

Call for evidence: Mainstreaming nature into policy and decision-making (Follow on Project) .



1. Introduction

This call for evidence/knowledge builds upon recent knowledge exchange work funded by the Natural Environment Research Council 2017-2021. My project web site is here.

<https://mainstreaminggreeninfrastructure.com/>

As part of my sabbatical (February to July 2024), Northumbria University are funding me to further develop this mainstreaming work with a focus switching towards the successful delivery of mainstreaming nature, unpacking the key ingredients that have led to successful policy and practice interventions.

This phase of work is focused primarily on policy and practice communities and researchers who have operated as “pracademics”.

2. Scope and key considerations.

The call for evidence revolves around three mainstreaming challenges.

2.1 Successful engagement with key economic and social stakeholders on nature

How and when to successfully engage people working outside the environmental sector in nature and environment policy and initiatives is a challenge as all too often such initiatives tend to involve the usual environmental suspects operating within their comfort zones (silos). Understanding the mechanisms and approaches that have been used to bring diverse audiences to nature’s table successfully and then how these audience voices have been

managed in workshops/visits/webinars are all neglected considerations. I am especially keen to gather evidence on what works best to get that initial engagement and how can you maintain that engagement for the long-term and what strategies are then used to design/deliver outputs?

2.2 Joining-up and simplifying the complexity of environmental concepts and plans

The natural environment involves a complex vocabulary and ever-growing list of concepts that specialists and stakeholders alike have to grapple with, understand, use, deliver and enforce. These include natural capital, ecosystem services, environment net gain, biodiversity net gain, local nature recovery networks, local nature recovery strategies, green belts, green and blue infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

These concepts have all been introduced at different times and for different purposes and generally have been worked on in specialist silos. This raises the wider question of how well these different concepts are joined-up in delivery agencies and within wider environmental policy and plans to maximize societal and environmental benefits?

As identified by the [RTPI](#) and [Broadway initiative](#), the number of different environmental plans and strategies is seen as confusing, unhelpful, diluting the communication of the power and value of nature to wider stakeholders. This resulted in the proposal of [Local Environmental Improvement Plans](#) to improve coordination, coherence and impact as part of a revamped environmental planning agenda.

I am keen to understand how those active in policy and delivery see this challenge and what initiatives at a local level have been undertaken to try and simplify or integrate a coherent environmental policy across the different environmental plans. Are LEIPS the best way forward?

2.3 Case studies of good practice : unpacking the power of the process

In many publications, strategies or policy briefs case studies play an important role in bringing the text to life. Here they rightly focus on the outcomes and what happened, focusing on the positives. I wish to gather evidence from case studies a slightly different tact; to target exemplar case studies but with a focus on HOW they became successful (their journey), looking in detail at the process by which the success stage was reached with some personal reflection from those involved. A recent joint publication of mine looking at this with regard to [planning for green and blue infrastructure](#) used this approach. From this type of process-based work we can then identify the common and bespoke ingredients. Thus, case studies should take a historical view of the entire journey and identify the drivers that led to advances and success.

3. How to submit your evidence

The deadline for submissions is 19 April 2024

Based on the three main challenges above, I invite anyone involved in policy and decision-making practice involving nature to submit evidence. You do not need to answer all the challenges and can focus on any aspect you wish. You can do this in various ways that best suit your needs. **Furthermore, you can submit any evidence you deem important to the delivery of mainstreaming that is not included in the challenges.**

- Submit a written piece with links to reports and publications as necessary. You can address any or all the areas of concern. You can submit this anonymously or as a named participant. Such submissions may result in a further (optional) request for a one to one meeting to discuss evidence.
- Submit a paper or report without any accompanying narrative but highlighting the challenge area involved. This can be the most pragmatic one for those in a hurry.
- Request a teams or virtual meeting or telephone meeting to present your evidence. This will be a one to one meeting; again responses can be either anonymous or named. This can be structured in time and focus to fit in with the kind of evidence you have.
- A video or audio podcast recording.
- Request a face-to-face meeting. I will come to you. Ideally this would be a group-based agency or stakeholder type event.

The evidence can be submitted with a request that it is kept anonymous, or you or your agency can be named. The choice option should be made clear in your response.

4. How your evidence will be used.

Your evidence forms part of a wider knowledge synthesis of the three challenges. This includes a targeted rapid evidence review and lessons learnt from my work with a range of mainstreaming initiatives. These outputs will then be translated into a workshop briefing note to inform a virtual workshop on mainstreaming delivery on May 31st.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss any aspect of this work; please do not hesitate to contact me. Alister.scott@northumbria.ac.uk

This project has ethics approval Project No. 6654 Reference: Scott 2024-6654-6108 February 16th 2024 Northumbria University.