

# Evaluation of the Upland Ecosystem Service Pilots: Annex 2. South West Uplands

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# Foreword

Natural England commission a range of reports from external contractors to provide evidence and advice to assist us in delivering our duties. The views in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of Natural England.

## Background

The Upland Ecosystem Service Pilots, located in Bassenthwaite Catchment in the Lake District, the South Pennines and the South West Uplands, were developed as demonstration projects to understand how the ecosystem approach could be applied in practice. Evaluation helps us to understand what's working and what needs improving in order to inform future policy and delivery. This report, evaluating the South West Uplands Pilot, accompanies a synthesis evaluation for all three pilots.

Lessons learnt from this evaluation are relevant to the development and implementation of new environmental and conservation policy and practice, including implementation of Natural England's Conservation Strategy and the government's 25 Year Environment Plan, especially the development of local natural capital plans. The findings are relevant because the pilots:

- Focussed on natural capital and the ecosystem services, exploring the benefits provided from a place.

- Provide an example of partnership projects developing a shared mapped evidence based and delivery plans at a landscape scale.
- Involved a wide range of stakeholders in their collaborative development, including farmers, land owners, water companies, environmental organisations, National Parks, private businesses and local people.

The pilots pioneered the application of the ecosystem approach in a place. They explored: understanding how the natural environment functions and underpins our well-being; involving people in decision making and valuing the benefits that we get from the natural environment.

Nationally the work has contributed to the further development of work on the ecosystem approach including, for example, through the development of the Ecosystem Approach Handbook, mapping ecosystem services and natural capital, further work on place-based payments for ecosystem services, informing the work of the Defra Pioneers.

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### Further information

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# Evaluation of Upland Ecosystem Service Pilot Projects

SOUTH WEST UPLANDS PILOT EVALUATION – FINAL REPORT

## Natural England

Evaluation of Upland Ecosystem Services Pilot Project, South West Uplands Pilot Evaluation, February 2018

A report by CAG Consultants

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# CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Key Findings</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Introduction to the Pilots</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Pilot selection criteria</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Introduction to the South West Uplands pilot project</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Pilot boundary .....	13
Governance.....	14
Summary of Pilot project activity .....	14
<b>Aims of the research</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>2. Methodology</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Evaluation questions</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>20</b>
A theory based approach.....	20
Qualitative research .....	20
Review of project documentation .....	21
Data analysis .....	21
<b>Research Ethics</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Challenges and limitations</b> .....	<b>21</b>
Time elapsed between completion of project and evaluation.....	21
Inconsistent approach to the presentation of project documentation .....	22
Limited size of qualitative sample .....	22
<b>3. Findings</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Spatial and temporal scales</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Research question: To what extent has the ecosystem approach and decision-making been applied at appropriate spatial scales? .....	23
Research question: To what extent did the pilot take into account the timescales needed for processes to implement the ecosystem approach? .....	24
<b>Partnership and participatory engagement</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Research question: To what extent did a participatory approach involve a range of stakeholders' perspectives? .....	25
Research question: To what extent did the pilot include evidence from a range of disciplines? .....	27
Research question: What aspects of partnership and governance enabled agreement on a shared plan and achievement of project outcomes? .....	28
<b>Economic considerations</b> .....	<b>30</b>

Research question: To what extent did the pilot consider the need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context? .....	30
Research question: To what extent did economic valuation inform decision-making? .....	32
<b>Outcomes.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Research question: What were the inputs to the Pilot in terms of staff time and funding, for Natural England and other partners?.....	33
Research question: To what extent has the participatory approach resulted in attitudinal and behavioural change?.....	34
Research question: To what extent did the delivery Plan influence the environmental outcomes and deliver multiple benefits?.....	35
<b>4. Discussion .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Spatial and temporal scales .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Partnership and participatory engagement .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Economic considerations .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Outcomes.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>5. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Did the pilot provide examples demonstrating how the ecosystem approach could work on the ground .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Was there evidence of the use of a consultative ecosystem approach to define land and water management based upon stakeholders’ perceptions of the best options.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Did the pilot demonstrate that investment in the natural environment can result in multiple benefits (carbon, water, food, biodiversity, recreational and landscape benefits).....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Was there evidence of partnership working to deliver a range of ecosystem services in a cost-effective way and link these services to the beneficiaries. ....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Theory of Change .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Topic guide for use with project staff and stakeholders .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Topic guide for use with national programme staff.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Matrix for documentation review .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Stakeholder participation in the Pilot steering group and workshops .....</b>	<b>55</b>

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Between the summer of 2009 and March 2011 Natural England ran three upland ecosystem pilots in order to demonstrate how the principles of the 'ecosystem approach' (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2018) could be applied in practical land management settings. The pilot areas were Bassenthwaite (in the Lake District National Park), the South Pennines and the South West Uplands.

The pilots were innovative in nature and were intended:

- To provide practical examples demonstrating how the ecosystem approach could be applied on the ground.
- To use a consultative ecosystem approach to define land and water management based upon stakeholders perceptions of the best options.
- To demonstrate that investment in the natural environment can result in multiple benefits (carbon, water, food, biodiversity, recreational and landscape benefits).
- To work in partnership to deliver a range of ecosystem services in a cost-effective way and link these services to the beneficiaries.

This report presents the findings from an evaluation of the South West Uplands pilot project. It includes an assessment of how successful the pilot was in delivering against its key aims, together with reflections on key learning points.

Research for the evaluation included a review of project documentation and a series of in-depth interviews with ten individuals involved in the pilot (at the local level) and four Natural England staff involved in the management of the overall upland ecosystem services pilot programme. Owing to the passage of time since the completion of the pilots (March 2011) most interviewees were unable to recall their experiences of the pilot in any detail and when questioned tended to respond in general terms. This limited the ability of the evaluation to explore issues of detail, but interviewees were able to offer high-level insights, which were subsequently cross referenced with documentary evidence to generate responses to the following evaluation research questions.

### Key Findings

The evaluation was guided by a series of high-level research questions. These serve as headings for reporting of the key findings.

#### ***Research question: To what extent has the ecosystem approach and decision-making been applied at appropriate spatial scales?***

The research generated limited insight into the question of whether or not the pilot operated at an appropriate spatial scale; the project did not develop to the point of developing area-based plans. One reason for this was that the pilot was hampered by the challenge of securing agreement from a partnership which was spread across multiple geographic areas



and administrative jurisdictions. There is some evidence to suggest that the project might have benefited from a more restricted geographic focus. This view is supported by the fact that two post-pilot initiatives – supported by or emerging from the pilot – which focused on small functional land units, were reportedly more successful in developing effective working partnerships.

***Research question: To what extent did the pilot take into account the timescales needed for processes to implement the ecosystem approach?***

The project did not run to schedule and ultimately failed to deliver the anticipated and planned outcomes. Some respondents felt that the pilot should have been run over a longer timeframe, but it is not clear that this alone would have led to better outcomes. Issues with project resourcing (project officer time) and difficulties securing partner buy-in, appear to have been more significant constraints than the project delivery timeframe.

***Research question: To what extent did a participatory approach involve a range of stakeholders' perspectives?***

The pilot was successful in securing initial engagement from a number of organisations representing a range of public and private interests. The range of interests represented by these organisations was, however, quite narrow in focus, more so than may have been expected from a project seeking to apply the ecosystem approach. Only a small number of organisations appear to have sustained their involvement with the project over time and their interests are reflected in the ultimate focus of the pilots. Several key partners were identified as having entered the pilot with strong views as to what the focus of project activity should be and the pilot appears to have struggled to reconcile their agendas, with one another and the aims and objectives of the pilot and this seems to have been one of the main reasons for the delays suffered by the pilot.

***Research question: To what extent did the pilot include evidence from a range of disciplines?***

The pilot drew on, or brought in, expertise from several disciplines, most notably economics, remote sensing, ecology, landscape/protected area management and stakeholder engagement. It is not however clear to what extent project activity was informed by this expertise. Arguably a project pursuing an ecosystem approach might have been expected to draw upon a wider range of expertise, than that which was reported, but the relatively narrow focus is consistent with the pilot's ultimate focus on farming and water quality.

***Research question: What aspects of partnership and governance enabled agreement on a shared plan and achievement of project outcomes?***

The pilot did not deliver a shared plan. As previously noted the partnership brought together for this project found it difficult to reach agreement and suffered from a lack of common purpose. The main reasons for this appear to include: partners, perhaps driven by external factors, being unwilling to compromise on their own agenda; a lack of understanding of the ecosystem approach and its benefits; perhaps coupled with an inability, on the part of Natural England, to convince partners of the merits of the project. There is also some

evidence that some partners may have perceived Natural England as ‘parachuting in’ and failing to involve partners sufficiently in the initial design of the pilot.

***Research question: To what extent did the pilot consider the need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context?***

The pilot clearly took account of the need to consider the business implications of adopting an ecosystem approach for agricultural holdings. There was however, a narrow focus on farm business units and, to a lesser extent, the economic concerns of water companies. This focus excluded much of the wider rural economy.

***Research question: To what extent did economic valuation inform decision-making?***

The valuation exercise was started, but was not completed. As with all pilot activity, valuation activity was delayed and may have been a factor in its non-completion. However, the primary reason would appear to be that the activity proved to be more demanding than anticipated (the valuation work was new to those involved at that time) and that the staff resource, at both the local and national level, proved to be insufficient.

***Research question: What were the inputs to the Pilot in terms of staff time and funding, for Natural England and other partners?***

Natural England was the primary sponsor of the pilot and committed a significant amount of staff time to the project. Other partners contributed staff time, for example via participation in the workshops, but it is unclear how much additional input they provided. Overall there was evidence from both the document review and the interviews that the pilot was under-resourced from the start and that this was another significant cause of the reported delays and non-completion of project activity.

***Research question: To what extent has the participatory approach resulted in attitudinal and behavioural change?***

The pilot was reported (by some participants in the qualitative research) as having had some effects on the thinking and practice of some participants. It was also suggested that the pilot had helped shift the regional conversation in relation to the ecosystem approach. Some interviewees noted that the pilots had helped focus attention on the ecosystem approach at a time when it was not widely understood. Whilst this meant that initial conversations around the pilot were challenging, they helped to catalyse enhanced interest in the concept. It was also reported that the pilot supported and informed the evolution of two subsequent local pilots, focused on trialling new approaches to paying farmers for producing ecosystem services.

## **Conclusions**

***Did the pilot provide examples demonstrating how the ecosystem approach could work on the ground***

The pilot was beset by delays and significant practical activity only appears to have been initiated following a meeting in June 2010; by which point the pilot was almost halfway through its planned lifespan. Much of the activity that was initiated was not completed (the primary reason appearing to be resource constraints) and as a consequence the pilot did

not, during its lifetime provide an effective demonstration site (although some useful lessons have been learned). Pilot activity informed and supported the development of two smaller scale (in geographic terms) sub-pilots and whilst both of these had a relatively narrow focus, both were reported as offering useful lessons, in particular relating to farmer involvement in ecosystem service delivery.

***Was there evidence of the use of a consultative ecosystem approach to define land and water management based upon stakeholders' perceptions of the best options.***

Whilst the pilot was able to secure engagement with a number of stakeholder organisations, it is clear that participants found it difficult to develop a functional partnership, and this was a major source of delay in the project. The reported success of the 2 post pilot initiatives (referenced above) to secure effective partnership working perhaps suggests that the pilot may have benefited from a focus on a smaller area, or areas, from the start (this did eventually happen). Conceivably a more refined focus (geographic and in terms of services to be addressed) may also have helped secure buy-in and better enabled partners to move more swiftly from a focus on abstract conceptual issues onto the practical realities of applying an ecosystem approach on the ground.

***Did the pilot demonstrate that investment in the natural environment can result in multiple benefits (carbon, water, food, biodiversity, recreational and landscape benefits).***

Despite significant interest in the valuation element of the pilot (amongst pilot partners) the valuation work, along with all other pilot activity, was subject to significant delay and did not commence until after June 2010. Work on valuation was not completed, the main reason for this was reported as being a lack of staff resource within Natural England at both the local and national level. It was reported that the valuation work proved to be more challenging than expected and that, at the national level, a decision was made to concentrate efforts (on valuation) on the South Pennines pilot.

***Was there evidence of partnership working to deliver a range of ecosystem services in a cost-effective way and link these services to the beneficiaries.***

As noted above the pilot did not progress to the stage of securing changes in land management designed to enhance the delivery of ecosystem services. However, the two sub-pilots (referred to above) were both reported as providing useful lessons in partnership working. In particular both sub-projects were identified as demonstrating good practice in relation to the engagement of farmers in bottom up discussions and project development.

# 1. Introduction

## Introduction to the Pilots

1.1 Between the summer of 2009 and March 2011 Natural England ran three upland ecosystem pilots in order to demonstrate how the principles of the 'ecosystem approach' could be applied in practical land management settings. The pilot areas were Bassenthwaite (in the Lake District National Park), the South Pennines and the South West Uplands. This report is an evaluation of the South West Uplands pilot project.

1.2 The pilots were established with the initial aim of improving Natural England's understanding of the practicalities of adopting the ecosystem approach and ultimately to encourage a more widespread adoption of the ecosystem approach. The ecosystem approach is defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity as being:

*"a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way."*

1.3 Examples of areas of land or water being managed in line with the ecosystem approach were rare at the time and therefore in many regards the pilots approach was innovative and untested.

Specifically the pilots were intended:

- To provide practical examples demonstrating how the ecosystem approach could be applied on the ground.
- To use a consultative ecosystem approach to define land and water management based upon stakeholders perceptions of the best options.
- To demonstrate that investment in the natural environment can result in multiple benefits (carbon, water, food, biodiversity, recreational and landscape benefits).
- To work in partnership to deliver a range of ecosystem services in a cost effective way and link these services to the beneficiaries.

1.4 The three pilots were managed as a single programme by a central Natural England team consisting of two full time staff in the form of a National Programme Manager and a National Project Manager.

## Pilot selection

1.5 Natural England elected to establish the pilots in upland landscapes as, whilst recognising that all types of landscape would be expected to gain from the application of an ecosystem approach certain characteristics of upland environments made them particularly suitable as pilot sites.

*" Upland environments provide a suite of easily recognised and valuable ecosystem*

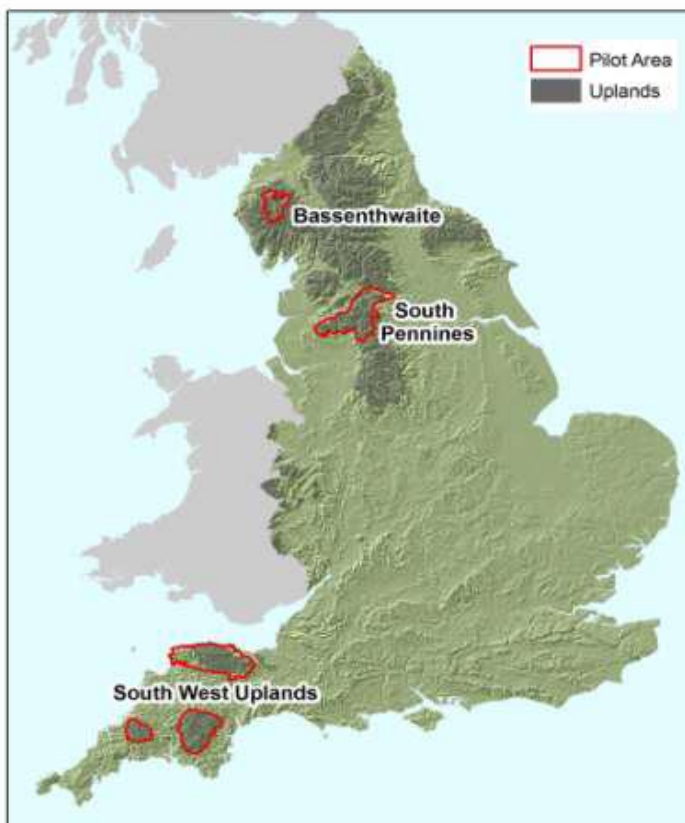
*services (for example, carbon storage, water supply, timber, food and recreation.” (Waters and others, 2012)*

- 1.6 Natural England Regional Directors, with upland sites, were asked (by the pilot programme manager) to identify and volunteer potential pilots. In order to be eligible for consideration regional offices were expected to provide staff resource (in the form of a full time project officer) and to be able to identify an existing local partnership through which the pilot would be able to establish connections with local partners and stakeholders. The final selection of pilots was made by the national programme manager. For the South West pilot the local partnership was the South West Uplands Federation.

## Introduction to the South West Uplands pilot project

### Pilot boundary

- 1.7 The south-west pilot boundary is shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1** Showing location of South West (and other) Uplands Ecosystem Pilot (Waters and others 2012, p.4)

The south-west pilot area was based on National Character Areas (NCA) 145,150 and 153. NCA's divide England into 159 areas each of which is defined by a particular combination of landscape, biodiversity, geo-diversity and economic and cultural characteristics.

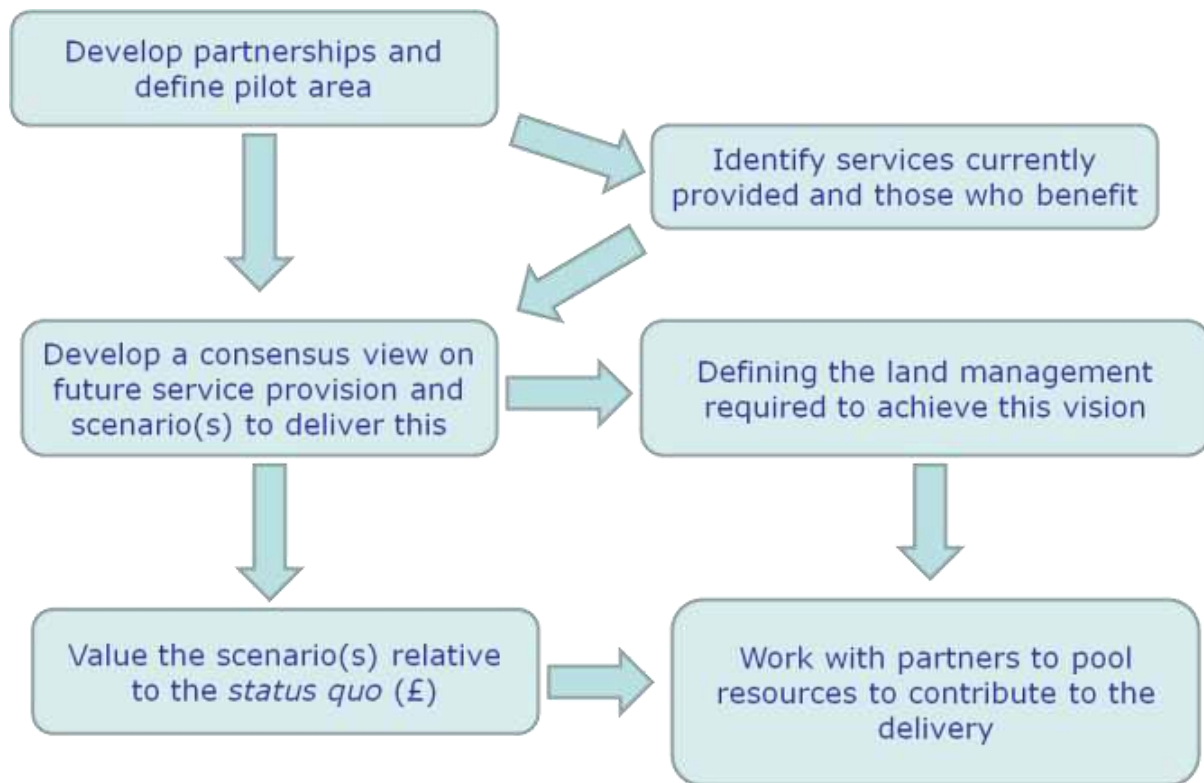
- 1.8 The three NCAs used to define the south west pilot overlapped (although not exactly) with the boundaries of the Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, and the Bodmin Moor Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and it was expected that representatives from each of these bodies would be involved in the pilot. In practice it proved impractical to involve the Bodmin AONB in any practical activity although stakeholders from that area were invited to participate as 'learning partners' or observers.

### Governance

- 1.9 Oversight of the pilots was provided by the national programme management team whilst local Natural England staff provided day-day project management. However, in line with the principles of the ecosystem approach, each pilot was expected to be led by local stakeholders – Natural England hoped that their input would catalyse local interest and activity in relation to the ecosystem approach. In practice a local project officer was not assigned to the pilot until April 2010 and it is not clear that an effective steering group was in place until June 2010.

### Summary of Pilot project activity

- 1.10 The pilots were initially intended to involve 2 phases of activity, the first phase was expected to be officer led (Natural England staff) and to run from mid 2009 until the end of March 2011, and it is this period that is the focus of this report.
- 1.11 Natural England anticipated that the upland pilots would evolve in line with local circumstances and priorities, but suggested that they would follow a similar development path – as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2** Shows the project steps that each pilot was expected to follow (Waters and others, 2012, p.5)

1.12 The following summarises the main activities and outputs known to be associated with the pilots, it is based primarily on project documentation provided to the evaluation team by Natural England.

**Develop partnerships**

1.13 In accordance with the principles of the ecosystem approach the south-west pilot looked to engage local partners and stakeholders in the development of the pilot from the start. This was enabled by the existing networks of contacts held by the pilot project officer and other regional Natural England staff, and by the pre-existing local strategic partnerships / networks, most notably those existing within the Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park's.

1.14 Early engagement work (summer 2009), by Natural England, established that there was significant regional interest in the pilots and partners were quick to put forward suggestions for potential project activity and to identify other proposed initiatives that might be linked to the pilots. An internal (NE) project update (Clarke, 2009 3) reported that:

*"Enthusiasm from partners is very high; at least four project officer posts are appearing as the result of other initiatives in the region"*

### ***Project development and the role of the Participatory Workshops***

1.15 A key mechanism for engaging partners and stakeholders were 3 participatory workshops held between November 2009 and June 2010. In between workshops and project meetings NE pilot staff, and contractors acting on their behalf, produced a number of reports. A summary (in chronological order) of all of the main activities and outputs known to have been produced by the pilots follows.

#### **Workshop 1: Scoping workshop (held on the 2/11/09)**

1.16 This workshop was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009. It was attended by 12 people representing 8 different organisations. According to a report of the meeting (Trail-Thomson and Bloomfield 2009) it was organised and facilitated by independent consultants (commissioned by Natural England)<sup>1</sup>. The consultants presented a project proposal and then facilitated discussion with a view to developing the proposal and agreeing a way forward.

1.17 Workshop discussions and agreed actions were captured in the aforementioned workshop report which was produced by the consultants shortly after the workshop. Subsequently the workshop report was used to inform the development of a project brief (Natural England, 2009-1). A summary of the key decisions recorded in these documents follows:

- A steering group partnership be established to manage the pilot with this group including representation from: Natural England (NE), South West Water (SWW), Exmoor National Park Authority (NPA), Dartmoor NPA, Environment Agency (EA), English Heritage (EH), Defra, Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT), Bodmin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Defra.
- It was expected that pilot activity would complement and build upon existing initiatives and existing partnerships involving: Exmoor NPA and SWW; Dartmoor NPA and land managers; and SWW and the WRT.
- NE staff would support and track initiatives, but 'keep removed from the day to day delivery of NPA work'.
- A refinement (although not final) definition of the pilot project areas.
  - Dartmoor NP (area to be confirmed)
  - Exmoor NP, Upper Exe Catchment

1.18 It was determined that Bodmin Moor did not provide a suitable host for pilot activity and would not therefore form part of the pilot project area, but that representatives from that area would continue to have an observer role. In addition it was agreed:

- That the pilot would focus on the delivery of 8 forms of ecosystem service.
- To establish a South West Uplands Learning Group.
- To establish an independent expert advisory group (to advise all of the pilots).

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<sup>1</sup> A pilot project officer had not yet been appointed.



## **Workshop 2: Ecosystem Services - prioritisation and identification of beneficiaries 10/2/10**

- 1.19 A draft agenda (Natural England (2010d) for this meeting indicates that the meeting included a series of small group discussion sessions focused on:
- Identifying the types of ecosystem services generated by the south-west uplands and which of these it might be desirable to produce more of.
  - A discussion of how existing priority ecosystem service delivery might be enhanced.
  - A discussion about how the pilot might be delivered.

The agenda suggests that the meeting was attended by 20 people representing 13 organisations<sup>2</sup>.

- 1.20 Natural England produced a write up of the workshop. This provides a description of the discussions, but does not contain any information concerning key decisions or next steps. A subsequent internal project update report indicates that, following the meeting, Natural England staff (from the national programme) met with SW Water to discuss their (SW Water) land management and water quality work.

## **Workshop 3: Options / Valuation workshop. 18/6/10**

- 1.21 This workshop featured an introduction of the valuation of ecosystem services followed by small group discussion<sup>3</sup> focused on:
- Identification of preferred ecosystem services.
  - Identification of the land management practices that would deliver the identified services.
  - Identifying options and target areas for activity.
  - Prioritisation of preferred options.
  - Discussion of opportunities and constraints.

According to the workshop report the meeting agreed that that the pilot would focus on 2 sub-projects.

- 1) A refresh of the Dartmoor Vision.
- 2) The Wimbleball reservoir catchment – Upper Exe

- 1.22 The workshop report also reported that partners agreed to a new delivery schedule, including baselining and valuation activity (due to be completed by July and end of October respectively).

## **Outputs following the workshop**

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<sup>2</sup> The note from this meeting did not provide a list of attendees so we have assumed that those identified on the agenda were in attendance.

<sup>3</sup> The meeting report did not include a list of attendees.

- 1.23 Several documents were produced in the aftermath of the workshop, aside from the report on the workshop these include:
- South West Ecosystem Pilot Plan (Natural England (2010c))
- This document explains that it is intended that the pilot features two strands of work:
- 1) Work on valuation, option planning and appraisal and project monitoring (to be led by NE)
  - 2) An agri-environment delivery pilot featuring project activity in the two national parks including:
    - A refresh of the Dartmoor Vision (to be led by DNPA)
    - Test a new integrated agri-environment delivery mechanism (this was developed via the Dartmoor Farming Futures project, and led by the Dartmoor NPA, Dartmoor Commoners Council (DCC) and NE)
    - An exploration of different funding models for delivery of ecosystem services associated with farming (led by Dartmoor NPA)
    - An unspecified Exmoor NPA pilot project
    -
- A draft ecosystem service baseline report for Dartmoor (appears to be based on Natural Character Area)
  - A draft ecosystem service baseline report for Exmoor (appears to be based on Natural Character Area)
  - A report on the findings of a remote sensing exercise which considered how remote sensing might be used in mapping ecosystem services.

#### **Project Planning Meeting (25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011)**

- 1.24 A report from a project-planning meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011 (Natural England, 2011) reports on on-going work on the Dartmoor Vision and activity related to the Exmoor NPA, Wimbleball and Barle, sub-project, but no other details on these projects were available from the documentation.

#### **Final Project Outputs** (documents produced before the end of March 2011)

- 1.25 The final documented outputs from the pilot include:
- A draft valuation report for the Dartmoor pilot area.
  - A set of valuation tables for the Exe and Barle catchment.
  - A set of valuation tables for the Wimbleball and Pulham pilot area.
  - A draft report<sup>4</sup> 'An ecosystem services pilot in the South West – building a framework for delivery' (Dwyer, J. & Short, C., 2011). This report describes a study, undertaken by the University of Gloucestershire's Countryside and Community Research Institute, to investigate proposals for a new ecosystem services delivery system in the Wimbleball and Barle catchments.

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<sup>4</sup> A final version of the report was produced in July 2011.

## Aims of the research

1.26 The overarching aim of the evaluation was to assess how effective the South West Uplands pilot was in applying the ecosystem approach. Natural England required that this be done through an assessment of:

- What happened/what was done differently in the Pilot?
- What difference did it make?
- What worked, to what extent and for whom?
- Why and under what conditions?
- What didn't work?
- Were there unintended consequences?

## 2. Methodology

### Evaluation questions

2.1 Natural England set the following questions for the evaluation:

- 1) To what extent has the ecosystem approach and decision-making been applied at appropriate spatial scales?
- 2) To what extent did the pilot take into account the timescales needed for processes to implement the ecosystem approach?
- 3) To what extent did the participatory process influence the development of the Integrated Delivery Plan and achievement of outcomes?
- 4) To what extent did the pilot include evidence from a range of disciplines?
- 5) What aspects of partnership and governance enabled agreement on a shared plan and achievement of project outcomes?
- 6) To what extent did the pilot consider the need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context?
- 7) To what extent did economic valuation inform the decision making?
- 8) What were the inputs to the Pilot in terms of staff time and funding, for Natural England (NE) and other partners
- 9) To what extent did the participatory process result in attitudinal & behavioural change?
- 10) To what extent did the Delivery Plan influence the environmental outcomes?

These questions have been used to provide the headings for the findings section of the report (Section 3).

### Methodology

#### A theory based approach

2.2 The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach. Such approaches involve seeking to understand and explore the assumptions which underlie the perceived links, between the inputs to a project, and the outputs and outcomes from the project. It involved the development of a theory of change for the pilots. The theory of change (Appendix A) sought to provide a comprehensive description of how the pilots were intended to deliver their intended outcomes. This theory was then utilised to inform the design of the research tools.

#### Qualitative research

2.3 Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 key stakeholders. This included: relevant Natural England staff, partners in the pilots and other stakeholders/informed observers identified to the research team by Natural England. The interviews were guided by topic guides designed to explore key research questions, sub-questions and assumptions in the theory of change.

2.4 In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 3 Natural England staff involved in the management and operation of the national programme. A separate topic guide was utilised for these interviews, which focused particularly on comparing and contrasting the three pilots.

### Review of project documentation

2.5 Project documentation relating to each of the pilots was provided by Natural England. This included published documents, as well as internal emails and other documents such as progress reports. To review these sources, the research questions for each pilot were broken down into a series of sub-questions (informed by the theory of change), and these then formed the basis of a matrix (see Appendix 1) for the purposes of systematically reviewing the documentation and capturing the findings.

### Data analysis

2.6 The qualitative data generated by the interviews and documentation reviews was coded against the research questions and sub-questions. Subsequently the qualitative and documentary evidence was triangulated, with a view to identifying key themes and insights.

### Research Ethics

2.7 All research was conducted in accordance with the principles of Government Social Research (GSRU, undated), in summary these require that all research undertaken for UK Government organisations should ensure:

- Sound application and conduct of social and market research methods, and appropriate dissemination and utilisation of findings.
- Participation based on valid consent.
- Enabling participation.
- Avoidance of personal harm.
- Non-disclosure of identity and personal harm.

### Challenges and limitations

#### Time elapsed between completion of project and evaluation

2.8 This evaluation has been conducted more than 6 years after the completion of pilot activity. This posed particular challenges for the qualitative research with some potential respondents being unavailable for interview and many of those that were available finding it difficult to recall the pilots in any detail, several noted that there had been a number of other initiatives around at that time (and since) and that this meant they were not always sure that, when recalling their experience of the partnership, they were not confusing it with another initiative. The overall impact of this was that responses to interview questions tended to focus on respondents' general impressions and experiences of the pilots, and to be light on details, for example recollections of decision making processes.

- 2.9 The passage of time has also made it difficult to consider the counter-factual, i.e. what might have happened in the absence of the pilot, in a meaningful way. As noted above, interview respondents reported the existence of multiple other initiatives and that some of these were informed by or based, at least to some extent, on the ecosystem approach. It was also reported that the ecosystem approach has been popularised via technical articles and other media in the years since the completion of the pilot. The net result of this is that respondents were unable to be clear on the extent to which some of the reported project outcomes could be attributed to the pilot.

### **Inconsistent approach to the presentation of project documentation**

- 2.10 An extensive range of documentation was made available for review. This provided considerable useful detail although the records were inconsistent in their approach and often failed to record key details, for example whilst decisions were recorded in workshop reports, they did not record why a decision had been made or how. Other inconsistencies included: the name of the author was not included on all documents, records of attendees were not recorded for all meetings and some dates were missing. There was also a general lack of monitoring data.
- 2.11 Another key challenge was that the documentation did not provide a complete project narrative. For example, the outcomes of actions agreed in a workshop or meeting were difficult to track and in some cases references to an agreed activity subsequently disappear from the project record.
- 2.12 The absence of a clear project narrative and record of activity means that it has not always been possible to provide a clear picture (in the evaluation) of what did and did not happen and why.

### **Limited size of qualitative sample**

- 2.13 As noted above (para 2.8) a number of potential interview respondents were unavailable for interview, in some cases individuals had retired or moved into other organisations (in the period since the completion of the project). In other cases potential respondents indicated that they did not wish to participate in the interview, suggesting that too much time had elapsed. This meant that fewer respondents were interviewed than originally planned (10 instead of 14), reducing the range of views available to the researchers. The limited number of respondents also poses challenges for reporting, as it is more difficult to preserve the anonymity of individual respondents. In mitigation, and in order to conform with Government social research principles, some comments and potential quotes, likely to enable identification of individuals, have not been included in this report. Whilst this may have reduced the ability of the research team to provide respondents insight on some topics it has not prevented reporting of key findings or conclusions.

## 3. Findings

### Spatial and temporal scales

#### Research question: To what extent has the ecosystem approach and decision-making been applied at appropriate spatial scales?

- 3.1 It was initially intended that the south west pilot area would be based on National Character Areas (NCAs) 145,150 and 153. These NCAs covered much of the area encompassed by the Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks and the Bodmin Moor Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Following the first project development workshop (November, 2009) it was agreed that pilot activity would be confined to the 2 national parks. It is understood from Trail-Thomson, J and Bloomfield, D. 2009 that this was owing to Bodmin offering fewer opportunities for piloting the ecosystem approach – one respondent noted that they understood that Natural England wished to see project activity focused on areas closer to main population centres - and also a lack of resource within the AONB and other local partners.
- 3.2 Within the 2 national parks it was intended that project activity include both area wide mapping and valuation activity and a more practical element focused on sub-pilot areas within the boundaries of the parks. The report from Workshop 1 recommended the pilot include:
- “ A [sub] project based in Exmoor examining all services in the upper Exe catchment and all services in a selected area of Dartmoor.”* (Trail-Thomson, J and Bloomfield, D. 2009)
- 3.3 At some point (the records are unclear as to when project sites were finalised) it was agreed that the Exmoor sub-pilot area would be the Barle and Wimbleball catchments.
- 3.4 The pilot documentation does not identify a specific sub-pilot site for Dartmoor, although it is reported (Natural England, 2010c) that activity would focus on common land<sup>5</sup>. To complement the proposed sub-pilot activity Natural England commissioned the development of a refreshed ‘Dartmoor Vision’. Internal update reports (Clark, 2011) describe this as being a high level plan, incorporating ecosystem service principles, for the national park.
- 3.5 Interviewees had little to say on the subject of spatial scales. Those who did provide responses on this matter differed in their views. One respondent noted that

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<sup>5</sup> It is understood that pilot activity helped to develop the Dartmoor Farming Futures project. According to Manning, J. 2017 this ongoing project is focused on two areas of common land within the Dartmoor National Park: Haytor and Bagtor Commons and the Forest of Dartmoor.

perhaps the size and diverse nature of the main pilot area had made it difficult to bring people together. This respondent contrasted the pilot with the Wimbleball Catchment project (a follow up to the pilot) where it was felt it had been much easier to secure partner buy in – a view supported by a report by the University of Gloucestershire (Dwyer, D. & Short, C. 2011) which states that:

*“ The study has confirmed an interest and a willingness among the farmers who manage land in the Barle and Wimbleball catchments, to engage with a new approach to deliver ecosystem services, working in a formal partnership with key agencies and private companies including South West Water, Exmoor NPA and Natural England.”*

- 3.6 The same respondent suggested that securing agreement, across multiple geographic areas, may have been hampered because of a lack of understanding of the ecosystem approach.

*"it was at a time when ecosystem services was quite new, so partners did not quite understand what was being asked of them"*

- 3.7 Another practical factor, reported by several other respondents, was that it had proven difficult to agree the choice of sub-pilot area (and project focus) owing to disagreements amongst partners concerning the focus of pilot activity.

*‘everyone approached it with a what’s in it for us perspective.’*

- 3.8 This view was clearly echoed in internal project documentation and evidenced by the apparent failure of the pilot to agree a sub-pilot site for Dartmoor.

- 3.9 Other responses (not verbatim) are shown below:

- One respondent noted that they felt that the scale of the pilot was too ambitious. They would have preferred to see a focus on smaller pilot areas.
- One respondent noted that they had never been clear as to the geographic remit of the pilot or how it had been determined.
- One respondent noted that they felt that the approach was broadly correct.
- One respondent noted that after the pilot they had tried to make use of baseline report for Exmoor but did not find it helpful as their need was for data relating to the NP itself.

### **Research question: To what extent did the pilot take into account the timescales needed for processes to implement the ecosystem approach?**

- 3.10 Natural England anticipated that one of the main outputs from the pilot would be an integrated delivery plan which would have been expected to include the scheduling of future work. In practice a plan was not developed and therefore most findings - with regard to timescales - relate to the development and delivery of the pilot itself.



3.11 The review of internal communications reveals that there was significant slippage in the project delivery plan. For example an internal update report (Clarke, 2009 7) reports that:

*“ The SW and South Pennines [pilots] have failed to deliver any significant outputs or progress to date”*

3.12 It is clear from subsequent reports that efforts were made to get the project back on schedule, for example a revised project plan was produced following a workshop (Workshop 3) in June 2010, but the project continued to suffer from delays and this impacted on final outputs and outcomes. In addition to not producing an integrated delivery plan the pilot also failed to complete the valuation and baselining exercises<sup>6</sup>.

3.13 A number of interview respondents noted that they felt that the timespan of the pilot had been too short. One suggested that this may have made it difficult to secure traction with local partners.

*“ Pilot was ambitious - basically ridiculously ambitious though environmental problems are often long term, multi-faceted, and intractable so you need a long term, well resourced approach. It is very difficult to be effective with so few resources and so little time.”*

## Partnership and participatory engagement

### Research question: To what extent did a participatory approach involve a range of stakeholders' perspectives?

3.14 In total 21 organisations had contact with the pilot, whilst 9 farmers were contacted as part of the Barle and Wimbleball sub-pilot. Excluding Natural England the list includes:

- 4 representatives of designated protected area (Dartmoor NPA, Exmoor NPA, Bodmin Moor AONB, South West Protected Landscapes)
- 1 Water Company (South West Water)
- 1 regulatory body (Environment Agency)
- 2 national landowner / manager bodies (NFU, CLA)
- 1 University (Exeter)
- 1 central Government representative (Government Office South West)
- 7 Bodies representing local landowner / manager interests (Bodmin Moor Commons Association, Bodmin Graziers, Bodmin Livestock Project, Dartmoor Commoners Association, Exmoor Society, South West Upland Federation)
- 2 charities (RSPB and WRT)
- 1 major landowner (Duchy of Cornwall)

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<sup>6</sup> The documents provided for review contain several draft versions – varying in completeness – of valuation and baselining reports, but no final versions of these documents.

- 3.15 A full record of participants in the pilot project is provided in appendix A. This list includes a list of organisations that were contacted by NE before the commencement of formal pilot activity (Workshop 1) and stakeholders contacted during the course of the research for the Barle and Wimbleball sub-pilot (Dwyer, J. & Short, C., 2011).
- 3.16 A report from Workshop 1 (Trail-Thomson, J and Bloomfield, D. 2009) indicates an interest in including organisations to represent health, archaeology and recreational services, but there is no record of such organisations having any direct involvement in the project.
- 3.17 Based on their recorded participation in pilot activity the organisations most closely involved in the pilot include:
- Natural England
  - Dartmoor NPA
  - Exmoor NPA
  - NFU
  - South West Uplands Federation
  - South West Water
- 3.18 With the exception of the NFU, these are the bodies that are reported, in project documentation and the qualitative interviews, as being the principal stakeholders in the pilot. Of these, the two national park authorities, and Dartmoor NPA in particular, were identified as being the two most influential partners.
- 3.19 The review of internal NE documents suggests that NE were aware at the start of the project that some partners had strong views regarding the scope and geographic focus of the pilot. For example an update report (dated 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2009) noted that one partner was hugely enthusiastic and keen to link the pilot to some of their existing projects, but also recorded that there was a potential risk of other partners becoming excluded.
- 3.20 A later update report (Jan 2010) suggests that there was a perception of competition between the pilot and other initiatives – for example a proposal for a Dartmoor Farming Futures project that was submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment in 2009.
- 3.21 Several interview respondents recalled there being some competition between pilot partners and disagreements on location and project focus.
- **Experience of the participatory workshops**
- 3.22 One interview respondent, who attended all 3 workshops – the main mechanism for securing participatory engagement – reported that whilst they felt attendance had

been good, they had not felt strategic and the sessions often involved different people.

*“ the workshops felt like talking shops, no clarity of purpose and because different people attended each time to a certain extent it felt like we were going backwards.”*

Another respondent observed that they felt that the pilot was not participatory in nature. They reported turning up to workshops to be presented with materials for discussion, when they felt they should be being developed via group discussion.

### Research question: To what extent did the pilot include evidence from a range of disciplines?

- 3.23 The write up of Workshop 1 (Trail-Thomson, J and Bloomfield, D. 2009) held in October 2009 indicates that this event took into account:
- National and international thinking on the ecosystem approach.
  - Natural England’s policy documents relating to landscapes and in particular protected landscapes.
  - UNEP’s 2009 report on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity.
  - Work by the EUROPARC Federation on communicating Values and Benefits of Protected Areas.
- 3.24 The workshop report (Thomson,T and Bloomfield, D. 2009) notes that moving forwards the project should take into account some work on pricing the benefits of clean water (to be provided by SWW). A meeting between Natural England and SWW on this subject is reported (Clarke, 2015 7) to have taken place (after Workshop 1), but the date of the meeting was not provided.
- 3.25 The report by Thomson,T and Bloomfield, D. (2009) also refers to the importance of involving economists in order to assist in decision making regarding the prioritisation of different types of ecosystem service. Valuation work was undertaken towards the end of the pilot, this generated several incomplete draft reports and a set of valuation tables for the Exe and Barle and Wimbleball and Pulham catchments.
- 3.26 An update report dated 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2010 (Clarke, 2010 5) reports a meeting of expert (in the ecosystem approach) practitioners, including several academics. No additional information was made available to the evaluation team and therefore the disciplines represented at this meeting, and their role in informing work undertaken by the pilot, is unknown
- 3.27 A geomatics report (Crispin, H. and Petchey, S., 2010), was produced for the pilot in November 2010. This looked to examine whether remote sensing tools might be usefully applied in the mapping of ecosystem services within Dartmoor National Park.

A Natural England report dated 20<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>/2009 (Natural England, 2009-1) makes reference to the need for local engagement and communication noting that:

*“ local engagement, and communication, together form a strand of work as important as valuation of the services themselves.”*

The University of Gloucestershire undertook farmer engagement activity as part of a scoping exercise for the Wimbleball and Barle sub-project (Dwyer. J. and Short, C, 2011) and used this to inform their recommendations for a proposed future ecosystems services project<sup>7</sup>.

### **Research question: What aspects of partnership and governance enabled agreement on a shared plan and achievement of project outcomes?**

- 3.28 The pilot did not produce a shared plan. Neither the document review or the interviews provided a direct explanation for this, but both lines of enquiry indicate that partnership working and governance were challenging for this project. Findings relating to this matter follow.
- 3.29 The risk of local partners being unable to agree on the focus of the pilot was identified by Natural England before formal project activity commenced (Clarke, 2009 1), but the risk was deemed ‘manageable’. A later document (Clarke, 2009 2) suggests that the reason for concern was a desire that the pilot be solely focused on a given area and existing initiatives in that location.
- 3.30 In the report of the first project workshop, Workshop 1, Thomson,T and Bloomfield, D. (2009) recommend that the pilot should move forward by “building upon initiatives already started, rather than starting from scratch.” The same report also recommends that the pilot be managed by a partnership composed of representatives from: Natural England (lead), SWW, Dartmoor NPA, Exmoor NPA, Defra, Bodmin AONB, WRT, English Heritage. It is presumed that both recommendations were generated by workshop participants.
- 3.31 A later report (Natural England, 2009) indicates that a pilot steering group was expected to be in place by January 2010, and also describe the intention that this would be complemented by an expert Regional Reporting Panel. No details were supplied as to potential members of either of these groups.
- 3.32 The report produced following Workshop 2 (Natural England, 2010a) indicates that the governance of the pilot was still a matter of debate in February of the following year.

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<sup>7</sup> The future project referred to is understood to have developed as an independent project after the end of the south-west ecosystem pilot.

*“ As well as the existing steps [project planning] – need an additional one on governance (how to make it all happen).”*

- 3.33 And it is not until April 2010 that it is reported that the agreement of key strategic partners has been secured. However a later internal progress summary report (Clarke, 2010) notes that:

*“ there is still no agreed pilot area within the more general NCA boundaries; no regional project plan; and no clear vision for what the pilot will deliver.”*

- 3.34 Subsequently a report produced following Workshop 3 (Natural England, 2010b) reports agreement on two pilot sub- projects and indicates that a detailed pilot delivery plan would be produced by the end of June 2010. This plan (Natural England, 2010d) reports the establishment of a steering group consisting of representatives from Natural England; Dartmoor National Park Authority; Exmoor National Park Authority; Dartmoor Commoners’ Council (DaCC); RSPB; National Farmers Union; Environment Agency; South West Upland Federation; Exeter University.
- 3.35 Findings from the qualitative work largely echoed those of the document review, but offered additional insight into the reasons why the partnership working and governance arrangements for this project proved to be so challenging.
- 3.36 A number of respondents noted that it was clear from their earliest involvement with the pilot that there were some fundamental disagreements as to what its priorities should be.
- 3.37 Observations made regarding the nature of the partnership and its governance suggested that partners were largely pre-occupied in pursuing their own agenda and that the partnership lacked cohesion:
- “ It is a stretch to suggest that there was a functional relationship.”*
- “ Meetings were not particularly effective or productive. Partners were not actively engaged – they were extremely sceptical and in some cases hostile.”*
- “ Loose structure to the partnership and people were pulling in different directions.”*
- “ it would just have been good had it been managed as an overall project.”*
- 3.38 One reason, cited by several respondents, for the difficulties the pilot experienced in securing consensus was that stakeholders did not understand the ecosystem approach and how it might benefit them.

*“ Basically partners had own agenda's and didn't really get it and NE did not provide enough resource to convince the key partners that it was worth their while.”*

3.39 One issue reportedly of particular interest was valuation, it was suggested that one reason for this interest was that the many bodies were under considerable financial pressure at that time and saw valuation work as a means of enabling them to demonstrate the value of their activity to Government. This reportedly influenced these bodies approach to the pilot.

3.40 Some partners were described as being difficult to engage owing to a lack of convergence between their agenda and that of Natural England (in relation to the pilot). A contrasting view, expressed by one respondent was that.

*“ it felt like Natural England were trying to parachute something in to a well established partnership”*

3.41 Some respondents suggested that at the time of the pilots Natural England were still learning how to communicate the ecosystem approach themselves and that this meant that partners were uncertain as to what the potential benefits of participating in the pilots might be. Others offered contrasting perspectives on Natural England's approach.

3.42 Some respondents suggested that rather than come in with a pre-prepared project proposal Natural England should have come in with a blank piece of paper which, it was suggested, would have been more effective in securing buy-in. Although one respondent noted that this was not easy for Government agencies to do.

*“this is a difficult and scary place to start from if you are a Government agency charged with delivery.”*

Whilst another felt that Natural England should have played a more active leadership role.

## **Economic considerations**

### **Research question: To what extent did the pilot consider the need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context?**

3.43 In the report from Workshop 1 (Trail-Thomson, J and Bloomfield, D. 2009, p.1) it was reported that partners' thinking was informed by the premise that protected areas and those who manage them:

*“ currently deliver vital services to the public; that these services are not widely acknowledged; that they are in turn based on values commonly held by people; that each service should be properly valued economically; that new payment delivery mechanisms, many of which will be based on payments of one kind or another, will need to be developed in order to realise these values and raise them in the public’s consciousness”*

- 3.44 The concept of using insight, generated through the pilot, to inform the development of new payment mechanisms is expanded in a report from Workshop 2 (Natural England, 2009 -2, p.1) which refers to the need to consider ecosystem service delivery at the level of individual farm holdings.

*"As well as valuing whole future landscapes – we need to focus on what an ecosystem approach could mean on a single farm holding. This could help give confidence to farmers that it would provide long term security for their businesses."*

- 3.45 The report from Workshop 2 makes it clear that one of the main subjects of debate was the viability of existing farm businesses and the impacts that a focus on payment for ecosystem services might have on this type of business. Whilst the report from Workshop 3 (Natural England, 2010b) suggests that:

*"Key to uptake of programme is that it contributes to a functioning business"*

- 3.46 The subsequent project plan (Natural England, 2010c), produced in June 2010, confirms the pilot’s focus on business, particularly existing businesses, by agreeing that one of the priority workstreams for the pilot will be an agri-environment sub-pilot, led by Dartmoor NPA. The plan reports that the activity of this sub- pilot:

*“ would be focused on particular commons and the associated farm land (i.e. one of two commons / areas going into HLS). It would pick up the approach proposed in Dartmoor Farming Futures. The overall aim is to: Offer farmers and landowners more responsibility for the design and delivery of agri-environment agreements to deliver agreed outcomes (based on ecosystem services).”*

- 3.47 In addition to the Dartmoor sub-pilot the project plan also refers to a separate sub-pilot, to be led by Exmoor NPA. At the time the report was produced the details of this project had not yet been agreed, but it is understood that this led to previously referenced research by the University of Gloucestershire (Dwyer. J. and Short, C, 2011). This work focused on investigating the interest and willingness of farmers to engage with new mechanisms for delivering ecosystem services. As with the Dartmoor sub-pilot a core element of this project was on ensuring financial and business sustainability (for existing businesses).

*“ This [the Exmoor sub-pilot] should be the enabling vehicle through which individual farm businesses can then agree appropriate financial contracts with South West*

*Water and NE, to deliver environmental benefits in ways that will ensure the balanced delivery of a wide range of ES services, as well as improved financial and business sustainability.” Dwyer. J. and Short, C, 2011, p.3*

### **Research question: To what extent did economic valuation inform decision-making?**

3.48 As noted previously in this report (paragraph 3.39) some pilot partners were reported (by interviewees involved in the qualitative research) to have had a strong interest in the valuation element of the pilot.

3.49 An internal Natural England update report (Clarke, 2009 4) reports that a working group was expected to meet in December 2009 to finalise the valuation methodology, but no additional information concerning that meeting was made available to the evaluation team. Whilst subsequent documents contain references to valuation, including a visit (no date provided) to the pilot by experts from the Natural England programme team, activity does not appear to have commenced until after Workshop 3 (June 2010).

3.50 Subsequently local Natural England staff produced draft versions of the following documents:

- Valuing land management investments Exmoor v2 (Valuing land management investments in the SW Pilot: Exmoor Study Area catchments)
- Valuing land management investments in the DartmoorV2 (Valuing land management investments in the Dartmoor)
- Exe & Barle Valuation tables March 17th
- Wimbleball and Pulham Valuation tables March 17th

None of the listed documents were completed.

3.51 The main reason for non-completion of the documents would appear to be a lack of Natural England staff resource, at both the local and national level. Local interview respondents observed that local project staff were unable to invest sufficient time to enable them to complete baselining activity. Respondents also noted that there was lack of an imperative (to complete the work), at the regional level.

3.52 As noted above, resourcing was also a problem at the national level. Whilst it was initially expected that Natural England economists would provide support and assistance to all of three upland ecosystem pilots, in practice the valuation work proved to be more time consuming than anticipated. In response the national programme management team decided to focus support on work in the South Pennines pilot (where there was a high level of buy in from local partners).



## Outcomes

### Research question: What were the inputs to the Pilot in terms of staff time and funding, for Natural England and other partners?

3.53 Natural England invested significant staff time in the pilot. A member of staff from the south-west area office was appointed to act as the pilot project manager, other local staff became involved in the delivery of sub-pilot activity over the course of the project.

3.54 It was anticipated that the pilot project manager would be a full time post, but in practice it was reported that the estimated time investment was 30-50%. Figures for the time invested by other staff (for example 2 other local Natural England staff were involved in the valuation work) were not available to the evaluation team, but several interview respondents suggested that insufficient project officer time was invested in the project.

*“ They [Natural England] clearly did not have enough time to dedicate to the project. Things would go quiet and then suddenly get busy as and when they had some spare time.”*

*“if purely a theoretic exercise intended to generate a report then this [resource] was quite possibly sufficient. If about delivering a physical pilot then there was insufficient resource.”*

*“ I never got a sense of this being implemented with a serious commitment to an ecosystem approach.”*

3.55 The document review reveals that Natural England were aware – from the start of the project – that ensuring sufficient officer resource was likely to be a challenge for this project. It was noted in Clarke, 2009 2 that there was a risk that regional project officers would be drawn into other work and resourcing continued to be referenced as an issue in subsequent reports. For example, a report from May 2010 (Clarke, S. 2010, p.3) notes that:

*“ The pilot has suffered delays due to conflicting demands upon the project officer and some relationship issues with key partners; the project has not been adequately resourced from the outset.”*

3.56 The issue of conflicting demands was also referenced in the qualitative research where some interview respondents noted that those local Natural England staff who became involved in the project were trying to manage multiple priorities and that the pilot suffered as a result.

3.57 It was also suggested (by some respondents) that the pilot was not a priority for the regional office. It was suggested that this may have been a result of a change of

Regional Director during the course of the project and also a re-orientation of regional priorities as a result of implementation of the then Government's austerity agenda.

- 3.58 In addition to local staff the pilot also involved an investment of time from the national programme management team - in the form of the programme manager (full time), programme project manager and a technical economics specialist (valuation). All members of this national team are understood to have actively engaged with the pilot, for example by attending workshops and bespoke meetings with key partners. An internal Natural England project summary report (Clarke, S, 2010) noted that:

*“ the national MPM and PM [Major Project Manager and Project Manager] have invested considerable time in talking to project officers and key partners in the regions.”*

- 3.59 Based on the attendance at the workshops (see appendix A), and the records of their involvement in other meetings, it is clear that a number of external partners invested time into the pilot and the sub-pilots, but interview respondents found it difficult to provide estimates owing to the time that has elapsed since the completion of the pilot.
- 3.60 In addition to time, Natural England invested some financial resource (£13k per pilot). No finance information was made available to the research team, but the documentary and qualitative evidence suggests that this was used to fund the appointment of sub-contractors to deliver Workshop 1, to deliver the refresh of the Dartmoor Vision and, to fund project management and research for the Barle and Wimbleball sub-pilot.
- 3.61 Only one piece of evidence was found of additional funding inputs from other organisations. This took the form of a sentence in the research report for the Barle and Wimbleball sub-pilot (Dwyer. J. and Short, C, 2011) which noted that the research was supported by funding from Exmoor NPA, the Countryside and Community Research Institute and Natural England.

### **Research question: To what extent has the participatory approach resulted in attitudinal and behavioural change?**

- 3.62 Some interview respondents reported that they had noticed identified some changes in the attitude and understanding of individuals and organisations that they worked with, and suggested that they felt that to some degree these were a result of the pilot.
- 3.63 Some respondents suggested that the pilots had helped to focus attention on an important issue - the ecosystem approach - at a time when many regional stakeholders were just becoming aware of this concept. Whilst this meant that initial

discussions were challenging, they had helped to focus attention (on the ecosystem approach) and to generate some momentum.

- 3.64 One respondent noted that many of the individuals involved in the pilot had subsequently moved onto other projects to which they had been able to apply learning acquired through their participation in the pilot. The same respondent noted that since the completion of the pilot they felt they had seen a change in the approach to land management of regional stakeholders, such as the NPAs, and attributed this, in part, to their involvement in the pilot. Another respondent noted that they had established some enduring relationships as a result of participation in the pilot.
- 3.65 Several interview respondents suggested that the most tangible form of legacy could be seen as in the form of post-pilot activity, stemming from the sub-pilots, on Dartmoor and Exmoor. One respondent stated that they felt that the pilot had been important in helping to inform the launch of the Dartmoor Farming Futures project – an on-going farmer led project that is testing new approaches to payments for ecosystem services. There was some support for this view from another respondent who noted that they felt that the pilot had had some influence on Dartmoor Farming Futures.
- 3.66 Other interviewees reported that the pilot, specifically the sub-pilot work in the Barle and Wimbleball catchment, had also helped to inform what became the Wimbleball Catchment Project. This claim is supported by documentation supplied to the evaluation team by Natural England.

*“ The Wimbleball catchment project evolved from a study commissioned by Natural England and Exmoor National Park Authority and undertaken by CCRI in 2011<sup>8</sup> and from the South West Uplands Ecosystem Services Pilot.”* Unknown (2013)

- 3.67 As with the Dartmoor Farming Futures initiative this project aimed to focus on alternative approaches (to existing agri-environment schemes) for paying farmers for delivering ecosystem services.

### **Research question: To what extent did the delivery Plan influence the environmental outcomes and deliver multiple benefits?**

- 3.68 As reported elsewhere the pilot did not produce a delivery plan and, as none of the pilot activity led to area based project plans, there is no documented evidence of environmental or other ecosystem benefits.

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<sup>8</sup> Dwyer J and Short C (2011) *An ecosystem services pilot in the South West – building a framework for delivery*, Report to Exmoor National Park Authority and Natural England. CCRI: Cheltenham

## 4. Discussion

### Spatial and temporal scales

- 4.1 The pilot did not reach the stage of producing area based plans and as such generated no direct insight into the question of the most appropriate spatial and temporal scales for an ecosystem approach. The evaluation did however collect views on the practical issues of pilot project selection and project timescales.
- 4.2 It is clear from the review of project documents, and the qualitative research, that project activity was hampered by a lack of consensus amongst pilot partners. One suggested reason for this was the large area intended to be covered by the pilot and the existence of multiple administrative boundaries within the pilot area. Some interview respondents felt that disagreements between partners might have been reduced or avoided had the pilot had a more discrete geographic focus.
- 4.3 Several respondents observed that they felt that the pilots had been too short in duration. The pilot was subject to a number of delays and failed to deliver some of the anticipated outputs and therefore more time may have helped. However; evidence from both the document review and qualitative interviews indicate that the projects were under-resourced and that key stakeholders had differing views as to the focus of the project – making it difficult to agree issues such as sub-pilot sites and thereby causing project delays. This being the case it is far from clear that a longer project timeline would have ensured better outcomes as the lack of project resource and the difficulties the pilot had in securing partner buy-in appear to have been a more critical constraint.

### Partnership and participatory engagement

- 4.4 The pilot secured engagement with individuals from 22 organisations, drawn from a mix of public and private interests. However; the range of sectoral interests was narrow (from an ecosystem services perspective) with the focus of most participating organisations being wholly or largely focused on land management and agriculture. Most participants were representative bodies rather than private businesses or individuals and only one (large) private landowner was directly involved in the pilot.
- 4.5 The possibility of involving representation from organisations representing health, archaeology and recreation was recorded in the write up from Workshop 1 (Trail-Thomson, J and Bloomfield, D. 2009) and this report suggested that it was intended to contact health stakeholders. There is however no record of this happening. Some of the bodies that were involved in the pilot have a remit to address issues such as tourism and recreation, for example the two NPAs, however it is reasonable to assume that the lack of representation from certain types of interest groups will be likely to have informed the final shape of the pilot.

- 4.6 Both the document review and qualitative interviews provide clear evidence that the partnership brought together for this project suffered from a lack of common purpose. Whilst some documents make reference to the establishment of a steering group, others record tension between the supposed members of the steering group and in practice the project does not appear to have agreed on a common agenda until well into what should have been the delivery phase. The qualitative interviews, which involve a number of people who attended the workshops and other events, paint a picture of difficult and inconclusive meetings.
- 4.7 Whilst the pilot was successful in engaging with a significant number of stakeholders, the evidence suggests that some partners entered the pilot with firm views as to the types of activity the pilot might pursue and there is evidence of persistent disagreement between pilot partners.
- 4.8 One important external factor would appear to be the prevailing austerity agenda and the pressure on budgets being experienced by some partners, at that time. For example the reportedly firm focus of some on valuation could be interpreted as a reasonable response to a perceived need to justify, in financial terms, the value of their activity.
- 4.9 Some interview respondents suggested that the reported tensions in the partnership might have been lessened had Natural England been more effective in selling the benefits of the ecosystem approach, i.e. in describing what was in it for pilot participants. It is unclear whether this would have better enabled more effective collaboration, but it seems likely that the reported unfamiliarity of at least some of the principal partners, with the ecosystem approach will have impacted on the pilot.
- 4.10 Another suggested source of tension within the partnership was that some partners may have perceived Natural England as 'parachuting in' with a ready-made project. It was suggested, by some interviewee respondents, that it may have been better for Natural England to have come in with a blank sheet of paper and to allow local partners to design the pilot from the ground up. Arguably this approach would have been more in keeping with the principles of the ecosystem approach although, as observed by one respondent, it may not have been viable for Natural England to take this approach, owing to the need for the organisation to satisfy its organisational imperatives and priorities.

## **Economic considerations**

- 4.11 The document review reveals clear and persistent evidence of an interest in the economic dimension of the pilot – by which we mean the implications for businesses and land managers of adopting an ecosystem approach to land management.
- 4.12 The final project plan reports that the development of a new system, linking agri-environment schemes more closely to the delivery of ecosystem services, became

one of the key projected outcomes of the pilot. This focus may have been appropriate in the circumstances, but it means that the interests of a broader range of economic actors, for example the tourism and recreation sector, were excluded.

- 4.13 Despite the clear focus of at least some project partners on the economic dimension of the pilot the valuation work was not initiated until the project was well advanced and this work was not completed. Local Natural England staff, involved in undertaking baseline work, were reportedly unable to complete their contribution to the valuation exercise owing to a lack of time (associated at least in part with a reported change in regional priorities). Whilst at the national level – owing to valuation activity proving to be more resource intensive than originally anticipated - a decision was made to focus resource (in the form of Natural England economist's time) on pilot activity in the South Pennines.

## Outcomes

- 4.14 Natural England invested a significant amount of staff time in the pilot and provided a modest revenue budget. Partners invested some time and, in the case of the Barle and Wimbleball sub-pilot, are reported as having invested some financial resource.
- 4.15 There is evidence from both the document review and the qualitative research that a lack of resource, and in particular a lack of project officer time, was a challenge and one factor in the delays that beset the pilot. Internal Natural England reports show that there was an awareness that there was a risk of insufficient project officer time and that this would be likely to impact on the project. However; it was assumed that this could be managed – it is not clear from the documentation how the risk was expected to be mitigated, but there is a suggestion that national programme team staff may have invested more time in the project than was anticipated. The available evidence suggests though that this was insufficient.
- 4.16 One reason for this may be that less local project officer time was invested than was originally expected, 0.3-5 of a project manager post as opposed to the expected 1.0 full time equivalent. Other local staff resources were invested in the pilot, for example in the valuation work, but as reported the level of resource would appear to have been less than was needed.
- 4.17 The primary reason given for this was that local project officers were dealing with multiple competing work priorities. Some respondents also suggested that regional priorities changed during the course of the pilot and that this may have led to pilot activity being perceived as a lower priority than other work.
- 4.18 The pilot was reported, by some interview respondents, as having had some impact on the thinking and practice of some of the participating individuals and organisations. Respondents found it difficult to identify specific examples and noted that the pilot would not have been the only source of influence, but suggested

that they felt that the regional conversation, regarding the ecosystem approach, had been “moved on” by the pilots. And that individuals who had participated in and learnt from the pilot had subsequently informed their organisations practice. More tangibly some respondents reported that they felt that 2 post-pilot initiatives, Dartmoor Farming Futures (initiated during the pilot lifespan and still in operation) and the Wimbleball Catchment Project had been informed by or originated in the pilot.

- 4.19 A number of respondents reported that they felt that some participants in the pilot, including some Natural England staff, lacked a firm grasp of the ecosystem approach, and its potential for delivering land management improvements. There is also some evidence to suggest that Natural England were unable to convince partners of the benefits of applying the ecosystem approach in the pilot. Whether the difficulties experienced in securing partner engagement could have been addressed by a more effective ‘sales pitch’ is unknown, but given the reported unfamiliarity with the approach at that time, perhaps more effort should have been invested, in the early stages of the pilot, in improving partners’ familiarity and understanding of the ecosystem approach.

## Consideration of the Counterfactual

- 4.20 When considering the impacts of a pilot programme it is always useful to consider the counterfactual, i.e. would observed impacts have occurred in the pilot’s absence. This is challenging for most real world projects as it is often difficult to identify comparator sites. Even when this can be done, it is not possible to control the influences to which that comparison site is subject. Therefore the presence / absence of a pilot will not be the only cause of any reported differences or similarities between sites. It is however possible, based on interview responses and the documentary evidence, to make an informed assessment of the extent to which pilot impacts are likely to have been additional, to what might otherwise have happened, and this is the purpose of this section of the report.
- 4.21 As described in paragraph 4.18 interview respondents suggested that the pilot had had some impact on the thinking and practice of participants and their organisations. However, interviewees also reported that owing to the existence of multiple other initiatives since the pilot, and the general increase in information regarding the ecosystem approach, they were unable to say how significant a role the pilot played, or whether reported changes would have happened anyway.
- 4.22 Also noted in paragraph 4.18 was the role that that the pilot was reported to have played in the evolution of two post pilot initiatives, namely Dartmoor Farming Futures and the Wimbleball Catchment Project. As has been noted elsewhere in this report the concept of Dartmoor Farming Futures emerged independently of the pilot and, whilst there is evidence that the pilot provided valuable early support, this may have been forthcoming from elsewhere. In contrast the Wimbleball Catchment Project appears to have emerged directly from the pilot.



## 5. Conclusions

5.1 The upland ecosystem pilots were intended:

- 1) To provide practical examples demonstrating how the ecosystem approach could be applied on the ground.
- 2) To use a consultative ecosystem approach to define land and water management based upon stakeholders' perceptions of the best options.
- 3) To demonstrate that investment in the natural environment can result in multiple benefits (carbon, water, food, biodiversity, recreational and landscape benefits).
- 4) To work in partnership to deliver a range of ecosystem services in a cost-effective way and link these services to the beneficiaries.

5.2 The evidence gathered for this evaluation suggests that the South West pilot was largely unsuccessful in delivering against these objectives. On a more positive note it appears to have helped to attract attention and interest on what was then a largely unfamiliar concept. There is also evidence that potentially useful lessons were learned and of post pilot legacy benefits. A summary of key discussion points and lessons learned follows.

### **Did the pilot provide examples demonstrating how the ecosystem approach could work on the ground**

5.3 The pilot was beset by delays and significant practical activity only appears to have been initiated following a meeting in June 2010; by which point the pilot was almost halfway through its planned lifespan. Much of the activity that was initiated was not completed or, in the case of the sub-pilots, only generated early stage scoping activity. This sub-pilot activity however was taken forward, after the completion of the pilot, via the on-going work of Dartmoor Farming Futures and the Wimbleball Catchment Management Project.

5.4 The focus of Dartmoor Farming Futures is, and that of the Wimbleball Catchment Management Project was, on investigating alternative approaches to paying farmers for delivering ecosystem services. Whilst, in focusing on the role of farmers as the primary beneficiary and delivery mechanism, these projects are considered to have pursued a narrow focus (in relation to that expected of an ecosystem approach), both were reported as having provided useful practical learning and insight into the question of how the ecosystem approach can be applied on the ground. Whilst the available evidence suggests that it is important not to overstate the role of the South West Ecosystem Services Pilot it would appear to have played a role in informing, supporting and catalysing both of the aforementioned projects.



## **Was there evidence of the use of a consultative ecosystem approach to define land and water management based upon stakeholders' perceptions of the best options.**

- 5.5 A planned feature of the upland ecosystem pilots was intended to be their emphasis on applying a participatory approach. Whilst the pilot was able to secure engagement with a number of stakeholder organisations, it is clear that participants found it difficult to achieve consensus, and to develop a functional partnership, and this was a major source of delay in the project. Multiple reasons were given for the seeming inability of partners to agree and it is difficult to unpick their relative significance. Based on the evidence however it is suggested that some of the problems might have been avoided had the pilot been confined to one of the national parks and / or if pilot activity has been focused (from the start) on relatively small scale land management units.
- 5.6 Whatever approach the pilot might have taken its success would still have been dependent on the support and buy in of local partners. It is however clear from Natural England internal documentation that the risks of conflict between partner agendas and the aims and objectives of the pilot, and a lack of local project management resource were identified before the first workshop meeting. At that point Natural England were confident of being able to manage these risks, but in practice these issues appear to have fundamentally undermined the pilot. There is perhaps a lesson here about ensuring that resources and in particular partner buy in, are secured when initiating new projects.
- 5.7 Although not identified as a problem by participants in the pilot the evaluation found that those organisations that engaged with the pilot represented a relatively narrow range of, largely agricultural, interests. Initial project documentation suggests that it was intended to engage with a wider audience but this does not appear to have happened. The final focus of the pilot on new mechanisms for paying farmers to deliver ecosystem services is perhaps to be expected, given the nature and likely priorities of those organisations who engaged with the pilot.

## **Did the pilot demonstrate that investment in the natural environment can result in multiple benefits (carbon, water, food, biodiversity, recreational and landscape benefits).**

- 5.6 Despite significant interest in the valuation element of the pilot (amongst pilot partners) the valuation work, along with all other pilot activity, was subject to significant delay and did not commence until after June 2010. Work on valuation was not completed, the main reason for this was reported as being a lack of staff resource within Natural England at both the local and national level.
- 5.7 At the national level it was reported that the valuation activity, which at that

time was new to Natural England, proved to be more complex and resource intensive than expected, and as a result a decision was made to focus activity on the South Pennines pilot (where there was more interest and traction, on this topic, amongst local stakeholders). There is some evidence that, at the local level, changing priorities may have meant that Natural England staff were less able to invest time in the pilot than was originally planned. If this is accurate then it again highlights the need to ensure key partner buy-in to successful project delivery.

- 5.8 Overall, for the reasons described, the South West pilot produced no evidence demonstrating that investment in the natural environment can result in multiple benefits (carbon, water, food, biodiversity, recreational and landscape benefits).

### **Was there evidence of partnership working to deliver a range of ecosystem services in a cost-effective way and link these services to the beneficiaries.**

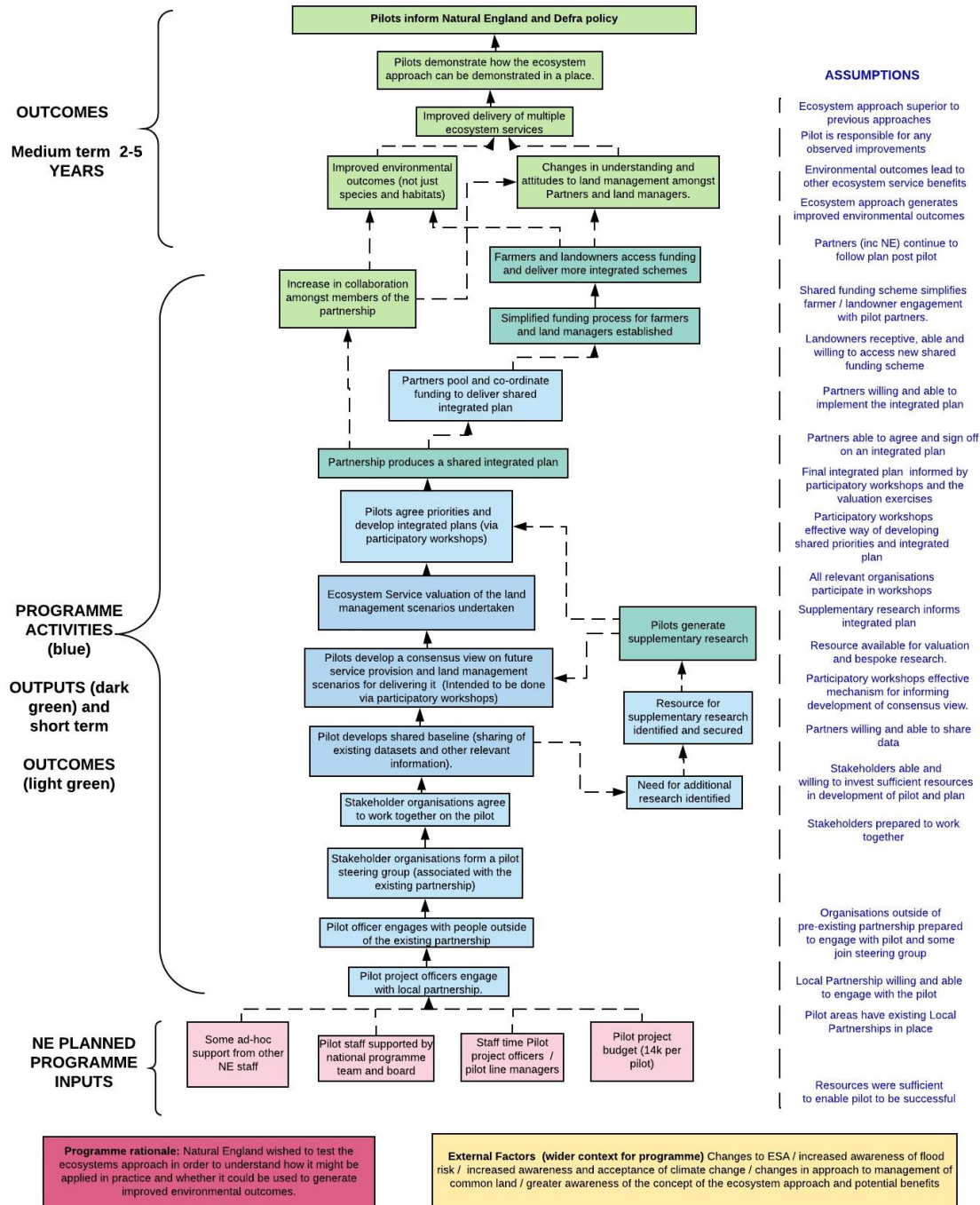
- 5.9 As noted above (para 5.4) the pilot struggled to establish a functional partnership, or in delivering any form of ecosystem services. However, some interview respondents reported that the sub-pilot work of Dartmoor Farming Futures and the Barle and Wimbleball catchment project, both involved successful partnership working. In particular both sub-projects were identified as demonstrating good practice in relation to the engagement of farmers in bottom up discussions and project development.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Theory of Change



## Appendix 2: Topic guide for use with project staff and stakeholders

Question number (from RfQ)	High level research question (shown in grey) and Interview questions	Probes/supplementary questions
	<b>Context</b>	
	Could I ask you to introduce yourself and to describe your professional role / occupation (current and at the time of the project).	
	How did you come to be involved in the pilot and what was the nature of your involvement?	<p>Did they have a specific role? For example were they a member of the pilot steering group.</p> <p>What sort of activities did they take part in? Eg did they participate in workshops and if so which ones?</p> <p>Were they involved in the pre-existing partnership [Penine Prospects / Upland ] prior to the project commencing?</p>
	How familiar are you with the ecosystems approach?	Were you familiar with the approach prior to your involvement in this project?
<b>a</b>	<b>What are the inputs to the Pilot in terms of staff time and funding, for Natural England and other partners?</b>	
	What inputs did you and your organisation contribute to the pilot?	Check for staff time, funding, other in-kind contributions
	Overall, including the resources invested by Natural England, were the resources available sufficient to enable the pilot to be successful?	If not, what impact did this have on the pilot and how much more resource (of what type) do they feel was needed.
	What role did the existing partnerships play in enabling, facilitating and driving the pilots?	May want to talk to pilot project managers first to ensure that understand what the existing partnerships were.
	Overall how important were the existing partnerships in each area in supporting and driving forward activity in the pilot area?	
<b>b</b>	<b>To what extent did the participatory approach involve a range of stakeholders' perspectives?</b>	
	Do you think that the projects involved all of the stakeholders relevant to your area?	<p>Do you think others should have been involved and if so who?</p> <p>Why were they not involved?</p> <p>Would the outcomes have been differed if they had been?</p>

	Do you think that the pilots approach and in particular the participatory approach was effective in securing buy in?	If YES what was it about the approach that worked.  If NO why not?
<b>c</b>	<b>To what extent has the participatory process influenced the development of the Integrated Delivery Plan and achievement of outcomes?</b>	
<b>d</b>	<b>To what extent did the Pilot include evidence from a range of disciplines?</b>	
<b>j</b>	<b>To what extent did economic valuation inform the decision making?</b>	
<b>If not sufficiently addressed above</b>	Which participatory workshops did you attend and were they well attended?	If they did NOT attend why was this.  If they feel they were NOT well attended. Why was this.
	Did the activities and tools used in the participatory workshops help to link services to beneficiaries?	Note: mainly applies to the mapping workshop.
	Did you feel that the workshops were effective in engaging stakeholders in the development of the pilot?	If YES were there particular reasons why. If NO why not. Probe for issues such as lack of time / effectiveness of facilitation / absence of key stakeholders.
	Were the participatory workshops informed by evidence developed specifically for the pilot, for example valuation?	If YES what was the evidence and where did it come from.  If valuation evidence was used to what extent did this inform decision making?  If NO were there any obvious evidence needs / gaps and if so why were these not addressed?
	Was the Pilot able to achieve a consensus view and did this inform the integrated plan?	What were the main challenges involved?
	Do you think that partners and other stakeholder organisations were able to effectively contribute to the setting of priorities for the Pilot and the development of the integrated plan?	If YES how was this achieved. Probe the role of the workshops, also examine if stakeholders were able to contribute in other ways.  If NO, what prevented this?
<b>e</b>	<b>What aspects of partnership and governance enabled agreement on a shared plan and achievement of project outcomes?</b>	

	What were the governance arrangements for the pilot.	Was there a steering group.  If YES how was it formed and who was involved (probe to see if included people NOT involved in the pre-existing partnerships.)
	What worked well, and less well, with the partnership and governance arrangements?	Did people attend. Was engagement constructive.
	Have the partnerships and stakeholder relationships established through the Pilot endured?	In what form?  What sorts of activities are they engaged in? To what extent are they linked to the work of the Pilot?
<b>f &amp; h</b>	<b>To what extent did the Pilot take into account the timescales needed for processes to implement the ecosystem approach? To what extent did the Pilot consider the timescales required to achieve outcomes and impacts at different spatial scales?</b>	
	What sort of future planning period were pilots working to?	
	Do you think the timescales were sufficient to allow the ecosystems approach to be implemented?	If not, which, if any, aspects of the ecosystem approach were not able to be fully implemented?
<b>g</b>	<b>g) To what extent has the ecosystem approach and decision making been applied at appropriate spatial scales?</b>	
	At what spatial scale did the pilot operate?	How was this agreed?
	Do you think the project operated at the right spatial scales?	If NO please explain.
<b>i</b>	<b>To what extent did the Pilot consider the need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context?</b>	
	To what extent do you think the pilot considered the need to understand and manage the ecosystem in the context of organisations business and financial imperatives?	If NO please explain  If YES please explain

<b>k</b>	<b>To what extent has the participatory process resulted in attitudinal &amp; behavioural change?</b>	
	To what extent is the ecosystem approach understood / used in your organisation?	In what way? (e.g. increased partnership working, pooling of resources, working across different scales, consideration of wider stakeholder groups, changes in attitudes to land management etc)
	Has your / your organisation's understanding of the ecosystem approach improved as a result of participation in the pilot?	
	Have you identified any changes to the ways that you or others in your organisation think or work as a result of this project? (e.g. increased partnership working).	[Note the question is about thinking <u>and</u> working.]  Why?  Do you view these changes as being beneficial?  Are there any conflicts between these different ways of thinking and working and your other priorities?  Was/is further support needed to enable you or your organisation to implement these changes?
	Have you identified any changes to the ways that those in other organisations think or work as a result of this project?	E.g. Do you think this project led to a more integrated way or working in your area?
	In what ways did the project contribute to these changes?	
	Are there any external factors may have contributed to these changes?	E.g.'s of external factors: changes in approach to management of common land, growing awareness generally of concept of ecosystem approach, increased awareness and acceptance of climate change
<b>l</b>	<b>To what extent has the Delivery Plan influenced the environmental outcomes and delivered multiple benefits?</b>	
	Did the pilot develop an Integrated delivery plan?	
	To what extent to you think the pilot was successful in applying the ecosystem approach?	If possible response should be illustrated with examples.



	What do you consider to have been the main benefits of this project?	Which individuals/groups most benefit from these benefits? In what ways?  What role did the Delivery Plan in delivering these benefits?
	Have pilot partners made changes in their use of funding?	For example pooled funding schemes.  If YES has this benefited partners and or their stakeholders?  If YES in what ways?
	Are you able to identify any environmental outcomes that you feel have been delivered or influenced as a result of this project?	To what extent do you think these are the result of the project and the delivery plan?  Would these outcomes have occurred anyway?  Do the environmental outcomes extend beyond species and habitats?  To what extent are these outcomes measurable?
	Have there been any unexpected outcomes either positive or negative?	These may be positive or negative.
	Overall how would you describe your experience of this project?	Were there any particular aspects that you felt were particularly useful or not useful?  What were the main learning points for you?
	Do you think that Pilot demonstrates how the ecosystem approach can be demonstrated in a place?	Do you consider it to be superior to previous approaches?  If YES why.
<b>Close</b>	<b>Please close by thanking them for their participation and ask them if they would like to check our notes of the conversation prior to them being used in the research.</b>	

### Appendix 3: Topic guide for use with national programme staff

Question number	High level research question / Interview question	Probes/supplementary questions
	<b>Context</b>	
	Could I ask you to introduce yourself and to describe your professional role / occupation (current and at the time of the project).	Check on extent familiar with and involved with ecosystems approach.
	In what way(s) were you involved in the pilots?	Did you have a specific role?
	How much time and resource did you invest in the pilots?	Check for staff time, funding, other in-kind contributions.
b	<b>What are the key differences across the areas in terms of approaches and impact and why?</b>	
	Based on your understanding of the pilots briefs, did they proceed as planned / expected?	If NO please expand on your answer; i.e.were things done differently; were activities omitted?
	If the pilots differed significantly in their approach please explain how.	Issues of interest include: - differences in project governance. - differences in the level and extent of stakeholder engagement and participation - differences in approach to developing the project baseline - differences in approach to developing the integrated plan - OTHER significant differences (e.g. choice of spatial scale / timeframe)
	What were the reasons for any identified differences?	
	What impact, if any, do you feel that this had on the pilot?	Probe for impacts on: process; buy in; outputs; impacts.
a	<b>What are the key outcomes from each pilot?</b>	
	What would you say were the principal outcomes from the pilots?	How do they differ between the three areas? What are the principal reasons for these differences?  To what extent were these outcomes a result of the pilots? Might some of them have been achieved anyway?  To what extent are these outcomes measurable?  To what extent have the outcomes been sustained?

	What were the main benefits and beneficiaries and did they differ between the three projects?	What are the principal reasons for any differences?
	Were there any unexpected outcomes from the pilots, either positive or negative?	
	Overall to what extent do you feel that the three pilots were successful in applying the ecosystem approach?	Need to allow time for respondent to consider all 3 pilots (where they have such insight).
c	<b>How important were participatory ways of working in achieving stated aims in each area?</b>	
	How effective was the participatory approach in securing stakeholder engagement in each pilot?	Was the approach more or less effective in the different pilots?  If YES why was this?  What iimpact did this have on outcomes?
	Based on your understanding of how the participatory approach was applied are you able to identify any strengths or weaknesses of the approach?	If YES are these due to the approach or to the way it was applied?
d	<b>How important were existing partnerships in each area in driving forward actions and additional stakeholder involvement? (Comparisons around governance in each area and what difference that made to outcomes)</b>	
	What role did the existing partnerships play in enabling, facilitating and driving the pilots?	
	Overall how important were the existing partnerships in each area in supporting and driving forward activity in the pilot area?	What were the reasons for any reported differences? Eg strength/commitment of local partnerships / key players etc  What iimpact did this have on outcomes?
e	<b>How were environmental outcomes captured in each area? What mechanisms were (in place/put in place) to achieve these?</b>	
	Did you measure outcomes from the pilots?	Important to probe how confident the respondent that outcomes can be attributed to the activities of the pilot? I.e. would something have happened anyway and if so would it have happened in the same way without the pilot.

g	<b>How are national and local priorities incorporated into the pilots in each area? (tensions around national/local?)</b>	
	How did the pilots identify their priorities (for the integrated plan)?	Probe to understand what mechanisms or rationales were applied.
	To what extent did the pilots include environmental, social and economic priorities?	
	To what extent did the the pilots take into account local, regional or national priorities?	<p>Were you aware of any tension between the pursuit of local / regional / national objectives?</p> <p>How did this differ between the three areas and why?</p> <p>What impact did this have on outcomes?</p>
h	<b>What was the role of economic valuation in the three areas? To what extent did it help to inform decision making?</b>	
	To what extent did the three pilots consider the need to understand and manage the ecosystem in the context of business and financial imperatives?	<p>How did this differ between the three areas and why?</p> <p>What impact did this have on outcomes?</p>
	What was the role of economic valuation in the three areas? To what extent did it help to inform decision making?	<p>How did this differ between the three areas and why?</p> <p>What impact did this have on outcomes?</p>

## Appendix 4: Matrix for documentation review

<b>Issue: Spatial and temporal scales</b>	<b>Prompts</b>
To what extent did the pilot take into account the timescales needed for processes to implement the ecosystem approach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what planning time horizon did the pilots work to?</li> <li>- did the pilots have enough time to deliver against their aims and objectives?</li> </ul>
To what extent has the ecosystem approach and decision making been applied at appropriate spatial scales?	At what geographic scale did the pilots operate
<b>Issue: Partnerships and participatory engagement</b>	<b>Prompts</b>
What were the inputs to the Pilot in terms of staff time and funding, for Natural England and other partners?	We want to collate any evidence in relation to the time spent by individual partners and any financial contributions they may have made.
To what extent did the pilot include evidence from a range of disciplines?	We want to understand what type of evidence was used in the development of the pilots. Eg soil maps, biodiversity data etc.
To what extent did a participatory approach involve a range of stakeholders' perspectives?	We want to collate any information available regarding the range of individuals and organisations involved in the pilots. It would be useful to know how many people were involved / in what they were involved in and to have an idea of who was involved (general public and organisations).
How effective was stakeholder engagement?	Did anyone report any views on this?
What aspects of partnership and governance enabled agreement on a shared plan and achievement of project outcomes?	It would be useful to understand what types of governance were in place to manage the pilots and who sat on any steering groups / sub-groups etc.
<b>Issue: Economic Considerations</b>	<b>Prompts</b>
To what extent did the pilot consider the need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context?	It would be useful to know what steps if any the pilots took to ensure consideration of business issues. Eg the compatibility of environmental objectives with farming etc. Information on workshops and reports would be useful.

To what extent did economic valuation inform decision-making?	Were any Valuation reports developed by the pilots, if so how many and how were they used?
<b>Issue: Outcomes</b>	<b>Prompts</b>
What outcomes can be associated with the pilot?	Outputs include reports / outcomes are environmental / social and economic benefits generated as a result of the pilots.
To what extent has the participatory process resulted in attitudinal and behavioural change?	It would be useful to understand if there is any evidence of changes in practice and attitude as a result of participation in the pilot.
To what extent did the participatory process influence the development of the integrated delivery plan?	It would be useful to know how many participatory workshops were run, what types of activity they engaged in, who and what the workshops were for, who attended and to collect any views that may have been expressed regarding the usefulness or otherwise of the workshops.  ALSO do we know if the workshops influenced the Integrated Plans?
To what extent did the delivery Plan influence the environmental outcomes and deliver multiple benefits?	Linked to the above it would be useful to understand if there is any information available concerning the ways in which the pilots led to changes in organisational practices and any evidence of impact - we are interested in types of impact and who benefited.
How successful were the pilots in applying the ecosystem approach?	Please capture any views that people may have expressed about this issue.
<b>GENERAL</b>	
Direct drivers (reasons for engaging with the pilots)	
Barriers	
Enabling and success factors (things that help to deliver success)	
External factors that enable or constrain (PEST factors)	
Unintended consequences	
Other points of interest	

## Appendix 5: Stakeholder participation in the Pilot steering group and workshops

Partner organisation	Pre-project contact	Steering group member <sup>9</sup>	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3 (no details)	Wimbleball
Bodmin Moor AONB	1					
Bodmin Moor Commons Association			1			
Bodmin Graziers	1					
Bodmin Livestock Project			1			
Country Landowners Association	1			1		
Dartmoor Commoners Council		1		1		
Dartmoor National Park Authority	1	1	1	2		
Dartmoor Preservation Association				2		
Duchy of Cornwall				1		
Environment Agency		1		2		
Exmoor National Park Authority	1	1	2			1
Exmoor Society				1		
Farmers						9
Government Office South West				1		
National Farmers Union	1	1	1	1		
Natural England		1	4	5		1
RSPB		1		1		
South West	1					

<sup>9</sup> As identified in SW Ecosystem Pilot Project Plan (June, 2010). Assumed 1 representative per body attended.

Protected Landscapes Forum						
South West Upland Federation	1	1	1	1		
South West Water	1		1	1		1
University of Exeter		1				
Westcountry Rivers Trust	1					1