

## North Devon Marine Pioneer

# How do we include nature in local decision making?

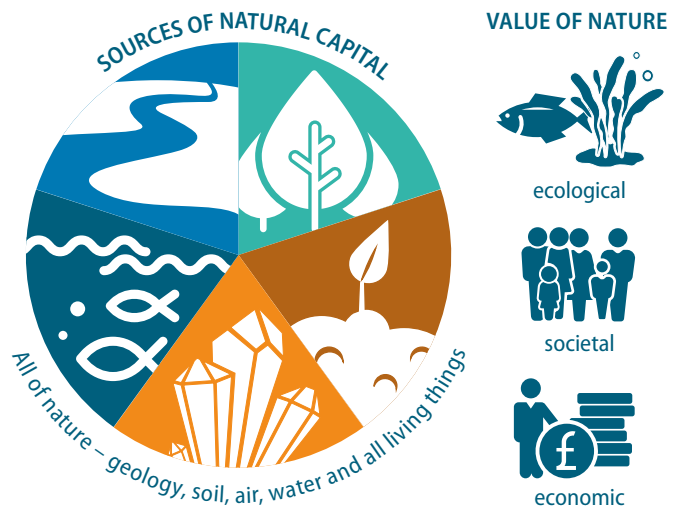
### We asked workshop participants to explore:

- how best to incorporate nature in local decision making
- new ways to support decision makers who manage North Devon’s marine environment
- how to do this – both for individual developments that require formal approaches (e.g. marine licensing, planning consents), and for broader strategic plans

### Key points from the discussion

- Rather than developing new tools, participants wanted improvements to current processes and methods, and better understanding of the natural capital approach.
- There is potential to build natural capital into the option appraisal stage of the existing sustainability appraisal process, which directly informs local plans.
- The North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011–2031 was identified as an existing strategic policy framework within which natural capital approaches could be adopted – as supported by the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Net Gain** for nature is an approach to development that leaves nature in a better condition than before.



### How we could promote a natural capital approach?

#### High-level document



- Stating the aspiration for policies requiring a net gain in natural capital and how this can be integrated into decision making.

#### Guidance



- For planning/licence applicants, elected council members and planning officers, targeting end-users – e.g. ‘what this means for you’; ‘how to use it’; ‘translating into process’.

#### Natural Capital Asset and Risk Register



- Identifying factors for assets such as thresholds, sensitivity to things which could effect nature’s ability to function,

causing irreversible change, and key types of environmental improvements; identifying what is at risk and producing a risk register.

### Mapping ecosystem services and natural capital



- ▶ Enabling decision makers to see where natural capital assets are, their condition, their growth or decline over time, and the benefits that are derived from them – though the scale of this task should not be underestimated.

### Cost-benefit analysis for natural capital

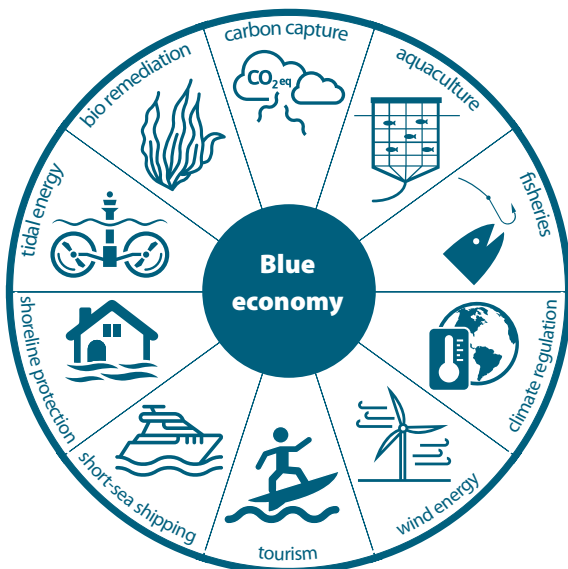


- ▶ Using ways other than monetary value to assess the scale of losses and benefits from a decision being made (trade-offs). This approach could be used in licensing and planning permission applications – but details of appropriate methods and their use need further consideration.

### Sustainability Appraisal



- ▶ Building natural capital into the scoping and option appraisal stage of the existing sustainability appraisal process, which directly informs local plans:
  - ▶ this approach should consider key **blue economy** sectors to assess how activities affect ecosystem services and natural capital



- ▶ growth is more than economic growth – it involves improving quality of life and ensuring the wellbeing of future generations
- ▶ the sustainability appraisal would consider cumulative impacts, thresholds and key triggers, and how to link outcomes to natural capital accounts and investment plans
- ▶ the approach should incorporate current best practice and tools (e.g. the National Ecosystem Approach Toolkit)
- ▶ Supporting guidance notes would cover e.g. how natural capital approaches interact with environmental legislation and concepts.

### Planning interaction map



- ▶ To help understand the policy landscape:

National	Regional/local
▶ 25 Year Environment Plan	▶ North Devon and Torridge Local Plan
▶ Marine Policy Statement	▶ Local Enterprise Partnership
▶ South West Marine Plan	▶ Shoreline Management Plan
▶ Fisheries Act	▶ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
▶ Clean Growth Plan	▶ Exmoor National Park
	▶ Marine Conservation Zones

### Participants

Twenty-two people including local and regional regulators and planners attended the workshop, from organisations including: local authorities, Marine Management Organisation, Natural England, Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, North Devon Biosphere Reserve

**Bioremediation** – using nature to clean up after people – uses microorganisms, plants, or microbial or plant enzymes to detoxify contaminants in the water and seabed sediments.

This workshop was convened to support the objectives of the North Devon Marine Pioneer and delivered as part of the NERC-funded South West Partnership for Environment and Economic Prosperity (SWEEP).

**For updates visit our website:** [northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/marinepioneer.html](http://northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/marinepioneer.html) and read the full report.

