

2. UNDERSTANDING THE EVIDENCE

Star trails over Butser Ancient Farm
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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EVIDENCE

THE APPROACH TAKEN TO EVALUATION

2.1 Planning for nature and ecosystem services encompasses many topic areas, for example biodiversity, landscape and recreation, whilst considering social and economic benefits, and improvements in health and well-being. Each of these are 'traditionally' separate professional areas, but the Partnership recognised the need to take a cross-sectoral approach so that the multiple benefits of green infrastructure planning can be secured.

2.2 This complexity of evidence and the linkages with many areas presented a particular challenge in devising the approach to evaluating the needs, pressures and opportunities operating in the Network area and in presenting these findings.

2.3 There are also issues which exert pressure or which need to be planned for, such as climate change, along with the aspiration of the Partnership to incorporate ecosystem service thinking into the Network approach.

2.4 The Network area itself is also highly varied, with many different landscapes, large towns and small villages, areas of economic strength and of social deprivation. The Network area covers 14 local authorities, with a number of additional stakeholder organisations, each with their own priorities and policies.



EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

2.5 Evidence was taken from a range of sources:

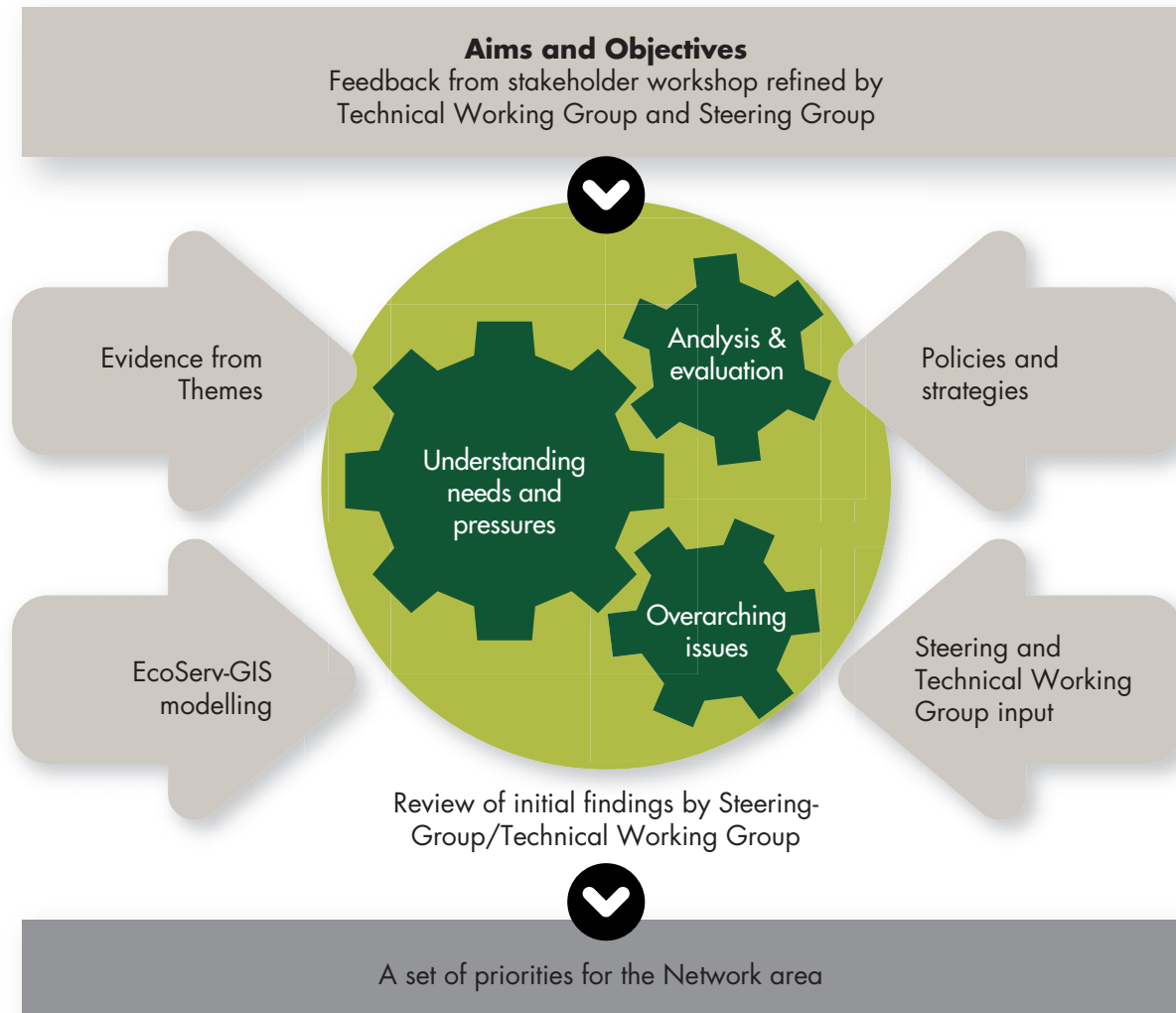
- National and international legislation, policy and guidance;
- Strategies, Local Plan documents and evidence documents from all local authorities;
- Feedback from questionnaire to local authority partners;
- Strategies and evidence from stakeholder organisations;
- Review of primary datasets;
- Modelling outputs from EcoServ-GIS;
- Input and comment from Technical Working Group, Steering Group and from the Stakeholder Workshop of October 2014.

2.6 It was decided that, while there was a risk of losing the cross-sectoral approach needed, the most pragmatic solution to evaluating the evidence base and presenting this was to split the evidence into 'Themes'.

2.7 The choice of these was based on feedback from the stakeholder group workshop of October 2014 and existing understanding of the priority issues of the Network area raised by the Technical Working Group. The Themes are:

- Local Plans and Strategic Initiatives;
- Landscape and Cultural Heritage;
- Nature and Biodiversity
- Health and Well-Being;
- Recreation and Access;
- Water Resources.

FIGURE 2: EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION TO ARRIVE AT PRIORITIES FOR THE NETWORK AREA



2.8 There were also a number of important topics which were relevant to all the Themes and to the Network area as a whole. All of these were considered in the evaluation process. These are:

- Housing growth;
- Cross-boundary influences and opportunities;
- Links between the Themes and opportunities to deliver multiple benefits;
- Opportunities for partnership approaches;
- Securing and improving economic and social benefits;
- Ecosystem services;
- Climate change.

2.9 All of this evidence was reviewed and evaluated to gain a better understanding of the needs, opportunities, threats and pressures across the Network area.

2.10 This work informed the headline findings and strategic priorities for the Network area, which are described in the following sections.

FIGURE 3: THE INTERCONNECTED THEMES, AND OVER-ARCHING TOPICS

