



Investing in our natural environment

An invitation to join the Green Halo Partnership



An invitation

This is an invitation to you to join a group of like-minded organisations across all sectors at the launch of the Green Halo Partnership.

We'd like you to join us to shape an agenda for action, to identify the positive things we can do by making a commitment to maintain and enhance our shared bank of natural capital and ensure this protects the unique character and identity of the New Forest and surrounding area.

Our launch is at Ordnance Survey's offices in Southampton on 22 November at 9.30am.

Please let Rachael Bowen know if you want to join us; by phone on **01590 646632** or email **rachael.bowen@newforestnpa.gov.uk**.

We hope you'll be part of the Green Halo's journey.

Introducing Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

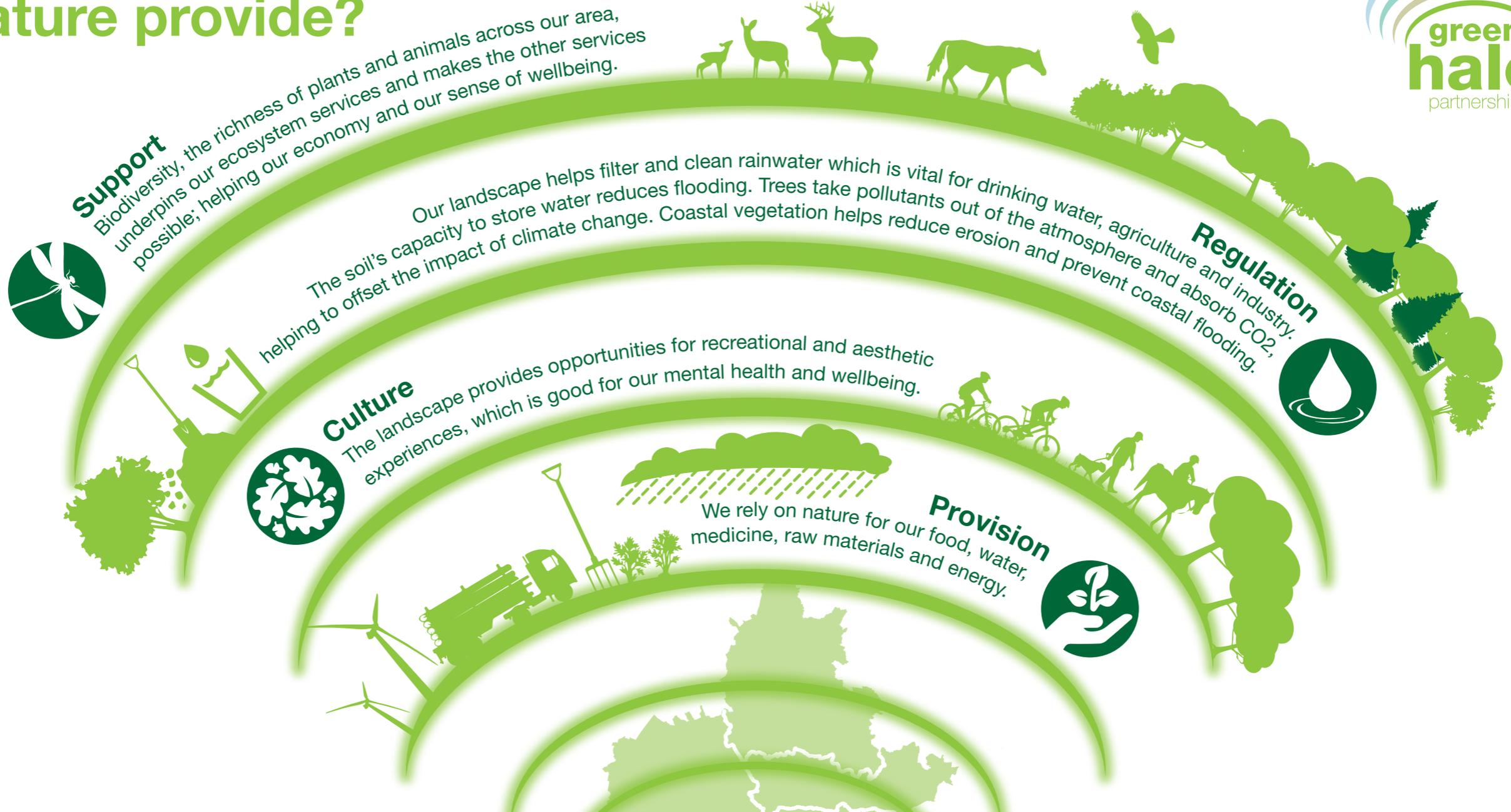
We all enjoy nature for its sheer beauty. But today we also recognise that the natural environment has a measurable value to our society – what economists call ‘natural capital’. Natural capital can be defined as the world’s stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms. Natural capital assets provide people with a wide range of goods and services which underpin our economy and society – so-called ‘ecosystem services’.

These services range from the cleansing of air by trees; through water abstraction or timber production or food; to the aesthetic, spiritual or cultural qualities of the land which enhance our sense of wellbeing and health. They also encompass other benefits such as protection from flooding or the mitigation of climate change through CO₂ absorption.

The infographic shows the range of ecosystem services we benefit from. For more detail see www.naturalcapitalcoalition.org/natural-capital. Recognising the contribution ecosystem services make to our economy and society gives us another reason for protecting, restoring and improving natural systems.



What services does nature provide?



Support

Biodiversity, the richness of plants and animals across our area, underpins our ecosystem services and makes the other services possible; helping our economy and our sense of wellbeing.

Culture

The landscape provides opportunities for recreational and aesthetic experiences, which is good for our mental health and wellbeing.

Provision

We rely on nature for our food, water, medicine, raw materials and energy.

Regulation

Our landscape helps filter and clean rainwater which is vital for drinking water, agriculture and industry. The soil's capacity to store water reduces flooding. Trees take pollutants out of the atmosphere and absorb CO₂, helping to offset the impact of climate change. Coastal vegetation helps reduce erosion and prevent coastal flooding.

The Green Halo is about making the protection of our natural assets part and parcel of planning for our future. It aims to do that by encouraging public and private organisations, communities and individuals to recognise the economic value of the natural environment, the “natural capital”, and ensure that it is taken properly into account when we make decisions about how land and habitats are managed or developed.

Join us: www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/greenhalo

The Green Halo Vision

The Green Halo is an aspiration: the aspiration to work together to make protecting our natural world part and parcel of planning for our future and ensure we retain a unique and high quality place to live and work.

It aims to do that by encouraging public, private and third sector organisations to recognise the economic and social value of the natural environment – its natural capital and the ecosystem services it provides – and ensure that guides decisions about how we manage or develop our area.

The Green Halo aims to help us all find the very practical ways in which our environment can help us to tackle many of the challenges our society faces today: from improving public health or creating sustainable business, to making better use of renewable resources or addressing atmospheric pollution and climate change.

The Green Halo has a very clear but challenging vision, which will only work through partnership:

To be a global exemplar of how our most precious landscapes can work in harmony with a thriving, economically successful community

The Green Halo will bring together organisations from across the public, private and third sectors to:

- **Inspire** by promoting best practice in protecting and enhancing natural capital and ecosystem services
- **Encourage** by developing and delivering new projects
- **Support** by helping to identify resources for projects and offering expert advice to assist in their delivery
- **Inform** by continuing to promote and publish research on natural capital, and by communicating its activities to local communities.





Why a 'Halo'?

Because the benefits we get from ecosystems services are not delineated by lines on maps. The idea was born in the New Forest National Park, but the partnership wants to identify, value, protect and improve those services across a much wider geography, including land and habitats around the National Park. The benefits of our natural systems reach well beyond our immediate geography. That is why our Partnership will include partners from Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Dorset and Wiltshire, but the 'Halo' can stretch as far as we want it to.

The story so far

A conference hosted by the New Forest National Park Authority and Business South at Ordnance Survey in July 2016 brought together businesses, NGOs and public sector organisations to develop the idea of a Green Halo, anchored in the National Park. A steering group was formed from across the sectors to begin to develop the work programmes and recruit others.

The steering group and the discussions it has had with other potential partners have shown widespread recognition of the benefits of a healthy environment. There is interest in natural capital and ecosystem

services, but a lack of examples of what they mean in a practical sense. Nationally the theory around accounting for our natural capital is developing, as is public policy on the subject. But there are few practical examples of what can be done.

So, put simply, we want to bring together people and organisations to understand the value of ecosystem services and work together to make a practical difference through projects which protect, restore and improve those services.

The Green Halo Partnership

Protecting and enhancing ecosystem services is not the job of one body. It requires shared vision and leadership. It means organisations from across the public, private and third sectors must work together.

To encourage this collaboration we're setting up the Green Halo Partnership to:

- explore innovative projects and ideas about how we can protect and enhance ecosystem services
- encourage its members to collaborate on projects and programmes which protect and enhance ecosystem services
- promote practical projects and actions
- help in obtaining funding to support collaborative projects
- support research and innovation on natural capital and ecosystem services.

The Green Halo Partnership is open to all organisations which are ready and willing to commit time, energy and resources to protecting and enhancing natural capital, and so ecosystem services in and around the National Park. There is no geographic limit to membership.

Membership of the Partnership means those joining acknowledge their responsibility to our environment by signing up to the vision set out above and committing to taking into account natural capital and ecosystem services in their planning, budgeting and decision-making wherever possible. The decisions they face will often be complex, but members will undertake to do what they can whenever they are able to protect and enhance natural capital.





Green Halo Forums

The Green Halo Partnership will host four Forums each exploring one area where ecosystems services make a contribution. These will be voluntary, bringing together cross-sector organisations who want to tackle one particular topic. We'll start with Forums which will focus on:

- Building the Local Economy
- Improving Health & Wellbeing
- Sustainable Living
- Protecting the Natural Environment

These will be at the heart of the Green Halo initiative. They will be where we turn ideas in actions, shape projects which can make a real difference and bring together partners to deliver change.

Each Forum will be open to organisations within the Green Halo Partnership that have a particular interest or expertise in that topic and want to contribute. Each will help the Partnership develop its understanding of what can be done to protect and enhance ecosystem services, and take a lead in developing ideas, initiatives and projects for their own area of responsibility.

Our understanding of natural capital and how it provides the ecosystem services we depend on is in its infancy. Many are still trying to pin down how best the concept can help society and our economy, whilst also protecting the environment. As the Partnership grows, so ideas about natural capital and ecosystem services within the Green Halo will develop. For now, the remit of each Forum is simply to provide space to develop their own understanding of what needs to be done and where opportunities lie within each theme. We'd like you to help us do that.

We'll send you more information about each Forum before the Partnership's launch. At that event you'll have the opportunity to contribute to one or more of these Forums, to help shape their remit and agenda for action, and so help turn our Green Halo Vision into action.

Geovation – Green Halo in action

Ordnance Survey is a supporter of the Green Halo, and is hosting the Partnership launch. It is also supporting projects which explore how ecosystem services help improve our economy, environment and wellbeing.

Ordnance Survey's Geovation Challenge is designed to encourage and support fresh thinking and solutions on using location-based data, technology and design thinking to tackle some of the key challenges facing society. The current challenge is looking at how we can build greener, smarter communities and cities. It invites submissions under the four themes the Green Halo is addressing: local economy, sustainable living, health & wellbeing and our natural environment.

The best of these submissions will be supported to develop their ideas as new ventures.





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