

# Natural Capital Initiative Dialogue Session: Flooding

## Scene setting

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# Flooding challenges

- Climate change
- More frequent extreme events
- More flood risk for our communities
- More development pressure on floodplains
- Need for more integrated and sustainable infrastructure solutions
- Need to understand and value intangible impacts and benefits



# Social and natural factors

- Clear from flooding challenges that current approach needs to be adapted
- Effective long term flood management solutions can only be found by fully understanding and valuing social and natural impacts and benefits



# Policy is evolving

- Natural Environment White Paper 2011
- Biodiversity 2020 - Defra policy for valuing biodiversity
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Green Book
- Defra strategy is to mainstream the Ecosystems Approach



# Too much focus on technical solutions?

- Flood defence legislation and policy, grant in aid appraisal and outcome measures do recognise valuation of ecosystem services
- But infrastructure options development and funding often in silos
- Sectoral and organisational
- ...may result in conventional solutions and missed opportunities
- Philosophy of engineering certainty



# Making it happen

- Move debate from purely technical to societal and environmental
- Real acceptance of natural capital approach requires cultural change and strong direction
- Innovative solutions require organisational impetus to become “business as usual”
- Better coordination across policy areas
- Accept we now have the evidence



# We have the evidence

- Many case studies
- Beckingham Marshes
- Tamar Catchment
- Alkborough Flats
- Jervaulx, River Ure
- Pickering



# Ecosystem approach for flood risk

- Identify options that fit with local priorities
- Understand who benefits and who loses
- Identify missing or degraded ecosystem services
- Better understanding of how changes in the environment affect people
- Identify unintended consequences
- Optimise multiple benefits





# Do things differently

- Understanding and valuing community engagement and social benefits
- Developing catchment based solutions
- Climate change anticipated and flexibility built-in
- Readiness to adapt
- More efficiency by more integration
- Valuing ecosystem services



# Conclusion

- Political will and cultural change needed to facilitate a practical paradigm shift
- Foundations laid – now time to build
- Simple solutions exist that could be readily implemented
- Strengthen Defra FDGiA outcomes
- Better coordination across government
- Make this a part of our everyday flood risk management toolkit

