Dialogue Matters

Enabling Positive Landscape Change to Deliver Landscape Resilience – The role of Landscape Governance and Landscape Justice

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Report details

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Executive summary

Natural England commissioned this research as part of a programme of work to reinvigorate its role as a national advisor on landscapes, to be at the forefront of landscape thinking and to help drive innovation in the development of landscape policy. The aim is to ensure landscapes deliver multiple benefits for nature, climate, and people. In this context, landscapes include areas that are rural and urban, wild or managed, inland and coastal and at different scales. The focus of this research is around landscape governance and landscape justice and how the evidence can be incorporated into policy and practice.

Governance in its widest sense is the framework for managing ongoing landscape change and includes the ethos, culture, people, finances, procedures, risk management, accountabilities, and power relationships (i.e. where power sits, who holds it, how decisions are made, if and how decisions can be influenced, who is able to do that, and through what mechanisms). Good governance is at the heart of achieving thriving landscapes with fair and just mechanism to involves others, used to integrate and aligning multiple interests to deliver multiple benefits.

This report is based on findings from a focused literature review of 30 papers, a survey of landscape projects to which 33 responded sufficiently to analyse, a workshop of 13 leading landscape specialists, and extensive Stakeholder Dialogue practitioner knowledge and literature.

The drivers for a stronger understanding and good practices in positive landscape change include:

- Acceleration in the number of landscape projects of all shapes and formations needing to understand and apply good governance to their landscape
- The need to integrate different agendas to result in multi-benefit outcomes
- Increasing recognition in national and international policy instruments that, beyond environmental projects, other stakeholders and communities are an integral part of landscapes, hold valuable knowledge and resources, and have the right to be involved in changes that affect their lives, livelihoods, and landscapes.
- Proven benefits in better quality decisions and outcomes of deliberative, participatory, action orientated processes, with multidirectional dialogue between different stakeholders and communities.

Best Practice Dialogue involves fostering co-design and delivery of landscape change working with multiple other stakeholders and communities, with a collaborative, power sharing and inclusive ethos; and applying procedural justice principles: contextual fit; scalar fit; conflict resolution; neutral facilitation; free, prior, and informed consent; integrating knowledge systems; and adaptable and flexible processes[1].

This research found a gap between this characterisation of Best Practice and what is happening in landscape practice. Of the projects that completed the survey:

- 21 had an **environmentalist-led (sectoral) approach**: These projects, even if new, comprised a small governance group of environmental professionals with a few also

[1] Ruano-Chamorro C., Gurney G. G., Cinner J. E. (2022) Advancing procedural justice in conservation. Conservation Letters. 15(3):e12861. https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12861

including landowners. Most were informal, some with Terms of Reference. Wider engagement was to gather views and disseminate decisions.

- 4 took a full **co-creation and co-delivery approach**. In these projects, initiating organisations contracted professional participation specialists to design and facilitate multi-interest dialogue to co-decide the future priorities and share in ongoing governance and implementation.
- 5 took a co-creation approach, with responsibility for implementation reverting to environmental professionals.
- Other projects included: one where environmental professionals planned change and then shared implementation with other stakeholders; one where stakeholders planned change and then co-delivered with environmental professionals; and one where stakeholders self-organised – planning and implementing change themselves.

For quality and robust landscape governance and justice, projects need information, support and guidance to understand and apply good practice including:

- Know about procedural justice, and able to understand power, and shift form 'power over', to 'power with' (sometimes described as 'deciding with not for'), and embed ethics and practices of regenerative governance.
- Recognising that engagement to capture hundreds of views won't reap the benefits of participation and co-creation which comes from power sharing, good practice multi-interest participatory and deliberative dialogue and improved governance.
- Adopt a reflective learning approach involving continuous self assessment and improvement
- Awareness that facilitating good practice is an established profession backed by a large body of research evidence. Projects can learn from this, apply the optimum dialogue designs for their settings, and avoid risks, errors, ineffectiveness or ad hoc practice.

From the research many landscape projects are unaware of the benefits of effective governance including sharing power with other interests and communities. This matters because research shows the benefits claimed for involving others are dependent on the power shared in decision-making and quality of decision-making processes[2] [3], with power shared through good practice resulting in better outputs in terms of ambition, agreement and stringency leading to better outcomes[4] [5].

The findings from the workshop and dialogue practitioner expertise show an opportunity for embedding understanding of barriers and enablers to landscape change to shift perceptions and build skills to deliver on needed change.

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[2] Reed. M., et al (2018) A theory of participation: What makes Stakeholder and Public engagement in environmental management work? Restoration Ecology 26(S1): S7-S17 DOI:10.1111/rec.12541

[3] Reed, M.S. (2008) Stakeholder participation for environmental management: A literature review. *Biological Conservation* 141: 2417-2431.

[4] Newig et al (2018), The Environmental Performance of Participatory and Collaborative Governance: A Framework of Causal Mechanisms, The Policy Studies Journal, Vol. 46, No. 2

[5] Jens Newig, Nicolas W. Jager, Elisa Kochskämper & Edward Challies (2019) Learning in participatory environmental governance – its antecedents and effects. Findings from a case survey meta-analysis, Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning, DOI: 10.1080/1523908X.2019.162366

In summary, this research found ambition by leading landscape specialists, strong research evidence for good and just landscape governance and participation, practitioner literature that describes how this can be achieved, and a few examples of good practice. However, there is a way to go before this is embedded as business as usual and landscape projects know about and apply effective and just landscape governance.

To pioneer sector change, Natural England can lead efforts to build understanding, capacity and relevant skills to include:

- The steps and stages in designing and facilitating action orientated, multidirectional dialogue, between different stakeholders and communities to lead to good decision-making and thriving landscapes.
- Awareness of power dynamics and how to optimise them,
- Ways to integrate different knowledge and interests in landscapes
- What characterises regenerative governance, and procedural justice.

Natural England can then drive innovation in the development of landscape policy that delivers benefits for nature, climate and people.

The research team have developed Section 7 with recommendations of how to do this, to support Natural England actioning the findings in this report.

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 About this report

This report has been written by participation practitioners and researchers from Dialogue Matters and academic researchers from the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI). We access different knowledge and experiences and write in different ways. The findings also reflect the experiences of 33 Landscape Projects, and 13 landscape specialists. This richness of perspective brings theoretical understanding, real world insights, and practical solutions for sound governance and landscape justice, all to result in thriving landscapes.

The breadth of sources and knowledges mean this is not a short, snappy report. It includes an overview of drivers, an in-depth literature review, faithful reporting of the views of projects and workshop participants, key concepts and practical consideration of what they look like in governance and participation. It concludes with a vision and hopes for the direction of travel from landscape specialists and our suggestions for how NE could embed new thinking and new approaches.

The power of language is great and when used mindfully can convey big ideas in simple ways. However, words can hold different meanings to different people depending on a wide range of factors. To ensure that all readers of this report are understanding key words by the same meanings we have compiled a glossary of terms which can be found in Annex 1.

1.2 Context of this research

Natural England wants to reinvigorate the organisation's role as a national advisor that ensures landscapes deliver benefits for nature, climate, and people and position NE at the forefront of landscape thinking that drives innovation. In recent years, landscape use and management have received increased attention[1]. For example, the Lawton Review (2010) and its subsequent principles of 'bigger, better, and more joined up' brought the role of landscapes to prominence within the policy arena. This report continues to shape policy, most recently in the 25 Year Environment Plan (25-YEP)[2] and associated targets like 30x30 [3] and research which sought to reconcile the trade-offs surrounding changing land use, conservation, and development [4] [5]. Consequently, the term 'landscape change' has evolved to encompass various interpretations, approaches, and tools that aim to enhance future land-use decision-making and management[6] [7].

In its broadest sense, landscapes represent an area of common interest [8] [9]. However, as the report will show, multiple understandings of landscape exist. These range from purely physical spaces and/or simple geographical formations to dynamic systems shaped by natural processes, human activity, and cultural values. While early conservation theory set the groundwork for landscape-scale approaches and systems thinking, the same theories often overlooked the importance of 'people' and 'society' who ultimately shape these landscapes [10]. In reality, ***both*** natural and human entities interact to shape landscapes[11] and are increasingly seen as social-ecological systems [12] [13] [14] all collectively developing a shared sense of place [15].Like many parts of the world, the UK's landscapes are complex - with different cultural, political, ownership, and ecological values and benefits ascribed to them. The process of landscapes changing is a natural one. Landscapes are never constant; they change both seasonally and over longer periods of time. UK's landscapes are undergoing additional significant changes physically and socially. This includes greater public

appreciation in reaction to Covid, a shift in perceptions about what is valued to now encompass lowland landscapes not just uplands and greater efforts around equity, diversity and inclusion of nature access, the environmental profession, and inspiring younger generations. There are also many challenges to contend with: complexity, climate, nature loss, soil loss, ecosystem breakdown, infrastructure, housing, industry, air and water pollution, food security. These partnered with limited land, especially in England, catalyses landscape conflicts that can create a block to change.

The pace of change is accelerating which is difficult for people to adapt to psychologically and practically. This is particularly the case for well-loved landscape regarded and valued as ‘timeless’ and ‘enduring’. The pace of change can cause social and psychological shock and trauma to those who live, work and visit landscapes

The challenge for the well informed and positive landscape change that Natural England are seeking to encourage is the interdependency of the interwoven natural and human systems that affect our landscapes. This requires the ability to work with and integrate a wide range of factors, which will meaning involving with multiple forms of knowledge and understanding across different spatial and governance scales. Also present within this space will be a range of policies and strategies, different drivers and interests among stakeholders and different ownerships and rights. This makes the need to attain an agreement that is well supported and delivers multiple benefits in a more equitable way over the long term all the more challenging.

At the current time there are a range of new incentives, approaches, and ways of thinking linked to landscape-scale interventions and management. The new incentives include Landscape Recovery under ELMS; the Facilitation Fund under Countryside Stewardship, as well as some options that support nature-based solutions and regenerative agriculture. Funding opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) were introduced during 2024 and green finance initiatives meeting net zero targets such as the Peatland and Woodland Carbon Codes. Finally, there is a growing interest in different land management techniques, nature-based solutions, regenerative agriculture, wilding and managing landscapes for health (e.g., to mitigate ammonia emissions, health, and wellbeing), some of which are support by existing agri-environment schemes. All of these have the potential to be linked with large scale activity and therefore will engage with a range of stakeholders. Some, like the pilot Landscape Recovery projects and BNG, are seeking land management agreements for 20-30 years. This is a longer period than has previously been the case in Agri-environment schemes (AES). The previous maximum length was 10 years.

2 Drivers and motivators for positive landscape change

There are multiple drivers for working more effectively, inclusively and justly at landscape scale. This includes benefits of taking an integrated landscape approach, benefits of participation and top down international and national drivers. To set the scene we have briefly outlined these.

2.1 Statutory and regulatory drivers for landscape change

International

At an international level the UK is signed up to a range of multiparty agreements:

The European Landscape Convention (1994) comes from the Council of Europe (not to be confused with the European Union) and was ratified by the UK in 2006. It defines landscape as "*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*". Notedly, this definition of a landscape does not require official designation. Often, a local non-designated landscape can often be just as, if not more, important to local people. The Convention encourages an integrated perspective including human rights, people's quality of life and wellbeing and sustainability. This is a foundation for just approaches to landscape. The Convention calls for the "active participation" of people in landscape management. The convention outlines participation as involving procedures which enable greater power sharing and with some projects now going even further taking a co-production approach (co-design and co-delivery of change and sharing of benefits). The Landscape Convention references the Aarhus Convention as a key instrument for the implementation of active participation in landscape management.

The Aarhus Convention came into force in 2001 and was ratified by the UK in 2005. This UN Economic Commission for Europe aims to empower citizens and civil society organizations in environmental matters. It is founded on the principles of participative democracy and establishes several rights related to the environment. The Convention has 3 pillars: Access to information, Public Participation, and Access to Justice related to Environmental Matters. The participation pillar provides the public the right to have a say in environmental decisions that affect them or in which they have an interest, at an early stage whilst options are open. This was enacted in the EU via the Participation Directive and other Environmental instruments (the SEA, WFD, MFD) and the latter were then transposed into domestic law, now retained laws. Whilst the UK has ratified the Convention, it has not been directly incorporated into domestic law and its application is complex.

Convention on Biological Diversity signatories of the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the 1971 Ramsar Convention, include the UK. At COP-6 (2000) the CBD agreed on the need to foster stakeholder participation in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use with many resolutions building on this since. In 1995, the 'Ecosystem Approach'[16] was adopted under the CBD as the main way to deliver sustainability through *"integrated and equitable management".* Three years later participating countries signed up to twelve principles for achieving this, four of which are particularly relevant to governance and justice (see Figure 1).

Principle 1: The objectives of management of land, water and living resources are a matter of societal choices.

Principle 2: Management should be decentralised to the lowest appropriate level.

Principle 11: The Ecosystem Approach should consider all forms of relevant information, including scientific, indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices.

Principle 12: The Ecosystem Approach should involve all relevant sectors of society and scientific disciplines.

Figure 1: Four of the twelve principles in CBD which are particularly relevant to governance and justice.

Most recently in 2020 at COP 15 (and after) Heads of State and Governments from 96 countries and the President of the EU Commission, endorsed the Leaders Pledge for Nature[17] . This has now been endorsed by over 100 non-state actors and sub-national governments. The relationship to landscapes is the scale of ambition and how it can be delivered? This Leaders Pledge commits the signatory countries to reverse biodiversity loss and deliver a nature positive world 'living in harmony by 2050'. The pledge includes the following in relation to governance and decision-making:

"Commitment to the **full and effective participation of** indigenous peoples and **local communities in decision-making** and recognition of their rights, as acknowledged in relevant national and international instruments". (Pledge 2c)

We will re-double our efforts to end traditional silo thinking and to address the interrelated and interdependent challenges of biodiversity loss, land, freshwater and ocean degradation, deforestation, desertification, pollution and climate change in an **integrated and coherent way**, **ensuring accountability** and robust and effective review mechanisms, and lead by example through actions in our own countries. (Pledge 3)

We commit to integrating a **"One-Health" approach** in all relevant policies and decision-making processes at all levels **that addresses health and environmental sustainability in an integrated fashion**. (Pledge 8)

At COP 15, the UK also signed to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030: the 30 x 30 pledge. In relation to landscapes and governance the following text is relevant:

Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and **equitably governed systems** of protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures, recognising indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, **recognizing and respecting the rights of** indigenous peoples and **local communities**, including over their traditional territories**.**

UNFCCC: At the Conference of the Parties (COP) 27 in November 2022 discussions took place around the role of landscape scale working to enhance climate change resilience and to reduce emissions from landscape change, recognising that ecosystems and landscapes play a crucial role in climate resilience and carbon sequestration. By adopting landscape-scale strategies, countries can address climate challenges holistically, considering interconnected natural systems. This requires effective and just landscape governance.

The 2005 Brisbane Declaration[18] supported by the UN, sets out standards around participatory processes and decision-making. The declaration affirms that community engagement is critical to effective, transparent, and accountable governance in the public, community, and private sectors. All participatory processes should endorse the core principles of integrity, inclusion, deliberation, and influence (see: Best Practice Dialogue). Further, it identifies that meaningful community engagement should address barriers and build the capacity and confidence of people to participate, in particular those previously excluded or disenfranchised.

In summary, this range of international multiparty agreements set the statutory responsibility for "active participation" of people in landscape management. This requires greater power sharing with some projects setting the precedent for a co-production approach whereby the public has the right to have a say in environmental decisions that affect them or in which they have an interest, at an early stage whilst options are open. Additionally, by adopting landscape-scale strategies, countries can address climate challenges holistically, considering interconnected natural systems. This requires effective and just landscape governance which we will explore more in this report.

National

There are numerous drivers for improved landscape change at national level, a brief overview is provided here.

25 Year Environment Plan

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out ambitions for protecting and improving the environment across 10 goals including climate change, biodiversity, air quality, and water quality to create a greener future by safeguarding and enhancing our natural surroundings for generations to come[19]. In December 2023 the UK Government also made commitments to committed to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030, often referred to as 30by30. These commitments can only be achieved by working at a landscape scale.

National Character Areas:

England's landscapes have been mapped against robust criteria defining landscape character based on a mix of natural and human created features[20] with 159 landscape character areas defined by Natural England. The strength of these descriptions is to influence planning, farm support, and landscape recovery. However, while the Statements of Environmental Opportunity were 'widely consulted on' the descriptions and lists of landscape priorities were not co-created with the local communities who are affected or care about the area. As lists of features, descriptions, and opportunities, they are able to guide but less able to catalyse change.

National Parks and National Landscapes

In the UK protected landscapes cover 27.8% of the UK[21]. These designations have preserved valued places, limited development, and worked to ensure that any development that takes place is in keeping. They are also much-loved places to visit. However, there are a number of challenges related to the management of land within them. There is also talk on new National Parks and the renaming of AONBs as National Landscapes.

Whilst designated for public good, protected areas were selected and defined by government. Citizens did not get a say on where they should be, their purpose, resourcing, why they are important, or until recently, how they were managed. The earliest record we could find of engaging citizens to co-create a management plan was a project Dialogue Matters designed and facilitated in 2003 for the Isles of Scilly AONB[22], pioneering the application of the previously mentioned regulatory commitments. Wider use of this level of shared decision-making remains the exception.

The 2019 Landscapes Review[23], assessed the management of protected landscapes, their alignment with the 25 Year Plan, governance and financing, environment and biodiversity, and effectiveness of protection. The report makes recommendations for significant improvements in funding, scope, reformed governance (to be much more inclusive and reflective of society), shared purpose with other protected landscapes, stronger protection in planning, and a renewed mission to recover and enhance nature and be at the heart of the Nature Recovery Network (a national network of wildlife-rich places to increase and restore nature).

All-England Mapping

The All England Strategic Landscape Mapping Tool was established in 2021, partly in response to the Glover Landscapes Review. The intention was create a visionary map for England's landscapes in the 21st Century, reflecting the spirit of the Hobhouse map which led to the establishment of the first National Parks 70 years ago. The All-England Strategic Landscape Mapping project aims to:

- help identify areas which may have potential to be new or extended nationally designated landscapes (National Parks and/or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty); and
- identify places where alternative forms of landscape action or approaches may be more appropriate.

This mapping tool has been created to share the analysis undertaken as part of the All-England Strategic Landscape Mapping Project.

2.2 Drivers for a landscape approach

Landscape scale projects and nature recovery initiatives

As demonstrated by the statutory agreements described above, the UK is undergoing a movement towards engagement and empowerment around landscape change. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan has catalysed or strengthened an array of these including:

1. **The Nature Recovery Network** is ‘central to governments apex goal of improving nature’ across land, water and sea with the ambition of restoring 500,000 ha of new wildlife rich habitats. Some LNR Responsible Authorities are commissioning professional participation practitioners to help with developing their LNR strategy. However, through our experience engaging with three separate ITQs many projects say that co-production is their desired approach without understanding what this entails (which is fundamentally about shifting power and working as equals to co-decide). All too often, projects place any stakeholder and community engagement in strongly hierarchical governance structures. This restricts and undermines stakeholder input to being within a ‘top-down’ approach because a select and self-appointed group hold all the main decision-making power, and gathers information from stakeholders, rather than sharing power for more equal input.

2. **Landscape Recovery Projects** totalling 56 pilot studies which are all in their development phase as of July 2024. These projects have the scope to innovate for landscape-scale management governance .Developed at the local scale in response to criteria awarded by government these are sizeable projects, at least 500 hectares, which have a primary focus on nature recovery. Currently all are still being developed but it is clear that they will use the available AES schemes (CS plus and SFI) to adjust the land management within these areas. They also need to engage with all appropriate stakeholders, have a clear governance structure, links to private finance and show how they will adapt to climate change

3. **Green finance**: The UK's Green Finance Strategy highlights their commitment to funding initiatives that support environmental objectives while ensuring social equity. It seeks to mobilise private sector finance to support public goods[24], including biodiversity and climate adaptation, with a clear emphasis on social justice and job creation. However, there are already examples (*pers. comm*) of private finances affecting landscape priorities and undermining goals agreed by others. This is explored later in this report (**Error! Reference source not found.**.and 0).

Natural Flood Management (NFM) approaches are being scaled up on a catchment basis to be delivered with and by landowners to reduce flood risk. NFM is required to be in all Flood and Coastal Risk Management projects. It is part of a wider drive to implement more nature-based solutions within the wider environment. NFM is most likely to be effective in rural areas where it can impact over a wider area, such as the restoration of floodplains or river corridors. The most nature-based option is the re-introduction of beavers which creates wet woodland and holds water upstream and reduces flooding.

Drivers related to equality and social justice

An important but often under-explored aspect of this shift in ecological decision-making, and policy development has been issues of landscape resilience as viewed from broader societal and cultural perspectives[25] including equality. These include access, exclusion, and connection to nature and natural landscapes and concludes that this is not evenly distributed[26] [27] [28]. The drivers for better landscape governance and justice are explored in the next section, but it is worth noting here that there are national and international drivers relating to social justice across sectors.

The United Nations' 2006 document *Social Justice in an Open World: The Role of the United Nations*, states that "*Social justice may be broadly understood as the fair and compassionate distribution of the fruits of economic growth*"[29].

There is no commonly agreed definition of social justice, but five commonly used principles are: access to resources, equity, participation, diversity and human rights. The Sustainable Development Goals[30], intended as a package not 'pick and mix', include these social justice goals[31].

In the UK, the Levelling Up agenda aims at addressing regional inequalities, including disparities in access to nature and quality landscapes. This policy emphasises the importance of investing in green infrastructure and environmental projects as a way of promoting social wellbeing and equity. This is working to ensure that benefits of such investments are shared across different communities[32].

One of the tools used by governments to lever social justice is Procurement Policy Note PPN 06/20 (Social Value in the award of contracts) which is designed to deliver social value through government procurement and applies to all Government Departments, Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies. The themes including health and wellbeing, community integration ("collaboration with users and communities in the co-design and delivery of the contract to support strong integrated communities") and effective stewardship of the environment. For landscape governance this means being justice-oriented, focusing on delivering equitable benefits and mitigating social disparities.

The intersection of environmental policy and social justice supports the need for a holistic approach to landscape change, recognising the interconnectedness of ecological sustainability, social equity, and resilience. The emphasis on social justice within public spending and policy initiatives underlines the desire for a shift towards inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development practices more widely. This creates a powerful driver for social justice being factored into environmental decision-making

This shift to involving minoritised and historically excluded communities cannot be achieved by power holders independently, if sharing power is involved, so this comes hand in hand with an increasing need for ethical and effective participation to ensure genuine inclusion. To deliver on this, increased knowledge, capacity and capability is needed.

Drivers related to delivering benefit for climate, nature and people

As well as regulatory and policy contexts listed above, there are many other reasons to enhance the effectiveness of landscapes governance, justice and decision-making.

Effective governance at landscape scales enables integrated thinking, coordinated policy development, synergies, and complementarities to be identified. It also enables collaborative multi-benefit action across administrative boundaries and between sectors and interests. This is needed more than ever to help align and integrate the growing number of overlapping initiatives related to landscapes including the following (in no particular order):

- The emphasis on tackling food, water, energy and climate change (so called 'nexus' issues) in an integrated and collaborative way at scale, strengthened by an influential 2011 report from the World Economic Forum[33]

- A focus on nature-based solutions (NbS) to restore nature and ecosystems adaptively at scale. This includes for example to sequester carbon, mitigate disaster risk (flood, landslides, reduce wind speeds, fire, coastal erosion) and foster health for other species and ourselves, with global standards now agreed internationally[34].
- Collaborative agri-environment schemes that foster and enable? cooperation between adjacent land units, to achieve large scale change and access government funding (for example, through Landscape Recovery) to realise a range of multi-functional benefits (including nature restoration, avoiding diffuse pollution, flood management, deer management, species introductions, nature corridors and habitat connectivity).
- River basin and catchment management which require the integration of multiple complex systems involved in the management of water quality, water quantity, flood control, water use, health and recreation. There is now also increasing pressure to reduce water pollution from sewage discharges and farm and poultry production runoff. Some water companies are funding farmers to reduce diffuse pollution and restore peatlands upstream as more effective forms of water quality management (than the expensive upgrading of water treatment facilities).
- Management of forests and woodlands for multiple objectives including timber, fuel, carbon capture, flood mitigation, recreation, nature, learning, and wellbeing.
- Strategic green infrastructure that delivers multiple benefits and works as a functional system for people, water, and nature to link and connect in and between urban areas.
- Major research investment into land use for net zero (e.g. UKRI's Net Zero Agriculture Network Plus and LUNZ) which will inform future land use decisions from the perspective of avoiding carbon loss and carbon sequestration particularly in relation to soil and plant health.
- Health and wellbeing which recognises that healthy people and communities are correlated with access to diverse green and blue space.
- The One Health Agenda recognises that healthy landscapes, animals and people are intrinsically linked.
- Despite a perceived conflict between food security and biodiversity, food security is currently threatened by degrading land and seascapes. On land this includes soil erosion, flood, loss of pollinators, and spread of disease. In coastal/seascapes key habitats are being lost which buffer land from storms, filter sea water, and provide food.
- A new focus on community and landscape resilience is aimed at reducing risks and enhancing the ability of communities and their landscapes to recover from natural disasters and other adversities.
- Water and air pollution mitigations through woodland and wetland creation at scale.
- Local economies, in particular those related to recreation and tourism, can be seriously affected by loss of landscape quality for example recent concerns about sewage and effluent spills into lakes, rivers and coastal land/seascapes.
- Social justice and inclusion agenda, recognising that those who will experience the greatest disadvantage from landscape degradation, climate change and nature loss are those already more marginalised.

In light of these changes and complexities, Natural England commissioned this report to introduce evidence and new thinking to enable thriving landscape futures and help to put Natural England at the forefront of landscape thinking. The ask included exploring ways for Natural England and others to frame and understand landscapes, landscape governance and landscape justice to better this goal.

The ask for this research also included explaining more about *"action orientated engagement processes where there is multidirectional dialogue between different stakeholders which has led to good decision-making"* as well as the methods and approaches that deliver good results.

2.3 Aim of this research

The drivers and context outlined above demonstrate the need and appetite for improved landscape governance, and the opportunities of catalysing innovation that harnesses this momentum. The aim of this research is to equip Natural England to lead and pioneer change that delivers for climate, nature and people. Due to the lack of standardisation in engagement methodology and practice, to create change, establishing what best practice is, what the characteristics are, and how these can be implemented. Therefore, this research will explore existing practice to identify barriers and enablers for landscape change to answer:

> 'What factors enable positive, proactive, and purposive landscape change?'

This report will also provide recommendations for how Natural England can pioneer the needed change and deliver on their ambitions.

3 Approach

3.1 Summary

The research team used a combined methodology to make the most of a range of data sources. A literature review summarises past practice reported in academia, but inherently cannot form a full picture as it can only review the past. A survey to gather case examples that provide a snapshot of a range of current practice. To look to the future, the research team ran a futures workshop with landscape and governance experts. The research team of dialogue practitioners also contributed insights gleaned their own extensive practitioner knowledge which is provided in a separate section (Section 5).

This combination of knowledge types and sources, from academics and project experiences, to landscape experts and dialogue practitioners enables a comprehensive investigation. The method used to gather each dataset is briefly explained in more detail below.

3.2 Literature review

The literature review was conducted following a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) (see Collins *et al.,* 2015) to provide an up-to-date overview and summary of relevant academic literature relevant to the research question: 'What factors enable positive, proactive, and purposive landscape change?'

The search terms to identify possible relevant sources of literature were: landscape approaches, landscape governance, landscape perceptions, landscape justice, multi-stakeholder participation and engagement. These were entered in search strings, meaning that if these phrases occurred in the title, abstract of main body of the paper they would be selected. The searches were undertaken in Web of Science' and 'Google Scholar' alongside manual data scoping of relevant individual publishing bodies. Web of science highlighted 6,328 results of which 32 were screened as being relevant. Google Scholar returned 9,240 of which 20 were screened as being relevant.

In order to manage project resources whilst ensuring a concise overview, the initial data search was limited to peer-reviewed research articles, published in English, between 2010-2024. These overarching inclusion criteria were designed to: (1) narrow the scope of the REA, (2) remove irrelevant data items, and (3) ensure data quality, relevance, and robustness. Each data search was sorted by "relevance", with the first 150 papers listed being examined in accordance with similar systematic rapid evidence assessment protocols (see Barkley et al., 2023; Collins et al., 2015). As such, whilst initial search terms returned 15,568 valid results, 300 were examined. From this, 52 applicable titles were selected, alongside 24 records identified from other sources (i.e., prior researcher knowledge, data item reference lists). Once duplicates were removed, the remaining 65 peer-reviewed articles were further screened for eligibility and relevance via title, keywords, and abstract. In total, 30 papers were included within the final literature list and utilised for in-depth characterisation and analysis.

3.3 Survey of landscape projects

To identify and learn from current landscape change projects, Dialogue Matters tailored a survey (which was originally part of research conducted for the Scottish Government in 2016 on engagement and empowerment in land management[1]) to the research question and research context. A copy of the survey format and questions can be found in Annex 2.

The survey was disseminated via Dialogue Matters and CCRI's combined network of approximately 1000 people working around governance, participation, and nature, and via their social media networks. The survey was also distributed to landscape change projects identified in desktop research, landscape-scale nature recovery projects NE is involved in, CIEEM and CIWEM award winners from the last five years, and cases collected in Dialogue Matters's Scottish Government research (updated submissions were invited). In total 41 project submissions were received from the data collection phase, and eight submissions were discounted because of insufficient information. Data from the remaining 33 submissions was summarised into an Excel sheet for analysis of governance, inclusion, and decision-making.

Qualitative elements of the survey were analysed using emergent processing which is an inductive method of coding qualitative data. This involves clustering similar points in each workshop session together so that discussion threads and themes emerge from the data and can be effectively organised. Emergent processing is similar to thematic analysis, except the whole of the data is represented through themes, rather than some thematic analysis use where summary themes lose referral to portions of the data. This approach was selected as it supports themes being informed directly by the data, rather than any pre-conceptions of the processor of what the qualitative data should contain, or what the relevant points will be. By building summaries that are informed by themes which are in turn informed by the data, this ensures accurate representation of the whole of the qualitative dataset. The data was processed and synthesised using this analytical method and a summary of survey data is in Appendix 1 (accompanying document).

3.4 Futures workshop for landscape experts

To rapidly explore the leading edge of landscape change thinking, Dialogue Matters designed and facilitated a short 2.5-hour workshop. The event took place on Tuesday 19th March and was hosted online via Zoom.

Approximately 20 landscape experts were invited to take part, of which 13 attended. Participants had backgrounds from statutory, academic, ecology, governance, participation, justice and inclusion specialisms and took part in facilitated discussions. Together they developed a vision for a positive landscape future, characterised exemplar approaches to landscape-scale change, suggested language and framings that could bring people together around the concept of landscape and identified barriers and solutions to change. They also explored NE's current and potential future role in enabling and supporting positive landscape change.

The essence of all participant points and ideas were recorded in writing by Dialogue Matters's professional workshop facilitators, with participants able to request writing changes if their point was misinterpreted, which ensured an accurate record. All outputs were downloaded and analysed using emergent processing (see above), and the findings are described in the results section of this report (Section 4.3).

3.5 Stakeholder Dialogue practitioner knowledge

A great deal of what is known about best practices is not in the academic literature but held in the knowledge, experiences and case examples of professionals who design and deliver landscape scale (and other) dialogue. Just as stakeholder knowledge makes for wiser decisions around landscape change, so dialogue practitioner knowledge does for the application of practice. The research team conducting this research are dialogue practitioners in the environment sector with knowledge from prior research, reports, articles, training materials, networks, and direct experiences. The research team's practice has won 8 awards across 5 different categories in the last 9 years and so is positioned at the cutting edge of dialogue practice.

Given the need to both document existing good practice in landscape governance, and innovate best and pioneering practice for Natural England, the research team are including this data source. This data is kept in a separate results section (Section 5) to preserve the integrity of the conducted research and create a clear split between the data collected from external data points, and the data synthesised from our own dialogue practitioner experience and expertise. Where a point can be easily referenced or other evidence provided, this has been included.

This information was collected by reviewing materials from Dialogue Matters' content in peer reviewed sources - including a book chapter[2], a published report for Natural England[3], and a published report for the Scottish Government[4]. The research team also reviewed content from Dialogue Matters' training courses in 2023 (Inclusive Engagement course and Best Practice Stakeholder Participation course). This information was collated and synthesised into the key principles found in Section 5.

4 Data collection results

4.1 Literature review

An overview and summary of academic research is provided here, covering methods for achieving positive landscape change, centred on an understanding and characterisation of landscape, alongside issues of landscape governance (decision-making), justice, and change perception. Specifically, the review aims to:

- Conceptualise academic narratives of 'landscape' and 'landscape approaches'.
- Highlight key takeaways and good practice across frameworks, approaches, and exemplar research case studies.
- Contribute to the broader reports vision of a positive shared future for landscapes and landscape thinking.

Given renewed interest in landscape change and environmental management, an evidence-based overview of academic literature, using the Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) approach (see Collins et al., 2015), provides insights into how landscape(s) will continue to adapt and mitigate the complex social and ecological socio-ecological challenges across multiple scales, from local to global. This is especially important for organisations such as NE that seek to mediate policy, practice, and research to enable for sustainable and positive landscape change centred on cross-stakeholder collaboration and adaptive co-management.

The literature review and this resulting chapter are structured around the following 'core themes' linked to the three aims above:

1. **Understanding & Characterisation of 'Landscape' & 'Landscape approaches':** The academic understanding and interpretations of landscapes and how these are operationalised through the various, and rapidly emerging, integrated and holistic landscape approaches

2. **Landscape Governance (decision-making):** Examining the issues associated with making decisions at the landscape-scale including the management, planning, and decision-making processes involved and the overarching institutional and policy frameworks required for effective land use and management

3. **Landscape Justice:** Considers the importance of understanding and accounting for issues of access and exclusion, ownership, rights and identities, and control within landscape approaches.

4. **Perceptions of Landscape Change:** Assesses the importance of understanding how different stakeholders perceive and value landscapes, especially in the context of global environmental challenges and local decision-making processes.

5. **Actions to Enable Landscape Change:** Reviews the evidence the core principles of good or best practice for delivering positive landscape change through consensus-based, integrated landscape approaches.

Landscape & Landscape Approaches

Understanding landscapes can be complex, posing a range of challenges for academics, policymakers, and practitioners. This is partly because landscapes are embedded with different meanings and identities, as a result the management of landscapes can be disputed and politicised[1]. Nevertheless, management at a landscape-scale is increasingly important in order to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss as well as other societal and environmental challenges[2] [3]. This section briefly outlines academic understanding and interpretations of landscapes before exploring how these are operationalised through the various, and rapidly emerging, integrated and holistic landscape approaches.

Assessing a cross-section of broader literature, it is clear that definitions and interpretations vary - from physical descriptions to abstract concepts that consider the complex and multi-faceted interactions between humans and the environment[4]. For some, landscapes represent a "defined section of the Earth's surface reflecting the sum of its parts... understood as a set of objects and/or characteristics existing independently from the observer"[5]. Others provide a divergent perspective, framing landscapes as "arenas", "bounded areas", and "scales of management" that humans have an affinity for, connection to, and within which they assess character, quality, and function based on the actions and interactions of natural and/or human factors[6] [7] [8] [9]. In such cases, landscape(s) are increasingly framed as interconnected social-ecological units, or 'systems of coherent character', that allow for a more holistic understanding of land-use change and inherent trade-offs[10] [11] [12].

In reality, landscapes are far more than fixed physical entities; they embody dynamic histories and carry cultural, social, political, economic, and ecological significance[13]. As a direct consequence, stories or narratives associated with landscapes vary between individuals and across institutions. Whilst not mutually exclusive, these include viewing landscapes:

- As a product of human-environment interaction,
- As functional spaces of production and forces for market gain (i.e., 'ecosystem services' and 'natural capital'),
- Through the lens of place-based identity and sense of place or belonging[14] [15]

Thus, 'enabling positive landscape change' requires consideration of these distinct narratives, covering the material landscape and its physical properties, alongside the interests and interdependencies of both people and places[16]. In order to achieve this, there needs to be greater consideration of socially embedded values and diverse knowledge systems in policymaking, planning, and management of landscape change are needed[17].

As with landscapes generally, the literature relating to landscape approaches is widely applied and inter-disciplinary[18] [19] [20] [21] [22]. In turn, defining and operationalising landscape approaches against a backdrop of complex social-ecological systems results in 'constructive ambiguity' – meaning that, whilst the general interpretation is understood in principle, there remains little consensus on what landscape or ecosystem approaches constitute in practice[23] [24]. Therefore, a universally accepted definition has been - and remains – rightly elusive.

Landscape approaches are most often broadly described as a holistic framework or strategy that integrates science-policy-practice for multi-functional land use and management within a

landscape of competing interests and agendas[25]. Examining this in more detail, Freeman & colleagues identify three overarching forms of landscape approach, including:

- use of the landscape scale,
- sectoral landscape approaches,
- integrated landscape approaches[26]

Other researchers also focus on the various dimensions, or 'framings' of landscape approaches. These approaches can be both theoretically or action-oriented: viewed as conceptual frameworks (theoretical), a series of principles or guidelines (action-orientated), but overall resulting in a context-dependent description of the process of taking a 'landscape approach'[27] [28].

Consequently , there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach or roadmap to enabling change and delivering outputs. Rather, landscape approaches and landscape-level initiatives come in different sizes and shapes: including:

- Integrated landscape, coastal, and catchment management;
- Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES);
- Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM); and
- Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA).

Similarly, a number of frameworks have been developed to incorporate thinking about values into landscape-scale research – including the "Life Framework of Values", the "Nature Futures Framework", and "Three Horizon's Framework"[29]. Collectively, they emphasise the need for inclusive multi-stakeholder involvement, and the delivery of multiple objectives and benefits[30]. In turn, these frameworks, approaches, and tools and may be applied in practice with a distinct focus, including: the preservation of natural and/or social and cultural values, promotion of social justice and participatory governance, or securing food security and local livelihoods[31] [32].

Landscape Governance (Decision-making)

Understanding the emerging diversity of landscape approaches requires an examination of the issues associated with making decisions at the landscape-scale. This is often referred to as landscape governance. Whilst both landscape approaches and landscape governance are concerned with the management, planning, and decision-making processes involved in landscape change, landscape governance refers to the overarching institutional and policy frameworks for effective land use and management[33] - in effect managing the actions of diverse public, private, and civic actors involved in landscape management[34] [35] [36]. Landscape approaches, by contrast, provide on-the-ground tools and methodologies to implement integrated and participatory initiatives at scale.

Landscape decision-making has a range of meanings covering different aspects[37]. This is because it often involves multiple stakeholder groups, wide-ranging, and potentially contradictory, knowledge types, and is context-dependent on the social-ecological, institutional, legal, and economic perceptions involved[38] [39] [40]. As such, democratic and participatory processes of involving stakeholders are key to identifying what works, where, and for whom[41]. This is, in turn, important in order to enable improved land-use decision-making, natural resource management, and identifying and achieving mutual co-benefits for individuals, communities, and landscapes[42] [43]. Recent

research[44] suggests that a multi-actor and trans-disciplinary approach to landscape use and management can help identify:

- common research needs;
- foster knowledge co-production;
- guide evidence-based decision-making and policy development;
- harmonize cross-sector integration/implementation.

However, this research stresses that stakeholder involvement does not guarantee impact, as the benefits are not guaranteed. If the approaches are poorly designed and/or implemented without considering the potential risks, participation and wider engagement may lead to unintended impacts, including distrust and conflict, the further exclusion of marginal groups, and failing to deliver on anticipated project outcomes[45] [46] [47]. Furthermore, stakeholder involvement alone is often insufficient to transfer academic understanding or landscape frameworks into action-oriented land use and management decision-making[48].

In practice, effective landscape governance represents a bespoke place-based negotiation and results in spatially distinct decision-making[49] [50] [51]. To strengthen landscape governance, a review of approaches highlighted the importance of understanding local context, purpose, and rationale - effectively balancing novel initiatives alongside building upon what works at the local level to improve existing processes in the landscape[52]. Landscape governance as a decision-making process needs to be framed as a combination of co-production, collaboration, and adaptive management making best use of informal networks, multi-stakeholder coalitions, or public-private partnerships. This allows communities of action and interest to engage in conversations in what constitutes 'good decision-making (governance)' and suggests priorities for future change. If successful this leads to more effective, informed, and representative land use decision-making[53] [54].

As a result, there have been numerous attempts at developing best-practice typologies, models, frameworks, theories, toolkits, and general guidance that aim to provide clarity and an overarching structure for undertaking public and stakeholder engagement/participation, many of which are reviewed in this report. For example:

- Arnstein's Ladder,
- deliberative democracy,
- participatory politics and citizen assemblies,
- the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)'s Spectrum of Public Participation,
- alongside recent examples proposed by Reed and Colleagues, including the Wheel of Participation, and subsequent Tree of Participation[55].

Collectively, these tools help explain and categorize the different 'types' of engagement (mostly from an academic perspective), describe the roles and expectations of different groups involved, and illustrate how such factors affect both the objectives and outcomes of the process.

Landscape Justice

While focusing on landscape-scale change is important for addressing environmental and socio-economic challenges, on its own it will not serve as a solution for inclusive engagement, top-down decision-making or a range of social injustices. However, there is increasing discussion and

inclusion in the academic literature on issues concerning environmental justice and a 'just transition' as being part of landscape representation and decision-making[56] [57]. Consequently, there are references to landscape as ‘meeting point to connect (sometimes called a nexus) environmental equity’, and providing 'the essential infrastructure for [human] wellbeing". These suggestions sit alongside the perceived potential for landscape-scale management to "embrace continuity from local to region, and .... include people and place". All of this illustrates the importance of understanding and accounting for issues of access and exclusion, ownership, rights and identities, and control[58] [59] and is covered within the term ‘landscape justice’.

Overall is reasonable to consider that landscape justice is a measure of social sustainability: centred on fair distribution of environmental, economic, and social benefits and burdens across the landscapes in question[60]. As part of landscape approaches, landscape justice seeks to promote equal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes for stakeholders. This would therefore need to include marginalised groups, indigenous communities, and vulnerable or harder-to-reach, sometimes termed’ overlooked’, stakeholders[61]. It is recognised that including multiple (inconsistent or conflicting) perspectives and knowledge systems within landscape management creates significant challenges[62]. As such, enabling positive landscape change is a collaborative effort to establish shared values amongst the stakeholders involved. Within the academic literature, this is sometimes portrayed as "balancing desirable states of landscapes", in which all values are integrated and accommodated. The main output is for the group to arrive at a common understanding of landscape and ensuring multi-functionality in terms of land use, management and decision-making[63]. This might involve reconciling potentially competing interests of sustainable food production, economic development, and recreation, increased space for nature, preservation of historical and cultural heritage, and renewed environmental stewardship.

In order to better understand these potentially competing and complex narratives, the analysis of landscape justice uses various categories, such as ‘central tenets’, or ‘forms of justice’, including:

- distributive (sharing of burdens and benefits),
- procedural (fairness of social decision-making)
- substantive (fairness of law - including the rights, protections, and remedies provided by the legal system)
- recognition justices (respect for cultural differences and minority groups)[64] [65]

More recently there has seen a coming together of landscape and environmental justice ideals within a broader assessment surrounding the context, scale and scope, and political representation of different aspects of justice[66]. In doing so, these analytical frameworks enable researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to assess justice issues from an increasingly interdisciplinary perspective and contribute to long-term, multi-scale solutions associated with landscape change[67].

Perceptions of Landscape Change

The assessment of landscapes, social perceptions and preferences for landscape change are diverse and continually evolving, often in response to varied ecological considerations, cultural heritage, and scenic values[68]. For example, research by Park and Selman[69] centred on attitudes towards landscape change and rural landscape in England. In this study they illustrated the complex perceptions of, and preferences towards, landscape, highlighting issues of path-dependency and often favourable attitudes towards a rural idyll, alongside both antipathy and openness for landscape change. As such, the following section emphasizes the importance of

understanding how different stakeholders perceive and value landscapes, especially in the context of global environmental challenges and local decision-making processes.

As already mentioned, recent developments in landscape research and policy have championed the need for inclusion and capacity building. Most approaches suggesting this involve the adoption of multi-disciplinary and spatial perspectives and advocating the need for more inclusive, citizen-led approaches to assess landscape perception. Nevertheless, historic challenges remain when attempting to mainstream landscape considerations into policy and effectively integrate the outcomes of public involvement into landscape decision-making processes[70]. This is often because the resulting assumptions are contradictory, possibly because they separate mind-body and nature-culture divisions[71]. In such cases perception is an essential concept for understanding environmental knowledge production as a defining component of understanding landscape, and key to any future strategy for land-use planning, protection, and management[72] . In linking issues of governance, justice, and societal perceptions of landscape change, participation plays a role in obtaining information concerning social perceptions of the landscape in questions and improving "participation culture". Where implemented carefully and respectfully, participation can be seen as a just pathway for collaborative engagement in landscape decision-making[73]. Therefore, for participatory discussions of values to effectively support decision-making processes, it is important to assess and consider the local context and institutional set-up: effectively tailoring the design to meet the needs of the audience and landscape under consideration[74].

Research on landscape change perceptions has evolved in response to wider context: incorporating recent theories and approaches, including:

- The use of overarching reviews on land use change and its socio-economic drivers
- Examination of various aspects of landscape change such as relative rates, monitoring land management in different settings
- Exploring future scenarios, alternative landscapes, and value perspectives[75]

However, research examining public attitudes towards landscape change is limited. Where it occurs, it is often specific to key stakeholders, geographic locations, or landscape types. This gap highlights the need for further research to understand how individual characteristics and socio-demographic profiles (e.g., age, social and economic status) influence perceptions of landscape and aspirations of future change. For this the research will need to move beyond traditional methods that have been critiqued for their inability to adequately incorporate pluralistic values of landscape change[76]. In response, new tools, and approaches, such as participatory scenario building, multi-criteria mapping, and theories of change, have been implemented to shape landscape futures - providing a forum that helps to integrate diverse interests and mitigate trade-offs[77] [78] [79].

Actions to Enable Positive Landscape Change

Despite the existence of the various principles, approaches, and case-studies, there remains little robust guidance for those involved in delivering landscape change to undertake the desired consensus-based, integrated landscape change. There is, however, some consistency across the academic literature related to principles of good or best practice[80]. Based on the review presented above, the following section summarises academic evidence for delivering positive landscape change.

The following key principles and evidence-led recommendations reflect the common consensus and emerging best practice surrounding issues of landscape change and synthesising the current guidance contained in:

- 'IPBES Nature Futures Framework', 'Life Framework of Values' and/or 'Three Horizons framework'[81] [82]
- 'Five Capabilities Framework[83]
- 'iCASS Platform'[84]
- 'Ten Principles of the 'Integrated Landscape Approach'[85]
- As well as the broader core principles associated with delivering positive landscape change, as identified from international case-networks, including the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI)[86], and Green Livelihoods Alliance[87].

Ultimately, these concepts provide a holistic framework and theoretical focus that:

- Considers the complexities of landscapes
- Integrates multiple perspectives
- Fosters legitimacy & trust
- Ensures equal access & capacity
- Develops the necessary social capital required in scaling positive landscape change

By incorporating these principles into decision-making processes and practices, they lay the foundation for a positive set of actions for landscape change that benefits both the natural environment, the surrounding landscapes, and wider society.

Given the wealth of peer-reviewed academic research, which goes beyond the scope of this research, there are a number of broader policy documents produced by charity, not-for-profit, and practitioner organisations resulting in toolkits on issues of decision-making, participation, and scenario modelling. A quick skim of these documents suggest that they are intended to complement and build upon, rather than replace existing guidance for landscape change. In practice, individuals, organisations, and institutions may apply these and additional principles in a variety of different ways: actively responding to local context and past successes.

This research sought to synthesise elements of best practice and provide 'key takeaways' by identifying cross-cutting themes that are common across frameworks, approaches, and embed case studies which implement 'positive, proactive, and purposive landscape change'. The organisation of the key takeaways below reflects a comprehensive and systematic approach to enabling landscape change – from conceptualisation to implementation - addressing various dimensions of governance, participation, adaptation, and collaboration.

Key Takeaways

Based on the review of academic literature, the 6 key takeaways are:

1. **Context for Common Concern** – Solutions need to be built on trust, collaboration, and shared negotiation/consensus building[88]. Prioritise identification and understanding of local context, purpose, and rationale, alongside identifying common concerns and ambitions, and co-developing a theory of change for the landscape in question[89].

2. **Multifunctional Perspective(s)** – Recognise landscapes as interconnected systems that encompass diverse social, economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions. In turn, landscapes have multiple uses and purposes, each valued in different ways by various communities of interest and action[90]. Trade-offs exist and may be best reconciled through individual and institutional culture change - moving beyond 'quick-fixes' or a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to value holistic perspectives[91] [92].

3. **Integration of Multiple Stakeholders** – Foster dialogue and multi-actor partnerships to uncover individual and collective landscape assumptions[93]. Actively involve diverse stakeholders, including (but not limited to): local communities, governments, NGOs, businesses, and researchers in decision-making processes related to landscape use and management. Here, participatory techniques can better incorporate people alongside the multiple perspectives of nature and social-ecological systems into decision-making processes[94].

4. **Participatory and Deliberative Decision-making** - Rather than historically top-down or sectoral approaches, prioritise inclusive governance models where stakeholders collaborate to co-create effective and representative solutions whilst addressing broader social injustices, inequalities, and power imbalances through inclusive decision-making processes and equitable resource distribution[95] [96].

5. **Adaptive Co-management** – Embodying flexibility and innovation promotes learning, knowledge exchange, and collective decision-making[97]. Embed principles of 'good practice' into existing governance, organizational culture, and decision-making structures while allowing for continued learning and renewal via the development of feedback, monitoring, and evaluation processes.

6. **Scale & Connectivity** - Operate across multiple scales (recognising the interconnectedness of landscapes across local, regional, and national levels)[98] [99]. Promote landscape connectivity, spatial relationships, and cross-scale interactions in decision-making processes, by developing long-term visions and goals for landscape management that transcend political cycles and short-term interests. Build individual and institutional capacity, share knowledge, and leverage resources to achieve positive landscape change[100].

4.2 Survey of landscape projects – case examples

The 33 case examples with sufficient information to include spanned all UK countries, a crown dependency, and a cross-border project in Ireland. There were also submissions from national and European landscape projects.

All main landscape types were included: upland, lowland, catchments, and rivers, coastal and marine. Across these were several urban projects. The focus of work spanned holistic approaches to landscape management that encompassed nature recovery, rewilding, green infrastructure, water (quality, quantity and flooding), climate (mitigation and carbon sequestration), forestry, fisheries, farmed food, regenerative agriculture, cultural heritage, outdoor education, access and recreation. For a table summarising the breadth of projects, please see Annex 3.

Results from the survey

Perceptions of Scale: Responding to the question about whether the project was landscape scale or not proved to be contextual. For example, one project, although working in a large area, described their work as 'local' because it was a sub-catchment of a much larger landscape. Likewise, another project described the recovery of an estate as landscape scale because that is how they perceive and relate to the area.

Entities: It was notable that 19 of the projects were informal partnerships, 12 of which had Terms of Reference (ToR). These governance arrangements are vulnerable to member and staff changes and may be perceived to lack legitimacy by other stakeholders. Other governance arrangements included: two projects taking a co-productive consensus building approach; two projects functioning by legal agreement under contract law; two registered charities; and one limited liability partnership that became an independent body.

Decision makers and numbers deciding: 19 of the projects surveyed stated that their decision group were 15 or fewer people. Three projects did not specify how many people were in their decision group. Across the 33 projects, 21 decision groups were mostly comprised of environmental professionals from public bodies, NGOs, and local authorities - with some also including landowners or resident groups but not enough different interests to be categorised as multi-stakeholder. Only nine projects responding to the survey had a mix of stakeholders from different interests making decisions about the future of the landscape they were working in. There were other cases where environmental professionals did not dominate in the decision group, but the decision group could not be called representative. In one case, for example, a group of landowners had come together to form a cooperative to instigate landscape change on the land they own.

Of the projects that responded to the survey, there were four where the decision group had a varied mix of interests represented. In all these cases, deliberative decision-making processes and wider engagement were designed, facilitated, and managed entirely by third-party participation and facilitation professionals.

Designing and facilitating engagement and participation: case examples suggest that many Project Officers hold significant power over how others are involved to decide, plan, and implement change. In 13 of the projects, Project Officers were involved in managing, designing, or facilitating stakeholder involvement. In only four of these projects did the Project Officers have training in

participation and facilitation. In seven projects, the Project Officers had some form of training in communication and engagement only, while in two project the Project Officers had no experience at all. The Project Officers taking on these responsibilities is in part due to resourcing and funding constraints, with two projects stating that there had been no budget to support external involvement in engagement planning and delivery. Responsibility then fell on the project team. Seven projects said they collaborated with other stakeholders in designing, managing, and facilitating their engagement process but it is unclear who these stakeholders were and whether they were other environmental professionals or a more diverse group.

Role of professional third parties: In 12 initiatives, professional third parties were involved in the planning of delivery and engagement. Of these, eight could be categorised as shared decision-making - showing a correlation between the diversity of stakeholders, numbers involved, amount of influence they had, and commissioning of a participation professional. Only four took a genuine co-design approach through multi-lateral action focused dialogue and deliberation, co-delivery with new shared and mixed governance arrangements, and the explicit intent to share resources and benefits with other interests and communities.

Wider engagement and power sharing: While decision groups were dominated by the 'usual suspects' (environmental professionals, local authorities, and NGOs), the survey suggests that projects are making efforts to involve a broader range of views through wider engagement. Roughly 70% of projects had involved one or more other stakeholder interests or groups - such as health prescribers, heritage, archaeological, arts, residents, recreation, and fishers - in wider engagement. Most of these projects also provided at least some form of support for people to engage. However, this involvement did not translate to a greater level of power sharing. In most cases these stakeholders had a low level of influence - being engaged to influence and inform decisions rather than being part of the decision group itself.

Diversity and inclusion: From an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) perspective, most projects had not involved voices from more marginalised groups in planning or implementing landscape change. Three of the 33 projects surveyed had involved people from different faiths or ethnicities, and three projects had involved people from disabled or LGBTQ+ interests. Nine projects had involved young people or seniors in some capacity. This is not necessarily an indictment of the projects surveyed. It may be the case that some of these groups are not significantly present in the demographics or mix of stakeholders living in or around the project areas. In these scenarios, involving more diverse groups for the sake of their involvement would be tokenistic. There was, however, a distinct lack of diversity in decision-making groups. For the most part, diverse stakeholders were only included via wider engagement and could only influence or inform decision-making. Only one project had people from an ethnic minority, faith, disabled or LGBTQ+ interest in their decision-making group, while five projects had young or senior people represented in decision-making.

Perceived barriers from case examples

Barrier	Number of cases	Description
Funding and resources	8	A lack of resources is a significant barrier to projects which face issues such as lacking capacity to submit funding applications, manage delivery, engage stakeholders and be responsive to competing demands. A number of projects were able to access funding but an insufficient amount for the scale of work or struggled to meet the requirements for funding. This barrier underpins and exacerbates many of the following barriers people shared.
Collaboration and partnerships	3	Challenges occurred in partnership working and managing collaboration between diverse organisations, personalities and across sectors.
Stakeholder Engagement	10	Projects encountered constraints related to stakeholder engagement, stakeholders face consultation and engagement fatigue which makes it challenging to get key stakeholders engaged and maintaining involvement over time. Numerous groups have differing visions for the landscape, and this causes complexity in moving forward, an example of this was conflicting views on public access. Communities volunteer their time and there's a challenge in realising benefits for them and translating their vision into delivery to make this volunteered time worthwhile. A focus on engaging farmers and investors has led to limited engagement with local communities and other stakeholders.
Time constraints	5	A significant barrier to projects is a lack of time and the need to complete time-consuming activities such as evidence gathering and stakeholder engagement. This is driving projects to plan and deliver at the same time and risks a loss of momentum.
Guidance and governance	2	Responses reported struggling to deal with complex projects while receiving a lack of guidance from governing bodies. Additionally, a lack of clarity in governance and legal agreements stifles progress.
Bureaucracy, delays and uncertainty	5	Dealing with bureaucracy and red tape within organisations and funding bodies is a substantial barrier. Long delays in governmental sign-off slows down work, and uncertainty in long-term government commitment creates ambiguity.

Weather and seasonal constraints	4	Some project work is seasonal, leading to delays due to weather events, flooding etc. Climate Change has led to more extreme weather which has made it more difficult to establish habitats.
COVID-19	3	COVID-19 caused a number of challenges including significant delays, required changes to approach and the short-term nature of project funding.

Perceived enablers from case examples

Enabler	Number of cases	Description
Funding	4	A key enabler for success is projects being supported by robust finance models.
Collaboration and partnerships	6	Successful collaborations and partnerships are enablers, where two or more parties come together with common aims and are able to share resources towards progress. These collaborations can be across organisation and sectors. They are best when established formally and benefit from the strength of involving interdisciplinary teams.
Stakeholder and community buy-in	9	Stakeholder and community buy-in is a significant enabler for projects. Projects reported that this is accomplished through convening the right stakeholders and creating a clear starting vision for discussion and evolution. Understanding diverse perspectives and finding common ground were key aspects of this for projects, alongside the need to think long-term.
Leadership and support	2	Strong leadership as well as support from environmental NGOs, trusted facilitators, and aggregators are critical enablers in progress and involving stakeholders.
Efficiency and overcoming bureaucracy	1	Responses underscored the importance of streamlined processes and reduced bureaucracy in simplifying operations within a challenging context.
Successful approaches	3	A variety of successful approaches were shared including, community led approaches, linking with Local Authority Place Planning and national monitoring programs, detailed opportunity mapping for intervention identification and evidence-based

		approaches. Remaining persistent, determined, and flexible in approach, while seizing opportunities and being patient in execution, were all reported as ways to enable greater progress.
Policy consistency	2	Policy that is consistent and clear enables projects to better navigate a way forward in a complex environment.

4.3 Futures workshop for landscape experts

Characteristics of an exemplar project

To both help projects deliver better practice and evaluate what they are doing, a common understanding of the characteristics of an exemplar project is needed. To understand what that might look like we invited national landscape and governance specialists to participate in a short, futures workshop to share their perspectives.

Notably there was some resistance at the idea of defining and thereby fixing what is an exemplar project. One group in the workshop discussed this in some detail: '*All of us are noticing we have problems with policy and the idea of an 'exemplar approach' – it suggests rigidity and fixedness. There is an attractiveness to not having a fixed idea of what an exemplar is or looks like - though this might make policymakers feel uncomfortable'.* The term '*exemplar allows you to feel like you're controlling or shaping things'.* It would be better '*to make guiding principles loose enough that there can be deviation from a norm, while having a sense that there is a decision-making framework for building partnerships to manage landscape change.'* So there are *'core underlying principles and guidance but flexibility with how these are applied'* for a particular landscape. If you're focusing on something being 'exemplar' someone has to set the terms of that. Instead there needs to be a shift '*away from procedural understandings of this to focus on organic continuous emergent processes'* and outcomes guided by a hierarchy of principles '*like the Sandford Principle'* (decision-making related to National Parks[1]). Measuring achievements would then be about measuring how well the principles were being applied and the effect they were having, rather than on pre-defined outcomes. The group also discussed whether risk-based framing would assist with this considering that these are even more narrow and defined.

All groups explored the kind of principles that would characterise an approach to landscape governance and justice for positive change. These have been summarised below in relation to ethos, governance, decision-making, management and outcomes with clarifications and additions from the research team.

Ethos

Embrace intangible values: Historically there has been '*a materialistic lens on landscape and how it functions and we need to embrace the intangibles that can't be monetised or even measured'.* This means moving on from an '*empirical understanding of landscapes'* to learn from the arts and include '*awe', 'spiritual connection', 'love joy and happiness' – terms 'not part of our lexicon'.*

The drive to green finance and a natural resource approach is eclipsing this at present but there is great benefit in embracing different values and 'r*ecognising when we come to a landscape over and over again there is an evolution of experience*' and we need different and evolving '*presentation and interpretation to support that'*.

Foster crosscutting and multi-benefit approach. This means '*taking opportunities for embedding cross cutting policy agendas. For example, nature and health being tied to landscapes'* and ensuring diverse people feel comfortable in landscapes.

Be adaptive and let go of control and fixed outcomes. This means recognising *'that landscapes are constantly changing with or without human intervention - this is a fundamental point for landscape planning'.* The '*notion of control is our dominant impression of how policy has to work, but it doesn't have to be like that*. *For example, you could have a policy that 5% of resources have to be seen to go into innovation to open out the arena.'* Policy can work this way creating *'broad principles which allow other players to fill in detail and learn as they go. That means getting away from a focus on monitoring and measuring outputs and instead manage through principles and good governance so people at ground level can work out what needs to be done and who needs to be involved and how to adapt.'*

Do long-term thinking and enable rapid change. '*We need quite rapid landscape change to address changes we're facing. Exemplar approaches would embrace that speed and take people with them.'*

Hear 'beyond human' voices. This is about recognising that nature itself has agency and is an active agent in landscape change. Other countries (for example New Zealand and Canada) '*are giving natural features (rivers, mountains, and lakes) personhood i.e. the same legal status as people'*. Practices are emerging to go beyond anthropocentric (human centred) decision-making to adopt a 'multispecies' ethos. This is not about putting species into landscapes to act as 'ecosystem engineers' for outcomes that humans have decided. It's about trying to '*hear'* what the species want and where and how they want to live by affording them their agency and opportunity to respond to landscape change – to be '*self-willed'* (for more on this see: Beyond human voices and multispecies dialogue).

Nurture and support systemic change in the way the economy and society are able to function to foster thriving landscapes rather than depleting nature and people at landscape scale.

Resilient Landscapes are about managing landscapes in a way that they and the human and beyond human life and communities in them can withstand or rapidly recover from adversity. Healthy ecosystems are more able to adapt to climate change, invasive species and pest and disease. Nature based solutions reduce flood and fire risk – although these may need to happen as part of ecosystem function and preventing them could lead to ecosystem brittleness.

Regenerative landscapes are those where the landscape is not only restored to a healthier and appropriately diverse state but is able to thrive and self-improve under changing conditions. This provides a way of assessing landscape health as regenerative or degenerative. This goes beyond healthy functioning soils and ecosystems to regenerating the health and welfare of the human and other life in the landscape and the health of the systems that support that life.

Connected, collaborative, and creative. This is about encouraging a '*diverse landscape where nature, society and culture interconnect.'* Developing the goals for landscape change

collaboratively with local people builds on existing spiritual, emotional and cultural connections to the land. Historically, it has been '*difficult to bring beauty into any form of discussion'*, moving forward we '*could be braver about letting artists lead.'* Storytelling and other forms of artistic expression allow '*different ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling'* and can help connect communities, cultures, and landscapes.

Power sharing and mitigating 'power over' dynamics. *'Many land use policies are driven by undemocratic processes.'* An exemplar approach accounts for power dynamics and requires *'evenness of power distribution'* and *'levelling out power between different players and interests.'* This means a commitment to meaningfully involving stakeholders who are most affected - '*not tokenistic representation'.* Stakeholders share the power to decide if landscape change is desirable, what it should be, how it should be implemented and share in the benefits.

Co-create change. This means embedding '*co-design as a normal part of the approach across all projects'* where the governance and strategic direction of landscape change is coproduced with communities in a participatory and inclusive way. Enabling a diverse group of people to work together in a process of change *'builds in a level of acceptability'* for landscape change plans and fosters a *'genuine feeling of ownership and achievement amongst all communities.'* It is important that this kind of work is ongoing and well-resourced.

Inclusion. '*Exclusivity underpins a lot of what we're trying to get away from,'* with approaches tending to be top-down and '*expert-driven*.' There are aspirations that '*governance involves broad representation.'* Diverse publics, people, ways of knowing and cultural visions of landscape should be included in processes of change – and participation should be genuine, not tokenistic. As well as meaningfully involving voices of marginalised people and communities, exemplar projects should also be provisioning for the inclusion of non-human voices in processes of planning and implementing landscape change.

Governance

Power. '*An elitist approach is not exemplar.'* Some landscape restoration projects have celebrated that '*they are fast moving and agile*,' selling this approach as a major positive without recognising the level of '*small group control*' that it has embedded. If decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of a small group '*then more decisions will be made in their interests'* as opposed to the broader interests of all. Exemplar projects '*act to counter power disparities between different relevant parties*' and share decision-making power to '*allow people whose landscape it is to say how they feel and what they want for it.'*

Aspire to equitable sharing of benefits. Currently, '*the impacts of landscape change are not equally felt.'* Principles of social justice should be embedded, and resources reallocated towards social and equity dimensions for a project to be considered exemplar. Effort should be made to '*bring about as close to real equitable and just impact, and provisioning for co-benefits - moving beyond framing through simple dichotomies or trade-offs e.g. land-sparing vs. land sharing, food vs. nature.*'

Community-led. It is '*encouraging that NE are considering bottom-up as well as top-down approaches'* and locally led landscape management initiatives are also emerging. Governance in exemplar projects should move toward a community-led approach where there is '*involvement*

from all [affected] communities in developing and achieving the outcomes.' '*There is a genuine feeling of ownership and achievement amongst all communities.'*

Just and adaptive. *'We need quite rapid landscape change to address the changes we're facing. An exemplar approach would embrace that speed.'* As outlined above, however, fast-moving, and agile approaches tend towards concentrating power in the hands of a small group. Exemplar projects require a level of reflexivity to move at pace and remain both adaptive and sensitive to issues of justice. Approaches to governance should incorporate '*evolving feedback from a wide range of interests*' and should be '*locally bound and rooted in communities*' to stay abreast of any emerging inequities resulting from processes of change.

Supported by an integrated national strategy. The governance of exemplar projects should be nested within wider integrated governance structures. There are aspirations that *'local action is supported by an integrated national strategy'* and that, vice versa, landscape projects support a wide range of strategic objectives - such as biodiversity recovery and achieving net zero.

Decision-making

Co-produce strategic direction with communities. There is a perception that government agencies '*parachute in and tell people what to do,'* imposing their vision for landscape change on people. There was broad agreement at the workshop that exemplar projects would co-produce strategic direction with communities, and that this would be done in a participatory and inclusive way - '*build[ing] in diversity from the beginning… [and] develop[ing] the narrative with the people involved in a co-creation process.'* Additionally, language to communicate project visions should *'draw on common experience rather than niche interest.'*

Involvement from all communities. Wiser decisions result from involving a greater diversity of knowledges and perspectives in decision-making. '*Both insider and outsider views are important'* and *'we need to balance the people who live and work in the landscape and those who visit.'* If people are involved in developing and achieving outcomes, they feel like they have helped shape the way forwards and feel a greater sense of ownership over the implementation of change and the resulting outcomes. Aspirations were expressed in the workshop that in the future there would be institutionally supported mechanisms to facilitate this kind of participation in decision-making.

Previously un-listened to and marginalised groups are helping to shape outcomes. Many people often do not get a voice in processes of change that will significantly impact the landscapes they live in or feel connected to. Exemplar projects develop ways of involving marginalised or seldom-included groups in decision-making. This extends beyond the human to include the rights of non-humans too.

Systems thinking. There has been a reliance on siloed and reductive approaches to conceptualising, managing, and making decisions related to the natural environment. There has also been a *'lack of joined up thinking within agencies'* and a *'lack of integrated process at every level.'* We *'should be better at thinking and acting in terms of systems and taking a more strategic approach.'* Systems thinking represents a valuable tool for driving large scale nature recovery, and exemplar projects should be exploring this approach to embed more holistic approaches to decision-making.

Management

Adaptive co-management. Policy approaches have created rigid and restrictive management structures and practices. *'Adaptive co-management of environmental and societal assets'* was felt to represent a more positive way forwards. Exemplar projects should be '*getting away from a focus on measuring outputs etc. and be managing through principles.'* Being less prescriptive and establishing principles of management gives space to flexibly respond to change and unexpected outcomes - *'allowing people at ground level to do what needs to be done and involve who needs to be involved.'*

Monitor change and feedback into the decision-making. Exemplar approaches *'embed continuous evaluation across all projects,'* and integrate feedback from a wide range of interests into decision-making. Monitoring processes should be holistic – incorporating and integrating socio-economic, cultural, ecological and climate factors. Workshop participants felt that NE could support these feedback mechanisms by continuing '*to review evidence of past knowledge… to feed into initiatives.'*

Community and citizen scientists. Management of exemplar projects would value local people's connection to the land and sense of place. Community and citizen scientists can play a key role in monitoring changes in the landscape. This further *'builds a sense of place'* and gives communities agency in processes of change. It also builds trust between communities and landowners while integrating knowledge held by community and citizen scientists into decision-making.

Outcomes

Multi-benefit outcomes – benefit stacking. Projects should deliver multiple benefits with '*cross-cutting approaches'* rather than single interest outcomes. This means moving beyond current dichotomies (e.g. land-sparing vs. land sharing and food vs. nature) and a typical landscape perspective to create new coalitions and groups working to bring change and share results.

Organisational policies contribute to living systems vitality. Policy supports a shift from degenerative practices to sustainable and regenerative approaches.

Distinctive landscapes and local character areas allowed to develop. Evolution and change are embraced. Distinctness is allowed to evolve so that '*landscapes are adapted to changing local climates.'*

Enjoyed by a much broader range of people. Landscapes are more easily accessible for a greater number of people and '*resources are allocated for outreach and access by ethnic [and other] minorities to visit all kinds of landscapes.' 'More people are connected to landscape change projects beyond the "usual suspects."'* People feel like they are part of the change.

Better delivering for nature, climate, and people than current approaches. This includes contributions to climate resilience (e.g. via carbon sequestration and flood risk reduction), benefits for beyond-human life (e.g. biodiversity recovery), and social impacts – such as happier, healthier people.

Integrates food production and environment improvements. Innovations and approaches currently emerging have the potential to support this, such as agroecological principles, the

Environmental Land Management Scheme, and other agricultural payment schemes incentivising landscape and nature recovery.

Works at scale for ecosystem function and social and economic flourishing. Localised species and habitats matter, but wider ecological and landscape processes and the benefits derived from them need to be emphasised alongside more place-based management. High-level drivers such as climate change are in view, and it is '*not just about the pretty bits but about making everywhere better.'*

Barriers perceived by landscape experts

Barrier	Description
Inequalities and Privilege	Existing inequalities and privileged positions are barriers to change, particularly around access to land. There's a lack of understanding that equality diversity and inclusion applies to everyone and everything, not just about small specific groups but is all encompassing.
Structural and ownership challenges	There is a lack of clarity around land ownership, sometimes we don't know who owns the land or has a vested interest. There are powerful actors and institutions in land ownership who traditionally make the decisions, it can be a challenge to change mindsets.
Capitalism	Navigating capitalist systems can be a barrier to change, with the dominant world view that everything needs to be monetised and commodified. The whole financing system tends to make sure the people who are in control get the incentives and rewards, there's a focus on individualism and profit.
Economic constraints	The current economic situation and fiscal position provide challenges, there's a lack of money and lots the government needs to spend on.
Cultural and identity barriers	There's a history of narrow mindsets and rigid cultures in the people and organisations that have power. Identities are embedded in how people and communities work, and this can lead to entrenched views.
Lack of coordination and integration	The lack of joined up thinking within and between agencies is a significant barrier.
Participation challenges	Many organisations aren't good at participation, or don't listen to the results of participation efforts.

Despondency	Lots of examples of relevant groups not meeting, young people's despair getting in the way of change, and fake information via social media causing issues.
Devolution in the United Kingdom	Devolved nations are not treated in the same way and aren't as well resourced.
Knowledge and skill gaps	There's often an assumption of landscape knowledge, but often there's a gap in knowledge, skill acquisition and development, and implantation.

Enablers perceived by landscape experts

Enabler	Description
A change in governance approach	Facilitate a governance approached that operates on multiple levels. An approach that embraces changing, emerging and co-constructed framings of the problems and solutions required for positive landscape change.
Engagement, participation, and decision-making	Mainstream participation as a way of dealing with landscape scale change, give up control and provide active empowerment instead of passive. Promote a diversity of narrative around what landscape means to people and enable young people to contribute to the discussion.
Focus on process rather than outcomes	Focus on ways in which policies or finance could be more flexible. Centralised structures need to be more flexible and acknowledge complexity.
Leadership and visioning	Through bold leadership and visioning, provide alternative futures, not just within the paradigm.
Encourage reflection and time for thought	A precursor to social movements and driving change is giving people time to think it through.
Learn from success stories	Places across the world are having great results with new and innovative thinking, learn from this and build it in with what we know works already.

Reframe perceptions of landscape	Seeing landscapes as ‘everywhere’, helping everyone see that they can do something within their own landscape.
Policy advocacy and public awareness	Push the theme of landscape up the policy agenda and create more public awareness across the board. This can be achieved through getting influential people on side to promote and amplify and changing the mindset of land managers.
Long-term thinking in politics	Embed long-term thinking in politics.

4.4 Differing results from data sources

Findings from the workshop demonstrate ambition and had strong resonance with findings and recommendations from the research evidence summarised in the literature review. However, when comparing workshop and survey findings, there is a clear gap between the ambition and imagination shared in the workshop and how many landscape projects are fulfilling or are able to fulfil this ambition in practice.

5 Stakeholder Dialogue practitioner knowledge

5.1 Observations of research results

Whilst not mentioned in the short workshop, findings from the literature review resonate with Dialogue Matters' own experience of the importance of concepts such as procedural justice, power sharing, and understanding of psychology and negotiation for successful outcomes. In this additional results section, we outline the key concepts that directly inform our practice.

Challenges in identifying exemplar projects

Genuinely exemplar projects are not easy to identify. On top of this, there have been many studies detailing how evaluating self-competencies is an intrinsically difficult task[1] and that this extends out into evaluating our own projects. That is because whilst they are sincere in their endeavours, most are unaware of the academic and practitioner literature about best practices.

Additionally, due to decision shortcuts known as heuristics, humans have confirmation bias where we favour information that fits existing world views[2], functional fixedness where we struggle to see beyond the way things are currently done[3], and optimism bias where we overestimate our knowledge and success[4]. Only by accepting not having full knowledge is a person able to acquire new knowledge. In the knowns and unknowns framework of knowledge, four categories are identified. Known knowns (explicit knowledge), unknown knowns (tacit knowledge), known unknowns (an identified lack of knowledge) and unknown unknowns (an unidentified lack of knowledge). In this framework, a recognition of the extent a lack of knowledge can only come about through trying to build knowledge in that very area, otherwise no shift in knowledge will occur.

From practitioner experience, we find that well-known projects (including some who answered the survey) are often those that invest their engagement funds with a PR ethos so connect with a lot of people, speak at events, and have visibility. An assumption is then made that with high profile they must be exemplars. However, at a functional level, there may be little or no power sharing. From our experience with projects and ITQs, decision-making in these contexts is business as usual: i.e. a partnership of environmentalists from the project, public bodies and NGOs are making the decisions and use their engagement budget to try to persuade others to accept their decisions. By contrast, projects that spend their engagement budget upfront on inclusive and action focused deliberative dialogue, or full co-creation, have less budget for gaining visibility.

There is also a correlation between the approaches taken to governance and participation with the character and motivations of project leaders. Those who are more extrinsically motivated enjoy the status and visibility of being seen as pioneers and innovators, promote their projects, and are comfortable with an 'experts know best' approach. Those who are more intrinsically motivated are more comfortable with sharing decision power, working collaboratively, have an enabling and empowering value system to bring about change. In seeing themselves as equals with other stakeholders they are less likely to promote their own work. This is a further reason why landscape projects with higher visibility are not necessarily leading best practices.

The importance of dialogue designers and facilitators

We have carried out research into participation case examples on several occasions with respectively 29 responses [5], 14 responses[6] and the survey for this research, 33 responses. In all three research projects we found projects that sincerely believe they are exhibiting good practice. However, when analysed through a lens of power, landscape governance arrangements, participatory decision-making, inclusion and justice, they fall short. The reasons for projects to be in this situation includes because they:

- Are well intended and doing their best to apply what they know, but lack training, knowledge and expertise around power analysis and power sharing, ethics, methods, processes, and practices.
- Are unable to analyse their situation and context (levels of tension, complexity, or scale for example), are unaware of the range of participatory approaches and the strengths and weaknesses of each, and so are unable to commission or design deliberative dialogue processes in which the optimum method or combination of methods are applied for the context.
- Employ engagement and communications officers who know about methods for better public relations via information giving and gathering, but are not trained in multi-party negotiation and decision-making.
- Are unaware that this is a now well evidenced and established professional practice - and so re-invent how to involve others.

Where projects that responded to the survey are delivering good practice, they have either worked with expert professional dialogue designers and facilitators or had someone trained in those skills.

5.2 Summary of key concepts underpinning good practice

Over the last two decades there has been increasing recognition that communities and stakeholders are an integral part of social-ecological systems, hold valuable knowledge for wiser decisions, resources for action, and have the right to be involved in changes that affect their lives, livelihoods and landscapes. Most people in the UK have experience of top-down approaches triggering negative reactions and blocking progress, but there is now evidence that good practice in governance, participation and justice improves buy-in and collaborative action.

The benefits of Best Practice Dialogue are numerous and differ between the planning stage and the implementing stage of landscape change. A key point is that benefits are not guaranteed but depend on the level of influence that people have and the quality of the decision processes they are involved in[7]. The more power shared; the more benefits are realised. This correlation is explored in more depth in Section 5.4.

The benefits of landscape management listed below do not result from all levels or types of engagement. They result from Best Practice Dialogue. That means it is designed, deliberative, participatory, action focused, inclusive and multi stakeholder. Based on our experience spanning 24 years and working with over 150 projects, when Best Practice Dialogue is used it results in:

- **Better informed decisions**: outcomes are better informed from a much broader range of knowledges resulting in wiser decisions[8] [9]
- **Finding new solutions**: people are more open minded and creative if they are working (safely) in a diverse setting[10]
- **Systems Thinking**: the opportunity to understand the system connection, pattern, and function so intervention points are smarter and cause positive ripple effects
- **Social justice**: Those seldom included and listened too are often those who experience the worst environmental risks of pollution, flooding, fire, noise and degraded landscapes - this is not just but can be addressed through effective process
- **Potential to harness a wider array of resources** for change and find opportunities for co-design and co-delivery of different aspects of the change
- **Sense checking solutions** so that otherwise unforeseen outcomes, are seen and can be factored in if positive or designed out if not
- **Conflict handled:** people are enabled to shift from working on each other in escalating conflict to working on the shared challenge
- **Outcome acceptance:** People are more willing to accept outcomes that are not their own first preference if they think the process has been fair and legitimate[11]

5.3 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice is about the fairness and transparency of the process and procedures by which decisions are made and disputes resolved. It comes from a legal setting and the idea of hearing from all parties and there being a high quality of interpersonal interactions leading to perceptions of fairness and legitimacy in conflict resolution. This mirrors findings from research in an environmental context that where people experience a process as fair and having legitimacy, they are more able to accept outcomes that are not their own first preference[12].

In a marine ecosystem governance context, researchers found that efforts to increase participation are often associated with a low level of trust and legitimacy[13]. Recent research argues that processes of involvement by themselves do not build trust, also a greater understanding of procedural justice is needed with attention to the fairness of how participatory decisions are made and by whom[14]. They propose a procedural justice framework with three main characteristics:

- **Process properties**: Transparency, accountability, neutrality, correctability, ethicality, trustworthiness
- **People's agency**: voice, decision control and capabilities and capacity to take part
- **Interpersonal treatment**: respect and politeness

They go on identify seven levers for procedural justice: contextual fit; scalar fit; conflict resolution; unbiased neutral facilitation; free, prior, and informed consent; integrating knowledge systems; and adaptable and flexible processes.

For landscapes projects to meet or exceed the criteria for procedural justice, they need to be developed through Best Practice Dialogue based on Consensus Building principles and practice, and be inclusive of different knowledge, people, and sectoral interests. Such processes foster

mutual respect and levels the power dynamics so that people experience agency and influence. Based on this and previous research, landscape projects need to understand and apply procedural justice considerations in the way they engage other knowledge holders.

5.4 Understanding and sharing power

Governance and justice are all about power – who has it, who doesn't, how it is used and is it held or shared and at what stages of planning and implementation. However, there is little explicit awareness of how the use or sharing of power affects landscape outcomes in both the phases of planning and agreeing change and during implementation.

Power determines whose voices get heard and how knowledge is created or used[15] [16] [17] [18]. Crucially, power dynamics affect both the nature and quality of decisions, and the acceptance of decisions[19]. Sharing power is also more effective at getting to beneficial outputs and outcomes than other factors such as structured communication alone or communication intensity[20].

However, in this research the survey responses show that even where projects are engaging a broad range of stakeholders to provide their views, a simple power analysis shows the core environmental professionals have retained decision-making power. This shows the need for projects to understand power, power sharing, and the difference between superficial engagement and inclusive deliberative approaches to landscape change. Four of the case examples[6] took a different approach of sharing power through multi-interest designed and facilitated dialogue with related benefits.

So before involving people in landscape futures, it is vital for projects to understand more about power, the difference sharing it makes to outcomes, and how assumptions around power alter a landscape project's willingness to share power with others.

Sharing power

People tend to assume that power is fixed and a zero-sum game: one person loses power as another gains it. However, power is created at the interplay between relationships and power structures so it is not fixed and it can be cumulative [21].

Because power is dynamic, landscape projects have choices about whether they hold onto power, share it, or give it away. They can also use their power to block or enable action. And there are ways to share it without fearing that they are losing power or 'selling out' nature or landscape character.

Figure 2 below illustrates that power relations can be deliberately changed. The top level is where environmental public bodies (and/or third sector organisations) have 'power over' others and hold all the decision-making power. The next level involves the organisation/s engaging others to inform and influence their decisions whilst holding power to make the final choice. Both of these levels

[6] For transparency, we designed and facilitated 3 of these case examples

can trigger resistance. The bottom level is where decision-making power is shared in a collaborative process.

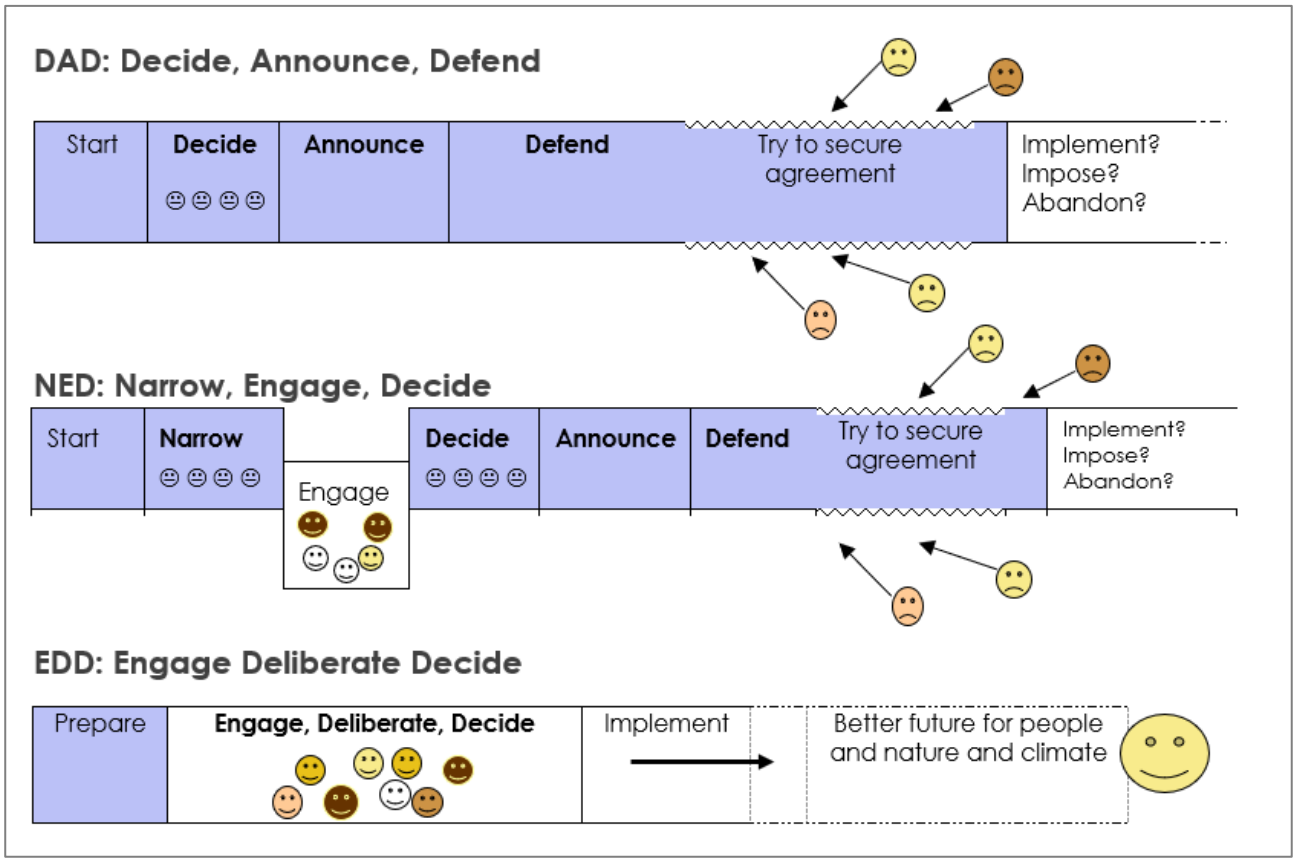


Figure 2: Power in decision-making – ways that public bodies can hold or share power to decide[22]

One of the reasons that skilled facilitators make a difference is because they can design a process, and use skills and facilitation techniques, in ways that respect all whilst moderating the more powerful voices and enabling quieter less confident individuals to express their views and be listened to with respect. In this way, individuals gain confidence within the process from the outset and ideas are taken on merit not the personal power of the person proposing an idea.

Understanding these different types and ways of thinking about power is a helpful precursor for public bodies like Natural England, and landscape projects, to think about what it means for them and the choices they make when involving others in landscape decisions. They have choices about whether they hold onto power, share it, or give it away, and whether they use their power to block or enable action recognising that when they share power to decide and implement change it will enable better outcomes for people, livelihoods, land, and landscapes.

Across the UK, communities and stakeholders are increasingly involved in planning landscape change, but once the planning stage draws to a close, and the implementation stage starts, any shared power defaults back to a core group of environmental professionals (from public bodies and the third sector). Other stakeholders and communities may have had real influence during the planning process, but not in the implementation stage.

In earlier research for the Scottish Government[23], we adapted and applied a framework for thinking about responsibility and power using an alternative model[24] and further adapted it for this research (see Table 1). No model is perfect, but the advantages of this one include:

1. It separates how power is shared during the process of planning landscape change and how it is shared at the implementation stage and recognises that different approaches may be needed at each stage.

2. One category is not inherently better than the others, rather each category can be seen as fit for particular purposes.

3. Projects can move between categories or have different parts of a larger project function in different categories.

4. The model recognises that sole and complete community control may be the optimum in some circumstances (for example community management of parts of local areas within a landscape/seascape).

5. It helps identify what organisations could be doing in each category.

6. It accommodates an understanding of empowerment which functions at different geographic scales.

In the model, the following categories are used:

- Environmental professionals who are the stakeholders in land use and land management from public bodies, local authorities and third sector conservation organisations who have similar perspectives, often share power, and work as partners and allies.
- ‘Other stakeholder and/or communities’ from other perspectives and interests

Table 1: Power Framework[25], the role of landscape organisations and theoretical examples.

		Responsibility for designing and planning change		
		Environmental professionals (from public bodies and the third sector) design and plan	**Shared design and planning**	**Other stakeholders and/or communities design and plan**
Responsibility for implementation of change	**Environmental professionals deliver**	Traditional professional service **Role:** Decide for and deliver for (e.g. emergency response to a flood)	Shared design and planning. Professionals responsible for delivery **Role:** Decide 'with' but hold the resources and power to implement (e.g. collaborative design of a new forest area followed by professional implementation)	Other stakeholders and/or community design, professionals deliver **Role:** Hear what is wanted and then use specialist skills, resources and power to deliver (e.g. a community want help eradicating an exotic invasive species and work has to be consented and carried out by specialists)
	Shared delivery	Professionals design, shared delivery: **Role:** Decide 'for' then build capacity to share delivery (e.g. a citizen science monitoring program)	All share in planning and in delivery (Full co-production) **Role:** Co-decide and co-deliver (e.g. integrated management of a land or seascape)	Other stakeholders and/or community design, shared delivery **Role:** Hear what is wanted then share and support delivery (e.g. community level flood resilience)
	Other stakeholders and /or communities deliver	Professionals design, other stakeholders and/or community deliver **Role:** Decide 'for' then hand over to communities (e.g. an agri-environment scheme)	Shared design. Users/community deliver **Role:** Decide 'with' then hand over to communities (e.g. deer management groups)	Self-organised, other stakeholders and/or community deliver **Role:** Keep in contact and offer support (e.g. regenerative farm or estate management – or community woodland management)

Practical guidance on how landscape projects can increase power sharing in each category can be seen in the research report for Scottish Government[26].

Levels of influence in the planning phase

In each of the boxes in the power framework above (Table 1), there will be deciders, influencers, information providers, and recipients and everyone needs to be clear on the level of influence afforded to those taking part. This comes down not to the methods used, but to who will use the outputs, how they will be used, and to what extent. The academic models are not very useful tools for this type of practical assessment which allows everyone to be clear on who has got what influence. The following model (Table 2) is used by practitioners to bring clarity about the roles and can be used to map stakeholders against.

Table 2: Form of engagement (mentioned at least once in the interviews/surveys) mapped against the roles of power holders and level of influence that others have

Role of power holders		Level of influence others have	Form of engagement
Share decision-making	The group holds sign off	Share making all key decision	Deliberative workshops
	Someone external to the group holds final sign off or veto	Share decisions about what to recommend	
Consult to be open to influence		Provide suggestions to influence decision makers	1:1 meetings, workshops, focus groups. charrettes
Gather information to develop decision makers' understanding		Provide information to decision makers	Semi-structured interviews, drop in meetings, and online questionnaires
Give information to raise awareness educate and inspire or persuade others		Receive information	Walks, talks, farm visits, events, conferences, festivals, social media, newsletters

There are many benefits claimed for engagement, but these map onto the level of influence people have. The more influence stakeholders hold, the higher the benefits to social capital, knowledge shared, decisions are better informed, solutions are more likely to be integrated and there will be a greater commitment to action.

Co-production, co-design, co-delivery

There are many and growing numbers of definitions of co-production, however this approach is fundamentally about changing power relations to share power with others:

> Co-production is about working together as equals to share resources, power and responsibility to both plan and implement change…. and enjoy the benefits
>
> (D. Pound, 2016[27])

The phrase co-production and related terms (co-design, co-creation) are being picked up and used in the environment sector but on closer enquiry the meaning has usually been lost. The phrase seems to have become a way of saying 'we are involving more people than we otherwise would have done' in this endeavour. Evidence of this comes from recent LNR strategy processes where in the text of calls for neutral third-party professionals, states they want a 'co-production' approach but the governance is strongly hierarchical and comprised of the usual people. This renders input by others as mere information for their decision-making.

Engagement versus Co-design
Summit to Sea vs. Tir Canol ('Middle Ground')

This rare case example illustrates the effects of two radically different approaches.

Summit to Sea (S2S) took a sectoral approach with environmentalists making decisions about the vision and rewilding future of a sheep farming landscape in central Wales. S2S took the typical approach of engaging and consulting – aiming to persuade sheep farmers and others to agree with their plans. This approach catalysed a massive push back with sheep farmers fearing collapse of their way of life and communities. The project collapsed with significant collateral damage to trust, people's wellbeing and nature recovery.

After this failure there was a major reset. The culture is one of humility, listening, learning together, self-reflection, and having no fixed goals. After two years of this co-design approach, conservationists, farmers and others are working well together in a process of experimentation and learning to find what works.

See Annex 8 for more detail.

Figure 3 : Engagement and consultation vs. Co-design

To deliver genuine co-production those who previously held power need to change their role during the process of planning landscape change to one of first convening and then co-creating decisions with others through procedurally just deliberative consensus building. In the implementation phase the core governance reflects the mix of interests involved in deliberating and so inclusive of different knowledges. The core governance is then focused on guiding and enabling implementation of what has been agreed by all, supporting action and checking it is aligned with agreed priorities, and checking that benefits are enjoyed by all.

5.5 Principled negotiation and statutory responsibilities

From previous research and our direct experience when training environmental professionals, we frequently hear two main concerns about involving and sharing power with other stakeholders and communities: that it risks 'selling out' and will result in unacceptable compromises and for those from a public body, they can't do it anyway because of their statutory obligations.

Both would be legitimate concerns if the process of planning landscape change is poorly designed and not based on principled negotiation. In these situations, any negotiation will be based on positional understanding of negotiation where there is a zero-sum game and assumption of trade-offs with outcomes being the result of power tactics.

However, processes based on designed Consensus Building principles and practices work differently. This is because they help people shift behaviour from adversarial negotiation tactics to cooperative ones (see Table 3) and seek to maximise outcomes as close to win/wins as possible.

That means working to maximise mutual benefit and asking 'both and' questions rather than an assumption of trade off 'either/or' outcomes. For example, asking questions like how can we have a nature rich and food producing landscape? Or, how can we have active recreation and quiet tranquillity and wellbeing? When there appears to be an impasse, particular facilitation techniques are used to help people brainstorm and explore potential solutions before firming up the best.

Government Making Decisions with Others.

This project is the story of a government making decisions with (not for) other stakeholders, co-creating Jersey's first tree strategy for across the Island and all landscapes. The strategy celebrates the multiple benefits of urban and rural trees, woodlands, and hedgerows and fulfils climate and nature commitments.

Harnessing different values and knowledge, the dialogue enabled people - including government officers - to co-create the vision, principles, and priorities, identify ways to build on and integrate existing good work, and make offers for implementation.

Impacts of this project include changes to planning law and environmental policy, and a government commitment to share responsibility for the planting, management, and protection and benefits of Jersey's trees with stakeholders.

Figure 4: Jersey Government making decisions with (not for) others

The basis of this thinking comes from work done at Harvard[28] around negotiation and draws on law, behaviour science and conflict management (including international conflicts) and applied to the development of multi-stakeholder environmental Consensus Building practice in the mid-1990s[29]. As explored in the next section (5.6), the shift in language from participation to engagement has lost this understanding.

Table 3: Behaviour in positional (win/lose) versus principled (win/win) negotiation

Positional/ adversarial negotiation	Principled/ Co-operative negotiation
• Withhold information	• Share information
• Make threats	• Ask questions
• Argue from positions	• Explore interests and needs
• Attack the others' knowledge or them	• Explore knowledge and perspectives
• Defend position	• Seek solutions
• Work on each other	• Work on the challenge
• Win/lose	• Work toward win/win

5.6 Engagement vs. participation

The term engagement is now widely used in the environmental sector, but this is problematic in relation to power awareness and planning for procedural justice. That is because the word engagement can mean anything from superficial connection with people (to collect views or provide information, to seek to influence, persuade, educate or entertain) through to serious consensus building and co-creation processes in which power is shared to design and deliver

landscape change: decisions that will affect lives, livelihoods, nature and landscape function and character.

As evidence for this shift, all the global Multi-Lateral Environmental Agreements (CBD, Ramsar, CCC), the Aarhus Convention, and environmental EU Directives, use the language of participation. Practitioner literature also used the word participation to mean participating in decision-making processes, and a recent report for Natural England[30] shows that of the 66 references, 49 use the word participation in their title, 13 engagement, and 4 co-production, with a correlation between the age of references and whether they use the term participation or engagement.

The question is whether this matters or not? It does when the words map onto activities, practices, values and the extent that projects share power. The history of this change appears to be from corporations: their public relations, related project management practices (like Prince 2) and in seeing the benefit of shifting from passive marketing to actively 'engage' people in their products and services. These roots bring with them the 'interest and influence' matrix as the way to identify and treat stakeholders – but this is not a socially or procedurally just method (see the following Section 5.7).

This emphasis on 'engagement' also results in projects focusing on the number of people they connect with whilst the status quo in governance, power and inclusion stays the same. It also obscures the need for different skills sets and ethics to work with deliberative processes

5.7 Inclusion – who is in and who is out?

We define being inclusive as "sharing more power with a greater diversity of people". That's because if people are only included in activities with little or no influence on outcomes, then all that has been achieved is a more diverse group of people have had their time wasted. Identifying who to include in an equitable and balanced way is a key to success.

The 'influence and interest' or Boston matrix is now widely used - but is seriously flawed when it comes to diversity and inclusion of different knowledges and perspectives. It cannot lead to a socially just approach to landscapes. This is covered in more detail in Annex 7.

A better approach is to broaden out the deliberative group so that it is balanced and includes the different perspectives and knowledges needed for wise decisions. This is based on knowledges not pre-existing power. A real example from a land/seascape project is that bait-diggers have great knowledge of what goes on around the coast. However, whilst they would never be key players on the influence/interest matrix, they are out every day, see what is going on, how the coast is used, and the natural changes around them. They are then key knowledge holders. Another example is a river project wanting to help build resilience in communities. Flood maps don't pick up where surface water pools, routes that would be closed to emergency vehicles or escape, and capacities local communities have to respond – only local knowledge can provide this crucial information.

There are sophisticated ways to identify stakeholders doing key actor analysis and other tools used by researchers[31] [32]. This rigour is relevant to well-funded action research but not feasible in the budgets afforded to practitioners who use a quicker simpler method[33].

Identifying people by their different types of knowledge including from the perspective of communities or place and interest, mitigates the effect of power and results in a more balanced

and inclusive set of people deliberating over options. To include diverse community voices involves using demographic information.

Being inclusive in practice

Genuine inclusion is about who is in the room to influence the future; if and how it includes all relevant forms of knowledge and seldom listened to voices; how and the extent to which, power is shared; and when outcomes are agreed, who enjoys the benefits and whether this is equitable.

Whilst there is a welcome change in environmental organisations wanting to be more inclusive, through Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives their focus to date has largely been internal and about protected characteristics (age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).

When it comes to landscape governance there is a myriad of other factors that can exclude people. Understanding these and working to overcome barriers results in many more voices shaping and influencing the landscape future. Table 4 is unlikely to be complete but lists the kind of barriers participation practitioners come across.

Table 4: Barriers that can exclude people from taking part in participatory processes

These barriers are solved in design of participation and engagement processes			
Culture • Language • Different parts of society - conventional and alternative, rural and town etc • Ethnicities together? • Men and women together? • Religious observance • Not having the networks and connections to be known or know what is going on	**Availability** • Time • Carers • Commuters • Teachers • Night workers • Self Employed • Farmers and fishers busy times of day, week or year	**Age** • Children and young people (safeguarding requirements) • Seniors	**Access to take part** In-person: • Transport • Distance • Cost Online: • Internet • IT equipment • Signal • Skills • Screen size
These barriers are solved in facilitation and use of techniques			
Psychological • Confidence to have your say • Not being listened to or actively silenced before • Sense of security and safety • Sense of security and safety • Decision deficit (systemic poverty)	**Type of education/ status** • Literacy • Little formal education • Those with many degrees • Social status • Roles e.g. Directors, experts, struggle to share power	**Special requirements** • Hearing • Seeing • Standing • Wheelchair user • Coping in groups • Anxiety • Shielding • Neurodiversity • Mental health or conditions	**Interpersonal** • Tension • Conflict • Exclusion • Threats • Poor past history

There are of course also those who don't want visibility but can still impact the landscape: foragers and harvesters, off roaders and in the UK (where there is restricted countryside access) wild trespassers, swimmers and campers, and criminal activities such as: smugglers, wildlife crime, bloods sports, drug users, sex, fly tipping, or pollution. For those that are legal a one-to-one approach can work.

From Table 4 above, it is clear that many individuals need to be supported to overcome barriers and take part. This may be practically in the form of travel, day care or per diems. But also psychologically so they feel welcome and feel confident to share their ideas, take part constructively, and contribute and articulate what the landscape means, their needs, the futures they hope for and what they can contribute to collaborative change.

Inclusive participation, young people, and equities (landscape justice)

When it comes to young people, they have a right to have a say in the landscapes of their futures and this is set out in an UN and European statements for example:

- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**: is an international treaty that recognizes the right of children and young people to express their views freely on matters affecting them. Article 12 of the CRC specifically addresses the right to be heard in decisions related to the environment and landscapes.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**: The UN's global goals emphasize youth engagement in achieving targets related to environmental conservation and sustainable development.
- The **European Youth Strategy**: recognises the importance of youth participation in shaping policies related to the environment, climate, and sustainable development. The strategy encourages active engagement of young people.

In summary, both the UN and European statements affirm that young people have a right to participate in discussions, decisions, and actions related to landscapes, environmental protection, and sustainable development. Their voices are vital for creating a greener, more equitable future.

However good practice around involving young people tends to be absent or one off and reactive to particular proposals or strategies. Grosvenor, ZCD Architects, TCPA, and Sports England have jointly created a toolkit for normalising involvement of young people in the development and management of places[34] and moving away from the tick box or tokenistic approach. The toolkit aims to bring about the following shift:

Table 5: (Adapted from) Voice Opportunity Power – A Toolkit to Involve Young People in the making and managing of neighbourhoods[35]

	Shift from	Shift to
Young people	Peripheral	Central
Conversation	What do you want?	Understanding and sharing lived experience
Focus	Place based provision	Strategic and detailed public realm
Engagement	One off and reactive to a proposal or change	On going conversation form the early stages to final proposals and ongoing management
Interaction	Light touch and superficial	Embedded, deliberative and sharing of power
Design of interaction	Exclusive	Democratic and inclusive

Depth and Breadth

Breadth is the number of different people the project connects with, and depth is about the number who have the opportunity to share knowledge and deliberate over options.

With the best will in the world, it is not possible to involve everyone in depth in core deliberations. In the complexity of landscape change, deliberative processes will need to involve the same stakeholders negotiating across a number of workshops. That limits the number of people who can be involved. Experienced and skilled professionals can design and facilitate deliberative processes involving as many as 70 people using an array of techniques and with venues big enough. But that is still not everyone.

Breadth is achieved through wider engagement providing opportunities for people to learn about and respond to emerging priorities. This engagement uses information given and gathering methods used in typical engagement activities, noting that the more people are involved, the constraints of processing outputs means that fewer questions can be asked.

The diagram below (Figure 5) illustrates that fewer individuals can be involved in the deliberative parts of engagement whilst thousands can respond to a questionnaire.

Ideally there are sufficient resources to do both with the deliberative group identifying information they need from others and getting feedback on the acceptability and how to improve emerging priorities.

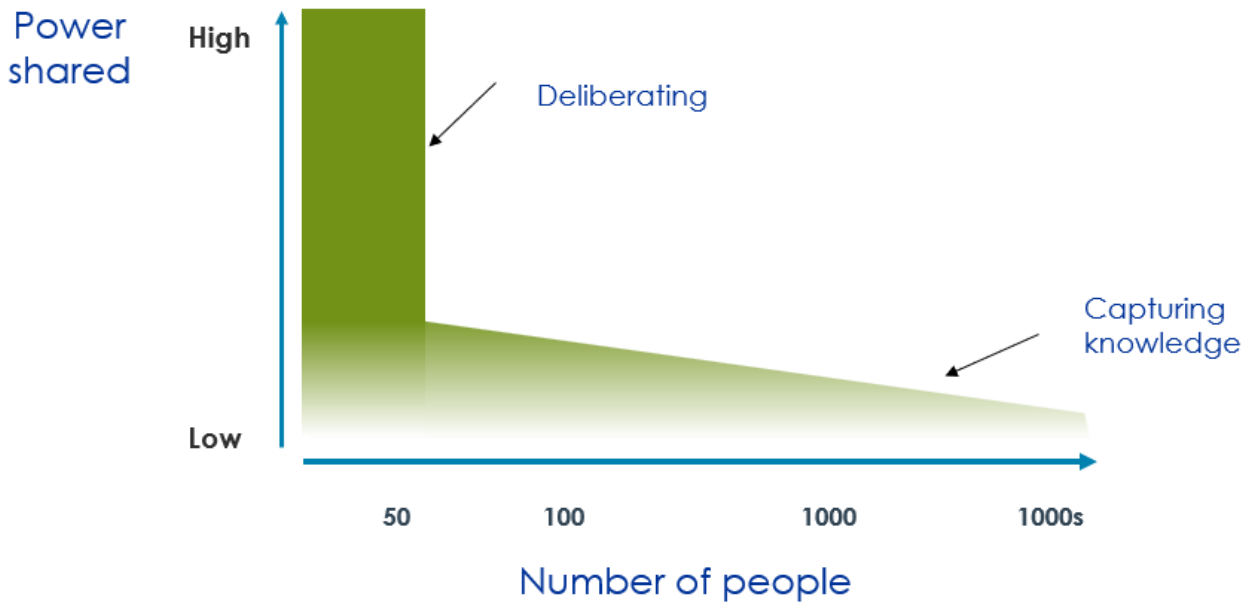


Figure 5: Power shared to influence outcomes and numbers of people that can be involved (Pound, D. 2006)

5.8 Valuing different ways of knowing about landscapes

Natural science and modelling have dominated landscape decision-making for decades. Over the last 15 years this has been added to by approaches that identify, analyse, quantify, and value ecosystem services (for more on this see: Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital). Whilst these ways of thinking provide clarity and empirical information for environmental professionals, they are not well understood and exclude other sectors, communities and ways of knowing. This limits the kind of knowledge that is factored into decision-making, affects the kind of procedures used, the kind of people that are involved and how their knowledge is used.

We have direct experiences of projects that want to blend a deliberative approach with sophisticated modelling of services and landscape potential. This looks like a welcome move but on closer scrutiny has not been what it seems. The expectation of commissioning organisations has been that power and knowledge flow from stakeholders to inform conclusions reached by technical teams and landscape professionals. In practice this renders the deliberative outputs just another form of data for a separate decision-making process by experts. This does not have procedural justice and so won't lead to landscape justice. For that, instead of stakeholders informing modelling, expert evidence and land use/potential modelling should inform multi-stakeholder deliberations.

Push back on Westernised ways of understanding

Prioritising only natural science knowledge and evidence is a barrier to procedural and landscape justice. Over the last few years there has been a wider international push back about westernised science and economics, and in particular the now prevailing approach that perceives natural features as natural capital and the benefits human enjoy from them as ecosystem services.

Concerns raised by indigenous, and many other people is that these frames are anthropocentric and rooted in colonial extractivist perspectives putting ‘nature at our service’.

In response, the 2022 IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) Values report describes different world views, knowledge systems and value typologies[36] [37]. Using the example of a river these world views are listed as: living from river resources, living in riverine landscape, living with riverine species and habitats, and living as – river as part of us. For some this still does not go far enough with some indigenous and other people saying it is still anthropocentric having the view that the river is not part of us but people are nature and so part of the river, not the other way around.

These different world view understandings can all be found in the UK. Research we carried out with John Muir Trust about how people perceived land that was ‘wild’ uncovered varied understandings of the concept[38]. A group of people with diverse lived experiences (e.g. different ethnicities, genders, faiths, languages, sexual orientations, neurodiversity, socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, urban and rural living) shared their views. Perceptions of ‘wild’ ranged from plots of overgrown grass, seeing native species, integrating wildlife with infrastructure e.g. managed parks, remoteness and a lack of people, to seeing more diverse visitors.

Young peoples’ attitudes towards the coast in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria were found to be very mixed[39]. Some young people find it a place of enjoyment, peace, and adventure and others find it boring, uncomfortable and a place of natural and human dangers.

Research in the UK supports this shift in perspective with perceptions of landscape ranging from something other which you see and are separate to - it is the scenery and backdrop – something you gaze at; to something you experience and interact with a place to live in, farm, visit, have fun in; to something you are intrinsically part of and connected to along with the other life there. This mirrors perceptions of nature [40].

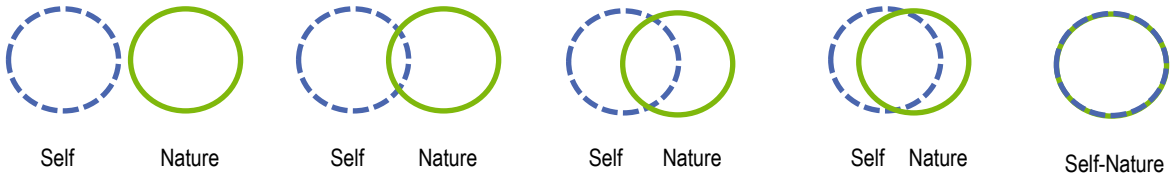


Figure 6: How we perceive ourselves relevant to nature (adapted from Oliver et al 2021[41])

This kind of thinking opens the path for professional environmentalist to feel it is acceptable to go beyond typical science and policy paradigms, methods and framing to encompass other ways of knowing about and relating to nature in landscape dialogue.

Beyond human voices and multispecies dialogue

Landscape specialists at the futures workshop in this research noted that other countries “*are giving natural features (rivers, mountains, and lakes) personhood i.e. the same legal status as people”* and this has implications for future decision-making about landscapes.

Given our research found many projects do not have the capacity or resource for involving a diverse range of people and interests, this may seem too much to contemplate. However, internationally, this thinking is growing rapidly in research, law and practice. For example, there has been a recent shift from legal personhood for natural landscape features (such as rivers and lakes) to now include species: a treaty for the Pacific called He Whakaputanga Moana, (the ocean declaration of Māori) recognises whales and dolphins as 'legal persons'. Earth, nature and species rights and the crime of ecocide are in other countries, now included in laws, resolutions, declarations, treaty text, and other legal documents [42] [43] .

There is also now increasing discussion that social justice should include 'non' or 'beyond humans' with research exploring how other nature can have 'voice' in decision-making. For example, there is international research (we're part of) exploring the effect of sharing power in decision-making on 'biodiversity and socially just outcomes including for 'beyond humans'" [44] and members of the Futures Team at Defra are exploring the topic. Additionally, the Earthlaw Centre, working internationally on earth and nature rights and laws, is developing practices for how people can be proxies for nature and natural

features in decision-making and are already taking on this role in corporate board rooms. Other initiatives are exploring ideas around multi-species dialogue[45] and interspecies deliberation[46] . These are about rethinking human-centred understandings of nature, science, and innovation.

This thinking would see landscape justice as needing to go beyond humans to include multi-species justice. The idea is raising all kinds of questions around how nature has a 'voice' in decisions, how that is done equitably and fairly, who could be a proxy, how is that done in a serious and ethical way and how as well as when it is appropriate to do this.

Case 1: If the lake and nature here could speak what would they say?

- Help me .. Please!
- Why aren't you protecting me?
- Things are changing and we can't keep up
- I've been here for thousands of years, the stories I could tell you, but you're killing me. Stop.
- What have you done?!
- Stop always putting your needs before mine

From direct experience, we know that simply asking questions around 'what would nature say' brings a different 'voice' compared to the scientific and regulatory language of environmental professionals. Here are two examples each in the context of serious dialogue and decision-making with 60 – 70 mixed interests including professionals from a variety of backgrounds. In both cases the activity was optional and could be responded to anonymously. The outputs can be seen in the text boxes.

Case 1 was about strategic priorities for a much-loved lake and its wider landscape, a tense and sensitive context with active conflict. The dialogue involved interests such as nature, water quality, business tourism, recreation, culture and heritage, land managers, and inclusive community voices.

Case 2: If nature in these locations could speak what would we hear?

- Look how beautiful I am
- I am speaking – you just have to listen
- Help!
- We can make this work if only you listen
- Listen to me I can show you the way
- I'm intimately connected with you and other nature – you depend on me
- You may not know who I am yet and what the impact would be if I was lost
- I can't catch up with the changes happening around me
- I am a shadow of my former self- don't turn off the lights
- You have turned my green to grey
- We've been here for over 1.6 million years - please stop wrecking us so we have a future

Case 2 comprised of British environmental professionals from NGO, regulatory bodies, and research discussing a biodiversity strategy for a number of diverse locations.

In both cases, people's responses show communities and stakeholders including regulators and scientists, 'hear' and imagine the voice of nature with a quite different character from their own and responses can be compelling and deeply moving in tone and style.

All forms of relevant knowledge

As well as the motivation for social justice and inclusion, the UK is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ecosystem Approach. Principles 11 says "*The Ecosystem Approach should consider all forms of relevant information, including scientific, indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices*"[47].

How this is done in practice takes innovation and fresh thinking. What is clear is that people should not have to couch and frame their ideas in formal or scientific formats that are familiar and comfortable to environmental professionals. To enable all forms of knowledge to be brought into discussion of landscape change means embracing other's ways of knowing so people can speak in their own voices using their own languages, understandings, and forms of holding and communicating what they know and how they know it. This includes pictures, drama, poetry, music, and story. In this research the workshop of experts started discussed the need to embrace the arts in dialogue even suggesting arts led dialogue.

5.9 Psychology

Landscape and nature projects are familiar with receiving push back and a negative reaction to their ideas. They often mistakenly think this is about explaining and persuading others to their view, but this is unlikely to work and could make things worse. The problem is not primarily an information deficit, but about human and group psychology. Knowing more about this provides insights into what is going on and what to do differently. In describing this, we have used the first person-plural to convey that all of us respond this way – neuroscience shows it is wired in.

Individual psychological drivers include:

- A natural bias to short-termism and localism. Communicating about large scale and long term does not map onto how our brains function. The solution is for all to share in the creation of a long-term vision to create a sense of direction, and then the discussion move to short-medium term priorities and action to get there.
- A strong desire for autonomy and control. When others make decisions and impose them on us it undermines our sense of autonomy and agency. To avoid this, the solution is to work as equals sharing information with each other and together generating solutions.
- Pursuit of happiness and avoidance of negative emotions. Talk of loss, risk and disaster to try to catalyse action through fear responses is a mistake. Our minds are aversive and switch off to protect themselves. Instead, all share in identifying what is already going well and suggest action to strengthen, accelerate and amplify that. Then identify any gaps and how to address them.
- A drive to maintain self-esteem and self-worth. When we are told we are contributing to the climate and nature crisis, landscape degradation or some other issues, it triggers cognitive dissonance: our brains have to work out if we are not the good people we like to think we are or if the person providing the information is wrong. Psychological process will scramble to restore self-esteem and reject the information. Instead, a focus on what is everyone is doing already to restore nature and landscapes provides a sense of recognition and appreciation.

Group psychological drivers include:

- We want to be part of groups and communities with a good reputation. We resist outsiders implying we are not. The solution is the same as the one above. Instead of othering and blaming language towards those affecting the landscape in negative ways, surface what is already going well, encourage and appreciate. In most settings pioneer types will be innovating the way out of the issue already and so identifying those innovations from within a group or community reaps dividends.
- We create and defend our own group's norms. The solution is to engage opinion leaders/formers and create a norm of respect and mutual action.
- We have a strong drive for justice and fairness. The answer is to work in ethical and respectful ways to find and get as close to genuine win/wins as possible.

With this understanding, and working with the grain of human nature, landscape managers can avoid inadvertently catalysing the very resistance, reactance, and barriers that frustrate progress.

Another aspect of psychology relevant to landscapes is place attachment[48]. Depending on how long they have lived somewhere and how they feel about it, the place can become entwined with their sense of who they are and their identity. This brings a risk of trauma when landscapes change (solastalgia)[49] but also motivates and engages people to make a positive difference and care for the place they love.

5.10 Working in a context of tension and conflict

Where there is tension and conflict anxiety ramps up and people start to withdraw from each other or decline to engage in the first place. Conflict does not have to be seen this way. Conflict brings with it the potential to be a positive driver in transformational change[50] .

A way of understanding conflicts is to assess their complexity using the follow understanding of the nature of the challenge:

- **Technical and practical problems:** Where people agree on the nature of the problem and the issue is how to technically solve it. Different opinions may exist on the technical solution but through dialogue, existing knowledge and scoping the pros and cons of each solution, agreement can be reached.
- **Value-laden problems:** Where people agree on the basic nature of the problem but not on how to resolve it. Values and interests pull people in different directions despite recognition of a common problem. A dialogue is needed to enable people to share their different knowledges and hopes. Then to co-create and develop potential solutions before picking those with most support. The key is in managing the process to give adequate space and structure for everyone to join in thinking of the pros and cons of different possibilities.
- **Value-laden 'wicked' problems.** Where people disagree on both the nature of the problem and how to resolve it. When people don't have a shared view of what needs to be solved it makes it difficult to move forward to solutions. The critical first step in this kind of problem is to work on developing a common understanding of long-term hopes, current realities, what is already being done to improve the situation and ways to move forwards. These types of problems require carefully structured, professionally facilitated process design.

Participation practitioners whose practice is based on Consensus Building have a suite of tools and practices to help people meet across their differences and agree solutions. One of our own case examples demonstrates what is possible. People were brought together in a one-day workshop over the badger cull and bovine TB. The group included people who had broken the law to defend their interest – both animal activists and farmers. The tension was so high people asked in advance if they could use false names so they could not be traced afterwards and for other protections to keep it safe. And yet, in just a one day workshop, by the end they agreed on 5 priorities they wanted to see actioned and one of those was a new collaboration where they would need to work together to achieve the goals.

5.11 Integrated approaches result in integrated outcomes

There is increasing recognition of the need for integrated approaches to landscape change that moves away from siloed or linear thinking by different agencies – which results in narrowly-focused, overlapping strategies and plans - to a much more holistic and multi-benefit systems approach to landscape futures. This would include for example: community and local economic resilience, agile and resilient farming and forestry, climate adaptation, carbon sequestration, soil health, flood mitigation, air and water quality, recreation, and human health and wellbeing.

Place-based integrated plans of this kind enable different agencies and projects to integrate, synergise and align, and play to strengths to achieve more than the sum of its parts. An integrated approach also reduces the risk of one sector taking action that has a negative effect on other interests.

Nine of the projects that responded to the survey are holistic in what they cover (See Annex 3) but quite a few are only tackling a subset of the areas noted above. Of those covering multiple aspects of landscapes, only a few used participation methods that would enable stakeholders to develop their thinking in an integrated way. Broadening out the topics being considered does not make a significant difference to the costs of planning landscape change at scale and has the potential to reap dividends in the future.

5.12 Conditions for success

Throughout this report we have described what enables successful landscape governance, participation and landscape justice. This is not new[51] [52] [53] but the awareness and understanding of good practice seems to have been lost. The following table (Table 6) summarises key points. It is adapted from Reed et al 2018[54] theory of participation which illustrates how the outcomes of participation and engagement in environmental management are explained by context, process design, participants, the management of power dynamics and scaler and temporal fit:

Table 6: What increases the likely success of stakeholder participation

Likelihood of delivering beneficial outcomes →		
Challenging: No prior participation culture or ethics, few if any resources, core governance group consider themselves as separate to and being experts.	**Context**	**Conducive:** Ethics respectful of others and their knowledge, understanding of good practice, culture of working with others, sharing resources. Core group perceive themselves to be one stakeholder amongst many
Ad hoc procedures and process unclear flows of knowledge and decision-making points	**Design**	**Designed**, transparent structured process with clear flows of knowledge and power
Ad hoc representation, hierarchical, closed/limited involvement	**Participants**	**Systematic representation**, inclusive of relevant knowledges, interests and diversities, balanced to avoid bias at decision points
Top down, other people involved to input views. Power dynamics unmanaged with some participants unable to contribute knowledge or influence outcomes	**Power**	**Power sharing**: principle of equality and shared decision-making. Power dynamics effectively managed to give all participants equal opportunities to contribute knowledge and influence outcomes
Poorly matched to spatial scales	**Scalar Fit**	**Well matched** to spatial scales
Late involvement and/or poorly matched to what is needed	**Temporal fit**	**Early-stage involvement** when options are open and timing well matched to what is needed
Hierarchical, experts decide, governance group, unrepresentative, power over	**Underpinning governance**	**Regenerative governance**. governance group reflects variety of other stakeholder and diversity interests, power with – playing to strengths

5.13 Understanding the risks of poor practice

For the most part in this report we have focused on good practice but there is also a body of literature that critiques and questions the ideas of participation and engagement [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7]. Researchers blame poorly represented communities and stakeholders and poorly designed decision-making processes for:

- Missed goals
- Exacerbated conflict
- Special interest groups being able to bias the outcome
- Decisions that have unintended consequences or outcomes.

Concerns fall into the following four areas[8]:

- Decision quality can be degraded, and scientific information not well handled
- Processes can be unfair and inequitable
- Results can be trivial at substantial costs in time, effort, and funds
- Processes can be used for manipulation

The first three are most often failings due to flaws in the way the dialogue process is designed and facilitated[9] and so can be avoided with better process design and skilful facilitation.

However, the last, manipulation, is the greatest risk. Project officers, engagement officers, facilitators, communities and stakeholders can all enter an engagement process in good faith, believing it to be genuine and to have real influence, only to find out that trust is misplaced. Research shows that when organisations deliberately or inadvertently misuse participation and engagement processes, it can have the following effects[10]:

- It disempowers and delegitimises opposition by those who have participated because the organisation can argue “they’ve had their say” and for those who did not participate “they’ve have had their chance”
- It takes up community and stakeholder time and money so they’ve no resources to act outside the process
- It builds unwarranted trust with short-term gain in stakeholder and community acceptance at the expense of legitimacy and trust over the long run
- It insulates the organisation body from legitimate external challenge because the process is perceived to be legitimate (but is not)
- It could allow the organisation to avoid or defend against legal challenge on the grounds that the process was undertaken according to statutory requirements, even if the engagement had no real influence and did not conform to good practice
- It can “co-opt, localise, and contain or channel conflicts that would otherwise influence the projects actions and so function as a way for a project to exert control and engage in hollow public relations rather than being truly responsive”

Successful outputs (such as strategies, plans or other agreements) and outcomes (such as social learning[11], network forming, preference change, implementation of solutions and empowerment) are highly dependent on five factors[12] [13]:

- The selection of participants
- The provision of information and decision-making power
- The process design (including the sequence of workshops, other activities, selection of methods and techniques)
- Professional facilitation to balance power dynamics between participants, or at local level where professional facilitation is not feasible, guidance and discussion packs to enable groups to work in a more equitable way
- Applying good practice to the context in which the engagement occurs[14]

By recognising the risks of poor practice, projects can enable a shift to better practice. Projects that develop capacity in the above five factors and recognise when outsourcing is needed to supplement skills, knowledge, or ensure appropriate representation, can maximise gain and chances of fulfilling their aims.

6 Discussion

Natural England commissioned this research into landscape governance and justice to help them reinvigorate their role as a pioneer, a national advisor, and a champion of landscapes delivering benefits for nature, climate, and people.

Increased attention to landscape use and management, and extensive political and social drivers represent a significant opportunity. By combining top-down international and national drivers, grass roots social justice and inclusion movements, an integrated landscape approach, and the benefits of participation, Natural England can deliver to this ambition, and catalyse change that delivers for all.

6.1 Summary of key findings

To answer the research question: 'What factors enable positive, proactive, and purposive landscape change?', a literature review established practice reported in academic literature, a survey gathered case examples, and a workshop of landscape experts explored enablers and barriers. Additionally, dialogue practitioner expertise was incorporated in Section 5.

Literature review

The literature review found six key factors enable positive, proactive and purposive landscape change. These are:

- Context for common concern, where solutions are built on trust, collaboration, shared negotiation and consensus building
- Multifunctional perspectives, where landscapes are recognised as complex symptoms, and diverse and holistic perspectives are valued
- Integration of multiple stakeholders, where diverse and holistic perspectives are included in partnerships and decision-making is informed by representation of the whole system
- Participatory and deliberative decision-making, supporting shifts from top-down approaches to co-creation leading to win-wins
- Adaptive co-management, where good practice knowledge exchange and collective decision-making are embedded into governance, whilst enabling informed adjustments through evaluation
- Scale and Connectivity, where projects operate across scales, promoting connectivity, spatial relationships and cross-scale interactions in decision-making processes; and capacity and knowledge sharing are embedded practices

Survey of landscape projects

The survey of landscape projects resulted in 33 case examples covering a range of project scopes and focuses. Of these, there was variety in perceptions of scale and a range of different entities submitting to the survey. This showed that less than one third of respondents had a mix of stakeholders from different interests making decisions about their landscape futures and where environmental professionals were not the only decision makers there was a lack of representation of diverse interests.

Resourcing and funding constraints result in project teams taking on responsibility for external involvement and engagement planning, resulting in many project officers hold significant power over how others can engage with decision-making. 13 projects reported the project officers managing, designing or facilitating stakeholder involvement. Only seven however reported this group having training that focussed on communication and engagement. However, no specific reference was made to dialogue, consensus or negotiation which could indicate egalitarian practice. Two projects had no training in this space. The last four projects employed strategies which did not fall into either of the survey categories.

Within the thirty-three projects, seven projects referred to collaborating with stakeholders in designing, managing and facilitating engagement, but the diversity makeup of the groups is unknown.

In 12 projects, professional third parties were involved in planning and delivery of engagement. Eight of these appear to be using shared decision with higher decision group numbers, diversity of stakeholders, stakeholder influence, showing a correlation between the involvement of participation professionals and how much decisions are shared. Four took a genuine co-design approach through action focused dialogue and deliberation, co-delivery of new governance, and sharing of resources and benefits across interests and communities.

The survey showed ~70% of projects involving one of more of the other stakeholder interests and groups, and many provided support for people to engage. However, this did not automatically translate to greater power sharing and in most cases, stakeholders had a low level of influence where they informed decisions rather than being the decision-makers with environmental professionals, local authorities and NGOs.

From an EDI perspective, only three of the projects involved voices from marginalised groups in planning or implementing landscape change, such as those from marginalised faith or ethnicity groups, people with disabilities or the LGBTQIA+ interests. Nine projects involved young people or seniors in some capacity. However, the demographics and mix of stakeholders living in each landscape is not known, and tokenistic engagement of marginalised groups can result in further marginalising. There was a distinct lack of diversity in decision-making groups, and diverse stakeholders were mostly included via wider engagement so had low influence. Only one project involved people from ethnic and faith minorities, people with disabilities and people from the LGBTQIA+ community in the decision-making group. Five projects involved young or senior people represented in the decision-making group.

Eight barriers were identified:

- Funding and resources
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Time constraints
- Guidance and governance
- Bureaucracy, delays and uncertainty
- Weather and seasonal constraints
- COVID-19

Seven enablers were identified:

- Funding
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Stakeholder and community buy-in
- Leadership and support
- Efficiency and overcoming bureaucracy
- Successful approaches
- Policy consistency

Futures workshop for landscape experts

This workshop identified principles that would characterise an approach to landscape governance and justice for positive change. These are ethos, governance, decision-making, management and outcomes.

Ten barriers were identified:

- Inequalities and privilege
- Structural and ownership challenges
- Capitalism
- Economic constraints
- Cultural and identity barriers
- Lack of coordination and integration
- Participation challenges
- Despondency
- Devolution in the United Kingdom
- Knowledge and skills gaps

Ten enablers were identified:

- A change in governance approach
- Engagement, participation and decision-making
- Focus on process rather than outcomes
- Flexibility
- Leadership and visioning
- Encourage reflection and time for thought
- Learn from success stories
- Reframe perceptions of landscapes
- Policy advocacy and public awareness
- Long-term thinking in politics

Stakeholder Dialogue practitioner knowledge

In the separate results in Section 5, the research team share challenges in identifying exemplar projects and best practice. Additionally in projects, a high prevalence of positive intent and seeking to involve more voices means an appetite for practice that recognises communities and stakeholders as an integral part of socio-ecological systems. However, a knowledge deficit around power, collaborative governance, participatory decision-making and justice means that many are not

able to truly fulfil intent. This combined with a culture of top-down approaches trigger negative reactions and block progress.

The research team differentiate a variety of engagement practice from Best Practice Dialogue where decision-making is designed, deliberative, participatory, action-focused, inclusive and multi-stakeholder. Dialogue Matters use Best Practice Dialogue to deliver the above benefits, examples of which have won multiple best practice awards. This can result in systems thinking and improved system understanding, handling conflict, finding new solutions that are sense checked before implemented, decisions being better informed, social justice, harnessing of broader resources, and a greater acceptance of outcomes.

Drawing from expertise in implementing Best Practice Dialogue, the research team shared 11 integrated concepts and knowledge frameworks that enable achieving these Stakeholder Dialogue process outcomes:

- Procedural justice
- Understanding and sharing power
- Principled negotiation and statutory responsibility
- Engagement vs. participation
- Inclusion – who is in and who is out?
- Valuing different ways of knowing about landscapes
- Psychology
- Working in a context of tension and conflict
- Integrated approaches result in integrated outcomes
- Conditions for success
- Understanding the risks of poor practice

Summary of barriers and enablers

The identified barriers and enablers (Section 4) to positive, proactive and purposive landscape change were subject to additional emergent processing to distil the key findings. These key findings are summarised below.

Barriers

18 barriers are distilled into:

Interpersonal – collaboration and partnership challenges; and despondency.

Procedural – poor engagement practice; lack of ownership clarity and justice; bureaucracy and lack of coordination and integration.

Natural – weather or seasonal constraints and COVID-19.

Social – systemic social injustice.

Expertise – knowledge and skills gap.

Resources – funding and time constraints.

Enablers

34 identified enablers are distilled into:

Inclusion and collaboration – genuine inclusion and collaboration of diverse perspectives representing the whole system.

Governance – governance that overcomes bureaucracy, is efficient, with embedded collective decision-making; flexibility in governance; leadership to vision and support.

Expertise – improved understanding and skills to implement best practice approaches, learning from successes and understanding the risks of poor practice; understanding psychology; building in continual reflection and learning.

Procedural justice – implementation of best practice to achieve procedural justice.

Perceptions and focus – process over outcomes; changed perceptions of landscapes to include and value diverse and holistic perspectives.

Political and public support – political and public advocacy and awareness; political consistency.

Resources – funding support and resources.

6.2 Interpretation of findings

These data sources demonstrate differing values and practice, and an aspiration for higher quality practice. Whether people are familiar with the some of the terms and principles of Best Practice Dialogue, or not, principles that enable procedural justice or integrated understanding are not yet guiding common practice and implementation. To both help projects deliver better practice and evaluate what they are doing, a common understanding of the characteristics of an exemplar project is needed.

The opportunities here, are to utilise the knowledge shared in this report to build awareness of good and best practice, create mechanisms for standardisation, and support implementation of the findings into common practice.

The literature review found six key factors enabling positive change from a range of academic records from the last 33 years.

The case examples in the survey demonstrate a disconnect between the enablers discovered in the literature review and current practice. The findings outline how 70% or cases were involving more than the ‘usual suspects’, but did not necessarily factor in power sharing for stakeholder influence or representation of views and interests.

The survey reached projects regarded externally as exemplar, but the evidence shows that most are still sectoral and led by environmentalist professionals and/or landowners, with informal governance, engagement at the lower levels of influence, and many lack a holistic perspective and desire to integrate knowledges and action. The vast majority of decision groups were limited in number, representation and diversity.

Numbers and lack of diversity of interests can be because unless people know how to commission or design and facilitate multi-interest action orientated dialogue and decision-making, they are constrained by how many people are able to make effective decisions together. Research suggests the optimum for a functional team that can make decisions quickly is about five[1]. The maximum for self-managing groups to bring a wider range of ideas and resources and make decisions together is about 15 (though at this number a few will be leading and having greatest influence on decisions whilst others become more passive). With these kind of numbers, it is not possible to bring in a wide range of different voices with an ethic of inclusion. The case for increasing diversity of decision groups for better informed and more just decisions stands, but to be really inclusive of knowledges, interests and communities of place or interest, and for all to feel they have the opportunity and ways of contributing their ideas, different kinds of procedures are needed with facilitation skills and techniques in play.

The barriers and enablers identified by the case examples showed inclination for positive practice, but a lack of knowledge on how to mechanistically deliver this. The barriers and enablers align somewhat with the literature review findings, but in effect, the lack of practice standardisation, and variable awareness of factors that are considered good or best practice has resulted in variable practice that is not fulfilling the sector aspirations and ambitions.

The first listed barrier of ‘funding and resources’ underpins and exacerbates many of the other barriers that people encountered (see: Perceived barriers from case examples). It is the hypothesis of the research team that a lack of funding and resource has additionally prevented projects from exploring what may be good or poor practice. So, where projects have positive intentions, there is neither the capacity or capability to understand how to deliver outcomes aligned with those positive intentions, nor the time to investigate this.

The workshop identified principles that would characterise an approach to landscape change, and barriers and enablers, all of which align more closely with the literature review findings. Additionally, the barriers and enablers identified at the workshop demonstrate pre-existing knowledge of good practice. Barriers covering system inequalities, the impact of capitalism, and despondency show a level of social understanding most commonly found in those who are already engaging with ideas of differentiating practice.

Additionally, the workshop identified that knowledge and skills gaps are a barrier, and learning from success and building in reflection are enablers, which the case examples from the survey do not specifically reflect. As referred to in Section 5.1, challenges in self-reflection combined with decision heuristics can impede knowledge acquisition. The different nuance represented in the barriers and enablers of the two data sources implies that many survey respondents had a higher proportion of unknown unknowns, and an overestimation of explicit knowledge likely due to optimism bias. Whereas the workshop’s higher number of identified barriers and enablers, and the understanding needed to identify more nuanced barriers and enablers imply a higher level of relevant explicit knowledge as well as a higher awareness of knowledge or skills gaps (known unknowns).

Finally, the findings presented in Section 5 summarising Stakeholder Dialogue practitioner knowledge show that dialogue practitioner practice may be ahead of the ambition of both the workshop and the literature review. These enabling principles demonstrate transdisciplinary thinking, knowledge on functional and mechanistic application, and show a level of engagement with and reflection on high quality practice to inform this list.

In effect, one can only build an awareness of knowledge skills and gaps by starting to build knowledge and skills in that area. We see a correlation between level of engagement with Best Practice knowledge and nuance in understanding of barriers and enablers to landscape change. This effect is positive as it demonstrates that this practice can be learned and developed.

Opportunities for mitigating barriers and maximising opportunities include:

- Cultivating a culture of innovation and continual learning that can support the building of knowledge and reflection opportunities that help embed principles enabling landscape change.
- Introducing greater ownership clarity and justice that seeks to counter systemic social injustice, and designing new governance models that support collective decision-making.
- Improving resources by enabling business to co-fund solutions, pooling of investments, identifying interventions that meet the needs and interests of investors, access to grant funding and clear funding criteria.
- Embedding ethical practice at the heart of changing practice for genuine inclusion and effective collaboration.
- Developing understanding and implementation of procedural justice, ensuring fair and equitable processes support decision-making.
- Fostering co-understanding across stakeholder groups (including the historic power-holders) that engenders holistic learning and perspectives.
- Utilising characteristics of exemplar projects to identify and promote better and best practice, and promoting these to political and public audiences to improve awareness and buy-in.

6.3 Further Research

Risk of private green finances undermining landscape justice; We highlighted above the current concerns about the risk of private finances undermining endeavours for procedural and therefore landscape justice**.** We know (*pers. comm*) that this risk is already playing out and being navigated in a project that wanted to take a fully co-productive approach**.** We think urgent work needs to be done to assess this serious risk to landscape justice and mitigate it.

Action Research. Action research with projects funded to adopt and embed these concepts in one or more demonstration landscape.

Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services. Approaches to natural capital have been widely adopted and embedded often uncritically in the environment sector. There are circumstances where these approaches are fit for purpose but many that are not. Ways of perceiving the benefits humans enjoy from (other) nature at landscape scale span: appreciation (which can simply be expressed with words and pictures through the arts and experienced spiritually and with emotion), to relative value/ranking of importance, to monetization and commodification. Each has different values and perceptions of human's relationship to nature, associated methods, benefits, risks, and circumstances of where it is the optimum approach and when it is counterproductive. There is a growing body of literature critiquing and raising concerns about how the approach is used and the power it affords certain interests over others. This power difference is increasingly relevant with concerns that green finances and the services investors are interested in, will skew landscape priorities and undermining a co-production approach with local people. During the writing of this report we have heard examples of where this has now happened (*pers. comm*). Worthwhile

research would include: a literature review of the critiques of the approach, a national workshop to surface pros and cons, purposes, power analysis and effect on decision-making as well as solutions for how green finances can enable, not determine landscape outcomes.

6.4 Follow on work

Capacity Building: There is a vast body of relevant research and practitioner literature about what works. The references quoted in this report are a small portion of what exists. Based on this, the challenge for achieving thriving landscapes through good governance and landscape justice is not a lack of evidence, but lack of awareness and application of the evidence in landscape projects.

As illustrated in this research, many landscape projects are doing what is familiar and known in the form of sectoral governance with environmental professionals and/or landowners making and implementing decisions about landscapes. Other people are engaged to collect their views or seek to inspire and persuade but not to co-produce landscape change.

Our main recommendation then, is for NE to shift investment from research to skills building. This would include building awareness, understanding and practical guidance, tools and training on:

- Regenerative governance
- Procedural justice (through power analysis and designed participatory multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and decision-making).
- Holistic and integrated ethos and Systems Thinking
- Co-design and co-delivery (co-production) of thriving landscapes for equitable sharing of benefits.
- Incentivising better practices with tools and check lists of principles and practices for landscape projects to aspire to. This should evolve and adapt as practices advance.

Integrated by landscape dialogue in Natural England. We recommend a dialogue within Natural England to consider the concepts introduced in this report and then harness the combined knowledge of officers from different parts of NE to find out what is already going on in this direction and what more needs to be done to align procedures and practices and to support or deliver effective landscape governance and justice.

Landscape Futures. Scope the future that the landscape specialists brought into view. Create a route map to that future and define NE's role in it

Power and the power matrix. Map the organisation's work onto the empowerment framework and provide guidance on how to increase power sharing (Please see section 6 of Pound (2016)[2] examples that will also be relevant to NE).

6.5 Conclusion

The key findings of this research is that the majority of landscape projects who responded to the survey are delivering practice that does not align with the ambition and quality of practices evident in the academic literature, the workshop of landscape specialists, and dialogue practitioner knowledge. The findings include identified barriers and enablers to landscape change, which can be utilised to catalyse landscape change.

This represents a significant opportunity for Natural England to prioritise building understanding internally and externally and raise the ambition and practices of landscape projects. This will support projects to deliver multi-scaled benefits explored throughout the other sections of this report.

7 Recommendations and implementation

7.1 Setting the scene

Natural England commissioned this research as part of a programme of work to reinvigorate its role as a national advisor on landscapes; to be at the forefront of landscape thinking and to help drive innovation in the development of landscape policy.

Understanding current practices is crucial but insufficient for fostering innovation. To empower Natural England to realise their ambitions, the research team has developed recommendations based on the data in this report, existing knowledge and best practices. These recommendations aim to equip Natural England to:

- Build internal expertise
- Champion Best Practice Dialogue understanding for landscape change
- Provide strategic direction for landscape change
- Enhance landscape projects' benefits for nature, climate, and people
- Pioneer and develop a culture of innovation

By combining research findings, practitioner insights, and implementation experience, this report offers recommendations and guidance to empower Natural England to catalyse change and deliver positive outcomes for landscapes.

Note to all readers – at this stage we are moving beyond research framing-informed writing style.

7.2 Vision and direction of travel

The following vision for a suggested direction of travel was synthesised from aspirations expressed by leading landscape specialists in the workshop component of this research:

Vision

England's landscapes are thriving and are managed with a sustainable and regenerative ethos. Nature is treasured and celebrated for its intrinsic value, and the health and wellbeing of more-than-human nature is prioritised alongside the delivery of social and climate co-benefits.

Governance structures are inclusive of diverse perspectives, people, communities, and more-than-human voices - and promote connectedness, collaboration, and creativity. Power sharing and participatory mechanisms are institutionally supported. In decision-making processes, feelings and other ways of knowing are given credence alongside scientific knowledge.

Community co-production and co-ownership is at the heart of planning and implementation of change, and local action is supported by integrated national strategy. Management approaches are adaptive, responsive to feedback from a variety of interests, and allow for the evolution of locally distinct habitats and character areas.

Nature, society, and culture are interconnected. A broad range of people have better access to the places around them and feel like they are part of and spiritually connected to landscapes. Living in our landscapes gives people a greater sense of nature connection and improves their quality of life.

Suggestions for how Natural England can support this future

Power sharing, inclusivity, and co-design: Shift towards to true power sharing which encompasses more diverse interests rather than just benefits for nature. Improve ways of working with, for and through people and communities. Stakeholders should have the opportunity to decide together if, where and how to deliver landscape change. A suggested way to do this would be through participatory governance approaches embedded across the organisation's area teams and projects. Co-design and co-creation methods should be at the centre of all projects, stakeholder representation should be ongoing, not on and off.

Understandings of landscape: There is value in recognising that there are multiple interpretations and understandings of landscape, landscape change and the approaches to achieve it. Different parts of society have different drivers but there is potential to find common cause. More diversity is needed. There should be an expansion of the multicultural interpretation of landscape and nature so that everyone in society can see themselves in it. NE could enable a wide-ranging discussion to build understanding and a vision of what a positive landscape future looks like.

Facilitating partnerships: Participants would like to see NE think about their role within landscape governance, and recognise they are one of many players. There's an opportunity for NE to become a facilitator, broker, and partnership builder, bringing together different interests to help people find common ground. NE could bring together communities of practice working with those 'outside' including different publics and academics. This could support projects and help them develop by marrying wisdom and knowledge in culturally sensitive ways.

Showing leadership for justice and equity: Participants discussed the need for NE to take leadership on issues of justice and equity. This can be achieved through investing in or reallocating resources towards meaningful inclusion of social and equity dimensions of landscapes. Also countering power disparities between relevant parties and beginning conversations on climate justice and landscape projects that reduce inequalities. There should be reflection on neo-colonial affiliation and practice to bring about equitable and just impact and provisioning for co-benefits. Participants would like to see NE show strength in challenging vested interests and be more assertive in advising Government on landscapes. Currently NE is perceived to be only about wanting to benefit nature, even if it's at the expense of people, rather than wanting to benefit nature and people. There's an opportunity for NE to change it's public image by being a truly representative leader that involves stakeholders in the co-creation of the future.

Increase place-based working: with NE working with others to co-create place-specific visions of landscape futures, moving beyond designations to working on systems and places, and focus more on integration of landscape work with other work for example Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS).

Monitoring, evaluation, and review going beyond nature: Projects should be continuously monitored and evaluated for people, nature, and climate. That includes projects being measured for equity impacts and the extent of community participation and empowerment. One way of doing this is to uses tools that act as a plum line so a project's team, partners, stakeholders and communities can regularly reflect on how well the projects is aligning with core values related to regenerative governance principles and take remedial action as necessary. [7]

Learn about the evidence of what works and share it: There's an opportunity for NE to build the success of great landscape projects and ideas at grassroots level into more widely applicable solutions, seeking to deeply understand why they work and sharing this openly to benefit others across the UK.

Communicate a positive vision: NE could communicate a positive vision that others want to be a part of to encourage engagement, including practical visions of climate impacts on landscapes to help people envision the risks. When communicating about landscape, species abundance needs to be more clearly linked with landscape character and condition.

New ways of working: A culture shift/organisational learning is needed towards meaningfully embedding social considerations at the heart of NE's vision and mission, bringing it to the same level of importance as natural considerations. Currently the focus is technical skills, there needs to be more focus on people skills such as empathy, leadership, conflict management, active listening etc. Other suggestions participants made included - new ways of working with young people, using modern technologies to engage stakeholders.

[7] For example, Dialogue Matters is in the early stages of creating an online culture evaluation platform that will enable this rapid assessment.

7.3 Preparing to involve others

Embed positive values and ethics.

This is about changing ways of relating to other stakeholders and communities and their knowledge. The following table comes from work done for the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) about 20 years ago in which they concluded that a significant risk to the future of nature conservation was the culture and attitudes of conservationists. Whilst there has been shift to the positive side, the 'experts know best' side is still much in evidence. This stems from the view that natural science evidence should be the main determinant of what happens[1]. Holding this view makes it difficult to accept the legitimacy of others' evidence or knowledge or their role and influence in shaping what happens. To do so requires the change outlined in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Change in attitude of environmental managers[2]

From: →	To:
• Focus on scientific and technical knowledge	• Many forms of knowledge are needed and used
• Seeing other stakeholders as the problem	• Realising we are all stakeholders and all part of the problem and the solution
• Seeing other stakeholders and communities as a distraction and drain on resources	• Realising they are a resource – of information, ideas and endeavour
• Telling others what to do	• Listening with an open mind
• Pushing others to change	• Working with others to agree change
• Behaving as experts	• Behaving as partners
• Formal approaches	• Informal and interactive approaches
• Our ideas and solutions	• The best ideas and solutions are the ones that are most workable, acceptable and used

Recommendation: Develop and agree ethics and principles to guide participation and engagement.

Find sufficient resources for Best Practice Dialogue

Best Practice Dialogue which leads to good decision-making requires resources. Typically, the resources allocated to this aspect of any project are underestimated and far less than for other elements – even though getting this right will make all the difference to progress and outcomes. Funds are needed for an array of tasks and costs:

Table 8: Array of tasks required for Best Practice Dialogue

Process support tasks	Content related tasks	Process delivery
• Project management • Identifying stakeholders including finding names and addresses • Liaising with participants on progress and next steps • Normal event logistics and costs (venues and refreshment suppliers, sending out invitations and noting replies, providing for any special requirements, sourcing sufficient stationery and other materials) • Travel expenses and increasingly per diems (a payment to take part) for those giving up income or experiencing costs to be present. • Setting up and managing online surveys or interactive websites • Disseminating outputs • For the follow-on implementation phase to make participation and engagement business as usual	• Creating briefing information or summaries • Finding evidence and information participants ask for to help them in deliberations. • Writing up end plans, reports, or strategies	• Designing the process, workshops, sessions and any wider engagement events or surveys • Delivering workshops, drop-in events and any specialist workshops • Typing up, processing, reporting, and summarising • Adapting to what emerges through the dialogue •

Recommendation: Scope what is needed for the context and then the cost – so as not to fetter the possibility of too little funds for Best Practice Dialogue. Also invest funds upfront in Best Practice Dialogue rather than in superficial engagement.

Neutral design and facilitation.

One of the procedural justice 'levers' is neutral facilitation - which researchers qualify as "skilled, unbiased, open-minded, approachable, and trusted" [3]. Design and facilitation is now a profession and requires a range of skills and understanding. Based on researching national and international codes and standards[4], Dialogue Matters' standards for best practice are shared in Annex 5. A short summary of the role includes:

Neutrality: being able to function and be trusted to function on behalf of all involved including not only the organisations sponsoring the process

Integrated process design: creating the architecture or blueprint of a complex deliberative participation processes following steps and stages in principled negotiation and ensuring all the elements are linked and flows of knowledge clearly planned.

Equity: this is both through equitable representation and power balancing and then facilitating for equal opportunity for people to contribute in workshops

Fair facilitation: using a range of tools, techniques and skills facilitators enable positive group dynamics, move behaviour and relations toward more respectful treatment, increase trust, and foster open and effective communication

Faithful reporting: so that people can see what they said and agreed reflected in workshop and process reports an end strategies, plans, or route maps.

For landscape projects this is a challenge. The neutral person does not have to be an independent third party provided that:

- Stakeholders would trust someone from the project to be unbiased
- They have strong professional ethics related to the role and know how to function in a neutral way and can spot and manage pressure to do otherwise
- They have training in the relevant skills, and techniques.

However, in the complexity and tensions around landscape change, project staff, however skilled, may not be trusted in the role. And many of the landscape projects reported barriers around lack of funds, multi-tasking and needing to drive particular outcomes.

Recommendation: Involve a facilitator in decision-making processes. Preferably, facilitators should be a neutral third party. If someone from the project is facilitating, they must have appropriate training and the trust of all stakeholders that they will remain unbiased.

Identifying who participates in the deliberative dialogue

Good practice landscape governance and justice means expanding beyond the core group of environmental professionals and a few landowning interests. Section 5.7 and Annex 7 discussed the flaws with the commonly used ‘influence and interest’ model and why its use justifies the status quo. A more equitable way to identify people is based on the knowledges and perspectives needed to think holistically about landscapes and avoid unforeseen circumstances.

The types of knowledge will vary by landscape and scope of project but to illustrate the breath for holistic thriving landscape futures, it is likely to include the following interests: natural environment; business and tourism; communities; diversities; heritage and culture; infrastructure (transport, development); recreation and access; resource users (farming, forestry, mining, energy or at sea fishers, renewables); and health and wellbeing.

There are methods for working this out and cross-checking initial drafts from a different perspective for example by functions, by sectors, and by part of the community (locations and diversities). Where it will help build trust and legitimacy, or it is difficult to identify one voice that other similar organisations would trust, the draft balance can be checked with stakeholders themselves.

Getting the balance between knowledge types is vital for deliberative dialogue because techniques are used to prioritise solutions or action that are affected by who is in the room. A bias towards any perspective will call into question the legitimacy of the process and the acceptance of outcomes[5].

Identifying people by their different types of knowledge, mitigates the effect of power and results in a more balanced and inclusive set of people deliberating over options. To include in the group

diverse community voices a separate method which involves analysing demographic information is needed.

Recommendation: Identify stakeholders to take part in deliberative dialogue based on knowledge types that are relevant to the type of change you are looking to enable and the type of landscape you are working in. Make sure there is a balance of relevant knowledge types, and check that balance with other stakeholders if you are unsure.

Design, design, design

The idea of designing a dialogue process and all the elements in it is not common in most landscape and other natural environment projects, but it makes a significant difference. Design takes place at several levels: the overall architecture, the events, sessions, questions, techniques, and outputs. Crucially this includes the decision points and how knowledge flows through the process and is carried to the next part (e.g. is it a summary, infographic, presentation, map, or person). The resulting flow diagram shows the architecture of the process upfront before anything gets underway and includes the core deliberations and the wider engagement activities to collect views and test support for the direction of travel and emerging priorities to feedback those deliberating. It does of course need to be adaptive, but if any change is needed the ripple effect can be understood, and redesigns still have coherence with what has gone before.

We emphasise the need for purposeful and clear design because we have seen the consequences where it does not exist and had to step in and help some projects recover. There is also research evidence that if people feel the process has legitimacy, they are more able to accept decisions that are not their first choice[6]. A few of the risks of having no process design and benefits of having a good process are listed below.

Table 9: Risks of no process design and benefits of having process design

Risks when there is no process design	Benefits of process design
• No clear flows of information or power	• Flows of information and power clearly laid out
• Power battles - people work on each other not the challenge, become more positional and tensions can escalate ramping up existing or starting new conflicts	• Power combined – people put their effort, energy, and ideas into working on the challenge not each other
• No or little social learning	• Social learning – people understand their way of seeing thing is not the only way and more open to others' ideas
• Lack of clarity about who can influence what and when	• Clarity about where decision sit – in the dialogue or feeding into a separate decision process or group
• Inadvertently empowering the project officer or team to reconcile contradictory views from different groups (e.g., if a focus group approach is used)	• Stakeholders come together and are facilitated to reconcile differences and find mutually acceptable solutions
• Stakeholder fatigue, no sense of progress, no clarity about what difference its making	• A clear sense of progress through the steps and stages of building agreements
• Damaged relationships and reputation	• Possibility for increasing trust and understanding

Recommendation: Design the entirety of the dialogue process before engaging anyone. Plan out the different deliberative events, wider engagement, and decision points – and how knowledge will flow coherently through them. Adapt the process to emerging priorities and circumstances – and be transparent with your reasoning.

7.4 Embedding new approaches in NE

Framing - for landscape transformations

All knowledge makes use of frames, and every word is understood through the frames it activates in a person's neural system[7]. This makes frames unconscious structures through which people perceive and make sense of what is around them. Therefore, when framing resilient landscape futures, finding a phrase or descriptor that works for all is both a challenge and the key to success.

- **Living landscapes** as a phrase speaks to the living and evolving nature of landscapes but already used by a number of initiatives (for example the Royal Society's Living Landscape Programme and various Wildlife Trusts).
- **Positive landscape** begs the question who defines what positive looks like and if people hear Natural England talk of positive, they may assume the focus is only nature and cultural aspects of landscapes.
- **Resilient landscape** is another phrase that is gaining traction, for example at the British Ecological Society 2024 conference. However, outside the environment sector the word resilient is not a phrase that is in common daily use. It means the landscapes ability to recover from difficulties or problems but is unclear what condition the recovery is too. For example, this could be to a functional landscape for intensive farming rather than to the nature and culturally rich recovery many aspire to.
- **Regenerative Landscape** speaks of restoring life for people and nature, and self-improving and generative natural and human systems and processes. We have also included a section on the ideas of Regenerative Governance in this report (see: Regenerative Governance). We think this language and framing will have appeal throughout the landscape and natural environment sector. However, this is not a term that is in common use outside this space and regenerative farming is seen by some farmers as a fad.

Recognising there is no perfect answer, we suggest for outside communications:

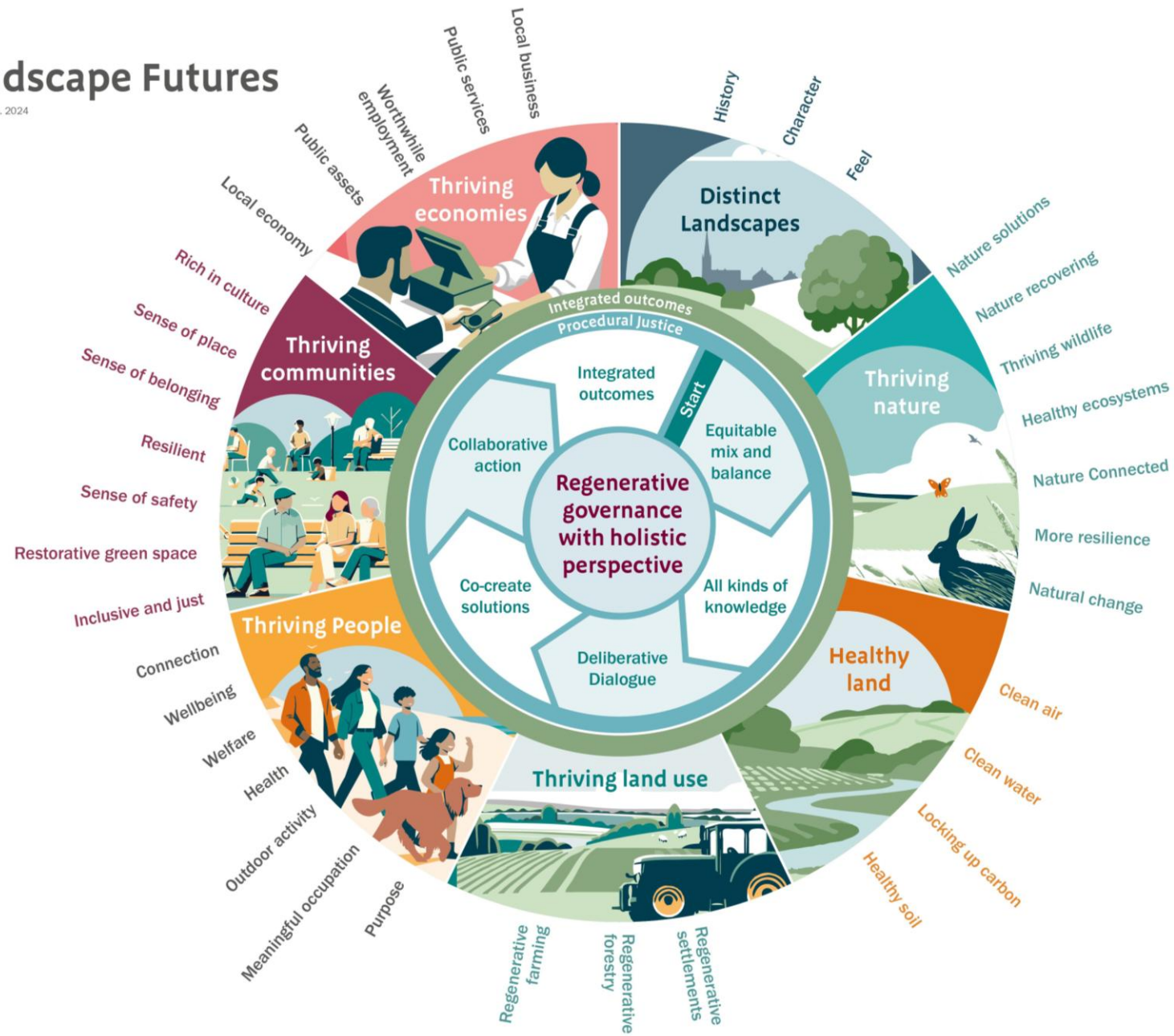
- **Thriving Landscapes**. It conveys the idea of a distinct area that brings health to people, nature and livelihoods and echoes Natural England's vision of a 'Thriving Nature for people and planet'. It is not prescriptive but offers an idea that is open, positive and resilient in character whilst leaving space for local stakeholder and communities to shape what that looks like in their context. It encompasses places rich in wildlife, benefiting people's wellbeing, enjoyment and prosperity. This research encompasses an understanding of landscapes to include urban and rural, wild and intensely managed, and the notion of thriving is not restricted to areas considered naturally beautiful.

For inside Natural England and with other agencies and organisations we suggest:

- **Integrated by landscapes**. This phrase was first used in work we did in the East of England in 2005 bringing together the then English Nature, Rural Development Agencies and Countryside Agency to discover their common ground and plan how they could work together in the future when they all came together in Natural England. As it did then, this phrase offers the idea of landscapes as the integrating concept for a myriad of initiatives.

  The visual we have conceived and had created over the page speaks to both ideas of integration and thriving healthy landscapes.

Figure 7: Regenerative Governance, procedurally just participation, and integrated thinking lead to thriving landscapes



Dialogue Matters

Adaptation and change across landscapes with different characteristics and governance mechanisms

There is an idea that landscapes of different characteristics require different governance mechanisms but this is a misunderstanding of good practices. Regenerative governance is an ethos and approach that can apply to any scale or type of landscape. Best practice dialogue delivering procedural justice likewise applies regardless of landscape types, purposes, or mechanisms in play. The details of who is in the governance group and how a dialogue is designed are of course tailored to the context, but the fundamentals of good governance and Best Practice Dialogue remain the same.

Build a supportive environment

For Natural England to be on the leading edge of landscape governance and landscape justice this will mean a transition to embed a new ethos and new ways of working.

This includes an ethos and culture within NE that:

- Recognises that NE and other professional environmental allies, have just one sectoral perspective towards landscapes and thriving landscapes require a holistic perspective
- Is willing to let go of 'power over 'and shift to 'power with' and helps to embed an ethos of participation and co-production as business as usual
- Guides and enables a more flexible, adaptive, experimental, and open approach grounded in solid principles
- Holds a respectful and constructive attitude towards people from all other sectors and communities, their knowledge, ways of knowing and skills whether or not they align with Natural England's.
- Recognises that people have the right to have a say in changes that impact on their lives, livelihoods, and landscapes
- Embrace Systems Thinking
- Include outcome evaluation and monitoring that goes beyond natural science to include broader metrics such community confidence and action
- Outcomes that go beyond the state of the natural environment to be more holistic, integrated, and long-lasting

To support individuals working around governance and justice:

- Recognise that people working on landscape, landscape governance, participation, engagement, and justice have professional skills on a par with other kinds of technical specialism
- Ensure front line staff feel empowered and supported so they can build trust and take action with others within broadly defined parameters (without having to refer up lines of management)

- Recognise relevant skills as important aspects of all job roles, including taking them into account when recruiting or promoting.

To deliver or support delivery of good landscape governance and justice

- Build understanding of best practices in regenerative governance, procedurally just participation, and engagement so projects know what to be aiming at and have tools to evaluate their progress towards them. So projects know they need to go beyond engagement focused the number who take part, to measures around sharing power to influence and power to act
- Encourage sound understanding and familiarity around power, principled negotiation, dialogue design and relevant methods and tools
- Incentivise good practice with clearer expectations in relation to grants and funding. At present, we know (*pers. comm*) that projects are 'ticking the engagement box' to access funds but that engagement is far from the quality and just procedures that are possible – often with a similar budget
- Embed formative evaluation to assess progress, overcome barriers, and capture learning and feedback into the transition process with questions like those in Table 10. This approach would help NE support and/or lead landscape projects with an ethos of continual reflective and reflexive evaluation and growth. It would mean people feel they have more control over their own action learning and are not having 'experts' or seniors impose things on them

Table 10: Possible stages of an evaluation and feedback process

Stage	Example questions
Understanding	To what extent have people understood • good governance, • procedural justice • participation vs. engagement
Implementation	• To what extent are projects able to implement it? • What are they learning about that? • What difference is this making to how people work? • What is working and how can it be enhanced?
Effect	• What effect do people think this change is having? • What difference do external people perceive? • What has changed on the ground/in the landscapes? • What can be learnt for the next round of initiatives?

Cultivating a culture of innovation

Build in learning and improving understanding: normalising acknowledging known unknowns can support an organisation to build knowledge in a range of areas. By accepting what is not known, people can step into knowledge acquisition and build their expertise over time.

Plan connection and time to reflect: to create positive norms for reflecting to embed knowledge, learn from different circumstance, or considering what worked well, and what can be improved on.

Creating psychological safety: social systems are more likely to achieve change if those present have psychological safety. Psychological safety describes and environment where people can be themselves, take risks, and learn, without fear of negative consequences. This involves fostering a culture of trust, respect, and openness where individuals feel safe to contribute ideas, ask questions and admit mistakes. Key to this are: trust, respect, inclusion, openness, and learning. When psychological safety is high, teams are more likely to be innovative, productive and engaged.

Catalysing creativity: research shows that laughter and informality increase creativity, which can lead to innovation, or solutions-finding.

Embedding evaluation: being open to, and acquiring new knowledge is a key part to shifting culture and practice. However, knowledge acquisition and knowledge application (skills development) are different processes. By embedding evaluation measures, teams can know when they are achieving success, but this can support skills development with feedback loops. Information on what worked well and where things can be improved (taking a positive framing to feedback) will support this process.

Normalise adjusting course: a normal part of skills learning is feeling outside of your comfort zone, and skills are only embedded through practising through this learning stage. Practice does not make perfect, but it does make improvement. As in embedding evaluation through feedback loops, it is important to normalise and make it safe to adjust course when evaluation metrics are showing that the chosen course is not delivering the desired effect. By normalising changing your mind, you enable informed agility that adapts to shifting priorities, new ideas emerging, or responding as new information becomes available.

Clarity on skills for engagement and participation

Valuing, building and professionalising capacity and skills for landscape governance and justice is a vital task. Skills in effective education, communication and engagement are all important but not the same as the ethics, practices and skills needed to design/facilitate (or commission) procedurally just Best Practice Dialogue.

To build clarity, we suggest the development of a competency framework that recognises and maps out these differences. This would also enable people to be clear what path they are on, and the skills needed to develop further along that path or gain skills in another category.

This would also help mitigate the risk we say in the case examples, of projects mistaking engagement activities for participation and co-creation. Table 11 illustrates how the competencies differ.

Table 11: Differing skills and competencies for participation, engagement & communication specialists

Specialism	Methods	Skills and competencies
Participation specialist	Participatory Multi–Stakeholder Dialogue (i.e. Best Practice Dialogue)	• Ability to scope the context and assess power, complexity, levels of tension and trust, then know if a landscape project can undertake the participation themselves or need to commission external professionals. • Stakeholder identification, inclusion, and balancing • Understanding principled negotiation and now this unfolds and is facilitated across a multi -stakeholder processes • Understanding the importance of process design and architecture to ensure clear planned flows of knowledge and decision points • Facilitation techniques, methods and tools and how to select the optimum for the situation • Facilitation skills including managing challenging behaviour • Mediation, and conflict management and resolution skills • Recording, collecting, processing and analysing qualitative data • Reporting fairly • Ability to behave and be trusted to behave in a neutral and impartial way throughout (i.e., working on behalf of all, including but not only NE's own agenda)
Engagement specialist	Social science methods	• Semi-structured interviews, • Drop in meetings • Online questionnaires and surveys • Event management
Communication and education specialist	Marketing, PR, and Comms skills	• Audience research and stratification • Communication with accessible language and graphics, captivating content • Education materials • Story telling • Social media and websites • Creative and graphic design • Reputation management • Data analytics • Event management

Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital

The Defra environmental agencies have all embraced and embedded a paradigm of seeing the natural environment as natural capital with associated ecosystem services. This approach has merit, for example to: pay farmers to deliver environmental and social goods, provide rigour for green financing, and make the case for nature-based solutions compared to new infrastructure.

However, that approach brings a number of challenges in relation to landscapes[1] and ecosystem health. Those related to governance include:

- A push back on its view and relationship with nature and natural systems, which is uncomfortable to stakeholders and communities with other value systems[2] [3] [4] [5].
- The lens of ecosystem services is hard to understand and can be alienating [6] to stakeholders. Especially to people with other ways of framing and experiencing what they value and how they relate to landscapes.
- It is inherently reductionist in world view and econocentric, focusing on understanding the elements, flows and trade-offs. This is counter to Systems Thinking.
- It is not based on procedural justice and does not require or apply psychology, principled negotiation, conflict resolution and Consensus Building ethics and practices.
- Its use of complex modelling is often distrusted by other stakeholders, and it contributes to power imbalances around whose knowledge counts and how that knowledge is captured and communicated.

Crucially an underlying assumption is that economic arguments are the main factor influencing management decisions. In practice, in all decision-making, individuals bring multiple values, information, know how, and experiences to negotiation. Discussions about landscapes are no different with economic arguments far from dominating the outcome. Value mapping research for rivers in Scotland[7] provides some insights into people's choices. With a sample size of 1012 individuals, the study showed three main models, meant to explain human choices, only explained part of people's environmental preferences - leaving 43% unexplained (typical figures for this kind of research because human preferences are so heterogeneous):

- **Standard Economic Model** explained 8% (economic 'static models' assume that individuals hold both pre-existing preferences and perfect information. Preferences are driven by rational utility maximising objectives)
- **Environmental Ethics** explained 18% (A 'rights-based' model which assumes there are moral positions that prevail over utility – and preferences are driven by rights-based ethical beliefs about environmental entities)
- **Social Psychological model** explained 31% (This is a 'process model' which assumes that beliefs and preferences are formed and alter as information is acquired. Human preferences are complex and driven by attitudes, norms, and behaviour control factors)

In light of this, we recommend that Natural England considers where natural capital and ecosystem services framing may become a barrier to principled negotiation, inclusive knowledge and values, procedural justice, and systems thinking for thriving landscapes.

Policy development

Landscapes have always and will always change with and without human interventions. There are wide concerns that managing land and seascapes with pre decided and prescribed conditions and outcomes is no longer viable. Instead, the focus needs to shift to healthy functioning natural processes so that nature itself has freedoms to adapt and transform.

The same applies to policy development. This too needs to be adaptive focusing on broad principles, good governance and a continued and reflective learning practice. The workshop of leading landscape thinkers explored this in some depth (see Section 4.3), suggesting the development of a hierarchy of principles with a shift from measuring what is being achieved related to pre-defined outcomes, to measuring how well the principles were being applied and the effect they were having.

A recent pioneering project led by Forest Research shows a way forward. The 'traditional' approach of involving stakeholders in policy creation has been for researchers to design questions, go out and ask stakeholders, and then feed the responses back to the policy team. Instead of following this approach, Forest Research, Defra, and Forestry Commission chose to pilot using a co-design method for designing and delivering tree health grants. This was an open, iterative, and agile process with continual loops of feedback between the policy, research and delivery teams which then led to responsive adaptations. This approach enabled local learning to feedback into policy development in an action learning context and ethos. The project recently commissioned us to support their reflections on how this worked to develop guidance that would enable the co-design approach to be repeated[8].

This provides a model that NE could follow working across policy, relevant NE specialists, and landscape delivery, to reflect and learn together.

7.5 Governance for positive and just landscape

Introduction

Landscape working brings an array of opportunities and challenges. These challenges are exacerbated as knowledge of governance options and good practice is generally weak. Governance includes all the formal and informal arrangements that steer the future of the landscape. This includes the following:

- **Power relations and related ethics and procedures**: Who is involved, the power they have, who appointed them, who they are accountable to, how they make decisions, and the extent other interests share or influence those decisions.
- **The human dynamics** and resources: the people, relationships, including guiding principles, communication, ethics, culture, and how disputes are settled
- **Strategies and plans** to deliver landscape change
- **Financial arrangements**
- **The legal entity or not and way legal agreements are created** for example via contract or cooperative law

In landscape projects (outside of National Parks and National Landscapes), governance is generally underdeveloped. For example, many of the projects who responded to the survey describe informal arrangements with at most Terms of Reference (ToR).

With the new Landscape Recovery Projects this is no longer sufficient. They are required to have clear and formalised structures and legal agreements to deliver their responsibilities with others, with multiple funding sources and need to operate over 20 plus years.

In this section we explore both the human element side, considerations to inform governance choices, and legal mechanisms.

Human dimensions

Good governance includes skilful handling of differences, effective communication, principled negotiation with clear and transparent decision processes, clarity on power relations and responsibilities, accountabilities within and beyond the core project, and guiding ethics and principles.

Research shows that without good governance, when some level of participation or engagement takes place, there are not the supporting resources and infrastructure for ongoing collaboration and implementation. Context, design, power, and scalar fit are all key attributes for delivering beneficial outcomes through participation (see Table 6) and these flow from the governance of the project, partnerships, and organisations at the heart of the landscape project.

In this research, the survey cases included protected landscapes with formalised and hierarchical committees and boards. New landscape projects are developing their governance and many of the respondents said they have informal partnerships with at most Terms of Reference.

A culture of friendly informality fosters innovation, communication, builds social capital, and leads to more effective decision-making. However, without a clear governance framework and strategy in place, partnerships are dependent on the current personalities, relationship and group dynamics. If these aspects breakdown, the partnership is vulnerable to sudden collapse. For example, if there are changes in personnel and the original people driving and catalysing the work move on, momentum can be lost. This is particularly relevant in light of findings in our prior research [9] which suggested that the personality types who have the drive and energy to catalyse new landscape and land management initiatives are not best suited to leading the ongoing management and maintenance stage. They tend to either move on to the next challenge or they can become a barrier and gate keeper for ongoing work and effectiveness.

A clear governance framework and strategy (including purpose, values and ethics, framework, accountabilities, communication, ways of resolving differences) provides greater resilience.

However, whilst planned resilient and appropriate governance provide a foundation, it is governance in its wider sense which determines positive outcomes. This is where process effectiveness enables collaborative advantage (being able to achieve more together than individually) resulting in outcome effectiveness[10]. Process effectiveness includes:

- Shared purpose; values and objectives
- Clear roles and responsibilities with empowered officers
- Effective, clear and timely communication
- Conducive power relations and a collegiate culture building
- Sustained commitment and resources from partners
- Attention to group health including appreciative culture, healthy ways to handle conflict and actively fostering high trust
- Effective and streamlined project management systems

Core governance groups during a deliberative process

When a project is in the phase of participatory planning and deliberating about landscape change, core governance groups need to avoid making decisions in parallel and thereby undermining deliberations and trust.

It is typical practice for process designers and facilitators to ask for groups to either pause whilst the deliberative process is taking place, or to operate with very clear guidance on what can and can't be decided by their group. In best practice decision-making, following consensus and co-design principles, the governance group will in any case function as equals with other stakeholders to deliberate over and agree solutions.

Post the phase of planning change, new governance arrangements may be needed. For example, in projects we have run, all the stakeholders agreed the pattern of organisations and interests in the group so it is inclusive of different kinds of knowledge and they have confidence in its legitimacy. An alternative is that the pre-existing governance group continues to meet but sets up a 'sounding board' of other stakeholders to bounce ideas off and help check the details of implementation. Some projects mandate the sounding board to be able to make the call that there has been such a change in direction that the full stakeholder group needs to be reconvened to work out the way forward. This can happen when there is incremental drift from original agreements, or the impact of an emergency (such as fire or flood) renders previous plans void, or there is significant change in government policy or funding.

Regenerative Governance

The idea of regenerative approaches to soil, farming and nature is gaining traction in nature and landscape recovery. The idea that the same regenerative ethos can apply to governance is new.

Regenerative governance seeks to function both internally and externally in a way that restores and regenerates healthy relationships, diversity, wellbeing, and also healthy connections and regenerative uses between people and the natural environment. The intent is for this to enable thriving and resilient social, economic, and environmental systems.

Regenerative governance requires a shift away from the traditional, hierarchical model of governance (typical of protected landscapes) towards a collaborative and decentralised approach. This approach fosters and values cooperation and collaboration across different sectors, stakeholders, and communities (including government, business, civil society, local and other communities).

This ethos also emphasises the importance of feedback loops, transparency, and adaptability in governance systems. It brings with it the idea of ongoing reflective learning and experimentation to identify what works and what doesn't, and to continuously work at improving the health of governance practices and relationships.

Within the governance there will be a core governance group and operational level.

Core governance group

Moving to regenerative governance means the core governance group has a quite different responsibility and function. The group membership will reflect a broader range of interests and

communities in a balanced way so no one perspective can dominate. For landscape projects that might mean bringing in voices from business, health and wellbeing, arts, communities and pioneering forms of land management (including those engaged with regenerative farming and sustainable forestry).

Those in the governance group will less see their role as one of status and kudos and more one of service, with an ethos of being custodians and stewards entrusted to lead in the agreed direction where appropriate and mobilise and devolve resources and power for action to others whenever possible.

The group's responsibilities are not about determining and controlling the future of the landscape but of hosting and enabling and taking part in strategy development with an ethos of co-design and co-delivery. Once a strategy has been agreed, their role is then to faithfully enable the agreed direction and priorities. If there is a substantive change of direction or priorities, their role is to recognise the need for further deliberative and action orientated dialogue to understand the shift and how best to respond.

Inherent to the idea of regenerative governance is the idea of restoring and replenishing people, communities, nature, culture, livelihoods and all the things that make up a thriving landscape.

Operational level

This is the level in which things get done and a difference is made on the ground: the 'doing' part of the organisation. Typically, people are appointed to get the job done with tight control on job descriptions, accountabilities, work planning, deliverables, targets and monitoring.

Regenerative and co-productive approaches with their different kind of culture and ethos focus on employing "imaginative and effective people, especially on the frontline, and empowering them with the freedom to innovate, and act and giving them whole jobs to do: if they have all this they will succeed, if they don't they will fail"[11].

Our summary of regenerative governance culture is below:

- **A strong and shared sense of vision and values**
- **Light touch guidance and procedures including collaborative decision processes to build consensus agreement prior to any required formal sign off.**
- **Transparency with two-way flows of influence and communication between all parts**
- **Clear and empowering structures devolving decisions and resources within and beyond the organisation**
- **Everyone is clear about where responsibility for different decisions sits**
- **People feel empowered and free to act within their area of responsibility**
- **Responsiveness towards stakeholders and the environment**
- **A robust understanding of the difference between adversarial negotiation and principled negotiation and application of the latter**

- **Equity and inclusiveness ethos guiding all decisions**
- **Effectiveness to meet the needs of people and nature whilst making the best use of resources**
- **Accountability to the people and nature that will benefit from or be affected by decisions - as well as any statutory requirements**
- **A culture with a participatory ethos which is fair, inclusive, and equitable**

Governance Structures and Entities

When considering new governance there are a range of questions that need to be answered to work out the optimum structure and entity:

WHY: What is the purpose? What is the shared vision and sense of direction? What are the values and how they can be enacted?

WHAT: What will the entity be doing? Holding and disseminating grants or funds? Entering into contracts? Employing people? Providing services? Leading joint marketing or promotion exercises? Acting as an advocate for the area? Giving a space for conflict resolutions? Convening participatory processes? Commissioning research?

WHO: Who needs to be in the governance group? Does that reflect diversities of the area? How much capacity, and what skills/expertise does the group collectively have to involve others? How do locals, and citizens support the initiative?

HOW: Who is it accountable to? How will others be able to engage with and influence progress? What culture will it have? Where are the main sources of income going to come from: grants, membership, goods and services? Does the organisation want to be making a surplus to support other things? If so, what will it do with any surplus? Is a legal entity needed and if so, which will work best?

The core question is which kind of governance (and where appropriate legal) arrangements will reinforce, not undermine, adaptive. collaborative, resilient, and just landscape futures?

Adaptive legal arrangements

If projects that are looking to implement landscape scale change own assets, employ people, take on responsibilities and risks, and make legal agreements, they need an appropriate legal structure. This is vital to limit liability for those involved, and ideally to ensure any assets are locked in for community benefit in the long term. There are options about how this is done: for example as a public body, trust, charity, limited company, or social enterprise and there are pros and cons of each. A typical model is to establish a Community Interest Company (CIC) and enter into agreements via contract law. However CICs have particular risks:

- Contracts require fixed and specified outcomes which, with the periods of some landscape agreements now being 20 years, does not enable the adaptive management and flexible outcomes that will be needed to adapt to fast changing climate related conditions.

- Contracts are negotiated each time with particular entities and complex legal conditions – this advantages public finance investors who will have and can afford specialist lawyers defending their interests.

For adaptive and resilient landscape projects, establishing a co-operative legal arrangement can address these challenges by:

- Bringing parties together in a mechanism through which a range of different interests can work together collaboratively, for shared objectives as well as their own particular needs;
- Enabling grouping, stacking and bundling of ecosystem services in a way that meets the scale needs of a wider range of interests than would otherwise be possible.
- Enabling the transparent blending of differing types of funding and finance in a more coherent and effective way, from sales of ecosystem services, through to grants, and investment finance (traditional, social and community based).
- Different categories of membership can make more flexible agreements guided by commonly agreed ethics and principles and tailored to the requirements of landscape recovery over the long term in a way contract law thwarts.
- Cooperative governance can also include rules for making different types of decisions, dispute resolution mechanisms and penalties for non-implementation.

A cooperative is established with a collaborative ethos at its heart and a core set of legal requirements.

Risk of private green finances undermining landscape justice

A particular challenge in new landscape projects is going to be how priorities agreed through Best Practice Dialogue, work alongside the priorities of private finances. Private green finance will want to drive specific measurable outcomes to satisfy their investment and have the legal clout to protect their interests. Without deliberate and carefully planned governance arrangements, the risk is that private finances drive landscape change regardless of collaboratively agreed priorities and that this does not lead to thriving landscapes.

In this way there are serious risks of private finances undermining endeavours for procedural and therefore landscape justice**.**

The answer is for landscape projects to undertake the process of planning change collaboratively and only when agreed priorities and landscape futures have been agreed will it be possible to offer private finance the opportunity to invest in landscape restoration.

Implementing positive landscape change

The focus to this point has been on establishing good governance including Best Practice Dialogue to develop priorities and plans for landscape change. It is just as important to think about what happens during the implementation phase.

That includes how governance needs to evolve to be inclusive of different knowledges and diversity. How to continue an ethos of mutual respect and ongoing involvement. How best to

embed a participatory ethos as business as usual so that skills are used in all kinds of meetings to increase equity, inclusion and effective decision-making (including using consensus building techniques).

Just as the state of the landscape needs to be monitored, audits of power sharing, equities, and justice does too.

Recommendations for landscape projects

- **Carefully consider and plan the governance of the core project**
- **Develop a culture that is regenerative and enables thriving**
- **Embed good values and ethics around working with others**
- **Adopt adaptive legal frameworks**
- **Be wise around green finances**

7.6 Participation for positive and just landscape

Facilitating positive and just landscape change

This section provides suggestions that are applicable to landscape (and seascape) projects and initiatives.

Consider power

The importance of understanding and working with power for better landscape outcomes is discussed earlier in Section 5.4. Power relations are held in structural, systemic and institutional ways and something that happens between people. It is inherently relational, dynamic and messy. There are a range of tools available for power analysis[12] [13] and science is advancing understanding of power on outcomes[14].

Remember that power and when it is shared affects the nature and quality of decisions - sharing power leads to better environmental outcomes[15]. Therefore, thinking about and sharing power is a crucial part of landscape change success.

Recommendation: Give time to assessing and being aware of the multi-dimensions of power in and around the landscape change project and what justice and inclusion look like in this context.

To start considering power, these questions are a helpful introduction:

- Who sets the agenda and for what purpose?
- Who decides what matters most and how is that decided?
- Who is included and who excluded? Why?
- Whose voices are heard and believed?
- Whose knowledge, values and beliefs count?
- Who decides and makes the rules?
- Who designs and facilitates any involvement?
- What kind of transparency is there?
- What dimensions of power are at play?
- What does landscape justice mean in this context?
- Who answers any of the above questions?

Analyse the context

To assess the context for engagement and participation there are crucial aspects to take into account: importance, influence, tension, the character of what needs to be resolved, uncertainty, complexity, the nature of the challenge (technical and practical challenge, value laden, or value laden wicked), numbers that need to be involved, timeframes, geographic scale, levels of governance (local, landscape, national or international), capacity and skills to deliver good practice, and trust by other stakeholders and communities to run a fair process. All these things

make a difference to the kind of engagement and participation needed and whether tackling this is something a project can undertake by itself or whether a professional third party is needed.

(Funded by the National Trust for open use, Dialogue Matters has created a simple tool 'Rapid Assessment of Participation Context' to enable projects to do this and are happy to make it available).

Recommendation: Analyse the context carefully against a checklist to scope the context for involving others and the capacities the project has to do this work.

Methods and approaches

The survey suggests that many landscape projects are unaware of the now established profession around participation and engagement, of the array of methods and approaches, or which is fit for what purpose. Where there is no clear design and selection of methods it results in weak and ad hoc engagement, reinventing of wheels and repeating of mistakes. Poor practice risks undermining a landscape project's ambition and can catalyse new conflicts. The rigour and training required for delivering other aspects of landscape change (for example ecology, hydrology, habitat management) is not reflected in the skills and training expected in relation to the human dimensions and decision-making itself.

There is now a wide array of methods and approaches (see Annex 4) and each have strengths and weaknesses. Some are championed by particular organisations and even copyrighted (such as Planning for Real) but increasingly the lines between them are blurring with professional practitioners drawing on the array of methods or inventing new ones when designing integrated deliberative dialogue processes. Three methods that, when woven into a sound dialogue design, make a real difference to decision quality for landscape change are described below.

Systems thinking:

Typical attempts at integrated landscape management have sought create a broad vision and then tackle each component part for alignment with that vision (i.e. farming, recreation, nature). But you can't change complex systems by changing the parts. This is still rooted in siloed, and reductionist thinking and unconsciously assumes linear causality. This approach also focuses on the problems of each part and how to fix them without attending to the broader system.

Systems Thinking is different. It inherently recognises complexity, nonlinearity, intricate interconnections, and that systems are dynamic and evolving. System Thinking involves taking a holistic view of the system, not just the parts. This includes looking for patterns not snap shots or pieces, seeking to understand how the system behaves over time and the reinforcing processes, balancing processes (that maintain equilibrium), non-linear change, cumulative effects and causal links.

For landscapes, when the socio-ecological and economic systems are better understood it makes it more possible to identify interventions that have positive and cascading impacts through the system. This means that decisions are less likely to cause unforeseen consequences or activate other negative cascading effects.

Methods to understand the systems span from highly sophisticated modelling to 'soft systems' approaches (i.e., Best Practice Dialogue). Both have their place but for landscapes, soft systems approaches are more effective because they involve the people affected and multiple forms of knowledge to seek to understand the system. They are also less costly, more agile, and avoid the suspicion of stakeholders that black box technology is being used to undermine and disempower.

Whilst soft systems methods have been developed and applied over the last 20 years they have not yet gained traction in landscape work. Though we note that only one project (other than our own) and outside England, mentioned Systems Thinking in the survey. This is set to change. In 2019 the Chief Scientist of Defra convened a System Research Program to explore how systems thinking could be applied across Defra responsibilities (we supported with training and insights into soft systems methods and practices). Defra have now issued guidance on the value of the approach[16] and there is separate government guidance on tools and techniques which includes causal diagrams, rich pictures, and systems mapping[17].

Futures thinking

Futures methods enable people to think beyond the present to the longer-term related changes. Psychology tells us that people are vulnerable to various cognitive biases that limit perception of what is changing and limit imagination to what can change assuming that how something has been done is the only way it can be done. To counter this a range of futures and foresight methods have been developed including visioning, 3P thinking (possible, probable, potential futures), co-created scenarios, Three Horizons (what is emerging in the future, current but fading in relevance, and bridging between the two) and PESTLE (assessing political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental trends). Weaving these into deliberative dialogue reaps dividends in understanding the bigger picture. Futures methods are also part of good practice Systems Thinking. Crucially, futures methods and approaches increase the likelihood that agreed landscape action is not only well informed but more agile and adaptive and more likely to result in resilient landscapes that are able to be more responsive to rapidly changing conditions.

Constructive/ appreciative/ asset-based dialogue.

The typical approach to landscape change is to surface and focus on the problems and issues before moving to solutions. However, a problem-solving approach inadvertently triggers deep psychological barriers to change. Assuming there are no additional resources in the situation, diverting resources from what is already working to solve problems, just causes new problems to emerge elsewhere in the system thereby multiplying the problems.

Research shows doing the opposite and focusing and building on what is working well is transformative[18]. The table below summarises the findings of the Action Research. In one set of communities the researchers took a problem-solving approach: in the other, a constructive and appreciative approach. The difference is stark. This research was done around Indonesian forests but we have applied this ethos into all our work for 15 years, much of it in the UK, and we see the transformative change in our practice.

Table 12: Summary of the difference between problem solving and appreciative dialogue

Effect on people in a problem solving and deficit-based approach	Effect on people with constructive and appreciative dialogue/ asset-based approach
Frustration	Motivated
Efforts not valued	Efforts valued
Environment is complex and difficult = a problem	Looking after the environment has many benefits and is doable
Feeling overwhelmed	Believe in own capacity and agency to make a difference
Risk averse	Fosters innovation
Disowning – it's not our problem	Willing to get involved and make a difference
No momentum or causes resistance	Momentum for delivery

Recommendation: Learn about the different methods, principles, and practices and how they can be used to best effect. If the situation is too complex or contentious for the project to facilitate themselves, and a professional participation designer and facilitators is needed, leave selection of methods and techniques to them. They do their best work when not fettered by pre-existing design thinking.

Annex 1 Glossary of terms

This section explains and explores the key terms and way they are used in this report. These terms are explored in the literature review from an academic perspective. In the rest of the report these terms are used more loosely and less defined. To assist with understanding we offer the following descriptions.

Best Practice Dialogue

- There is no settled language to differentiate best practice from other approaches and there is a history of linguistic drift as terms assigned with specific meanings are widely adopted, and the meanings shift. This process undermines broad application of best practice principles, as the term migrates without the best practice standard or principles moving with the term. As terms are more widely used to describe different practices, this creates challenges in differentiating by the term alone. The shift in meaning for the term Stakeholder Dialogue is an example of this effect. The Environment Council originally coined the term in the mid-90s to mean an exemplar approach comprised of specific ethics, techniques and practices. However, as time passed, the meaning of Stakeholder Dialogue has shifted to mean two-way communication between different parties, rather than the original exemplar approach. Stakeholder Dialogue was originally used to describe practice with:

- A focus on the importance of dialogue design tailored to the context and following steps and stages in principled negotiation and Consensus building
- A large core group of multiple interests negotiating together across several workshops. For example, in complex landscape projects 60 people would not be uncommon
- An ethos of levelling power relations so people deliberate together and then ideas are taken on merit not based on the power, status and behaviour of those taking part
- Use of deliberative and Consensus Building techniques including decision techniques to avoid dominant people determining the outcome
- Neutral facilitation throughout

To avoid the risk of different interpretations of practice by using widely used terms like Stakeholder Dialogue, we instead use ‘Best Practice Dialogue’ in this report to refer to the above exemplar approach and quality of process described by the Environment Council.

Deliberation

Deliberation is defined as “*when there is sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions and where there is space to weigh options, develop common understanding and appreciate respective roles and responsibilities*”. (UN Brisbane Declaration 2005[1])

Integrity

When there is openness and honesty about the scope and purpose of engagement.

Inclusion

When there is an opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard.

Influence

When people have input in designing how they participate, when policies and services reflect their involvement and when their impact is apparent.

Landscape

The word ‘landscape’ means different things to different people. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscapes as “*an area perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*.” Landscapes are formed by geology, geomorphology, soils, hydrology, and related nature and ecosystems, and the associated land uses, human structures and layouts, histories, cultures, stories, appearance, smells, sounds, feel and experiences. In this report landscapes can be areas that are rural and urban, wild or manged, inland or coastal and relevant to seascapes.

Landscapes are also experienced and understood at different scales. Some landscape initiatives match the landscape characters defined by Natural England, some are smaller parts of a whole and others, whilst described as a landscape project, cross multiple landscape character areas for example from mountains to lowlands and then the coast.

Landscape Approach

A type of collaborative landscape management that seeks to understand the landscape through a socio-economic lens, spanning multiple sectors and considering the interests of diverse stakeholders.

Landscape governance

With landscapes functioning socio-ecologically, and understood at different spatial and governance scales, some landscapes map onto existing governance arrangements (for example National Parks), but most do not. All are affected by polycentric policy, strategies and governance arrangements for different aspects of landscapes (local authority plans, catchment management, protected nature sites, transport, tourism plans etc). To add to this complexity the causes and effects of landscape change, reach beyond local boundaries[2] [3] [4] so there is the potential for local management to be at odds with wider social and ecological processes.

In this context, when we use the phrase landscape governance, we mean the formal or informal arrangements that steer the future management and land use decisions in a landscape. As will be seen in this research, the variety spans formal legal entities and regulatory duties, to informal partnerships held together by good will and shared intent.

Landscape Justice

This is a less familiar term so is explained in a little more detail below.

Landscape justice came to attention in the 1980's in America through the work of Latino, Native American, Asian and African American communities who had been severely negatively affected by the environmental movement. For example, fortress conservation values had excluded indigenous peoples from their lands in order to create 'wilderness' (and sometimes areas for white people to trophy hunt). In the UK, this has been experienced in the management of our moorland as driven grouse moors in which rich white people can trophy hunt. The movement grew to recognise that environmental injustice was not just about natural landscapes because environmental degradation is most likely to be experienced by black people, people of colour, indigenous people, and marginalised white people. This is the link between social justice and environmental justice. It considers whether people benefit or are harmed by the choices and related impact on the environment by the more affluent power holders. Harms can include living with polluted water and air or less greenery or green space through to exclusion from lands that are intrinsic to the culture, claims and rights of the inhabitants.

Concerns about landscape justice now extend far beyond America. In the UK there is also a history of exclusion from landscape benefits. Better known examples include the Enclosure Movement which took place up to the early 1900s and mass trespass of Kinder Scout (1932). More recently, there has been push back on re/wilding projects seeking to alter traditional farmed landscapes or exclude access.

Landscape justice and equalities raise questions about who is in the room to influence and make decisions about landscapes. Who can use the land and who can't? Who is welcome and who is not? Who gets to define what needs to be solved and how that is framed (currently this is usually natural science evidence and regulation)? Whose rights and histories dominate and whose do not? Who has the capacity, and time to take part in planning landscape futures and the resources and capability to implement agreed change? Who owns the land? How are the benefits and harms distributed?

In this report we use the term landscape justice to encompass the fairness of procedures by which landscape decisions are made, what they include, who is involved in implementing and adapting to change, and the outcomes.

Participative Democracy

A term to describe stakeholder involvement in decisions becoming the norm. It is a core part of government policy as participative democracy is seen as the main way of addressing the 'democratic deficit' left by the decline in 'elective democracy'.

Reflective learning

A process of continued learning and reflection about how what is being done is aligned with agreed ethics, principles and practices and what can be learned and improved.

Annex 2 Survey

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

This survey is part of research commissioned by Natural England.

We want to hear from projects working around landscape-scale change. The focus is around governance arrangements and how other people were involved at two main stages: planning landscape change and, if you have got this far, implementing what has been agreed.

We know there is much to learn from other projects (e.g. coastal, marine, riverine) and we would like to hear from those too. We are also interested to learn about projects working in England, other UK countries, and outside the UK.

We may want to quote what you say in this or potential follow-on research, but it will not be attributed to you, your project or landscape.

This survey has been written to capture a wide range of cases at whatever scale landscape change is experienced and understood by a project. It also looks to accommodate projects that took place in the past or are currently in progress. As a result, not all the questions will be applicable for all projects. Please feel free to skip over any that are not relevant to your context.

Responding to this survey

1. This survey will take approx. 20-25 minutes to complete
2. The survey contains a mix of open and closed questions
3. This survey is available until midnight on the Friday 15th March.
4. You can look through the survey before responding, return to earlier pages without losing your work, and complete it in more than one session.

If you have technical difficulties completing this survey please alert: sam.bavin@dialoguematters.co.uk.

Consenting

This research is being conducted by Dialogue Matters - a neutral third party that designs, facilitates, and evaluates stakeholder dialogue and conducts social research in environmental contexts. It has been commissioned by Natural England. We are asking for your feedback to help develop a vision that positions Natural England at the forefront of landscape thinking.

Participation is based on voluntary, informed and fluid consent. You are free to withdraw the information you have provided at any time, without having to give justification. If you wish to withdraw your responses please email sam.bavin@dialoguematters.co.uk.

Your responses may be quoted in reporting to Natural England, but will not be attributed - unless you specify you are willing to have a case study attributed to you. You will be able to consent to having a case study attributed to you at the end of the survey.

All information gathered from this survey is held in secure file storage with two-factor authentication on password protected devices. Data will be stored for a maximum of six months after the completion of the research and will then be destroyed. Only Dialogue Matters will have access to the raw data. Natural England will be provided with processed and anonymised data used in any reporting.

The information you provide may be used by Dialogue Matters in a project report to Natural England and to inform a 'Vision Statement' document that Natural England can use to communicate an initial strategic vision for landscape change both internally and externally.

You can view our privacy notice here.

* Do you consent to participate in this survey, given the information above?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

1. About you

1.1 What is your full name?

1.2 What is your occupation?

1.3 What organisation do you work for?

1.4 What is your email address?

1.5 Organisation type:

- ◯ UK Government
- ◯ Devolved Government
- ◯ Government Agency
- ◯ Local Authority
- ◯ Non-government Organisation (NGO)
- ◯ Community Organisaiton
- ◯ Voluntary
- ◯ Business
- ◯ Research
- ◯ Partnership Project
- ◯ Consultancy
- ◯ Other (please specify)

1.6 Your role/s:

- ◯ Project Officer/Manager
- ◯ Project Team Member
- ◯ Project Steering Group Member
- ◯ Funder/sponsor
- ◯ Stakeholder
- ◯ Member of the Community
- ◯ Researcher
- ◯ Engagement Officer
- ◯ Workshop Facilitator
- ◯ Other (please specify)

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

2. The context of your landscape project or initiative

2.1 What is the name of the landscape change project or initiative?

2.2 Where is it located?

2.3 If possible, please provide a website link where we can find out more:

2.4 What type of landscape are you working in? (Tick all relevant boxes)

- ☐ Forest/woodland
- ☐ Mountain
- ☐ Uplands
- ☐ Lowlands
- ☐ Moors
- ☐ Heath
- ☐ Grassland/meadows
- ☐ Arable
- ☐ Rivers
- ☐ Lakes
- ☐ Wetlands
- ☐ Coastal
- ☐ Marine
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2.5 What is the geographical scale? (Tick all relevant boxes)

- ☐ Local
- ☐ Land/sea character area
- ☐ Protected area (e.g. National Park, National Landscape)
- ☐ Cross-border
- ☐ Across multiple borders
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2.6 What are the objectives of land management and change? (Tick all relevant boxes)

- [ ] Catchment management
- [ ] Climate adaptation
- [ ] Fisheries management
- [ ] Flood management
- [ ] Food production
- [ ] Forestry/timber management
- [ ] Net zero - carbon capture
- [ ] Nature recovery
- [ ] Outdoors education and learning
- [ ] Biodiversity
- [ ] Protected (e.g. National Parks, National Landscape, National Scenic Area)
- [ ] Recreation management
- [ ] Regenerative farming
- [ ] Renewable energy
- [ ] Rewilding
- [ ] Waste management
- [ ] Water quality management
- [ ] Wild animal management (e.g. deer, wildcats, beavers, otters, birds)
- [ ] Cultural heritage
- [ ] Other (please specify)

2.7 On the following scale how complex are the decisions that are being made?

- ◯ Straightforward (e.g. low levels of uncertainty, sufficient good evidence to support decisions, few options to choose between, small number of interests with similar views).
- ◯ Quite straightforward
- ◯ Intermediate
- ◯ Quite complex
- ◯ Very complex (e.g. high levels of uncertainty, limited or conflicting evidence, multiple options, multiple and diverse stakeholders with contrasting perspectives).

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

3. The planning stage - Planning landscape-scale change I

This part of the survey is looking at how people are involved in planning landscape change.

3.1 Who was/is in the original group driving the need for landscape change?

3.2 How does this group function?

- ◯ As an informal partnership by informal agreement
- ◯ As an informal partnership but with terms of reference
- ◯ By legal agreement under contract law
- ◯ By legal agreement under cooperative law
- ◯ As a social enterprise
- ◯ As a charity
- ◯ As a community interest company
- ◯ As a limited company
- ◯ Other (please specify)

3.3 Who is involved in planning landscape change?

3.3.1 Who is involved?

Public sector:

	Who is in the main decision group?	Who is involved to influence or inform decision through other engagement?
Government	◯	◯
Government Environmental Agencies	◯	◯
Government other Agencies	◯	◯
County Authorities	◯	◯
Local Authorities	◯	◯
Parishes/town councils	◯	◯

Private sector:

	Who is in the main decision group?	Who is involved to influence or inform decision through other engagement?
Individual business	◯	◯
Chamber of commerce	◯	◯
Local business associations	◯	◯

Researchers and academia:

	Who is in the main decision group?	Who is involved to influence or inform decision through other engagement?
Universities and colleges	◯	◯
Museums	◯	◯
Research Institutes	◯	◯

Non-Government Organisations (Professional organisations with charitable status and paid staff):

	Who is in the main decision group?	Who is involved to influence or inform decision through other engagement?
Landowner associations	◯	◯
Environmental and conservation	◯	◯
Historical and archaeological	◯	◯
Landscape and heritage	◯	◯
Health	◯	◯
Health prescribing	◯	◯
Education	◯	◯
Recreation	◯	◯
Youth	◯	◯
Senior (older people)	◯	◯
Ethnic	◯	◯
Disabled	◯	◯
LGBTQ+	◯	◯

Community or local groups (voluntary staff):

	Who is in the main decision group?	Who is involved to influence or inform decision through other engagement?
Resident groups	◯	◯
Youth groups	◯	◯
Senior Groups	◯	◯
Societies conserving architecture and historic features	◯	◯
Local environmental groups	◯	◯
Local recreation groups	◯	◯
Faith groups	◯	◯
Ethnic groups	◯	◯
LGBTQ+ groups	◯	◯
Art/culture groups	◯	◯
Schools	◯	◯
Individual landowners/occupiers	◯	◯

Other (please specify)

How many people are in the decision making group?

Approximately how many people have been involved through wider engagement?

3.3.2 Are the community and stakeholders actively supported to take part in planning landscape change?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If yes, which activities are taking place? (Tick all relevant)

- ☐ Supporting their communication to and from their wider network
- ☐ Supporting preparation of their data, maps and graphs in a professional way so it stands alongside other sources of information
- ☐ Plain language briefings, PowerPoint, notes, maps
- ☐ Supporting development of the community or stakeholder group's social media
- ☐ Helping communities or stakeholders link with others with similar interests
- ☐ Providing expenses to enable people to attend workshops
- ☐ Providing a Per Diem to enable people to attend (e.g. for self-employed fishers, foresters or farmers, or for child care or other care provision to free people to attend workshops
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

Planning landscape change II

3.4 How are other communities and stakeholders involved?

3.4.1 In what ways are communities and stakeholders involved? (Tick all relevant)

Through face-to-face methods:

- [ ] Drop in events/open days
- [ ] Chaired workshops/meetings
- [ ] Facilitated deliberative workshops
- [ ] Town hall meetings /public meetings
- [ ] 1:1 interviews
- [ ] Focus groups/topic groups
- [ ] Surveys/questionnaires face to face
- [ ] Multiple events with different people and groups
- [ ] Multiple events with the same group of people negotiating over time
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Through online or written methods:

- [ ] Online deliberative workshops
- [ ] Online surveys/questionnaires
- [ ] Sending in comments on documents
- [ ] Multiple online events with different people and groups
- [ ] Multiple online events with the same group of people negotiating over time
- [ ] Other (please specify)

3.4.2 Is anyone designing the overall process of involving people in the planning stage of your project?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3.4.3 Are the different activities involving people designed to work together in an integrated way?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not applicable

If yes, who is designing, facilitating, and managing the involvement process to plan change?

	Who is designing the process?	Who is facilitating the process?	Who is project managing the process?
Project officer/s with no previous experience	◯	◯	◯
Project officer trained in communication and engagement	◯	◯	◯
Project officer/s trained in the design and facilitation of participation	◯	◯	◯
Independent third-party professionals	◯	◯	◯
It is a collaboration between the project and the people who are engaging in the process	◯	◯	◯

Other (please specify)

3.4.4 There are a range of existing methods and approaches to participation in landscape change. Are any of the following approaches being used? (Tick all relevant)

- [ ] No specific approach was used
- [ ] Achieving Better Community Development (ABCD)
- [ ] Alternative Dispute Resolution
- [ ] Appreciative Inquiry
- [ ] Charrettes
- [ ] Citizen Assemblies
- [ ] Citizen Science
- [ ] Citizens Juries
- [ ] Community Voice Method
- [ ] Designed Consensus Building/Stakeholder Dialogue
- [ ] Future Search
- [ ] Market Research
- [ ] Mediation
- [ ] Multi Criteria Analysis Process
- [ ] Multi-party Environmental Mediation
- [ ] Natural Capital Approach
- [ ] Open Space
- [ ] Participatory Appraisal
- [ ] Participatory Art, Song, Dance
- [ ] Participatory Mapping
- [ ] Planning for Real
- [ ] Systems Thinking (using causal diagrams, patterning etc)
- [ ] Three Horizons
- [ ] World Cafe/Collective Learning
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Why are these methods being chosen?

- ◯ Because it is the only one/s we know
- ◯ We have heard it worked well elsewhere
- ◯ We have experience of using this approach in another setting
- ◯ We are analysing the situation and working out the best approach
- ◯ A professional facilitator is advising us
- ◯ A professional facilitator is designing and leading the work
- ◯ Other (please specify)

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

Planning landscape change III

3.4.5 What is the quality of engagement in planning what to do?

Stakeholder and community participation, and engagement plan

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The project/initiative has clear (written) guiding principles and ethics on involving communities and other stakeholders	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
We have an engagement and participation plan that sets out who can decide what	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The plan includes a coherent and integrated process with clear links between those making decisions and input from wider engagement	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Deliberation and discussion

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The group deliberating and deciding reflects the range of communities, diversities, stakeholders and interests in the area	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A systematic process is being used to identify who is in the decision group	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The discussion is deliberative i.e. there is sufficient information and time to dialogue, share perspectives, explore the challenge, suggest ideas, weigh options and find agreement	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

The way decisions are made

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Professionally designed and facilitated consensus building	○	○	○	○	○
Un-facilitated consensus	○	○	○	○	○
Voting	○	○	○	○	○
By the strongest voices in the group	○	○	○	○	○
By the leader/chair/director of the project	○	○	○	○	○

Wider engagement

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Communities and stakeholders have been able to provide their views from an early stage whilst options are open and at key points thereafter	○	○	○	○	○
Their views influence, alter and help shape outcomes	○	○	○	○	○
There is wide support for implementation	○	○	○	○	○
There is ongoing engagement and dialogue planned in to support implementation and review progress	○	○	○	○	○

3.4.6 Who is responsible for signing off the landscape-scale change plan/strategy and priority action?

- ☐ Government ministers
- ☐ Committees of public bodies (local authorities, agencies)
- ☐ Senior managers in public bodies
- ☐ Specialists and experts in public bodies
- ☐ A partnership, steering group or other group of professionals
- ☐ Project teams
- ☐ Project officers
- ☐ The stakeholders as a group
- ☐ A sub group of nominated stakeholders
- ☐ A user group
- ☐ Citizen/community organisation
- ☐ Landowners

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

4. Implementation stage: Implementing landscape-scale change

This section of the survey is about the group overseeing implementation.

4.1 Please indicate where you have got to with implementation:

- ○ We haven't got to this stage yet (Please jump to Section 5)
- ○ We haven't got to this stage yet but have worked out how it will be managed (Please continue with this section)
- ○ We are in the implementation stage (Please continue with this section)

4.2 Who is in the group with the responsibility for overseeing and managing the implementation stage and who are they accountable to?

Who is in this group?

Who are they accountable to?

4.3 How was the mix, balance of the group, and the specific individuals decided?

4.4 How does the group overseeing management of landscape change make decisions?

- ◯ Professionally designed and facilitated consensus building
- ◯ Un-facilitated consensus
- ◯ Voting
- ◯ By the strongest voices in the group
- ◯ By the leader/chair/director of the project
- ◯ Other (please specify)

4.5 How are the wider community and stakeholders involved in ongoing implementation?

4.6 Are any capacity building activities being carried out to help communities and stakeholders implement action?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not yet

If yes, which activities are taking place? (Tick all relevant)

Funds:

- ☐ Advice on grands and funds
- ☐ Support filling in grant or funding applications
- ☐ Grants/funds to start up and establish enterprises
- ☐ Operating funds
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Land management:

- ☐ Technical land management advice (eg about habitats, animal husbandry, tree management, flood resilience)
- ☐ Practical and specialist land management (eg using special equipment, vehicles or licenses)
- ☐ Training in land management skills
- ☐ Support of knowledge hubs such as Farmer hubs
- ☐ Long term lease of land
- ☐ Sale of land
- ☐ Loan of equipment
- ☐ Other (please specify)

New enterprises and groups:

- ☐ Organisational development and capacity building (e.g. developing sound governance, legal support, insurance, accountancy, staff recruitment and management)
- ☐ Office space
- ☐ Help with planning applications (eg for offices, stores or classrooms)
- ☐ Help in the ability to sell goods or services (eg business advice, establishing supply chains, marketing, selling, cash flow, tendering/bidding)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify):

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

5. Outcomes

5.1 List three key outcomes of the landscape change project:

1.
2.
3.

5.2 How did community and stakeholders involvement contribute towards these outcomes?

5.3 List any negative effects of community and stakeholder involvement:

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

6. Keys to change

6.1 What are your big successes so far?

1.
2.
3.

6.2 The planning stage:

6.2.1 What are/were the key enablers to success in planning landscape change?

1.
2.
3.

6.2.2 What challenges have you encountered?

1.
2.
3.

6.3 The implementation stage:

6.3.1 What are/were the key enablers to success in implementing landscape-scale change?

1.
2.
3.

6.3.2 What challenges have you encountered?

1.
2.
3.

6.4 What kind of support would have made it easier to achieve landscape-scale change?

1.
2.
3.

Enabling Landscape-scale Change

Thank you very much for taking time to do this survey. Please forward this link to other landscape project you know of so they can tell us about their project.

We may quote what you say in research outputs but will do this in a way that cannot be attributed to you, your landscape or your project unless you provide consent here:

- [ ] I am happy for you to attribute my case example if that is helpful
- [ ] I would want you to check any text with me before publication
- [ ] I want my case study to remain anonymous

Annex 3 Table of case studies

Location	Landscape type	Geographical scale	Land management objectives	Complexity summary
England	Upland -mixed habitats	Landscape character area	Holistic management	3
England	Lowland heathland, wetlands and coastal	Landscape protected area	Holistic	4
England	Lowland woodland, heath. Grassland and wetlands	Landscape character area	Holistic	5
England	River and coastal	landscape character area	Nature, climate and people	3
England	Upland -mixed habitats	Landscape	Nature, wilding, water and climate	4
Wales	Lowland commons with woodland, heath. Grassland and wetlands	Local landscapes and connecting Green Infrastructure	Nature and climate	3
UK wide	All - National Research	National research		5
England	Upland -mixed habitats	Local landscape recovery	Nature, wilding, climate, regenerative farming	4
Scotland	All habitat - national project	Landscape character areas	Holistic	5
England	Upland and lowland forests with a mix of other habitats	Forests	Nature, wilding, water and forestry	4
England	Lowland - wilding farmland	Local landscape	Nature, climate, regenerative farming	3
England	Urban -woodland grass rivers and wetlands	Local landscape	Nature, water, climate	4
England	Urban	Urban local	Nature, water, forestry	4
Wales	River Catchment	Landscape - protected area	Holistic	3
Wales	River Catchment	Landscape scale - River Catchment	Nature, water, fisheries	4
Scotland	River Catchment restoration	Landscape	Nature, water, climate, people	4
England	Upland and lowland forest	Landscape cross Boarder	Nature, water, climate	4
Wales	Urban - with woods grassland rivers and coastal	Local - urban	Nature	2
England	River Catchment - grassland, rivers, lakes wetlands	Landscape	Nature, water, access	3
England	Lowland - forest arable rivers and wetlands	Large Estate	Nature, water, climate, regenerative farming	4
England	Marine	Seascape/marine	Nature, wilding and fisheries	3
England	Upland -mixed habitats and coast	Landscape - protected areas	Nature and people	2
England	Coastal - grasslands and wetlands	Landscape (character area)	Nature, water, climate, regenerative farming, people	4
Wales	River Catchment - moors to lowland	Catchment	Nature, water, climate	3
England and Wales	Upland - forest grassland and farmland	Landscape	Nature, water, climate, food	5
UK wide	Upland moors and heath	National project	Nature, water, climate	4

Wales	lowland- moors, wetland and coast	Landscape - protected area	Nature, water, climate, regenerative farming, people	3
England	Lowland heathland	Landscape protected area	Nature, climate, and people	3
England	River and wetland	Local - character area	Nature, water, climate, regenerative farming, people	5
Ireland	Upland - mixed habitats	Landscape character area	Nature, water, climate, people	5
UK and Europe	All - European Landscape network across habitats		Nature, water, climate, regenerative farming	4
Ireland	Upland and lowland - forest, mountain, heath, farmland, coastal and marine	Landscape protected, cross boarder	Nature, climate, regenerative farming, people	4
England	Lowland mix of habitat and coastal	Landscape part protected area	Holistic	5
England	Urban moor and grassland	Urban local	Nature	4
England	Coastal and marine	Land/sea scape	Holistic	5
England	Lowland all habitats	Landscape	Holistic	5
Jersey	Upland moor to coastal waters	Landscape	Holistic	5

Annex 4 Approaches to participation and their strengths and weaknesses

Methods and approaches	Roots of the method/ Approach where known	Main level of influence	Focus	Strengths
Decision-making				
Stakeholder Dialogue / Designed Consensus Building	Environmental management (First developed by facilitators at the new closed Environment Council)	Consultation through to Shared Decision-making	Helping people find what they agree about and build mutually acceptable and implementable ways forward. Desire to provide an alternative to conflict and the inaction arising from deadlock.	Strengths • Deliberative • Fosters mutual understanding and creativity • Has a high regard and respect for stakeholders • The process is designed to sequence through phase of negotiation tailored to context • It enables people to shift from positional to principled negotiation behaviour • Harnesses different types of knowledge • Optimises social capital Weaknesses • Dependent on the participants and negotiations in the room so not predictive or mathematical (like some e.g. multi-criteria analysis) • Requires trained and skilled person to design and facilitate and be accepted as impartial
Co-production (co-creation, co-design, co-delivery)	Research into public service improvements by Nobel Prize Winner Elinor Ostrom	Participants co-create way forward	Radically different approach to sharing power in decision-making and co-producing change and sharing benefits	Strengths • Deliberative • Equitable and inclusive • Harnesses different types of knowledge • Generates resources and commitment for action Weaknesses • It is as much an ethos as method or specific approach go good intention can be undermined with wrong or no choice of decision process - best supported by a facilitator using Consensus Building methods

Methods and approaches	Roots of the method/ Approach where known	Main level of influence	Focus	Strengths
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)	Legal	Decision-making	ADR enables in depth negotiation between a few parties	Strengths • Mediated process resulting in acceptable outcome for parties involved Weaknesses • Requires a trained mediator • Can only involve a few parties
Appreciative Enquiry	Business /organisational development	Consultation or shared decision-making	A focus is on appreciating and building on strengths and what is working already (instead of on problems)	Strengths • Generates enthusiasm and energy for change • Positive and forward focused Weaknesses • The culture of science and environmental management can react against the full AI method as a too touchy/feely in style.
Open Space/ Unconference	Organisational development	Decision-making	Enabling a group to develop their own agenda and priorities	Strengths • Participant driven • Very open and dynamic • Can involve large numbers of people • Less design, preparation and therefore costs Weaknesses • Can be too open for some environmental contexts where there are environmental and statutory constraints • Can be vulnerable to dominant characters taking over the agenda or individual discussion sessions
Soft System Methods	Research	Decision-making	Focus on system patterns and revealing intervention points that catalyse positive change	Strengths • Participatory approach to mapping complex systems and how they behave looking for patterns and reinforcing or balancing processes and non-linear change

Methods and approaches	Roots of the method/ Approach where known	Main level of influence	Focus	Strengths
				• Makes it possible to identify where interventions have the greatest positive impact. • Championed by Defra Weaknesses • Requires a trained and skilled person to design and facilitate • Unless combined with Stakeholder Dialogue then tends to only involve smaller groups of professional specialists - so not inclusive of lay knowledge.
Consultation				
Planning for Real Participatory Mapping **Participatory GIS**	Planning and developers	Information Gathering and Consultation	Understanding how people want space to be planned and designed and mapping current initiatives	Strengths: • Very visual and engaging Weaknesses: • Usually used to provide information for decision makers - although approaches to Participatory GIS (Geographic Information Systems) are developing to be more consensual • Understanding and using maps is a form of literacy and so this can be a barrier to use
Three Horizons	Research	Information gathering and consultation (can be used as a method in decision-making)	Scoping what is waning in relevance, the emerging future and the bridging innovations	Strengths • Enables people to more clearly perceive change and what is emerging. Weaknesses • By itself it is not a consensus building or decision-making method • Can be time consuming to consider questions other methods do more rapidly
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)	International Development	Information gathering and consultation	A way of capturing information from local people in developing countries. Often uses	Strengths • Creative ways of gathering diverse forms of knowledge

Methods and approaches	Roots of the method/ Approach where known	Main level of influence	Focus	Strengths
			techniques that don't depend on literacy.	Weaknesses • Tends to be used for very local decision-making or as a way of gathering information for authorities to make decisions
Community Voice	Research	Information gathering and consultation	Using video to capture people's opinions.	Strengths • People give their opinions by video, and this is then rich in tone, body language and word choice to convey their thinking Weaknesses • Decision makers hearing from but not deliberating with other stakeholders. • Can be as costly to use as deliberative dialogue • Researchers take transcripts and edit the video so that people's points are separated from everything else they say. There are examples of people withdrawing consent for use of their video because they felt the footage selection was unfair to their whole perspective
Information Gathering				
Public Dialogue	Stakeholder Dialogue being taken into science	Information gathering	Desire to engage citizens with no prior knowledge to dialogue with scientists to influence policy	Strengths • Representative of the views of wider society • Deliberative Weaknessnes • Resource intense because on top of usual dialogue costs, citizens are paid an allowance to attend and selected through sortition • Can take too long - there may be insufficient time from when a policy maker is aware of a contentious issue to the point they have to make policy decisions • Deliberative outputs only inform science or policy decisions • Can result in unworkable recommendations because
Citizen Assemblies **Citizen panels**		Information gathering	Enabling a demographic match of citizens with no prior knowledge to hear	Strengths • Representative of the views of wider society • Deliberative • Democratic in mix and balance of participants

Methods and approaches	Roots of the method/ Approach where known	Main level of influence	Focus	Strengths
			briefings and experts and reach conclusions	Weaknesses • Resource intense because on top of usual dialogue costs, citizens are paid an allowance to attend and selected through sortition. • Can result in unworkable recommendations. • Weak connection with decision makers and decision processes so can make no difference. • Recent serious criticism that because citizens are selected by sortition it disempowers established minority ethnic or other seldom heard groups and their community leaders – is it an example of those with power appearing to engage democratically but actually side-stepping the need to engage as equals with minority communities
Citizens Juries	Legal	Information gathering	Citizens Jury involves 12 people in deliberating in depth based on hearing and cross-examining expert witnesses. Used to inform policy makers	Strengths • In depth deliberation • Citizens recruited from broader society Weaknesses • Only 12 people are involved • Can be time consuming • Despite being very deliberative the jury's verdict functions only as information for policy makers
Multicriteria analysis and Valuation methods	Human geography and economics.	Information gathering	Seeking to understand what people value	Strengths: • Uses the language of maths, economics and science and appears to be transparent, repeatable and provide strong "evidence" Weaknesses: • Based on economic models of human behaviour (i.e. that humans are 'rational optimiser') • Results are fed into computer models to generate answers and this can disassociate stakeholders from the outcome

Methods and approaches	Roots of the method/ Approach where known	Main level of influence	Focus	Strengths
				• The technical language that surrounds the methods excludes • The primary focus is information gathering and processing rather then principled negotiation
Focus groups and social surveys	Marketing	Information gathering	Capture information to inform decisions	Strengths • Surveys can capture high numbers and breadth of perspectives • Focus group recruitment methods are designed to find individuals who reflect demographics and have no prior knowledge so more reflective of the wider populace Weaknesses • Way of gathering information but not making decisions, building social capital or creating momentum for action
Drop-in Meetings	Planning and development	Information giving and gathering	Enabling people to contribute their views at a time convenient to them	Strengths • Individuals attend events at a time suiting them • Large numbers can contribute Weaknesses • No deliberation with others • Can create so much comment that it enables organisations to 'cherry pick' the comments that resonate with their ideas
Participatory art projects **Fun days** **Open days**	Community Development and Education	Information giving and gathering	Education, community cohesion, connection to a project or area.	Strengths • Can involve very high numbers of people Weaknesses • Not deliberative • Does not provide power or influence

Annex 5 Guidance for Best Practice Dialogue

Table 13 describes the key steps in an engagement process suitable for planning land use and land management at area or larger scales. (Local and community scale projects are unlikely to have the resources to deliver a thorough facilitated engagement process, but can be supported to follow these stages through group discussion packs and other materials).

Table 13: Key steps in an engagement process

Stage	Details
1. Scope the context	This includes finding the following information: • The maximum level of influence (i.e. can others make, share or influence decisions or only provide information for decision-makers?) • The number and types of people who need to be involved • How easy it would be to get everyone to a workshop • The level of tension and trust • The timeframes by which decisions need to be made • The past history between participants and whether they are likely to have similar or different: views, values and information • Whether the issue is complex or straightforward • What else is going on that is affecting the context • The geographic scale • The levels of governance that need to be involved (e.g. community, local, area, national, international) • The capacity to support and facilitate the process
2. Commission a skilled in-project or third party designer/facilitator	• Decide whether the process can be designed and facilitated by project officers, community members, or needs an impartial and professional facilitator. • If a professional designer/ facilitator is needed then pause until they have been involved. The best facilitators won't just 'drop in' and work in someone else's design. They will want to scope the situation and craft the optimum process within budgets and timeframes and ensure it is sound and equitable. The less their hands are tied by pre-existing design, the more they can do their best work.
3. Systematically identify communities and stakeholders	• Identify all the different interests • Work out who needs to be in which level of influence (see: Levels of influence in the planning phase) • Ensure that the core group holding decision power is equitable, inclusive and balanced. For example (depending on the focus of the engagement) this could mean equal numbers from business, environment, recreation, community, heritage/landscape, and landowning interests.
4. Develop an engagement strategy	• Identify how to engage people depending on the level of influence possible, their interests, and communication preferences • Design the number of face-to-face workshops for the core deliberators and what happens before and after each • Design in other supporting engagement such as questionnaires or drop in meetings • Map the information flows and decision paths between different engagement activities and ensure links are genuinely functional (not just

	lines on a flow chart). Functional links are through people, documents and presentations. • Set out who will use engagement outputs, what they will use them for, and when. • Set out how progress will be communicated
5. Design the core engagement process	• Design a sequence of workshops and within that the sequence of questions, facilitation techniques and methods, room layouts, and how best to group people
6. Facilitate	Use a facilitator with the skills and experience to do a good job. Key attributes are that they: • Have knowledge, experience and skills to facilitate group interaction and group process • Provide an environment where participants can speak freely and safely • Encourage cooperative behavior • Enable equal opportunity, so strong voices don't dominate • Handle tension and incidents • Maintain confidentiality • Know a range of facilitation techniques and tools and when to employ them • Handle the pressure of a live process
7. Monitor and adapt	Process Monitoring includes: • Survey baseline perspectives at the start of the process • During the process use a set of good practice criteria to review it and make adaptations as necessary • At the end ask people what influence they feel they have
8. Embed engagement as business as usual	• Ask people how they want to be involved in influencing ongoing implementation, monitoring and review.

Stage 5 in Table 13 above involves designing the core process to facilitate the shift from positional tactics to cooperative behaviour. This process is illustrated in
Figure 8. It shows how a well-structured process first helps participants to share and explore information in order to broaden out perspectives and help people move away from positional argument. Next, participates work together to generate ideas and solutions and explore the pros and cons of each. Finally, the process enables them to narrow options down to ones that are mutually acceptable.

Figure 8 also illustrates that the purpose of the process (to gather information, consult or make decisions) determines how much of this process is completed.

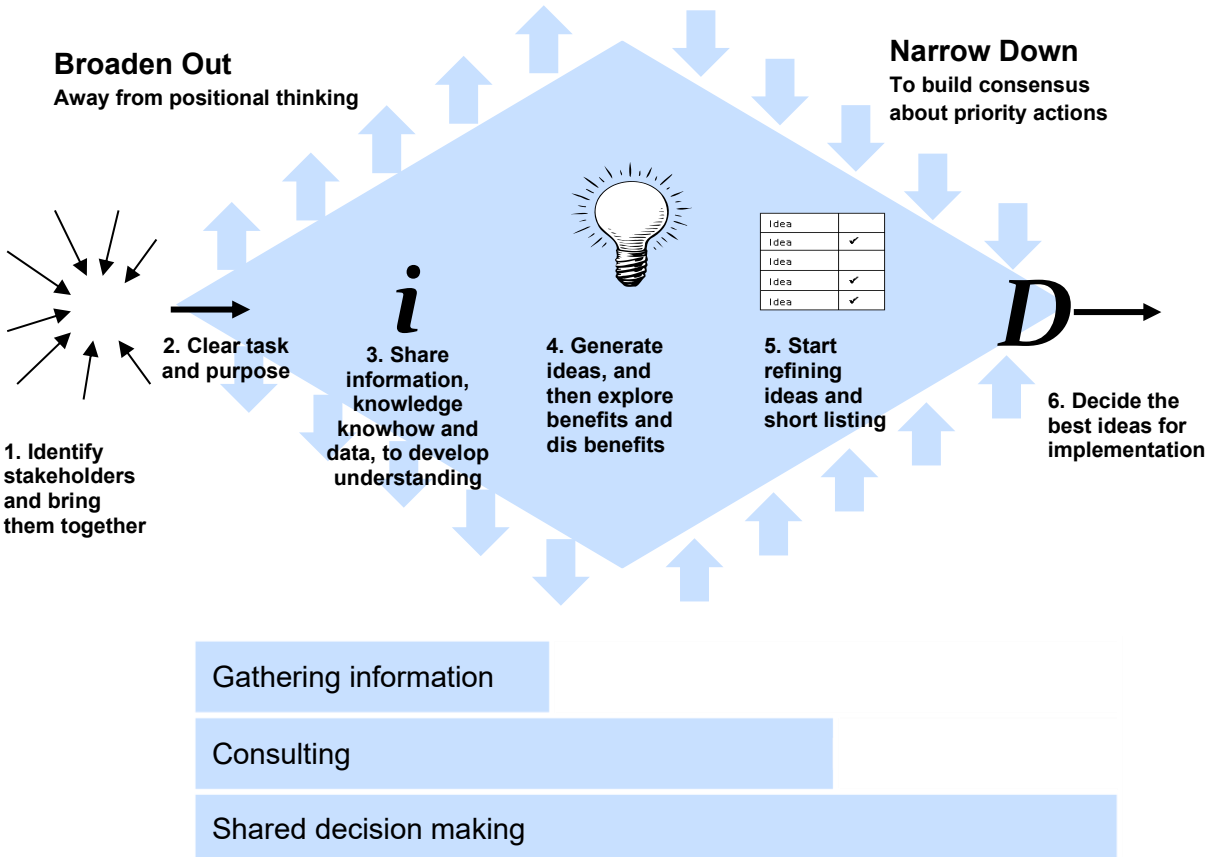


Figure 8: The process of discussion – broadening out before narrowing down, matched with three levels of influence

Annex 6 Additional thoughts on power

There are many different types of power and different ways it can be shared. Some of the mains power types related to landscape organisations and how that can be shared, are outlined in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Main types of power held by landscape organisations

Power Type	Source of power	How it can be shared
Management	Regulation and/or ownership of land	• Share decisions about how to manage and use land • Lease or sell land to others who can engage the community in management decisions
Knowledge	Environmental science and staff who are science trained	• Co-create science knowledge with communities, users and stakeholders • Respect other forms of knowledge • Support communities and stakeholders presenting their own knowledge in graphs or maps
Moral/ethical power	The moral imperative to look after the natural environment	• Respect and learn about the legitimacy of other moral and ethical arguments (such as social, economic and environmental justice, human and community rights and human and economic wellbeing)
Statutory	Legislation	• Share power to shape the legislation • Share power to decide how obligations are met and share or hand over power for implementation

Modes of Power

The types of power listed above are expressed through four sets of power relations[1]:

1. **Power over** (the ability to influence and coerce). With this kind of power if one party increases power it will be at the cost of the other party whose power diminishes. When this happens, it can trigger a backlash and in an environmental context, a legal challenge or direct action campaign when the less powerful party fights back.

2. **Power with** (power from collective action). This contrasts with power over because when people work together, power to act increases, strengthens, and leads to collective action.

3. **Power to** (the ability to organise and change existing hierarchies).

4. **Power within** (power from individual consciousness) is based on the character and psychology of the individual or group of individuals and how they see themselves related to others. Increasing 'power within' results from building self-esteem and changing perceptions of rights, capacities and potential[2].

A common way of seeing power is to think of it as a commodity (e.g. as something that can be passed from one generation to another) or as a structure (e.g. a position in a hierarchy that grants the holder certain powers, or social structures such as class and religion). These views of power are that it is relatively unchanging or unchangeable[3].

Another way of understanding power is that it is something that occurs between people or groups of people and is relational, so power dynamics can change if and when the social interactions change.

The power matrix

There are a number of theoretical models for the extent that other stakeholders and communities have power to influence [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10]. However, there are challenges with the practical application of these models:

1. They use words in specific but different ways to indicate the increasing levels of influence held by communities and stakeholders, but because there are no generally accepted definitions, each model provides its own.

2. They can imply that one level of engagement is morally better than the other. For example, one of the first engagement frameworks[11] has manipulation at one end of a 'ladder of participation' and 'full citizen control' at the other. Whilst it is hoped that landscape projects not deliberately manipulate other stakeholders or communities, it is not possible for them to fully hand over land use and land management choices to others because decisions require specialist and technical input (for example around landscape ecology, hydrology, or habitat management) and there are related statutory and regulatory responsibilities.

3. The models do not distinguish between the planning stage and the implementing stage and this can be confusing.

This third challenge is a particular constraint. Explained more in Section 5.4

Empowerment

This term also comes with some difficulties. 'Empowerment' implies that there are holders of power and those they are bestowing it on, but many communities and stakeholders perceive themselves to already have power to act, and so are merely exerting that power in a new context. Some research suggests that authentic power comes from within; it cannot be bestowed or controlled[12] and any attempt by one group to 'give' power to another is likely to be a subtle way of exerting power and attempting to keep control[13].

The empowerment agenda has also been perceived as a way for public bodies to cut budgets and shed responsibilities onto other stakeholders or communities who may not have the time, resources and skills to take up the challenge. If they don't, they are worse off; the public bodies are no longer delivering a service and the recipients of that service are unable to make up the shortfall[14].

Taking on landscape change and land management responsibilities requires a level of competence, skill, knowledge and time, and so favours those organisations and communities that have these resources. This then raises questions of social and landscape justice.

Annex 7 Issues with the influence-interest matrix

The 'influence and interest' matrix is now widely used (also known as Mendelow's Matrix, or the Boston Matrix) for identifying stakeholders. However, is seriously flawed when it comes to diversity and inclusion of different knowledges and perspectives. It cannot lead to a socially just approach to landscapes.

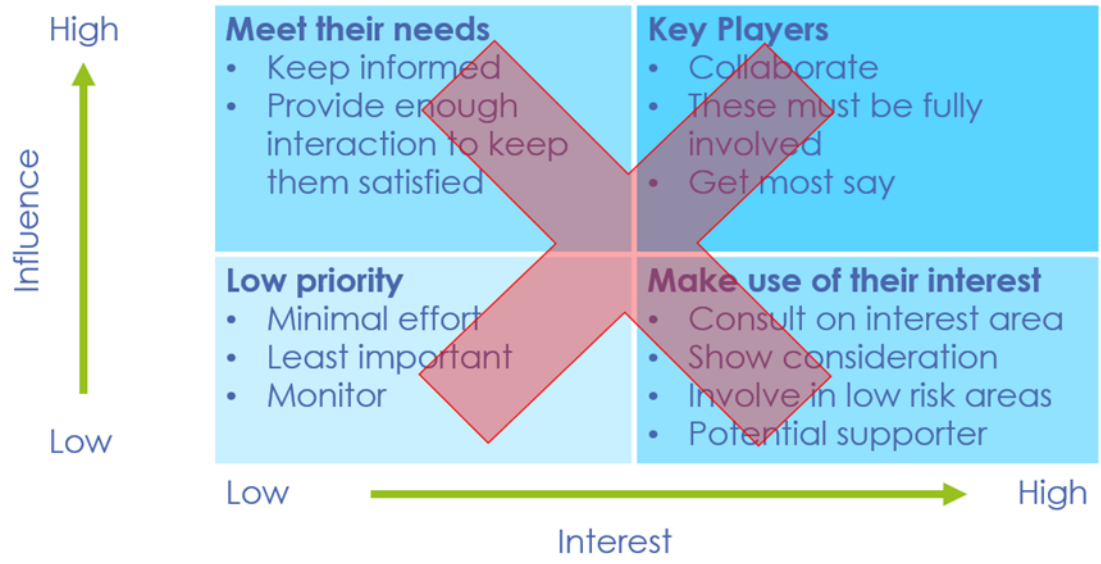


Figure 9: The influence-interest matrix is flawed for use in Best Practice Dialogue

Critiques include:

1. The environment and related professions are the whitest after farming - so people and organisations identified as having interest and influence will be dominated by white, educated to degree level or beyond, middle class and, at senior grades, more likely to be male[1].

2. 'Key players' in the model will already be known or have the networks and information to quickly find out there is something they want to influence and have the resources to do so. Those allocated to the low interest and low influence box will be people who do not have the networks or knowledge to even know there is something going on that might affect their interests.

3. The matrix encodes a way of treating people which is disrespectful and instrumentalist: people are commodities or resources to be managed or used if they are useful or ignored if not.

4. It rules out people who may have relevant knowledge but who would not be seen as having influence.

Annex 8 From Summit to Sea to Tir Canol ('Middle Ground') – A story to inspire

This is a story of power: who has it and how they use it. Hard lessons were learned, but through all the upset for those involved, it stands as a story of how sharing power makes all the difference.

The story takes place on the west coast of Mid Wales just north of Aberystwyth. It's a large area of uplands, lowlands, woodlands, rivers and coast and for the last few hundred years sheep farming has been the main land use. Sheep farming is an integral part of the strong Welsh culture, with Welsh being the first language for many. These days, sheep farmers here are struggling with Brexit and reforms to agricultural support, causing a great deal of anxiety about the future. Historically, Wales was colonised by the English and that legacy, whilst hundreds of years ago, still affects how outsiders are viewed today.

Into this picture came a new rewilding project: Summit to Sea (S2S). With 3.5 million of philanthropic funding (from England) and staffed by English people, the project drew lines on maps and developed their 20+ year vision. Their aim was to restore nature and support a resilient local economy. They sought to engage, inspire and persuade others of their good intent and the potential benefits of their ideas. They consulted to find out what people thought. But in all this, the lead organisation: Rewilding Britain (RB), retained the governance and control of budgets.

Sheep farmers were very alarmed. They saw S2S as a project imposing ideas and agendas from outside the area. With the backing of the Farmer's Unions, they organised a campaign, to oppose the project seeking major change or cessation. The project's connections to a campaigning journalist who wrote of sheep being 'woolly maggots' and a 'white plague' trashing landscapes, did not help.

Sheep farmers were open to widening their income sources and to the carefully managed reduction in sheep numbers. But they were extremely concerned that significant reduction through rewilding, could cross a tipping point with cascading effects across the local sheep farming economy and supporting sectors (such as vets, feed merchants, markets). This in turn leading to first abandoned farms and then villages with schools, shops, churches and community life collapsing too. The farmers held large public meetings to raise awareness of their concerns.

Through this period of uproar, S2S were not very present on the ground, and in the absence of open, honest dialogue, misinformation proliferated. Staff were under extreme stress dealing with it all. S2S engaged a PR company for crisis communication and put out a call for professional conflict resolution specialists. But it was too late. The project could not continue. The coalition of local farmers and farmer unions demanded that RB withdraw and they did so at the end of 2019.

RSPB Cymru took on project hosting, and a new radically different approach began. The ethos was to centre people in the design of the landscape-scale project through a process of co-creation spanning two years. Rather than simply 'engaging' and 'consulting' them about ideas that had already been formed elsewhere, those living and working across the areas, including vocal farmers who had made the opposition to S2S, together shaped the way forward and a new project was born: Tir Canol, which means 'Middle Ground' in Welsh.

Tir Canol, is very different to S2S. The ethos is one of humility and engaging in true co-production. This means designing with rather than for other people, embedding a deep ethos of listening and learning together. There are no fixed goals, recognising that human and natural systems are

dynamic, there are a great diversity of opinions and views, and what works must emerge through a process of experimentation and learning together – and not be imposed. Tir Canol are wise where funding comes from, recognising that the origin of funding brings an agenda and can itself feel and be a threat to local decision-making. Tir Canol know the Welsh culture, landscape and relationship with place are intimately linked. The project is now largely staffed by Welsh speakers. Words are chosen carefully with the project rejecting the word ‘rewilding’. They are self-reflecting, recognising that perceptions of landscape (for example sheep bad/trees good) are biased to personal interests.

It is of course early days, the situation is fragile, and there is a great deal of trust to be rebuilt. But this story shows the fundamentally different ethos around power: from a rewilding project behaving in a top down ‘we know best’ way, to an ethos of co-design, emergent goals, and co-delivery. It stands as a powerful lesson for other landscape scale projects.

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Annex 1 Glossary of Terms

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