

One Coast project - creating a Cornish coastal corridor for nature and people

The One Coast project has at its heart a shared vision for a continuous, accessible, nature-rich corridor around the South West coast, for the benefit of nature and people. This SWEEP project developed rich environmental and economic datasets, and a review of finance mechanisms, to support the National Trust and other key partners, in identifying delivery mechanisms for this ambition, with a potential £7.8m of investments outlined for Cornwall.

sweep Impact Summary



Transforming Cornwall's
330 mile
coastal corridor



National Trust plans
informed for:

7 coastal habitat
restoration sites
and **5** coastal hubs



£7.8m of
investment
proposals
informed



Why it mattered?

The One Coast project's original aim was to articulate the economic context and delivery mechanisms for a continuous, accessible, and nature-rich corridor around the South West (SW) coast for the benefit of nature and people. The coastal corridor is defined as the continual strip of land stretching from Mean High Water to 1km inland around the entire SW coast – all 630 miles. The SW coastal area's natural beauty and wildlife are core to its essence and value. Visitors come to see the wealth of historic, artistic and cultural heritage and to spend time in nature.

The SW Coast Path is one of the region's principal tourist attractions. Used by more than 8.9m people per year, it brings an estimated £520m per year to the local economy, supports over 10,400 jobs (full-time equivalent) and the health and wellbeing benefits of walking on path are valued at over £75m per year.¹

Originally intended as a joint initiative between the National Trust and RSPB, the RSPB shifted priorities before the Covid 2019 pandemic and, whilst they remain supportive, the ambition for a wider, wilder coastline is now being taken forward by the National Trust, with other organisations, such as the South West Coast Path Association, promoting the same concept.

Anticipated benefits included new direct and indirect employment, leveraged public grants and other

Ways of Working



investments, and to inform and shape nature recovery and Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) on the SW coast.

In 2022, the NT's work remains focused on a series of strategic ambitions, including restoring the natural environment, making at least half of its farmed land "nature friendly" by 2025, creating 25,000 ha of priority habitat by 2025, and improving the quality of existing nature sites on its land². The National Trust also has a commitment to making its sites better for people who need support to access them, working through partnerships and testing new approaches.

The current focus for One Coast project lies within Cornwall, home to over half (330 miles) of the South West's coast path.

What we did

SWEEP Impact Fellow Dr Rachel Morrison and Prof Kevin Gaston, University of Exeter worked in collaboration with project partners - National Trust and RSPB - to assess their needs for the One Coast project. The following resources were developed providing a wide range of information and data that could be drawn upon to realise the One Coast ambition.

- **One Coast Evidence Base: An Environmental and Economic Review of the Cornish Coastal Corridor:** This review provides a catalogue of information for project partners on a range of environmental, socio-demographic and economic aspects of the Cornish coastal corridor.
- **Financing One Coast. A review of possible finance mechanisms for the One Coast Project:** This review highlights the range of possible relevant finance mechanisms which could be used to help fund the One Coast project, ranging from traditional grants to philanthropic sources of finance. A series of recommended or priority investments for project partners are provided.
- **A suite of environmental datasets and ecosystem services GIS maps** - linked to the One Coast project.

Initial findings were presented to 40 participants at a joint event with the SWEEP-linked TEVI project: 'Showcasing innovations along the South West Coast Path in Cornwall in the context of the county's Environmental Growth Strategy', 15 May 2019, Porthcurno Telegraph Museum.

¹ Petersen, C. The South West Coast Path Health and Wellbeing. Assessment 2020 Report.

² <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/who-we-are/about-us/our-views-on-nature-and-wildlife>

Impacts & benefits delivered

SWEEP work is supporting the National Trust commitment to play its part in working in partnership to restore a healthy, beautiful natural environment. It also identifies opportunities in two cross-cutting priority areas where the NT is seeking to make a step change, 1) better reflecting the changing communities they serve (Everyone Welcome); and, 2) becoming net zero carbon as an organisation by 2030 (Climate Action).



Attitudinal/Capacity

Informed NT thinking on development of the Cornish and wider South West Coastal Corridor:

SWEEP outputs were used by the National Trust to produce an Advocacy Document which was shared in 2019 with NT staff – coastal managers and national coast policy leads - and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership Board (CloSLNP). (see Figure 1 National Trust advocacy slide setting out the ambition for Coastal corridor economy)



Organisational Function

Underpinning NT strategic vision for the South West coast:

The NT has committed to develop and implement its next-stage vision for the South West coast in its 2022-2025 Plan, which sets out how the region is moving from pandemic recovery and renewal, back to delivery. The NT is focusing on two areas to deliver on this ambition:

1. restoring the coastal natural environment by creating habitat
2. developing a series of natural environment visitor hubs and sites

Cornwall remains one of the biggest opportunities for delivery, and the NT's South West leadership team is commissioning a strategic regional programme for the South West coast, to deliver a step-change in outcomes for nature, people and climate. It will cover the way land is managed, how people access the coast, how we respond to the changing climate, how communities are involved, and how projects are funded.



As we emerge from the pandemic and explore significant opportunities to deliver nature's recovery in Cornwall, and new financing models for delivery across the county, the NT team believe there will be other opportunities to share the SWEEP outcomes, for example, with the team developing the Cornwall Habitat Bank as a Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund project."

Sarah O'Brien, External Affairs Advisor, National Trust

This programme will deliver public benefits which include: improved state of nature – bigger, better, more and joined up; improved quality of place; greater climate resilience; increased connection to the coast for people, for greater physical and mental wellbeing; and increased financial sustainability. Sponsored by the Regional Director, a team led by a Senior Programme Manager will be developing this long-term programme over the next year, drawing in both regional and national expertise.

Supporting future NT funding applications – including expressions of Interest submitted to the CloSLNP, which is building a pipeline of projects to put forward to the UK government's new Shared Prosperity Fund and other funds, with two potential projects for the next 3 years (2022-2025):

- Creating a landscape for nature, carbon, and people through restoring coastal habitats at 7 sites (**c. £1.3m**)
- Creating 5 coastal hubs which would be exemplary in enabling access, provide facilities for local communities and improve provision of coastal visitor assets (**c. £6.5m**).

Insights and learning: Coastal corridor economy



The coastal corridor could contribute an estimated 38-44% of Cornwall's total GVA.

Between 32%-37% of the population of Cornwall live in the coastal corridor.

44% of all enterprises in Cornwall fall within the coastal corridor.

Approximately 372 farms have land intersecting the coastal corridor, 8.2% of the total estimated farms in Cornwall.

Soils and vegetation in the coastal corridor are estimated to store around 14.3% of Cornwall's total stored carbon, and 20% of above-ground carbon storage.

Greenspaces, paths and beaches within the coastal corridor are predicted to receive approx. 18.64 million recreational day visits by English adult residents per year.

The coastal corridor alone accounts for 49% of the total predicted recreational visits by adults to greenspace in Cornwall and 51% of the total welfare benefit to residents.

Despite representing just 17% of the land area of Cornwall, the coastal corridor contains 54% of Cornwall's conservation areas.

Natural capital assets estimated to cover 87% of coastal corridor in Cornwall



Figure 1 : National Trust - Ambition for Coastal Corridor Economy

Looking to the future

The National Trust continues to make the case for a wide coast and marine corridor, as a key opportunity for nature's recovery in Cornwall and the South West. They are keen to work with partners to develop funding packages and proposals in partnership with farmers and landowners for landscape-scale coastal conservation areas, for example, as part of the next stage of ELM delivery (Landscape Recovery Schemes). Through its ongoing partnership with the South West Coast Path Association, NT will be exploring how the Coastal Margin designated as part of the England Coast Path process, can be incorporated into a Wild Belt along the coast.



Livestock on Coast Path, Cornwall

“Our challenge is to see if we can direct biodiversity net-gain and progressive agri-environment schemes to help us get maximum benefit from the Coastal Margin and mitigate against the worst impacts of climate change.”

SW Coast Path Association

A wild belt to protect the coast – The South West Coast Path

“We recognise the coast is so crucially important to the local economy. It's probably our biggest asset. We have nearly 22 million visitors a year come down to the South West to enjoy the coast and 10 million of those come to the National Trust sites themselves.”

National Trust. Source: The South West Coast presented by the National Trust



One Coast project illustration. Source: © National Trust/ Doodlebug

Organisation we worked with



Underpinning NERC Science

- NE/J015237/1 - Fragments, functions and flows - the scaling of biodiversity and ecosystem services in urban ecosystems
- NE/L009137/1 - Testing agricultural impacts on breeding ground food resources as a driver of population decline in a brood parasite

About SWEEP

The South West Partnership for Environmental & Economical Prosperity (SWEEP) is a partnership between the University of Exeter, the University of Plymouth, and Plymouth Marine Laboratory. Funded by the Natural Environment Research Council and stakeholders together to solve key challenges faced by those working with our natural resources. www.sweep.ac.uk



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