

West Midlands Natural Environment Summit

Working together for a nature positive future



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Greener
Together

Welcome

Richard Parker

Mayor of the West Midlands



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Keynote speaker

Mary Creagh MP

DEFRA, Minister for Nature



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Nature for cities

Working together for a nature positive future



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Nature for Cities

James Scott

Group Director of Strategy and Planning at Urban and Civic
Non-executive Board Member at Natural England



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Nature for cities

James Scott, Natural England
Non-Exec Board Member

Why we need (more) nature in urban areas

- Towns and cities are complex ecosystems.
- Air quality improvement, solar shading, carbon reduction and flooding solutions.



Why we need (more) access to urban nature



- As towns and cities evolve this gives us a chance to invest in natural capital.
- A post pandemic necessity.
- Urban greening is a multi-faceted investment opportunity.
- Brings health, economic and social benefits.



Mapping access to greenspace

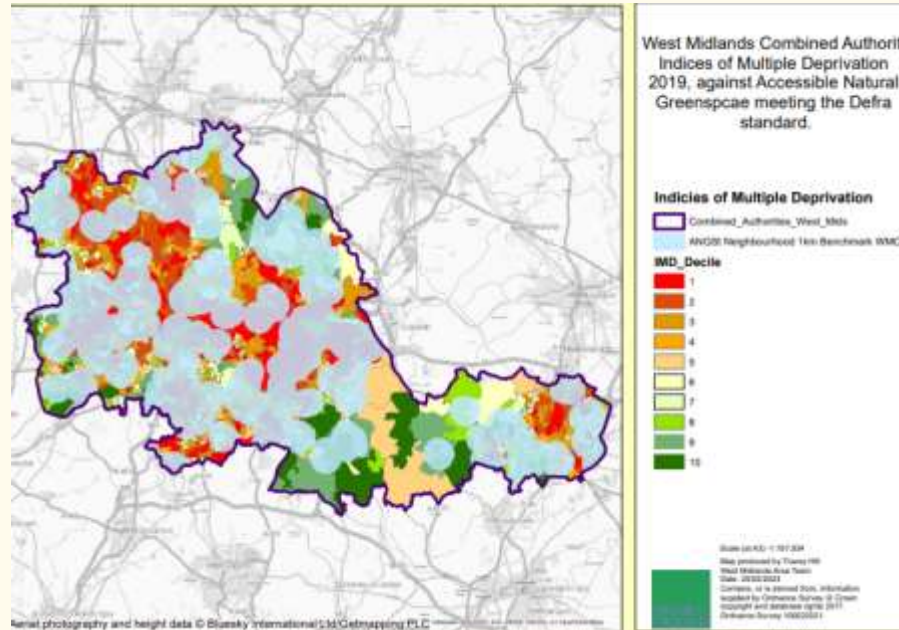
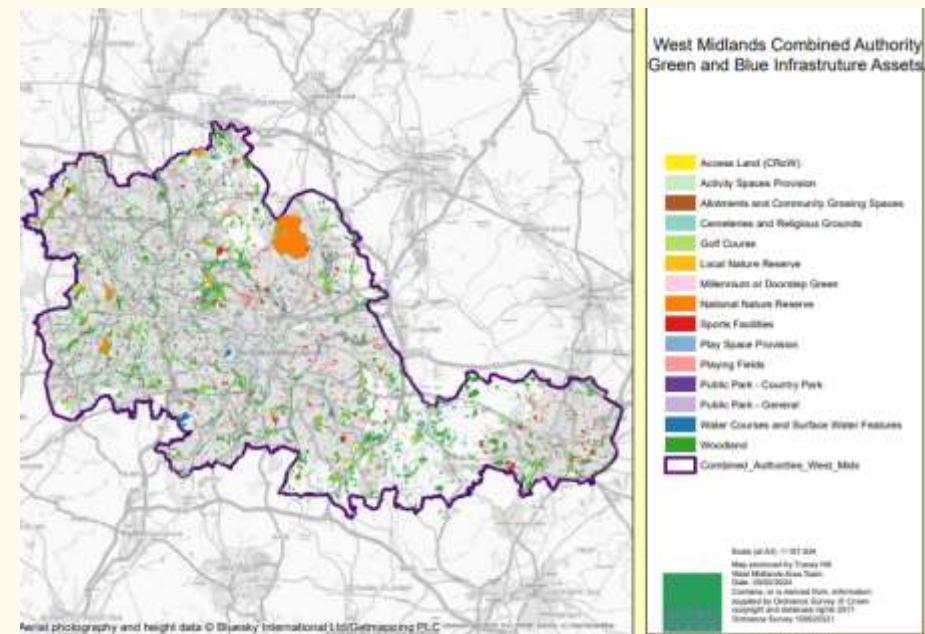
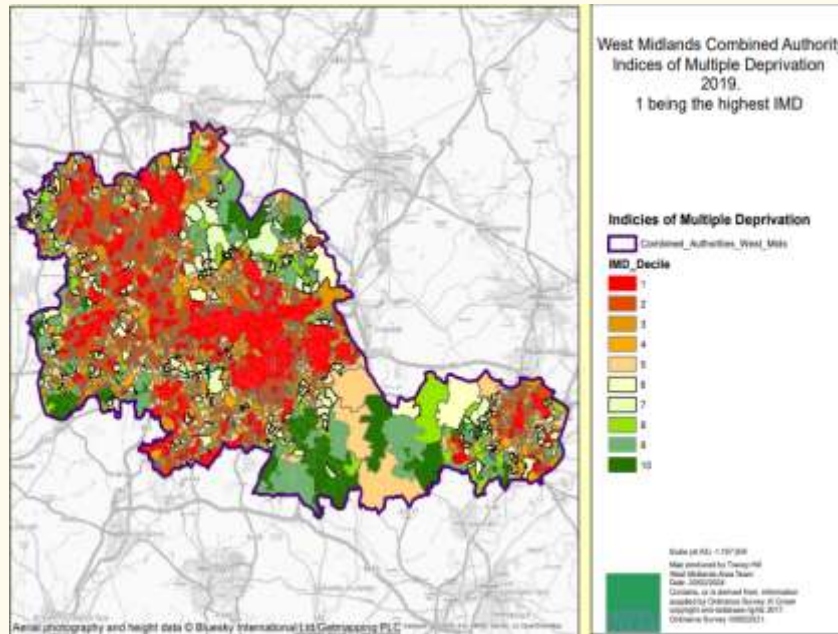


Green Infrastructure
Geography in Government Award 2022 Excellence in Geo-visualisation winner

Home Green Infrastructure ▾ Map Mapping Guide ▾ Resources ▾ Contact Us

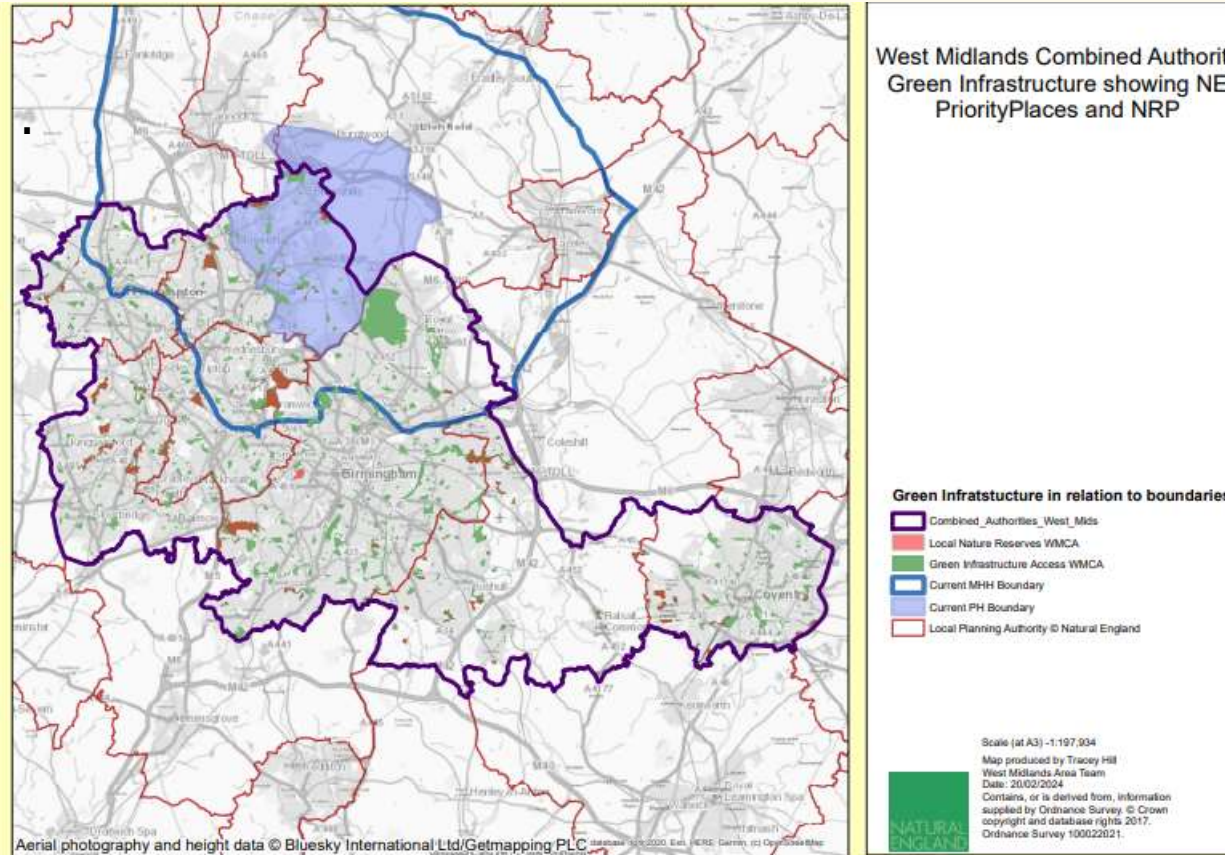
Green Infrastructure Mapping Database and Analyses - Version 1.2
A freely available tool providing GI Mapping layers and analyses, and the GI Mapping Database User Guide

The screenshot displays a web interface for the Green Infrastructure Mapping Database and Analyses. It features a dark purple header with the Natural England logo and navigation links. Below the header is a large map showing various green infrastructure elements in shades of green and blue. A central banner highlights the "Green Infrastructure Mapping Database and Analyses - Version 1.2" tool, describing it as a freely available resource. Below the banner, there are three smaller map thumbnails showing different geographical areas with green infrastructure overlays.



1. Indices of deprivation
2. Accessible green and blue space
3. The areas of accessible natural green space that could form building blocks for Green in 15

Midlands Heathlands Heartlands and Purple Horizons



- Midlands Heathland Heartlands a priority area for NE
- Aim is to connect Cannock Chase (Staffs) with Sutton Park (Birmingham).
- Purple Horizons Nature Recovery Project extends across 12,000 hectares in the West Midlands.

Purple Horizons – a partnership



Working together



[Green Infrastructure Home \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

www.naturetownsandcities.org.uk



Nature for Cities

Alastair Driver

Director, Rewilding Britain



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NATURE FOR CITIES

THE ROLE OF REWILDING


Prof Alastair Driver
Director



@RewildingB @AliDriverUK

REWILDING
BRITAIN



An aerial photograph of a braided river system flowing through a valley. The river consists of multiple channels that frequently split and rejoin, creating a complex, winding pattern. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green grasslands, brown heathland, and dense green forests. In the distance, rolling hills and a small cluster of white buildings are visible under a clear sky.

REWILDING IS THE LARGE-SCALE
RESTORATION OF ECOSYSTEMS
TO THE POINT WHERE NATURE
IS ALLOWED TO TAKE CARE OF
ITSELF



REWILDING SEEKS TO
REINSTATE NATURAL
PROCESSES AND,
WHERE APPROPRIATE,
MISSING SPECIES –
ALLOWING THEM TO
SHAPE THE
LANDSCAPE AND THE
HABITATS WITHIN

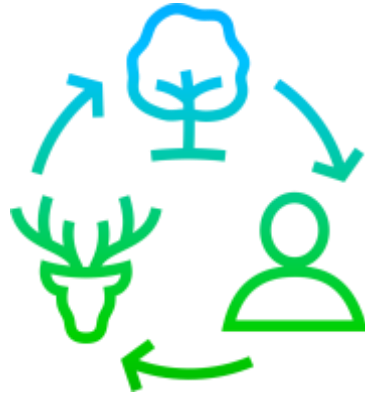


TRADITIONAL NATURE CONSERVATION PRACTICES
ON THEIR OWN
ARE NOT ENOUGH
TO ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT WILDLIFE RECOVERY
IN BRITAIN

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF REWILDING



Support people and nature together



Work at nature's scale



Let nature lead



Create resilient local economies



Secure benefits for the long term

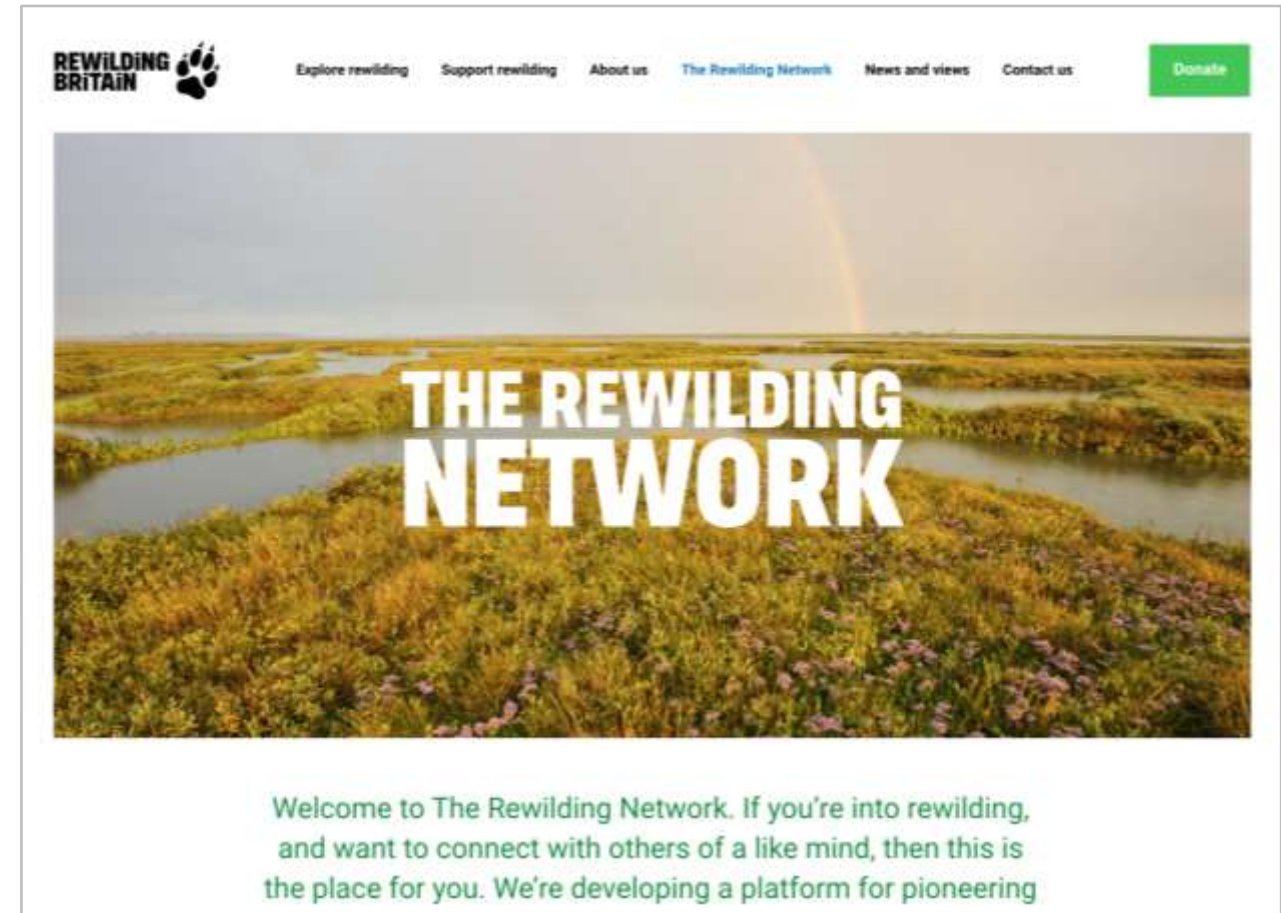


THE REWILDING NETWORK



- **974 Network members**
- *228 sites greater than 40 ha in size*
- *171,611 ha of land*
- *30 marine sites*
- *506 km² of sea*

- **22 Local Networks**
- *Local groups of landowners and communities who have come together to co-ordinate rewilding at a local level*



BUSTING A FEW MYTHS

- **Only 24% of rewilding sites in E&W are large private estates**
- **Rewilding sites produce 44% of the food produced pre-rewilding**
- **By area, 56% of rewilding sites are SSSI**
- **62 species are being considered for reintroduction**
- **Jobs have doubled on rewilding sites in E&W and quadrupled in Scotland**
- **Volunteer numbers have increased tenfold**



Pine Marten



European Wildcat



White-tailed Eagle



Eurasian Beaver

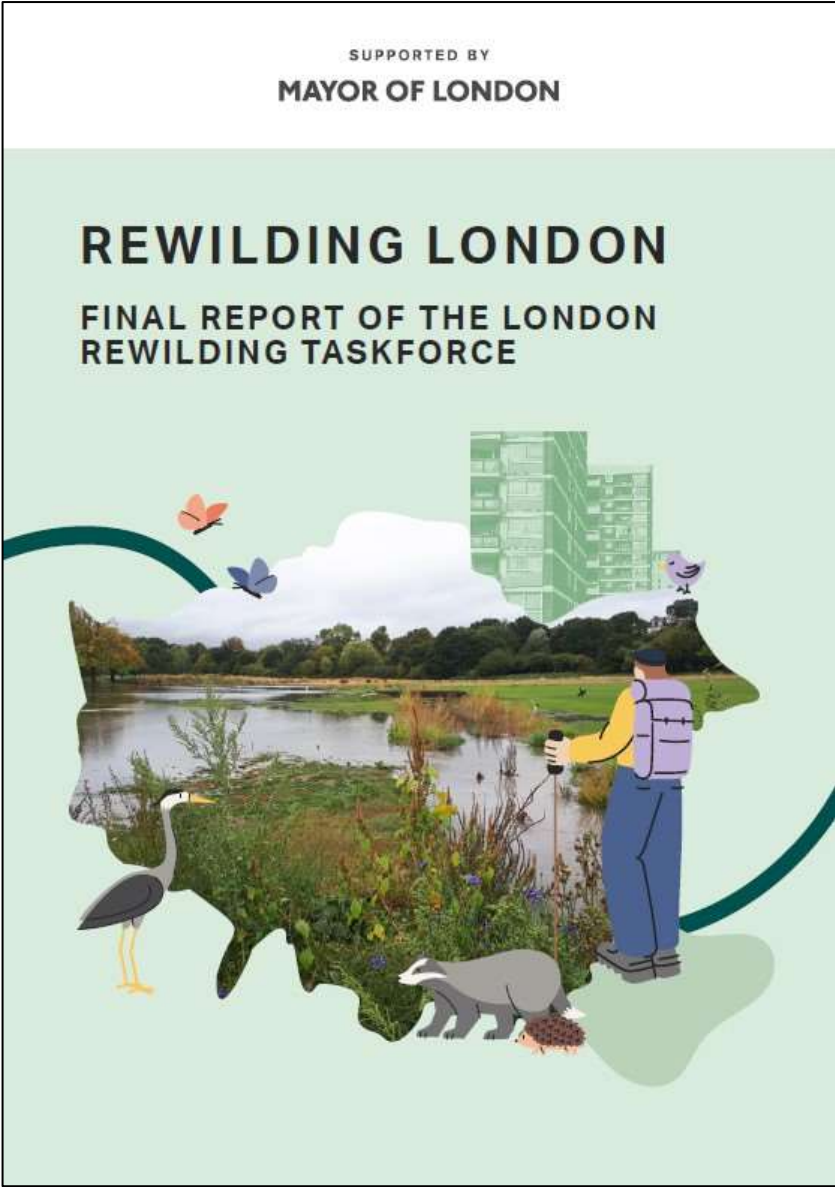
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR URBAN REWILDING



- 1. Identify/create large scale rewilding core areas
- 2. Identify/create “stepping stone” sites
- 3. Promote public engagement with rewilding



Ealing Beaver release



OTHER MAJOR FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



- England Woodland Creation Offer
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Carbon trading markets
- Nutrient offsetting
- Nature for Climate Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Endangered Landscapes Programme
- Species Recovery Programme
- Rewilding Britain Funds
- **Private/corporate finance**



Birmingham aerial view





Rewilding Vision for Allestree Park, Derby

**THINK BIG.
ACT WILD.**

**REWILDING
BRITAIN**



Nature for Cities

Philip Glanville

Director of Advocacy and Engagement, UK100



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West Midlands Natural Environment Summit

18th October 2024

Urban Nature:
Why it matters and
how we can support
delivery!



Philip Glanville

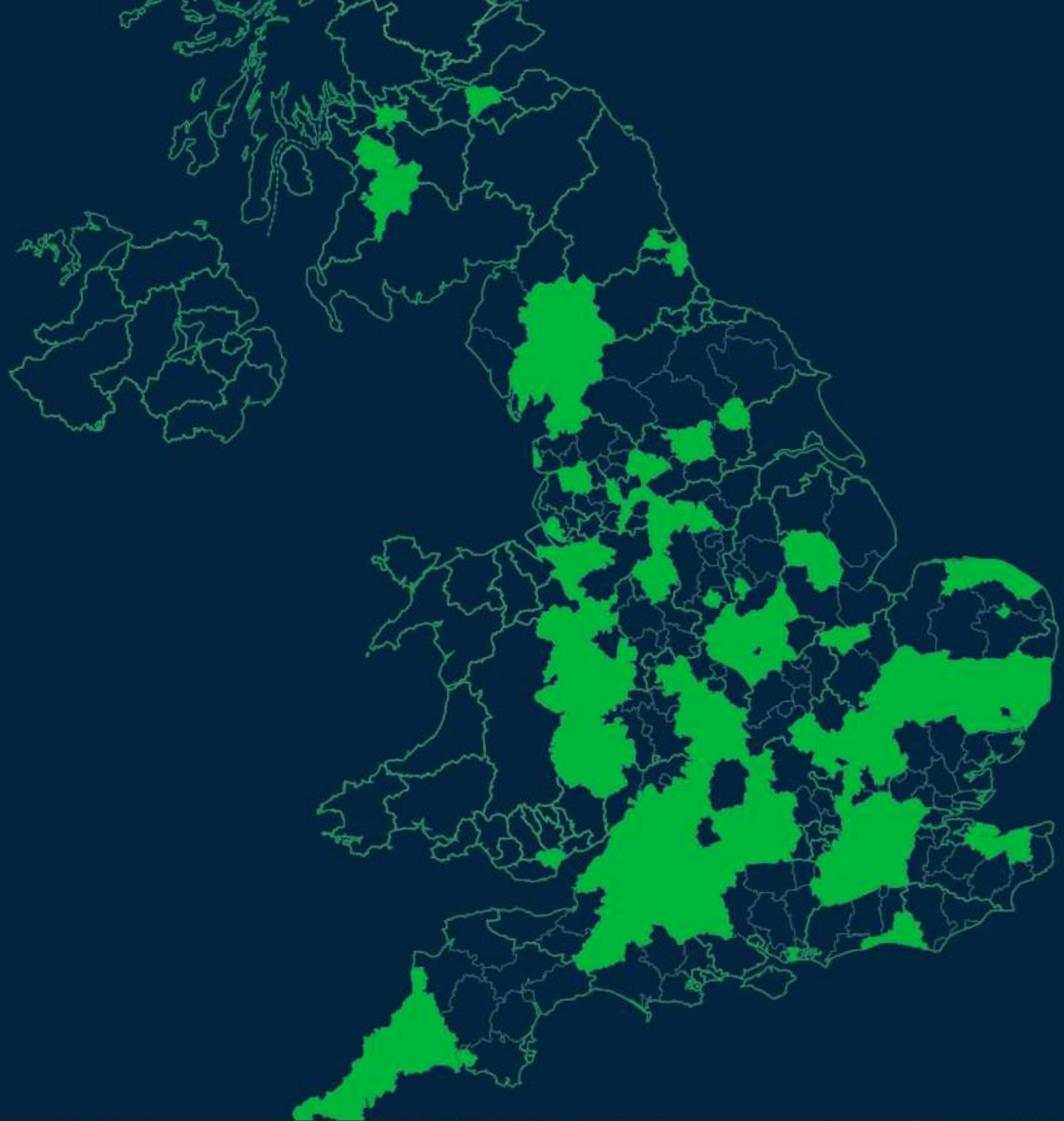
Director of Advocacy and
Engagement



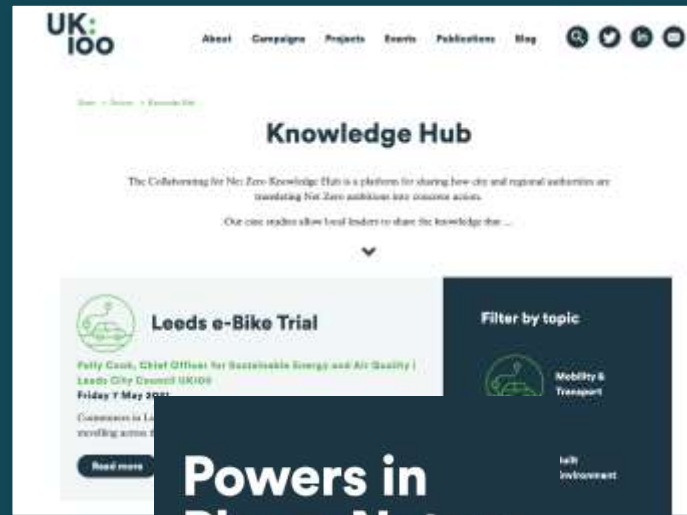
Who are we?

- We are the UK's only network of cross-party local leaders committed to ambitious Net Zero action
- Our 115 members represent over 60% of the UK population
- We support members to reach their Net Zero emissions goals faster than national targets
- Our programmes offer local leaders training, resources, and tailored support on delivery while our advocacy amplifies their voices.
- We work with Council Leaders, Officers, Members of Parliament and Civil Servants

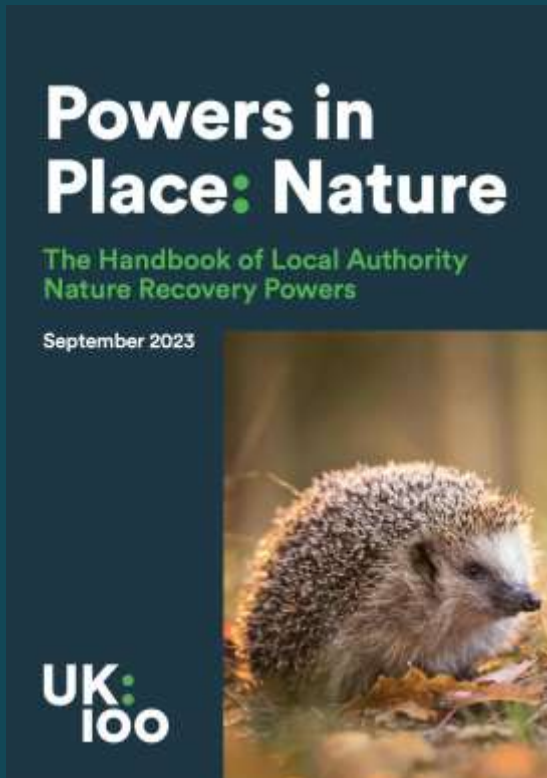
UK:100



What we do



Our work on Nature



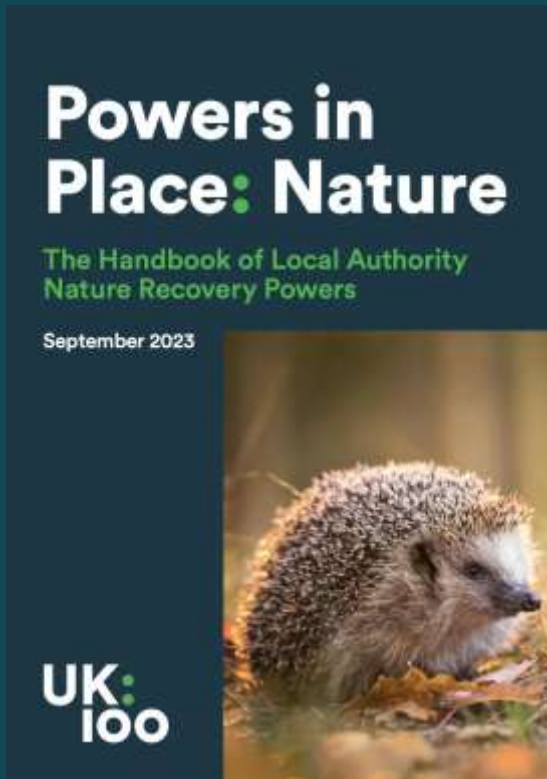
- In September 2023 we **published Powers in Place: Nature** - It's the go to Handbook of Local Authority Nature Recovery Powers.
- The Environment Act 2021 was a good thing, but unfinished business.

Overall insights

- **Measure It, Prioritise it, Fund it**
- **Accountability vacuum**
- **No joined up thinking**
- **Big skills gap**
- **Short term funding = no long term plan**

Key Recommendation 1

Measure It



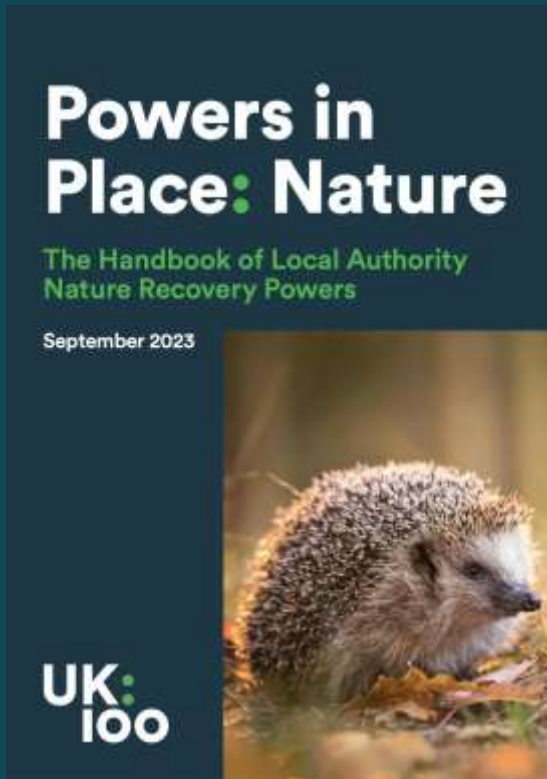
Consistency for nature: Government should roll out clear, coherent and connected policies and financial incentives to provide a strong investment case for developers, landowners and farmers to prioritise nature recovery alongside cutting emissions.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) should guide biodiversity and environmental land management schemes. Local authorities should have a clear governance role.

This must be underpinned by robust, consistent data which is locally relevant, accessible and properly resourced.

Key Recommendation 2

Value and Rate it



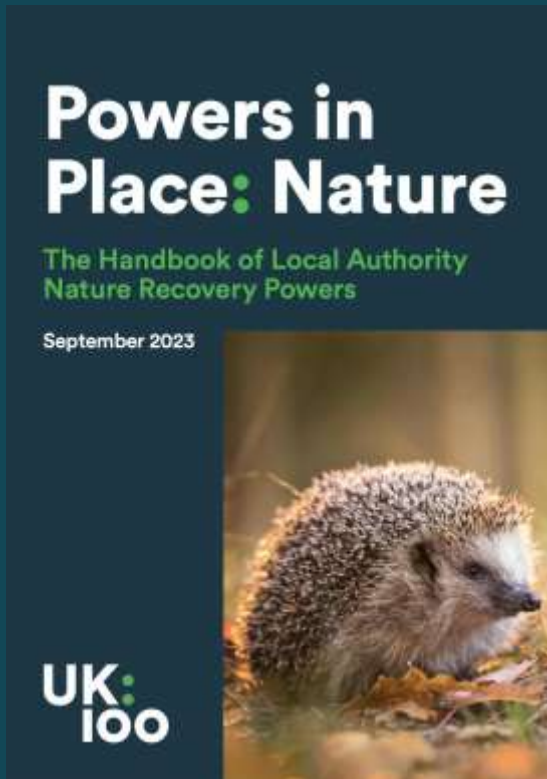
Priority for Nature: Nature recovery needs to be as strong in the implementation as it is in the duties, targets and strategies.

National and local delivery policies need to strengthen the weight given to nature protection in the planning system, and throughout all other policy and spending areas.

Alongside this, strong local political and corporate leadership to prioritise the Biodiversity Duty by Elected Members and Senior Directors can and should empower and support officers in delivering Nature Recovery.

Key Recommendation 3

Fund it



Funding for Nature: Fully fund Nature Recovery delivery capacity in lead local authorities for LNRS, and district councils responsible for implementing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Including expansion of staff teams with long-term funding, and investment in training programmes on Nature Recovery for all local authority staff and elected Members, akin to Carbon Literacy Training. Everyone needs to be able to speak 'Nature Recovery' – not just ecology specialists.

This funding should be available to all local authorities and should not be competitively allocated.

Additional points...



- We are facing twin crises - ecological and climate;
- Local leaders need to make protecting nature a top priority and support their staff in doing this work;
- **Get local politicians - councillors, Cabinet Members, Leaders, Mayors and MPs involved.** It worked for me, it's why conferences like this are so important;
- Nature challenges and solutions don't follow neat local government boundaries nor institutional bureaucracy;
- Long term funding so local governments can hire people to work on nature recovery plans and deliver them.

Growth is coming, Planning Reform is coming, New Infrastructure is coming - but can't happen without nature

Overarching recommendations:



- Ensuring long term policy **and budget certainty** for local authorities, businesses and other key stakeholders
- Reforming local authority funding away from short-term competitive pots towards **multi-year place-based grants**
- Establishing a **cross-departmental Local Net Zero Delivery Authority**
- Developing a **statutory Net Zero or climate duty** for local authorities
- Ensuring **community engagement** in place-based climate programmes

Risks and opportunities

- Can new Housing and Grid Infrastructure be a **win** for nature - yes, but policy and leadership matters;
- 1,000+ miles of overhead power lines can become **hedgehog** highways, **pollinator** pathways and **badger** bungalows;
- Good design can reduce bird deaths;
- 1.5 Million Homes could be developed to enhance nature and support climate action.
- Nature protections improve community sentiment and make better schemes.

Solve...

- Knitting together **growth, net zero and nature** isn't just possible it's a necessity, despite the fragmentation of policies and overlapping responsibilities in Whitehall it often happens on the ground.
- We need devolution that includes nature and to fix the machinery of Government.
- Combined authorities like the **West Midlands** have a crucial role to play, but we have **uneven devolution** and no net zero duty nor a duty to cooperate, especially on nature nor strong enough clarity about conformity between **Local Nature Recovery Plans** and **Regional Nature Recovery Strategies**.

Topic is

UK:100

...and Scale

Nature needs to be properly funded, nationally, regionally and locally - this includes the Environment Agency and Natural England.

Huge amounts are being achieved - but also the opportunity to crowd in.

Nature creates economic and social value, it's good for public health.

New towns and green belt reform are on the agenda, high ambition - where are the landscape level projects to match that ambition - real bridges between the urban and the rural, improved green belt, greater resilience, access to nature etc.

Funding and partnerships



UK:100

Nature needs to be properly funded, nationally, regionally and locally - this includes the Environment Agency and Natural England, in short term not easy - business case, prevention and multiplier case needs to be made.

Huge amounts are being achieved without funding, but stable funding also an opportunity to crowd in.

Investment in Nature creates economic and social value, it's good for public health and place shaping.

Work with communities and innovators: **Wildlife Trusts; Trees for Cities, Heritage Lottery** - new £15m 'Nature Towns and Cities Fund'; **Arriva** - £47m fund; **Natural England, Water Companies, Rewilding Britain, grassroot orgs** and of course **developers**.

Nutrient Neutrality and Biodiversity Credits are an opportunity - WTs are engaged!

What can be achieved: mitigation and adaptation



- Trees and more traditional greening are important, but...
 - Wetlands can 10x the carbon
 - Restored peatland 50x the carbon
- Preventing flooding and extreme heat - 1.5 or higher might already be locked in.
- Role of rewilding, SUDs and better flood management.
- Urban Heat Island - links to clean air, connected green spaces and access to nature - reducing inequality and barriers.
- Linking new agendas like wild swimming, food growing and rights to access.

UK100 Member Leadership on Nature

- **Mayor of London London Climate Resilience Review**
- **London Councils - Seven Climate Themes**
- **West Midlands Combined Authority - Natural Capital Programme**
- **Essex Local Nature Partnership**
- **Calderdale - Slow the Flow**
- **Herefordshire Nutrient Neutrality**
- **Hackney and Walthamstow Wetlands**
- **Beavers in Ealing and Enfield**
- **Manchester Carbon Literacy**
- **Watford River Colne**

UK100 Member: Case studies and UK100 Knowledge Hub

Plymouth - Habitat Banks: generating dividends for people, place and nature

- First council to create a habitat bank
- Established Ocean City Nature in 2023 to act as the city's Habitat Bank
- Set up an arms-length body to deliver it
- Leased 3 strategically selected sites
- Provided a £0.5m loan to the company for biodiversity enhancements
- Aimed to generate an estimated 277 biodiversity units through site upgrades
- Expected to generate £7.4million over 30 years



Who are our UK100 Members in the West Midlands?

West Midlands Combined Authority

Birmingham City Council

Solihull Council

Sandwell Council

Beyond... into Warwickshire, Shropshire,
Derbyshire and Leicestershire

Send us more information and case studies...

New Government Announcements and Legislation



- NPPF Consultation - closed on 30 September
- A new land use framework - trailed, but no timeline
- Budget and Spending Review - 30 October
- New English Devolution Framework - expected before the end of the year.
- Water (Special Measures) Bill
- English Devolution Bill - expected next Spring
- Various interesting Private Members Bill

Challenges:

- Role of **Office for Environmental Protection**
- Will planning reform finally join up on climate, nature and biodiversity?
- Are there conflicts between growth, nature and competing land use demands?
- Will nature feature in future devolution deals or the English Devolution Framework?
- How will nature be funded by new the Government?

To conclude



- We can't go backwards, the ratchet principle needs to be applied to nature, net zero and devolution.
- We can't see culture wars and the debate between Yimby and Nimby - bit climate and nature against growth and infrastructure.
- Finish the Environment Act 2021 Job.
- Delivery the protections need especially on water and clean air.
- The new Government can fix the machine of government and the relationship between national, regional and local government.
- Include nature and climate in devolution, including a new duty linked to the funding and powers need to deliver.

Thank you

Please do follow up via philip.glanville@uk100.org



Nature finance

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Nature finance

Alex Hume

Senior Associate Director, Finance Earth



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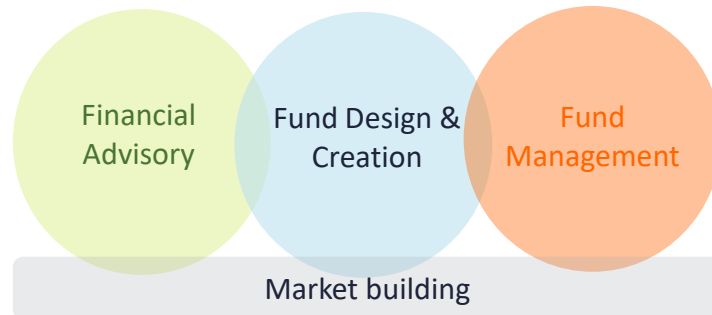


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Finance Earth

Founded in 2016, Finance Earth is a leading social enterprise and environmental impact investment boutique, offering market building, financial advisory and fund management services. We enable investment into conservation, climate and communities.

- We are a growing and passionate team of 40 professionals that provide expertise and financial rigor to develop impact led financial approaches to protect and restore nature, whilst ensuring communities are central to solutions.
- We are an award-winning employee-owned social enterprise who use an evidenced based approach to build market-based solutions with community centred governance to support the scaling of high integrity, high impact and fair outcomes.



A few of our partners:



£500m

Impact investment structures designed

£100m

Investment deployed into Projects for Nature, Climate and Communities

100+

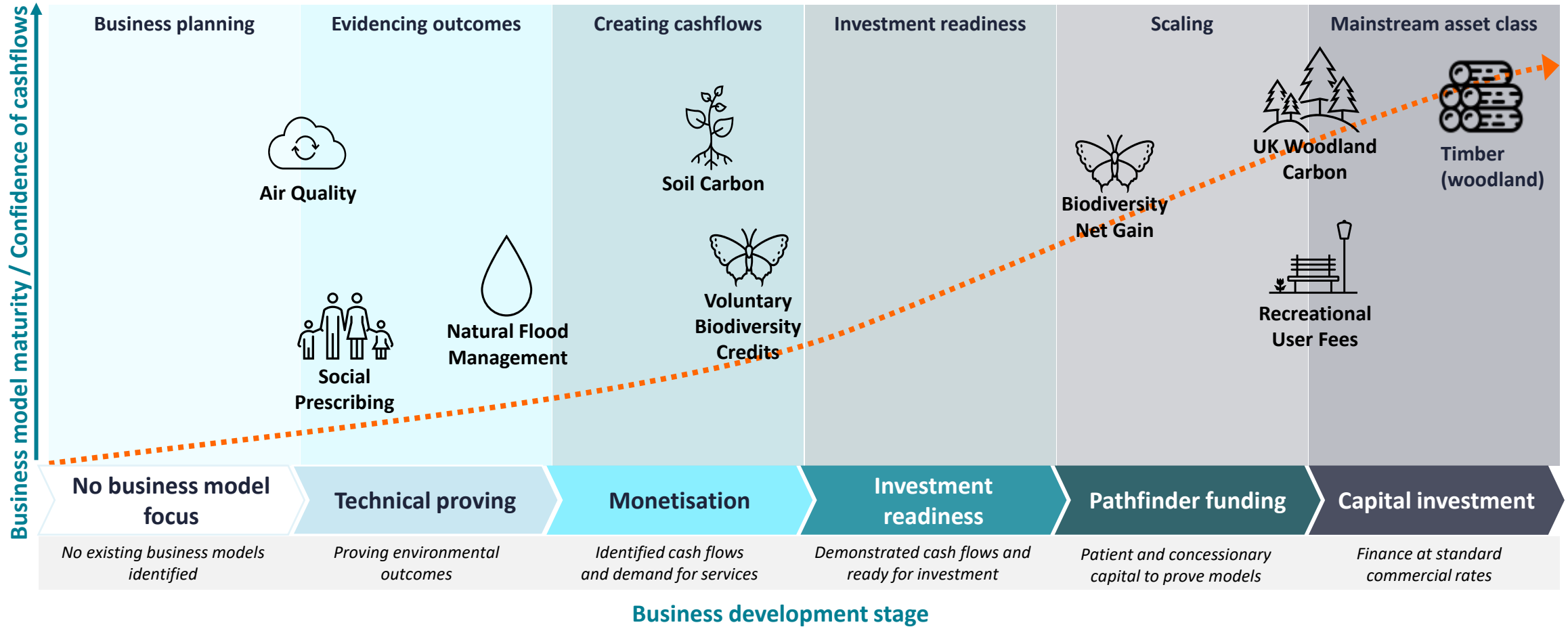
Projects undertaken since inception

30+

Countries where Finance Earth advised on projects

Pathway to Investment

Some business models are considered more investable by different classes of investor while others have uncertain potential or are not yet proven.



Nature Markets Principles

Finance Earth designed the Nature Market Principles with The Wildlife Trusts, The National Trust, RSPB, The Woodland Trust, and Federated Hermes.



1

Science-based Nature Recovery



NbS projects are led by science and deliver net gains to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.

2

Environmental & Social Safeguarding



Projects adopt a holistic & integrated approach to minimise leakage and not cause adverse impacts on other environmental objectives, projects or on local communities.

3

Additionality



Ecosystem services are only sold based on new, verifiable environmental outcomes that would not reasonably be expected to have happened without the income generated from the sale of ecosystem services.

4

Permanence & Financial Prudence



The durability of benefits is maximised, ideally in perpetuity, and the risks of reversal of the benefits are mitigated through financial prudence.

5

Seek co-benefits



Projects seek to maximise co-benefits for local communities and society.

6

Verifiability



Projects deliver reliable and independently measurable environmental gains through best practice management, monitoring, independent verification and reporting.

7

Transparency



Projects commit to public disclosure of outcomes to maintain accountability and support the development of trusted ecosystem service markets.

8

Buyer Screening Criteria



Buyers must be aligned with the transition to net zero and demonstrate support for the conservation and protection of the natural environment.

9

Commitment to best practices



Buyers and investors adopt best practices in the management and reporting of social and environmental impacts, e.g. following the mitigation hierarchy

Roles for the Public sector

The public sector has a key role in guiding the development and establishment of high integrity natural capital markets. Public sector actors must continue to play a range of key roles for nature, including:



Landowner – Owning c.8% of UK land, the public sector must lead by example with its own assets.



Ecosystem Service Buyer – purchases ecosystem services e.g., carbon credits/BNG units.



Project Developer – identifying project opportunities and leading delivery based on existing expertise.



Ecosystem Service Broker – connect projects with potential buyers to enable sales



Funder/ Investor – repayable & non-repayable capital provision for natural capital projects



Strategic Enabler – ensuring alignment with local and regional policies and strategic priorities



De-risking – sharing early-stage risk as a buyer or funder for emerging ecosystem service markets.



Aggregator/ Coordinator – bringing together projects and leading scale up at a place or regional level.



Innovator – support sandboxing and testing of emerging market models to explore new approaches.



Quality Assurer – confirming integrity of nature recovery actions and vetting buyers and investors

Nature finance

Helen Edmundson

Deputy Director of Green Finance for Defra



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Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Nature Finance

West Midlands, Natural Environment Summit

18th October, 2024

Helen Edmundson – Deputy Director of Green Finance, Defra



Overview

- **Current incentives for nature finance**
- **Barriers to scale**
- **Activities to date**
- **Working in partnership**

Drivers | 5 main ways the private sector is currently incentivised to pay for nature (1/3)

1

Nature obligations

- **Biodiversity Net Gain** obligation on developers to create a “net gain” of 10%. Estimates suggest this market could generate £135m-274m p.a.
- **Nutrient market:** we have supported the development of a nutrient mitigation market with c.£87m (to date) to enable housing impacted by nutrient pollution. This will be repaid by developers over time to fund further mitigation.



2

Nature-based economic infrastructure

Nature as “economic infrastructure”; flood defense, natural cooling, e.g.

- water companies have invested in **nature-based solutions** (NbS) to meet their regulatory obligations, alongside more traditional “grey” infrastructure.
- Some infrastructure providers are also exploring **natural flood management** as a risk mitigation measure.



Drivers | 5 main ways the private sector is currently incentivised to pay for nature (2/3)

3 Business resilience

There is growing awareness of the risks posed by climate change and nature loss to **businesses' bottom line**.

Investors and businesses are engaging with their supply chains to understand the risks posed by environmental degradation. E.g.:

- **Lloyds Banking Group** has partnered with the Soil Association on an exchange data platform to support farmers better understand and take action on their impacts and dependencies with nature.
- **Sainsburys** is working with **The Rivers' Trust** on water replenishment action as part of the River Wyre Project.



Drivers | 5 main drivers currently in place to incentivise the private sector to pay for nature (3/3)

4 Voluntary markets

Corporates invest, voluntarily, in nature-based carbon removals/reductions as part of their commitments to be “Net Zero”.

- Two established codes in the UK: the **Woodland Carbon Code** and the **Peatland Code**. Current p.a. market value is c£4 million (WCC) and £270k (PC).
- Other codes (e.g. soil carbon, sea grass carbon sequestration) being developed by land/coastal managers, businesses, and e-NGOs.
- Increasing interest in voluntary biodiversity markets.



5 Philanthropy

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding is a small part of financing for nature from business, although appetite is growing. Defra has partnered with Natural England, the Environment Agency, Crowdfunder and the Council for Sustainable Business on an 18 month pilot to assess if a matching platform (**Projects for Nature**) could help mobilise philanthropic finance.



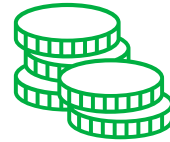
Barriers | 4 main barriers that are limiting the ability to scale nature finance

1



- Concerns about the **integrity** of nature markets
- Complexity around how to **combine payments** for different environmental outcomes.

3



- Nature projects and markets are seen as **risky** – they are new and untested.
- A need for “venture” or “high risk” capital to support first movers transition to nature friendly business practices.

2



- Lack of **capacity and capability** to find “buyers of nature” and attract up-front investment.
- This applies **across the environmental sector**.

4



- **Limited private demand** for nature services. Relies heavily on regulated obligations
- The other drivers are **voluntary** and subject to broader economic considerations.

Addressing barriers | Government has a core role in supporting both the development of high integrity markets, and access to them

- Defra has a **Nature Investment Standards** partnership with the UK's national standards body, the **British Standards Institution**.
- Government will launch a **consultation** on what further action is needed to support the development of **high integrity carbon and nature markets**
- **Investment readiness:** 137 projects across England supporting investment readiness through the £15m **Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund**.
- **Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC):** Support to 4 pioneering local and combined authority areas: Cornwall; Borderlands (Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmorland & Furness); West Midlands; York and North Yorkshire.
- **Sustainable Finance Disclosures:** working across government to integrate climate and nature into the decision making of large firms and investors so they have a better understanding of the risks and opportunities posed by nature.



Partnership| Defra is working with a range of partners to gather insights on policy, delivery and where additional action may be needed

- The **Green Finance Institute** is a key partner on investment readiness and aligning the financial sector - they are hosts of the TNFD.
- Aviva, GFI and WWF are currently exploring business interest in NZ and nature **transition plans**.
- The **Broadway Initiative** have kicked off a “nature markets dialogue” to support thinking on nature market governance.
- **The Crown Estate**, working with **Finance Earth** and others, are developing a roadmap on Marine Natural Capital Markets
- **NEIRF** and **LINC** have created a collaborative **Communities of Practice** for project teams.



Nature finance

Raphael Miller

Director, Mixed Infrastructure – Local Authority
Advisory & Lending, National Wealth Fund



West Midlands
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National Wealth Fund

*Previously UK
Infrastructure Bank*



The National Wealth Fund - Who are we?

- HMT owned & capitalised
- Operationally Independent of Government
- Headquartered in Leeds.

Our mission is to partner with the private sector and local government to increase infrastructure investment in pursuit of our two strategic objectives:

Tackling climate change – helping the Government meet its net zero 2050 goal

Supporting regional and local economic growth – providing opportunities for new jobs and higher levels of productivity

How we invest

Four Investment Principles:

1. Supports the Fund's CC & RLEG objectives.
2. Investing in infrastructure assets or networks, or in new infrastructure technology.
 1. Widening scope to support NWF aims and objectives and Industrial Strategy
3. Delivering a positive financial return.
4. *Crowding in significant private capital over time.*



Five Priority Sectors

+ Natural
Capital

+ Retrofit



Clean energy



Transport



Waste



Water



Digital

+ Support to National Industrial Strategy.

Natural Capital

- *UKIB Act 2023 S.2(6)* **“Infrastructure includes nature-based solutions”**
- **Progressive approach to natural capital**
 - See it as an investment Asset Class
 - Consider it on par with built infrastructure
- View as investment sector in its own right – while looking for opportunities in investment across our investment sectors



natural carbon removal



water quality



biodiversity



drainage / flood
protection



Urban cooling



Retrofit

Our offer

✓ Actions We Take

- Finance demonstrator sites
- Provide financing in environments of uncertainty
 - Regulatory
 - Technological
 - Market
- Invest at all levels of the capital stack: from common equity to senior debt and everything in between
- Minimum ticket size, £20mn Private, £5mn Local Authority (*nat cap flex*)
- Provide free of charge advisory services to Local Authorities)

✗ Actions we Won't Take

- Act as project developer or sponsor
- Provide revenue guarantees or grants
- Take a controlling equity stake
- Immature Technology (TRLs 1-6)
- Social & Cultural Infrastructure (schools, hospitals, cultural venues)

Natural Capital - Investment Challenges

- **Revenue Certainty** *who will buy? for how much?*
- **Demand certainty** *will policy increase demand?*
- **Absence of market structures** *price transparency, standards*
- **Ticket size** *can we aggregate to be more cost-effective?*
- **Financial Literacy of Developers** *need to be clear on revenue streams*
- **Ecological Skills Gap** *ensuring high-integrity projects*

Thank you

For more information about the National Wealth Fund,
or to contact us, visit www.uknwf.org.uk.



Local delivery and capacity building

Working together for a nature positive future



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Greener
Together

Local delivery and capacity building

Manu Maunganidze

Director of Nature Youth Connection Education



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Greener
Together

Local delivery and capacity building

Delia Garratt

Chief Executive, Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Greener
Together



**Birmingham &
Black Country**
Wildlife Trust



Our goals

We have identified three priority areas for our work:

1 Nature is in recovery, with abundant, diverse wildlife across Birmingham and the Black Country

By 2030 we want to see

30%

of Birmingham and the Black Country's landscape managed for the benefit of wildlife.



We will work to protect, restore and connect wilder landscapes where wildlife and people can thrive.

2 People are taking action for nature and the climate across Birmingham and the Black Country

By 2030 we want to see

at least
1 in 4

people across Birmingham and the Black Country taking action for nature.



We will inspire and engage people to take action for wildlife and enable communities to develop a positive and meaningful connection with their local natural environment.

3 Nature is playing a central and valued role in helping to address local and global problems

By 2030 we aim for

500

hectares of land to be improved to provide nature-based solutions to the ecological and climate crises.



We will help nature to help us by restoring and creating habitats that can draw down carbon from the atmosphere, reduce local flooding and pollution, whilst promoting nature-based solutions to help improve our physical and mental wellbeing.

Landscape scale approach to nature recovery



Love Your River Stour



Wilder Walsall

(Walsall:
Shire Oak Park LNR)



Dudley's Path to Nature Recovery

Working with others





Inspiration, knowledge & skills





**Birmingham &
Black Country**
Wildlife Trust





FOR BLINKY'S SAKE
END THE CULL

NO NATURE = NO FUTURE

THE wildlife TRUSTS
Birmingham & Black Country
ef Environment Foundation

RESTORE NATURE NOW
By rewilding the Beaky Blinders

RESTORE NATURE NOW
By rewilding the Beaky Blinders

NATURE NEEDS

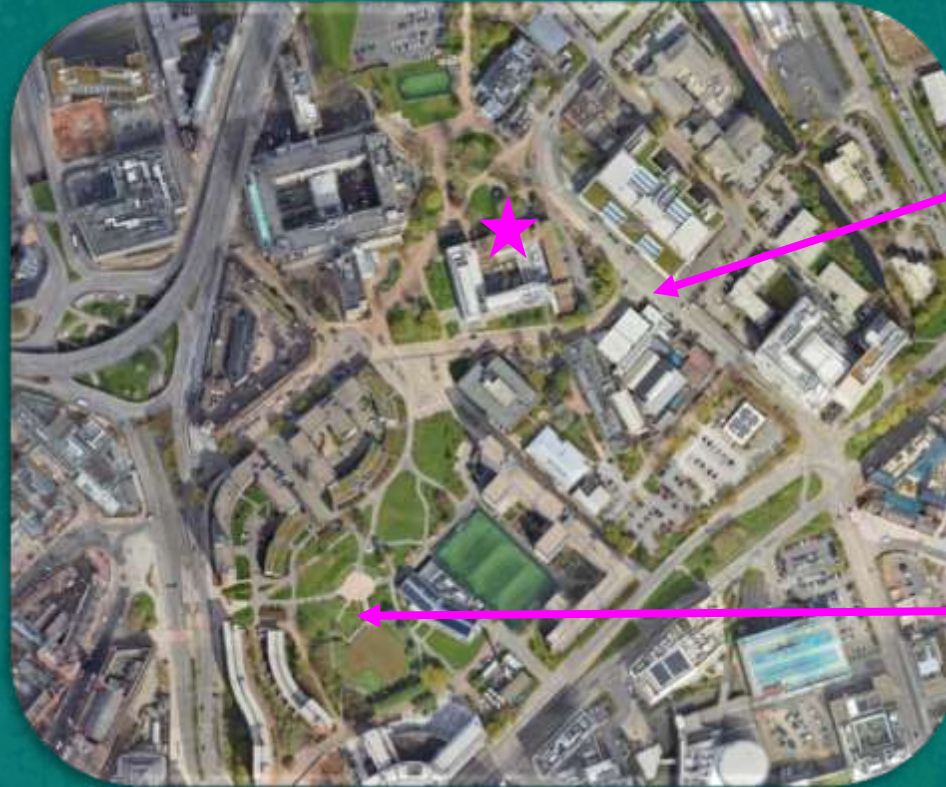
I'M A CLIMATE VOTER



**Birmingham &
Black Country**
Wildlife Trust

Aston University Campus

- One of the biggest green spaces in Birmingham city centre.
- Approximately 35,000 m² of public green space on campus - almost 28 % of the total campus area.
- Several buildings with green roofs including 1,735 m² on newly acquired 10 Woodcock St.



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Nature-based solutions for our urban challenges

Mike Webb

Natural Capital Programme Manager, WMCA



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Natural Environment Summit Nature Based Solutions for our urban challenges - Workshop

Mike Webb
Senior Natural Capital Programme Manager
Oct 2024



Local Investment in Natural Capital programme

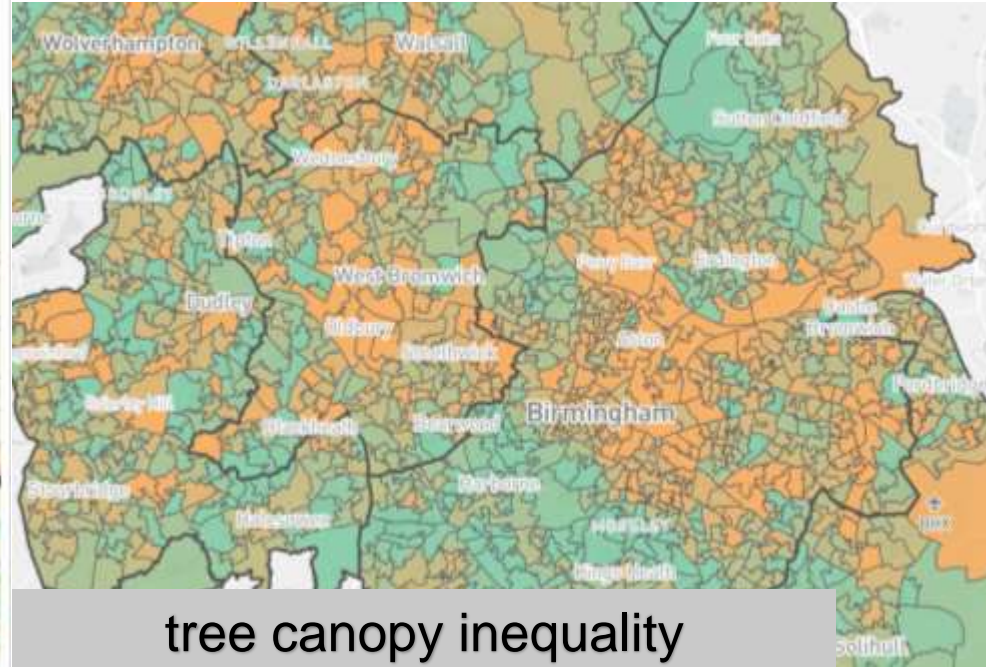
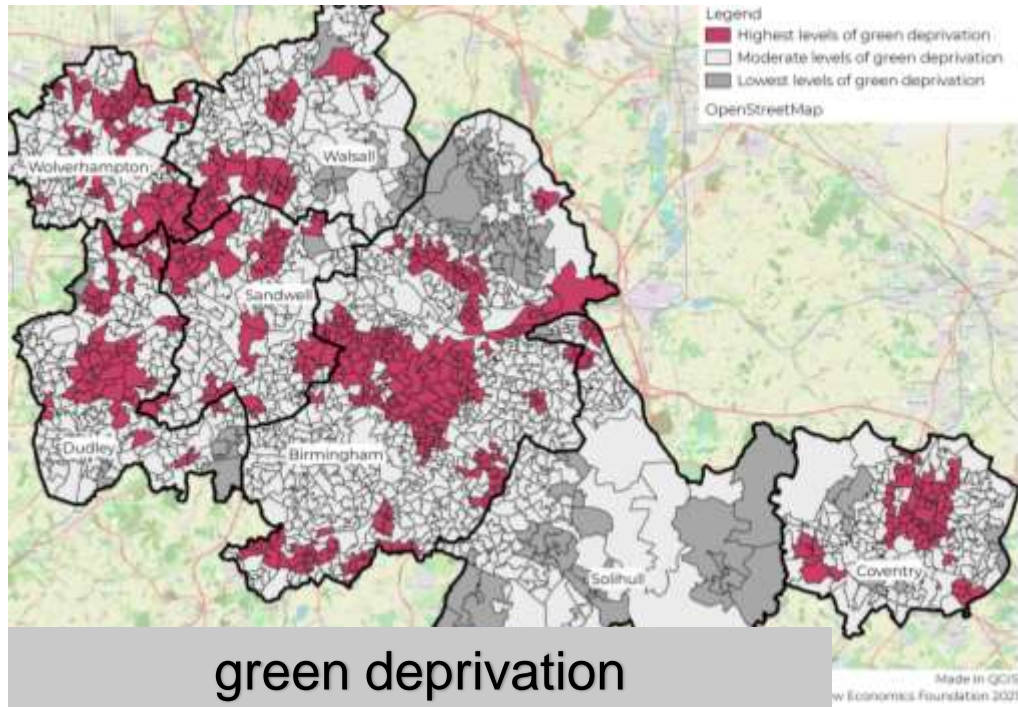


What are Nature Based solutions

“Nature-based Solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural and modified ecosystems in ways that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, to provide both human well-being and biodiversity benefits”

(IUCN, 2016)

What are the challenges in this urban space – wellbeing



- 73% of UK adults said connecting with nature was important for managing their mental health
- people who live in tree-lined streets are less likely to be prescribed anti-depressants
- annually in WM, up to 2300 premature deaths arise from long-term exposure to particulate matter.

What are the challenges in this urban space – Climate impacts



Excess heat, droughts & wildfires



- 3271 excess deaths in 2022 heatwave (England & Wales)
- 2017 Storm Doris, 2019/20 heatwaves & Aug 2023 floods cost the region £21.6m
- annual economic costs to the WMCA region could be potentially by the 2050s could be equivalent to £1.5 – £2.9bn/year

NBS for wellbeing



- Annual net benefit to society of Birmingham's parks & greenspace has been valued at nearly £600m, which includes £192m in health benefits
- For every £1 CGG projects returned on average £3.27 in net economic, social & environmental benefit
- There is a 23% decrease in sick leave taken by employees with a view of nature (saves ave. £1600/employee)

NBS for Climate Resilience



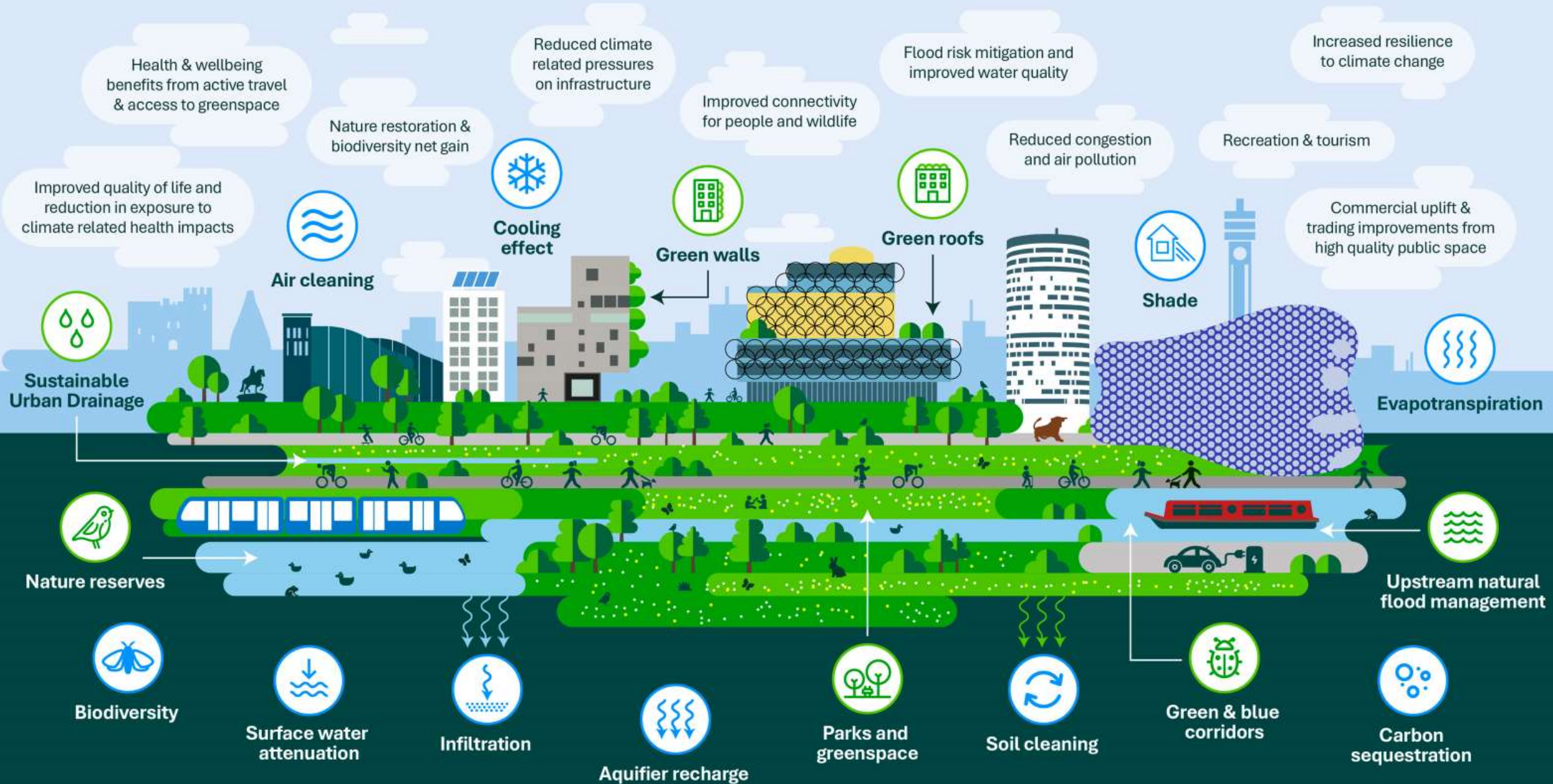
- 30% of our climate adaptation can be through NBS
- Street Trees can reduce ambient temp by 3°C & the WM trees intercept >1.5M m³ of run-off
- SuDs & rain gardens can reduce flooding whilst also combatting urban heat island effect
- Green roofs can reduce cooling costs by up to 25%

Natural ecosystem engineers



- Flood lag times increased by 55.9% where beavers are active
- lower concentrations of suspended sediment, nitrogen and phosphate leaving dammed areas
- Significant biodiversity improvements

Our vision for the West Midlands: Healthy, prosperous, resilient towns & cities



Nature-based solutions for our urban challenges

How do we make a stronger case for nature-based solutions delivery?

- How do we improve our approach to **measuring and reporting** on the benefits of nature-based solutions? (Tony)
- How can we strengthen the **integration of nature-based solutions into policy** to support delivery? (Matt)
- How can delivery be improved by **devolving powers or resources**? (Mike)



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Nature recovery in our urban setting

Emma Johnson

Midlands Deputy Director, Natural England



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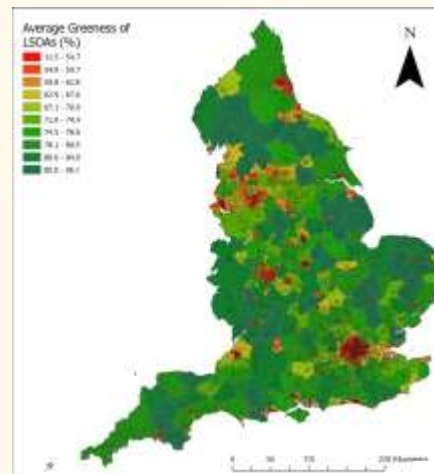


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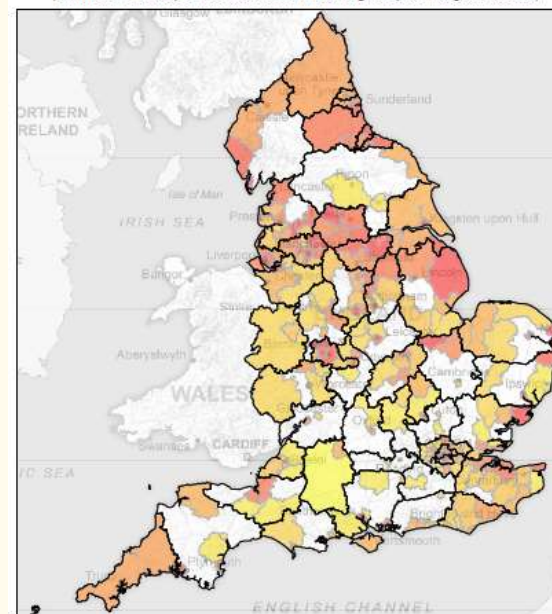
Average Greenness

- Poor in nature
- Reduced resilience to climate change
- Poor health & wellbeing



average greenness (% area that is not manmade surface) of LSOAs within each Local Authority.

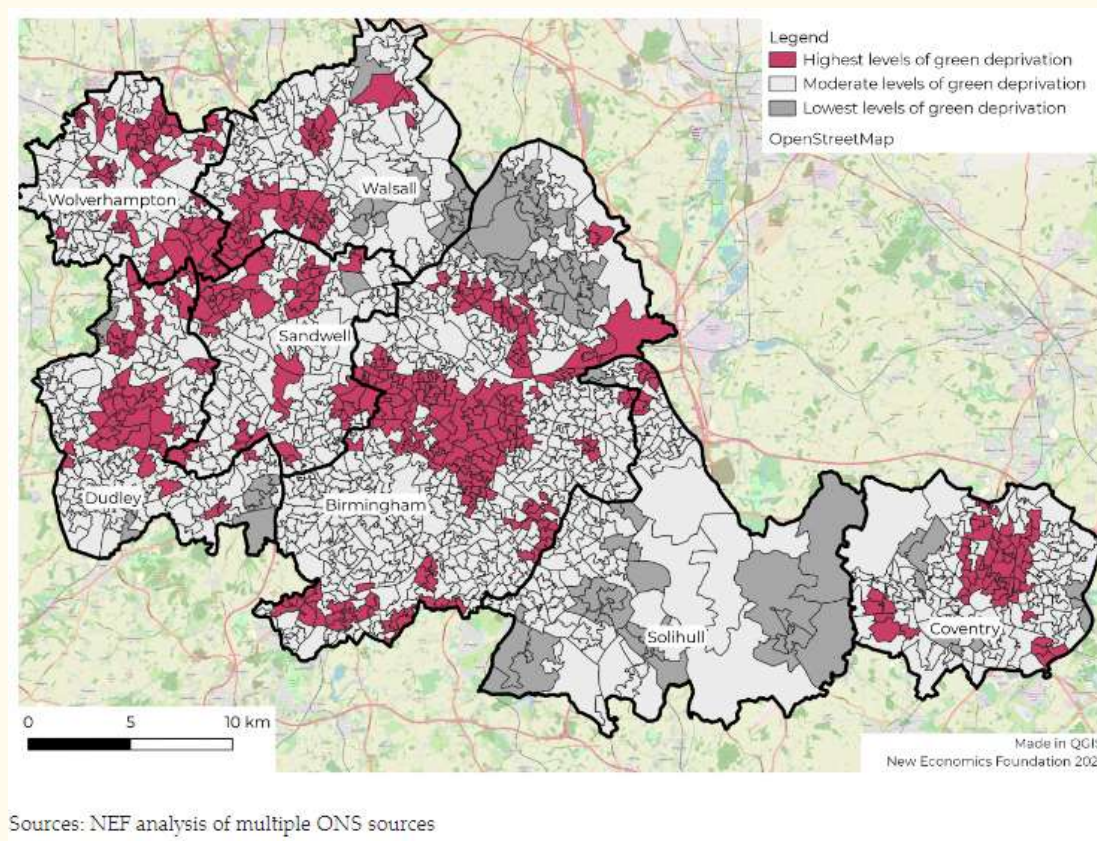
Local Natural Greenspace Access Inequality:
LSOAs with poor access to local natural greenspace close to home and in the highest two IMD deciles (Local Natural Greenspace is defined as 2ha of natural greenspace with 300m of home)



- Inequalities in access to nature

People and Nature

The West Midlands holds some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country — 49% of neighbourhoods are in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods for Index of Multiple Deprivation. (WMCA)



Sources: NEF analysis of multiple ONS sources

Sheffield 'Grey to Green'



Nature recovery in our urban setting



How do we deliver nature recovery in complex urban landscapes?

1. How do we **engage policy makers and stakeholders** in delivering local nature recovery?
2. How can we **optimise the delivery of BNG** for the benefit of nature recovery?
3. How can delivery be improved by **devolving powers or resources**?



© Wellspring

Nature recovery in our urban setting

How do we deliver nature recovery in complex urban landscapes?

- How do we engage policy makers and stakeholders in delivering local nature recovery? (Emma)
- How can we optimise the delivery of BNG for the benefit of nature recovery? (Jeff)
- How can delivery be improved by devolving powers or resources? (Jordan)



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Nature finance

Alex Hume

Senior Associate Director, Finance Earth



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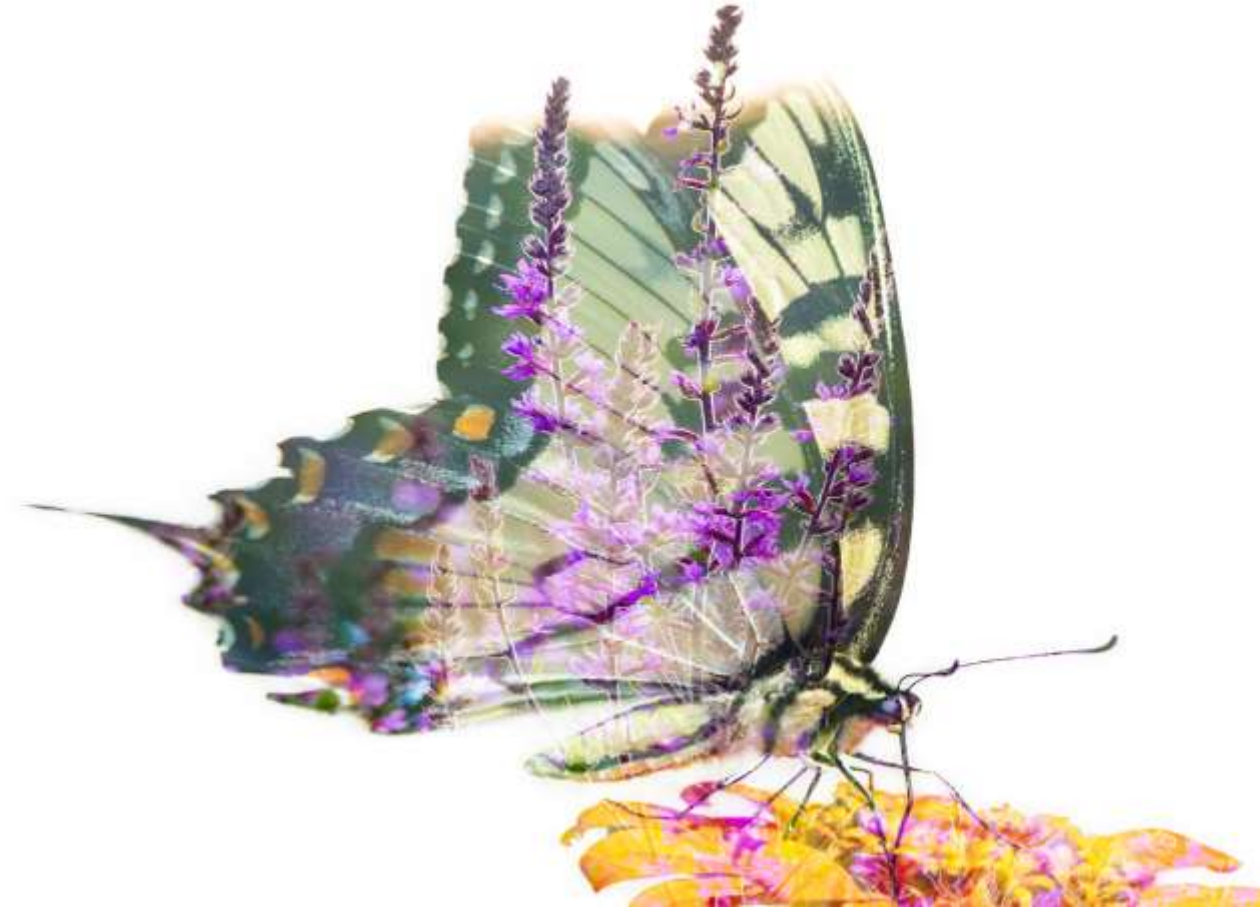


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WMCA LINC

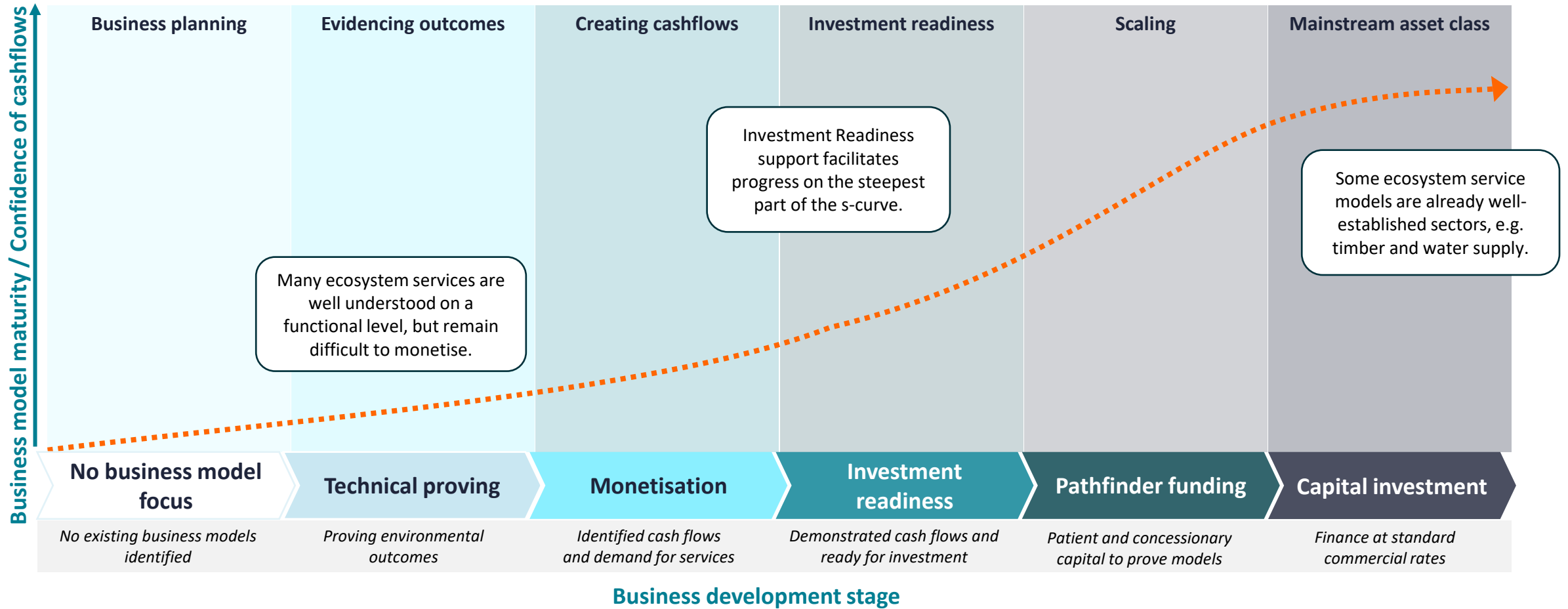
Natural Environment Summit
Nature Finance

18th October 2024



Pathway to Investment

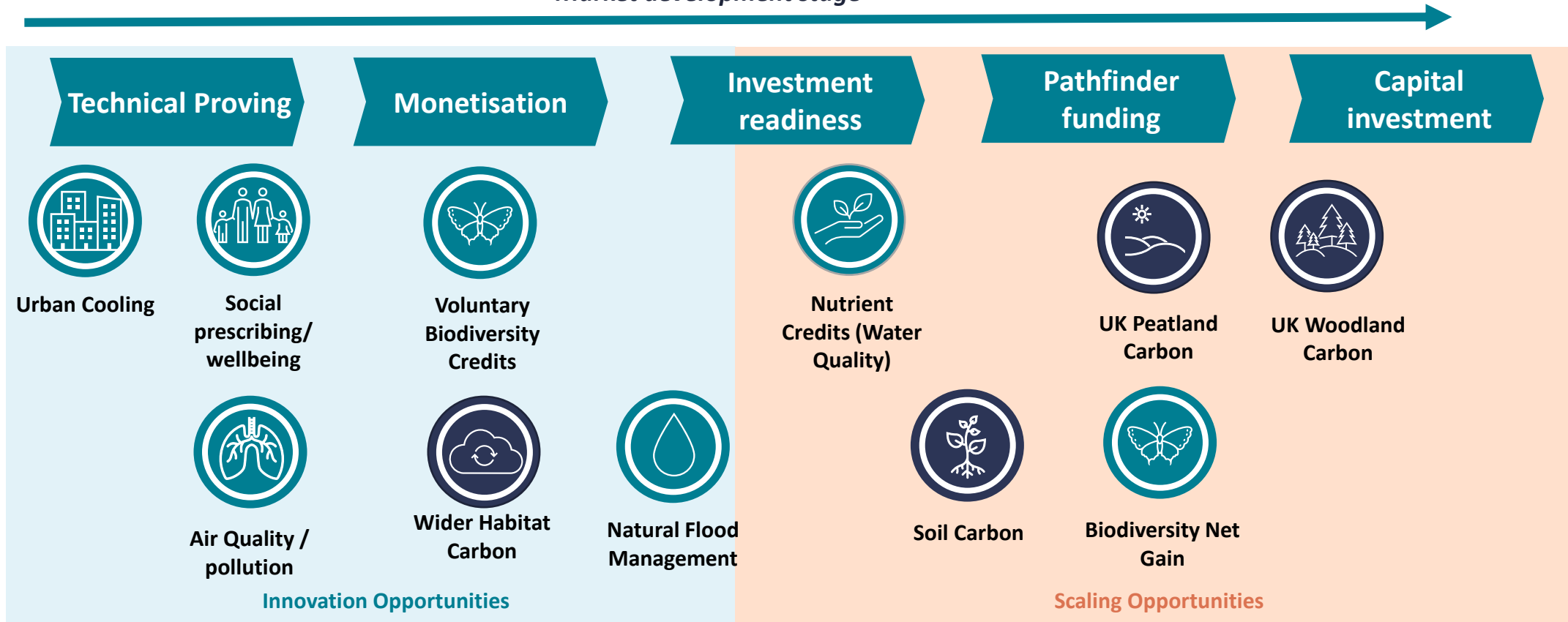
Some business models are considered more investable by different classes of investor while others have uncertain potential or are not yet proven.



Ecosystem Service Markets

These ecosystem service markets are currently at various stages of development from proof of concept to 'investment-ready for mainstream financial markets'.

Market development stage



Technical proving = Proving environmental outcomes and feasibility.

Monetisation = Modelling and identifying cash flows and demand for services.








Investment readiness = Demonstrated cash flows and ready to raise investment.

Pathfinder funding = Patient and concessionary capital to demonstrate sustainable revenue at scale.

Capital investment = Finance at standard commercial (risk-adjusted) rates

Challenges to Nature Finance

There are several challenges that contribute to the shortfall of finance for nature restoration. Finance is often not the limiting factor, but rather a lack of project pipeline, standards, data and delivery capacity.

	Revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncertain revenues streams and cash flow profiles• Investors are unable to form risk/ return expectations and therefore are reluctant to invest
	Project Pipeline & Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small-scale projects with long timeframes lead to high transaction and origination costs• Landowners and tenants are cautious of engaging in nascent PES markets (lack of pipeline)
	Access to Data & Project Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of access to standardised project & price data; limited record of successful transactions• Concerns about quality and integrity of outcomes delivered (for both buyers and investors)
	Benefit Attribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of confidence in the attribution of outcomes to a project, or the benefits to any one specific beneficiary• “Free rider” perception in multi-beneficiary interventions
	Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant upfront capex/ R&D often required• Ongoing costs for verification and maintenance
	Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experts (science, finance, project management, etc.) are few and high in demand• Skilled labour and machinery are insufficient in some markets (e.g., peatland restoration)
	Science & Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of scientific evidence and suitable verification standards for some ecosystem services

Development of a high integrity and high-quality ecosystem services market in the UK will also require a set of guiding principles & good practices to tackle issues such as double counting, leakage, verification, challenges around additionality.

Breakout discussion: What next for unlocking Investment in Urban Nature?

For the next 45 minutes we will break into groups and rotate round 3 separate tables around the room. Each table will focus on one of the following 3 questions

1. How do we give confidence to the market to unlock private finance?
2. What priority outcomes from nature for city-regions should we focus on?
3. How can delivery be improved by devolving powers or resources?

Nature finance

What next for unlocking investment in urban nature?

- How do we give confidence to the market to unlock private finance? (Alex and Florence)
- What priority outcomes in urban areas should we focus on and how do we progress? (Tristan and Sanchi)
- How can delivery be improved by devolving powers or resources? (Jackie and Beck)

Local nature delivery and capacity building

Lisa Trickett

Director and Founder, Places in Common



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Local delivery and capacity building

How do we build partnerships, skills and capacity that can include everyone?

- What are the **key** opportunities for collaboration and partnerships to support nature delivery in urban areas? (Katie)
- How do we build the skills and capacity for nature delivery, especially for diverse and under-represented groups in urban areas? (Beth)
- How can delivery be improved by devolving powers or resources? (Lisa)



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Thank you

wmca.org.uk/nature

environment@wmca.org.uk



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