



Our Natural Health Service

The role of the natural environment in maintaining healthy lives.

Ralph Barnett, Team Leader People and Access

The Role of Natural England



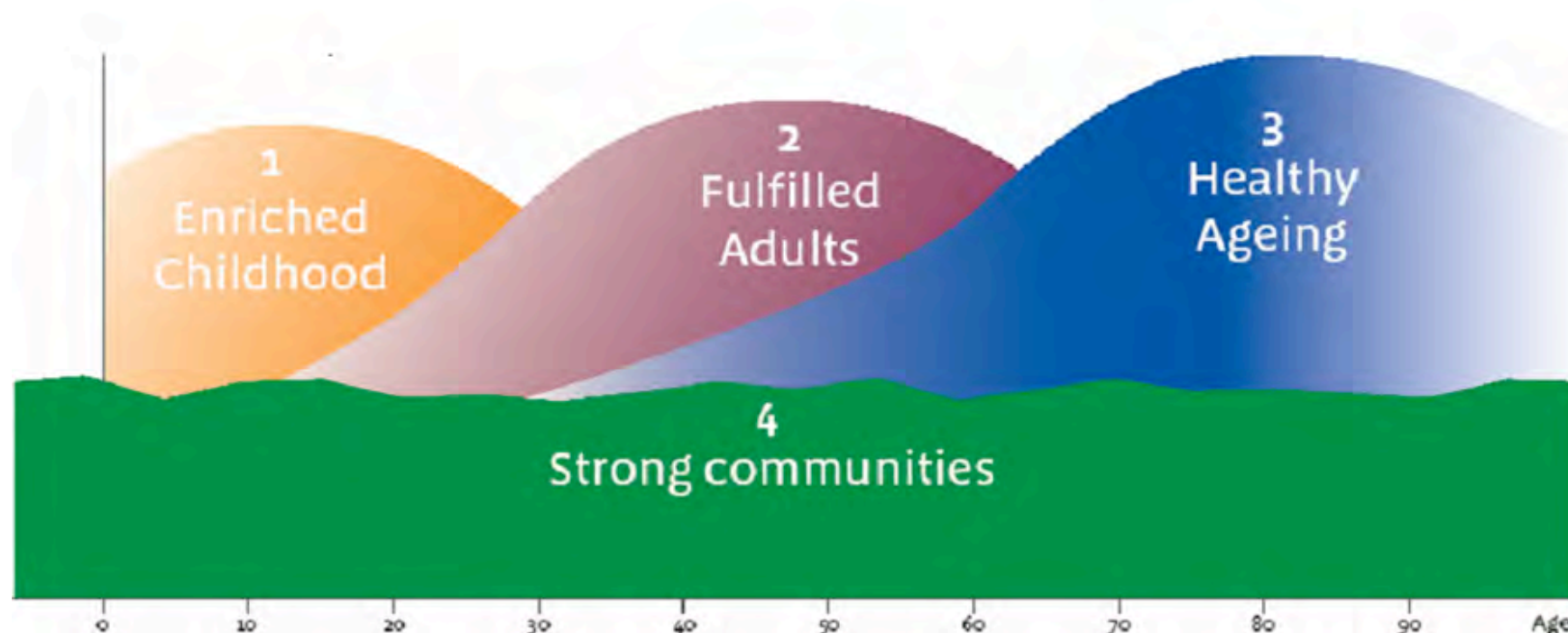
Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

- promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity;
- conserving and enhancing the landscape;
- securing the provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment;
- promoting access to the countryside, open spaces and encouraging open air recreation; and
- contributing in other ways to social and economic wellbeing through management of the natural environment.

Natural England's health and wellbeing policy



Contact with the natural environment helps create strong and healthy communities with more active and less stressed individuals.



The Natural Health Service



An overarching concept to help deliver the health benefits of the natural environment

What we want:

- Every household in the country should be within five minutes walk of an area of green space of at least two hectares.
- Every GP or community nurse should have the opportunity to refer patients to an approved health walk or outdoor activity programme.

Overview of Evidence supporting the Natural Health Service



| Indirect benefits | Direct benefits |
|------------------------------|--|
| Reducing health inequalities | Moderating impact from extreme weather |
| Improving mental health | Shelter from UV, noise, wind |
| Improving physical activity | Carbon sequestration |
| Reducing obesity | Improved water and air quality |
| Enhancing social cohesion | Food |

The natural environment can help with the major health problems facing society

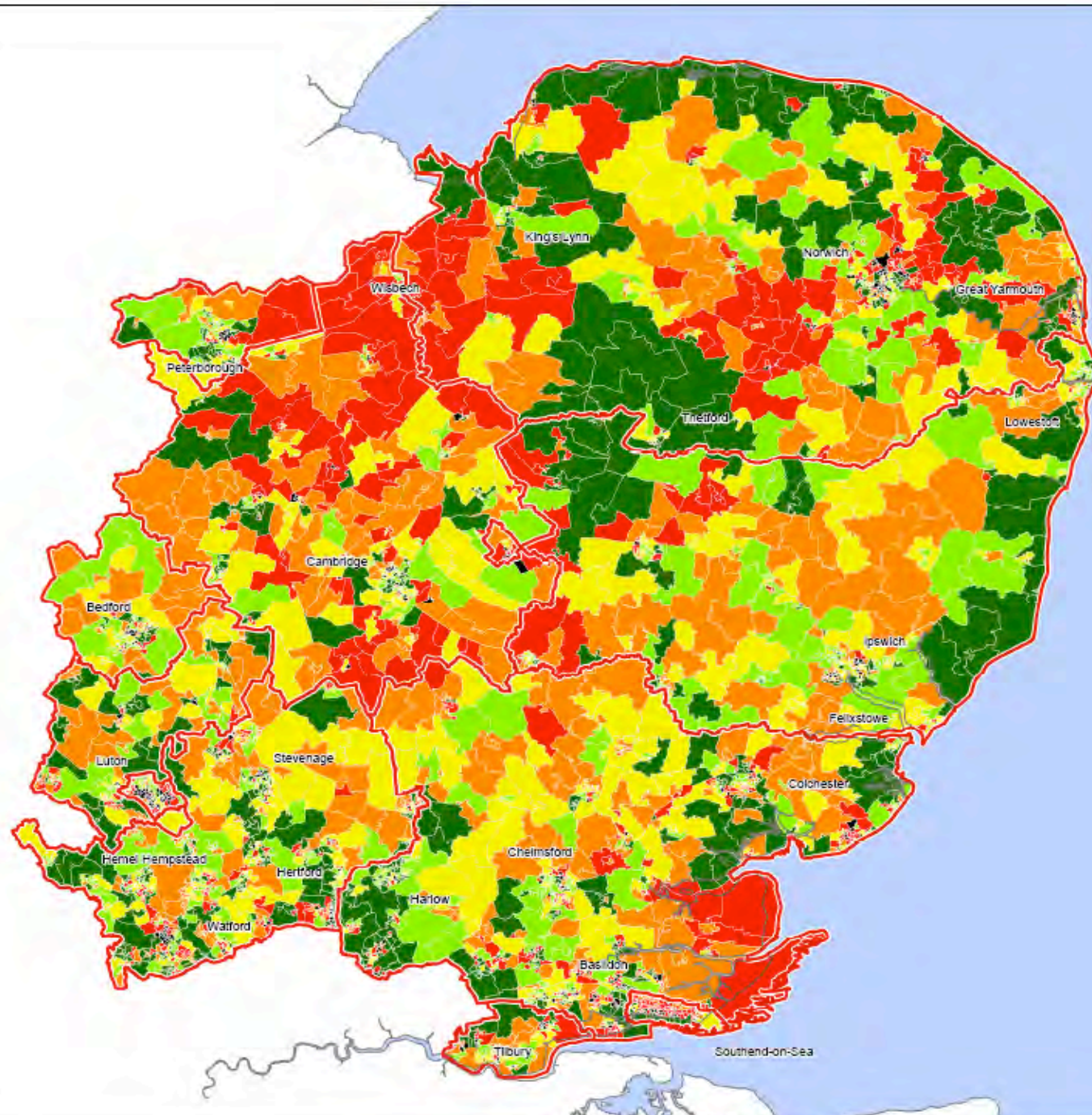
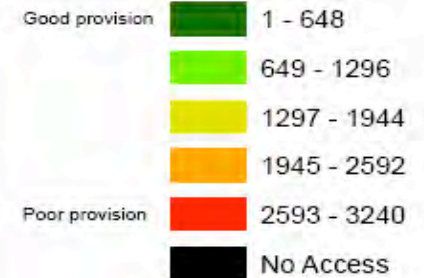
Health Policy Drivers



- **Wanless Report (2002)** suggested that a scenario in which people became “fully engaged” to look after their own health would save £30 billion.
- The Chief Medical Officer’s report **At least 5 a week (2004)** overwhelming evidence about the benefits of moderate physical activity.
- **Choosing Health: Choosing Activity (2005)** helped to join up government departments and made first mention of natural environment.
- **Healthy Weight, Healthy lives (2008)** presented a strategy to combat obesity in which a walking campaign would be launched.
- **Be Active, Be Healthy (2009)** A physical activity plan in which Walking for Health was announced as a partnership between DH and Natural England and a significant emphasis on use of Natural Environment.

Access Network

Access Provision
(Total access area as a percentage of Super Output Area, coloured by Range)

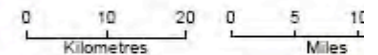


This is the final Access Network Map (v3 final)
It replaces the Draft Integrated Access Map.

It is made up of data which is nationally consistent;
where NE holds a licence to use it;
where the quality is good,
and where the land is available for public access from

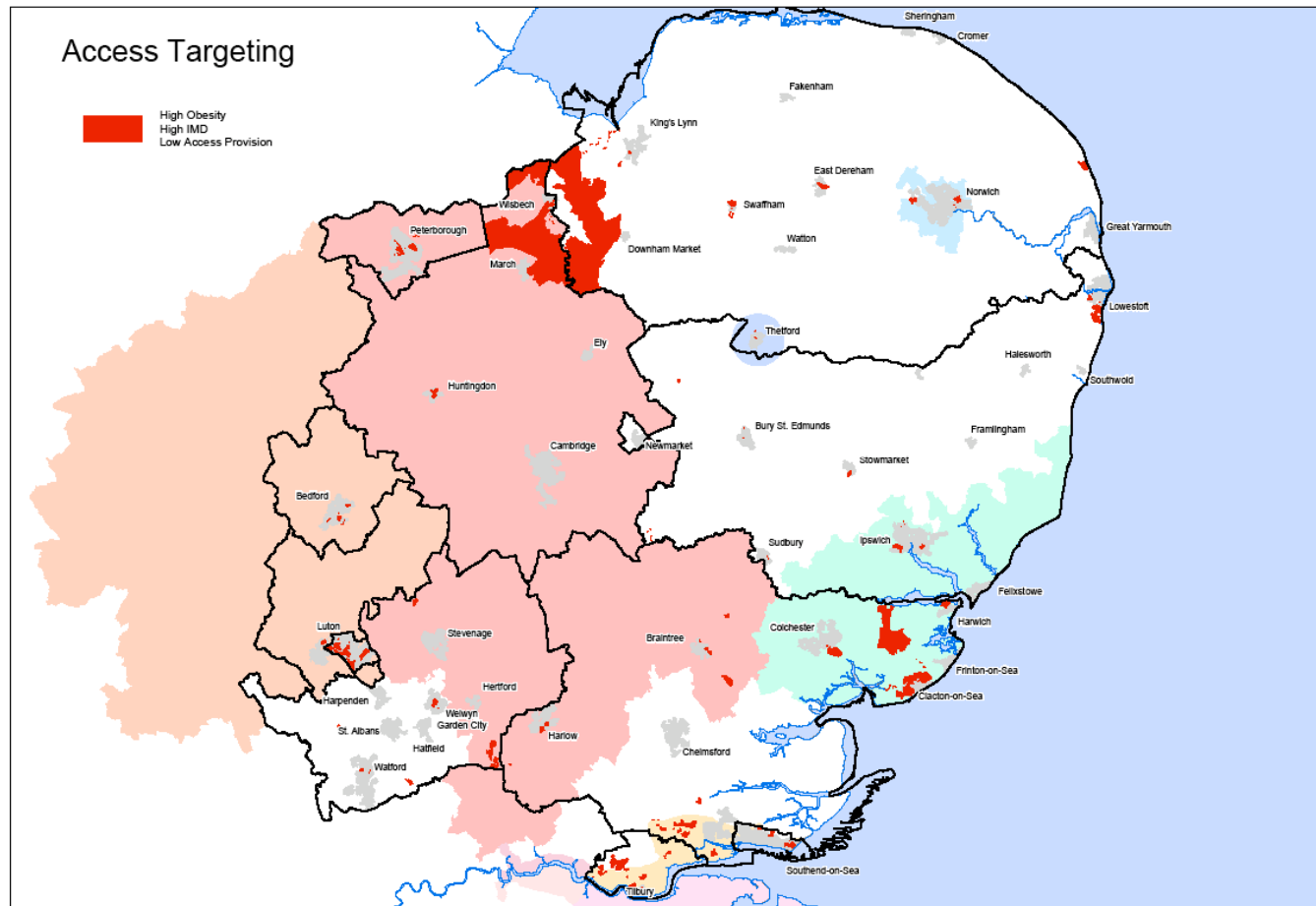
The datasets currently included are :

- Agri-environment scheme permissive access (route)
- CROW access land (including registered common land)
- Country Parks
- Cycleways (Sustrans) inc Local/Regional/National
- Doorstep Greens
- Local Nature Reserves
- Millennium Greens
- National Nature Reserves (accessible sites only)
- National Trails
- Public Rights of Way
- Forestry Commission 'Woods for People' data
- Village Greens – point data only



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Focussing delivery where need is the greatest



Creating health promoting environments.



Statutory

Planning

Advocacy

Green Infrastructure
Access Partnerships
Public Rights of Way
Green Flag Award

Grant Aid

Agri Environment Access
Access to Nature

Delivery

NNRs
Open Access
Coastal Access

Aim 2: Every GP or community nurse has the opportunity to refer patients to an approved health walk or outdoor activity programme.



- **Partnership** between NE and Dept of Health aims to get 2 million people active by 2012 the East of England Target for Walking for Health is 7000 by 2012 (2857 baseline)
- **Vascular checks** – every person over the age of 45 is now offered opportunity to be screened for vascular disease and physical activity levels.
- **Physical Activity Care Pathway** – to deliver physical activity in primary care via referral
- Primary Care Trusts **performance indicators** including childhood obesity and cardiovascular targets

Connecting people to the natural environment



Taking it forward at Local and Primary Care Trust level

- Increase cross sectoral working through regional Physical Activity Alliance,.
- Work at county/district level through Local Area Agreements and County Sports and Physical Activity Partnerships.
- Set local expansion targets for WfH and link people & greenspace
- Link provision & expansion of interventions to health checks & Physical Activity Care Pathway
- Establish a single gateway to facilitate referrals.



Contacts and further information

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Thank you!

**NATURAL
ENGLAND**

“Walking is the nearest activity to perfect exercise” Professor J Morris and Dr Adrienne Hardman 1997

