

**The social construction of landscape scale conservation projects
as delivered by The Wildlife Trusts in England**

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Abstract

Wildlife conservation in England is in transition because nature reserve based conservation has three weaknesses. They have not reversed biodiversity decline, nor do they provide the means for species to move across the landscape in response to climate change, and most reserves are too small to be part of an ecosystem approach to conservation. Landscape scale conservation (LSC) addresses these deficiencies. Therefore, the purpose of my thesis was to understand the meaning of LSC as implemented in the Living Landscapes schemes of The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) movement in England. My research also examined the governance and management of these schemes.

I used a constructivist approach to investigate the institutions and discourses of Living Landscapes. To do this, I conducted an email survey of the 36 Trusts in England and then studied the available documentation that describes Living Landscapes. Then I carried out a series of in-depth interviews with stakeholders associated with five Wildlife Trusts. The purpose of these interviews was to understand what their Living Landscape schemes meant to these stakeholders.

The email survey and subsequent document study revealed the range and type of Living Landscapes across England. LSC is complex, suggesting that ecosystem services are too intricate a typography to assign to these schemes. I developed an understanding of what is meant by LSC through the lens of stakeholders in Living Landscapes. I examined TWT's LSC vision which revealed the discourses and formal and informal institutions of Living Landscapes. I also examined Lockwood's framework for LSC governance, one of LSC's institutions.

My research examined the Wildlife Trust movement's approach to delivering LSC. Two types of institutions are evident, informal institutions define the physical attributes of Living Landscapes, whilst formal institutions are characteristic of their governance and management. Its key discourses of conservation, education and community engagement define Living Landscapes, whilst ecosystem services emerged as a new discourse to reflect the multi-faceted cultural and historical elements in the landscape. TWT's once insular approach to governance is in transition to a pluralistic model that encourages greater community involvement. Therefore, if LSC is to be a template for successful conservation it must embrace a wider definition of both conservation and governance.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed:

Date: 14th December 2017

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

A2N	Access to Nature (Natural England and Big Lottery initiative)
ACEVO	Association of Chief executives of Voluntary Organisations
AD-IM	IM is a conservation director at Trust AD
AGM	Annual general meeting
AOA	Articles of Association
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BC	Butterfly Conservation
BCNP	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust
CCRI	Countryside and Community Research Institute
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEO	Chief executive officer
CoE	Council of Europe
CSF	Catchment sensitive farming
CSG	Code Steering Group
CSO	civil society organisations
DA	Discourse analysis
Defra	Department for environment, farming and rural affairs
DP	Discussion Paper
DWT	Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
E-AF	AF is a volunteer with Trust E
E-DL	DL is a Living Landscape partner and past chairperson of Trust E
E-KB	KB is a Living Landscape manager with Trust E
E-MG	MG is a volunteer with Trust E
E-RH	RH is a senior manager and Trustee with Trust E
E-SV	SV is a Living Landscape project leader with Trust E

EA	Environment Agency
EBG	England Biodiversity Group
EC	European Commission
ECM	European Council of Ministers
EU	European Union
FC	Forestry Commission
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
GCSG	Governance Code Steering Group
GIS	Geographical Information System
GWT	Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
HI	Historical Institutionalism
HL	House of Lords
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
H&SC	Habitat and Species Committee
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
IMC	Integrated marketing and communications
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
KWT	Kent Wildlife Trust
L-DM	DM is a Trustee of Trust L
L-FW	FW is the CEO of Trust L
L-KW	KW is a senior manager at Trust L
L-MG	MG is a Trustee with Trust L and a chairperson of a Living Landscape partner organisation
L-PJ	PJ is a part Trustee and chairperson of Trust L

L-SF	SF is a reserve manager with Trust L
LCA	Large conservation areas
LSC	Landscape scale conservation
MBA	Masters in Business Administration
MEA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
M&S	Monitoring and surveying
NBN	National Biodiversity Network
NCA	National Character Areas
NE	Natural England
NEA	National Ecosystem Assessment
NIA	Nature Improvement Areas
NFU	National Farmers Union
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NSO	National Statistics Office
NT	National Trust
Q-AN	AN is an independent monitoring and evaluation consultant to a Living Landscape scheme led by Trust Q
Q-KR	KR is an independent communication consultant to a Living Landscape scheme led by Trust Q
Q-JG	JG is a chairman of a heritage conservation partner organisation in a Living Landscape scheme led by Trust Q
Q-SP	SP is Trust Q's Living Landscape project manager
Q-TB	TB is an independent HLF mentor to a Living Landscape scheme led by Trust Q
RAU	Royal Agricultural University
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RSPNR	Royal Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves
RSWT	The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts

S&RWT	Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SC	Social construction
SED	Socio-economic discourse
SMT	Senior management team
SNA	Strategic nature areas
SPA	Special Protection Areas
SRC	Stockholm Resilience Centre
SSSI	Site(s) of special scientific interest
SWBP	South West Biodiversity Plan
SWT	Suffolk Wildlife Trust
SWWT	South West Wildlife Trusts
SWWWT	The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales
TWT	The Wildlife Trusts
UEA	University of East Anglia
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
USA	United States of America
V-DG	DG is a senior manager at Trust V
V-DH	DH is a Trustee of Trust V
V-LP	LP is a senior conservation partner in one of Trust V's Living Landscape scheme
V-TH	TH is a senior manager at Trust V
WT	Woodland Trust
WTSE	Wildlife Trusts in the South East
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Chapter 1. PREAMBLE AND INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preamble and Introduction

This preamble and introduction sets out the scope and content of my thesis. The introduction provides an overview of the aim of my research, its context, and research questions. Then I provide some personal context that explains my interest in this research. Finally, I provide some background information about nature conservation before outlining my research framework and structure of this thesis.

Wildlife conservation in England is in transition. In the 20th Century it focused on the preservation of nature in reserves, but this approach has limitations (Lawton et al., 2010; Sheail et al., 1997). It has not reversed the decline in biodiversity evident in recent surveys (Burns et al., 2013). Nor do nature reserves provide the means for species to move across the landscape in response to climate change because habitats are not connected (Lawton et al., 2010). Also, nature reserves might be considered too small to be a significant part of the ecosystem approach to conservation.

In the 21st Century, landscape scale conservation (LSC), is a broad approach to nature conservation that seeks to address these deficiencies by creating a network of reserves, connected by permeable corridors of habitat across the country. I use the acronym LSC to describe this view of the conservation world (Kuhn, 1962). LSC includes “large conservation areas”, and “large scale conservation” which are terms frequently used (Elliott et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2010; Macgregor, 2015). However, current terminology prefers the term large scale conservation. I use the term landscape because of its association with The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) and its “Living Landscapes” (TWT, 2007). I explore the institutions and discourses associated with LSC in chapter 3.

My research is about understanding LSC and what it means to TWT. LSC is an emerging conservation discourse revolving around ecosystems and the services they provide, which is similar to the integrated landscape approach to land management (Nielson, 2016; Eigenbrod et al., 2017). Ecosystems operate at a landscape scale, thus LSC is complex because it involves varied biophysical, cultural, ecological, and sociological elements (Frost et al., 2006). LSC is also complex because it often involves partnerships between multiple landowners,

community groups, government agencies and conservation organisations vying for influence in the management and governance of LSC (Elliott et al., 2011).

These LSC partnerships have been classified according to land tenure: private, public and voluntary sector (Eigenbrod et al., 2016; Macgregor et al., 2012).

The private sector, including farmers, have landholdings that often support philanthropic conservation initiatives (HLF, 2013; Elliott et al., 2011). The public sector's considerable landholdings, such as country parks and local nature reserves, some of which are being transferred to the voluntary sector, are also important conservation areas providing public access to the countryside (Defra, 2014a; Corbett, 2014).

The environmental voluntary or charitable sector has over 1,700 member organisations in England, of which a few conduct LSC as described later in this chapter; examples include Butterfly Conservation (BC), National Trust (NT), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), TWT, and Woodland Trust (WT) (Clifford et al., 2013). They have significant landholdings and considerable experience of environmental management, campaigning and advocacy, and public engagement (Cook and Inman, 2012:176).

My research explores these complexities and provides insights into understanding the evolving nature of wildlife conservation in England as it makes the transition to a landscape scale approach. This transition is from single site nature reserves that protect special habitats and species to an ecosystem based LSC that recognises cultural and historical aspects within the landscape. Within TWT there is wide agreement and shared understanding over the significance of nature reserves within the movement, but the transition to LSC is not necessarily accompanied by a shared vision or understanding. It is these differences in meaning that my research seeks to understand.

1.2. Research aim and context

The aim of my research is to understand LSC as practised by TWT. My agricultural studies led me to appreciate that sustainable land management maintains the soil's agricultural value. This is attuned with wildlife conservation and the aesthetic quality of the rural landscape. This ecocentric view resonates with agriculture's impact on the modification of the landscape (Tivy, 1990:260). My research aim is to examine the social construction of landscape scale

conservation through an investigation of the governance and management structures within The Wildlife Trusts movement in England.

This movement is a network of nature and wildlife conservation Trusts across the country. Collectively, TWT is a membership-based organisation, with each Trust affiliated to the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT), the umbrella organisation that gives the movement a national voice. Trusts are both a registered charity and a charitable company limited by guarantee. Each Trust is independent in terms of governance, with an obligation to contribute to the public benefit. In addition to national charity legislation, Memoranda¹ and Articles of Association² establish each Trust's constitution and governance framework.

The importance of the social construction approach to understanding Living Landscapes, the name TWT use for its LSC, is that there are many interpretations depending upon local circumstances, stakeholders and priorities of Trusts (The Wildlife Trusts, 2007). Throughout my thesis, I understand the term stakeholder to include all those with an active interest in Living Landscapes, which I consider to be a sub-set of LSC. Stakeholders include: Trust members, staff and volunteers, government agencies, funders, land-owners, managers and farmers and the public, both visitors to an area and the communities they serve. Living Landscapes are not only about the buffering and inter-connection of nature reserves with habitats that allow species to migrate to mitigate climate change and developmental pressures, but they also represent the human interaction with the landscape.

My interest in the voluntary sector governance is a significant component in my research because Living Landscapes involves more stakeholders than nature reserve conservation. Therefore, the institutions used to govern and manage LSC have to adapt. This contrasts with the governance of nature reserves where landownership and management responsibilities rest with the conservation organization. Therefore, LSC has multiple stakeholders and objectives, which

¹ Some Memoranda have been rescinded under simplified constitutional arrangements under the Companies Act 2006 and integrated into the Articles of Association (AoA). The constitution is contained in modified AoA.

² The AoA follow model guidelines from the Charity Commission (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>)

not only has implications for governance but is the reason I adapted a social constructionist perspective to my research.

1.3. Research objective and questions

The objective of my research is to contribute to the understanding of LSC. LSC is socially constructed, i.e. influenced by society, which has implications for the designation, implementation and governance of TWT's Living Landscapes. To address these implications, I have three research questions:

Question 1. How is landscape scale conservation socially constructed in the UK?

Question 2. How do these different constructions influence the designation and implementation of landscape scale conservation projects delivered by the Wildlife Trusts movement?

Question 3. What are the implications for the governance and management of landscape scale conservation projects in the UK?

In England, apart from TWT, LSC has been adopted by the UK government in its Nature Improvement Areas (NIA), the NT with their collaborations with other conservation organisations, RSPB, the WT across their plantations, and by Butterfly Conservation (BC) with their matrix approach to landscapes (Bourn and Bulman, 2005; The Woodland Trust, 2015a; NT, 2015b; NE, 2013; Partnership, 2015; Defra, 2010). These examples show how LSC means different things to different people. For example, some concentrate on the ecological benefits, others the opportunities for engagement with local communities, whilst others integrate other conservation issues such as archaeology, cultural and historical artefacts, and yet others develop tourism and business opportunities.

LSC governance is interpreted in various ways. Conventional governance is concerned with legal compliance and financial probity (Crawford et al., 2009). However, contemporary themes of accountability, inclusiveness, fairness, legitimacy, resilience and transparency may be taken for granted (Lockwood, 2010). In my research, I use interviews and document analysis to examine the social construction, governance and management of Living Landscape programmes run by five Wildlife Trusts.

1.4. Personal context to the research

My research journey has been life-long. I have always wanted to conduct research and sought opportunities throughout my life, first as an environmental chemist with the Grassland Research Institute, then within local government, before studying for a MBA, and when I was working as a management consultant. This desire was nurtured during my work abroad where I witnessed the tension between conservation and land restitution (Kopecky and Mudde, 2003; Wedel, 2001).

I lived and worked in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) for twenty years where environmentalism was an engine for change in the old socialist states (Naveh, 2000:7; Tickle and Clarke, 2000:211). During this period, I enquired about conducting research in several different countries but prior to EU accession it was problematic. In these post-soviet countries land ownership is an important conservation issue involving civil society, which covers the charitable, non-governmental, and not-for-profit sectors. Tickle and Clarke's case studies show that landscape issues are closely linked to property restitution, land ownership and the embryonic civil society in the region. Whilst, Naveh demonstrated that CEE countries have a holistic approach to the management of their landscapes.

As an adviser to CEE governments during their preparation for, and accession to, the EU. I worked with, and led teams, in countries from the Baltic to the Balkans developing their capacity to prepare and manage aid programmes. I was a technical adviser on a range of environmental and infrastructure projects associated with accession and structural funds. During this period, I advised civil society organisations (CSO) on how they might contribute to the accession process by providing oversight of governmental activity. This experience proved a constructive background to exploring the issues of governance and accountability in the voluntary sector in England. The experience broadened my understanding of the role of CSO as agents of democracy, initially in environmental conservation, and latterly as catalysts for community involvement in decision-making.

On my return to the UK, I assisted in the management of a family farm that had a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) at its core. This SSSI had tremendous resonance with my family, as an unspoilt place, with views down the Slad valley. The farm lies within the landscape of the Cotswold escarpment, which is now

part of the iconic Laurie Lee Living Landscape scheme. In 2006, I began studying at the Royal Agricultural College to learn about the practicalities of farm management. Subsequently, I began volunteering with a Wildlife Trust in 2007. My agriculture studies examined environmental management, which coincided with the launch of TWT Living Landscape schemes, a LSC initiative (The Wildlife Trusts, 2007). Once I completed my studies I contacted the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) at the University of Gloucestershire to enquire about research. Consequently, I enrolled as a PhD candidate with the CCRI.

My interest in LSC arose from practical land management issues at farm-level and my role as a Wildlife Trust Trustee. It was an autumn of floods, which threatened biodiversity as many nature reserves were under water for a considerable time. As a Trustee, I served on the Board, the Habitat and Species committee (H&SC), and the finance panel. I also chaired the board of directors of a consultancy owned by the Trust and an advisory panel for a Living Landscape scheme³. I still serve on H&SC and a performance review sub-group for the trust. All this contributes to my evolving perspective on LSC and I acknowledge its influence in line with good reflexive practice (Darawsheh, 2014; Finlay, 2002).

Given this context, my research is of interest to the conservation community, not just from an ecological perspective but also from a sociological viewpoint. For example, the TWT movement (i.e. the individual Wildlife Trusts and its members), whose perspectives are both scientific and sociological, seek to balance ecological concerns with issues affecting local communities, schools, farmers and landowners. They also have to consider how to fund their activities.

My examination of the social construction issues associated with Living Landscapes and their stakeholders frame my research. My observations, and the way stakeholders responded during the interviews, have challenged my initial positivist view. Now, I interpret my research through this experience, but I

³ I retired from these roles in November 2015, following the governance ruling, approved by the membership at its 2013 AGM that Trustees should serve a total of nine years. I continue to serve as a volunteer and sit on the monitoring and evaluation panel, and Habitats and Species Committee.

appreciate that my own perspective is a function of my social, political, ethical and cultural influences (Lynch, 2000; Lynch, 2008). Such, reflexivity helps me understand LSC as I am both an observer and participant, which influences my knowledge of LSC and its governance (Pimbert and Pretty, 1995; Lynch, 2000; Antrop, 2005; Lynch, 2008).

In summary, I am interested in the governance of TWT's Living Landscape programme, how Trusts work in partnership with various stakeholders to deliver conservation objectives across whole landscapes. During my research, I have developed an understanding of the different perspective on LSC, its scale, objectives, and how it is governed and whether there is a common approach amongst the Living Landscapes initiatives. To understand LSC, its management and governance I begin by setting out my understanding of nature conservation and LSC, and then explain how my research questions developed. This introduction to my research provides a personal perspective on why I began my research. Before I describe my research structure, I outline my thesis.

1.5. Background and introduction to nature conservation

It is said that "landscapes are symbolic environments" (Greider and Garkovich, 1994:1). As such it is perhaps natural that many of the iconic landscapes in England have been appropriated for conservation (TWT, 2015b). I use the term iconic landscapes to denote:

a broadly familiar environment; a space, place, or building that conveys great cultural significance to a wide group of people. ... [But] as landscapes are constantly rebuilt, remodeled, renewed, and reimagined, hints of the past remain, providing us with visual clues about the landscape's evolution and helping us to imbue meaning in what we observe and experience. (Keeling, 2011:113)

I understand that these Living Landscapes are social constructions, built around their inherent symbols and the relationship people have with them (Greider and Garkovich, 1994:2). They are a departure from the nature reserves that are at the heart of TWT's activities. These reserves are usually owned by conservation organisations, or conservation minded land-owners, which means that governance issues are simple: they can do what they want in conservation terms within any restrictions imposed by government agencies on any statutory protected areas within the reserves. There is little recourse to neighbours, local communities, and funders. But with LSC, there are multiple interests, with

many landowners and more communities within their boundaries, all of whom have a legitimate voice.

There is also a difference in scale between nature reserves that are typically a few hectares in area and land management units in England, i.e. farms, that cover tens or hundreds of hectares. In contrast LSC schemes are often measured in thousands or hundreds of thousands of hectares. Conservation action at this level requires funding to take account of these multiple interests. These interests need to be balanced, hence the importance of a suitable governance framework that considers stakeholders' opinions. In addition, LSC poses challenges such as deciding what should be conserved, who should be involved in achieving its objectives, and by what means. Therefore, because LSC means different things to different people, it is important to understand how people construct understanding of what LSC should be and do.

In nature reserves, ecosystems work at a micro-level, but LSC allows ecosystems to perform their natural functions; therefore LSC is becoming the preferred conservation model (Lefcheck et al., 2015). This reflects the fact that ecosystems operate at the landscape level, taking nature conservation beyond the confines of the nature reserve. In so doing LSC reaches out to new partners to collaborate in the governance and management of the landscape. And because LSC involves more stakeholders than nature reserve conservation, a new or modified governance structure is necessary.

The concept of landscape dates to the 15th Century but it was articulated as a discourse and cultural concept by Denis Cosgrove (1984). My research focuses on LSC as understood by TWT, a movement that was established in the early 20th century to protect landscapes that were disappearing under the spread of industrialization (Sand, 2012; Worboys et al., 2015:12). Alongside changing landscapes, species of flora and fauna were becoming extinct and action was required to protect them; hence the creation of the Rothschild Reserves, which were amongst the first nature reserves in the country (Barnes, 2015; Rothschild and Marren, 1997). The landscape approach to nature conservation is not unique: earlier in Europe, a large section of forest in Poland was set aside where hunting was prohibited to protect the Wisent in 1690, whilst in North America the first national park was created at Yellowstone in 1872 (Glover, 1947; Runte,

2002). Thus conservation, in one form or another, has long been part of the human experience.

The context for TWT's Living Landscapes stems from the conservation interests of Charles Rothschild at the end of the 19th century (McCarthy, 2012; Sands, 2012; Rothschild and Marren, 1997). Nature conservation in the England countryside includes preservation and protection, mitigation of environmental pollution, and planned and sustainable use of natural resources (Green, 1981). But nature conservation also has three facets that are pertinent to LSC: emotional and spiritual, rational, and economic (Eversham, 2016). Nature is emotional and spiritual because for many people the countryside is the essence of life - it makes life worth living, and is an enriching experience. Experiencing the outdoors keeps us healthier: mentally and physically. Rational and economic aspects of nature conservation are enshrined within ecosystem products and services because the natural world is the source of the air we breathe, water we drink and the food we eat.

Landscape is a socially constructed component of the countryside, often associated with aesthetic ideals, but it is also loaded with meaning associated with its symbols and physical characteristics, the informal institutions, that are associated with its management for human benefit and enjoyment (Cosgrove, 1984; Gailing and Leibenath, 2015). Fundamentally, the English countryside is a valuable functioning landscape, it is interesting, natural, and beautiful. It is a pleasant place to visit or live, often associated with wildlife conservation (Rackham, 1986). Both countryside and landscape are social products: they exist as a result of human activity in working with and shaping nature, and they reflect the changing social values and attitudes of our times (Thrift, 1989). In my research, I explore the physical and administrative characteristics of LSC (i.e. informal and formal institutions), and how people relate to them through various discourses.

It has been claimed that European conservation objectives, based on ecological and biodiversity criteria, are too dogmatic and static, lacking the flexibility required by sustainable development (Kistenkas, 2013). The Brundtland report established sustainable development as a balancing act between the needs of people, the planet and profit (Brundtland, 1987). The challenge for conservation organisations is how to work in harmony with economic and social

stakeholders. This challenge is evident in LSC, where successful collaboration is the key to LSC, because of potential conflicts with development. Examples include a new residential development at the juxtaposition of town and country, or the transformation of a derelict quarry into a recreational amenity.

Conservation is an element of sustainable development because a balance needs to be struck between the economic, ecological and social characteristics and potential of any particular development (Brundtland, 1987). This has been interpreted as different aspects of environmental management (Catton and Dunlap, 1978).

Thus the sustainable development discourse is a counterpoint to LSC, where, for example, pressure on the peri-urban and rural environments for new housing requires green infrastructure to mitigate such development (Research, 2010).

This green infrastructure, perhaps made up of sustainable drainage systems and interlinked networks of green spaces, may constitute opportunities for peri-urban LSC, so bringing the countryside to the city (Uttley, 2016).

1.6. Research framework and thesis structure

My research investigates the characteristics of LSC, its institutions and discourses, through a survey and study of TWT's Living Landscape projects. My chosen method is document analysis, supplemented with interviews with a range of stakeholders that I develop into five case studies. Individual conservation directors, reserve managers, partners and volunteers were consulted in the selection process for the case studies. I justify my selection and use of case studies because they provide examples of LSC governance and unlock various meanings of Living Landscapes. The case studies were identified by examining the material gathered during my initial document review and the responses to an email survey. They were chosen according to the quality and detail of the material and their willingness to participate (Ragin, 1997). This method reflects convenience rather than a sampling heterogeneity, homogeneity or stratification (Bryman, 2008).

My document review was in two parts. First, I studied the websites of the Wildlife Trusts in England which produced a wealth of material. This formed the background to my email survey conducted in 2012. Subsequently, I analysed the documents I collected from the websites and the survey. Secondly, I analysed

the stakeholder interviews conducted during 2014. Interviewees included members of staff, partners and trustees, associated with five Wildlife Trusts and their Living Landscapes.

My document analysis revealed the characteristics of the Living Landscape programme, allowing me to explore what the concept means. My analysis is compared with findings of another recent study, which categorised landscape scale projects according to their approach to conservation (Elliott et al., 2011). The focus of my research evolved and was refined during the literature review when my original framework (landscape, conservation and governance) focused on my research questions (Table 1).

Table 1 Research Questions and Strategy

	Research Questions		
Strategic elements	Q1 – social construction of Living Landscapes	Q2 – How various interpretations of Living Landscapes influence conservation	Q3 – what are the implications on governance and management of Living Landscapes
Literature review	X		
Document analysis	X	X	X
Questionnaire and interviews	X	X	X

I initially explored the scale of Living Landscapes by examining the quantitative data on the schemes held by TWT as a possible basis for classification of Living Landscapes (2007). TWT’s vision also provided me with a preliminary insight before I explored what LSC means to different stakeholders (TWT, 2010). To do this, I draw upon the concept of social construction, with its institutions, discourses, relationships and symbols to reveal the complexities of LSC.

I use social construction as a framework to describe LSC’s physical (i.e. Greider & Garkovich’s symbols and relationships) and administrative characteristics (i.e. Gailing & Leibenath’s institutions and discourses), and people’s relationship to the environment (Greider and Garkovich, 1994; Gailing and Leibenath, 2015). This approach examines how stakeholders’ perspectives are constructed into their understanding of LSC. To understand the governance of Living Landscapes

I adopted Michael Lockwood's seven governance principles that were developed amongst Australasia's protected areas and indigenous people (Lockwood, 2009).

My research framework and programme were derived from my research methods. This helped formulate my interview questions and develop my understanding of the social construction and governance of Living Landscapes. I identified potential conflicts and agendas that might influence the survey and interviews, which I incorporated as mitigations into the design of my email survey and questions that formed the basis for my semi-structured interviews.

My thesis is structured to provide a logical and internally consistent description of my research. This introduction is the background to my journey from the initial concept to its investigation. Chapter 2 provides the foundation for the research through my investigation of the literature on conservation, social construction and governance, whilst chapter 3 investigates how LSC is implemented. Chapter 4 documents the methods I have used in the research, covering aspects of the literature review, surveys and case studies. I conducted three surveys; the first was an email survey of Trusts to request documents relating to Living Landscapes. Second, I used semi-structured interviews based upon questions to explore people understanding of TWT's vision and Lockwood's principles. And third, in my interviews I took the opportunity to discuss people's views on Elliott's categorisation of LSC (Elliott et al., 2011). I also discussed my use of QSR's NVivo© software to record and examine the various types of documents accumulated during the research.

The results from my research are discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 5 examines the concept of Living Landscapes, as espoused by the TWT movement. Chapter 6 examines what is understood by their approach to LSC. Chapter 7 explores some of the governance issues associated with Living Landscapes. Then chapter 8 makes some observations on what Living Landscapes mean and their governance, before I set out my conclusions in chapter 9.

Chapter 2. THE LITERATURE OF LANDSCAPE SCALE CONSERVATION

2.1. Introduction to the Literature Review

This literature review is in five sections; first, I provide an introduction to my use of the literature during my research. I then introduce some of the literature about social construction, particularly about institutions and discourses, that I found useful in its application to LSC. I follow this with an appreciation of the literature surrounding nature conservation and LSC. I then consider the literature about the governance of LSC and the voluntary sector before stating why this body of literature is fundamental to my research.

There has been significant recent interest in LSC (Macgregor, 2015; Macgregor et al., 2012; Eigenbrod et al., 2017). However, the literature I examined predates this. The purpose of my literature review is three-fold. First, it provides the context for my research. Second, it explains why social construction is an appropriate approach. This is important because the literature provides a framework for my research objectives and questions. Third, the literature explores what is nature conservation, identifies current practice in conservation governance, and provides some background to what LSC means to different people. In the literature LSC is known variously as largescale conservation, large scale conservation areas, and large conservation areas. I use the term LSC because it was adopted by the Wildlife Trusts in South West England to explain their approach to rebuilding biodiversity (SWWT, 2005).

The literature informed my understanding of LSC throughout my research, but first it provided examples of two social construction approaches that I found instructive: discourse analysis (DA) and institutionalism. These approaches helped me unravel what LSC means, how Living Landscapes are governed, and to “observe how and to what extent discourses become institutionalised and affect social processes and outcomes” (Arts and Buizer, 2009:340). I understand that a discourse is a set of ideas and concepts that communicate and provide a frame for understanding a subject, whilst institutions are the formal and informal rules, and physical characteristics associated with that subject (Arts and Buizer, 2009; Greider and Garkovich, 1994). I find historical institutionalism (HI) useful because it fits in with the time scale associated with TWT, a historical perspective reveals how institutions change over time according to

circumstances and the people involved (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015). HI facilitates a sequential study of the movement and Living Landscapes, it includes processes that are self-reinforcing (i.e. path-dependency), and allows the study of the development of institutions such as TWT's vision for Living Landscapes (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002).

2.1.1. Political Context of the Review

This section provides an overview of the political context for LSC, which has global, European and national perspectives. This political context is important because it sets the national, regional and local conservation agendas for LSC.

One global viewpoint is collaborative management, which has evolved from site based conservation into LSC (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). I understand that this evolution began with discussions about the application of ecosystem services, which is a holistic and integrated approach to landscape management (Smith and Maltby, 2003; Shepherd, 2004; Shepherd, 2008). These discussions developed into studies on conservation governance (Lockwood, 2009; Lockwood, 2010; Lockwood et al., 2010). I will incorporate Lockwood's approach to governance into my research and discuss it later.

However, in Europe the terms landscape and ecosystem are "interchangeable", which is helpful and confusing (Shepherd, 2008:2). Another European perspective is legislative. There are four legal instruments that underpin the European political context. First, the Florence Convention, a non-binding Treaty, is about the environmental, cultural and social importance of landscapes (COE, 2000; Lock and Strong, 2010). In-fact, "the spirit of the European Landscape Convention encourages not only practitioners but also researchers to adopt a constructivist attitude towards landscapes" (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:124). The second European instrument is the Blueprint for Europescape 2020, which is a framework for monitoring EU member state's rural development policies (Wascher and Pedroli, 2008). The third and fourth instruments are the European Council's Birds and Habitats Directives, which are the backbone to safeguarding Europe's biodiversity through a network of protected areas called Natura 2000 (EC, 1992a; EC, 2009). In my research I do not attempt to interpret

the European context, because since Brexit⁴ it is under review (European Union Committee, 2017).

The current national political context begins with a government Discussion Paper (DP) that drew heavily on the Lawton Report, an independent review of England's network of wildlife sites (Defra, 2010; Lawton et al., 2010). The DP shapes "the future of our natural environment, and in so doing, help shape a brighter future for our economic prosperity and quality of life" (Defra, 2010:4). But the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) acknowledges that England does not have a:

... coherent and resilient ecological network ..., but that establishing one will both help to reverse the declines in our biodiversity and deliver many other benefits to society, such as soil protection, clean water, flood attenuation and carbon sequestration (Defra, 2010:9).

Defra stresses, borrowing from Lawton, the need for a restorative approach to establish a "coherent and resilient ecological network", that builds consensus and cooperation with land-managers and landowners (Defra, 2011b:9; Lawton et al., 2010:68). The Lawton report validates LSC by emphasising the need for improved and wider collaboration amongst statutory agencies, local communities and their municipal authorities, private and voluntary sectors, farmers, land managers and landowners, and individuals (Lawton et al., 2010:v). Defra endorses LSC as a means to secure the value of nature by protecting and improving the natural environment (Defra, 2011b:7).

The English legislative context is evolving with concerns over protecting the environment after Brexit, but the English conservation policy had already shifted from environmentalism to sustainability. This shift recognises the natural world as a creation of society's imagination and culture, which is indicative of mainstream thinking (O'Riordan, 1999:152). Thus nature is a product of, and reflects, society's beliefs and culture (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Mulkey, 2007). This is known as the Wapner paradigm where nature, the environment and humanity are interdependent (Wapner, 1995; Wapner, 2010:12, 17, 214 & 218).

⁴ Brexit, the process by which the UK will leave the EU, was initiated in 2016 following a referendum. It was formalized on 29th March 2017.

2.2. Theory of social construction

Here I introduce the broad ideas behind social construction, along with the main authors who have influenced my research. The literature helped me identify the central tenets of social construction, which I use to examine LSC and scrutinize TWT's approach to LSC governance. I follow Stål and Bonnedahl's approach to social construction that unlocks meaning from case studies by exploring the discursive activities of consultants who provided advice to farmers (2015). This helps me identify the meaning of LSC and its associated forms of governance, as different stakeholders, particularly TWT, articulate their understanding of LSC.

2.2.1. What is social construction?

Social construction is concerned with the “relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:16). Thus reality is socially constructed through processes that may be analysed through a “sociology of knowledge” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:13). This is an appropriate research methodology, because I could explore how LSC is understood through its physical (e.g. the informal institutions of size, boundaries, and contents etc.) and social characteristics (e.g. images, meanings, discourses and institutions) and how they are related and perceived (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:72 & 104).

Initially, I read about psychologists and psychotherapists who used the SC approach as they analyse everyday language to understand their clients (Danziger, 1997; Edley, 2001; Hanson et al., 2005; Maze, 2001; Ponterotto, 2005; Spector and Kitsuse, 1977; Stam, 2001). Later I learnt that the physical characteristics of LSC are socially constructed as informal institutions (Greider and Garkovich, 1994). These include maps, diagrams, rivers, streams, boundaries, forests, fields and cultural phenomena. The relationship between these informal institutions becomes socially important once they are articulated in discourses. I combine these institutions with post-structuralist discourse analysis to help me understand LSC, by which landscapes are constructed within a system of “cultural meaning, encoded in images, texts and discourses” (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:132 citing Wylie, 2007:94). Such landscapes acquire “conflicting meanings” from its discourses, (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:132). This became evident during my research.

Once I understood how SC might be applied to my research, I reviewed the rural sociology and cultural geography literature to determine how LSC might be interpreted (Schneider and Sidney, 2009). I identified the prevailing social constructs in the literature, which I supplemented with grey literature from the European Commission, Defra, Natural England, and TWT. My use of grey literature is in accord with current best practice (Conn et al., 2003; Bellefontaine and Lee, 2014).

The institutions and discourses of social construction frame my research, but what was social construction? I think of it as a spectrum of thought that might include an approach or position, a theory or movement, or a theoretical orientation, or a *mélange* of all these labels (Stam, 2001:294). To focus my research, I needed a critical perspective, a model to guide my enquiry and subsequent understanding the range and variety of LSC (Lock and Strong, 2010:8). One such model is a study of sustainable forestry that describes the role of institutions and the various forms of discourse (Arts and Buizer, 2009). Another is the contrasting case studies that identify multiple meanings for landscapes that distinguishes between formal and informal institutions, and “different systems of meaning” provided by post-structuralist discourse theory (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:135).

Five papers were particularly helpful to my understanding of social construction and its relevance to LSC: Arts and Buizer (2009), Berger and Luckmann (1967), Gailing and Leibenath (2015), Greider and Garkovich (1994), and Hajer (2005). In this section I outline why these papers are important.

Arts and Buizer in their study of sustainable forestry identify four perspectives on DA: communication (an exchange of views), text (words, their context and meaning), frame (shared frame of meaning) and social practice (how discourses and institutional arrangements are intertwined). Each of these perspectives is evident in my study of Living Landscapes. For example, in TWT’s texts the same words recur in explaining their vision for Living Landscapes. This leads to a shared frame of meaning amongst the movement, whilst individual Wildlife Trusts interpret the vision according to their own institutional arrangements. In my research, I use the perspectives of a shared frame and social practice to explain the meaning of Living Landscapes.

Arts and Buizer identify three discourses from an institutional perspective, which have resonance with my interest in LSC: biodiversity, sustainable management and private governance (Arts and Buizer, 2009:341). Their view, in line with Hajer's argumentative DA, is that discourses influence institutions and vice versa because "actions ... produce new texts, reconstitute discourses, re-institutionalize action" (Arts and Buizer, 2009:346; Hajer, 2005).

Berger and Luckmann were instructive because they identify typical actions performed by the same types of stakeholders that constitute a shared institution (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:72 & 154). Likewise, I identify shared LSC institutions, not just in terms of civil society but in the rules which they applied to the LSC.

Hajer argues that language generates signifiers (i.e. symbols and signs) that influence policy making and its institutions through metaphors and story lines. These illuminate the distinct features of a discourse, which is an assembly of categories, concepts and ideas that together form a set of practices that confer meaning upon "social and physical phenomena" (Hajer, 2005:300). Hajer stresses that "discourse is not synonymous with discussion" because it is "a set of concepts that structure the contributions of participants to a discussion" (2005:300 & 303). Hajer also talks about storylines, which are condensed narratives that use metaphors to identify "emblematic issues", which may indicate a "conceptual shift" (2005:308). These storylines are how participants and stakeholders convey meaning and impose "their view of reality on others, suggest social positions and practices, and criticise alternative social arrangements" (Hajer, 2005:304). I use these storylines to understand how TWT interprets LSC through its Living Landscape programmes. Similar storylines exist within the Living Landscape discourse and share institutional practices, as demonstrated in my five case studies that indicate a specific socio-historic context (Hajer, 2005:305 & 309).

These three papers are important because they provided me with initial examples of how LSC and the wildlife conservation process might be interpreted through its discourses and institutions. From this I learnt that LSC is a process that changes over time, whilst its institutions, for example governance and management, evolve. Finally, two papers by two pairs of authors influenced me: Greider and Garkovich, and Gailing and Leibenath.

My initial ideas about the physical characteristics of Living Landscapes was influenced by Greider and Garkovich (1994). They talk about symbolic landscapes whose various institutions give meaning to nature (Greider and Garkovich, 1994:1). Examples of these institutions include the natural features of a landscape (e.g. hedges, trees, streams, field boundaries etc.), their extent, and the cultural and historical buildings and artefacts in the landscape.

Latterly, Gailing and Leibenath (2015) became influential. Their theoretical framework of HI and DA helped me interpret my research, particularly the development of formal and informal institutions. They suggest that landscapes are imbued with physical phenomena, icons and significance, which are social construction institutions (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:123-4). These include administrative structures, social rules and regulations associated with core institutional documents (formal institutions) and informal institutions such as traditions, customs, routines and shared beliefs, practices, and perceptions predicated on past decisions (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:126).

They adopt a post structuralist approach to DA and their social construction research, where language, meaning and relationships, the social and political practices, are important (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:125-127). Further, building on Hajer's ideas on discourses they stress that a discourse is a statement about social truths "rather than objective facts about reality" (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:128). However, discourses are temporary structures, changing over time, reflecting relationships between subject and object, practices and words, and they are "neither discussions or conversations, nor opinions" (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:127).

Gailing and Leibenath have compared institutionalism and discourse approaches, referring to dynamics and change, power and structure and agency within landscapes (2015:127-8). They stress the resilience of institutions and that discourses change gradually. Further, they stress that the range of landscape institutions includes symbolic icons, images or symbols and the toponyms, as well as rules and procedures (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:129).

All these authors helped me understand LSC, and the relationship between institutions and discourses is reflected in the range of perspectives and the shared language emerging from my research. I refer to these authors in my analysis and conclusions. But first I introduce others who have influenced me.

2.2.2. LSC discourses

Table 2 shows the range of discourse that emerged from the literature that may be seen in LSC. I identified the leading proponents for each discourse along with examples of its constituent elements. I have grouped the discourses together and listed them alphabetically for easy reference. My rationale for this is that discourses often overlap, merge or combine (Arts and Buizer, 2009:341).

For example, points of interest associated with the conservation discourse include conflicts over land-use, protection of rare species, provision of ecosystem products and services. Some of these are elements in my analysis. However, there are other discourses and storylines pertinent to my analysis: for example, the ecosystem services discourse has different storylines during times of stress following, flood, draught, or fire.

The conservation discourse includes elements of other discourses (e.g. environmental management, landscape and countryside, nature, and sustainable development), all of which are relevant to LSC (Arts and Buizer, 2009; Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013; Case et al., 2015; Eagles et al., 2013; Elands and Wiersum, 2001; Gerber, 1997a; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Owen, 1995; Sandberg, 2007). These discourses contribute to the symbiotic relationship between nature that is “culturally and socially constructed”, the environment (nature’s home) and people (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:30). The concepts of public goods and services, which is part of ecosystems and the socio-economic discourse (SED) are also part of the LSC agenda. SED, also known as integrated conservation and development, has elements of the sustainable development and resource management discourses mentioned above (Sandberg, 2007; Berger and Luckmann, 1966). SED includes community engagement, education and partnership discourses that contribute to understanding LSC (Ginn and Demeritt, 2008; Purdon, 2003). Therefore, the social economic discourse seeks to mainstream nature conservation, embedding it into the need for education, health and well-being and the collaborative decision making processes at different levels of society (Cowling et al., 2006; Aronson et al., 2006).

Table 2 LSC discourses by author and element

Constituent Discourse	Author	Elements
Environment	Gerber (1997a)	Nature as an abstract concept, ecosystem management paradigm,

Constituent Discourse	Author	Elements
		nature-society dualism
	Arts and Buizer (2009)	New discourses in forestry management: biodiversity and sustainable development
	Owen (1995)	Institutional arrangements that govern the rights over resources, biodiversity governance, adaptive ecosystem management
Governance	Sandberg (2007)	Administrative, economic & political spheres, with interactions that determine the exercise of power and responsibilities. The who, why and how of decision making should incorporate social and ecological issues
	Arts and Buizer (2009)	Institutionalization of governance due to policy change and innovation.
	Ginn and Demeritt (2008)	Institutions are manmade constructions that regulate relations between people and resources. Ecosystem management should cross all levels of governance – but can be trusted to do this?
Institutions	Eagles et al. (2013)	Institutions imply historicity, control and habituation that develop over time
	Arts and Buizer (2009)	Institutionalization change as a result of policy change and innovation
	Owen (1995)	Institutional arrangements that govern property rights and the rights over resources, biodiversity governance, adaptive ecosystem management
Integrated conservation and development	Sandberg (2007)	Environmental leadership, balancing and reconciliation of divergent sets of societal objectives and motives that are often in tension. Two key results: biodiversity protection and improved social wellbeing. New governance arrangements:
	Berger and Luckmann (1966)	Human society is dependent upon ecosystem services – more species is better than fewer
Landscapes and countryside	Case et al. (2015)	Dominance of extraction government sectors – ecologies of resource extraction
	Sandberg (2007)	Shift from a productive, utilitarian perception to a post-productive, non-utilitarian perception; increasing public demand to collaborate in landscape planning results in participatory planning as a productive mechanism for engaging with communities – collaboration with community consultation, stakeholder ‘willingness to participate’ but ‘consensus in principle; conflict in practice’
	Macnaghten and Urry (1998: 74 & 167)	The countryside as a dwelling, place and identity, whereas a landscape is a “record of ... past lives and work” with overtones of leisure, relaxation and a visual consumption of the countryside.
Leadership	Sandberg (2007)	Leadership is key to tackling the crisis of governance afflicting natural systems, but what is its purpose. Traits include: vision, charisma, strength, commitment, and reputation. Leadership in

Constituent Discourse	Author	Elements
		either maintenance of existing governance regimes or in the emergence of new approaches.
	Collier and Scott (2010)	Leadership made up of personal traits (who), their position (where), processes employed (how) and results achieved (what).
Management	Case et al. (2015)	4 simplified models: (1) government protected areas; (2) co-managed protected areas; (3) private protected areas; and (4) community conserved areas.
	Grint (2005)	Owners right to modify surrounding ecosystem – vested interests – consider common property analogy depends upon nature of the goods ...
Nature	Borrini-Feyerabend et al. (2013)	This is a postmodernist approach, despite its use by “defenders of empiricism, positivism or critical realism”. There is an ontological difference between nature and society, thus distinguishing epistemologically between an objective scientific knowledge and a subjective understanding of the social world.
	Macnaghten and Urry (1998:30)	Social practices and the cultural understanding of nature, where nature is “culturally and socially constructed”
	Elands and Wiersum (2001)	Nature conservation is identified as an objective of rural development with intrinsic values
	Eagles et al. (2013)	Ecosystem management may perpetuate the tension between nature and society, humans and the environment, especially as nature is artificial concept, social construct. Importance of communication: vulgarization of issues in layman’s terms that results in consensus building.
Policy	Macnaghten and Urry (1998:73)	A political discourse “afforded by the language of sustainability” and partnerships
Power	Demeritt (2002:768 & 777)	Power marginalizes certain groups restricting local involvement in nature management. Also power is an evitable aspect of any social construction.
	Gerber (1997b)	Knowledge and power are intractably linked, but power “represses nature, the instincts, a class individuals”.
Socio-economic	Ginn and Demeritt (2008)	Governance phase (main streaming in business and government policies) and normalization (socialization – new issue champions, e.g. school-based initiatives and citizen science). System-oriented approaches to conservation are becoming targeted but don’t keep up with biodiversity loss; these approaches include ecosystem stewardship, local initiatives around common-property, payment for ecosystem services, and restoration. Biodiversity protection needs to be integrated into provisions for global governance that include both legislative regulations and market incentives that accommodate ecological systems whilst balancing conflicting land-use demands.

Constituent Discourse	Author	Elements
	Purdon (2003)	Ecosystem services are public goods modified / influenced by human activity fall into four categories: private (exclusive and subtractible), club (jointly enjoyed service with exclusions of some users), common-pool (exclusion costly, interdependent users) and public (joint use and no exclusions).
Sustainable development	Macnaghten and Urry (1998:214-5)	Management of the environment is assumed within the concept of sustainable development, where performance indicators aid communication and evaluation of impact.

Environmental governance is part of a complex political discourse (Demeritt, 2002; Gerber, 1997a; Sandberg, 2007; Collier and Scott, 2010; Case et al., 2015; Grint, 2005; Owen, 1995). To help me understand LSC, I interpret the governance discourse to include aspects of institutions, leadership, management and partnerships (Arts and Buizer, 2009; Ginn and Demeritt, 2008; Sandberg, 2007; Case et al., 2015; Grint, 2005; Owen, 1995; Macnaghten and Urry, 1999). Of these, partnerships need consideration as they are a recurring institution in Living Landscapes.

Partnerships are both informal (e.g. a non-legal agreement) and formal (e.g. legal agreement) institutions and have been central to environmental activities since the end of the last century when they were used to resolve environmental conflicts (Merchant, 1999). Merchant considers that partnerships deal with “human and social processes” and “natural entities and processes”; thus, they are a new approach to collaboration, “in which non-human nature itself can be a partner” (1999:205). This suggests Living Landscapes are partnerships between humankind and the natural environment.

I am interested in the role of institutions such as partnerships because they regulate and control the relationship between people and resources, representing the role of power in relationships. But they also are the rules and the procedures that are central to governance and management.

Governance is the intersection between the administrative, economic and political spheres where the influence of power and responsibility in the framing of discourses is noticeable (Arts and Buizer, 2009:346). These institutions have administrative and physical elements, which along with their associated stakeholders with their different objectives and purposes operationalize LSC. In the same manner, LSC governance is constructed according to its various

stakeholders and their levels of collaboration that leads to agreed objectives (Wapner, 1995; Wapner, 2010:12, 17, 214 & 218; Collier and Scott, 2010:304).

2.2.3. How is Social Construction relevant to LSC?

My inherent positivist tendency is to produce “a full account of methods, evidence, justifications, claims and beliefs” (Owen, 1995:7). However, in this research I adopt a relativistic position that distinguishes between epistemological relativism, where “we can never know reality exactly as it is”, i.e. how I acquire knowledge about LSC, and ontological relativism, where I assume that “reality itself is determined by the observer” (Svarstad et al., 2008:118; citing Jones, 2002). Thus, LSC is a social construct whose features have no inherent value, except where value is attributed through discourse, people’s various understanding of LSC. Their perception of LSC, and any discourse, is associated with its institutions, actions, behaviours, policies and rules. The parity between each LSC discourse is contested and may not be as self-evident as stakeholders suppose.

Whilst the discourses I refer to may be conceptual, social construction deals with entities, which Edley refers to as “objects and phenomena” (2001:433). This is reassuring because examples of objects associated with LSC are tangible institutions, for example: agricultural field boundaries of hedges, ditches and stone walls. Its phenomena, informal institutions, include landscape features such as buildings, nature reserves, geological features and other landscape features like woods, ponds and streams.

There are administrative and social phenomena and institutions that govern LSC. These include committees, working parties, land management solutions and oversight mechanisms. Although an appreciation of LSC’s physical phenomena is important, the “communicative processes” that create or construct, reproduce and transform the social phenomena of discourses contribute to my understanding of LSC (Svarstad et al., 2008:118). LSC is a product of at least three discourses: conservation, governance and SED. It is both its subject and result whose phenomena divide up and anchor the landscape in its agricultural, cultural and industrial heritage. Thus disused, repurposed or ruined buildings, and other legacies of an industrial heritage, are phenomena that may be iconic within the landscape. Such discourses, phenomena and institutions are

contested because they are perceived differently. These contested areas reflect cultural and community preferences and interpretations, as well as political and social divides.

My knowledge of LSC comes from an examination of the interaction between stakeholders and the resultant institutions and discourses. These stakeholders include government agencies, administrative bodies and civil society at international, national regional and local levels who produce communicative processes, including policies, position papers, strategies and other documents and texts (Svarstad et al., 2008:188-189). The LSC discourses in my research include nature conservation and protection, governance, education, engagement, and research, as well as tourism, food production, and other ecosystem services⁵. I interpret these institutions and discourses to produce knowledge about LSC. My interpretation relies upon understanding the phenomena and institutions that are produced, reproduced or transformed over time by the engagement between LSC's various stakeholders who interpret these discourses differently.

In summary, paraphrasing Edley, the social construction of LSC is relevant because it is about the relationship between a physical location, for example a Living Landscape scheme, and its representation on a map or diagram (Edley, 2001:440). The map, as an institution and value-laden image and discourse, depicts the geographical position of the scheme and its constituent features (Harley, 1988:278). The scheme exists not because it is on a map or diagram, or that it can be visited, but because it is conceived and then designed around a feature such as a SSSI⁶ or a nature reserve⁷. The scheme is delimited by boundaries declared in documentation and agreements that describe it following negotiation and agreement between stakeholders. Therefore, LSC and Living Landscapes exist in a material sense and because they have been socially constructed and documented. They are a product of society. Similarly, the

⁵ Ecosystem services include provisioning services (e.g. food & water); regulating services (e.g. flood & disease control); cultural services (e.g. spiritual, recreational & cultural benefits); and supporting services (e.g. nutrient cycling that maintain life) Watson and Albon, 2011:84.

⁶ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected areas declared by Natural England.

⁷ Nature reserves may be established by conservation organisations such as a Wildlife Trust, or central and local authorities.

range of these schemes reflect constituent discourses that have brought them into existence. The language used in discourses reflects the individuals, communities and agencies involved, along with their qualities, processes, metaphors, events, concepts and categories they use in describing them (Gerber, 1997b:6). Therefore, more than one discourse is pertinent; I interpret them as a means to understanding and creating knowledge about LSC and Living Landscapes.

2.2.4. Applying social construction to LSC

Social construction has been used to understand the environment, landscape and nature for some time (Berkes, 2002; Case et al., 2015; Collier and Scott, 2010; Demeritt, 2002; Cosgrove, 1984; Eagles et al., 2013; Escobar, 1996; Froger and Meral, 2012; Gailing and Leibenath, 2015; Gerber, 1997a; Ginn and Demeritt, 2008; Hill et al., 2013). In this section I examine how social construction has been applied to ecosystem services in the forestry sector, and consider how I can apply it to Living Landscapes. But there is little research about TWT and its contribution to nature conservation (Dwyer, 1990). However, recently there have been reviews of LSC and the contribution from civil society (Adams et al., 2014; Adams et al., 2016; Ellis et al., 2010; Ellis et al., 2012; Elliott et al., 2011; Macgregor et al., 2012; Macgregor, 2015).

Therefore, as suggested by Bryman (2008:499-508), I use material from TWT and my interviews with Living Landscape stakeholders to examine the LSC institutions and discourses by interpreting the language used in text and speech. Thus, a landscape may be understood in terms of its constituent features, informal institutions, and how it is managed through more formal institutions. In this respect, I draw on the work of both Greider and Garkovich (1994), and Gailing and Leibenath (2015) in understanding the range of Living landscape institutions. I also found the contested concept of nature helpful, because it “means different things to different people in different places” (Ginn and Demeritt, 2008:300). I applied this to explore the contested concepts of LSC through the institutions and discourses of Living Landscapes and TWT.

In the literature, DA has been used extensively in the forestry sector (Arts and Buizer, 2009; Elands and Wiersum, 2001; Pistorius et al., 2012; Purdon, 2003). Discourses describe the physical and social environment thus revealing how

people explain, interpret, understand and articulate what they experience - how they construct their experience and communicate their representation of it (Potter, 1996). I use concepts within discourses to characterise LSC, for example conserving species and habitats are concepts within the nature conservation discourse, which I consider is both a goal and an ecological tool (Elands and Wiersum, 2001).

Purdon demonstrates a conceptual link between social construction and LSC, which I found instructive. He applied environmental discourses to deconstruct the dualism between nature and society, using a case study approach to ecosystem forestry management (Purdon, 2003:377). This is important because it recognizes what Demeritt calls the influence over, and authority of, “humans to shape nature” (2002:785). The way people debate, shape and govern nature is informative because it can be applied to LSC. This shaping occurs through notions and concepts associated with its governance and management. Purdon calls this vulgarisation (Purdon, 2003:382). Vulgarisation renders complex scientific language in laymen’s terms, thus LSC is socially constructed as it is explained and practised.

The ecosystems services approach to conservation emphasises stakeholder cooperation in land management especially at the landscape scale (Purdon, 2003; Goldman et al., 2007; Goldman and Tallis, 2009; Goldman, 2010; Reyers et al., 2012; Westhoek et al., 2013). For Purdon, the management of ecosystem services is a paradigm that establishes order, whilst others see it as a discourse that conserves biodiversity by limiting human impact through objective management criteria that emulates nature (Messier and Kneeshaw, 1999:933; Purdon, 2003:377-378 & 380). Purdon identifies a paradox within the ecosystem management discourse: humans are both part of nature (and landscapes) and seek to manipulate / manage it (them). This is resolved by considering ecosystems as a resource to be used and consumed, particularly if communities are involved in their sustainable management (Purdon, 2003:379). However, this approach may not be acceptable to some conservationists because of its technocratic associations with environmental management. But the concept of ecosystem services is a useful paradigm because it can be assigned landscape attributes and characteristics that help define LSC.

Social construction is an appropriate approach to my research because it permits the examination of different views and discourses on LSC. These views are held by its stakeholders (e.g. organisations, farmers, landowners and individuals). The variety of LSC schemes allows me to identify its institutions and how they contribute to knowledge about LSC. In the next section I consider the concept of conservation and its relationship to LSC, and the role of TWT within it.

2.3. Nature conservation and LSC in England

In previous sections I examined how social construction might help me understand LSC. I understand that landscapes, scale and conservation are socially constructed and together reflect a social and political conservation. Nature, and hence the natural environment and landscapes, are contested and mean different things to different people (Ginn and Demeritt, 2008). But LSC is a common-sense approach to nature conservation where there is a consensus about what it means, who is involved, what are its objectives and how it might be governed. In this section I provide a short history of nature conservation in England, provide some definitions, before examining what LSC is, why it is needed and how it is interpreted by TWT.

2.3.1. Definition of conservation in England

In England, the agricultural enclosures movement of the 18th and 19th centuries changed the rural landscape. Also in the 19th Century, the disappearance of species and landscapes as a result of industrialisation led to the emergence of the conservation movement (Jongman, 1995; Stolton and Dudley, 2010). Then after World War II, the scientific influence upon conservation accelerated; nevertheless, approaches to conservation appear to be a personal conviction rather than a scientific necessity (Evans, 1997:4). Thus to some conservation is a romantic concept brought about by scientific advances in understanding the natural world, and the abhorrence at the loss of some wild species (Holdgate, 1999:1). But to others the forces exerted on wildlife and their space in the landscape derive from increasing population and the demand for access to the countryside and the exploitation of resources. However, it was not until the Dower and Hobhouse Reports and subsequent legislation⁸ that the first National

⁸ National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Park was established (Hobhouse, 1947; Dower, 1945). This legislation protected large swathes of land, but afforded nature limited protection from development, and left agriculture unregulated. But it highlighted the need for protection for smaller sites that came known as SSSIs and county or regional Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (HMG, 1981).

Towards the end of the 20th Century nature conservation began to focus on landscape ecology as means to conserving species and habitats. This developed from island biogeography theory, which explains diversity as species developing and then dispersing to suitable habitats (Jongman, 1995:171; MacArthur and Wilson, 1963). In the case of the UK, a large island close to the mainland attracts many species because of the variety of habitats, which develop stable populations. It is these populations that are threatened (Lawton et al., 2010). Therefore, the concept of conservation balances preservation, protection and reservation with elements of the aesthetic, socio-economic and scientific. I find Evans' working definition of conservation useful because it:

- a) Keeps things as they are (preservation),
- b) Keeps human interference at a minimum (protection), and
- c) Provides sanctuaries, reserves or refuges for wildlife and their habitats (reservation) (Evans, 1997:8).

This is reflected in the IUCN definition of protected areas that is summarised in Table 3 (Evans, 1997:8; Dudley, 2008). More recently, the IUCN defines conservation as:

... the in-situ maintenance of ecosystems, natural and semi-natural habitats and viable populations of species in their natural surroundings and, in the case of domesticated or cultivated species, in the areas where they developed their distinctive properties. (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013:7)

Table 3 IUCN protected area categories

IUCN Protected area category	Description	Definition	Primary objective
1a – Strict nature reserve	Important sites that conserve ecosystems, species and geodiversity for scientific research, environmental	These reference areas are set aside to protect their key features, where human access is strictly controlled.	Conserve outstanding naturally formed global, national, regional ecosystems, species and/or geodiversity

IUCN Protected area category	Description	Definition	Primary objective
	monitoring and education.		features.
Ib - Wilderness area	These areas are relatively untouched ecosystems providing opportunities for evolution to continue and species survive.	These are large unmodified or slightly modified areas retaining their natural character, without significant human habitation, which are protected and managed to preserve their condition.	Protect long-term ecological integrity, free from modern infrastructure so allowing natural forces and processes to predominate, for the benefit of current and future generations.
II - National park	These larger natural areas allow natural ecological processes to continue, so conserving natural scenery and landscapes along with their cultural features; hence they include a range of tourist services and facilities.	These areas protect large-scale ecological processes and characteristic ecosystems. They provide a focus and opportunity for environmental and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific educational and recreational activities.	Protect natural biodiversity for the benefit of education and recreation, along with the underlying ecological and environmental structures and processes.
III - Natural monument or feature	These small areas of natural features and ecosystems, which may have cultural associations.	These areas protect designated natural monuments, which may have high visitor value.	Protect these outstanding features with their associated biodiversity and habitats.
IV - Habitat / species management area	These areas protect species that are of international, national or local importance, along with their habitats. They may be fragments of ecosystems that require active management.	The management of these areas is designed to protect particular species or habitats; they may require regular active interventions to sustain these species of habitats.	Maintain, conserve and restore these species and habitats.
V - Protected landscape / seascape	These areas have a distinctive quality, including important flora and fauna and cultural features. There is a balanced interaction between humans and nature as part of a	The landscape has been produced over a period of time by the interaction between nature and people. It has a distinct character with significant environmental and	Protect and sustain important land and sea scapes, along with their associated conservation and cultural values that have been created and sustained by human interventions and

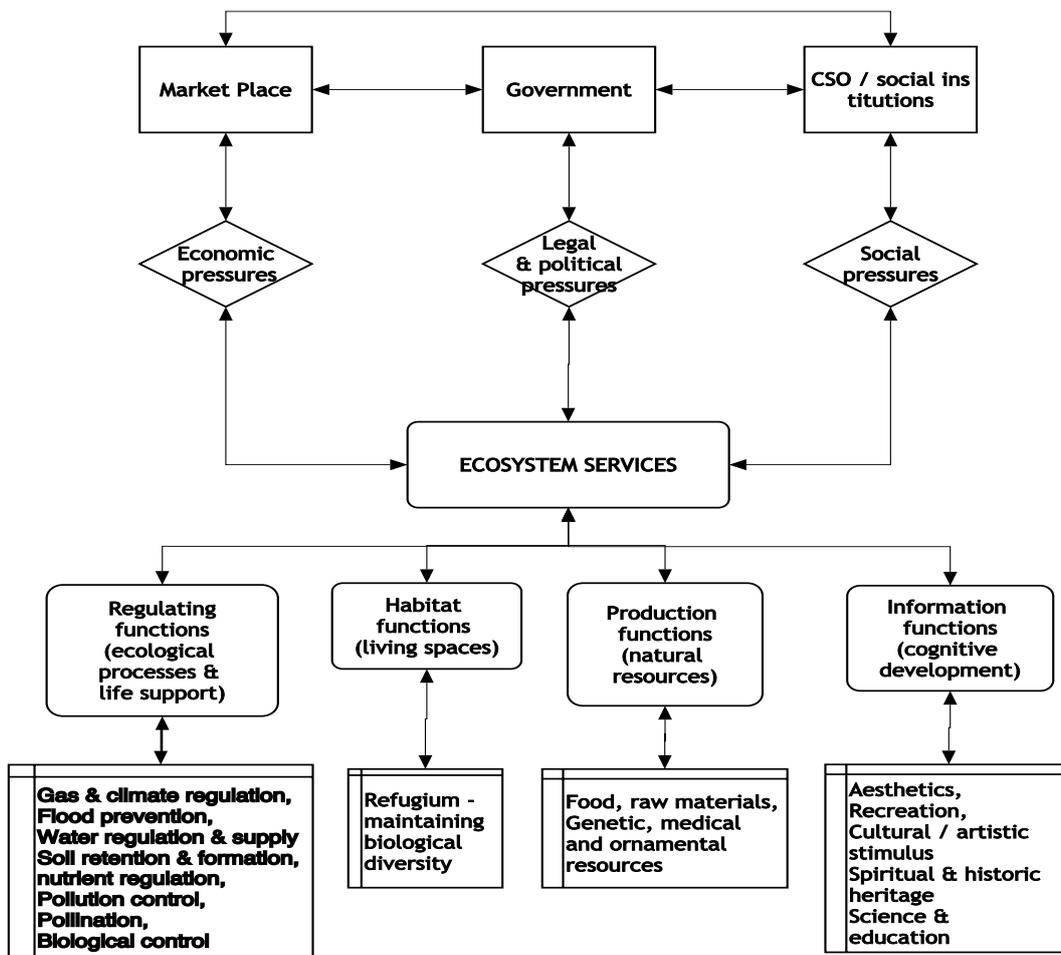
IUCN Protected area category	Description	Definition	Primary objective
	mosaic of conservation land or sea.	cultural values that are safeguarded to protect the area.	management practices.
VI – Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	These areas may be constituents of larger conservation initiatives with the sustainable use of natural resources with conservation objectives, but does not include industrial scale harvesting.	These areas conserve ecosystems and habitats, along with their cultural assets and values within a traditional natural resource management scheme, which is a key aim. A large proportion of the area is kept in its natural condition.	Protect natural ecosystems and use natural resources sustainably in a mutually beneficial manner.
Source: Table adapted from IUCN guidance (Foucaut, 1980:90). It draws on early work by Nigel Dudley (Hill et al., 2013:41 & 42)			

Within LSC the notions of conservation, governance and landscapes interact and are not confined to a single interpretation. Therefore, several LSC perspectives may be held at any one time. But there are inherent tensions, particularly about the human dominance of nature, which I understand as:

... relational or interactive, [because scientists do not just observe, but] ... participate in, reflect upon, and enact the social in a wide range of [situations] (Law and Urry, 2004:392).

There are interactions within LSC create tensions, where its association with ecosystems products and services compete with conservation that concentrates on protecting nature in dedicated reserves (Le Coeur et al., 2002:23 citing; Franklin, 1993:202). To resolve these tensions, Le Coeur and his colleagues note that nature is not confined by human boundaries, although field-boundaries are useful habitat corridors that divide parcels of land.

Figure 1 Ecosystem services: pressures and functions



Sources: Chart developed by this author drawing on original work by Juda (2001), Groot et al. (2002), and Haines-Young et al. (2006)

There is also a tension within the spectrum of conservation views due to cultural perspectives (Jackson, 1984; Beus and Dunlap, 1990). For example, one position is that site-based conservation protects nature in dedicated reserves and preserves specific endangered species. However, this approach neither safeguards biodiversity, nor is holistic (Franklin, 1993; Le Coeur et al., 2002). In contrast, LSC uses field-boundaries as habitat corridors, which builds up a mosaic of fields connected along their boundaries. This has the potential to deliver ecosystem services as agricultural practices shift from protection to management to preserve ecosystems and be more holistic by setting objectives for landscape scale units or individual farms (Le Coeur et al., 2002:37).

There are further tensions between economic efficiencies of large scale agricultural practices and the restoration of traditional field boundary hedges and ditches, which may be resolved by developing partnerships (Le Coeur et al., 2002:23-24; Jackson et al., 2007:25). Such collaboration represents a stakeholder journey where they become involved in conservation with an initial focus on economic returns (e.g. autocratic and technocratic land management) before they interact with other stakeholders and become collaborative (Jackson et al., 2007:205; Mullner et al., 2001).

Collaboration, a form of stakeholder adaptive governance, is a mechanism for managing crisis and periods of change within "social-ecological systems" (Folke, 2005:441). Collaboration requires strong leadership, which may be an opportunity for civil society to become bridging institutions between stakeholders in response to the fragmentation, degradation and destruction of habitats and ecosystems (Haila, 2002). The concept of bridging organisations is important, because it is a link between funders, officials and land managers (Gorg, 2007). TWT and other organisations⁹ may facilitate this link between farmers and landowners and the vertical bureaucracy of government and its agencies¹⁰ that administer grant schemes and so become bridging organisations. This link between agriculture and conservation is taken up by Professor Lawton who led the review of England's protected areas. Lawton establishes the need for nature conservation with ecosystem services at its heart and provides the scientific and cultural basis for LSC. His approach involves large-scale habitat recreation and restoration leading to a resilient and coherent ecological network (2010:ii, v, & viii).

This collaboration is reminiscent of Aldo Leopold's suggestion that husbandry is the art of management applied at a landscape scale (1949:175). And it is thought that collaboration, when part of environmental management, builds consensus between stakeholders and the public (Margerum, 2008:487). Thus, it has the potential to become a keystone paradigm for the 21st Century. However, the collaboration relationship is complex because a number of obstacles interfere with it (Frame et al., 2004:59 & 75). Such obstacles include

⁹ E.g. FWAG, RSPB and NT

¹⁰ Including the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE), Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

hijacking of objectives by government agencies, exclusion of the public and communities, and stakeholders not being representative. But it has been pointed out that several success factors, including common interests, commitment to outcomes, off-setting and trade-offs and framing, and lower transaction costs exist (Bruce, 2003).

In conclusion, as Selman and Knight have observed, conservation is about landscape scale processes rather than reserve management, where the necessary governance framework relies "heavily on incentives, advice and goodwill" and is a good basis for collaboration (2006:5). But such an holistic perspective to landscape research for current and prospective generations is vigorous, appealing and productive and appeals to a wide range of stakeholders for current and prospective generation (Naveh, 2000:24; Naveh, 2005:228).

2.3.2. What is LSC?

The previous sections have laid the foundation for understanding the social aspects of LSC by setting out what conservation entails. Here I consider the scientific and political basis for LSC. The former has evolved from an appreciation of island biogeography or equilibrium theory (Dudley, 2008). Whilst the latter has been influenced by the European Union (EU) and the Green Revolution that transformed agriculture with the aid of government and EU grants (Bird, 1987; Tivy, 1990).

Island biogeography calls for large refuges for nature and the dispersal of species within them, this developed from a species based theory into landscape ecology and ecosystems ecology that now includes LSC (MacArthur and Wilson, 1963; Diamond et al., 1976; Simberloff and Abele, 1976; Jongman, 1995; Brown and Lomolino, 2000; Haila, 2002; Whittaker et al., 2008). Traditionally, nature conservation has focused on single issues influenced by a steady-state view of nature, which is gradual and incremental and disregards the influence of integrated ecosystems (Folke et al., 2005). Professor Folke proposes that integrated ecosystems should be central to LSC; his research conceptualises sociological-ecological-economic systems and examines ways in which they might be governed (SRC, 2016). His approach seeks to resolve the tension between single site reserves and the landscape approach by embedding single site reserves (i.e. SSSIs and nature reserves in England) into their landscape as part

of a mosaic of natural habitats, as in LSC. This approach recognises that nature is not confined by man-made boundaries.

An example of this type of resolution is provided by BC, where within the landscape of refined agricultural management practices, field-boundaries are being rehabilitated to become habitat corridors as a mechanism for LSC (Ellis et al., 2012). BC's approach uses integrated ecosystems in the landscape as a form of ecosystem management that encourages collaboration between conservation organisations (Ellis et al., 2010; Ellis et al., 2012; Fox et al., 2015).

The EU, which is seen by some to be a post-World War II protectionist regimen with price and market regulation designed to promote a development paradigm within the "productive agricultural sector" (Coleman, 1998:633). Successive EU reforms have refined this position through a double paradigm shift, so that commercial agriculture must fend for itself. The post-war agriculture developmental paradigm promoted the "farmer as producer" that evolved first into a liberal market paradigm with the farmer seen as an entrepreneur, then into the notion of "the farmer as protector and gardener of rural landscapes" (Coleman, 1998:644). LSC has been adopted across Europe in the form of the European Landscape Convention¹¹, where the interaction between human and natural forces produces cultural landscapes (COE, 2000). Then, borrowing from the landscape management discourse of the European Council of Ministers (ECM), LSC is defined as the management of a landscape, taking into account its historic, cultural and environmental heritage, for sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits (ECM, 2008). The ECM defines landscape scale management as the:

... action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes (ECM, 2008:5).

This definition embodies agri-environment and conservation actions and appeals to many European Countries. The ECM's definition of landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character" has evolved through "natural and/or human" actions has wide resonance and is becoming prevalent worldwide, whilst

¹¹ As of 9th August 2010, only 9 countries of the 47 countries in Europe have not ratified the Convention and 7 have not signed it.

encouraging constructionist research (Goldman and Tallis, 2009). For example, Defra commissioned research into LSC to monitor its progress (Elliott et al., 2011; Eigenbrod et al., 2016). Nevertheless, there is no single definition of landscape scale, because it:

... covers a large spatial scale, ... a range of ecosystem processes, conservation objectives and land uses. The 'right scale' might need to take account of the particular interest of those involved locally, aesthetic or cultural characteristics, natural features such as river catchment areas or particular habitats, or recognised areas such as the 159 National Character Areas (NCA). (Defra, 2011b:18)

These NCAs describe the rich and varied landscapes in England (NE, 2007; NE, 2008). The English landscape is complex because of the large range of habitats and species within comparatively small ecosystems¹². Lawton points out order is imposed by ecological networks, and the landscape designations of National Parks and AONBs (Lawton et al., 2010:vii, 3 & 80). Here the National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) classification is a helpful starting point to understanding LSC because it simplifies the complexity (Jackson, 2000; Carey et al., 2008; Watson and Albon, 2011:14). The NEA broad habitat types are summarised in Table 4. The NEA is a holistic approach based upon the building blocks of English landscapes: farmland, woodlands and mountains and shorelines and estuaries. It has an integrated strategy that progresses from species level conservation to an ecosystem approach through to sustainable habitat management at a landscape scale (Hartje et al., 2003). I use this NEA framework to provide a typology of Living Landscapes (chapter 5). However, such a typology does not represent the human side of LSC. To do this a LSC discourse is required. This is reflected in the IUCN definition of a protected landscape:

... where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic values, and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values (Worboys et al., 2015:19; citing Dudley, 2008:20).

Thus, LSC embraces both the abiotic (the non-living component of the environment) and biotic (living component) elements of the environment; elements that have been fashioned by social and cultural forces acting across

¹² The Joint Nature Conservation Committee identifies 65 priority habitats and 1,150 species (UK Biodiversity Action Plan, source: www.jncc.defra.gov.uk, accessed 7th October 2015).

large contiguous geographic areas of land (Brown et al., 2005; Gorg, 2007; Jaquez and Negra, 2005). Therefore, the landscape scale concept integrates culture and nature with new types of social linkages and partnerships for both conservation and governance (Laven et al., 2005). As such, LSC reflects the different worldviews of conservation held by their partners and stakeholders.

In summary, the English landscape is influenced by agricultural practices, it has seen changes that are reflected in large fields where traditional biotopes such hedgerows, ditches and coppices have been removed to improve efficiency and economy (Le Coeur et al., 2002). It is a mosaic of agricultural landscapes that provide both agricultural and environmental goods and services (Jackson et al., 2007). Today, it is this fragile web of biotopes that are cherished by conservationists. To mitigate this fragility, agri-environment schemes and landscape scale initiatives seek to reconnect these biotopes and recreate landscapes that enhance biodiversity and buffer the effects of climate change, whilst restoring the connections to local communities, businesses and visitors (Ellis et al., 2012; SWBP, 2003; TWT, 2007).

Table 4 UK NEA broad habitat types

Broad ecosystem habitat	UK NEA habitat components / phenomena	Priority habitats in the UK biodiversity action plan
Mountains, moorlands & heaths	Bracken, dwarf shrub heath, upland fen, marsh & swamp, bog, montane & inland rock	Lowland & upland heathland, upland flushes, fens & swamps, blanket bog, mountain heaths & willow scrub, inland rock outcrop, scree habitats & limestone pavements
Semi-natural grasslands	Neutral grassland, acid grassland, calcareous grassland, fen, marsh & swamp	Lowland & upland hay meadows, lowland dry acid grasslands, lowland & upland calcareous grassland, purple moor grass & rush pastures
Enclosed farmland	Arable & horticultural, improved grassland, boundary & linear features	Arable field margins, coastal & floodplain grazing marsh, hedgerows
Woodlands	Broadleaved, mixed & yew woodland, coniferous woodland	Lowland beech, yew & mixed deciduous woodland, upland oak, birch & mixed ash woods, native pinewoods
Freshwaters (open waters, wetlands & floodplains)	Standing open waters & canals, rivers & streams, bog, fen marsh & swamp	Mesotrophic, oligotrophic & dystrophic lakes, eutrophic standing waters, aquifer fed naturally fluctuating water bodies, ponds, rivers, lowland raised bogs, lowland fens & reed-beds

Broad ecosystem habitat	UK NEA habitat components / phenomena	Priority habitats in the UK biodiversity action plan
Urban	Built up areas & gardens	Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land
Coastal margins	Sand dunes, machair, shingle, sea cliffs, saltmarsh, coastal lagoons	
Marine	Intertidal rock & sediments, subtidal rock, shallow & shelf subtidal sediments, deep-sea habitats	

Source: Adapted from table 2.1 in Chapter 2 section 2.3 of the UK NEA conceptual framework and methodology (Watson and Albon, 2011:14)

2.3.3. Why is LSC needed?

It has been suggested that LSC establishes connections across the landscape, whilst maintaining ecosystems, habitats, and species (Lindenmayer et al., 2008). However, although landscapes change in response to societies' needs this may result in the loss of diversification, character and identity, in terms of biodiversity, ecology and culture. Such changes in biodiversity are driven by agricultural management and climate change (Burns et al, 2016). In response landscapes may be protected according to their use and value (Antrop, 2005). Hence, Lawton justifies LSC as a response to the inadequate network of protected areas across England, which has failed to prevent the decline of many species of flora and fauna (Lawton et al., 2010). The reasons for this decline are that there is not enough space, some habitats are too small to sustain populations of some species and others are poorly managed, if it all, and finally many of the surviving sites are isolated, cut off from similar habitats that might allow populations of the endangered species to proliferate (Clarke et al., 2001). One solution is to create a network that is not only connected or joined up but larger, leading to better ecological landscapes (Lawton et al., 2010; Soliveres et al., 2016).

LSC integrates benefits from sustainable land-use with the conservation of natural resources (Hartje et al., 2003). It has been shown through multiple scale studies and interviews that the mosaics of rural landscapes have resulted from refined agricultural management practices where connectivity is important (Le Coeur et al., 2002). This connectivity is an essential component of LSC because

it balances the needs of nature and society. For example, in England the landscape is a product of agricultural practices that contribute to conservation through the shift from protection of habitats and species to management and preservation of ecosystems. LSC is important because it relies upon informal partnerships and networks to support government agencies and land managers in achieving conservation and ecological targets that have been decided locally but contribute to national objectives. In recognition of this Defra advocates an integrated partnership approach to LSC that combines various social stakeholders and actions to govern, coordinate, facilitate, and manage the various interests in LSC (Defra, 2011b:21).

These partnerships and networks make conservation processes more effective and efficient (Pretty and Ward, 2001). Examples of these partnerships, include catchment management groups, irrigation boards, farmers' groups, and other forms of collective action; these are the building blocks for LSC governance. In addition, there is expertise available from networks of volunteers and professionals from other fields who collaborate informally. One example of these partnerships is Living Landscapes, TWT's LSC initiative.

2.3.4. LSC and TWT

TWT has its origins in the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves (SPNR) founded by Charles Rothschild in 1912. Then nature conservation concentrated on habitats rather than species, enshrining the belief that special places need protection from development or other forms of damage such as intensive agriculture (McCarthy, 2012; Sands, 2012; Rothschild and Marren, 1997). Thus, nature conservation, as practiced by TWT, has over 100 years of history in England. From the protection of special areas for specific species and habitats it has evolved into ecosystems management requiring a collaborative landscape approach. Such an approach needs a champion to lead the initiative, a champion that accommodates a range of conservation ethics and paradigms. For TWT to be that champion, it must harmonise its approaches to conservation without compromising stakeholders' beliefs and practices.

TWT's response is Living Landscapes; this LSC sub-set focuses around SSSI and nature reserves, not because traditional protected areas are failing, but because these special places need to be connected in a mosaic of landscape elements

that allows nature to flourish beyond the boundaries of protected areas (Lawton et al., 2010). Living Landscapes are examples of partnerships with common value systems and common social constructions of nature conservation. Such partnerships establish trust through the exchange of knowledge and reciprocity (Pretty and Ward, 2001:6).

These Living Landscapes are a plain English example of the scientific and social concepts of LSC. They provide a focus for cooperation supported by limited government funding (Defra, 2011b; TWT, 2010). Through Living Landscapes TWT becomes a bridging intermediary between various stakeholders: communities, farmers, landowners and government agencies. TWT unites these stakeholders in networks funded from a portfolio of European, treasury, public and private grants that will restore habitats, attract wildlife, and encourage people to enjoy the landscape around them. These networks demonstrate the horizontal and vertical connections needed to drawdown funds and reconnect individuals to the landscape and encourage them to work towards mutually agreed conservation objectives. The following section explores LSC governance, examining its ethics and the role of the voluntary sector.

2.4. LSC Governance

It has been suggested that environmental governance and resource management are guided by environmental ethics, where governance is the exercise of power and responsibility based upon tradition and processes (Leys and Vanclay, 2010). These ethics reflect individuals' character, sense of duty and comprehension of utility (Saner and Wilson, 2003:4). In the voluntary sector, governance accounts for the use of funding, legal compliance and strategy.

In England, there is a perception that governance is restricted to financial probity and legal compliance as described by the Charity Commission (CSG, 2010; Carver, 2007a; Crawford et al., 2009; Charity Commission, 2015a). Elsewhere issues of fairness, inclusiveness and the exercise of power have been shown to be integral components of governance (Lockwood, 2010). This broader governance concept may be appropriate for LSC because it adapts to multiple stakeholder and society's needs. The roles of society, conservation, and the individual may be examined by considering social construction, because conservation is meaningless outside the context of society. This relationship

between nature and people is important because the role of governance is changing in step with the political approaches to conservation. Now a bottom up approach to governance, linked to leadership, is becoming important in contrast to the top-down central governance approach (Jepson, 2005; Lockwood, 2010; Cash et al., 2006).

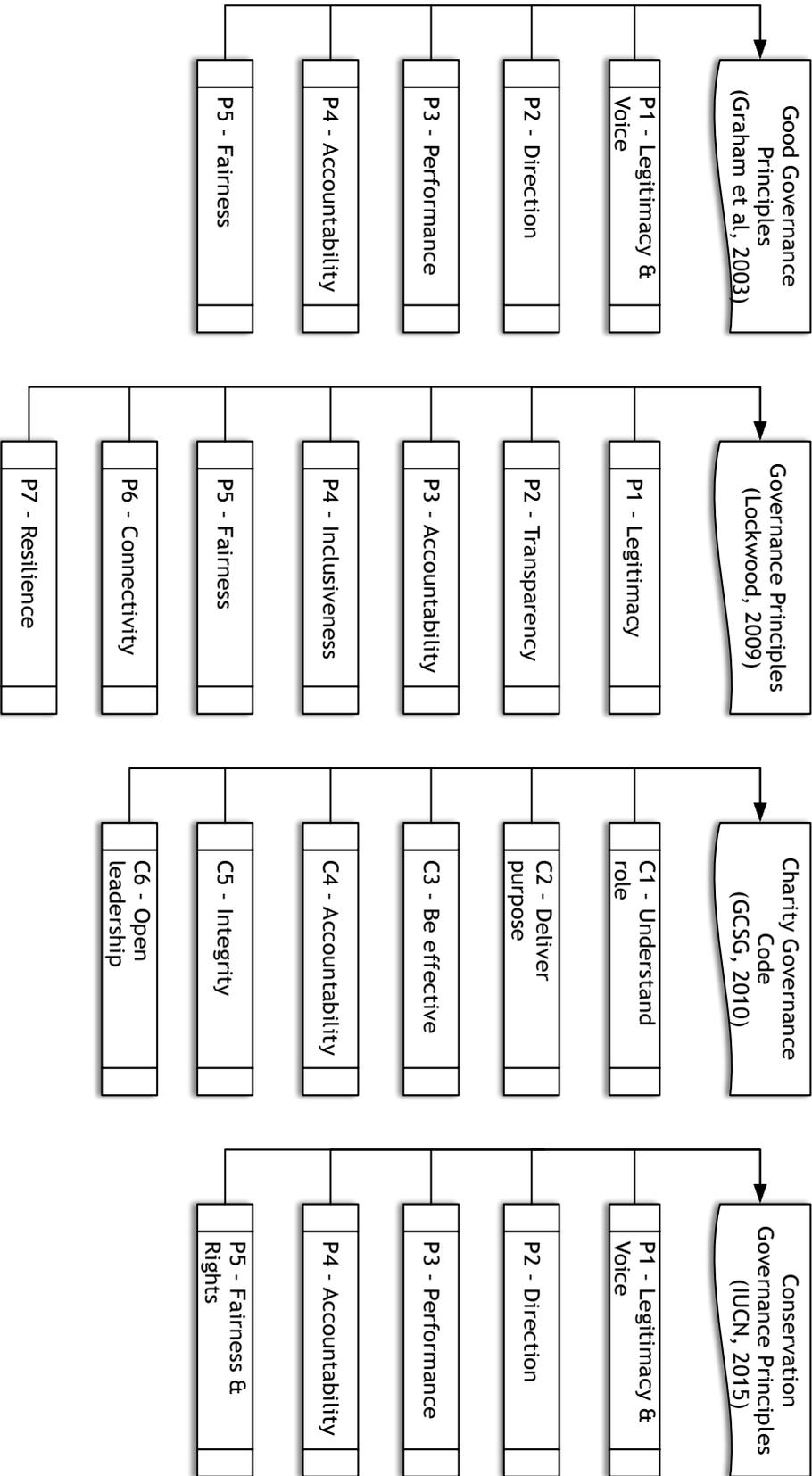
In this section I establish that the definition and mode of governance are contested, and that the role of communities is important in LSC governance. A summary of the various principles associated with voluntary sector governance is shown in Figure 2Error! Reference source not found.. Accountability is a recurring principle, as is legitimacy, and fairness is mentioned alongside some measure of performance or effectiveness.

2.4.1. Conservation Ethics

Another way of understanding conservation is to look at the ethics associated with it. Ethics are important because they underpin some of the views held by Living Landscape stakeholders. Thus, an appreciation of ethics helps me understand the various perspectives on conservation. Merchant identifies five types of environmental ethics, or moral directions: egocentric, homocentric, ecocentric, multicultural environmental and partnership (Merchant, 2005). Earlier she had recognised three conservation philosophies: anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and technocentrism (Merchant, 1990; Merchant, 1992).

Ethical conservation is important because human influence, in the form of agriculture and land management, has formed the English landscape, and there has been a tension between agriculture and conservation since the Green Revolution where technology augmented agriculture (Tivy, 1990:257-260). This tension has been described as part of a resource conservation ethic, espousing: “the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time” (Pinchot, 1947:212; cited by Callicott, 1990:16; Leopold, 1949). Merchant’s various conservation ethics expand the possible moral directions, which I examine below.

Figure 2 Comparison of governance models



Sources: Adapted by the author from original sources (GCSG, 2010, Graham et al., 2003, IUCN, 2015, and Lockwood, 2009)

The egocentric ethic, with its roots in the Protestant work ethic and the subjugation of nature, focuses on the individual good: what is good for an individual is good for society (Merchant, 1992:63). Less selfishly, the homocentric ethic concentrates on society as a steward of nature where societal benefits are maximised (Merchant, 1992:71-73). A balanced approach more amenable to LSC is provided by the ecocentric ethic, which is holistic and grounded in ecosystems focusing on nature being in balance with humankind, although humankind is reliant on nature (O'Riordan, 1977:4; Merchant, 1992:74-80). However, a more pragmatic notion is the partnership ethic, which debunks the notion of nature as mother and establishes an active and dynamic partnership between humanity and nature, involving human and non-human processes and entities: a mutual relationship between biotic and human communities (Merchant, 1999; Merchant, 2006). Finally, during my professional career, I held a technocentric ethic associated with environmental management. This is essentially homocentric with a managerial approach, where the adaptability of institutions and associated mechanisms accommodate the demands of the natural environment (O'Riordan, 1977; O'Riordan, 1985b). However, I now tend towards a blend of ecocentric and partnership ethics.

All these ethical positions influence LSC stakeholders to some extent and hence their view on the types of conservation practices, organisations, institutions and discourses (Beus and Dunlap, 1994:621). There is a spectrum of views; at one end, many farmers and land managers hold the "human domination of nature" ontological position irrespective of their position on environmental matters, whilst at the other end a minority of land managers hold the "harmony with nature thesis" (Abaidoo and Dickinson, 2002:129). All positions along this spectrum contribute to the various interpretations of LSC.

It has been argued that conservationists have an ethical obligation to adopt "a higher standard for management than mandated", where environmental codes are analogous to the "foundations" of conservation, whilst science erects the "walls and ceiling" (Soule et al., 2005:175). Therefore, ethically, conservationists should tend towards holistic ecosystem management. However, some maintain that science and ethics should be separate, whilst others believe conservationists understand nature's variety and are ethically bound to protect it (Van Houtan, 2006:1368-1370; citing Gould, 2003). However, conservation has

a cultural legitimacy that is often It has been overlooked (Van Houtan, 2006:1371). It has been suggested that a:

conservation ethic is that which aims to pass on to future generations the best part of the nonhuman world. To know this world is to gain a proprietary attachment to it. To know it well is to love and take responsibility for it. (Wilson, 2002:39)

The technocrat is criticised by ecocentrics because the latter believe that wildlife and their habitats should not be managed. For some, there is too much human intervention, and hence distortion, in the natural processes of nature (Midgley, 2007). One rebuttal of this recognises that the countryside is part of the human environment, but that there is not enough space for wildlife to encroach unmanaged (Schama, 1995). Another response is to manage, for the sake of biodiversity, selected areas of countryside to encourage wildlife and habitats, whilst its governance is handled at a local rather than central level (Gorg, 2007). LSC takes conservation beyond protected areas (i.e. SSSI and nature reserves) that protect single species or habitats to a heterogeneous approach that protects biodiversity and adapts to climate change (Studholme, 2009; Le Coeur et al., 2002; Franklin, 1993).

In summary, there is a spectrum of ethical thought. At one end of the spectrum anthropocentrism embraces egocentric and homocentric perspectives, where natural resources enhance society (Merchant, 1992:61; O'Riordan, 1977). Then, both biocentrism and ecocentrism have an affinity with ecosystem services, with the former taking an individualist view and the latter a holistic, intrinsic view of nature (Merchant, 1992:89, 181). However, tensions exist in the dualism between ecocentrism (i.e. participatory democracy and small-scale organisations) and technocentrism (i.e. professional and objective but often seen as arrogant and elitist), which surface within LSC (O'Riordan, 1977; O'Riordan, 1985a). This spectrum, with its inherent tensions, is the ethical backdrop to LSC. For example, TWT's Living Landscapes represent the small-scale ecocentric in partnership with the technocratic land manager.

2.4.2. Definitions of Governance

This section addresses my third research question by examining recent grey literature on conservation and voluntary sector governance. These include developments at the Charity Commission and the IUCN. In England, governance

is based on legal compliance and financial probity defined by current accounting standards (Charity Commission, 2012). One definition of voluntary sector governance is the "alignment of structures, procedures and codes with charitable objectives" (Crawford et al., 2009:vii). Within the conservation movement governance has been defined as a form of management or regulation that transforms and improves natural resources (Dudley, 2008:3-5 & 8-24). Two further governance definitions are the:

- (a) ... art of steering societies and organisations;
- (b) ... interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens and other stakeholders have their say (Graham et al., 2003:2&3).

The former definition has merit in its simplicity, and the latter is elegant in its explanation. Finally, internationally, the IUCN has a rights-based approach to governance, whilst Lockwood's principles propose parameters that may be assigned governance metrics (IUCN, 2015a; Lockwood, 2009:6-17; Lockwood et al., 2010). Earlier I referred to different governance models in Figure 2. Here I consider individual details, for example the IUCN frames the governance of natural resources by how they are managed in terms of objectives, goals and priorities, whilst Lockwood's principles frame it in terms of roles and responsibilities. Accountability and legitimacy are common themes, whilst most approaches have a strategic element. There are proposals to refresh these principles so that that "good governance promotes: equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability, rule of law in a manner that is effective, efficient and enduring" (UN, 2015). Another perspective stresses the importance of evidence-based decision-making, which requires a scientific basis for decisions, adherence to legislation, norms and standards, with a policy framework with extensive stakeholder engagement (UNEP, 2009).

In summary, today environmental governance has 21st century values, which may be at odds with TWT's 100 years of institutions. But there is sufficient awareness in the movement to appreciate the importance of community engagement, accountability, fairness, inclusiveness, and transparency in LSC governance (TWT, 2007). Next, I consider three aspects of voluntary sector environmental governance: the IUCN governance framework and Lockwood, then landscape scale governance, before examining TWT's approach to governance.

2.4.3. International conservation governance

The IUCN has been setting standards, based upon indigenous, bottom-up, conservation needs, for international conservation governance since 1948 (IUCN, 2015a). IUCN guidance describes seven categories of protected areas with four types of management (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013). This guidance examines the underlying concepts, inspects the voluntary sector's role in conservation, and provides a set of governance principles¹³. It is a framework for gauging and evaluating governance, with a checklist, exercises and indicators for examining governance. It identifies four types of governance whose main approaches involve government and its agencies, collaboration, private, and community driven governance (Borrini-Feyerabend and Hill, 2015:179). These are depicted in Figure 3. Recent guidance on conservation governance now extends to natural, cultural, and socio-economic heritage (IUCN, 2015b)¹⁴.

Conservation governance has been explored widely (Graham et al., 2003; Lockwood, 2009; Lockwood, 2010; Lockwood et al., 2010; Eagles, 2009; Eagles et al., 2013). And the history and governance of protected areas can be traced to 1933 (Dudley, 2008:3-4). The IUCN initially focused on management rather than governance (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). But now it integrates governance and management of conservation areas (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013; Worboys et al., 2015). Specifically, IUCN governance has five themes: legitimacy and voice, direction, performance, accountability, fairness and rights (IUCN, 2015b:59-60). This means that top-down, state governance, has been superseded by civil, collaborative and private forms of bottom-up governance (Graham et al., 2003; Lockwood, 2009; Smith et al., 2003). However, for my research I use Lockwood's wider set of principles of governance, which has seven characteristics that I believe resonate with the voluntary sector (Lockwood, 2009; Lockwood et al., 2009; Lockwood, 2010; Lockwood et al., 2010). These

¹³ The authors of the guidance note that good governance is also known as equitable management or equitable governance (IUCN, 2015:57).

¹⁴ This guidance and advice was published during and after the fieldwork phase of my research on Living Landscapes, hence it was not part of my research methodology. The IUCN is perceived as only relevant to protected areas such as national parks and internationally recognized conservation areas. Both publications identify LSC initiatives as part of the family of protected area categories, although the term "protected area" is open to interpretation and may be inclusive or exclusive.

are summarized in Figure 4 and Figure 5. In Table 5 is some explanatory text that illustrates what each of Lockwood’s principles mean.

Table 5 Lockwood’s governance principles and framework

Lockwood’s governance framework	Explanatory text suggesting ways in which the elements of the framework may be assessed / measured.
Accountability	Acceptance of responsibilities – clear lines in plans and activities Allocation of responsibilities – precisely identified Answerable to a constituency Answerable to higher authorities Powers of sanction Responsible for decisions Right to question
Connectivity	Coherence between different levels of policy Coordination between levels of governance Liaison between levels Long-term vision with measureable short and medium-term objectives Vertically consistent strategy
Fair	Absence of personal bias Consideration of intergenerational costs and benefits Fair in the exercise of authority in terms of distribution of power, recognition of diverse values and treatment of participants Reciprocal respect between higher and lower authorities Recognition of the intrinsic value of nature Recognition of rights Respect and attention to stakeholder views
Inclusive	Including marginised and disadvantaged stakeholders Open to non-locals to respect the boundaries of nature and ecosystem services Opportunities to participate in decision making Policies and structures are designed to foster engagement
Legitimacy	Constituency of support Decisions and actions consistent with mandate and objectives Earned through long-term association Earned through stakeholder acceptance Land owners

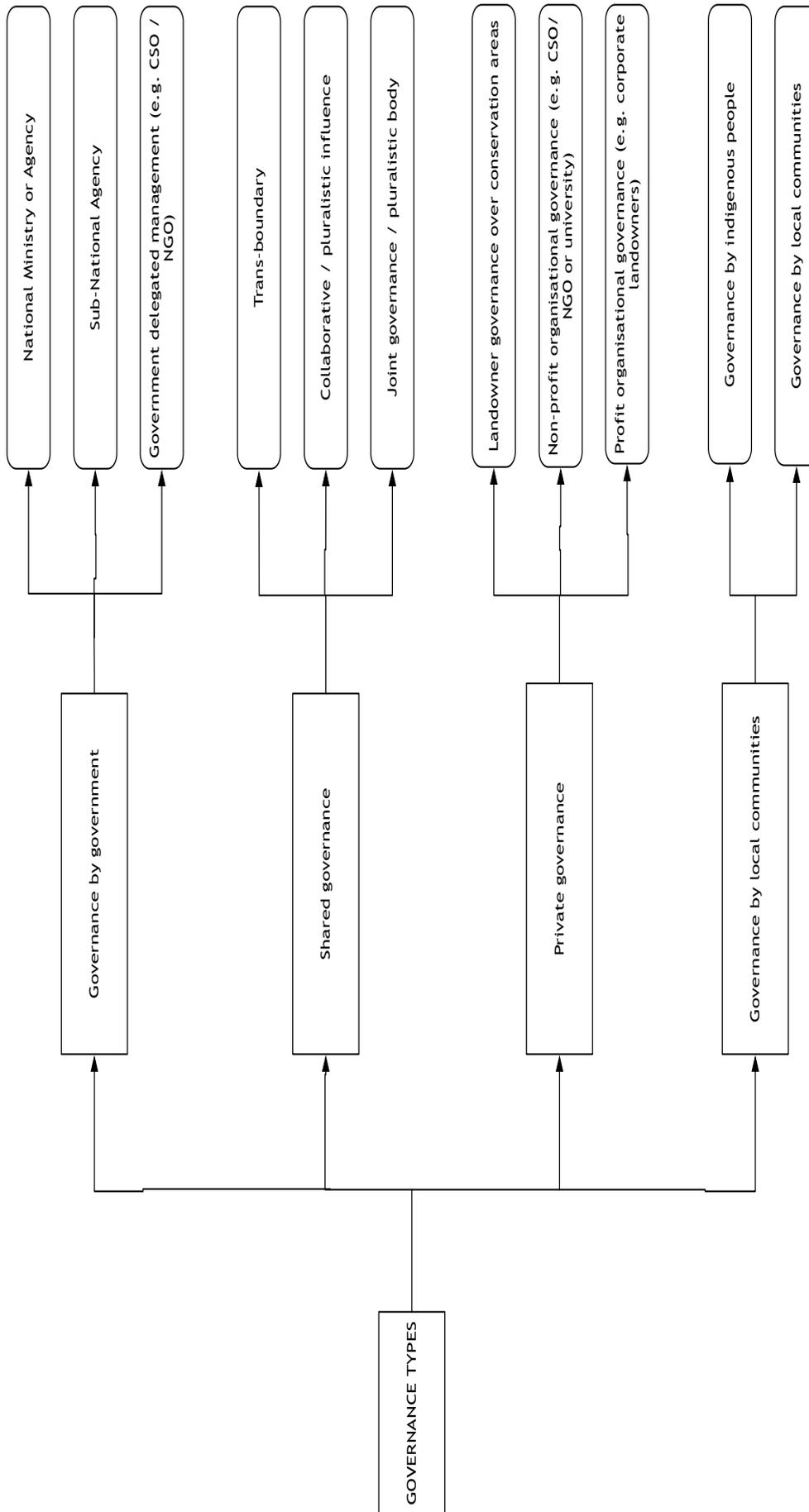
Lockwood's governance framework	Explanatory text suggesting ways in which the elements of the framework may be assessed / measured.
	Legal or democratic mandate Partnerships Reflected in integrity and commitment
Resilience	Anticipate and manage threats, opportunities and risks Maintain a balance between flexibility and security Incorporate new knowledge into decision making Reflection on individual, organisational and system performance
Transparency	Availability of performance information Communication and clarity of decisions Explanation of how decisions were reached Justification of decisions Reporting Visibility of decision making process Clarity over who made decisions

Source: Adapted from Lockwood (2009)

Lockwood's framework is based around the tensions between old and new world land-rights in Australasia (Mitchell et al., 2015). His rational and ethical framework grew out a review of governance principles for natural resource management (Davidson et al., 2006). Lockwood explains how he builds on Graham's and the IUCN's work by defining the types of governance and the transition from a top-down approach into a bottom-up approach involving communities (Lockwood, 2009). This is a practical consideration because communities often observe the decline in biodiversity at first hand.

As an aside, in partnerships these governance processes may be top-down or bottom-up, and consist of governance systems or networks, rather than management arrangements (Carlsson and Berkes, 2005). External partnerships, such as those that exist between government agencies, often provide a top-down policy framework around which local, bottom-up, conservation organisations can work together in LSC.

Figure 3 IUCN governance types



Source: adapted by author from IUCN (2015, table 4, p 29)

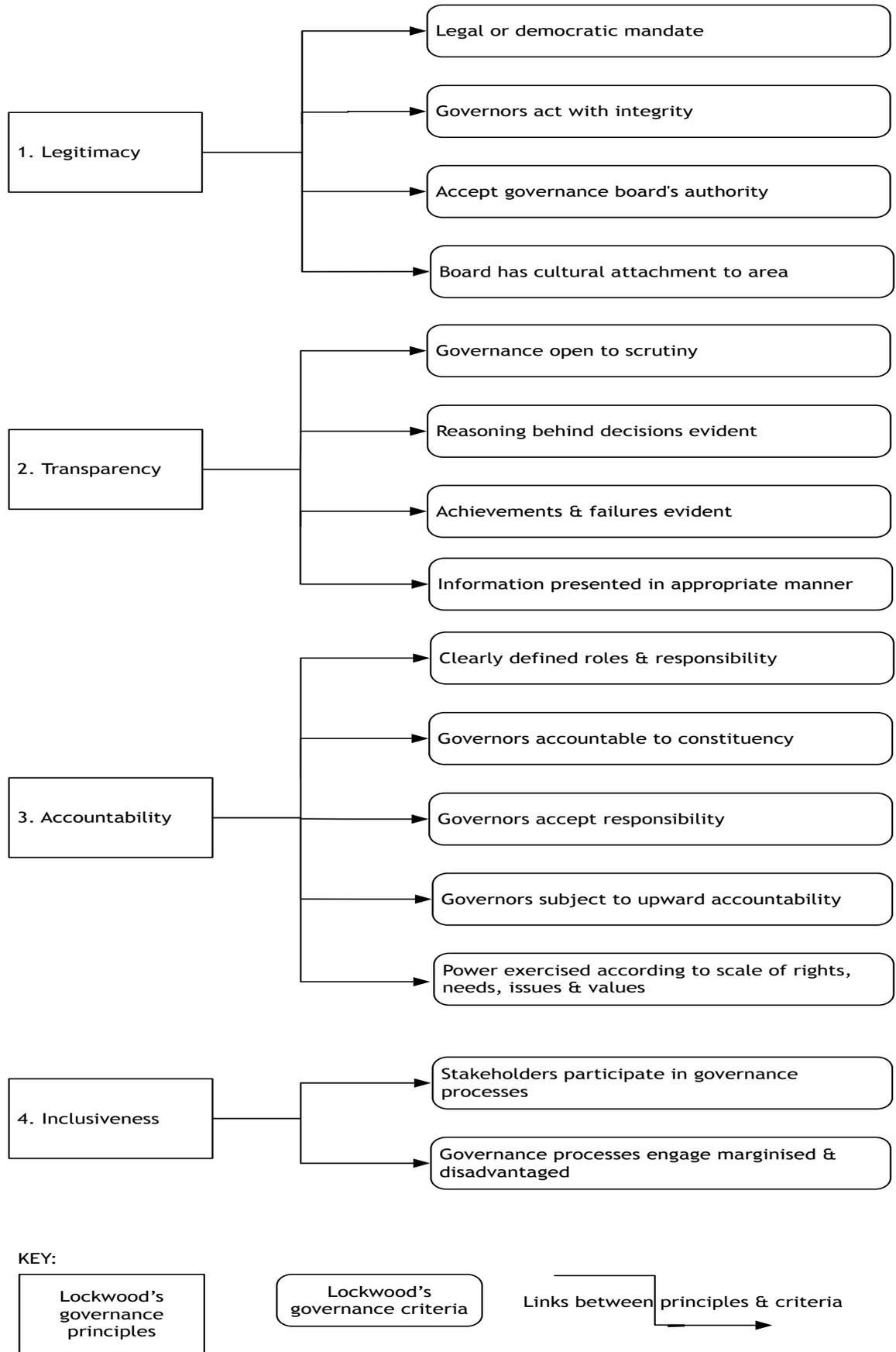
In summary, a model of protected areas governance has become established. It supports the traditional themes of accountability, legitimacy and fairness advocated by the IUCN and Lockwood (Figure 9). TWT fits the IUCN typology of private governance, whilst LSC governance may be private or shared, with or without local community involvement. I have mapped Lockwood's principles onto the charity governance code for the voluntary and community sector (Figure 6) to demonstrate the difference in emphasis of the two approaches. It is evident that Lockwood's seven drivers is a foundation for good governance, whilst the code emphasizes outcomes from good governance rather than its precursors. In my research, I test Lockwood's principles against the TWT's Living Landscape programme.

2.4.4. Governance at a landscape scale

In this section I examine international good practice for LSC. The key authors are Professors Berkes, Folke and Pretty, and Koontz. Professor Berkes is interested in social-ecological systems and adaptive management, and has used a range of techniques to explore these approaches. At a landscape scale, he supports, with others, a governance model that shares management responsibilities (Berkes, 2004; Berkes, 2009; Carlsson and Berkes, 2005; Folke et al., 2005; Peterson et al., 2005; Pretty and Smith, 2004). In England, innovative forms of collaboration are being devised as partnerships develop (Clarke, 2015; Singleton, 1998). However, some believe that top-down partnerships are little more than technocratic land management (Redford et al., 2003). Yet others acknowledge that more is known about what to conserve than how, thus complicating its management (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2000: 1; Bawa et al., 2004). Nevertheless, community involvement in conservation governance and management is well established (Berkes, 2004; Koontz, 2003; Koontz, 2005).

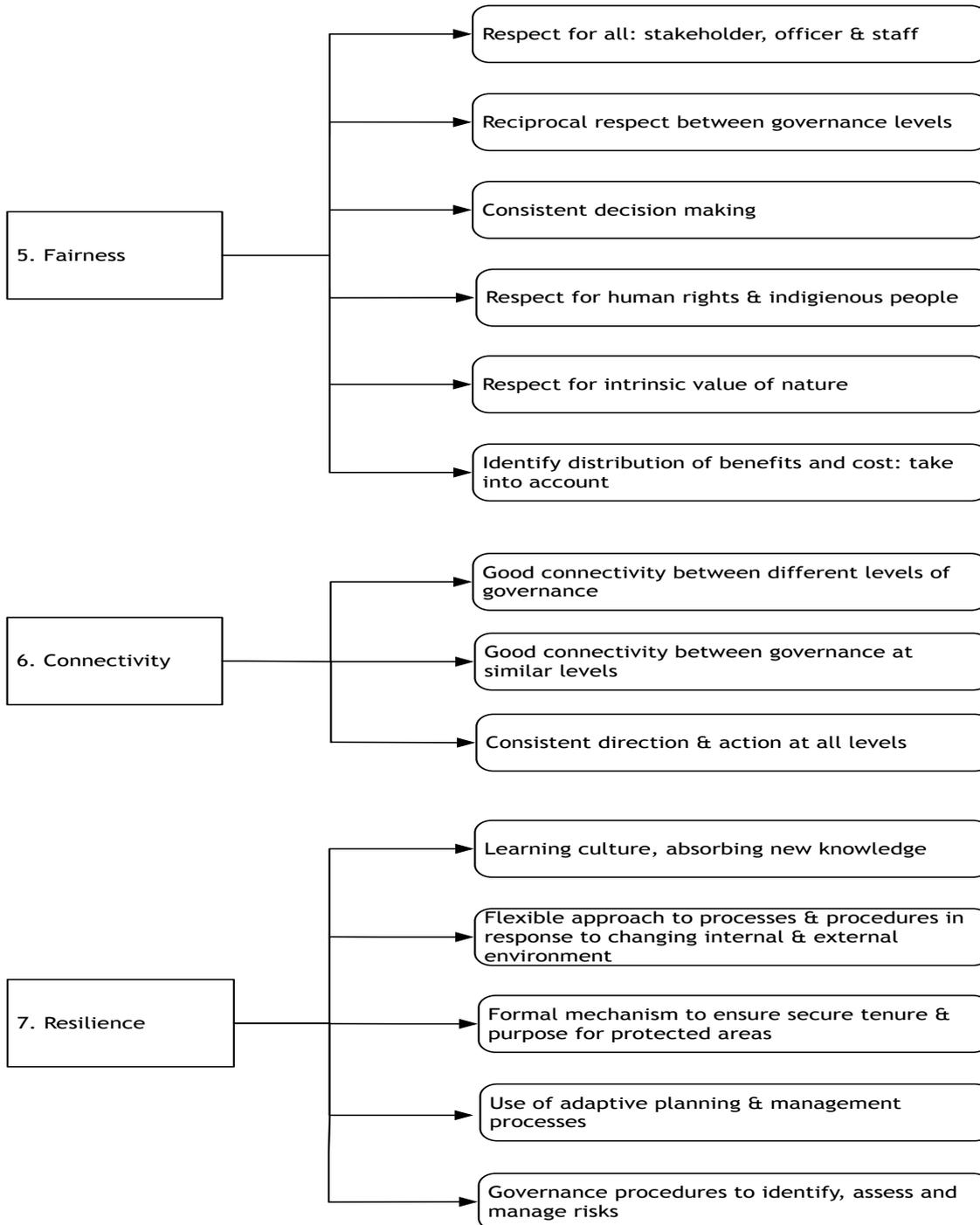
Research in the USA has examined partnership processes and found that power is a feature at every level, but its dynamics are not often discussed (Koontz, 1999; Koontz, 2001; Koontz, 2003; Koontz, 2005; Butler and Koontz, 2005). Power or influence is in evidence in LSC, from influencing selection of participants, or conferring membership in a scheme, or managing participants in terms of encouraging specific actions as part of the schemes.

Figure 4 Lockwood's Governance principles 1-4



Source: adapted by author from Lockwood (2009 & 2010)

Figure 5 Lockwood's Governance principles 5-7



KEY:

Lockwood's governance principles

Lockwood's governance criteria

Links between principles & criteria

Source: adapted by author from Lockwood (2009 & 2010)

In addition to Lawton, the relevance of ecosystem services to LSC has been scrutinized (Butler and Koontz, 2005; Lawton et al., 2010). And others have emphasised the importance of social capital (Pretty and Smith, 2004; Pretty and Ward, 2001). Koontz reiterates the importance of group processes and contextual factors that underlie partnerships (2003). Pretty and Berkes, with their colleagues, suggest that institutions such as advisory and management groups, volunteer fora, support and funding mechanisms are as important to conservation management, as policy and strategy (Pretty and Smith, 2004; Carlsson and Berkes, 2005). For example, governance structures relate to the relationships that conservational organisations adopt. These relationships facilitate horizontal and vertical associations at local, regional and national levels. However, these governance frameworks may not be transferrable from the developing world to LSC in England.

2.4.5. Summary of governance

I have identified several building blocks for governance in the literature that might be applicable to Living Landscapes. They involve multi-level land ownership structures, which require greater transparency, collaboration and community involvement. But it has been argued that international governance criteria are inappropriate because they do not suit English circumstances (Crofts and Philips, 2013). Also, there is limited academic literature dealing with voluntary sector conservation, specifically TWT, in England. However, recent research identifies innovative approaches to LSC and its governance, which deserves study (Hodge and Adams, 2012b; Cook and Inman, 2012; Hodge and Adams, 2013; Adams et al., 2014; Clarke, 2015; Eigenbrod et al., 2016).

2.5. The impact of the literature on my research

In this section I draw together my findings, set out how I will interpret my results, and place LSC in an English context. I then reflect on the pertinent points of social construction and the governance of LSC before concluding with some observations on the literature. A range of literature contributes to my research covering social construction, conservation ethics, and governance. I have also consulted grey literature, i.e. national and local wildlife magazines for the movement. Therefore, my research contributes to the growing body of LSC

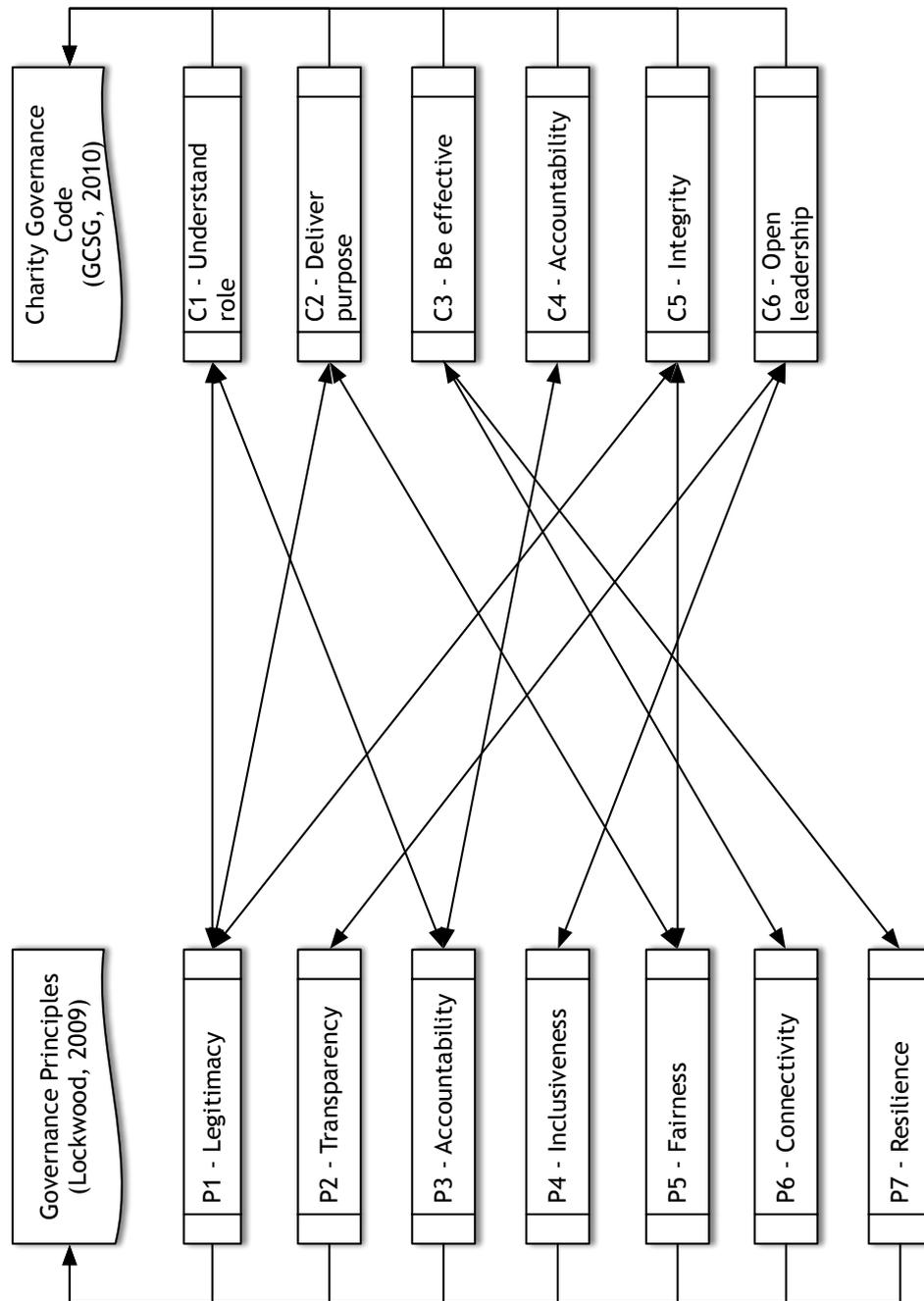
literature¹⁵. This is important if LSC is to match Lawton's call for an ecological network across the country. The potential and value of LSC is untested, and the contribution of Living Landscapes to ecosystem management has yet to be evaluated, although knowledge is accumulating (Eigenbrod et al., 2016). LSC adopts a broad ecosystem approach, where there is a spectrum of interpretation, ranging from small nature reserves that protect iconic species of flora or fauna within ecosystems to large expanses of wetlands, grasslands or forests. This literature review is pivotal to my research because it introduced me to social construction. I use its institutionalism and discursive concepts to understand LSC, which I applied to material provided by Living Landscapes' stakeholders. These included representatives from civil society and their partners, who contributed a range of material to my research. This material included documents covering corporate material, visions, strategies and business plans, and transcriptions of my interviews. Analysis of this material revealed a series of institutions and discourses, and the interaction between them helped me frame LSC, and the institutions helped identify LSC characteristics.

2.5.1. Social construction and Living Landscapes

My understanding of Living Landscapes and its governance draws on international literature from forestry, nature and marine conservation. These are landscapes on a grand scale and social involvement in them is at a different scale to the smaller landscapes in England. Further, most of the studies, with one or two exceptions, have been in developing countries, where large swathes of natural habitat are threatened by development. If LSC is a dominant trend in environment conservation in England, then there is potential to make it more effective by identifying best governance practice at an appropriate scale, and sharing this with its stakeholders.

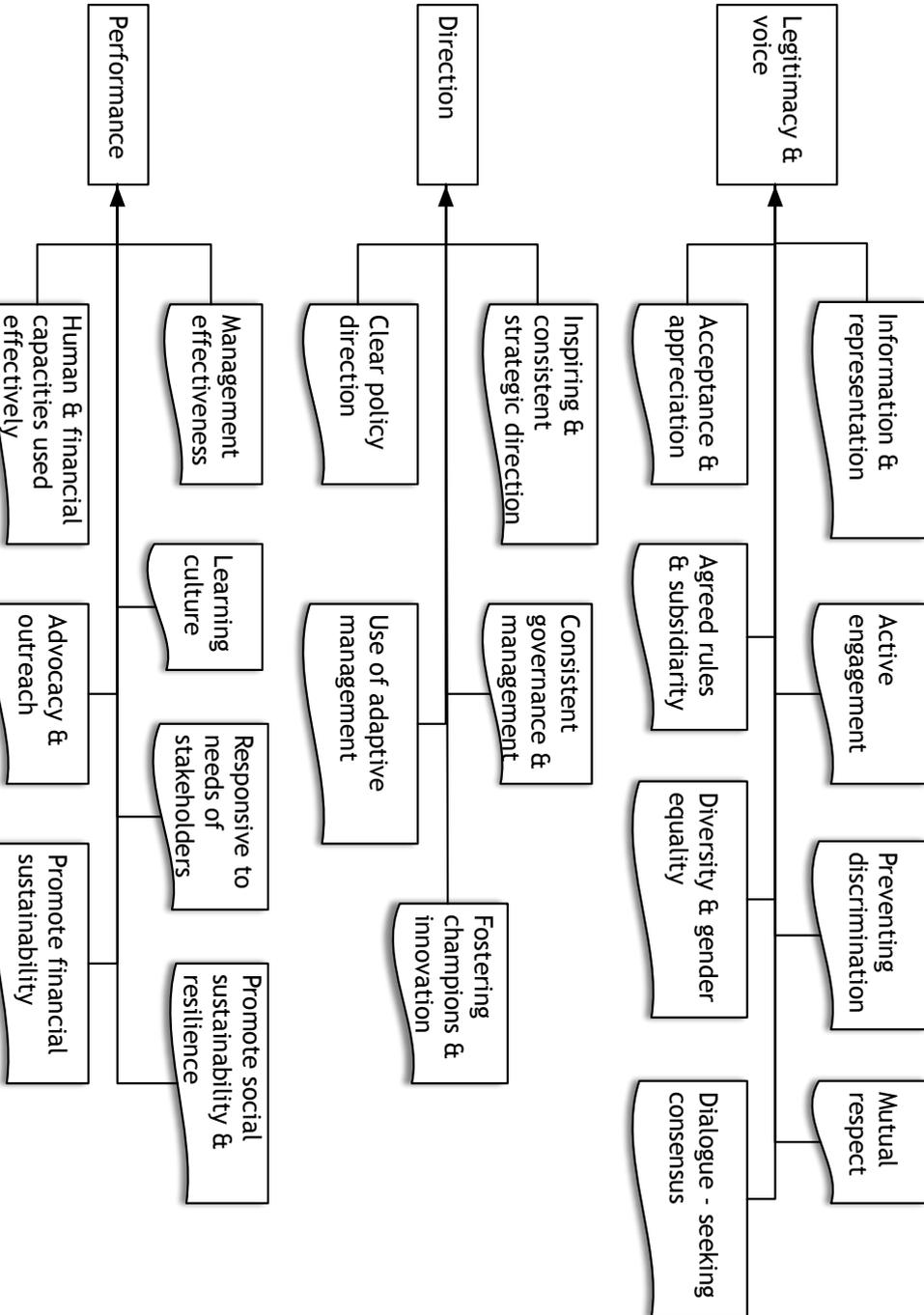
¹⁵ An e-search returned 11 papers published about LSC in 2010 (Metalib search, 27th August 2010), and an online search of the literature fielded around 240 references since 2011 to LSC, by 2015 there were over 1.5 million articles (Google Scholar on 26th October 2015).

Figure 6 Linkages between Lockwood’s principles and the Charity Governance Code



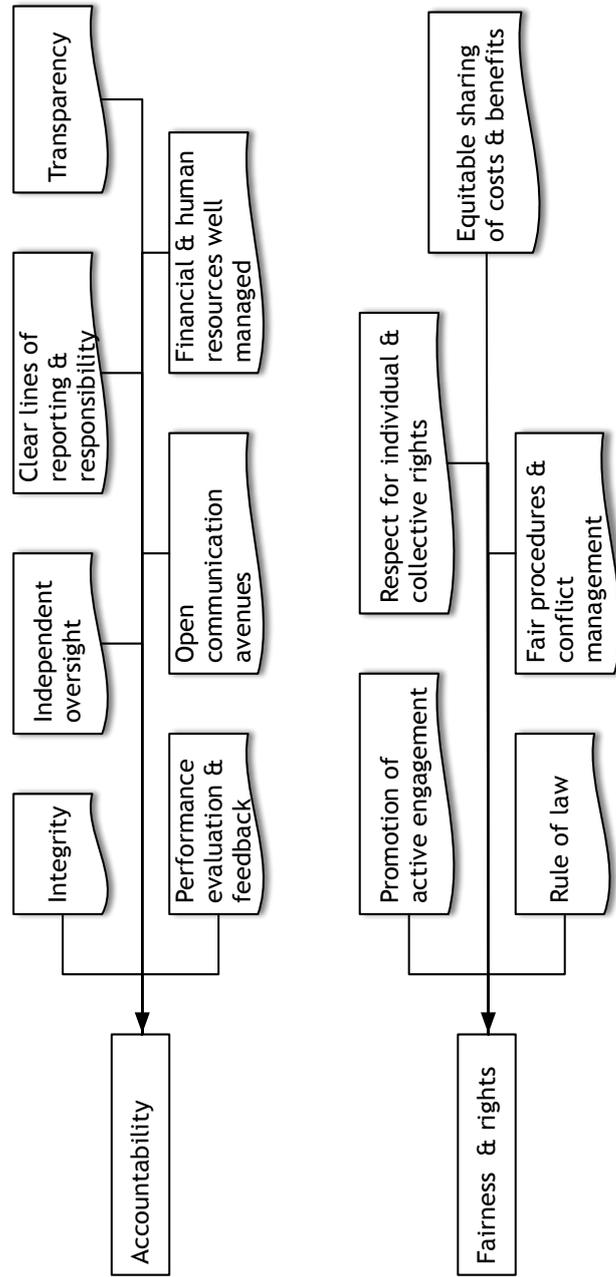
Sources: Adapted by the author from original sources (GCSG, 2010, and Lockwood, 2009)

Figure 7 IUCN Governance principles (part I)



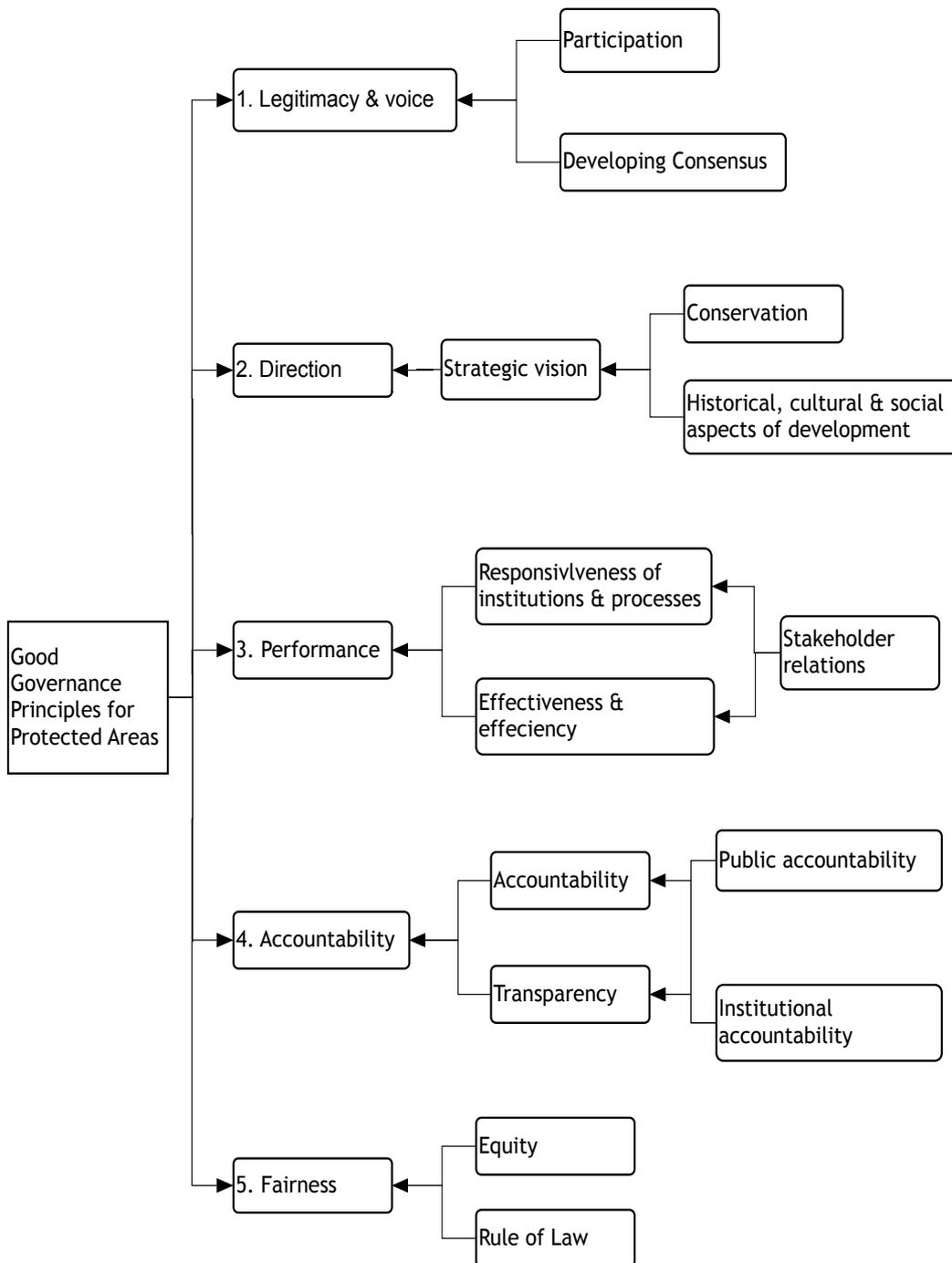
Source: Adapted by author from IUCN (2015, table 8, p 59)

Figure 8 IUCN Governance principles (part II)



Source: Adapted by author from IUCN (2015, table 8, p 59-60)

Figure 9 Good governance principles



Source: adapted by the author from Graham et al 2003

The European political discourse influences LSC, because, as Chojnacka and others have observed, the EU has a bias that favours green development over sustainable development, whilst in England the Localism Act encourages local action in planning issues (Chojnacka, 2013; Hodge and Adams, 2012a; HMG, 2011). The implication is that greater importance is assigned to economic aspects of development than the socio-ecosystems at the interface between society and the environment (Fisher, 2013). A number of conservation organisations and observers have contributed to and commented on UK government policy, which has set goals that include a nationwide ecological network (Burns et al., 2013; Partnership, 2015:5, 7-8; EC, 2016; European Union Committee, 2017). And it has been suggested that the “ethos of UK nature conservation” has been mirrored by EC directives with a focus on the “protection of species and habitats” (Carver, 2016:5; Reid, 2016). But, the political context for LSC is uncertain due to Brexit.

The literature is consistent in its approach to LSC in that it supports partnership-orientated management and collaboration (Berkes, 2004; Carlsson and Berkes, 2005; Clarke et al., 2001; Koontz, 2003; Koontz, 2005; Butler and Koontz, 2005; Pretty and Ward, 2001; Pretty and Smith, 2004). LSC could deliver multi societal objectives by managing the tension between conservation and development. And it could deliver social wellbeing through development and protection of ecosystems and biodiversity (Case et al., 2015:6, 9 & 24).

My exploration of LSC literature reveals a series of discourses, including conservation, ecosystems, environment and nature, governance, landscapes and development, leadership, management, and social well-being. Each reflects different perspectives. There is the deep ecologist protecting iconic species, and the conscientious technocratic farmer who balances the health of the soil and the hedgerows with the economic value of food production. Then there is the weekend nature lover introducing the next generation to wildlife and landscapes, and local dog-walkers appreciating treks through woodlands, along streams and across meadows. These perspectives are equally valid, and I have resisted the temptation to allocate weighting or value to them.

Therefore, LSC in England includes statutory and non-statutory protected areas. LSC is defined by their objectives and stakeholders' perceptions because LSC protects sustainably use and restores nature (Worboys et al., 2015:19). However, in the case of Living Landscapes, some fail the IUCN test of a dedicated area, whose prime objective is biodiversity conservation, and should be described as "voluntary conservation" (Borrini-Feyerabend and Hill, 2015:177). Currently, Living Landscapes are outside the remit of the Aichi¹⁶ biodiversity targets and are not included in Defra's biodiversity reporting (Defra, 2014b; Case et al., 2015). As I began to understand LSC, I perceived a bias towards biodiversity protection that is in tension with economic development (Case et al., 2015:25-26; Elands and Wiersum, 2001).

2.5.2. Concluding remarks

Since I began my research LSC governance has emerged to be an important component of international conservation (IUCN, 2015b; Lockwood et al., 2010). The IUCN guidance addresses broad and varied natural and cultural heritages, and social and economic influences (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013; Worboys et al., 2015). It is beginning to gain traction in the UK (Clarke, 2015; Eigenbrod et al., 2016). I show that governance frameworks epitomize the importance of legitimacy and accountability. But, wider governance principles are under estimated in England with both the Charity Commission and Wildlife Trusts failing to give full recognition to the significance of resilience¹⁷, inclusivity and connectivity, whilst playing lip-service to transparency.

A limitation of my review is the absence of a study of the partnerships that are at the heart of LSC. I had intended to focus on partnerships, but as my research progressed it became apparent that although they are one of the governance phenomena involved in LSC, they tend to reflect government and scientific rather than social objectives. In response partnerships should integrate

¹⁶ Convention on Biological Diversity targets. In England Defra's focus is on SSSI, see <http://jncc.defra.uk/page-6131> accessed 16 May 2016

¹⁷ I know, from conversations with fellow Trustees, that Trusts have realized the importance of resilience in a business and organizational context. They are developing relationships with their members to enhance it, and forging new management and human resource practices to underpin it.

environmental and social sciences, but although collaboration is increasingly important evidence is only now emerging (Clarke, 2015).

The social nature of TWT and its engagement with people and nature through Living Landscape schemes is under-reported. Therefore, my research contributes to the knowledge about its governance, scale and scope. Living Landscape are a sub-set of LSC, through which the application of social construction contributes to the understanding of environmental issues.

The IUCN manuals on protected area management and governance provide a conceptual link to protected areas and LSC. LSC represents two poles of conservation in England: nature protection and ecosystems management. But LSC is more than protecting biodiversity. It is the management of social ecological systems, including ecosystem products and services, natural and cultural heritage assets. LSC is a network of protected areas where ecosystem management takes place at a landscape scale. But because much of the land is in multiple ownership, collaboration between landowners is essential.

Therefore, Living Landscapes are collaborations, with informal or formal partnerships facilitated by TWT. My research suggests that Living Landscapes should qualify as IUCN protected areas. But there is a tension between objective and subjective observations of the environment that may be addressed by recognition of the different perspectives of LSC to include, for example, cultural landscapes. This is reflected in various landscape partnerships that celebrate bio-cultural heritage or eco-cultural landscapes.

This literature review has contributed to my research questions by raising my awareness of the social processes in LSC. These processes, along with institutions and discourses, influence Living Landscape schemes. But the possibilities for greater social interaction in LSC are only partially reflected in their governance and partnerships. Living Landscapes use partnerships to achieve conservation objectives, but there is limited transparency about how they operate and to whom they are accountable. The existing governance models adopt a technocratic approach that controls the interface between nature and man, and are slow to adopt more inclusive conservation partnerships.

My research contributes to the literature by showing that conservation governance structures vary, demonstrating differing degrees of social inclusion or collaboration. It is apparent that the political incentives that foster partnerships and governance structures are evolving, being driven by both national and European policies, and the availability of funding. However, reflecting on the literature, there are four gaps in the knowledge about LSC. There is limited material on: (a) the role of voluntary organisations; (b) the form and structure of LSC partnerships; (c) designation of LSC as protected areas; and (d) the application of contemporary governance models to LSC.

Chapter 3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LSC IN ENGLAND

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I provided the theoretical background to my research and now I develop the concept of LSC. Philosophically, LSC means whatever people want it to mean; but I examine what LSC means in England within the frame of TWT's of Living Landscapes. I examine how LSC is transforming conservation in England and provide examples of collaboration from the voluntary sector, including the BC, NT, RSPB, TWT, and the WT. For them LSC embraces agriculture and silviculture, improves biodiversity and provides recreational facilities, opportunities for improving community health and well-being, and economic development. LSC is established in the literature; it is pragmatic and significant because it attempts to balance conservation and economic development, whilst demonstrating sustainability (Fox et al., 2015; Macgregor, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2015).

3.2. LSC in England - definitions and features

Previously I examined the IUCN definitions of conservation and protected areas in relation to LSC. Here I focus on LSC through the lens of various voluntary sector organisations within the context of the various conservation discourses (Table 6). For example, TWT's definition of LSC has evolved from the restoration of the UK's battered ecosystems for the benefit of people and wildlife into the creation of a "connected ecological network" (TWT, 2007; TWT, 2015b). The RSPB emphasises the importance of connecting communities to their local landscapes, placing people within ecological networks (Pearson et al., 2015). In England, over 670 LSC initiatives have been identified, (Eigenbrod et al., 2016:61).

In my research, I focus on one family of LSC: TWT's Living Landscapes. These began in 2005 in the South West of England with a handful of schemes promoting the concept of ecological networks (SWWT, 2005). These networks were rolled out across the movement the following year and are designed to reconnect fragmented habitats, but they also address other environmental changes such as

climate change, and the desire to reconnect people with their environment (Macgregor et al., 2012:14-15; TWT, 2007).

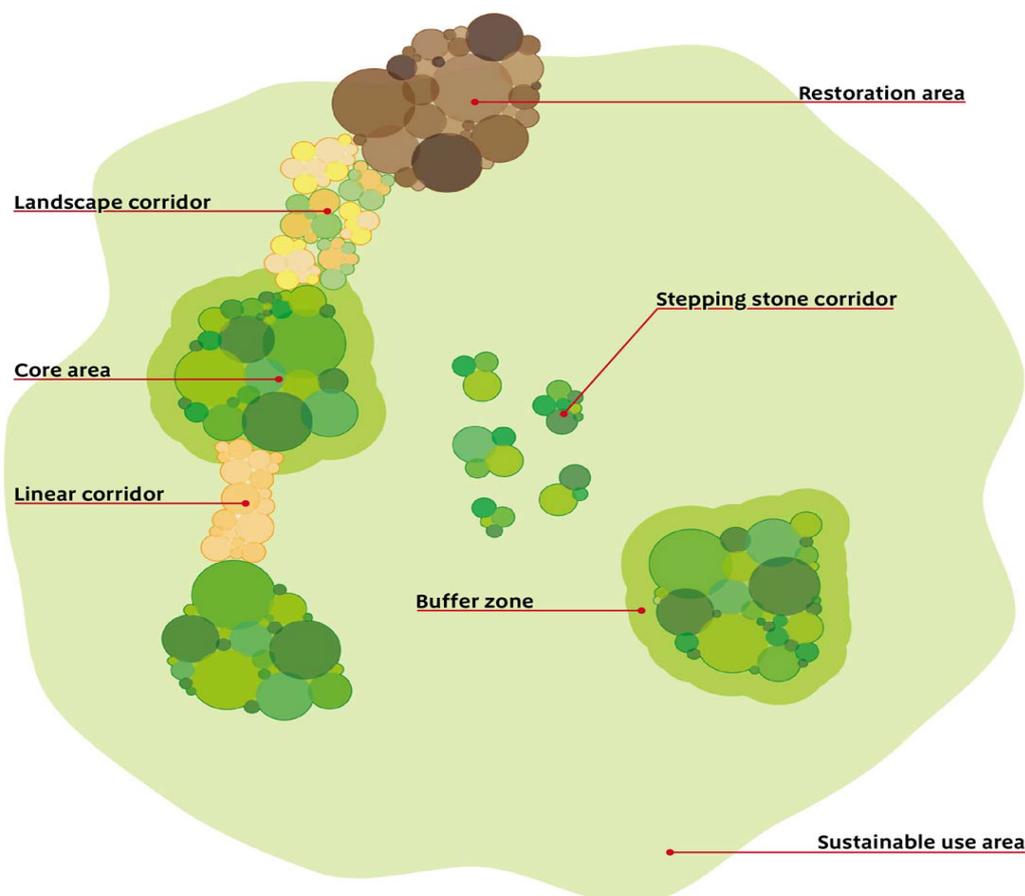
Table 6 Definitions of Large / Landscape Scale Conservation (LSC)

Organisation	Definition	Source
Butterfly Conservation	LSC “works by improving and connecting land for wildlife by the coordinated conservation management of numerous sites for a range of species across a large natural area”.	Ellis et al. (2012:5)
Conservation Leadership Dialogue	LSC “must integrate ecological, cultural and recreational values with economic and community development”.	Nora Mitchell in Levitt (2004:2)
	LSC involves: “ <i>regional</i> system of interconnected properties; ... organized to achieve ... <i>specific conservation objectives</i> ; [... with the cooperation or collaboration of ...] landowners and managers to achieve those objectives.”	Levitt (2004:2)
Natural England / Defra research	LSC are “... areas where an organisation or partnership directs land use change within a delineated area to achieve ecological restoration for wildlife conservation, and where public benefits are explicitly recognised in management aims”.	Elliott et al. (2011:7).
Research for Natural England	LSC covers: “... coherent and recognisable biogeographic, hydrological or geological areas; focusing beyond individual ‘sites’ to understand the dynamics and interactions between them, with a corresponding awareness of, and management for, ecological processes rather than just individual species or vegetation assemblages; ideally aspiring to management of the whole area of interest in a coherent and coordinated way; and likely to consider the interaction of people and nature”.	Macgregor et al. (2012:16)
RSPB	LSC is “about people and nature ... connecting local people and communities to their landscapes.”	Pearson et al. (2015:3)
TWT	LSC involves “enlarging, improving and joining up areas of land to create a connected ecological network ...”	TWT (2015a)
Woodland Trust	These are “ecologically functional landscapes” that: “... contribute towards rural development, flood alleviation, recreation and tourism, as well as economic and other benefits that add to quality of life. They can be landscapes that are not only rich in wildlife but that enrich the lives of people”	Smithers (2002:2).

The key features of LSC are shown in Figure 10. At their heart is a core habitat that needs enhancing, protecting or restoring. This core area is buffered from the impact of intensive agriculture or urban generation by parcels of land that connect other core habitat areas with corridors such as hedges, field margins, ditches, and shelter belts that permit species to migrate between areas. These

core areas might be a threatened habitat such as a fen or woodland, or a linear feature as a river or stream, which need enhancing. Enhancement measures might include enlarging existing sites or creating new ones, improving connectivity with corridors or stepping stones, and using buffer zones to reduce pressure on sites (Lawton et al., 2010:57).

Figure 10 Ecological networks within LSC



(Source: Lawton et al., 2010:17, Figure 1)

TWT's ambition is that the core areas in Living Landscapes are linked with a network of footpaths and trails. TWT encourages people to enjoy the wider environment by participating in voluntary activities that restore habitats to enhance the environment. TWT also encourages traditional enterprises producing coppice goods or charcoal to contribute to the sustainable management of these areas (The Wildlife Trusts, 2007).

Whilst the strategic nature of nature conservation has been established, the voluntary sector has a tactical role focused on nature reserves (Cook and Inman,

2012:172). However, Cook and Inman note that although collaboration enables environmental management, there is a lack of accountability particularly in the pursuit of single-issue agendas (2012:175). This is because, until Professor Lawton called for a “step-change” in approaches to conservation, the voluntary sector conservation had not changed much in over 100 years (Lawton et al., 2010:ii). One step-change is LSC, which, because it is made up of multi-tenure landholdings, re-establishes species and ecosystem connectivity across the landscape through an informal network of landholdings that encourages biodiversity (Fitzsimons and Westcott, 2008; Adams et al., 2014). The role of the voluntary sector, despite the lack of accountability, is important because it complements other conservation initiatives such as protected areas and agri-environment schemes (Pasquini et al., 2011).

Therefore, LSC goes beyond nature reserves by seeking to secure biological diversity within a portfolio of linked conservation areas (Lawton et al., 2010). It uses the concept of ecological corridors to provide connectivity between core areas, which supports ecosystem services that are key themes in the management of LSC (Groves et al., 2002; SWWT, 2005; Simberloff, 1998). This ecological framework has been widely adopted across Europe, individual countries (e.g. USA and Moldova), and between rural and urban communities (Hilty et al., 2006:253-267). Such an ecological framework for ecosystems management considers three factors: the importance of connectivity to address habitat fragmentation, island biogeography and the relative richness of species in a landmass, and meta-population theory. These factors link the distribution of species through patches of habitats with the processes by which species move (Hilty et al., 2006:49-86).

This concept of ecosystem management combines with ecological corridors to represent natural processes that are applicable at a landscape scale, which permits keystone¹⁸ species to be protected (Simberloff, 1998:252). However, this requires coherent management strategies at a landscape scale. But in England such strategies are difficult to coordinate and implement due to the fragmented nature of the agricultural landscape. This is despite the number of

¹⁸ A keystone species is one that has a series of dependent species relying on its existence.

agricultural holdings being in long-term decline. It is estimated that, due to consolidation, there are 100,000 holdings in the country with an average area of 87 ha (NSO, 2016:7; NSO, 2012:7). Therefore, based on the smallest size of large scale conservation initiatives (20,000 ha), it is likely that LSC schemes will include a significant number of landowners and managers, which makes landscape scale management, and its governance complex (Elliott et al., 2011).

3.3. Recent LSC research

Recent research has examined large conservation areas in the UK and scrutinised Natural England's database of large-scale conservation projects. Below I highlight some issues from these studies.

3.3.1. The Cambridge typology of LSC and the role of the voluntary sector

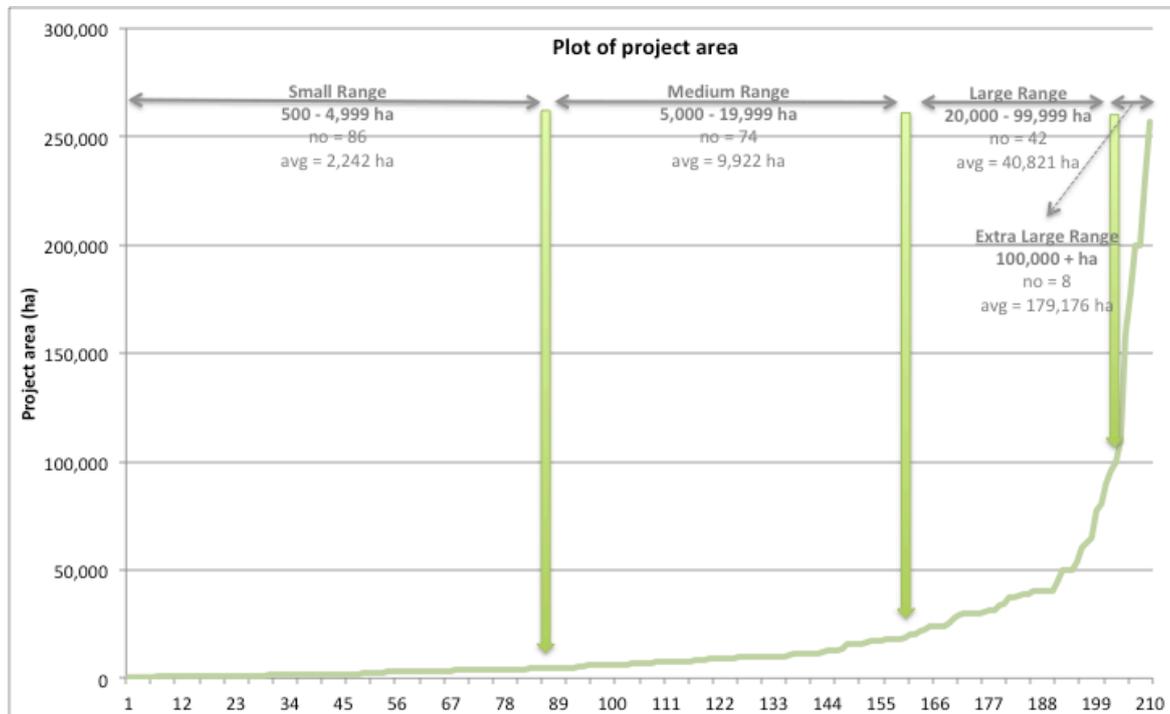
There are two groups of papers in this category that I use to illustrate aspects of LSC. First, there is a report¹⁹ that examines 240 LSC schemes in the UK with the aim to understand the "extent and diversity" of LSC and classify them (Elliott et al., 2011:6). Then there are several papers by the co-authors in the first study, which are led variously by Adams and Hodge.

The Elliott report reveals the extent of LSC, categorising them and recognising the importance of the voluntary sector in facilitating conservation (Elliott et al., 2011). Its authors propose a typology of collaboration between neighbouring landholders, where public-private partnerships predominate, and used a checklist to identify important issues (Elliott et al., 2011). Their typology shows that LSC encourages novel or experimental approaches to conservation (Elliott et al., 2011:26). They assessed project size, and examined trends in the collaborative approach to conservation and identified who was involved, its objectives, and whether the initiative could be categorized. Four size categories were identified, which are reproduced in Figure 11. The main project partners in large projects were public bodies and in very large projects there were diverse partnerships involving charitable organisations and businesses

¹⁹ The Elliott report was a joint commission by Defra and Natural England along with Scottish Natural Heritage and Countryside Commission for Wales. It was supported by the NT, TWT, RSPB and BC.

(Elliott et al., 2011:17). I have adapted their typology for my research (Table 16).

Figure 11 Size of projects - definition of four categories



Source: Figure 1 in Elliott et al (2011:14)

The authors found that LSC involved shared visions and quantifiable objectives through the management of a mosaic of habitats (Elliott et al., 2011:18). A subsequent report examined the role of not-for-profit organisations in LSC and provides a synthesis and recommendations for both conservation stakeholders and policy makers (Defra, 2011b).

Elliott and her colleagues were also interested in climate change adaptation and its relationship to LSC, its institutional and social arrangements. They were concerned with real biodiversity gains and how they were achieved, and whether LSC was a truly innovative approach to conservation or just a matter of scale. They defined large conservation areas as:

... areas where an organisation or partnership directs land use change within a delineated area to achieve ecological restoration for wildlife conservation, and where public benefits are explicitly recognised in management aims (Elliott et al., 2011:7).

Further studies explore the approaches to establishing and managing LSC initiatives, examine the scientific background and basis for site selection and management regimes (Hodge and Adams, 2012a; Hodge and Adams, 2012b;

Hodge and Adams, 2013; Adams et al., 2014; Hodge and Adams, 2014). The consensus is that LSC brings together farmers, landowners and conservationists in a way that requires a new approach to governance involving informal and formal institutional arrangements (Elliott et al., 2011:20).

3.3.2. Reviews of LSC in the UK

In recent years, there have been several reviews of LSC in the UK (Macgregor et al., 2012; Macgregor, 2015; Eigenbrod et al., 2017). The aims of the first review are to provide an overview of LSC, explore the mechanisms that set up and manage them, and determine whether LSC has “better environmental outcomes” (Macgregor et al., 2012:16). Macgregor and his colleagues identify four categories of LSC in their review of the situation in Great Britain; these are:

- ✓ Single landowner conservation areas;
- ✓ Small number of landowners as partners in conservation projects;
- ✓ Areas targeted by government schemes, such as NIA, Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) and Catchment Sensitive farming (CSF); and
- ✓ Conservation partnerships, of which Living Landscapes and Futurescapes are examples.

They noted that some of these categories overlap and intersections between initiatives include NIA, Living Landscapes and Futurescapes (Macgregor et al., 2012:18). Other spatial overlaps exist, for example between an RSPB reserve and a Living Landscape in Staffordshire, and two fen projects in Cambridgeshire, and between BC and TWT initiatives in Gloucestershire.

Whatever these conservation projects are called, three factors influence their viability, sustainability and success: coordination, timescale, and funding (Macgregor et al., 2012:21). LSC requires high levels of ambition and energy, but coordination between stakeholders needs to be improved if they are to be successful. Then long-term investment in commitment, personnel and resources is required. Finally, funding continuity is essential to secure the future of LSC, perhaps through collaboration with public utilities or businesses.

Macgregor develops these factors by suggesting four conditions as precursors to LSC’s long-term success: monitoring and evaluation of activities, establishment

of ecological networks, development of LSC partnerships, and the importance of making land available with appropriate funding to ensure sustainability (Macgregor, 2015:3-26). For each, he identifies a series of positive forces and opportunities that are counter-balanced with constraints and challenges. He also makes some recommendations, two of which stand out:

- ✓ Conservation's "brands", i.e. those from organisations such as NT, RSPB and TWT, need to be more collaborative, perhaps by establishing a joint leadership initiative; and
- ✓ Funding streams that allow voluntary sector conservation organisations to conduct their programmes need to be identified to ensure sustainability (Macgregor, 2015:3-26).

Another study, a synthesis of TWT's contribution to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) landscape partnerships, is pertinent. It recognizes that although LSC is not part of the statutory protected landscape mechanisms, it is evidence of the "institutional restructuring of conservation" (Clarke, 2015:20). I examine this restructuring process in chapter 7, as suggested by Hart (1998:177), by considering governance "good practice", its methods, processes and systems.

3.3.3. Summary of recent LSC research

These papers demonstrate the current interest in LSC. They recognise that institutional arrangements have yet to crystalize, although partnerships appear to be critical. They challenge the hegemony of the conservation brands without suggesting how collaborative partnerships may be facilitated. Further, although innovative institutions are deemed necessary these authors do not address the governance issues that I discuss in my research except to acknowledge the importance of public accountability and resilience.

These studies show that ecological networks have increased the ambition and scale of the wildlife conservation movement through collaborative partnerships. Macgregor identifies the importance of land tenure brought together under government-funded schemes. Adams and his colleagues have identified a re-territorialization agenda, which is led by third-sector conservation organisations who are broadening LSC's remit by expanding and extending its governance,

away from central government agencies to include local communities and civic society.

My research contributes to this body of study by examining the formal and informal institutions and discourses behind Living Landscapes. It contributes to the validation of collaborative approaches to the governance and management of LSC by considering whether a wider appreciation of governance issues would make lead organisations accountable and enhance their legitimacy.

3.4. The context of LSC in England

In England, statutory protected conservation areas such as National Parks and AONBs are large scale, whilst SSSI are small scale. These SSSI are hot spots of species-rich areas of rare or endangered habitat and species. There are also internationally recognised locations such as Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). Ecological conservation and its associated policies in England began with the protection of single species and special sites, examples include the Rothschild Reserves and the SSSI system (Barnes, 2015). This voluntary sector nature conservation focused on nature reserves, and unless they include, for example a SSSI, they have no statutory protection.

Conservation policies began to recognise the benefit of ecological networks toward the end of the 20th Century (e.g. Natura 2000 network²⁰). These networks evolved into an ecosystem approach (Lawton et al., 2010). This policy evolution reflects the complexity of natural processes and systems that have three scales of functionality: sites, landscapes and networks (Poiani et al., 2000:134-136). Such complexity requires a framework to assist in identifying priorities for policy and action. One such framework addresses habitat loss and degradation (Groves et al., 2002). Whilst another approach is based on species requirements at a landscape scale (Sanderson et al., 2002). LSC is another (Lawton et al., 2010). The following sections develop the ideas set out in chapter 2 to establish the importance of LSC.

²⁰ Natura 2000 network consists of SACs and SPAs and SSSI that protect rare and threatened species and habitats listed under Directives 2009/147/EC and 92/43/EEC.

3.4.1. LSC and ecosystem services

Ecosystems have intrinsic value and contribute to our existence, prosperity and welfare (Partnership, 2015; UKNEA, 2011). The loss of biodiversity and the decline in the capacity of ecosystem services due to variations in soil type and topology, land tenure and management are well documented (Laven et al., 2005; Lawton et al., 2010). Further, the IUCN estimates that 26 of the 429 Red List protected species in Great Britain are threatened (IUCN, 2016).

There are two responses to this decline: policy and political response and direct conservation action. The political response is to tackle pollution, restrict invasive species, and protect vulnerable species and habitats. The conservation response is to reverse habitat loss and its fragmentation. Despite this dual approach, agricultural intensification and urbanisation continue to have a negative impact upon biodiversity (Tscharntke et al., 2005). LSC has the potential to protect threatened species and their habitats through a system of interconnected land-holdings, where landowners “cooperate or collaborate” to achieve “specific conservation objectives” (Levitt, 2004:1-2 & 5).

It has been suggested that statutory protected areas have failed to halt the loss of biodiversity in the UK (Clarke, 2015). One response is LSC partnerships; these have been championed by the National Parks and AONBs, but they need linking up with a network of smaller scale initiatives to produce an ecosystem approach (Lawton et al., 2010; NE, 2008; Defra, 2011a). LSC partnerships require collaborative and complementary management styles involving multiple conservation charities, agencies and private partners. To understand these partnerships, I first look at ecosystem services in more detail. I then consider the scale of LSC because this factor influences the complexity of the partnerships before exploring collaboration.

The potential for engagement in LSC is not limited to the voluntary sector conservation, it includes statutory protected areas where the ecosystem approach underpins conservation objectives (Fox et al., 2015). The potential range of ecosystem services that might be included in LSC is shown in Figure 1. LSC can contribute to them, and there are potentially significant societal benefits (EBG, 2011a; Eigenbrod et al., 2016). For example, the National Parks

and AONBs incorporate LSC initiatives, because ecosystem services are “vital to the nation’s health and well-being” (NAAONB, 2015). National Park Authorities manage areas including cultural and natural heritage features, they are part of a worldwide network of protected areas dedicated to the long-term conservation of cultural values, ecosystem services and nature. AONB statutory protected areas are managed by partnerships involving local authorities and communities within its boundaries. These organisations have developed a collaborative culture that enhances and conserves cultural and natural heritage features whilst supporting the social and economic well-being of their communities.

At a county level TWT endorses ecosystems through their Living Landscapes that aim to restore ecosystems for the benefit of both people and wildlife (The Wildlife Trusts, 2007). At the local scale, SSSI protect special “flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features”; they are managed by landowners and are often feature in voluntary sector LSC initiatives (HMG, 1981, s28 § 1).

Lawton argues that “the re-establishment of ecological processes and ecosystem services” is a “step-change” in conservation that requires a collaborative approach from government, communities, businesses, local authorities, conservation organisations and landowners and managers (Lawton et al., 2010:ii). Lawton believes that such collaboration is essential if LSC is to reverse the decline in wildlife and habitats (Lawton et al., 2010:ii). It does this by extending the scale of conservation beyond the boundaries of nature reserves through partnerships that establish a mosaic of inter-connected habitats.

3.4.2. What is the scale of LSC in England?

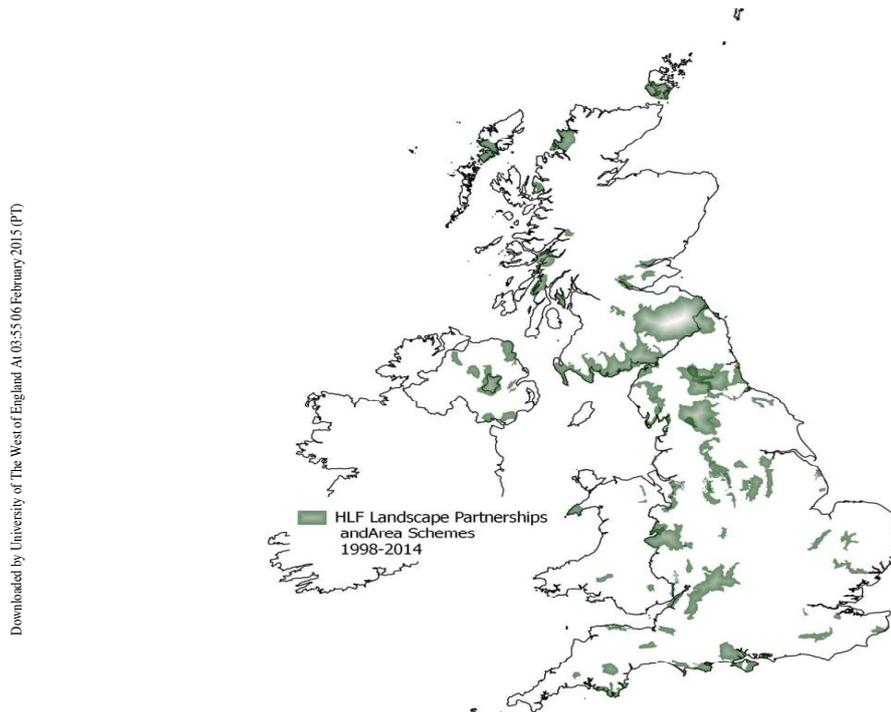
The scale of LSC respects the land-management units of a farm, but once ecosystems are considered the scale reflects much greater areas, up-to the scale of river catchment areas. LSC extends beyond the single landowner because ecosystem services rely on organised land management over a substantial area (Hodge and Adams, 2014). But LSC is more than nature conservation. It includes local cultural and industrial heritage and reflects the holistic nature of conservation with its impact on communities in terms of economic benefits, social dynamics and peoples’ health and wellbeing.

There are differing views on what constitutes landscape scale (Gorg, 2007; Jaquez and Negra, 2005; Laven et al., 2005). In recent research, the scale is considered to cover areas greater than 1,000 ha (Macgregor et al., 2012:17; Eigenbrod et al., 2016). But others consider that half that size, incorporating areas greater than 500 ha, is appropriate (Elliott et al., 2011:7). To demonstrate the scale of LSC, I have reproduced five maps to provide a geographic perspective on the scale of LSC in the UK, (Clarke, 2015). Figure 12 shows the extent of the HLF landscape partnership projects in the UK, some of which are Living Landscapes. Figure 13 is a collection of maps depicting different scales of LSC: statutory protected areas (map a), NIA (map b), TWT's Living Landscapes (TWT, map c) and RSPB's Futurescapes (map d). Map (a) may be compared with the voluntary sector initiatives (maps c & d) to show the relative scales. Map (b) depicts the 12 government funded NIAs but other NIAs exist such as those managed by the 48 Local Nature Partnerships in England (Defra, 2011b; Macgregor et al., 2012).

The scale of voluntary sector LSC is epitomised by the RSPB's Futurescapes and TWT's Living Landscapes, which cover an area greater than that covered by National Parks and AONBs combined²¹ (Jongman, 1995; Eigenbrod et al., 2017). Futurescapes cover an estimated million hectares in the UK, whilst Living Landscapes extend over one and half million hectares (Clarke, 2015:172). Some Wildlife Trusts determine the size of the Living Landscapes by assessing the requirements of each species and habitat, whilst considering the appropriate area needed to restore functioning ecosystem services (SWWT, 2005).

²¹ The evidence for this assertion is provided in Chapter 5. In 2012, I estimated that Living Landscapes covered nearly 1.5 Mha, an area greater than that of England's National Parks. It is now estimated that they cover nearly 2.5Mha.

Figure 12 HLF Landscape Partnerships



Downloaded by University of The West of England At 03:55:06 February 2015 (PT)

Location of the UK HLF Landscape Partnerships and predecessor Area Schemes 1998-2014.
161x209mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Source courtesy of Richard Clarke, 14th June 2016 (Clarke, 2015)

For example, a river catchment area needs managing to enhance water storage capacity to safeguard the health and safety of local communities. This recognizes and maintains the biodiversity value of the grasslands and woodlands that stabilize the ecosystem services delivered within the catchment. The catchment area includes community drainage systems that manage holding capacity during floods. This example shows the potential for partnerships to deliver community and ecological needs, where governance and people-centred considerations contribute to deciding the appropriate scale of action.

3.4.3. LSC partnerships and collaboration

In England conservation is coordinated nationally and regionally by government through agencies such as NE and the Environment Agency (EA). The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) coordinates conservation and research with the voluntary sector.

Figure 13 LSC schemes across the UK

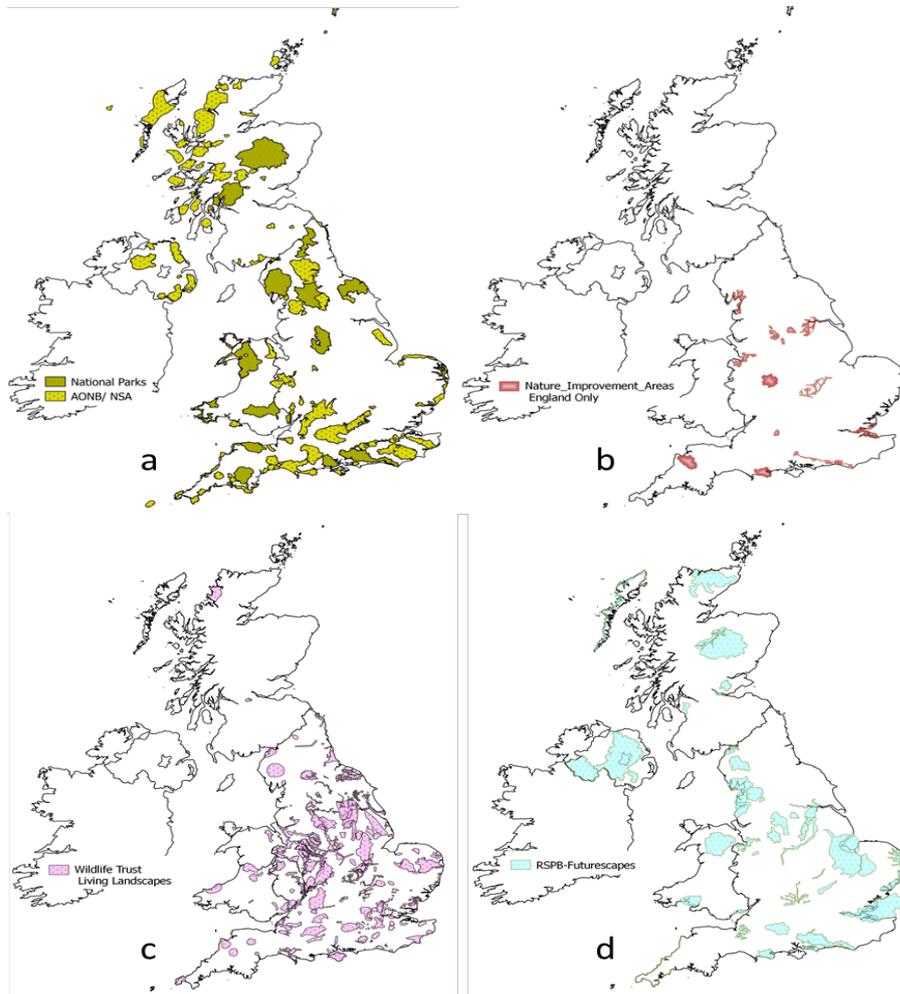


Figure ii. a) UK statutory protected landscapes - National Parks and AONB/NSA; b) Government funded Nature Improvement Areas (England Only); c) Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes; d) RSPB Futurescapes.

Source courtesy of Richard Clarke, 14th June 2016 (Clarke, 2015).

This includes an estimated 500 individual charities involved in environmental conservation²². Within TWT there are over 150 Living Landscape projects in the UK, each managed through partnerships with local landowners, farmers, businesses, and government agencies.

One of the conservation responses to the decline in biodiversity and ecosystem services is to build social relationships with other land holders and users. This

²² A search of the website www.charitychoice.co.uk returned 537 hits (27th August 2010); later the same search returned 1,045 charities (22nd October), of which 334 dealt with Wildlife Conservation (including those associated with TWT).

approach to LSC requires consistent funding and collaborative partnerships (Levitt, 2004). Such collaboration seeks to restore fragmented habitats in five ways (Macgregor et al., 2012). First, the mosaic of fragmented conservation sites needs to be patched together to allow species to migrate and establish viable populations. This is achieved through partnerships. Second, there is a trend towards rewilding nature as a landscape process, where nature is left to its own devices and human intervention is avoided (Carver, 2007b). LSC is an appropriate place for rewilding because species naturally occur within a landscape, and it is a legitimate response to, for example, declining agriculture in the highlands that calls for a new landscape (Carver, 2007c:269). Third and fourth, there is a growing recognition of the health and welfare benefits²³ associated with people reconnecting with, and experiencing nature. And fifth, conservation activities need to adapt to climate change by enabling species movement through connecting habitats to provide space for species to thrive making them more resilient.

3.5. Current views on LSC

In this section I examine the role of some voluntary sector organisations in LSC. This is important because of their land holdings and strength of their membership can leverage conservation objectives. Here I provide a synopsis of LSC initiatives as implemented by some voluntary sector organisations. I have chosen these examples because they allow comparison with Living Landscapes.

3.5.1. RSPB - Futurescapes, and the National Trust

The RSPB's Futurescapes initiative is co-funded by the EU-Life programme²⁴ (Pearson et al., 2015). There are 38 Futurescapes across the UK covering protected areas, including SACs, SPAs and other international designations (JNCC, 2016). Futurescapes are LSC partnerships with landowners, land managers, and water companies to secure biodiversity and develop green

²³ Although these benefits are not dependent on the scale of conservation, volunteering opportunities and improved access to nature stimulate them.

²⁴ EU-Life is a financial instrument that supports conservation partnerships across the European Union whose focus is on statutory protected areas known as Natura 2000.

infrastructure²⁵. They are part of Natura 2000 sites whose benefits include tourism, recreation, food, flood protection and clean water. As such the RSPB recognizes Lawton's concept of LSC as 'more, bigger, better and joined-up' conservation, where people and their communities are reconnected to their landscapes (Lawton et al., 2010).

Within the RSPB's LSC programme there are nearly 200 projects with over 140 different partnerships, including TWT, covering 100,000 ha whose success depends upon engagement with partners and the public. They have a shared vision, which requires careful planning to secure funding, and partners with appropriate practical skills (Pearson et al., 2015). Pearson and his colleagues contend that Futurescapes are successful because of their impact on biodiversity where sustainability is encouraged through LSC partnerships.

The NT is responsible for 250,000 ha of countryside dedicated to protecting historic landscapes, whose features include archaeological, historical and cultural artefacts as well as farmlands, woodlands, wood pasture and parks (NT, 2015a). It has a 10-year plan to "nurse the environment back to health" by reversing decades of unsustainable land management. It is developing innovative partnerships to reconnect habitats by working with other charities, businesses and local communities (NT, 2015c).

For example, Wicken Fen, with over 110 years of history, covers nearly 800 ha and its conservation value is reflected in its status as a Ramsar site, a SAC, a SSSI and a National Nature Reserve (NNR). The vision for this site has a 100-year time span with the ambition to expand the area to 5,300 ha (NT, 2015c). NT's partners include: Natural England, Environment Agency, local authorities, Sustrans, the Esmee Fairburn Foundation and the Heritage Lottery Fund (NT, 1999). The Wicken Fen Vision has a diverse partnership but does not include the local Wildlife Trust, despite having adjacent land-holdings. However, the nearby Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust's Great Fen Project is similar in ambition to Wicken Fen (BCNP, 2010).

²⁵ The RSPB defines green infrastructure as a planned network of natural and semi-natural areas that are managed to deliver biodiversity conservation for the benefit of people and wildlife.

3.5.2. Butterfly Conservation and the Woodland Trust

Butterflies are one of the most threatened groups of species in England, largely due to the destruction and deterioration of its habitats (Fox et al., 2015). BC has over 70 landscape scale projects across the UK, defined as the “coordinated conservation and management of habitats for a range of species across a large natural area, often made up of a network of sites” (Bourn and Bulman, 2005:111). BC acknowledges The Lawton Report as the policy context for its work and provides a series of case studies that demonstrate a shift in emphasis from single sites to networks. BC maintains “high quality habitats within individual sites”, that improve the ability of butterflies “to move around a landscape” through better connectivity between and within sites (Ellis et al., 2012:6-8). This approach recognises the importance of partnerships, particularly with RSPB and the British Trust for Ornithology who share a vision to address the decline of butterflies.

I discuss some of the lessons from BC’s experience of LSC in chapters 5 and 8 (Ellis et al., 2012:86-90; Fox et al., 2015:16 & 25). However, there is little collaboration with TWT, despite BC’s emphasis on collaboration and adding value to other conservation organisations sites and projects (Ellis et al., 2012).

The WT’s LSC strategy is to protect, restore and create 250,000 of new woodlands as an integral part of the landscape (The Woodland Trust, 2015b). It recognises the holistic role that individual reserves (e.g. coppices, shelter belts, woodlands) play in “ecologically functional landscapes”, because they:

... contribute towards rural development, flood alleviation, recreation and tourism, as well as economic and other benefits that add to quality of life. They can be landscapes that are not only rich in wildlife but that enrich the lives of people (Smithers, 2002:2).

Thus, the WT has developed a portfolio of approaches to establish woodlands that contribute to LSC. These initiatives include business partnerships, tree planting schemes for landowners, farmers, communities and schools, and a woodland carbon capture scheme that helps businesses reduce their carbon footprint. In a policy paper they encourage the Government to support more green infrastructure that will reconnect society with the natural environment (The Woodland Trust, 2015a). The River Clun riparian project is an example of

LSC that runs along 6 km of river where over 6,250 trees have been planted in cooperation with landowners (The Woodland Trust, 2015c).

3.5.3. The Wildlife Trusts and Living Landscapes

This is preamble to my analysis of TWT's Living Landscapes in chapter 5 provides context by describing the movement's history and its Living Landscapes. In 2010, TWT celebrated the hundredth anniversary of Rothschild's first nature reserve, Woodwalton Fen (Barnes, 2015). Another landmark, the centenary of TWT's precursor, the RSPNR, was in 2012. These milestones show an evolution, from a rich man's hobby to a countrywide nature conservation society with Royal status and patronage with a historical context (Bernstein, 2005; Lockwood, 2009). I examine further evidence for its legitimacy in chapter 7.

Living Landscapes may trace its historical roots to the Rothschild reserves (Barnes, 2015; Rothschild and Marren, 1997). This heritage is important because Living Landscapes continue Rothschild's conservation initiatives by connecting parcels of land. This network allows species to form a coherent and sustainable population that is buffered from the impact of agriculture and development. These connected landscapes demonstrate the importance of ecosystem services and reflect local conservation priorities and the diversity of nature and wildlife.

There are now over 150 Living Landscapes in the UK; this partnership approach to nature conservation began by TWT in 2006 (TWT, 2015b; TWT, 2007). The scientific basis for these ecological networks was established in South West England (SWWT, 2005). The vision was to restore the UK's ecosystems for the benefit of people and wildlife (TWT, 2007). The vision has evolved, now it is for a "recovery plan for nature" that provides a "healthy future for wildlife and people" (TWT, 2015b). This is interpreted and delivered by individual Trusts with each setting its own objectives for Living Landscapes. All the schemes conform to TWT's charitable objectives to "promote the conservation and study of nature" (RSWT, 2015).

For example, they aim²⁶ to (a) create a resilient landscape delivering heritage and wildlife benefits, and (b) recharge your batteries in a wilderness area managed by nature (Great Fen, 2015; WTSE, 2006). One Trust talks about creating robust and connected landscapes that are resilient for the businesses, communities and wildlife that rely on them (DWT, 2015). Another speaks of enhancing the value of areas rich in wildlife by creating connections between them that makes them more accessible to wildlife (S&RWT, 2015). Living Landscapes are a vehicle for LSC collaboration, whose partners include government agencies, local government and local businesses, as well as local landowners, farmers and other conservation charities.

Adams and his colleagues consider the diverse aims of LSC a strength, perhaps because they are a holistic approach to conservation and people's wellbeing (Adams et al., 2014). Living Landscapes focus on nature conservation and the conservation and preservation of local cultural and heritage features. They are an interface between people and wildlife that reconnects people to nature through partnerships that restore and recreate wildlife rich landscapes (c.f. A2N; Icarus, 2014). They have clearly defined boundaries that may contain officially protected areas. But most Living Landscapes are not gazetted, listed in an official government journal, or specific designated areas; therefore, they are not listed in schedules of statutory protected areas and are not protected by legislation. This lack of official recognition means that the existence of Living Landscapes is in jeopardy because they have limited legal protection.

3.6. Introduction to LSC governance in England

Previously I introduced an international perspective on LSC governance, here I examine the state of conservation governance in England. LSC governance strategies are complicated because, as I have shown, land tenure at the landscape scale is fragmented, largely due to the underlying structure of agriculture in England.

²⁶ The range of Living Landscapes aims and objectives is discussed in Chapter 5. RSWT's charitable objects are to promote the conservation and study of nature, the promotion of research into such conservation and to educate the public in understanding and appreciating nature, in the awareness of its value and in the need for conservation. The society primarily does this by supporting the work of the Wildlife Trusts to restore "a Living Landscape" and secure "Living Seas", which are its two key strategic objectives (RSWT 2015).

Voluntary sector governance in England has been shown to involve legal compliance, financial probity, strategic oversight, and vision (CSG, 2010; Charity Commission, 2012). Environmental governance is important because although it focuses on legal compliance and fiscal probity it also needs to address accountability and the complicated relationships between stakeholders. The remit for contemporary governance covers transparency, resilience, inclusiveness, fairness and connectivity (IEMA, 2015; IUCN, 2015a). Here I examine conservation governance by looking at the Lawton Report and the role of the voluntary sector.

3.6.1. Governance in the Lawton Report

The Lawton Report reviewed the wildlife and ecology network in England, and identified the need for innovative governance (Lawton et al., 2010). It advocates a positive approach to conservation in the UK, embodying “success and expansion, rather than the more familiar conservation tropes of threat and retreat” (Adams et al., 2014:2). Adams and his colleagues suggest that LSC has been successful in creating space for nature to move, whilst new technology such as handheld GPS devices provide both information about, and guidance around, conservation areas. These themes have been expanded by the English Biodiversity Group, which links nature protection with the enhancement of socio-economic well-being (Defra, 2011b; EBG, 2011b). Lawton’s new spaces for nature differ from traditional spaces that are protected by statute, either national or transnational, because they challenge the hegemony of traditional conservation by encouraging civil society and private entities to collaborate. This requires innovative governance regimens as the new biogeography of LSC draws on economics, science and sociology, an approach that is gaining traction amongst conservation organisations.

However, it is important to note that LSC governance, its social management, is evolving more slowly because of the complexity of land tenure and interests associated with LSC. Collaboration requires some form of innovative regulation and governance alongside consistent funding to ensure sustainability. There are successful examples from Africa, Australia and North America (Murphree, 2000; Murphree, 2004; Lindenmayer et al., 2008; Lockwood, 2009; Sanderson et al.,

2007). Such innovation is likely to require greater accountability and democracy than traditional conservation organisations have yet to cede. But to-date, there has been little examination of LSC governance.

3.6.2. Voluntary sector governance

In the UK voluntary sector, governance is overseen by charity Trustees or directors, who are elected by the membership. A review of the voluntary sector in Scotland confirms the importance of legal compliance and financial probity to governance (Crawford et al., 2009). However, some consider this approach to environmental governance too narrow, because “governance is about decision-making - who makes the decisions, why, and how those decisions are implemented” (WWF, 2015). Others consider that there are too many assumptions about what may be taken for granted (Lockwood et al., 2010).

Carsten Staur, in a report on environmental governance, says that “fragmentation, incoherence, insufficient cooperation and coordination, [and] inefficiency and lack of implementation” as reasons why governance is in crisis (Najam et al., 2006:iii). One response to these issues is the use of a code of good governance²⁷ (Figure 14). It provides a strategic and operational framework, which is regulated by The Charity Commission that ensures legal obligations are met (Charity Commission, 2015b; CSG, 2010). Within LSC, with its multiple stakeholders, the predominant approach to governance is a blend of stakeholder involvement and stewardship of the land. However, identifying suitable stakeholders willing to engage in governance is problematic, and some have called for a re-evaluation of governance structures, particularly multi-level and multiple stakeholder collaborative approaches (Cornforth, 2011; Lockwood et al., 2010). For example, governance mechanisms may be adapted to suit partners, with a balance between accountability to funders and delivery commitments, and the amount of community engagement (Great Fen, 2015).

Hodge and Adams suggest a light touch to LSC governance, where advice and guidance is provided, sometimes free-on-request, rather than requiring practical contributions to LSC. They note that partnerships should be legally formalized

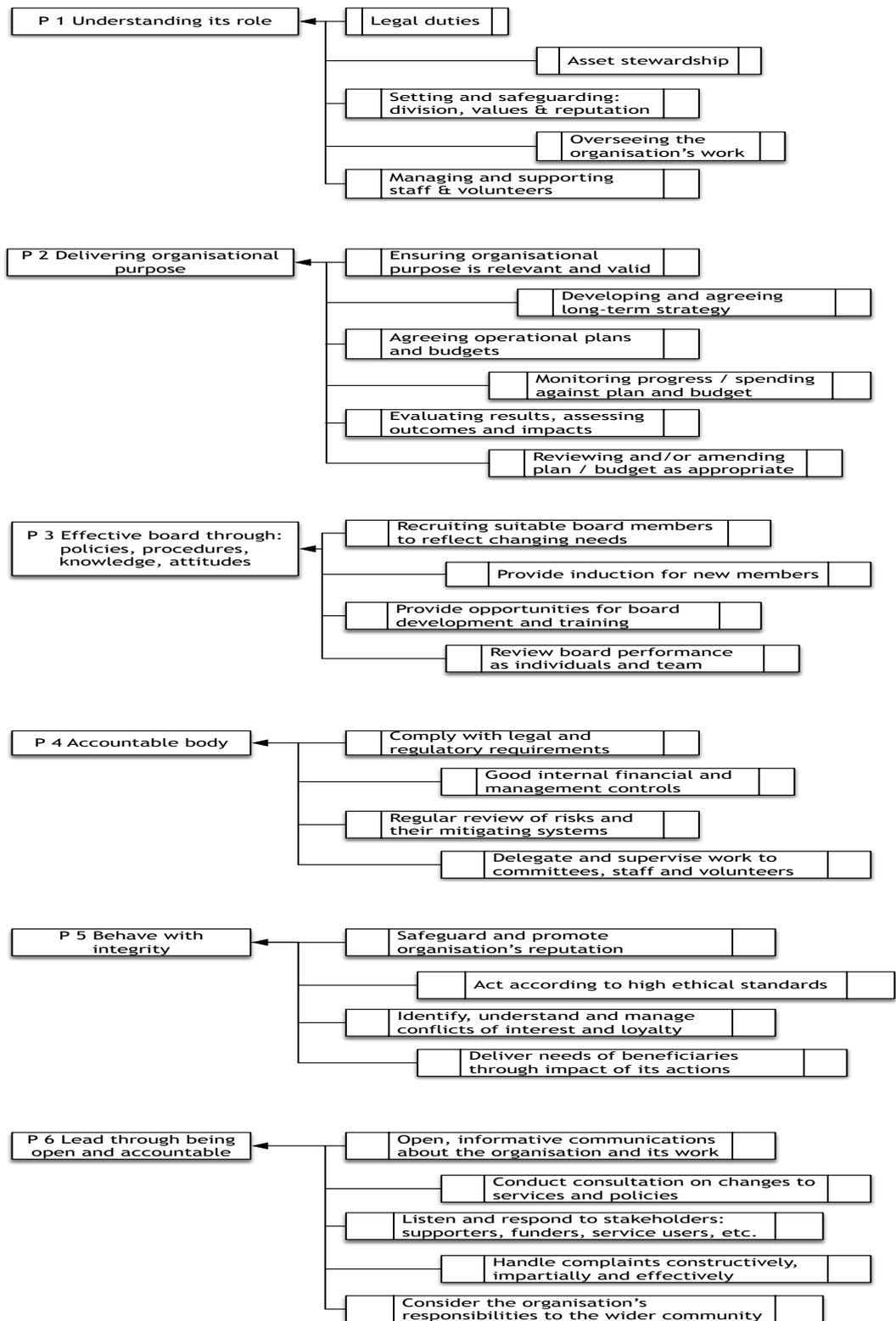
²⁷ This is produced for the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations and others.

to permit clear leadership and accountability (Hodge and Adams, 2014). Public trust is an aspect of legitimacy, which demonstrates how public interest in, and benefit from, LSC may be maintained. In their conclusions they call for detailed case studies to examine the “institutional framework” for LSC and its sustainability, which would clarify the grounds for accountability and legitimacy (Hodge and Adams, 2014:29). My research contributes to the understanding of this institution framework.

An example of innovative devolved LSC governance structures is the HLF Landscape Partnerships, where a lead organization is the accountable body that imposes strict governance and management requirements (Clarke, 2015). This is a flexible governance mechanism with formal partnership agreements; however, such agreements may prove problematic to scheme partners who do not want to be confined by legal agreements. To overcome such problems it has been suggested that governance institutions should be crafted with a focus on specific social objectives (Hodge and Adams, 2014). Nevertheless, there is consensus that innovative institutions can accommodate the challenges of LSC with key stakeholders from the private and not-for profit sectors (Adams et al., 2016).

The governance challenges are to find sufficient temporal, human and financial resources for the implementation and management of LSC. Another key governance question is how much government control is required to guarantee biodiversity gains, particularly as partnerships involving conservation organisations may not lead to the best governance option. This is because “from a broader social perspective” there are complexities within the partnerships (Adams et al., 2014:17). Such problems may relate to the difficulty of agreeing biodiversity objectives as much as the challenge in reaching consensus. My research is a fresh approach to LSC governance that considers three options. First, maintaining the status quo as no new framework is necessary (Elliott et al., 2011). Second, adopting an international framework (Lockwood, 2010; Lockwood et al., 2010; IUCN, 2015a). Third, developing an institutional framework that fits the English situation.

Figure 14 Charity governance code



Source: adapted by the author from the Governance Code Steering Group (2010)

3.6.3. Governance within TWT

Overall governance of the movement comes from the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT), which is the charitable body to whom all Trusts belong, with their chief executives and chairmen on its council. TWT England is a subsidiary organisation that has devolved responsibility for policy in England (RSWT, 2014). Governance at Trust level is a partnership between chief executive, senior management and representatives of the membership in the form of a council, board of trustees or directors. Governance arrangements are set out in Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association, which may be combined into a single document. TWT's governance framework has been developed over sixty years (Sands, 2012). It is transparent in so much as anyone may access the Charity Commissions website to see Trusts' charitable objectives. Sometimes Trusts publish their governance statements, but individuals need to be Trust members to participate in annual general meetings, and some websites do not provide any information on governance (RSWT, 2015; SWT, 2013).

Good governance depends upon leadership, which comes from a Trusts' chairperson and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with contributions from Patrons, President and Vice-President. Governance oversight is provided by strategic committees made up of volunteers and staff members, normally with a Trustee chairing the committee. Local nature reserves may have management committees, consisting of volunteers and staff that coordinate conservation on reserves. A volunteer who has specialist knowledge of the reserve, a member of staff or a Trustee may chair these committees. However, many reserves are not managed this way.

Some Living Landscapes have dedicated management and steering committees. Others rely on existing Trust governance mechanisms, which have been adapted, with variations, across the movement. TWT participates in various forms of partnerships, largely determined by expedience, historical precedence and geographic requirements. Partnerships may be horizontal or vertical, the former involve local authorities, businesses and voluntary sector organisations within the Trust's geographic area, whilst the latter involve government agencies. These partnerships are at the heart of Living Landscapes and are a practical expression of how local-external partnerships can affect and influence

conservation. Several Living Landscape partnerships involve a single Trust, with groups of farmers and landowners and Natural England working together to achieve common nature conservation aims. In some instances, several Trusts work together and adopt a more bottom-up approach. But most have adapted traditional approaches, akin to reserve management, for their governance.

TWT's approach to the governance of Living Landscapes is being driven by the consolidation of land holdings and by the multi-level partnerships required by funders such as HLF (Clarke, 2015:20). Some, however, seek to engage with a wider constituency within their Living Landscapes via community fora. Recent research has shown that the choice of mechanism influences eventual impact, outcomes and results, which are context sensitive (Hodge and Adams, 2014:15).

3.7. Summary

LSC is a voluntary sector conservation modality, involving cooperation between multiple stakeholders and landholdings alongside community engagement to create sustainable ecological networks within the landscape. In chapter 5, I examine the scale of Living Landscapes and what they mean to TWT. And in chapter 7, I discuss their governance in more detail, drawing on the evidence from my research using Lockwood's governance principles.

Chapter 4. METHODOLOGY

In previous chapters, I justified three aspects of my research: landscape perspective, social construction (SC) and governance. Here I set out my methodology to explore what is meant by LSC and how it is governed. I use surveys and interviews to unlock a social constructionist approach to my research. The landscape perspective on nature conservation focuses on the importance and scale of ecosystems. The SC approach provides me with insights into what LSC means to different people but I have established that there has been little research on the governance of conservation in England. All three aspects influence LSC which I explore through the example of TWT's Living Landscape programme.

Here I provide the reasoning for, and details of, my methodological processes, the why and how I gathered material to answer my research questions. I adopted Mason's strategy for a structured and exploratory approach to document collection (2007:68 & 78). I examined the primary academic and grey literature, and the documents from my email survey and semi-structured interviews. My document analysis determines their literal content, whilst I construct my knowledge about Living Landscapes from five case studies using institutionalism and DA.

In this chapter I explain my strategies and justification for data collection (i.e. email survey and interviews), along with my analytical methods. Section 4.1 explains my overall approach and structure, my aims and objectives and introduces the tools that I use. In section 4.2 I present my approach to the literature review and explain my understanding of social construction, where HI and DA produce knowledge about LSC that I describe in 4.3. In section 4.4 I discuss my approach to the email survey of the Trusts in England. In section 4.5 I explain the rationale for my case studies. This is followed in section 4.6 by an explanation of how I prepared for the semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. Finally, I consider some strengths and weaknesses in my methodology in section 4.7.

4.1. Introduction to my methodology

I use SC as an approach to understand Living Landscapes and its governance in England. I adopt a “lite” social constructionist approach, using HI and DA to understand Living Landscapes. I took this lite approach because Living Landscapes mean different things to different Trusts, but I did not want to complicate how I explained this to stakeholders. First, I used a quantitative approach to assess the size of LSC using data from Trust websites. At the same time, I collected documents from Trust websites about Living Landscapes in preparation for an email survey. Then, I used a qualitative methodology, using NVivo®, to organise and interrogate the material I had collected to determine the social construction of Living Landscapes. I use the concept of institutions to identify the characteristics of Living Landscapes, HI to give a historical perspective on them and their governance, and DA to give structure to what people mean by Living Landscapes, nature conservation and ecosystem goods and services.

I used four qualitative techniques to generate four sets of documents that I decipher to uncover what Living Landscapes mean. The literature review was a horizontal activity throughout my research providing the theoretical justification for the research. My document analysis of web-based TWT material helped identify LSC objectives. The same sources also provided some of the quantitative data about the size of the Living Landscapes (chapter 5). This was augmented with information collected during the email survey. My fourth dataset consists of transcripts from interviews with stakeholders from five Trusts involved in Living Landscapes. I discuss my analysis of this material in chapters 6 and 7.

4.1.1. Research methodology and structure

I adopted a mixed methodology, first using quantitative tools to understand the scale of Living Landscapes and to identify the important keywords and issues in the documents. I then used qualitative methods to explore these keywords and issues that led to exploring the SC and governance of LSC. The qualitative methods dominated the latter phases of my research as they exposed the institutions and meaning behind Living Landscapes.

My research was structured in four parts. First, I collected and analysed document about Living Landscape schemes in England from TWT and Trust websites²⁸ (section 4.4). This material was augmented with information from the email survey of all the Wildlife Trusts in England, which was followed up, where appropriate, with repeat emails and telephone conversations. The survey gathered additional documentation and information about the governance and management of Living Landscapes.

Second, I selected the case study Trusts to be interviewed, devised the interview guide prior to carrying out in-depth interviews (section 4.5).

Following the I transcribed them and analysed the transcripts using NVivo²⁹ according to best practice (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Finally, I collected my research material and information into this thesis by collating my analysis, preparing case studies (section 4.5) and writing up the findings.

4.1.2. Research objectives and methods

My research objectives are to:

1. Explore the social constructions of landscape scale conservation in the UK, regarding the movement of TWT in England.
2. Develop a typology of landscape scale conservation about the scale and scope of TWT's living landscape projects in the UK; this will define the characteristics, patterns and processes within TWT's landscape scale conservation programme.
3. Explore the social structures used to govern and manage landscape scale projects within the movement of TWT, with five English case studies.

The relationships between my research questions (section 1.3 and Table 1), approaches, and chosen methods and tools are depicted in Figure 15. It shows how my methods and qualitative tools contribute to my objectives and answer my research questions. My methodology contributed to these objectives and

²⁸ TWT's website contains a directory of sites, enhanced with an interactive map. See: <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/living-landscape/schemes>

²⁹ NVivo[©], is a computerised qualitative data analysis program for data collation and analysis. It is available from http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_nvivo.aspx.

answered my research questions through an observational approach and empirical study that examined the social concepts associated with LSC.

The literature review informed my research approach and use of an email survey and questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and case studies to address my first and third objectives and questions 1 and 3. I used quantitative tools to provide a physical dimension of the Living Landscape schemes, and an indication of what the important issues were before using document and DA to help understand LSC through its institutions and discourses.

As my research progressed, my approach became more qualitative. I used a quantitative technique of document analysis to identify keywords through their relative frequency in TWT's documents. Thus, I began to answer question 1 about the social construction of LSC, then I examined their physical characteristics, namely size and features of Living Landscapes (Greider and Garkovich, 1994). These characteristics are informal institutions, which I later explored through qualitative analysis (Arts and Buizer, 2009; Gailing and Leibenath, 2015)

My first qualitative technique, an email survey, gathered material that I would explore to explain the meaning of Living Landscapes. I then examined the movement's approach to LSC, question 2, through a series of semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed and imported into NVivo© for analysis. I used nodes, derived from an interview pro-forma and the themes that emerged during analysis, to code³⁰ and structure my material. These outputs were subjected to DA to elicit meaning behind the texts. My search for a typology (Objective 2) had been in part addressed by recent research by Elliott and her colleagues (2011), which I augmented with results from my semi-structured interviews. I synthesised my results into five case studies to answer question 3. The case studies were drawn from all over England and they helped me identify the types of governance models used for LSC.

³⁰ Coding is a technique that labels data according to ideas that facilitates future retrieval and analysis that may point to themes and patterns.

4.1.3. Document analysis - a quantitative tool

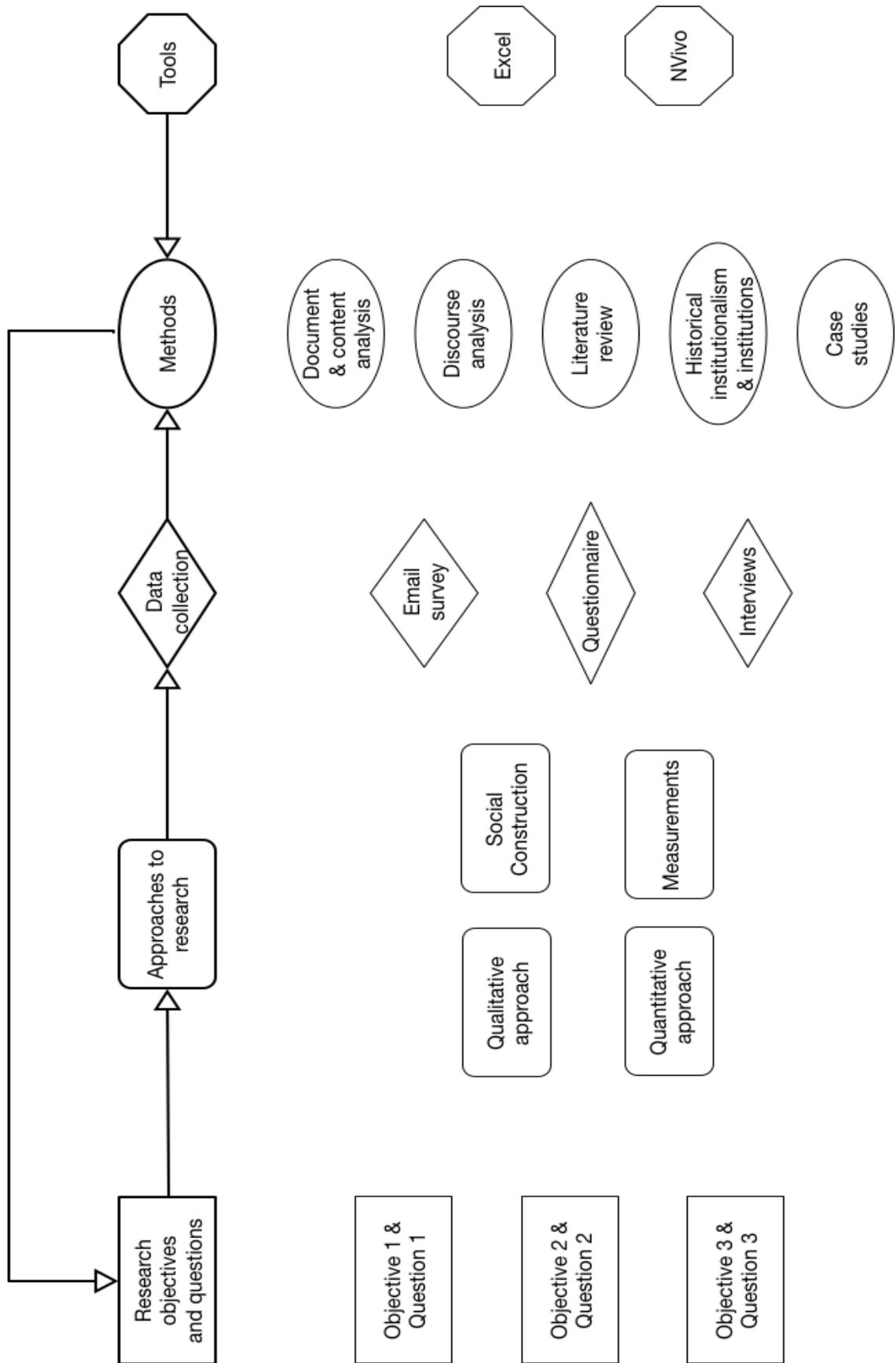
My quantitative approach, with its positivist perspective, introduced me to how I might answer my first research question by identifying the physical attributes and scale of Living Landscapes, the size and ecosystem type, and pointed to the keywords and issues in the documentation. These attributes are the informal institutions of the social construction of Living Landscapes (Arts and Buizer, 2009). I identified keywords and issues by counting word repetitions^{31 32} which identified LSC themes (Opler, 1945; Ryan and Bernard, 2003:96). This exploratory technique determined the pattern and distribution of keywords and themes associated with the constituent discourses identified in the Literature Review. Quantifying the keywords in this way provided triangulation with these discourses, as shown by the crossover between the discourses identified in Table 2 and the keywords shown in Figure 16 and 17. Triangulation is the corroboration of research that verifies and develops confidence. I use my various sources of material and methods to justify my findings as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994:266-267).

The keywords reflected the policy context (e.g. biodiversity, and ecosystem), the objectives of the scheme (e.g. restoration), its delivery mechanism (e.g. partner or partnership) and its implementation modalities through action verbs (e.g. the need to conserve, create, connect or celebrate). This systematic approach, derived from lexical frequencies, would reveal how Living Landscapes are socially constructed (Phillips, 2001). However, although the word counts and keyword analysis pointed to the sorts of discourses associated with LSC, more detailed qualitative analysis is required to answer my research questions and understand the discourses in action.

³¹ Adobe Acrobat X Pro© calculates total and specific word counts within a document, and Scrivener© generated word lists with individual frequencies, which I plotted using an Excel© spreadsheet. Adobe Acrobat X Pro© and NVivo© provided context mark-ups of the keywords in the texts which were used to code my documents.

³² Scrivener 2.3 is a text processing and project management tool providing document statistics such as wordlists and word counts available from <http://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php>.

Figure 15 Research flowchart



Therefore, I began to focus on qualitative techniques, making use of NVivo©, to code and analyse textual material at nodes, representing the themes that emerged from my research. I imported material from 53 sources that generated 235 different nodes of references.

4.1.4. Document analysis - qualitative tools

I collected over 250 documents during my inspection of websites and in response to my email survey, which I collated and organized with the aid of NVivo©. Some respondents provided additional documentation, but few provided the material I requested, rather they directed me to where the information might be found. The purpose of the analysis was to help me answer my research questions by exploring what stakeholders understood LSC. I coded keywords in my material allowing me to go beyond the words in the texts, interpreting it according to the appropriate institutions, discourses and relationships (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015). These LSC relationships are codified into institutions, the societal mechanisms that produce and propagate discourses.

My document analysis of interview transcripts used qualitative content analysis and discursive methods as suggested by Bryman (2008:369 & 515). To begin, I encoded my material as suggested by Bazeley and Saldana (Bazeley, 2013; Bazeley and Jackson, 2013; Saldana, 2013). My analysis of various texts was influenced by two papers. First, texts were examined to identify new discourses, frames and institutional coalitions as Arts and Buizer (2009) had done when analysing forest governance. I then used HI and DA to investigate the social construction of LSC in these texts to answer my research questions in a similar manner to Gailing and Leibenath (2015). This approach provided analytical rigour and triangulation between sources, and permitted me to use inductive analysis and holistic thinking to understanding how LSC arguments are constructed. Finally, I prepared a series of case studies to illustrate different models of Living Landscape governance.

4.1.5. Reliability and validity of my research

The validity and reliability of the material gathered during my email survey and interviews needs to be established to support the quality and rigour of my

research. The relationship between my sources helps validate my findings. Subsequent triangulation between my sources (i.e. corporate documents, responses to survey and interviews) establishes an internal consistency and reliability of my material as recommended by Bryman and Mason (Bryman, 2008:376; Mason, 2007:38-9).

The documents collected through my email survey were used to validate the information I had retrieved from Trust websites. Email responses also provided contacts for my subsequent interviews. The charitable status of the Trusts provides an ethical foundation for the credibility, reliability and validity of the material assuming participants' integrity (Mason, 2007:188). Further, their validity is endorsed by TWT's reputation for authenticity and credibility over 100 years of its existence, especially as the material on Trust websites is open to scrutiny.

However, I am aware that my interpretation of the material may lead to bias if my findings are not shown to be representative and repeatable across the movement (Bryman, 2008:516; citing Scott, 1990). Therefore, triangulation collaborates my findings from various sources and validates the different perspectives of LSC. Bryman (2008:379) notes that this produces a nuanced understanding of a subject. And as Mason suggests (2007:57), the comparison of results from the interpretivist and discursive perspectives is part of the spectrum of understanding.

I interpreted my material using two lenses. First, I adopted a strategic perspective that observed my material from an analytical rather than operational position. Second, my insider position, as a member of a Wildlife Trust, a past trustee and a serving member of two standing committees, confers a privileged perspective. My own integrity is demonstrated by the triangulation of sources from RSWT, Trusts and individuals that support the answers to my research questions as a participant-observer or informed observer (Mason, 2007:92). In this role, I am a detached enquirer. For example, during the email survey I announced myself as a research student with its attendant naive associations. However, during the interviews, I prefaced my conversations by introducing myself as a Trustee acting as a detached observer. But this may have influenced responses to my questions, although Mason (2007:56) notes that

this “insider” position helps establish bona-fides. Being an insider eased my exploration of the collective and individual understanding of Living Landscapes as LSC and its governance.

4.2. Literature review

This horizontal phase of my research developed my knowledge of social construction, nature conservation, LSC and its governance. It helped me identify areas where my research could contribute knowledge and developed my arguments in response to my research questions. I systematically reviewed the literature, using an evaluation matrix to eliminate extraneous material, which helped eliminate bias and imbued my review with rigour as suggested by Bryman (2008:85-87). The review also justified my pursuit of the social construction perspective on LSC (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015; Greider and Garkovich, 1994). It validated the ecosystem concepts behind LSC (Lawton et al., 2010). And it identified the potential for Michael Lockwood’s principles to unlock the complexities of conservation governance (Lockwood, 2009; Lockwood, 2010; Lockwood et al., 2009; Lockwood et al., 2010). The literature also provided the contextual background to nature conservation (Evans, 1997; Jongman, 1995; Stolton and Dudley, 2010).

4.2.1. Strategy, design, tactics and justification

My strategy had three stages, but it was a continuous process that evolved with the focus of the research, away from partnerships towards social construction and governance. First, I identified the key environmental authors on conservation. I then examined the importance of social construction, followed by an examination of environmental governance.

My initial literature review sought to understand possible delivery mechanisms for LSC. It identified formal and informal forms of institutions and discourses involving farmer partnerships and the role of stakeholders (Banks and Marsden, 2000). I also explored the concept of adaptive governance as a mechanism for LSC (Laven et al., 2005; Olsson et al., 2007). I then considered the role of conservation organisations as bridging institutions (Gorg, 2007). Later, I

investigated nature conservation and its paradigms to confirm the relevance of my research questions (Merchant, 2006; O'Riordan, 1977).

At a tactical level, I used the internet and dedicated bibliographic search engines to access academic peer-reviewed and institutional sources. I used keywords as selection criteria for papers to be reviewed. These keywords included: social construction, nature conservation, landscape scale conservation, large scale conservation, and governance. I recorded the main characteristics of each paper in a synthesis matrix according to a protocol suggested by Webster and Watson (2002:xvi-xviii). This protocol included: year published, authors, country of study, aim and objectives, theory used, methods used, sample size, results, themes covered, recommendations for future study, and any limitations of the research. This systematic approach helped me understand relationships between concepts and resulted in a conceptual framework for my research (Bell, 2008:100-103; Bryman, 2008:82).

4.2.2. Collection and analysis of my research material

I used bibliographic tools to identify the key authors³³ concerned with social construction, LSC and its governance spanning over forty journals (Table 21 and Table 22 in Annex I). Where possible major papers were downloaded into Endnote³⁴. They were subsequently uploaded into NVivo[©] for detailed coding and analysis according to best practice (Bazeley, 2013; Bazeley and Jackson, 2013; Saldana, 2013). I used a synthesis matrix to identify trends and themes in the main academic literature (Webster and Watson, 2002:xvii). I then used Barnett's triage approach to identify possible concepts or topics (e.g. wildlife trusts, landscape scale, governance, conservation and social construction), which led to the selection of criteria to refine the numbers of papers to be reviewed (Barnett, 2006). I cross-referenced these criteria with the governance topic to identify key papers. Then I used exclusion criteria to consider just those papers dealing with governance, conservation and the environment.

³³ Key authors have a significant number of articles in print and are in collaboration with others.

³⁴ Endnote is software produced by Thomson Reuters that manages bibliographic references.

My initial search revealed agri-environmental issues, biodiversity, ecosystem management and landscapes as keywords and themes. Figure 16 shows the frequency of keywords in the titles of papers, published between 1985 and 2009, related to landscape scale conservation. Later, I augmented them with additional authors to cover specific themes, such as:

- ✓ Governance (Lockwood et al., 2010; Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013);
- ✓ Social construction (Andrews, 2012; Bird, 1987; Case et al., 2015; Demeritt, 2002; Purdon, 2003; Wallwork and Dixon, 2004);
- ✓ Institutions and discourses (Arts and Buizer, 2009; Gailing and Leibenath, 2015; Greider and Garkovich, 1994); and
- ✓ LSC (Adams et al., 2014; Elliott et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2010).

I plotted these themes in a citation network as proposed by Hart and others, which helped me identify linkages between papers and highlighted keywords (Hart, 1998; citing Garfield, 1994; Jacso, 2005; Meho, 2007).

4.3. Social construction

4.3.1. Social construction and LSC

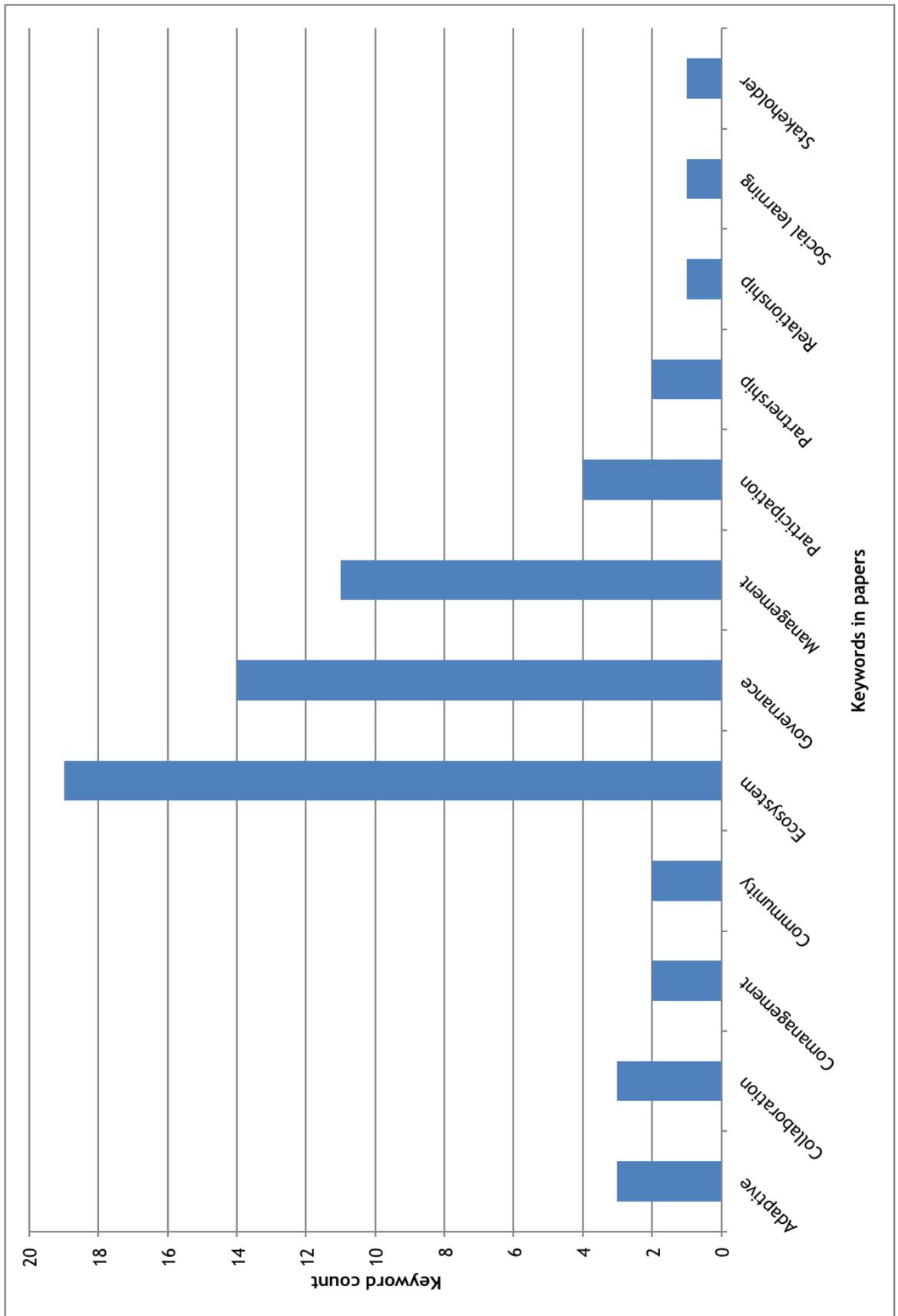
In the following paragraphs, I set out two aspects of SC that helped me understand LSC: historical institutionalism and discourses. I needed to understand and contextualise them before using them to explore Living Landscapes. I use HI and DA to explore LSC and below I describe how they are relevant to my research questions before discussing my methods for collecting and analysing of my material.

I use document analysis to examine TWT's contextual position, which I discuss in chapter 5. I then discuss the historical institutionalism and discursive insights to Living Landscapes in chapter 6.

4.3.1. Historical institutionalism of LSC

I was drawn to exploring how discourses become institutionalised within Living Landscapes (Arts and Buizer, 2009). Later I found Gailing and Leibenath's examples of formal and informal institutions particularly helpful (2015).

Figure 16 Example of keyword frequency in LSC titles (1985-2009)



HI is appealing because it provides insight into the SC of LSC through its institutions. It contributes to answering my research questions by providing a historical perspective on conservation and its governance. HI is important because it is an intermediary position between those who seek a strategic and rational choice through adherence to its rules and those who ask “what should I do, what is appropriate?” rather than “what do I get out of it?” (Steinmo, 2008:134). In contrast HI asks why decisions are made or how an outcome occurred by examining evidence through the historical record. My research draws on Gailing and Leibenath’s work by examining which institutions drive and frame Living Landscapes (2015:128). For example, one such institution is TWT’s vision.

Other institutions emerged from my document analysis as I examined the movement’s approach to nature conservation. These include policies, norms, informal and formal rules that evolve over time through the agency of those involved (e.g. conservation organisations, funding entities and government agencies). Formal rules include regulations and administrative arrangements as well as statutory instruments or articles of association; whereas, informal rules consist of shared values and perspectives, traditions, customs and routines (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:125).

Of particular interest, concepts such as customs and traditions provide a historical context for these institutions, particularly where path dependency leads to the development of new institutional elements and the institutionalisation of LSC, or a change in the direction of the pathway (Berkhout, 2002; Hotimsky et al., 2006; Froger and Meral, 2012). For example, path dependency is evident in the infrastructure investment required to maintain LSC, which includes keeping irrigation channels open, or mowing rides, or maintaining walls and fences (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:129).

In chapter 6 I examine the context provided by HI, where questions such as why and when do Wildlife Trusts adopt LSC reveal the range of possible institutions (Thelen, 2002:92-93).

4.3.2. Discursive approaches to LSC

I use DA to reveal the world view and grass-root interpretations of Living Landscapes along with the external and internal perspectives and relationships held by TWT. For example, the external relationships are with government agencies and other landscape stakeholders, whilst the internal relationships exist within its own hierarchy and across the movement. This analysis also helps me answer my research questions.

I found Hajer's example of acid rain and dead trees useful in explaining DA: "large groups of dead trees are not a social construct; the point is how one makes sense of dead trees", where dead trees are identified as evidence of a problem and "victims" of pollution, and acid rain is an element of the industrial pollution discourse (Hajer, 2005:299). Further, Arts and Buizer identified "biodiversity, sustainable development and governance" as global forestry discourses (Arts and Buizer, 2009:344). Therefore, I explore Living Landscapes as a metaphor for LSC, which may be experienced through visiting the countryside and observing its informal institutions, or participating in its sustainable development and governance with a view to conserving biodiversity. Consequently, I adopted Hajer's 10-step approach as a methodological template (Hajer, 2005:306-7). A summary of my research process compared to these analytical steps is shown in Table 7. Confirmation that this is a valid approach is provided by Nielson who used official documents and semi-structured interviews to identify discourses, institutionalisation and coalitions associated with integrated landscapes (Nielson, 2016:179).

Gailing and Leibenath (2015) demonstrate that DA is useful in understanding and accommodating various stakeholder perspectives. These authors say that discourse theory has three elements: a preoccupation with language and meaning, relationships between signifiers are important, and the individual's relationship to these signifiers confers meaning (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:124 & 126-7). These elements are evident in LSC, its focus on ecosystems, the relationship between, for example a field, its boundaries and its crop or habitat, and the role of the ecologist, farmer or volunteer in determining and protecting the characteristics of LSC. Further, the TWT vision contains examples of Living

Landscapes whose storylines contribute to identifying discourses by identifying a problem, proposing solutions and setting out visions (Nielson, 2016:180).

Table 7 Mapping of research stages to Hajer’s 10 analytical steps

Research stages			Hajer’s 10 analytical steps
I	Document analysis	Horizontal literature review	1. Document research
			2. Helicopter / scoping interviews
II	Selection of interviewees		3. Document analysis
	Conducting interviews		4. Key player interviews
III	Analysis		5. Data mining for possible lines of argumentation
			6. Analyse for positioning effects
			7. Identify key incidents
			8. Analysis of institutional practices linked to lines of argumentation
IV	Collation and writing up		9. Interpretation
?	Possible follow-up if time allows		10. 2 nd visit to key stakeholders

Source: adapted from Hajer (2005:307-7)

4.4. Email survey

In this section I discuss my email survey³⁵. I developed a strategy that focused on collecting and organising material so that it could be analysed systematically in preparation for answering my research questions. My strategy was to identify and canvas people responsible for Living Landscapes; this information came from TWT and Trust websites. Where no one was named I rang the Trust and asked for contact details. I devised the survey to elicit information about Living Landscapes, which would augment material on Trusts’ websites. Thus, my material was cross-checked and triangulated. The email survey was my initial contact with TWT.

³⁵ A description of my survey is reproduced in Annex II.

4.4.1. Strategy and design

I designed the survey to establish a relationship with the Trusts, demonstrating my interest in Living Landscapes before seeking additional material (Bryman, 2008:644). I sent an email to 40 Wildlife Trusts using TWT's email contacts for Living Landscape schemes as addressees during June 2011. I received responses from 75% of them, once reminders were circulated in October 2011.

The survey had three objectives, first, I needed to collect material on which to conduct my analysis. Second, I wanted details about their LSC objectives and mechanisms. Third, I hoped to identify candidates for interview. I asked for documents about the Living Landscape schemes relating to:

1. Objectives of the scheme;
2. Scheme delivery mechanisms;
3. Stakeholders/partners involved; and
4. Any other information that would be of interest.

The survey provided me with a range of material on 64% of the Living Landscape schemes in England³⁶. Most respondents answered my questions and provided supplementary material, and some expressed an interest in being interviewed. Subsequently, I followed-up those who had not responded with a phone call to identify possible interview candidates. Eight of the Trusts (21%) contributed further information about their Living Landscape schemes. Consequently, this material provided insight into these schemes, with an overview of Living Landscapes, particularly the partnerships.

I created a database to hold these details about Living Landscapes. It was populated with notes of telephone conversations and email responses, and with copies of pertinent documents. I also recorded the date responses were received and any subsequent contact. I had follow-up conversations to clarify any ambiguities, and confirmed their willingness to participate in future interviews. The database served as a repository for documents associated with each Trust. These documents included newsletters, leaflets and publicity

³⁶ I canvassed UK Trusts including those in the Isle of Man, the Channel Isles, the Isles of Scilly, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The percentage of England covered by the response was calculated once these outliers had been removed from the data set.

brochures about the schemes. Often maps were included showing the location and features of the schemes. Some material was confidential, such as funding proposals and consultants' reports.

I coded these documents according to origin, with each Trust being allocated randomly a letter, from A to AO, which insured anonymity if I were to cite the material. This convention was adhered to for the duration of my research, so that when I coded the interview transcriptions I added a two-letter suffix, derived from randomly generated names, to the relevant Trust code to denote each interviewee. All the material was divided into categories divided up by question, which I transferred into NVivo© for later coding and analysis.

4.4.2. Analysis of documents from the email survey

The first step in my analysis was to organise responses and documents from my survey. The range of documents I collected included general reports, publicity material, corporate and governance reports. Publicity material, although the most common type of document, did not provide much information. The most productive material were the corporate and governance documents. Table 8 shows the type of documents plotted against contributing Trusts. This material includes official documents from public and private sources, personal communications, as well as material held electronically, such as maps, leaflets and reports. Other material I analysed included TWT's directory of Living Landscape schemes, general summaries of the individual schemes, and documents provided in response to my email survey. Individual Trusts' websites were inspected for details about Living Landscape schemes.

My approach to qualitative content analysis adheres to best practice (Bryman, 2008:515). I looked for keywords and phrases in texts that described Living Landscapes, which gave an indication of the types of the discourses that might be present in the texts (Kambites, 2014). These texts included TWT's vision for Living Landscapes, the material Trusts publish about them, and the interviews I conducted with Living Landscape stakeholders.

Table 8 Contributing Trusts and document types

Document type	Examples of Living Landscapes ³⁷	Governance ³⁸	Partnership ³⁹	Management reports ⁴⁰	Corporate ⁴¹ / strategies
Trust					
A					X
B					X
C			X		X
E		X	X	X	
G	X			X	
M	X				
Q		X	X		
R		X			
T		X	X	X	
U			X		
V		X	X		
W				X	
X				X	
Y				X	
Z				X	
AA				X	
AD			X		

This approach is justified because much of the material is available to the public and may be readily verified. I organised the material I collected from my email survey, which included TWT’s vision by dividing the documents into categories covering policy and strategy documents, management plans and situation reports, along with guidance for partners and their terms of reference. I then

³⁷ These examples were short pieces or articles in reports or standalone summaries of Living Landscape schemes or initiatives.

³⁸ Governance material included financial applications and proposals, and management plans.

³⁹ Partnership material included terms of reference, scoping reports and extracts from reports.

⁴⁰ These included feasibility studies, consultation reports, annual and final reports for schemes as well as a State of the Environment report.

⁴¹ Corporate material included policy and strategic documents.

analysed each category using NVivo© to identify keywords and phrases that are indicative of the discourses used by TWT. My analysis followed guidance recommended by text books and researchers (Bryman, 2008:529-531; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1996; Polkinghorne, 2005; Riessman, 1993; Ryan and Bernard, 2003; Sandelowski, 1991).

For example, the Living Landscape Vision and Strategy is summarised in Box 1. Its objectives and delivery mechanisms provided details about how Living Landscapes are implemented through the participation of stakeholders and partners. Responses showed that habitat conservation was the main discourse, although a few schemes also had socio-economic aspects to their conservation activities. Some respondents provided me with additional material about Living Landscapes that is confidential.

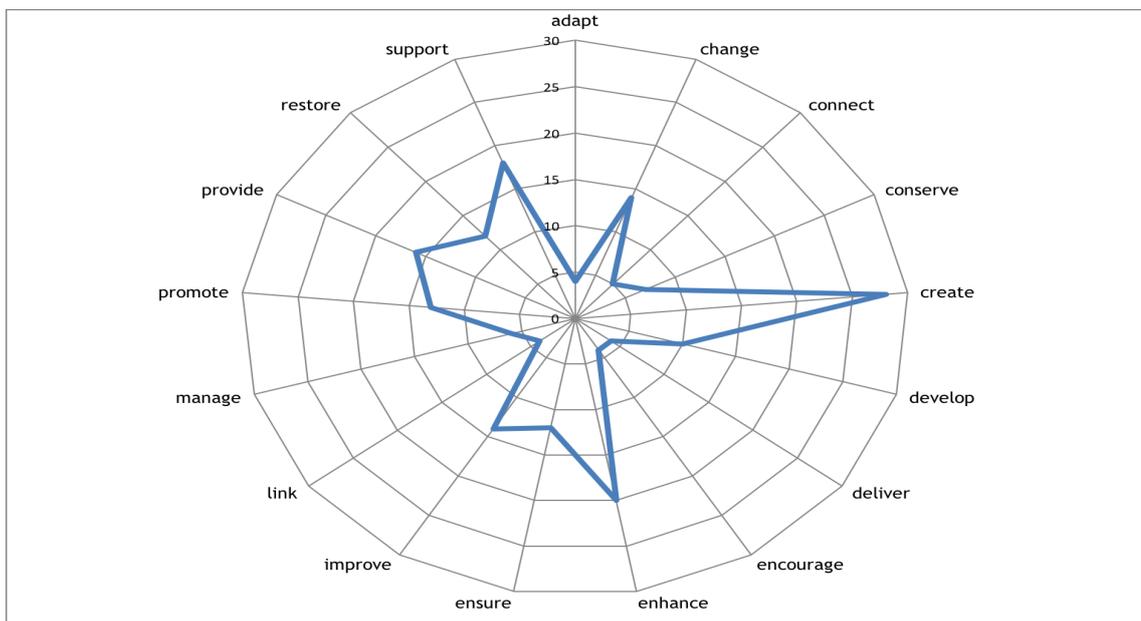
Box 1 The Living Landscape Vision

TWT's vision for Living Landscapes is "*a recovery plan for nature*", where fragments of wildlife-rich land are connected (The Wildlife Trusts, 2015b). Most Trusts refer to TWT's webpages for the definitive interpretation of Living Landscapes as LSC, which is expressed as "*enlarging, improving and joining up areas of land to create a connected ecological network across the UK, for the benefit of both wildlife and people*" (The Wildlife Trusts, 2015a).

Initially, I used word counts as part of my document analysis to identify keywords associated with prominent themes in the documents. Their absence may also be systematic of missing themes, or what is not being stressed. However, many words were not germane to my textual analysis. Therefore, articles, conjunctions, and prepositions were ignored. I then carried out discriminant analysis to select the keywords after discarding 125 common English words as suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2003:94, 97 & 103). This keyword analysis produced a lexicon of 87 technical words (

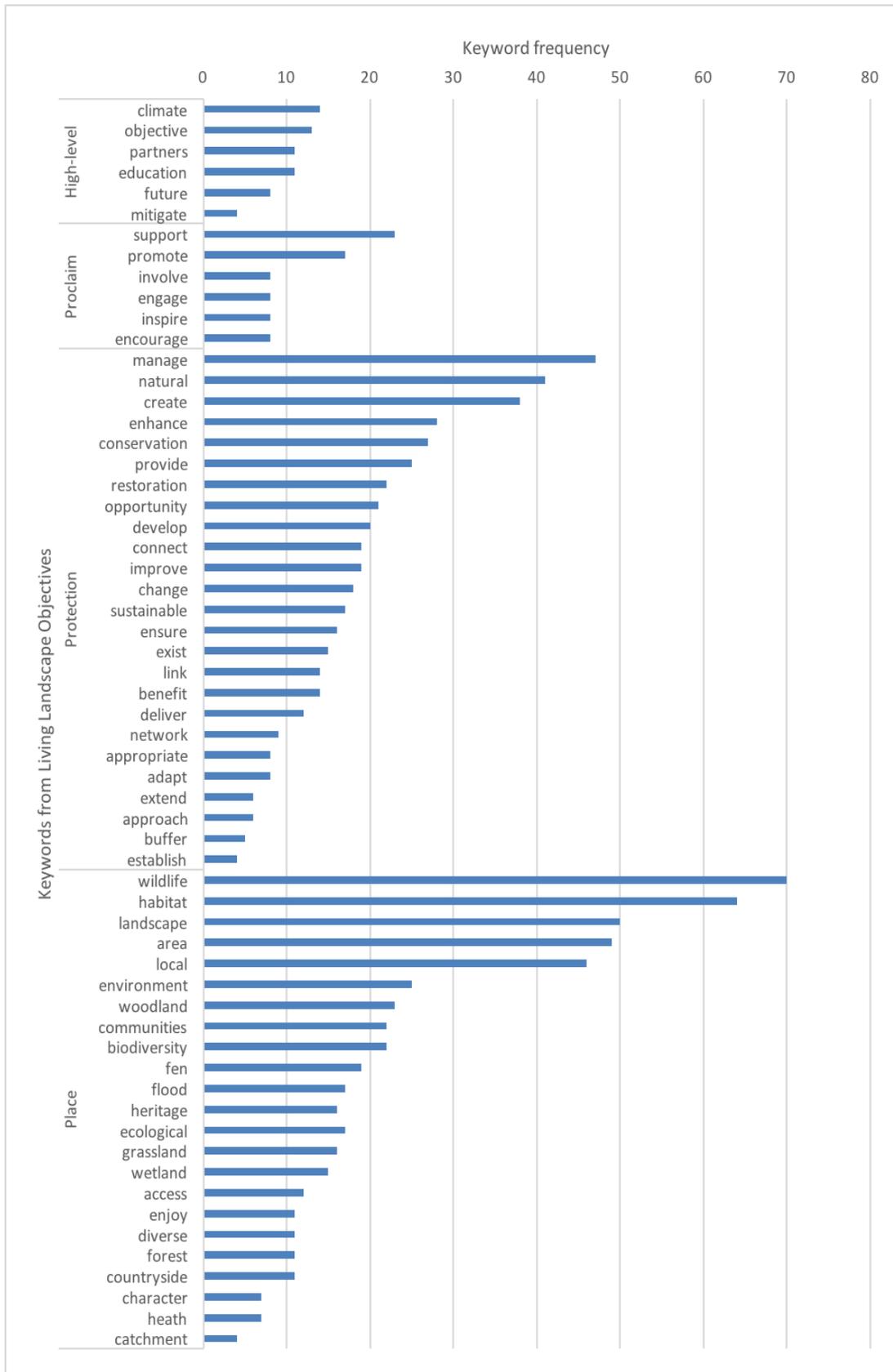
Table 25). Further discriminant analysis reduced this to 29 groups of words (Table 27), which were reduced by to twelve keywords: *adaptation, biodiversity, celebrate, connect, conserve, create, ecosystem, mechanism, partner, policy, restoration, vision*. One view on this data is shown in Figure 17, a Kiviart chart that plots the frequency of action verbs in Living Landscape’ objectives to show the relative importance of creating Living Landscapes. The purpose of such charts is show the balance between the various elements displayed (O’Loughlin, 2009:242).

Figure 17 Action verb frequency from Living Landscapes’ objectives



Source: Living Landscapes’ objectives extracted from documents collected from the email survey. An alternative way of depicting this data is shown in Figure 18 where the chart is divided into four groups of words that match the four themes that emerged from my analysis of Living Landscape objectives. The two smallest groups relate to high-level strategic concepts such as climate change, mitigation and education, and promotional ideals including engagement, inspiration and encouragement. I followed this up with context analysis, where I highlighted keywords within each sentence or phrase with colours. These colour coded highlights were then cut and sorted electronically using NVivo© to identify themes. This inductive process, where the repetition of key words within the “empirical data”, leads to the subjective identification of themes used by TWT (Ryan and Bernard, 2003:87-89).

Figure 18 Keyword frequency from the objectives of Living Landscapes



Source: Corporate documents (183) from my survey in 2011.

I used a similar process to identify keywords and action verbs associated with scheme objectives, which I used as a reference for analysing Living Landscape documents. For example, action verbs are used to analyse the objectives set out in Trusts' policy documents to demonstrate a sense of purpose and intent in the vision (i.e. *create*, *enhance* and *promote*). However, neither type of chart added much value to my quantitative analysis of LSC. On one hand, such analysis is strong because it reveals patterns of word use, for example the incidence of the terms biodiversity or ecosystems. But on another it is limited because it does not permit comparison of documents between Trusts due to the variation in documents. Although, this type of analysis was a digression, it highlighted the need for a nuanced approach to contextual analysis. And although the quantitative analysis identified keywords, NVivo© allowed me to delve into their context and meaning.

4.5. Case studies and the LSC governance

The methodology for my case study approach was in three stages. The first stage was to request documents about Living Landscapes from TWT in England to provide an overview of the context and character of Living Landscapes, its discourses and institutions. The second stage was to select suitable Living Landscapes for the in-depth exploration the governance and meaning of Living Landscapes. Only five Trusts agreed to participate but this was sufficient to gain insights into LSC. The third stage was the selection of stakeholders to interview. I chose five Trusts and examined their various approaches to LSC which I used as case studies (Trusts AD, E, L, Q and V, see chapter 7). These case studies were populated with two sets of data. Documents provided context for LSC, then the interviews provided insight and perspectives from Living Landscape stakeholders on the schemes' governance framed around Lockwood's governance principles (Lockwood, 2009). The interview analysis provided a context for Living Landscapes (Bryman, 2008). I mitigated the risk of generating biased responses by establishing context for the interviews from associated documents.

4.5.1. Case study strategy and design

These case studies provided context to the various approaches taken by each Trust to LSC governance by highlighting distinctiveness and any commonalities. I first collected information about individual Living Landscape schemes, once analysed they provided a basis for my interviews. In my interviews I used open questions to explore approaches to Living Landscapes (Bryman, 2008:52; Mason, 2007:167). An example of this holistic approach is the organisation chart presented with each case study. These charts are derived from a literal and interpretive reading of the organisational information presented in the Annual reports prepared by each Trust and from my interviews (Mason, 2007:170).

Because my case studies are derived from interviews and textual material they provide assurance to the validity and reliability of my research (Bryman, 2008:437). The individual storylines in the case studies reflect the flexibility of the interview guide, as interviewees were encouraged to talk about their involvement with Living Landscapes. These storylines help place my conversations into perspective and to identify themes (Riessman, 1993). My approach respected the stories that the interviewees told about their particular Living Landscapes (Polkinghorne, 1996).

My case studies protect the anonymity of the participants and their locations, whilst emphasising key points about conservation and summarising the variety of governance structures of each Trust. They contribute to answering my third research question by illuminating each Trust's approach to the governance and management of Living Landscapes. I use these case studies to illustrate different approaches to Living Landscapes and their governance. My initial research suggested that there would be several suitable candidates for case studies from the movement. I refined my selection by reviewing the documentation I had collected from my email survey before contacting the potential candidates. Table 9 shows the material I collated and analysed.

4.5.2. Identification of the case studies

The material I analysed from 14 Trusts suggested that my case studies might be drawn from seven Trusts (C, E, Q, R, T, U & V). Of these candidates, five provided some partnership information (Trusts C, E, Q, T & U), but only Trusts C,

E & T provided specific material that might provide a focus for case studies. In addition, the five management reports I collected contained operational information about the workings of partnerships (Trusts E, G, T, W & Z) that might be suitable for case studies. The corporate documents I was given were also a possible focus (Trusts A, B & C and Regions A, B & C). Trusts G and M were also candidates as they had prepared short vignettes as publicity material. Finally, Trusts E & T provided three types of documents that provided information about partnerships, and Trusts C & Q provided two.

The paucity of partnership information prompted me to search for other selection criteria. These included: (a) habitat types, (b) geographical spread, (c) strategic foundations, (d) personal interest, (e) size of programme or scheme, and (f) availability of data (Ragin, 1997). Consequently, I decided to concentrate on five Trusts that matched criterion (f) and were willing to participate: Trusts AD, E, L, Q and V.

This was a strategic selection or sampling from the cohort of people sent questionnaires and asked to be interviewed (Ragin, 1997; Rosch, 1978). Therefore, my chosen case studies are examples of Trusts' approach to Living Landscapes, based upon their willingness to participate in the interview process. This improved the generalisability of the information in my case studies and provided a snapshot of Living Landscape activities, objectives and purpose (Ragin, 1992). This status of these schemes is summarised in Table 10.

4.6. Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of my interviews with Living Landscape stakeholders was to provide insights into the institutions and discourses, including governance models. This section describes how such institutions and discourses are revealed. I refer to the individual interviewees by a two-part random code, its first letter refers to the Trust that individual is associated with, followed by a two-letter identification acronym. A brief description of character behind each acronym is

4.6.1. Strategy and design

My interview strategy was based around the selection of candidates to be interviewed from the responses to the email survey. However, several Trusts

declined to be interviewed; eventually only five Trusts agreed to participate. I contacted potential participants by email to discuss suitable interview dates. I subsequently rang the candidates to confirm their availability; however, availability was limited by resource constraints. Only one person was interviewed by telephone (AD-IM), the rest I visited at mutually agreed time and locations (i.e. cafes, reserves, scheme and Trust offices).

Table 9 Schedule of document types collated during the email survey

Trust ID	A	B	C	E	G	M	Q	R	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AD
Document type																	
Corporate strategies	X	X	X														
Management plan								X			X						
Partnership references			X	X			X		X	X	X						X
Funding proposal								X	X								
Consultation reports				X	X							X	X				
Interim reports									X		X			X	X	X	
Final reports									X		X				X	X	X
Case studies					X	X											

Source: Documents collected during my survey in 2011.

I wanted to interview a range of stakeholders, but the selection of stakeholders for interview was left to the discretion of the five Trusts. The proportion of interviewees by category is shown in Figure 19 which shows that 60% of the interviewees (15 people) were employed by the Trusts, and 40% of interviewees were voluntary supporters: project partners (4 people), trustees (4 people), or project volunteers (2 people). I had hoped to interview at least one representative from the five main categories from each Trust: Trustees,

management, staff, volunteers and partners. Eventually, I interviewed 25 people; a detailed breakdown of them is represented in Figure 21.

Table 10 Status of Living Landscapes in the five case studies

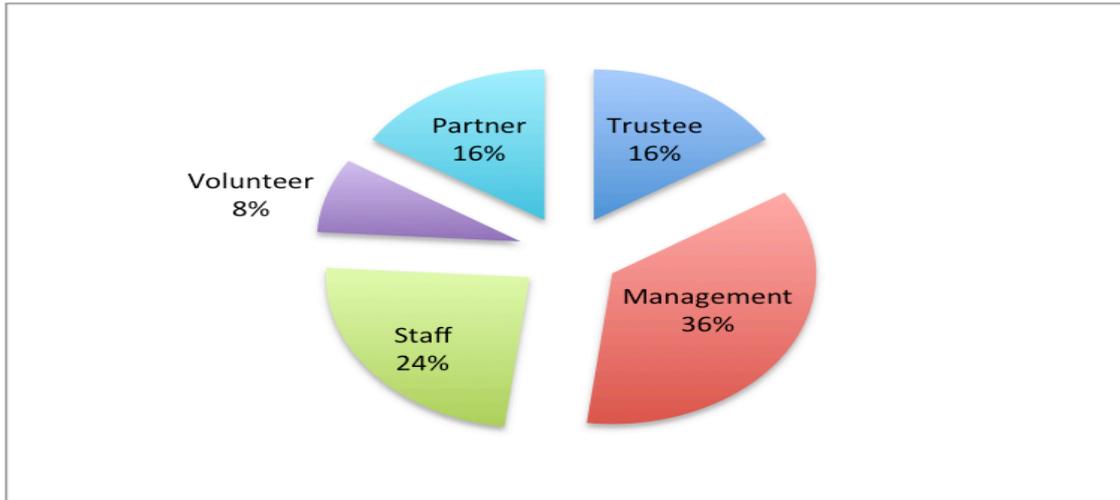
Wildlife Trust	AD	E	L	Q	V
Number of interviewees	1	6	6	10	4
Number of Living Landscape schemes	8	9	3	1	1
Types of Funding / stakeholders	HLF, NIA, NE, EA, FC, internal, private sector, local government	HLF, EA, NIA, internal, local government, private sector, NT, NE, FC, FWAG, charitable trusts, IDB, local communities	Utilities, Private sector, EA, FC, NE, HLF, charitable trusts, EU (Leader & RDA) Defra, IDB	HLF, NE, EA, charitable trusts, private sector	HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme, NIA
Notes	Local authority partnerships are important	Informal partnerships with landowners are key to the success of the schemes	Another Living landscape scheme is in preparation	These Trusts' websites no longer mention specific Living Landscapes, rather they stress the contribution that their individual reserves / sites make to an overall Living Landscape in their respective counties. Therefore, reference is made only to the Living Landscape scheme discussed during the interviews	

Source: Individual Trust websites, accessed: 4th July 2016

Of the staff interviewed there was one finance officer, whilst seven senior managers were interviewed. The other stakeholders interviewed were 5 managers, 4 delivery partners, and 3 volunteers. Of the delivery partners, one was a landowner and farmer (Trust E), two were senior representatives of another wildlife conservation organisation (Trusts Q & V), and one was a director of a heritage conservation charity (Trust Q). This cross-section of interviewees provided a range of responses to my questions about Living Landscapes and their

governance. The majority of interviews produced texts with a historical perspective depicting a conservation journey from volunteering to managing LSC that allowed detailed analysis.

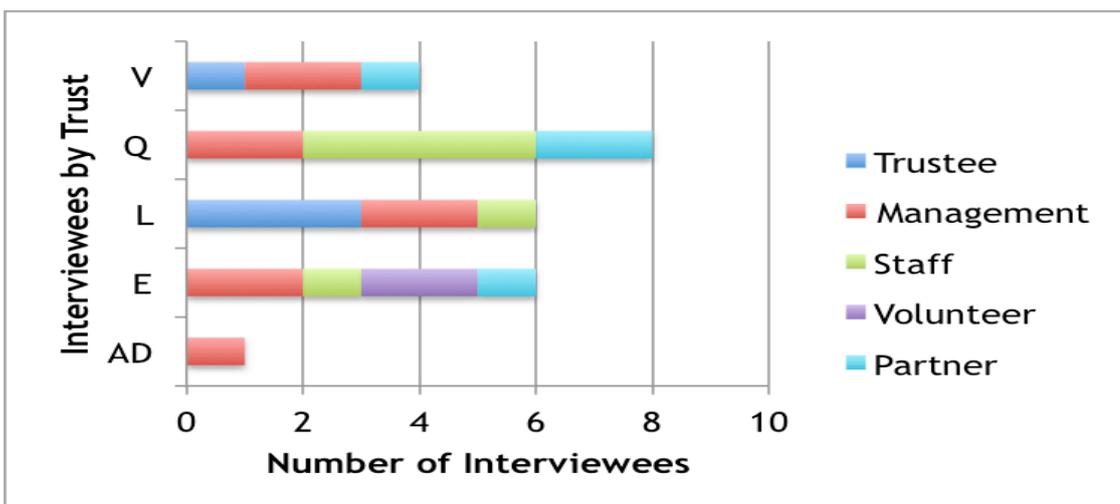
Figure 19 Percentage of Interviewee by category



Source: Interviews conducted with representatives from five Trusts in 2012.

Figure 19 shows the proportion of different interviewees, whilst Figure 20 shows the number of interviewees according to their Trust and category, and Figure 21 provides a detailed breakdown of types of interviewees. I believe 25 interviewees represents an adequate snapshot of Living Landscapes, although I would have liked to interview more Trustees and volunteers.

Figure 20 Number of interviewees by Trust

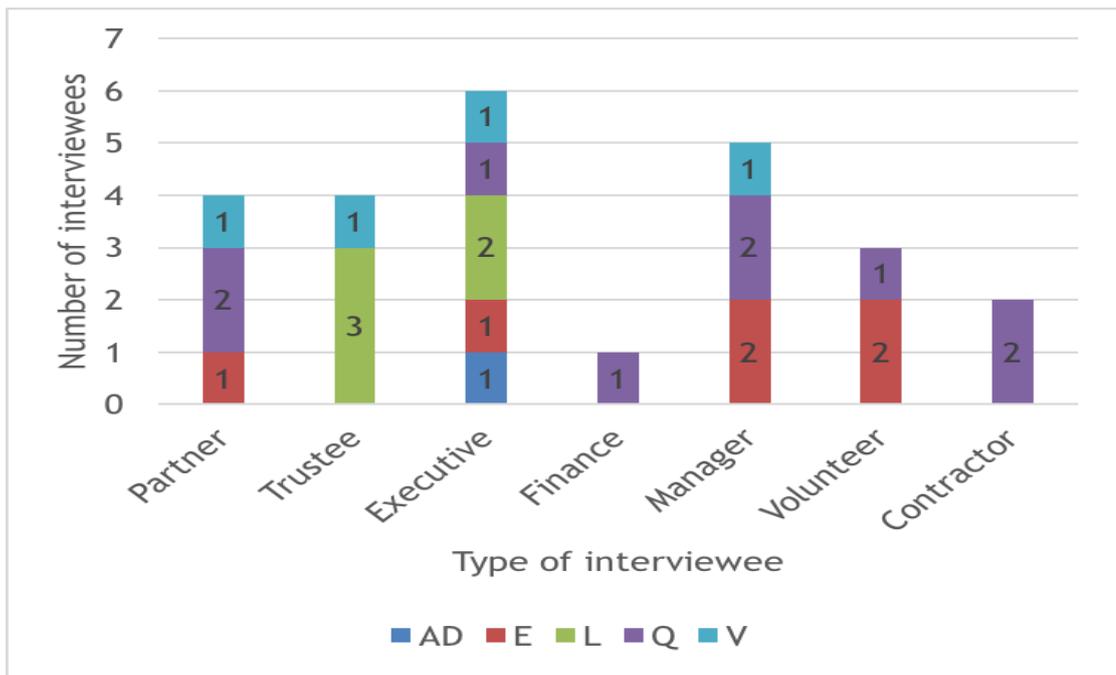


Source: Interviews conducted with representatives from five Trusts in 2012.

4.6.2. Semi-structured interview questions

I prepared an interview guide with the open-ended questions to direct conversations with interviewees. The guide is reproduced in Annex III. It is in five parts, first there is an identifier section containing the name and code for the Trust, the interviewee's name and interview date.

Figure 21 Types and numbers of interviewees



Source: Interviews conducted with representatives from five Trusts in 2012.

There are four sets of questions (sections A-D) covering different aspects of Living Landscapes: (A) conservation objectives, (B) the Living Landscape vision, (C) Lockwood's governance principles, and (D) the verification of information that arose from the email survey and document analysis. I developed these questions after analysing responses to the email survey. An outline of the guide is described below. I use the guide as the template for my eventual coding of the interview transcripts.

Section A provides the interviewee with an opportunity to describe their interest and involvement in Living Landscapes before asking about the objectives of the schemes. Respondents' answers provide a context to Living Landscapes and contributes to research questions 1 and 2. For example, questions A4-A13 explore the SC of Living Landscapes by reflecting their emphasis and what they omit.

Section B enquires how TWT's vision for Living Landscapes is interpreted. This is a reference to Living Landscapes' recovery plan for nature - our living conditions (TWT, 2007:5; TWT, 2010:7). I examine respondents' interpretation of the vision and how it is implemented through scheme objectives. Respondents' answers provide insight into what Living Landscapes mean and how nature conservation influences socio-economic development. The responses contribute to answering research questions 1 and 2.

Section C explores Living Landscape's governance by examining respondents' responses to Lockwood's seven governance principles (Lockwood, 2010:758-762). I crafted the questions to test whether Lockwood's framework is applicable to the voluntary sector in England. The questions address elements of each principle and responses create a picture of each principle as it is interpreted by stakeholders. Their responses reflect whether Living Landscape governance meet Lockwood's good governance principles. During the interviews, I encouraged respondents to provide opinions as well as observations and their responses contributed to answering research question 3.

Section D is in two parts. First, there are questions based on each Trust's response to the email survey which I needed to validate my findings from my document analysis. Then, I explore interviewees' opinion of Elliott's typology of LSC (Elliott et al., 2011). Their opinion was evaluated by rating the relative importance of each element. This triangulated my document analysis and contributes to research question 2.

4.6.3. Interview protocol, techniques and analysis

I devised a protocol to ensure that the interviews would not be jeopardised during the process and meet ethical standards. All interviewees gave verbal consent to my using their responses in my research, and agreed to the conversations being digitally recorded. I used two digital recorders to record the interviews, each equipped with a stereo microphone covered with a windshield. This protocol maintained the integrity of the recording should there be equipment failure and allowed interviews to be recorded outside if necessary. I provided interview guides to the interviewees in advance as suggested by Mason, giving them time to consider my questions before providing

informed consent to the use of the material in my research (2007:81). My questions were designed to be flexible and informal opportunities to discuss the Living Landscape vision and its governance. I used Section A to encourage respondents to talk freely, prior to talking about their Living Landscapes and introducing the subjects of governance and typology. After each interview, I transferred the recordings to my computer for transcription. I sent copies of the transcripts to interviewees and invited any comments. None were received.

The transcriptions are based upon an audio recording of the interviews using an orthographic transcription method. The transcription is not a verbatim record of my interviews as I needed to interpret part of the conversations. Specifically, I corrected grammatical errors, completed broken-off words, and excluded repetitive words. I also do not include breaks in speech, such as pauses and hesitations. Any sections of the audio recording that I found unintelligible are denoted in the transcription by [...]. Where text is paraphrased or unclear it is inserted within brackets [] and any unfinished sentences are denoted in the transcription by ... Finally, if discussion participants names or proper nouns are mentioned in the transcript they are denoted by an alternative word in brackets [] to maintain confidentiality.

I uploaded the interview transcripts of my semi-structured interviews into the NVivo© for coding prior to analysis. I analysed the transcripts in three stages using the same techniques as above. First, I examined the storylines around Living Landscapes that might indicate its range and type of institutions and discourse. Then I reviewed the governance and management frameworks. Finally, I reflected on what emerged from the interviews. Each stage produced possible nodes for future coding in NVivo©. My interview guidelines were my initial coding template, which I augmented with free-form coding according to the interview template as suggested in textbooks (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Bazeley, 2013; Bazeley and Jackson, 2013).

This approach to coding, where each subject is given its own node, facilitated my document analysis by revealing the indicative institutions and discourses associated with Living Landscapes. For example, from Section A of my interview guide one of the nodes is “Aims”. I gave this three child-nodes: landscape scale, monitoring and evaluation, and socio-economic development. I then created

free form nodes to capture and code ideas that emerged from the transcripts that did not match the template. Once the nodes had been populated, the resultant node tree was inspected and similar nodes were grouped together. Where identical free-form nodes appeared under multiple headings they were merged into a single node, others were grouped according to synergies between nodes. The content of each node tree was exported into a text document to facilitate mark-up and extraction as possible suitable quotations to be referred to in my results.

NVivo© facilitated this shift in analysis from content to context, as the range of institutional themes and associated discourses emerged. Thus, I examined the minutiae within the documents to reveal institutional elements of each Living Landscape scheme. This allowed me to piece together how Trusts and individuals perceived Living Landscapes. This is presented in three chapters. First, chapter 5 examines Living Landscapes through its purpose and scale with an introduction to the governance and possible typology. Then chapter 6 explores the social construction of Living Landscapes by identifying constituent institutions and discourses. Finally, chapter 7 presents the institutions of Living Landscape governance through five case studies. These chapters form part of the triangulation process that draws together results from the literature review, document analysis and interviews, whilst allowing propositions to be made about LSC through the lens of the Wildlife Trust movement.

4.7. Reflections on the methodology

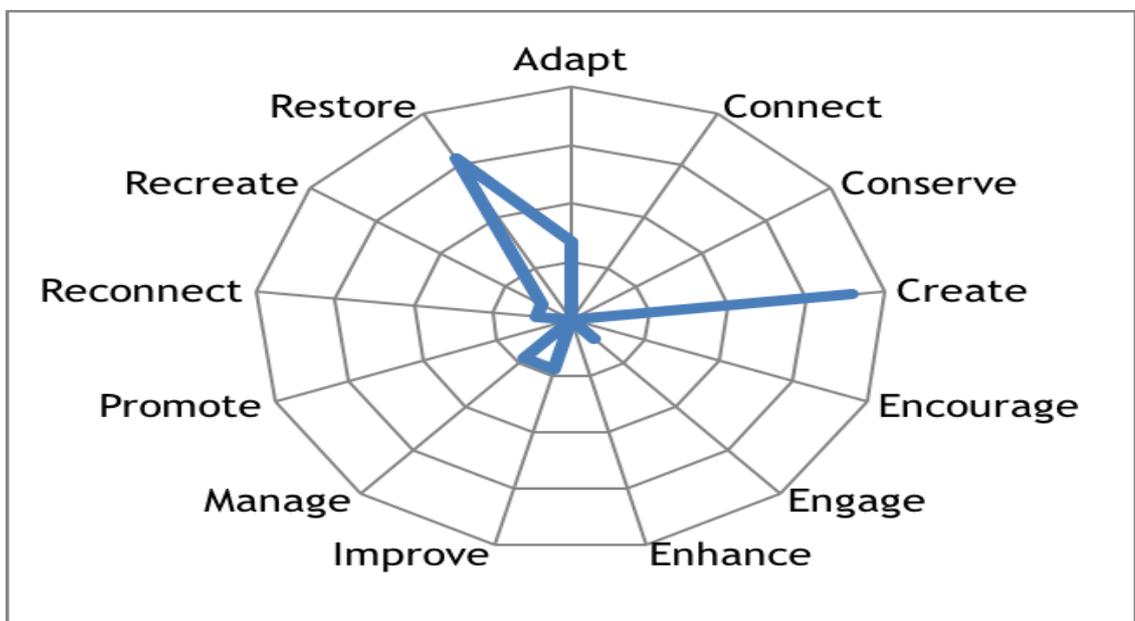
My methodology focused on qualitative methods, although I used quantitative word counts as an exploratory tool to indicate the themes in the material I collected. Here I assess some of the strengths and weaknesses of my research by reflecting on my document and content analysis, and case studies.

4.7.1. Quantitative document analysis - word frequencies

Initially, I conducted a quantitative study of the material using frequency analysis. To do this, I identified keywords in the Living Landscape vision and strategy to show what was being emphasized in my material. This was an exploratory investigation of the social construction of Living Landscapes.

For example, the horizontal bar chart (Figure 23) plots the frequency of keywords from the 2010 version of the Living Landscape Vision, grouped under four categories: place, protection, high-level and proclamation. It shows the emphasis on a sense of place, where words such as landscape, local and habitat predominate, followed by the importance of management and conservation. I produced similar charts for the various categories of documentation: partnerships, publicity, governance, maps and reports. Further analysis shows the relative proportion of action verbs in the document, where dual poles emphasising creating and restoring habitats dominate (Figure 22).

Figure 22 Proportion of action verbs in the Living Landscape 2010 Vision

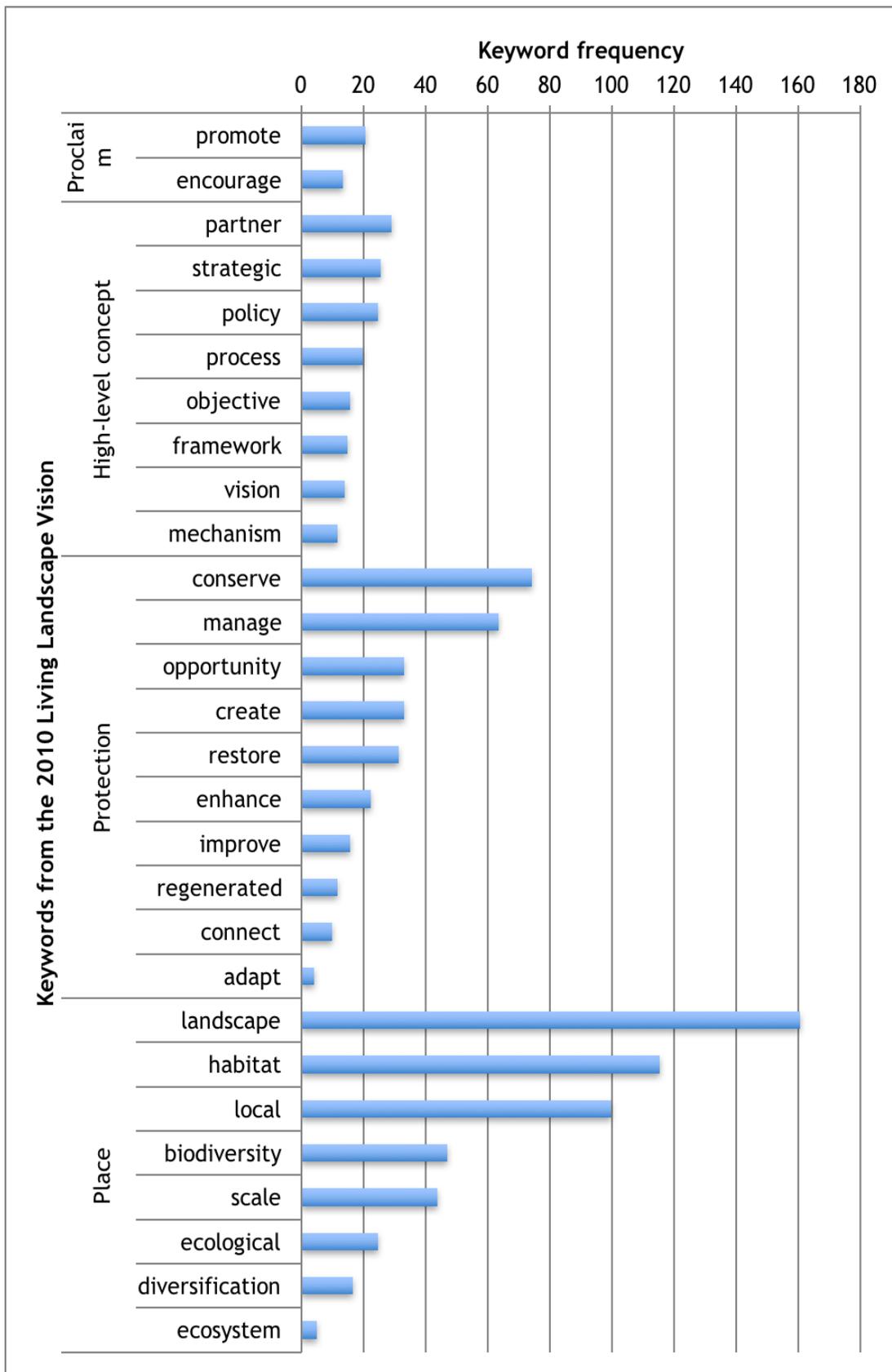


Source: *A Living Landscape, play your part in nature's recovery, protecting wildlife for the future* (TWT, 2010)

4.7.1. Qualitative document analysis

The storylines in the case studies provide insight, a snapshot, into the practical issues of day-to-day governance and conservation management of Living Landscapes. The case studies demonstrate various governance models used by Trusts in contrast to the models suggested in the literature (Ludwig et al., 2001; Lockwood et al., 2010).

Figure 23 Keyword frequency from the 2010 Living Landscape Vision



Source: derived from the Living Landscape Policy document (TWT, 2007)

The interviews produced more material than I had expected, reflecting their duration and the amount of time it took to transcribe them. During the interviews, I noted that there was a reluctance to discuss governance, and RSWT declined an invitation to contribute to my research. It was evident that the governance notions of financial probity and legal compliance were believed to be adequate for multi-stakeholder LSC. Disappointingly, despite my guarantee of anonymity interviewees were reluctant to challenge existing practices. This may be because of the academic nature of the research, or because I was considered an insider. My examination of Living Landscapes provides a partial view of LSC governance. However, when augmented with DA it reveals a nuanced understanding.

4.7.2. Geographic focus of the case studies

Initially I wanted to have a geographic focus to my research, with case studies reflecting the different perspectives on LSC in South West England. However, only one Trust from that region was prepared to participate. Therefore, I rejected the possibility of intra or inter-region comparisons. Nevertheless, my initial examination of the South-West's approach to LSC was constructive because they used a science based approach to LSC where Nature Map⁴² identified potential LSC areas (SWWT, 2005). Therefore, I decided to consider the whole of the English cohort of Wildlife Trusts as potential candidates for interviews. I contacted five Trusts who had previously agreed to be interviewed during my email survey. I interviewed 25 people during the summer and autumn of 2014 from these Trusts. This was fewer than I had hoped but proved sufficient to begin to understand Living Landscapes and their governance.

⁴² Nature Map is a geographical information system (GIS) that selects parcels of land to create the matrix of Living Landscapes land holdings. It identifies potential buffering zones around nature reserves that have similar landforms, which allows modelling of optimum habitat areas. It is used by some Trusts, and others are developing specific GIS tools that use river catchment areas that can be used to model ecosystem services.

Chapter 5. LIVING LANDSCAPES: PURPOSE AND SCALE

In this chapter I explain the purpose and scale of Living Landscapes and how they are categorised and governed. I draw on evidence from three sources: TWT literature, documents identified in my email survey, and interviews with Living Landscape stakeholders. This evidence is important because it establishes the context of my research and explains why Living Landscapes are significant.

This chapter is in six sections; first I describe the purpose of Living Landscapes. I follow it with sections explaining their scale with a discussion of the National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) classification. In the fourth section I discuss the concept of Living Landscape governance, and in the fifth I explore how Living Landscapes might be categorised. Finally, I summarise my findings.

Unless stated otherwise, the sources of data used to prepare the charts and tables in this section are derived from the Living Landscape Vision, documents collected during my email survey, and subsequent interviews.

5.1. The purpose of Living Landscapes

In this section I explain the purpose of Living Landscapes, placing them within the context of LSC in England, by setting out TWT's history, its vision for Living Landscapes and by exploring its objectives. The purpose of Living Landscapes is evident from the range of objectives in these schemes (Table 13).

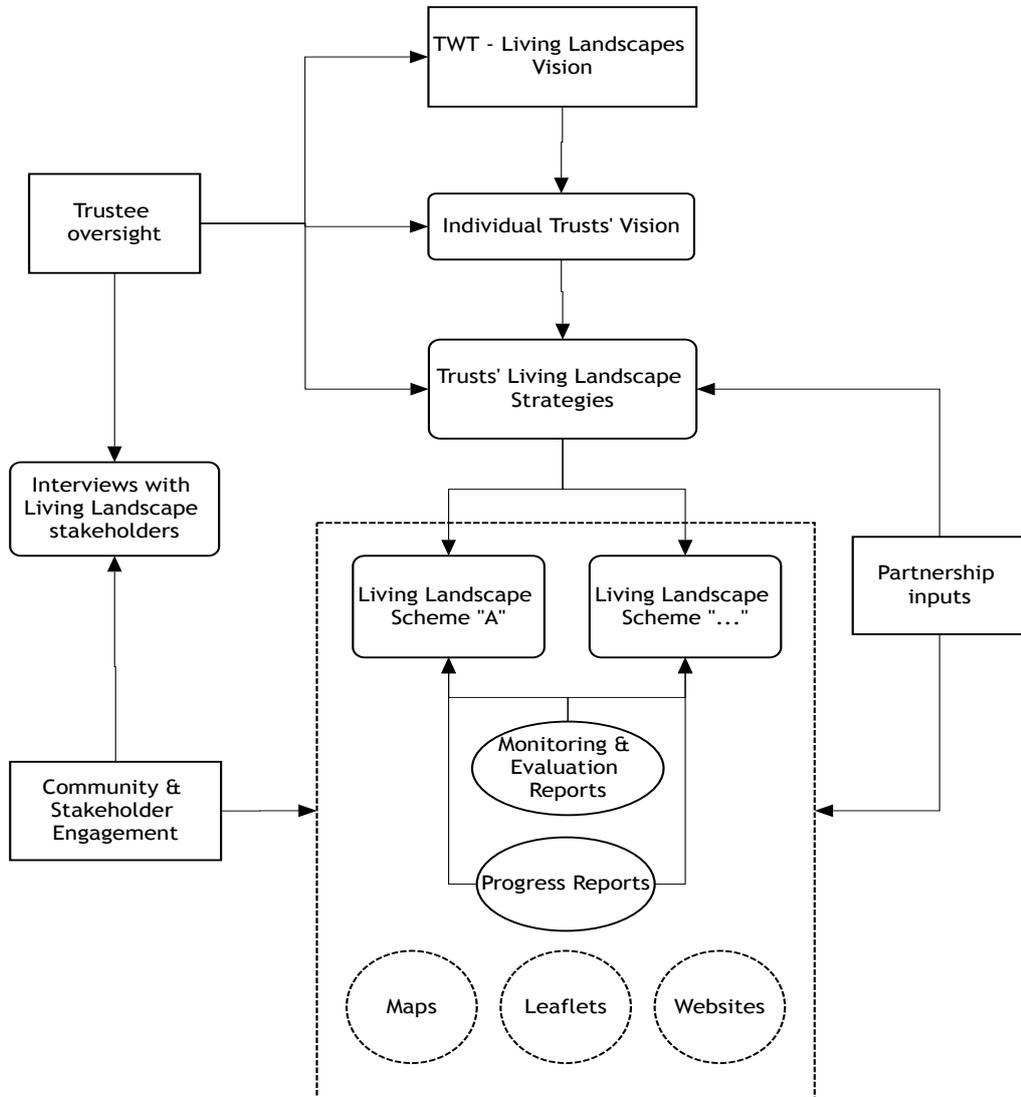
The context for Living Landscapes is provided by examining the role and strategy of the Wildlife Trusts conservation movement. The strategy comes from TWT's vision⁴³, charitable aims and objectives (TWT, 2007; TWT, 2010; TWT, 2015b). It is supported by evidence from examples of Living Landscape schemes, and their aims and objectives obtained from a variety of documents collected during the email survey, from Trust websites and during interviews. The range and hierarchy of documents are shown in the flowchart in Figure 24.

In England landscapes are very diverse, and such diversity suggests complexity. This is recognised by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), who identify 65 priority habitats in the UK, some of which are included in the 78

⁴³ RSWT's strategy is available from its website (<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org>) and is reproduced by the Charity Commission (<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk>).

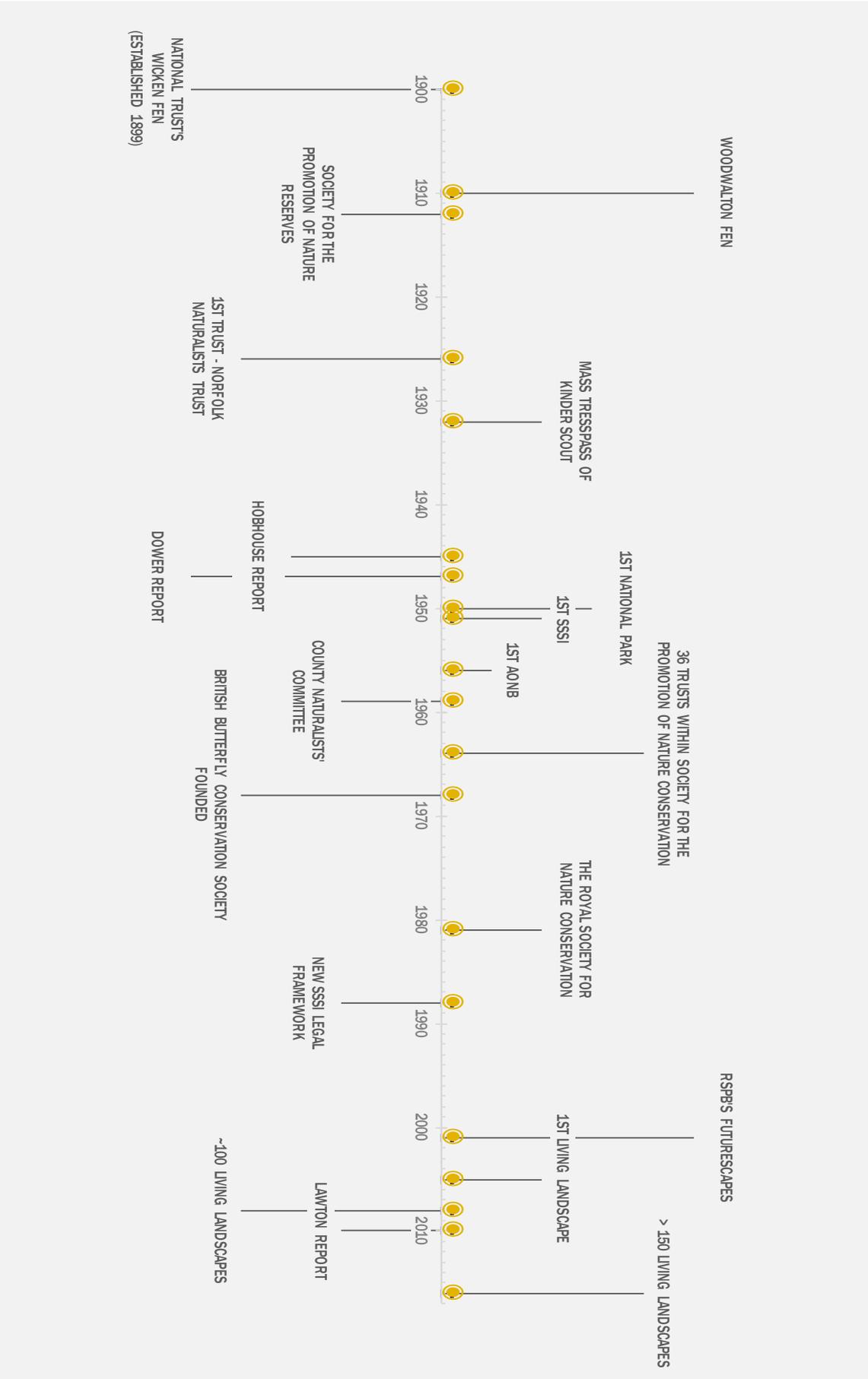
habitats listed in Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive (EC, 1992b; JNCC, 2010). I examine other possible ways to classify them in section 5.4.

Figure 24 Document Hierarchy



Source: Prepared by author following analysis of the interviews

Figure 25 Timeline - context for TWT



5.1.1. TWT's historical context

TWT's historical context is depicted in Figure 25. This timeline begins at the end of the 19th century with the establishment of two nature reserves in the Fen country with the assistance of Charles Rothschild. This timeline provides an overview of why HI is relevant to the study of Living Landscapes; for example, it depicts when formal institutions, such as legislation enacted and organisations formed. TWT has evolved since Rothschild founded the SPNR⁴⁴, the precursor to TWT, in 1912 with the establishment of 254 nature reserves around the country (Barnes, 2015). TWT's flagship Living Landscape scheme is based around the first Rothschild reserve: Woodwalton Fen (McCarthy, 2012). Thus, Charles Rothschild is the intellectual forefather of Living Landscapes.

The first county wildlife trust was Norfolk Naturalists Trust, which was established in 1926. By the early 1960's there were 36 Trusts across the country and now there are 47. In 1976, the RSPN was granted a new charter when it changed its name to the Society for the Promotion of Nature Conservation. Another name change came in 1981 when it became the Royal Society for the Promotion of Nature Conservation. A final name-change to the RSWT came in 2004. The first Living Landscape was established in 2006 and there are now over 150 across the country (TWT, 2015b). Each Trust is independent and is free to interpret the meaning of Living Landscapes in their own way based upon the RSWT's vision for a recovery plan for nature. This builds upon the movement's charitable objectives which focus on land management and habitat restoration, whilst embracing the wider objective of building functional ecosystem networks. These objectives acknowledge potential benefits including improvements in economic, health and social wellbeing (RSWT, 2015).

5.1.2. An ambitious vision for England

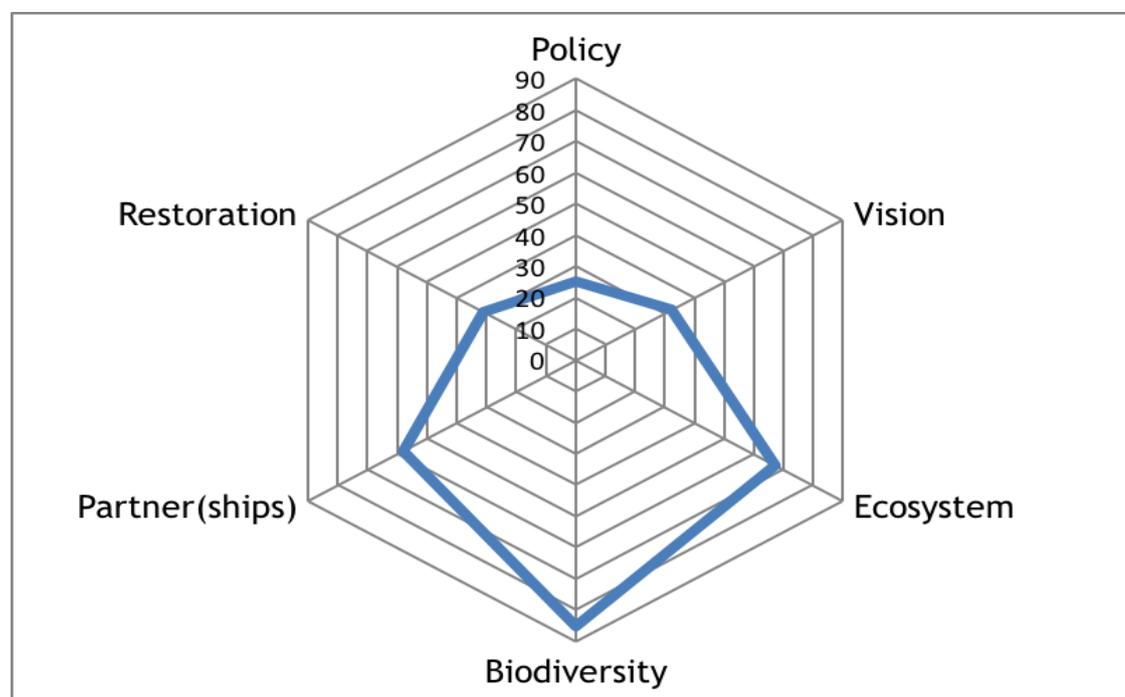
The scope of Living Landscapes is expressed in its vision, which is focused on the nature conservation discourse (TWT, 2007). It emphasises ecosystems, biodiversity and partnerships, which echo throughout the movement's policies, strategies and plans (Figure 26). Most Trusts refer to this vision, emphasising

⁴⁴ George V granted its Royal Charter in 1916.

the restoration of biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services through the creation or recreation of habitats. The vision establishes the principle of partnerships, but allows individual Trusts to formulate their own delivery mechanisms.

Some Trusts publish their scientific rationale for the selection of Living Landscapes (e.g. Nature Map, SWWT, 2005; KWT, 2006). However, my research only revealed one dedicated Living Landscape Policy (Trust A). Trust A's policy drew inspiration from their regional Living Landscape statement and the national strategy. Trust A emphasises the importance of ecosystems within Living Landscapes.

Figure 26 Keywords from TWT's Living Landscape 2007 Vision

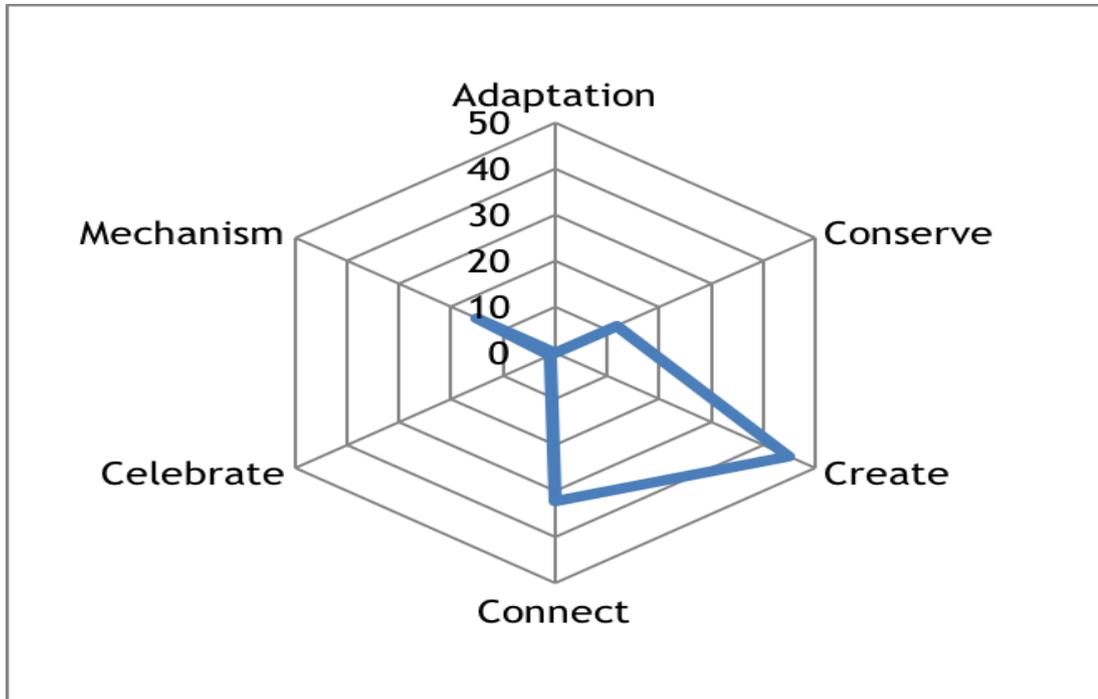


I discovered that 23 Living Landscape schemes were part of regional approaches to LSC (representing eight Trusts across two regions⁴⁵). These regional documents focused on biodiversity and ecosystem services with partnerships as the delivery mechanism. This is evidence that the scope of Living Landscapes extends beyond nature conservation and biodiversity to ecosystem services. This is confirmed by my examination of the relative keyword frequency. For example, Figure 27 shows the keywords that stress the importance of

⁴⁵ TWT England has ten regions: East, East Midlands, Greater London, Islands, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire & Humberside.

connections between habitats, and if necessary the creation of new habitats. Four of these keywords, celebrate, connect, conserve and create reflect TWT guidance for implementing Living Landscape schemes. However, these four words do-not feature predominately in other Trusts’ texts.

Figure 27 More keywords from TWT’s Living Landscape 2007 Vision



This keyword analysis demonstrates that TWT wants Living Landscapes to be associated with conservation, creation, connection and celebration of nature. The importance of connections is expressed in several ways, epitomised by the choice of terms including: reconnect, connectivity, addressing disconnect, and interconnections. The creation of new habitats is also prominent although some research suggests that it is better to improve the quality of habitats than to create more (Jeltsch et al., 2011).

The Living Landscape vision has had several iterations, each stating what Living Landscapes should achieve (TWT, 2007; TWT, 2010; TWT, 2015b). In its most recent iteration it states that Living Landscapes are:

a recovery plan for nature championed by The Wildlife Trusts since 2006. It is a new way of thinking about how we manage land to do more for wildlife, people and the economy. (TWT, 2015b)

The vision seeks to inspire and stimulate stakeholders to be part of the recovery of nature. Individual Trusts are encouraged to establish collectively “an environment rich in wildlife for everyone” by creating Living Landscapes and

Living Seas (RSWT, 2015). The vision provides stakeholders with the reassurance that the movement's strategic direction is focused on traditional reserve based conservation, which is the heart of LSC. For example, Living Landscapes in the South West of England are based upon strategic nature areas (SNA), which encircle and buffer existing SSSI and nature reserves. SWWT introduced the concept of landscape partnerships to manage conservation around these SNA (SWWT, 2005; SWBP, 2003; Studholme, 2009). These partnerships include Natural England and the Environment Agency as well as farmers and land managers, local authorities and commercial interests, community groups and conservation organisations.

The scale and ambition of Living Landscapes is daunting, because:

To achieve our vision for Living Landscapes, where wildlife is flourishing and recovering from past decline, now we need to think bigger and longer-term and build on the foundations laid by the work of past generations of conservationists. We need whole river catchments and entire tracts of upland with ambitious landscape-scale objectives that may take many decades to achieve. (TWT, 2015b)

The elements of these landscapes are expressed as core areas of wildlife habitat that are connected by wildlife highways that allow species to move across the landscape. But to paraphrase Barbara Hepworth, landscapes are empty of meaning without people (Read, 1952). Therefore, Living Landscapes need to:

... reconnect people with the natural world and promote the benefits it provides - from the technical and functional (food production, clean water), to the spiritual (nature makes people happy!). We work closely with local communities to promote the wildlife on their doorstep. Living Landscape schemes improve access to wildlife and green spaces and provide opportunities for recreation, education and hands-on volunteering. In fact, our volunteers are often vital to the success of the schemes. (TWT, 2015b)

The Living Landscape vision, as an institution, is ambitious, but it is encapsulated in these aspirations:

- ✓ Wildlife is abundant and flourishing, both in the countryside and our towns and cities;
- ✓ Whole landscapes and ecosystems have been restored;
- ✓ Wildlife is able to move freely through these landscapes and adapt to the effects of climate change;
- ✓ Communities are benefitting fully from the fundamental services that healthy ecosystems provide;

- ✓ Everyone has access to wildlife-rich green spaces and can enjoy and be inspired by the natural world. (TWT, 2015b)

5.1.3. Analysis of the Living Landscape vision and its objectives

My analysis of the vision used a word count technique to reveal the language of conservation and identify the various signposts to institutions and discourses through recurring themes (Ryan and Bernard, 2003:96). I applied the technique, which is described in chapter 4, to TWT's first iteration of its vision "*Living Landscapes, a call to restore the UK's battered ecosystems for wildlife and people*" (TWT, 2007). The Kiviat charts above show that two large groups of words relate to the geographical and ecological associations of Living Landscapes. There is a focus on habitats and the local landscape, because nature protection revolves around habitat management, conservation, creation and enhancement. The three most common verbs in the vision are *create*, *enhance* and *promote*. Create emphasises that something new is being generated, enhance builds upon an existing network, and promote stresses the evangelical nature of the Living Landscape initiative. The language used in the institutional literature from RSWT and TWT recurs in the unique aims and objectives of Living Landscapes.

I collected over 250 documents whose range is shown in Table 11. I analysed them using the quantitative techniques and tools described in chapter 4. For example, my analysis of the keywords in TWT's corporate documents is shown in Figure 18. Two predominant objectives emerged, revolving around the location, protection of habitats, and the special species associated with them. Two aspirational objectives also emerged: to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and provide a vehicle for nature and wildlife education. But there was little mention of socio-economic benefits of Living Landscapes, although communities were mentioned frequently.

My analysis of corporate documents from 20 Trusts shows that Living Landscape objectives have evolved from habitat creation to sustainable management that is in tune with the provision of ecosystem services. This reflects a transition in discourses associated with Living Landscapes from nature conservation to SED.

Table 11 Document concept map

Document category	Document type / description	Number provided
Corporate documents (183 documents representing 71% of all documents provided)	RSWT resumes of Living Landscape schemes	109
	Trust brochure	11
	Trust general document	32
	Trust Living Landscape policy	1
	Trust strategic plan	7
	Schemes as part of TWT regional strategies	23
Scheme publicity (52 documents representing 20% of all documents provided)	Trust leaflet	32
	Living Landscape presentation	1
	Detailed map (& leaflet)	13
	Trust newsletter	6
Scheme governance / management (23 documents representing 9% of all documents provided)	Management plan	2
	Partnership guidance	4
	Terms of reference for partnership	1
	Scheme funding proposal	2
	Scheme consultation reports	4
	Scheme interim / final reports	6
	Case studies	4

Total documents: 258

Source: Survey of 39 Wildlife Trusts in England with 112 Living Landscapes

A summary of the range of objectives from selected Trusts is shown in Table 12 and the full range of objectives are shown in Table 28 in Annex IV.

Living Landscape have developed from nature reserve conservation to the landscape that surrounds them. Their aims and objectives address wider issues of conservation outside nature reserve boundaries. These aims and objectives articulate their purpose and provide a reference point for their subsequent evaluation and monitoring. The most frequent objectives were the need for improved land management followed by the creation of functional ecological networks or ecosystems. Examples of the context of keywords and phrases are shown in Table 29 in Annex IV. The table's headings are the themes that come from TWT's vision and demonstrate the diversity of objectives across the Trusts.

This diversity reflects the examples shown in the vision, which contains examples of how Trusts have developed their own Living Landscapes (TWT, 2007). Interpretation and implementation of the vision is left to the initiative of individual Trusts. There is a common approach within Regions, such as SNAs in the South West of England and the rebuilding biodiversity plan for the South-East of England using ecological networks (KWT, 2006; SWWT, 2005).

My analysis of the objectives identifies an additional six action verbs to those in the vision. This suggests a broader definition, interpretation and mandate for Living Landscapes at a local level. The action verbs associated with Trusts' objectives emphasised *change* and *support* in addition to *create*, *enhance* and *improve* (see Figure 17). For example, one set of aims and objectives suggest that the land will be managed for biodiversity, whilst conserving the heritage and landscape, and enhancing it for the benefit of the communities that live in it and economy as a whole (I-LB, 2011). Such schemes have specific targets for individual species within the landscape, covering birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects and flora. Another example provides a comprehensive list that includes enhancing the area for the benefit of wildlife, biodiversity, and people through a series of objectives under three banners: environmental, socio-economic and strategic (U-GR, 2011).

Further analysis also shows that the links between objectives and partners are often implicit. For example, in Table 12, Trust H works with local farmers, whilst Trusts J and L are less explicit and talk about "work with others" or "build on existing partnerships", whilst Trust M says that they want to work "with a range of public and private landowners". Often aims and objectives are not specified with 46 of English Living Landscapes not providing them. 23 Trusts in England stated their aims and objectives explicitly, further examples are shown in Table 13.

The dominant Living Landscape objectives were habitat management, followed by the development of ecological networks. Three Trusts (E, C & W) emphasised the importance of partnerships. Trust AD considers that a partnership approach is essential because an ecological network can only be achieved by different organisations and individuals working together.

Table 12 Examples of Living Landscape objectives

Trust	Examples of objectives from selected Wildlife Trust documents
AA	Develop a task force of 2000 volunteer days to aid project delivery.
H	Work with local farmers, landowners, businesses and communities to restore and reconnect a coast to coast Living Landscape across this working agricultural landscape
J	Work with others to instigate a more natural tidal regime on the [...] River & maximise the area of coastal habitats within the project area
L	Build on the existing partnership of individuals, communities and organisations dedicated to delivering biodiversity gain in the long term
M	Working with a range of public and private landowners to enhance, extend and link existing wildlife habitats and encouraging them to manage the surrounding land in a wildlife-friendly manner.
W	<p>Champion and co-ordinate informed, participative and integrated action on the environment across a broad range of sectors.</p> <p>Work with communities connected to the natural area to help shape a landscape that reflects their needs.</p> <p>Support and complement the work of partners through linking and securing resources and expertise.</p>

Source: documents collected from Wildlife Trusts' websites and during the email survey

Some objectives are more aspirational, for example Trust M wants to provide an environment where people might recharge their “batteries, away from the hustle and bustle of cities and towns, in vast areas of wilderness, managed by nature”. And Trust R seeks to “reconnect people with the natural world and promote its benefits”.

Other objectives are broad and general, for example:

- ✓ Trust C’s “create living landscapes”;
- ✓ Trust E’s “gather wildlife information”;
- ✓ Trust I’s “managing for biodiversity, conserving and enhancing the landscape” and “conserving the heritage”;
- ✓ Trust S’ “slow precipitation run-off”;
- ✓ Trust Y’s “increasing connectivity and permeability”; and

- ✓ Trust AC’s “improve the habitat quality and connectivity of the landscape”.

Table 13 Objective matrix

Trust	AC	AD	E	I	L	O	Q	R	U	V
Uptake of agri-environment schemes		X	X	X	X		X			X
Improve economic, health and social wellbeing					X		X		X	
Create functional / permeable ecological network / ecosystem		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Land acquisition / connectivity / extend nature reserves	X		X					X		
Development of education / training programme / raise public awareness			X	X	X	X	X		X	
Increase engagement with landowners		X	X				X	X		X
Improved land management / habitat restoration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Develop collaborative agreements with other conservation organisations	X		X				X	X		X
Ensure viability of specific species through landscape re-colonisation		X			X		X	X	X	X

Source: data derived from my email survey of Wildlife Trusts in England.

Some interviewees, in response to question 6 in Section A, explained that their aims and objectives evolved over the life of the scheme. For example:

The original aim was ... very clear habitat creation ..., but ... the aims of the project have had to broaden. Partly to do with funding, ... to attract the big funding streams, ... to demonstrate achievement and vision in other areas. (E-SV: 08:07)

However, some Trusts realized that broader objectives took time to achieve:

There were some specific objectives around wildlife, community less, and economy practically none. Because that is something that hadn't really been taken account of to begin with. (L-KW: 5:58)

Whilst others recognized that it had to be a collaborative effort:

[Objectives were] actually set as an exercise amongst the partnership board, which is the good and great for the whole valley, effectively, and that was influenced by community consultations and liaisons to make sure that we were meeting the aims that the community believed were important to them within the valley. (Q-SP: 3:57)

The broader partnership picture is interesting:

I think the Wildlife Trust are delivering the objectives that they want, ... but that's a subset of what they're delivering. Because they are enabling, by leading the partnership, ... (Q-SP: 27:53)

These examples demonstrate that Living Landscape are evolving, largely driven by funding streams, but also to reflect the wider needs of society. However, the term ecosystems services is rarely used.

5.1.4. Summary of the purpose of Living Landscape

The purpose of Living Landscapes revolves around protecting those special places, nature reserves, where the dominant discourse is nature conservation. TWT wants to restore the English landscape, where habitats in these nature reserves are reconnected. This conservation management reflects local conditions and priorities, but this requires collaboration. This collaboration is about making connections between habitats and improving existing habitats rather than creating new habitats. It is built around cooperation between stakeholders, working together in formal or informal partnerships with communities, farmers and landowners. Examples from my interviews acknowledge that Trusts are thinking beyond conventional conservation in framing their Living Landscapes with community-based partnerships that demonstrate the importance of ecosystems services.

5.2. The scale of Living Landscapes

The previous section showed the ambition of Living Landscapes. This section considers what might be an appropriate scale by examining the evidence. A European landscape policy briefing maintains that the scale of landscape conservation reflects their governance level: regional, national and supra-national, as well as individual perceptions of the landscape (Bloemers et al., 2010). Thus, the appropriate scale for Living Landscapes is determined locally

by considering topology, geology and the geographic features of the scheme, and by the boundaries of the individual Trust, its land holdings and adjoining land.

I describe scale with reference to the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) habitat type because Living Landscapes represent a step-change in conservation from nature reserves to LSC. They occur at a geographical scale that is smaller than National Parks and AONBs but larger than SSSI. And I use data for Living Landscapes from TWT's website to provide a guide to their scale. The right-hand box plot in Figure 28 shows that Living Landscapes are local in scale ranging from 56 hectares (ha) to 257,000 ha, with a mean (\pm SD) of 16,000 (\pm 38,678) ha, with 73% of them below 10,000 ha. In comparison, the mean size (\pm SD) of National Parks in England is 80,835 (\pm 57,822) ha and that for AONBs is 54,485 (\pm 45,351) ha. On average National Parks are four and half times larger, and AONBs are three times larger than Living Landscapes.

5.2.1. The National Ecosystem Assessment and Living Landscapes

Living Landscapes are examples of the notion that conservation occurs across the “whole landscape”, crossing property boundaries of farms and estates (Dolman et al., 2001:305). I have classified Living Landscape schemes according to the broad NEA habitat types⁴⁶ and their size⁴⁷ to provide an overview of these landscapes (Watson and Albon, 2011). The NEA habitats are derived from Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats (Jackson, 2000; Carey et al., 2008).

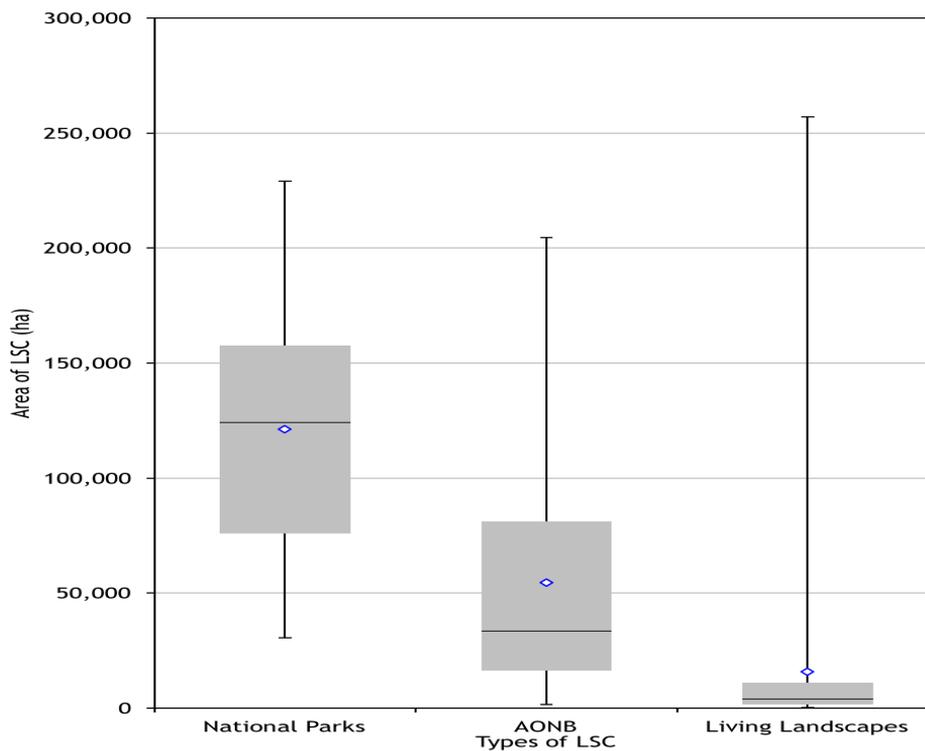
However, my classification is simplistic because Living Landscapes cover multiple habitats over a significant proportion of England with some overlap with protected areas, whilst the NEA refers to mono-habitats. Figure 29 and However, the scale of LSC is contested, as recent research suggests that conservation areas greater than 1,000 ha, i.e. 10 km² or nearly 4 square miles, are landscape scale (Macgregor et al., 2012:17). This would mean that 22% of Living Landscapes would not qualify as LSC. Earlier research suggests that areas larger than 500 ha should qualify (Elliott et al., 2011:7). This definition would include 87% of Living Landscapes.

⁴⁶ Most Living Landscapes incorporate more than one UK NEA habitat type.

⁴⁷ 89% of the 112 Living Landscape schemes examined provided an estimate of its size.

Figure 30 show my categorisation and scale of Living Landscapes by NEA habitat type. I justify the use of the NEA classification because it promotes an integrated holistic strategy that progresses from species level conservation to an ecosystem approach through sustainable habitat management (Hartje et al., 2003). This is important because much of the English landscape has been shaped by agricultural practices (Dolman et al., 2001).

Figure 28 Comparison of area covered by LSC

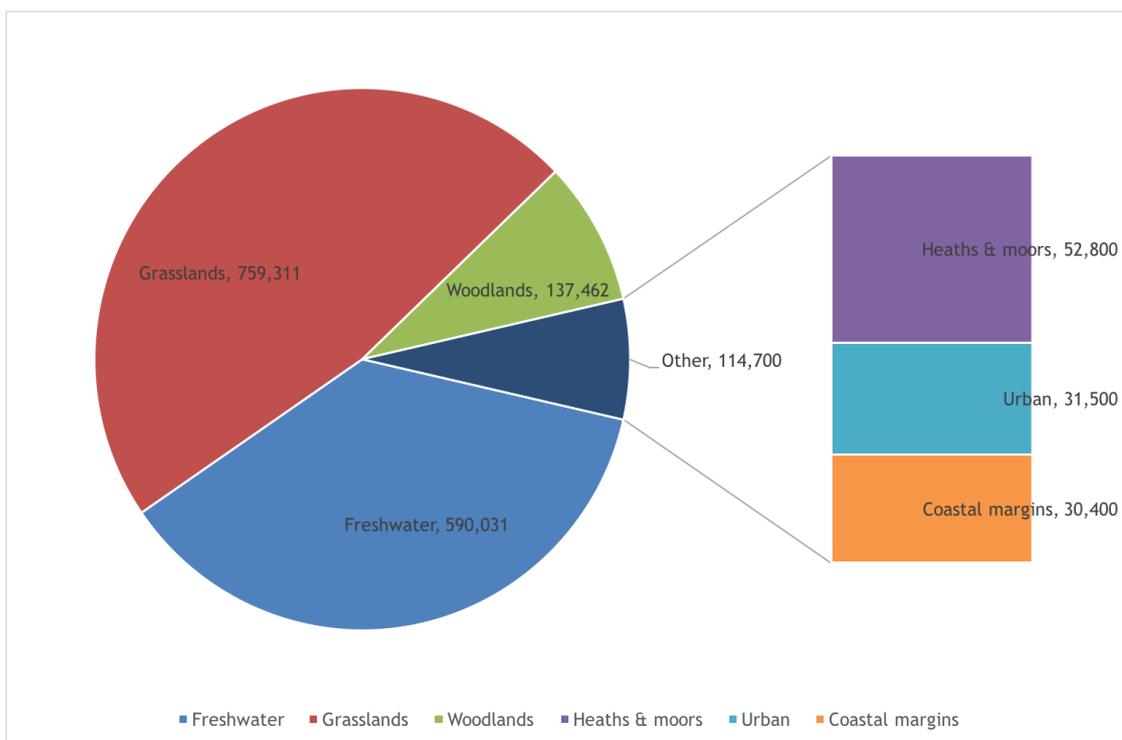


Source: data collected from RSWT and TWT websites

Research suggests that rural landscapes have resulted from refined agricultural management practices (Le Coeur et al., 2002). And it has been argued that agricultural practices should shift from protection to management, thus preserving ecosystems as well as the biodiversity of distinctive habitats and species (Tivy, 1990). This is reflected by However, the scale of LSC is contested, as recent research suggests that conservation areas greater than 1,000 ha, i.e. 10 km² or nearly 4 square miles, are landscape scale (Macgregor et al., 2012:17). This would mean that 22% of Living Landscapes would not qualify as LSC. Earlier research suggests that areas larger than 500 ha should qualify (Elliott et al., 2011:7). This definition would include 87% of Living Landscapes.

Figure 30 that represents the range of Living Landscapes by their ecosystem habitat type and size. The box plots show those schemes for which data was available, split into broad NEA habitat types. However, the compressed scale obscures some of the detail; therefore, outliers have been removed (i.e. schemes larger than 50,000 ha). I have estimated the number of schemes in each habitat type in Figure 31 and show that schemes cover over 12% of the England landmass. It is evident that the scale of these schemes is significant with the potential to contribute to ecosystem goods and services. The two predominant habitats are freshwater and grassland, representing 48% and 36% of the area covered by the schemes, and 44% and 24% of the number of schemes respectively.

Figure 29 Area covered by Living Landscapes by NEA habitat type (ha)



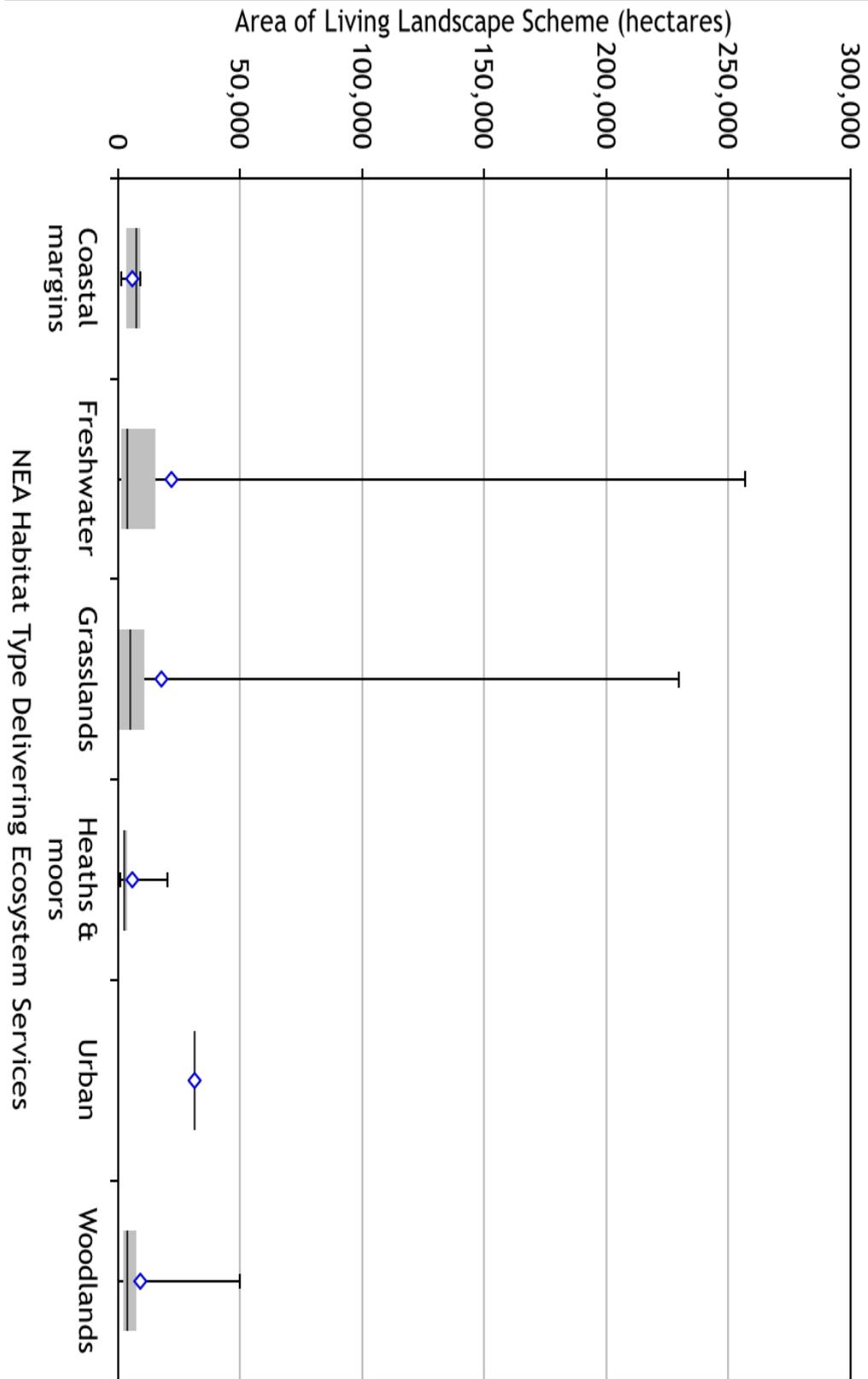
Source: data collected from RSWT and TWT websites

This reflects the agricultural heritage of the English landscape. The three smallest categories are coastal margins (5% of schemes covering 2% of their area), heaths & moors (9% of schemes covering 3% of their area) and urban (1% of schemes covering 2% of their area). Woodlands represent 15% of all schemes covering 9% of the area in England.

5.2.2. The scale of Living Landscapes in England

The scale of LSC in England is shown in Figure 28 and Figure 32 where the range, mean and average areas of National Parks, AONBs and Living Landscapes are compared. The combined area of Living Landscapes account for 34% of LSC, an area larger than that covered by National Parks and approaching that of AONBs. However, the scale of LSC is contested, as recent research suggests that conservation areas greater than 1,000 ha, i.e. 10 km² or nearly 4 square miles, are landscape scale (Macgregor et al., 2012:17). This would mean that 22% of Living Landscapes would not qualify as LSC. Earlier research suggests that areas larger than 500 ha should qualify (Elliott et al., 2011:7). This definition would include 87% of Living Landscapes.

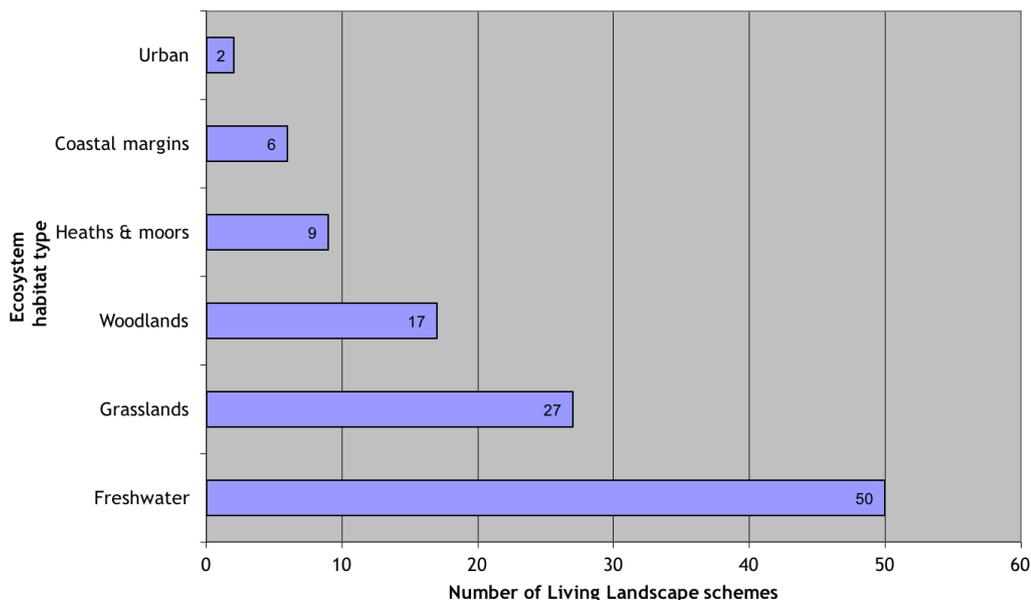
Figure 30 Box plot of Living Landscapes by NEA habitat type



Source: Data collected from RSWT and TWT websites

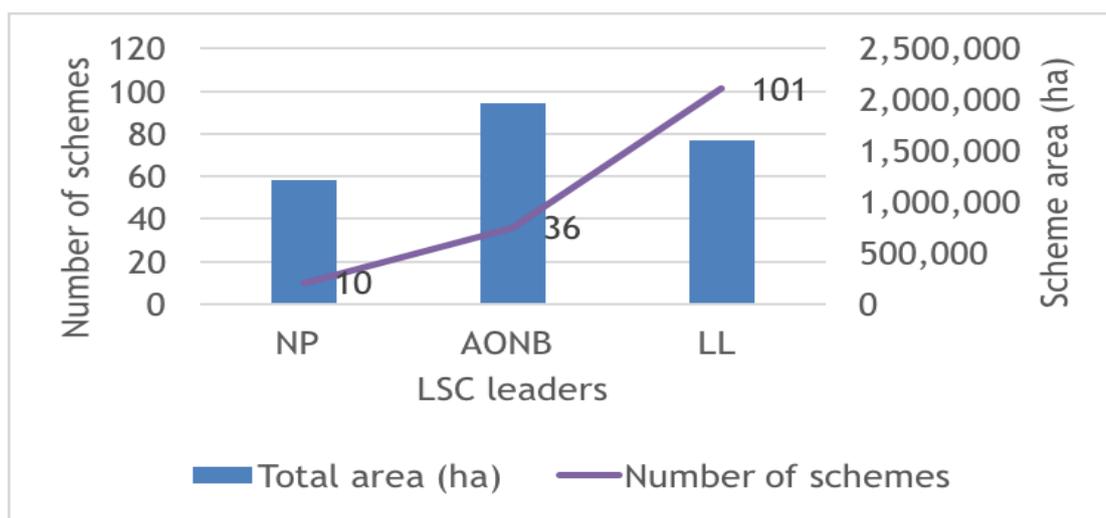
My research suggests that there is no definitive or typical size of Living Landscape. Their range of sizes is great, with a mean size of 15,841 ha. Schemes are generally smaller than either a National Park or AONB whose mean areas are 121,260 and 54,485 ha respectively. However, Living Landscapes sometimes overlap with National Parks and AONBs.

Figure 31 Number of Living Landscape schemes by NEA habitat type



Source: Data collected from RSWT and TWT websites

Figure 32 Areas covered by LSC in England



Source: Data collected from RSWT and TWT websites

In summary, Living Landscapes are significant because they have the potential to provide ecosystem services across the country. Living Landscapes are complex areas of conservation, covering more than one type of habitat; but, their contribution to ecosystem services has not been assessed and it is beyond the scope of this research.

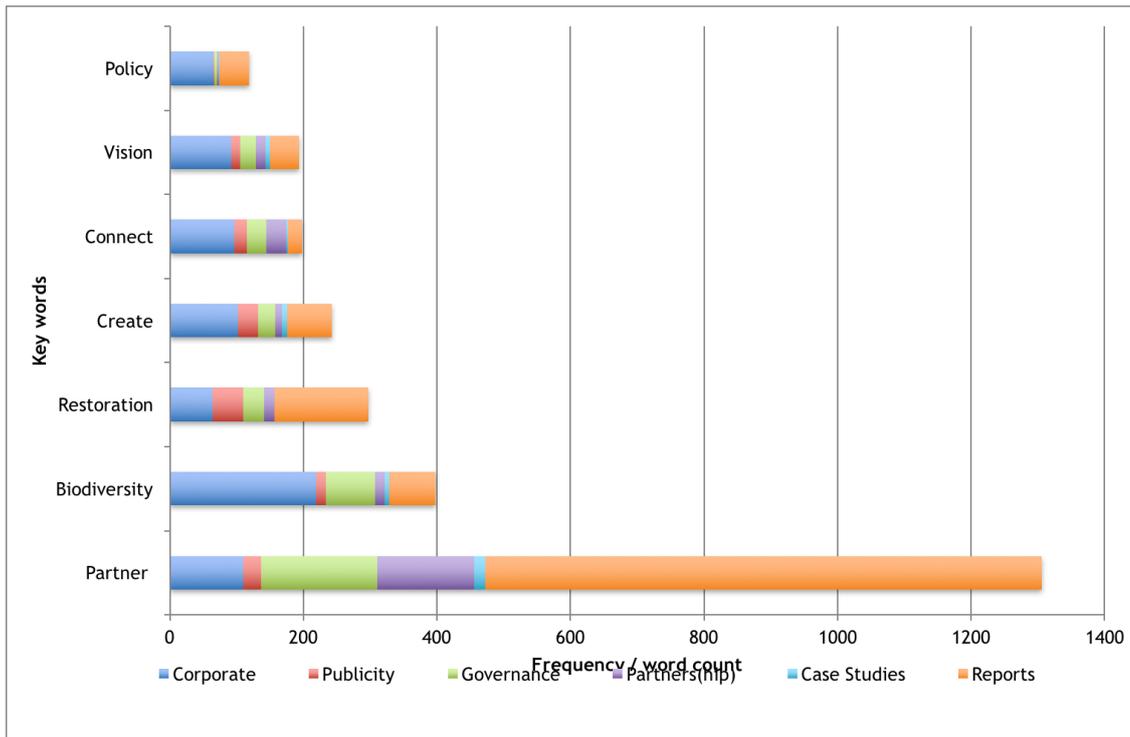
5.3. TWT and Living Landscapes stakeholders in England

In this section I examine Living Landscapes using information from my document analysis to begin to understand their institutions and discourses. This is important because Living Landscapes are a departure from single-site, nature reserve, based conservation, and have yet to be studied in detail. They are at the centre of TWT's policy and vision for the countryside. This is stressed in both the national and regional documents.

The range of TWT documents contributing to my understanding of Living Landscapes is shown in Figure 33. My analysis shows that partner or partnerships are recurring subjects, which reflects the importance of the collaboration discourse in LSC. These, largely informal, institutions involve a range of objectives as suggested by the action verbs depicted in Figure 34. However, the emphasis is still on the nature conservation discourse with the creation of new habitats and the enhancement of existing habitats for biodiversity, perhaps involving partnerships, rather than on the SED and ecosystems services. This may reflect the parochial nature of the movement, perhaps because Trusts are reluctant to embrace the broader vision of the national policy. It suggests that the movement is inward facing, focusing on local conservation and education. In contrast, Living Landscapes are collaborative, requiring complex institutions to support the ecosystem services discourse.

It is instructive to examine Living Landscapes in terms of the range of stakeholders involved in the schemes and how they deliver their objectives. The range of stakeholders, extracted from Trust documents, is shown in Table 14, and the variety of delivery mechanisms are shown in Table 15.

Figure 33 Keyword frequency in six types of Living Landscape document

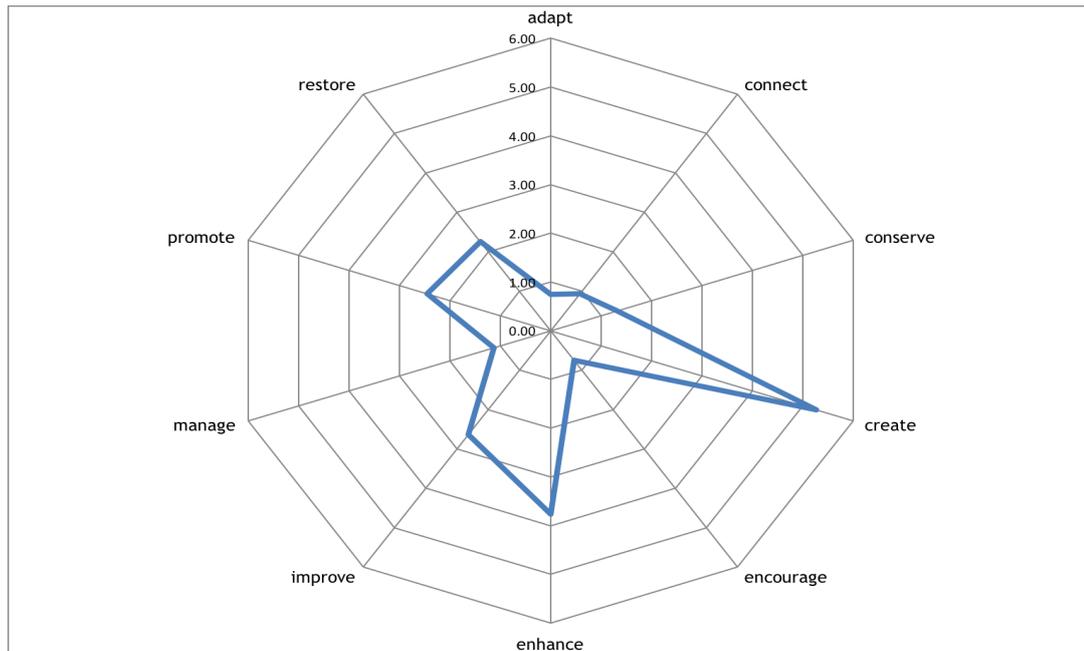


Source: Data collected from RSWT and TWT websites

Important partners include statutory bodies, conservation groups (for both the historic and natural environment), landowners, communities and local authorities, whilst amongst larger schemes long-term relationships with funding bodies are crucial. I obtained specific partnership information from two Trusts (E & T). Trust E provided a Terms of Reference for their partnership arrangements, and Trust V provided a partnership management plan.

Communities are an important partner, resource, and delivery mechanism where local working parties of volunteers, and links with nature and historic conservation groups and parish councils, provide vital support to conservation activities. Such activities might include scrub clearance or hedge laying on nature reserves, fence mending, or restoration of architectural and industrial heritage features, that form part of the Living Landscape. Other activities include assisting at Wildlife Trust events and administrative support. Volunteers also monitor species and the condition of the land. For example, volunteers are trained to conduct hedgerow, footpath or Phase I surveys that help build up a picture of the Living Landscape and its land usage. This range of institutions contribute to the community engagement discourse.

Figure 34 Proportion of action verbs in Living Landscapes' objectives



Source: data from Living Landscape objectives collected during email survey.

From my interviews, I identified four main types of Living Landscape delivery mechanisms, all involving some form of partnership. First, in-house volunteers assist with land management; second, contractors perform land management activities under Trust supervision. Third, landowners deliver conservation activities, and fourth, a hybrid mechanism, uses volunteers, contractors and land managers. Partnerships were not mentioned as a specific delivery mechanism, although they are inherent in dealings with government agencies and landowners and land-managers, and are integral to collaborations with other conservation organisations.

The importance of government subsidies or grant support to Living Landscapes were stressed throughout my research. Such support comes through agri-environment schemes or from grants from water utilities in partnership with the Environment Agency. These Living Landscapes focus on habitat management and the restoration of architectural, historic, and natural heritage features. They rely on collaboration between landowners and managers, often with volunteer assistance, to achieve agreed objectives.

In summary, my analysis confirms that TWT is in transition from an organisation concentrating on single site nature conservation and biodiversity to one that nurtures ecosystem services across the landscape. This increase in institutions

still supports the nature conservation discourse, but now includes the connection of habitats, their restoration, and in some cases the creation of new habitat.

Some Living Landscapes have explored wider ecosystem services, such as flood prevention, whilst others have ventured into socio-economic activities by encouraging tourism and promoting agricultural and forest products and services. Partnerships are a crucial institution to the delivery of Living Landscapes, not only in terms of conservation outcomes, but also because they can generate funding and support from communities. One specific type of institution, community engagement, is a component of all forms of delivery and is a significant institution and discourse.

Table 14 Partnership matrix

Trust	AC	AD	AF	C	E	I	L	O	Q	U	V
Statutory bodies (NE / EA)	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
National Parks / AONBs / FC	X						X				X
Conservation groups & civic society	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X
Utilities / waterways	X						X		X	X	
Funding bodies (HLF etc.)		X	X	X			X		X		X
Local authorities		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Academic institutions						X	X		X		
Landowners & farmers	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X

Source: data derived from my 2012 email survey and interviews.

Most community engagement involves development of practical conservation skills, but in one instance communities contribute an important institution to Living Landscapes by providing an oral history of conservation in the area (Trust AC). However, the interaction between communities and the agricultural and

cultural heritage landscapes is rare. If it can be established, this historical evidence of landscape could be the foundation upon which to encourage community involvement in the routine monitoring and evaluation of Living Landscapes.

Table 15 Delivery mechanism matrix

Trust	AC	AD	AF	E	J	K	L	Q	R	V
WFD ⁴⁸ / Agri-environment schemes	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
Land acquisition				X						X
Habitat restoration by volunteers		X		X	X		X	X	X	X
Habitat maintenance through appropriate management		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Landowner / land manager engagement			X		X	X	X	X	X	
Partnership facilitation		X		X			X	X		X
Community engagement							X	X	X	X
Oral history gathering	X									

Source: data derived from my email survey and interviews where partnerships were mentioned.

5.4. Development of a typology for Living Landscapes

In this section I examine possible methods for categorising Living Landscapes. This helps answer my second research question which is about how LSC might be designated. First, I discuss existing classifications before considering some recent research.

5.4.1. Introduction to a Living Landscape typology

Environmental conservation in England is complex largely due to the diversity of underlying geology which produces a variety of habitats upon which species

⁴⁸ WFD = European Commission's water framework directive

depend. It may be classified in several ways. One method has 24 categories covering terrestrial and freshwater habitats that make up the UK's landscape (NBN, 2012). The NEA system uses the seven broad categories: coastal, lowland grassland and heathland, freshwater, lowland wetland, upland and woodland habitats (Watson and Albon, 2011). These are further sub-divided into 17 types (JNCC, 2012). Adding to the complexity, there are 65 priority habitats within these types (JNCC, 2010). Some of these are included in the 78 habitats listed in the European classification model (EC, 1992b). Another approach considers ecosystem services, which offers management insights for both farmer and conservationist at the landscape scale (MEA, 2005).

I use the simpler NEA classification as a framework to understanding the range of Living Landscape schemes (UKNEA, 2011). This framework could be developed into a typology. A typology differs from the NEA classification because it is based upon an analysis of the Living Landscapes rather than matching the schemes to the NEA classification. A typology is important because it would place Living Landscapes within the context of ecosystem services, which are gaining traction as a possible remuneration template for various ecosystem products and services (Smith et al., 2013).

5.4.2. LSC typology - recent research

In a report for Defra, Elliott and her colleagues produced a typology of large conservation areas (LCA) (Elliott et al., 2011). Their typology divides LCA into three categories: actions, approaches and conservation purpose (Elliott et al., 2011:8). Living Landscapes are a subset of LCA so I adapted their typology to take account of the additional actions, approaches and purposes identified in TWT literature (TWT, 2007; TWT, 2010). To reflect Living Landscape objectives this revised typology (Table 16) includes site buffering, monitoring and surveying (M&S). I also added partnership development, community engagement, education and training to Elliott's approaches. I discussed this revised typology during my interviews where I asked respondents to rate each element as either an immediate priority, medium term priority or a long-term priority to determine respondents' perception of the typology. I collected 15 responses that I have combined into three diagrams (Figure 35, Figure 36 and Figure 37). Of the respondents 47% (7 individuals) were senior managers, 20% (3) were

Trustees, 20% (3) were scheme partners, and 13% (2) were junior managers. A summary of their responses is presented in Annex V.

I noted that priority actions were improvements and restoration, linking sites across the landscape (Figure 35). The creation of new sites was not a priority, but the expansion of existing sites was a medium to high priority. However, buffering and linking them to other sites was an immediate priority. Buffering is achieved by surrounding the nature reserves with land that might provide suitable cover to protect and encourage species to spread out from the reserves across the landscape.

Table 16 Modification of Elliott et al's typology

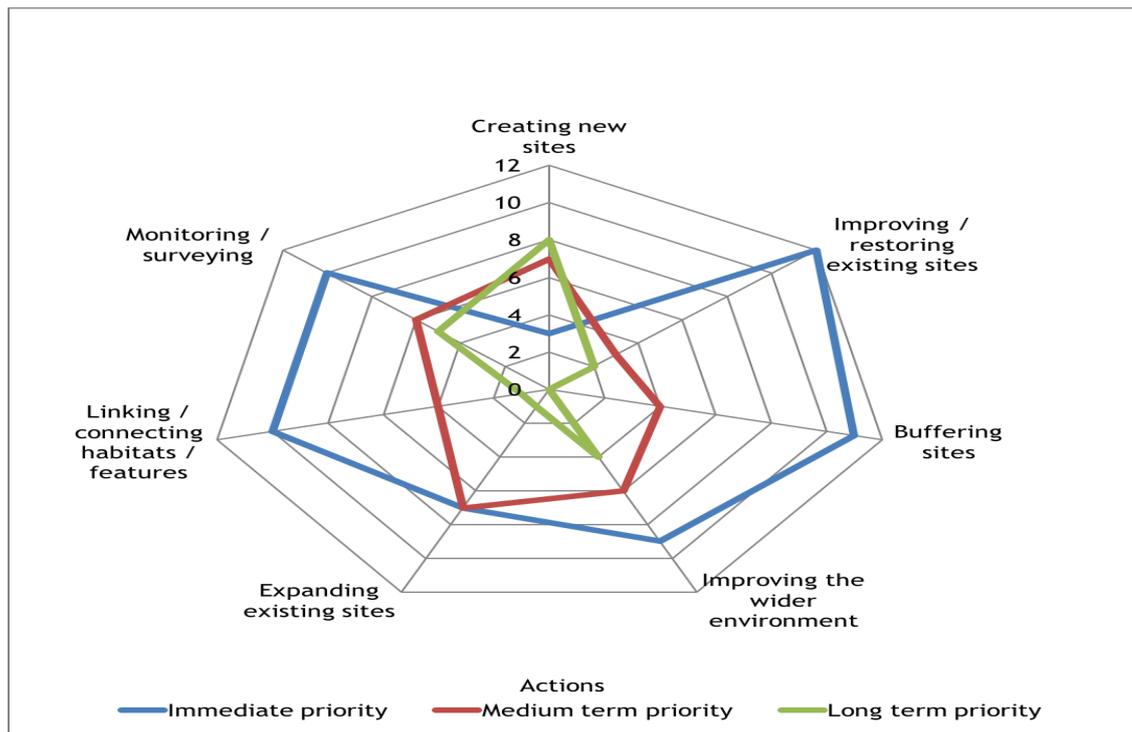
Elements of the Large Conservation Area Typology		My additions to Elliott et al's typology.
Actions	Creating new sites	Buffering sites
	Improving / restoring existing sites	Monitoring / surveying (M&S)
	Improving the wider environment	
	Expanding existing sites	
	Linking / connecting habitats / features	
Approaches	Property acquisition	Partnership development
	Land management by organisations	Community engagement
	Targeted grants to landowners	Education / training
	Advice to / encouragement of landowners	
	Use of volunteers	
Conservation purpose	Species / habitats - led conservation (i.e. biodiversity)	Climate change adaption
	Regulating ecosystem services	
	Provisioning ecosystem services	
	Cultural ecosystem services	
	Local economy or employment	

Source: adapted from Elliott et al (2011)

M&S is important because it allows landscape managers to know what species exist, where and when, and why they flourish (or otherwise). M&S is often provided by volunteers once they have been trained.

My analysis showed that partnership development is a priority, and along with community development is the preferred approach to LSC (Figure 36). Also, education and training, activities enshrined in TWT’s articles of association, are an immediate priority.

Figure 35 LSC typology - actions



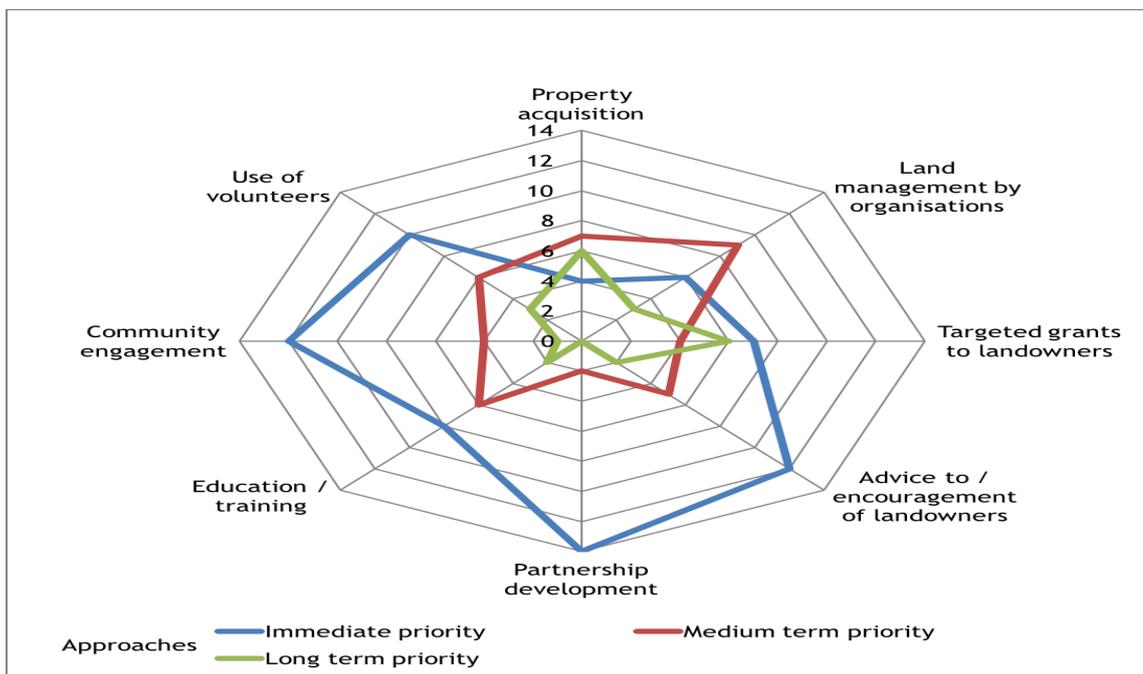
Source: Data from interview questionnaire adapted from Elliott et al (2011)

Of Elliott’s approach categories, respondents considered advice to landowners a priority followed by using volunteers. The former is contentious as TWT often provides advice free of charge, whilst the use of volunteers is an increasing important resource. Anecdotally, from my own experience as a Trustee, numbers of volunteers have increased, both locally and nationally.

I added a single additional criterion to Elliott’s categories to LCA’ purpose (Figure 37): climate change adaptation. This is considered a long-term priority by some interviewees and appears in TWT’s Living Landscape vision (TWT, 2007; TWT, 2010). I found that an immediate priority is species and habitat led conservation. In the medium term, ecosystem services are a priority, with some form of input into the local economy.

My research suggests that the shift from protecting biodiversity to supporting cultural, provisioning and regulating ecosystem services (i.e. bio-cultural heritage) requires further education and training, not only to members but also as advice to landowners and management. This finding is supported by recent research (Rotherham, 2015). LSC has been classified according to four criteria: (a & b) type of landownership (a single or group of landowners), (c) areas targeted by government agri-environment schemes, and (d) those led by conservation organisation working in partnership (Macgregor et al., 2012). Examples of all these four classifications are seen in Living Landscapes.

Figure 36 LSC typology - approaches



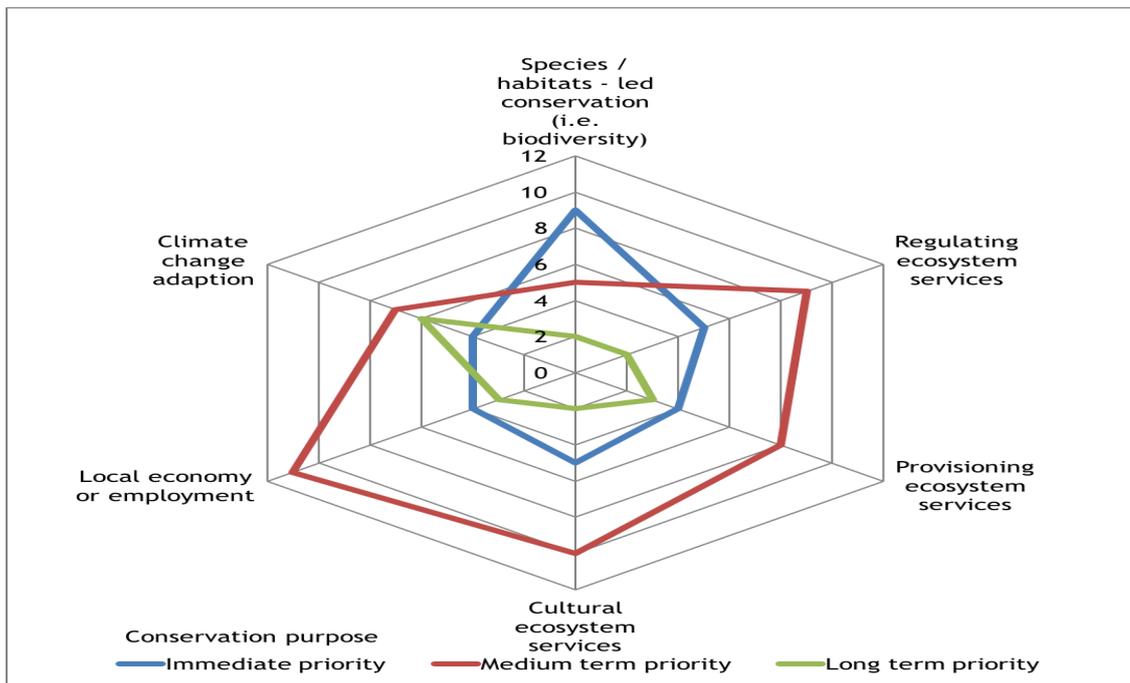
Source: Data from interview questionnaire adapted from Elliott et al (2011)

I found Elliott's typology useful when discussing LSC during my interviews. It helped explain the scope of LSC. It clarifies the meaning of LSC, but I found it necessary to expand their categories to reflect the range of Living Landscapes. In contrast, Macgregor's classification focuses on land ownership and purpose. However, during my interviews it was only the conservation purpose that had resonance with interviewees, who were unsure whether the movement understands the concept of the ecosystem services.

5.5. Chapter summary

This Chapter establishes that the overriding purpose of Living Landscapes is nature conservation. This model is well established within the movement. However, the nature conservation discourse and supporting institutions are broadening from discrete nature reserves to LSC - Living Landscapes. I have examined the purpose and scale of Living Landscapes and how are they categorised. These are summarised below. Although my findings are not definitive, they provide a framework which I expand in the following chapters.

Figure 37 LSC typology - conservation purpose



Source: Data from interview questionnaire adapted from Elliott et al (2011)

The purpose of Living Landscapes is multifaceted. They are a nature conservation mechanism to secure biodiversity and integrate ecosystem services into TWT's traditional conservation model. But primarily, it is about nature conservation, which includes:

- ✓ Maintaining or increasing biodiversity through habitat restoration, and/or creation;
- ✓ Connecting existing habitats to provide protected corridors for species movement as a means of securing biodiversity; and
- ✓ Embracing the concept of ecosystems services.

To achieve this purpose TWT collaborates with a range of stakeholders including:

- ✓ Government agencies;
- ✓ Local authorities;
- ✓ Communities;
- ✓ Civil society;
- ✓ Business interests; and
- ✓ Landowners, land managers and farmers.

The scale of Living Landscapes refers to their size and number. There are over 150 schemes with a mean size close to 16,000 ha. (nearly 62 square miles). They represent more than the equivalent area of National Parks in England. These schemes represent most of the UK NEA's habitats, but they do not distinguish between them.

Living Landscapes aspire to the ecosystem approach to nature conservation. This requires a partnership approach to the delivery of multi-function landscapes. These landscapes embrace the natural world, but also the cultural, historic and economic heritage of the country. Here agricultural, archaeological and historic features, informal institutions, interact to provide an attractive matrix that supports SED, society's economic, health and social wellbeing.

Voluntary sector governance, a formal institution and a discourse, relies on a constituency (i.e. membership) that provides oversight with an emphasis on legal compliance and financial probity. This is adequate for conservation based around nature reserves that are owned or managed by a Trust. However, Living Landscapes involve collaboration between multiple landowners. Therefore, partnership arrangements are necessary to provide oversight and accountability to the various stakeholders.

This chapter begins to answer my first research question about the social construction of LSC. It confirms that Living Landscapes are a legitimate conservation mechanism with an ambitious agenda that addresses the provision of ecosystem services. However, this ambition is not matched by its formal institutions, which still reflect the nature conservation discourse. This dichotomy between ambition and status are expanded in the following chapters.

Chapter 6. THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LIVING LANDSCAPES

In this Chapter I continue my study of Living Landscapes, answering my first research question by examining how this concept may be interpreted through the lenses of HI and DA to lead to a shared frame of meaning. I interpret the institutions and discourses to produce knowledge about LSC. Various interpretations emerged from my study of documents associated with Living Landscapes and interviews with representatives from five Trusts, who manage 29 Living Landscape schemes between them.

I approach the SC of Living Landscapes by identifying the institutions and discourses that, as Hajer suggests, influence each other and frame Living Landscapes. This is important because the essence of Living Landscapes is revealed through what its stakeholders understand by them. The main discourse associated with TWT's Living Landscapes is nature conservation. This discourse involves the protection, enhancement and conservation of biodiversity. The challenge for TWT is to move from this parochial approach to conservation to LSC, delivering conservation and socio-economic benefits through Living Landscapes. This journey is set out in TWT's vision for Living Landscapes as an ecological network across the country, where any socio-economic benefits are a bonus.

This chapter is in four sections and explores how the evidence from my document analysis supports, resists, reinforces or negates the institutions and discourses associated with Living Landscapes. I introduce Living Landscapes by examining three versions of TWT's vision for them, an institution that creates a shared frame of meaning for the movement. Second, I consider three institutions that support Living Landscapes. Then I examine six discourses associated with Living Landscapes that reflect different perspectives on LSC. This is followed by a summary and introduction to the next chapter.

6.1. TWT's Living Landscape vision

TWT's vision for Living Landscape is their articulation of LSC. Its first iteration, a brochure, was published in 2007, it was updated in 2010 as a leaflet, and in 2015 a one-page web version appeared accompanied by a short introduction to LSC (TWT, 2007; TWT, 2010; TWT, 2015b). The conservation discourse that

Living Landscapes espouse is a “landscape scale approach to conserving nature” that:

... involves enlarging, improving and joining up areas of land to create a connected ecological network ... for the benefit of both wildlife and people (TWT, 2015a).

I have reproduced TWT’s 2015 vision in Box 2, it is a condensed version of earlier iterations and provides the context for my institutional and discourse analysis. The movement’s shared frame of meaning, articulated in this vision, is for a healthy future for both wildlife and people. TWT has called it a “recovery plan for nature” that connects fragmented habitats, those special places for wildlife that are nature reserves and other protected spaces (TWT, 2010:2).

One feature of Living Landscapes is permeability. This occurs in all versions of the vision and refers to providing a breathing space and opportunities for wildlife to move through the landscape (TWT, 2015b). It is achieved by linking up fragmented habitats with corridors and stepping stones. These corridors may be blocks of land, hedges, streams or rivers. The stepping-stones are areas of land that form stopping off points for wildlife on the move. The objective of Living Landscapes is to restore wildlife to the landscape, whilst reconnecting people with nature and the countryside and contributing to the development of sustainable communities. In the following sections I explore the way the Living Landscape vision has evolved.

6.1.1. The Living Landscape Vision (2007)

This vision introduces several key concepts. First there is the idea of “climate corridors” that allow wildlife room to manoeuvre by linking up “oases of wildlife” - those nature reserves that are the core of the movement’s activities (TWT, 2007:2). This permeability is developed by explaining why traditional reserves are not enough to protect biodiversity and conserve nature - it is less than the bare minimum. Second, the concept of LSC is introduced, where nature provides the living conditions for society, in all its diversity. This is backed up with scientific explanation and justification. The third element presents the movement as a mechanism for creating LSC by using partnerships to deliver conservation benefits.

Box 2 TWT's 2015 Living Landscape Vision

Our vision for A Living Landscape: A healthy future for wildlife and people

A recovery plan for nature

A Living Landscape is a recovery plan for nature championed by The Wildlife Trusts since 2006. It is a new way of thinking about how we manage land to do more for wildlife, people and the economy.

Isolated fragments of wildlife-rich land

Nature conservation in the UK has traditionally focused on the preservation of specific sites. But outside these few places, natural habitats have been lost on an unprecedented scale and many species, both common and rare, are in long-term decline. As the demand for land for agriculture, housing and development has increased, so the room for wildlife and natural processes has decreased. This has resulted in small oases of wildlife-rich protected land, such as nature reserves, becoming surrounded by an otherwise inhospitable landscape for many plants and animals.

Emergency measures

These isolated areas of protected land are now the basic minimum we need to conserve nature into the future. The founders of many Wildlife Trusts fought to save these special places - woods, marshes, meadows, moorland - but these were emergency measures, taken against a tide of widespread destruction to our natural habitats; refuges from which it was always hoped that nature would re-emerge when the time was right.

Thinking big

To achieve our vision for Living Landscapes, where wildlife is flourishing and recovering from past decline, now we need to think bigger and longer-term and build on the foundations laid by the work of past generations of conservationists. We need whole river catchments and entire tracts of upland with ambitious landscape-scale objectives that may take many decades to achieve.

Our Living Landscapes

The Wildlife Trusts are leading 150 Living Landscape schemes around the UK, working with and helping other people to restore wildlife to whole landscapes. You can see a list of the places we are working in [here](#) or click on the interactive map box in the right hand menu.

Naturally functioning landscapes

Each Living Landscape scheme covers a large area of land: a naturally functioning landscape (such as a river catchment) often encompassing several Wildlife Trust nature reserves and other important wildlife areas. The schemes see individual Wildlife Trusts up and down the UK working with partners, landowners and local communities to restore the natural landscape.

These local schemes are all pieces of the jigsaw that will combine to form the wider Living Landscape we envisage: a national network of high-quality natural areas for people and wildlife.

Each Living Landscape scheme consists of:

Core areas of high quality wildlife habitat

Often these will be protected areas, nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) etc. These are the vital sanctuaries from which wildlife will be able to re-emerge into the wider landscape once it is restored.

Connections between core areas

Continuous corridors of suitable habitat, such as river valleys or diverse hedgerows, act as 'wildlife highways' allowing species to travel through areas disturbed by human influence as they disperse through the landscape to find suitable living conditions – this is even more important in the face of climate change. Habitats can also be connected by a series of stepping stones, rather than a large swath of continuous habitat. Stepping stones are smaller, unconnected natural areas, pockets of protected land that act as stop-off points for wildlife on the move – for example a series of copses in open grassland.

Permeability across the whole landscape

Land between the core areas and connecting habitats needs to be more accessible to wildlife. It may not all be pristine habitat but we can make changes to the way that land is managed so that it is easier for wildlife to move through and re-colonise the landscape.

It is also important that we manage the wider countryside more sustainably so that we can continue to benefit from the essential ecosystem services provided by the natural environment, such as clean air and water, healthy soils, food and flood management.

People and communities

Our Living Landscape work aims to reconnect people with the natural world and promote the benefits it provides – from the technical and functional (food production, clean water), to the spiritual (nature makes people happy!)

We work closely with local communities to promote the wildlife on their doorstep. Living Landscape schemes improve access to wildlife and green spaces and provide opportunities for recreation, education and hands-on volunteering. In fact, our volunteers are often vital to the success of the schemes.

Sustainable local economies

Many Living Landscape schemes also make sustainable, low carbon contributions to the local economy by providing employment opportunities, promoting locally grown food or marketing conservation grade beef from grazing herds.

In A Living Landscape...

... wildlife is abundant and flourishing, both in the countryside and our towns and cities;

... whole landscapes and ecosystems have been restored;

... wildlife is able to move freely through these landscapes and adapt to the effects of climate change;

... communities are benefitting fully from the fundamental services that healthy ecosystems provide;

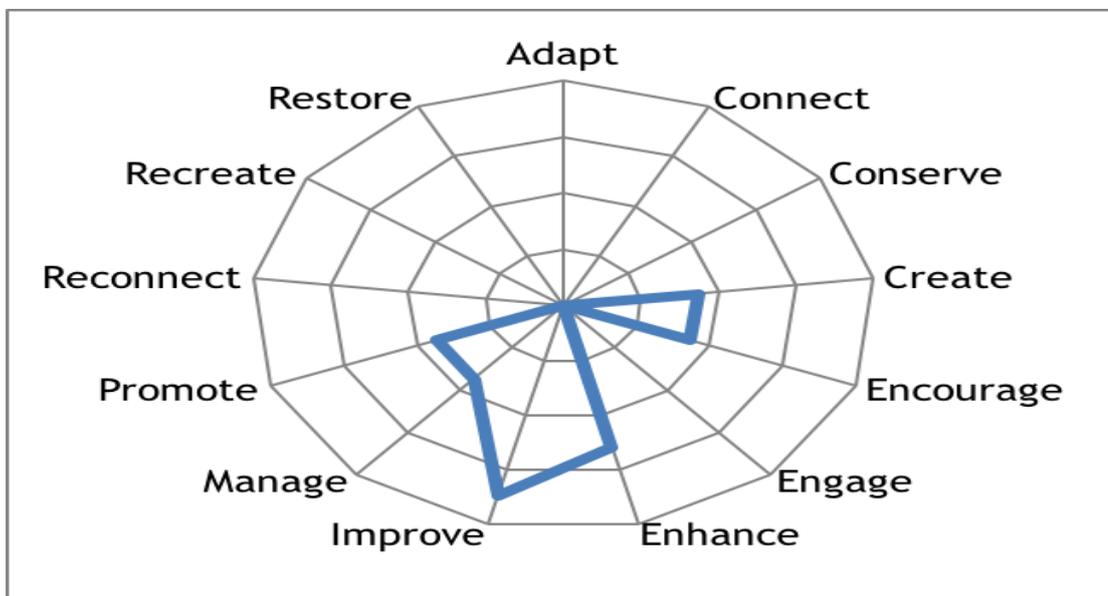
... everyone has access to wildlife-rich green spaces and can enjoy and be inspired by the natural world

Our work doesn't stop at the shoreline. The Wildlife Trusts also have a vision for Living Seas, where wildlife

The vision provides examples of what the concept means for different landscapes in the country. It envisages using the planning system to alter policy and make investments in landscape scale management and restoration. The vision ends with examples of Living Landscapes.

In the previous chapter I used action verbs to identify the purpose of Living Landscapes. These verbs emphasise that Living Landscapes should be created, promoted and managed, with lesser emphasis on the restoration and enhancement of existing areas of land. Here I examine how individual Trusts present their interpretation of Living Landscapes whilst maintaining a shared frame of meaning. To do this I use examples⁴⁹ of institutions and discourses taken from the vision (TWT, 2007). Figure 38 shows how the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has interpreted TWT's vision by emphasising an axis around the improvement and enhancement of land (i.e. conservation discourse). Although, unbalanced, it promotes the concept of improving Living Landscapes through partnerships with local companies, education establishments and local authorities (i.e. partnership and education discourses, and partnership institution).

Figure 38 Relative keyword frequency - Idle Valley



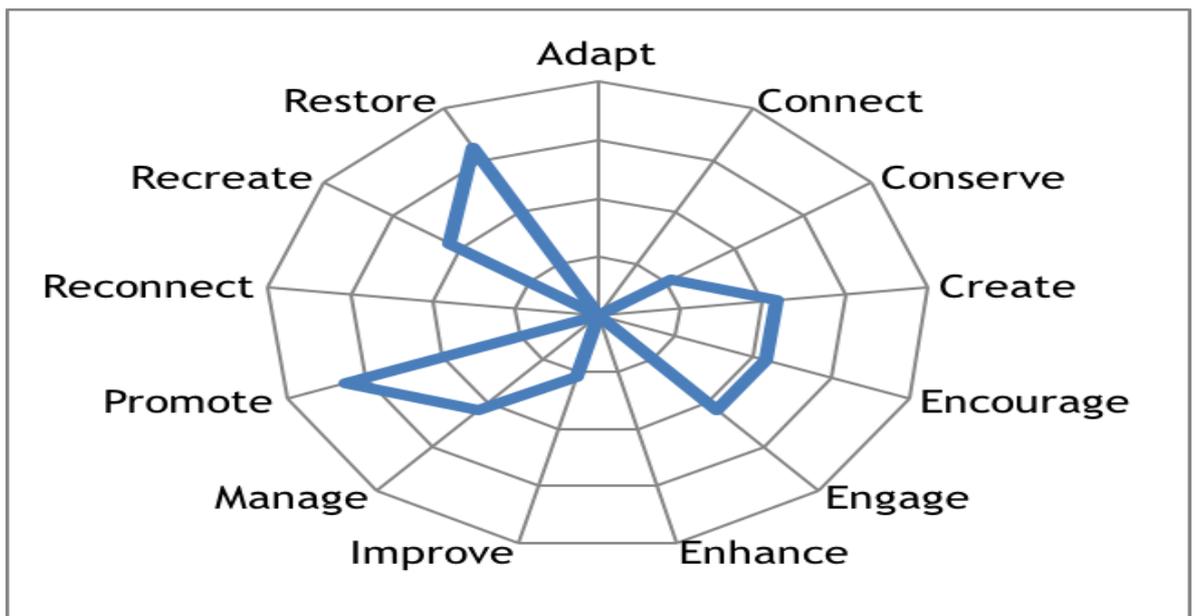
Source: Derived from analysis of TWT's 2007 Living landscape vision – Idle Valley example

⁴⁹ In the 2007 version of TWT's vision, there are ten Living Landscape examples, two of which are in Wales and Scotland, and one is regional. My two examples are representative of the rest.

This example encourages people to benefit from the rehabilitation of nature by visiting the region as a tourist attraction (i.e. social economic discourse). It paints a picture of Living Landscapes with economic and social elements alongside its wildlife.

A different axis emerges from the analysis of the example from Dorset Wildlife Trust in Figure 39, which focuses on a balanced view of Living Landscapes creating, promoting and restoring the land (i.e. conservation discourse). This discourse revolves around two poles, the first is about creating or recreating habitats, whilst the second focuses on restoration and management of grasslands and other wildlife rich landscapes. A second discourse rotates around the third pole that promotes eco-tourism and local rural businesses, whilst encouraging engagement through partnerships with bodies outside the conservation sector (i.e. new partnership institutions and engagement discourse).

Figure 39 Relative keyword frequency - Dorset



Source: Derived from analysis of TWT's 2007 Living landscape vision – Dorset example

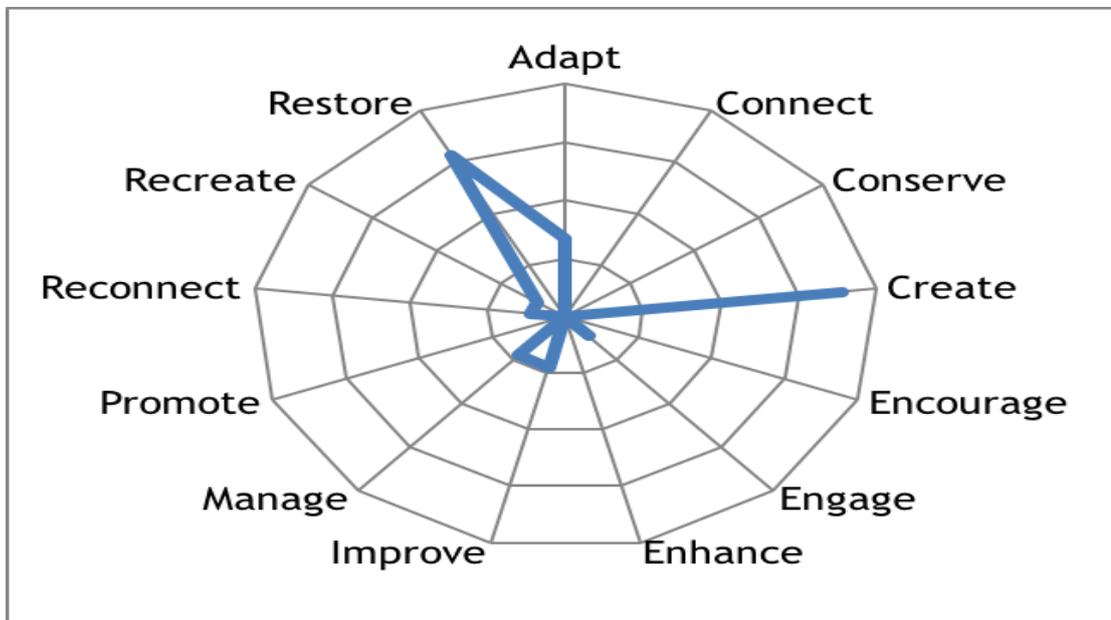
The Dorset example of Living Landscapes reflects its rural environment, whereas the Idle Valley's vision includes the restoration and management of wildlife rich landscapes in a peri-urban environment. Both these examples have resonance within the movement, and are indicative of a shared frame of meaning, as corroborated by my interviews. However, there is evidence that suggests that some Trusts are not comfortable with the vision, preferring their own

interpretation of Living Landscapes. This divergence in the shared frame of meaning is discussed later in this chapter.

6.1.2. The Living Landscape Vision (2010)

The Living Landscape vision is mutable and has evolved from the 2007 version. The action verbs used in the 2010 reiteration are shown in Figure 40. This iteration champions Living Landscapes as a “recovery plan” for nature: “protecting wildlife for the future” (TWT, 2010:2&7). The dominant axis has now shifted from Create-Promote to Restore-Create, which although still unbalanced underpins the recovery plan strapline and introduces the alliteration: “restore, recreate, reconnect” (TWT, 2010:7). This alliteration and the Living Landscape strap line are resonant phrases within this shared frame of meaning for the countryside referring to the “restoration and recovery of the natural environment and the systems that underpin it” (TWT, 2010:10&12). Thus, reiterating the earlier version of the vision, Living Landscapes aspire to reconnect habitats so that they become “permeable to wildlife” and provide “wildlife room to manoeuvre” - breathing spaces for nature (TWT, 2010:11).

Figure 40 Relative frequency of action verbs in 2010 vision



Source: Derived from my analysis of TWT's Living landscape vision (2010)

The Living Landscape discourse is subtly evolving. There is still mention of adapting to climate change, but there is no attempt to explain the importance

of ecosystem services, although the economic and social values of nature are stressed. And there has been a strategic shift to generate a resilient Living Landscape across the country within a time frame of 30 years, a generation⁵⁰ (TWT, 2010:9).

The 2010 vision has a political undertone, it is a manifesto urging the Government to take action to restore the natural environment. This reflects the actions recommended in the Government's consultation and White Papers (Defra, 2010; Defra, 2011b). Further, this vision is nostalgic, reminiscing and reflecting on the movements roots at the end of the 19th Century and its resurgence in the late 1950's and early 1960's, which is an important aspect of the shared frame of meaning within the movement. The overwhelming impression of this version is of a return to an idyllic past, where Living Landscapes are a blueprint for nature's recovery made up of informal institutions: rich wildflower meadows, woodlands filled with birdsong and bluebells in the Spring, wetlands restored, and upland heaths as carbon sequestration reservoirs. These institutions are elements of the unspoken ecosystems discourse.

6.1.3. The Living Landscape Vision (2015)

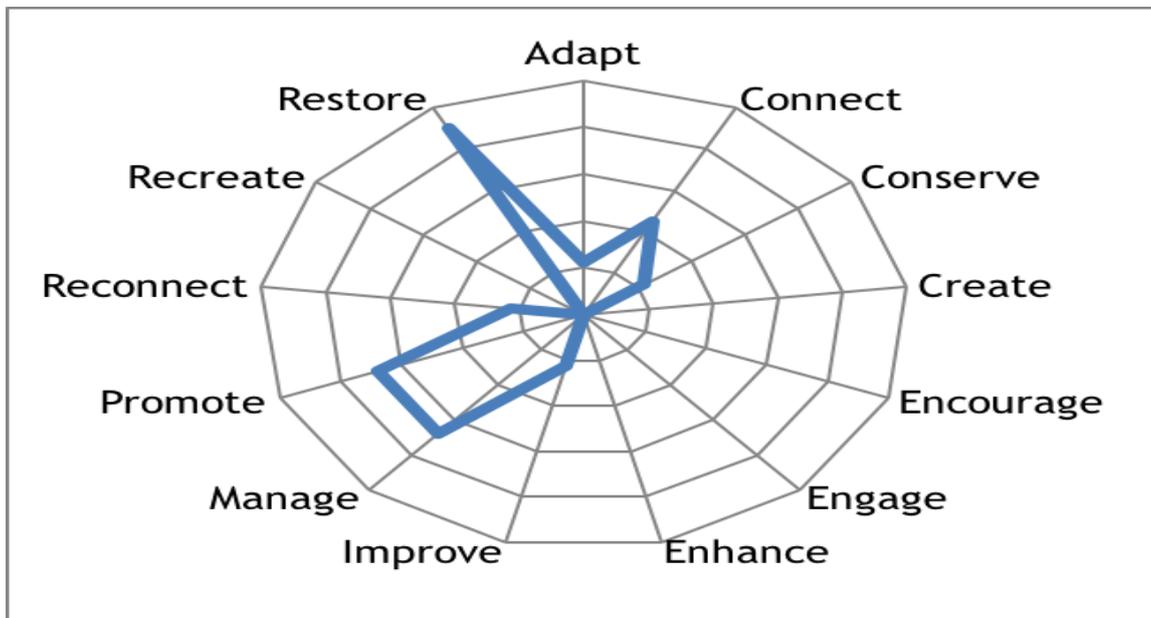
The 2015 version of the vision reiterates the need for recovery. It emphasizes the restoration of the natural landscape, promotes ecosystem services through land managed as "a naturally functioning landscape" (TWT, 2015b:2). It makes reference to the original vision by stressing the importance of connections between "core areas of high quality wildlife habitat" (TWT, 2015b:3). Figure 41 shows a shift in the dominant axis from an emphasis on Create to a Restore-Manage axis with a spur towards Connect. The vision emphasises the importance of sustainable land management for the restoration of wildlife to the landscape, providing them with natural sanctuaries. It refers to the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural world by encouraging people to reconnect with it by engaging communities with wildlife on their doorstep.

This version of the vision restates the ambition of Living Landscape. The picture is of thriving wildlife, free to move across restored ecosystems in the landscape.

⁵⁰ The Great Fen project, mentioned in the original TWT vision, has a fifty-year timescale.

It refers to the LSC approach, conveyed in a terminology of ecological networks, corridors of appropriate habitats and permeability, which reflect Purdon’s vulgarisation. Finally, the social benefits of access for everyone to “wildlife-rich green spaces” are reasserted (TWT, 2015b:4). But, there is a lack of symmetry in Figure 41 that is typified in Figure 39.

Figure 41 Relative frequency of action verbs in 2015 vision

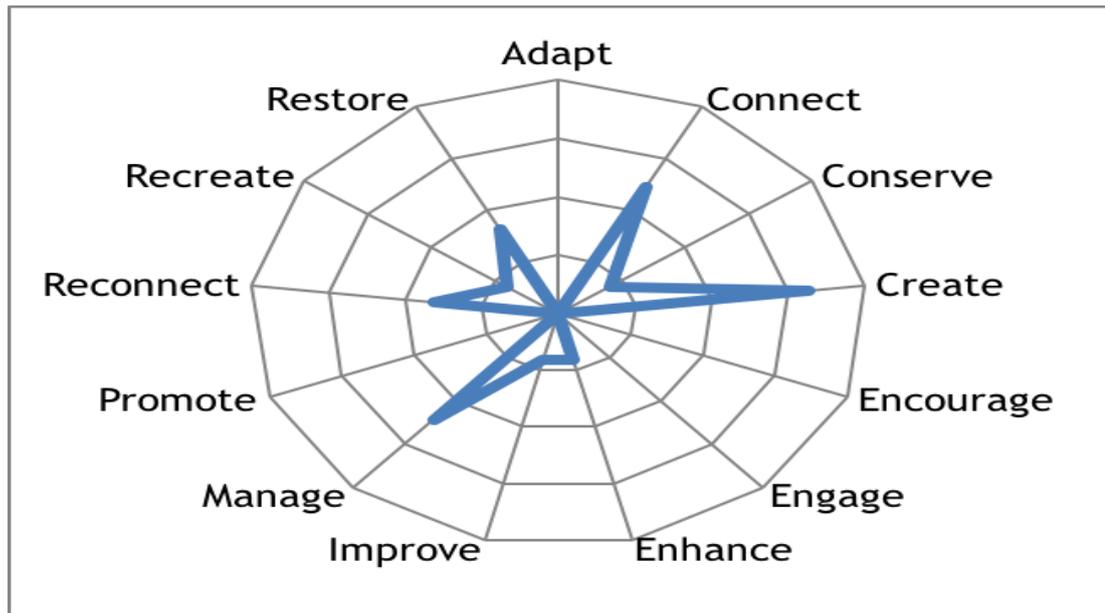


Source: Derived from analysis of TWT’s Living landscape vision’s web-page (2015)

However, some semblance of symmetry returns with a restatement of the vision on the website that is reflected in its action verbs (Figure 42). There is a dominant Create-Manage axis with spurs highlighting connections and reconnections within a restoration discourse. This depiction of LSC is nuanced and balanced compared to earlier Living Landscapes visions. There is an articulate explanation of LSC, focusing on Living Landscapes, which have the informal institution of traditional nature reserves at its heart (TWT, 2015a:2).

Living Landscapes have adopted the language of LSC and invested it with meaning through a partnership discourse and institution, where Trusts collaborate with conservation groups, landowners, farmers, land-managers, businesses and local authorities to create Living Landscapes.

Figure 42 Relative frequency of action verbs in LSC web-page (2015)



Source: Derived from analysis of TWT's LSC web-page (2015)

In this section, the Kiviatic charts show the balance (or imbalance) between the action verbs as the Living Landscape vision, a critical shared frame-setting institution, evolved. In the next section I consider other formal and informal institutions associated with Living Landscapes.

6.2. Institutions that support Living Landscapes

In chapter 2, I introduced institutions as a feature of social construction. In the previous section I discussed the dominant institution associated with Living Landscapes: its vision. Here, I discuss the formal administrative institutions and some of the informal, physical, institutions associated with Living Landscapes. I introduce two specific institutions that facilitate Living Landscapes: leadership and communication strategies.

6.2.1. Institutions that define and support Living Landscapes

The recognized administrations, funding mechanisms and legislation are some the formal institutions associated with Living Landscapes. For example, Trust L has adapted its formal institutions, committees and management groups, used to administer, govern and manage nature reserves to its Living Landscapes. Nature reserves are what John Lawton calls the core areas of Living Landscapes,

releasing them from the “prison of reserves”⁵¹ where species were constrained to being able to move across the landscape. Hence nature reserves are an institution within LSC, and may be informal as in the case of many of TWT’s nature reserves and local wildlife sites, or formal in the case of statutory protected Ramsar sites, SACs, SPAs or NNRs.

One example of formal institutions is the range of financial instruments used to support Living Landscapes. I have not examined them in detail, but Living Landscape publicity material give prominence to the range of funders, without whom the schemes would not be possible. The funding falls into four groups: government assistance, support from the National Lottery and the Landfill Tax, charitable trusts, and the generosity of the movement’s members. Government support comes through agri-environmental schemes as part of the government’s co-financing of European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy and other assistance packages. Some financial support also comes from national agencies and local government budgets.

For example, the HLF Landscape partnership benefits several Living Landscapes, as does the Landfill Tax. Charitable trusts also make a significant financial contribution to environmental organisations, often linked to specific outcomes. The HLF Landscape partnership schemes, which encourage the use of partnership boards, are used by Trusts E, Q and V. These formal institutions have documented procedures with strict reporting lines linked to funding streams. Other institutions may include training courses, volunteering and other forms of engagement that might include open days, and annual reviews.

Another significant source of funding comes from Trust membership, which is unrestricted income in the form of membership fees and legacies. It is available for general allocation; for example, Trust L uses its membership fees to cover organisational administration and staff costs, which includes Living Landscapes.

All such institutions form part of the institutional memory of an organisation, being part of the mechanisms by which norms, standards and informal structures are passed onto successive generations of staff, supporters and partners

⁵¹ A term coined by a conservation director from Trust L to represent species and habitats cut-off from the wider landscape, preventing their movement of species and colonisation.

(Boardman and Vandaele, 2010). This is evident in TWT's preference for continuing to use existing governance and management institutions for Living Landscapes. It is also indicative of the path dependency within the movement, where administrative institutions evolve, but do not change radically. The dominant currency within all these formal institutions is consensus that ensures that all stakeholders have an equal voice.

6.2.2. Informal institutions of Living Landscapes

My analysis of the descriptions of Living Landscapes identifies a number of informal institutions that contribute to the social construction of Living Landscapes. These informal institutions often include toponyms, signifiers and images associated with Living Landscapes that identify and demark them. Examples include the John Clare Living Landscape, The Great Fen, and the Hickling Living Landscape (TWT, 2007). The individual Trust nature reserves that make up a Living Landscape are also informal institutions.

These informal institutions also include physical features such as rivers, blocks of woodland and hedges (Trust C), whilst others are characteristic of, for example, a mosaic linking up wetlands that is also rich in wildlife and accessible to all (Trusts AD, C). Trust Q has another interpretation of Living Landscapes that not only includes the natural environment and how it is managed by hill farmers and other conservation groups, but also includes the features of the area's industrial heritage: the bridges, canals and railway lines. All these features are part of the physical and informal institutions of Living Landscapes, which combine into iconic images that inspire people to participate in conservation. For example, one senior manager in Trust V believes that people respond and understand the concept of Living Landscapes once it is reproduced as "an iconic photograph", a picture that conveys a simple message that "this wonderful landscape is what a living landscape will be like" (V-TH, a senior Trust manager, 2014, 04:50).

This use of iconic images was reiterated during my discussion about raising funds to purchase land: donations are more likely to be raised when people can associate the appeal with iconic landscapes or places (V-TH, a senior Trust manager, 2014, 06:00). However, another respondent considered it important to tailor the message to different audiences (V-LP, a conservation partner, 2014,

20:22). This implies that images, however totemic, are insufficient in encouraging people to participate in conservation or other forms of social engagement, such as education and training in Living Landscapes. Hence the need for a vision or masterplan to augment such iconic images and reach out to different audiences.

Another example of how informal institutions, with path dependencies associated with them, are important is this example from a senior manager:

... I think we need to think clearly about what it is a Living Landscape would look like if it were complete. It would be a nice, diverse wildlife-rich landscape that connected together but it's really hard because each area will look slightly different depending on the topography and the farming system. ... I just don't think we've given it a lot of thought. I think they have focused quite a bit on the iconic stuff and perhaps we could do more work on slightly ordinary, mundane hedgerows and verges, copses and ponds - the little threads that run through the landscape that make it diverse. (V-TH, a senior Trust manager, 2014, 31:15)

These examples of the informal and physical institutions reflect individual Trust's geomorphology and geology and cultural heritage. They emphasise the importance of local links, partnerships and people to the landscape. For example, Trusts E and L use groups of farmers and land managers who meet on an ad-hoc basis to review and plan their conservation efforts, that are often implemented by groups of volunteers.

In the next two sections I discuss the leadership and communication institutions. These institutions are associated with HI and path dependency, because they are used to engage with, and pass-on to, the various Living Landscape constituencies, stakeholders and partners.

6.2.3. The Leadership Institution

One of the roles of leadership within TWT is to stimulate funding for Living Landscapes, whilst another is to communicate the activities of the movement to as wide an audience as possible. In this way, good leadership facilitates the Living Landscape institutions in disseminating its discourses. One example is TWT wish to make ecosystem services a component of Living Landscapes (TWT, 2015a). However, one Trust director of conservation believes that "some audiences ... are finding it tough" to understand (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 24:25):

It's a bit of a turn-off, but we do talk about them. A lot of the areas that we're involved with, you have to take into consideration flood-risk management, particularly in low-lying parts ... it's what's most politically expedient at the time to make the case. But, actually because it's saying improvement to ecosystem services, it doesn't really make people sit up and listen ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 24:38 & 25:07).

The movement continues to grasp opportunities for influencing and leading on conservation, but it is challenging as one observer noted:

I think we may be aspiring to be leading, but we're not ... we're not as yet effectively channelling as best we can. ... There's all those other barriers and vested interests, and things don't change - very rarely change overnight. (E-RH, senior Trust manager, 2014, 18:24)

A final aspect is that leadership holds people together in a common vision. This is pertinent as the movement seeks to be advocates for change as this senior manager believes:

I don't think we can necessarily lead because it's not in our control but we can certainly be advocates for changes that will benefit the natural environment, benefit nature conservation and wildlife. And none of those things, in working with those other sectors, can change quickly. It's usually generational change. It takes some pretty big external event, disaster, or economic collapse for things to change. ... It should inspire people and increase understanding and knowledge of nature. And ... you can't divorce nature from economy or the social environment because that's, we are part of nature. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 19:51 & 00:27)

This idea of leadership was developed by a landowner who acknowledges that it takes exceptional leadership amongst like-minded farm estates to work together with the Wildlife Trusts to achieve Living Landscape objectives (E-DL, conservation partner, 2014, 15:17). Leadership is an important institution, not just because the issues of the day need navigating, but also because it provides direction and resilience within an organisation. It is important, particularly when an organisation is in transition, where it can facilitate change in the direction that ecosystem services and Living landscapes require. The importance of communicating this vision is discussed next.

6.2.4. The Communication Institution

Communication is an important institution because many Trusts have a dedicated communication department that interprets Living Landscapes and the shared frame of meaning associated with them. A communication strategy is

critical to interpreting and conveying the Living Landscape message because it facilitates, enables and empowers people. A suitable communication strategy explains what Living Landscapes mean, using all forms of media to engage with stakeholders. For example, one project manager believes that you need to get people involved and engaged from the beginning. They achieve this with an appropriate communication strategy (V-DG, senior Trust manager, 2014, 18:28). Another function of communication is sending clear messages as confusion may arise from the plethora of LSC labels, such as Futurescapes, or NIAs (V-DG, senior Trust manager, 2014, 18:28).

There is also confusion in the public perception of Living Landscapes, largely because storylines and discourses become blurred and open to different interpretations (EBG, 2011a). The language used in TWT's vision does not help because it obscures the links between the economic and social value of nature by conflating it with the quality of life. This confusion is also a facet in the public understanding of ecosystem services (Cortner and Moote, 1999). Such confusion can be brought into focus by natural events that from time to time cause devastation across the countryside.

For example, flooding is a discourse that influenced me when I began this research in 2007. Then the floods inundated the Severn Vale affected the quality of peoples' lives and damaged nature (Pitt, 2008). The Pitt report epitomises the political discourse at that time, and it was influential in the adoption of ecosystem services by one Trust (E-RH, senior Trust manager, 2014, 15:47 & 18:24). However, the vision requires restating in everyday language to ensure that the Living Landscape message is fresh and communicated effectively.

This was echoed by one Living Landscape partner:

Internal and external communication is important ... especially in an area where people were already agitated ... they were wondering what the future held for their area. They felt their area was about to be destroyed. ... we actually were part of a solution there, because a coherent sustainable environment is clearly less at threat than one that is just a draw on resources from local authority and elsewhere. (Q-JG, conservation partner, 2014, 37:02)

My research has revealed that effective communication has a bearing on many facets of Living Landscapes. Not just because of the challenge of choosing the

appropriate language for each audience, but also the need to avoid the pitfalls of offending one group or another. One Living Landscape manager admitted to not adopting TWT's visionary statements because they engage with people through an HLF landscape partnership that is locally rooted:

... we don't work to Wildlife Trust visions openly here, not because we don't agree with them, or because people wouldn't agree with them, it's purely that we just don't need to. ... The massive difference with our project ... is that our teams are here in the valley, working in the valley, our office is based in the valley, our tool sheds are based in the valley, most of our employed and key volunteer staff live in the valley, so we're actually part of it. ... so we're driving our message from within. (Q-SP, senior Trust manager 2014, 02:18 & 03:06).

This is an example of the type of inclusive engagement that helps overcome some of the communication issues associated with describing nature as a special interest. One of the objectives of Living Landscapes is to make conservation more approachable or understandable by everyone in a community. It is challenging to convey this message in TWT's vision because it both a corporate document and a political advocacy tool. In other words, the vision is aimed at both the movement's membership who need to understand a Trust's activities and objectives, and at funders and corporate supporters. Therefore, advocacy becomes an aspect of communication because it facilitates the engagement and political discourses that TWT adopt.

Aligned to this advocacy is the challenge of communicating intent. One Trust pointed out that dealing with landowners or farmers can be difficult, especially if they were to turn up with a map and say:

... you're within our living landscape area and our vision for this area is ... A natural response to this might be: "Well, why is my land on your map?" or more bluntly "what the hell has this got to do with you?". ... "it's quite a difficult first conversation to have" (L-FW&KW, senior Trust managers, 2014, 14:57).

Therefore, communication is an important subject, but Trusts still struggle to communicate the purpose of Living Landscapes, the importance of ecosystem products and services. Understanding Living Landscape institutions, following Gailing and Leibenaths's use of HI, shows how their meaning can be communicated. Understanding the concept of formal and informal institutions, how they map onto administrative and physical institutions helps unpack what

Living Landscapes mean to different stakeholders. Once understood the message behind Living Landscapes may be communicated effectively.

6.3. Some Living Landscapes discourses

Previously, I explored Living Landscapes through their informal and formal institutions: TWT’s vision, the physical features within the landscape, and the administrative and financial structures that enable and manage them. Some of these informal institutions are iconic images that attract people to the landscape, which in turn have been used by Trusts to express different perceptions of Living Landscapes. Here I use DA, following NVivo© node analysis, to identify a series of discourses that are revealed in the expressions, keywords and phrases in the material I have collected. A selection of these keywords and phrases are shown in Table 17; some of them are applicable to more than one discourse. I explore the underlying discourses of Living Landscapes that are revealed in my analysis of TWT material and interview transcripts.

6.3.1. The LSC discourse

Above I interpreted the evolution of the Living Landscape vision through its keywords and action verbs. Here I introduce what my analysis reveals about Living Landscapes. My analysis shows that the discursive components of Living Landscapes are wide ranging, including: community engagement (e.g. the role of volunteers and community groups), conservation, education, partnerships, restoration, providing access to recreational green spaces and socio-economic development.

Table 17 Discourses: their keywords and phrases

Discourse	Keywords and phrases that appear at the nodes from my analysis of TWT material and interview transcripts			
Community engagement	Volunteering	Association with totemic images	Formative experience	Educational element as well as practical activity
	Looking for fulfilment	A step towards full-time employment	Connection with the land / sense of place	
Conservation	Nature reserves	Fragments of habitats	Species loss	Ecosystems
	Ruining our environment	Recovery plan for nature	Nature accessible to all	Reconnected to nature

Discourse	Keywords and phrases that appear at the nodes from my analysis of TWT material and interview transcripts			
Education	Primary & secondary schools	Learning about nature, landscapes	Practical conservation	Promotion of research
	Raise awareness	Interaction with communities	Share with more people	
Partnerships	Collaboration	Relationship with government agencies	Governance mechanism	Facilitation versus leadership
	Share knowledge / vision		Demonstration projects	
Political	Anti-environment	High-level objectives	A bigger picture, bigger vision	Create a new landscape ... for people and wildlife
	Economic growth	Nature can become political capital	A voice for nature	Vigorous campaign
	Popular mandate from our membership	Playing our part	Recovery plan for nature	Ecosystem products & services
	Conflicts between people & nature, e.g. Farmers, Bovine TB & badgers			
Socio-economic development	Cultural heritage conservation	Develop diverse income streams	Agro- / ecotourism	Health and well-being
	Green infrastructure	Rural and peri-urban regeneration	Non-nature objectives	Dilution of impact of nature conservation

As the vision for Living Landscapes acknowledges:

Nature conservation in Britain has traditionally focussed on the preservation of special sites. This is both necessary and urgent, but it is less than the basic minimum required to conserve nature in the long term. (TWT, 2007:4)

Therefore, a shift in attitude amongst the conservationists is required, an approach that moves from:

Dominators and controllers of nature to appreciators and influencers of nature;

Nature as special interest to nature as providing our living conditions - locally, regionally and globally;

A situation of nature in boxes to nature in the neighbourhood and nature in the landscape. (TWT, 2007:5)

Thus, the Living Landscape discourse revolves around naturally functioning ecological networks that are wildlife-friendly (Trusts AD, C, T and R).

Geographically, they may consist of a cluster of sites (Trust U) or a whole County (Trust V); therefore, the discourse crosses existing boundaries in a landscape that is rich in wildlife and valued and accessible by everyone (Trusts AD, C, U).

This discourse is strongly ecocentric and epitomises what has been called a “new relationship with nature ... a source of joy and inspiration ... (where) ... utility and aesthetic pleasure” unite (Edwards, 2016:69). But it also represents a new social contract through Trusts’ relationships with partners and communities.

For example, during Section B of my interviews, Trust L demonstrates how the institutions and discourses of Living Landscapes are disseminated to, and interpreted by, their members and audiences. Trust L avoids the word “vision” preferring to be ambitious for all their activities (L-FW, senior Trust manager, 2014, 30:00). Others within the Trust express a common cause by linking Living Landscapes to special geographic features, or locations (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 58:29). However, one Trustee from another Trust thought it helpful to look for inspiration from best practice:

I think what one has to do is to look at particular examples - concrete examples. We've had some links with the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust [The Pumlumon Project]. (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 15:40)

Another Living Landscape project had tremendous success with community engagement and education through the HLF. Its project manager says that:

The education community team had [to] develop everything from scratch. There was nothing really prior to their work starting and they have developed some fantastic programs that interact with thousands of people every year. ... it develops all the time in new directions. ... for instance, ... because ... [of] ... HLF funding, we have a chance to explore the archaeology, ... and that's a key factor in getting that extension of funding. ... part of the vision of the project is to create a tourist economy here ... (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 12:26)

However, one Trustee from another conservation organisation thinks that:

... the vision boils down to what is quite safe and simple, and some people can sign up to. It's generally nice, and it's okay. It doesn't mean a huge amount ... (V-LP, conservation partner, 2104, 18:36)

Further, when asked about the role of ecosystem services within the vision this same Trustee opined:

I understand ecosystem services. ... I quite like the idea of it. I think we should be a little bit careful and I think sometimes we can put a value on nature which we maybe shouldn't, and some of it's quite arbitrary. ... there is a danger with ecosystem services, that you'll come up with these broad terms what your services are, but you don't strategically think about how you deliver them. So for something like pollinators, you might think, "Okay, well let's create loads of interest

in habitats," instead of actually looking at, "Well, where are our deficits in pollinators? Where do we actually need them in the landscape?" (V-LP, conservation partner, 2104, 33:13)

Others, like this Trustee think that special occurrences, like the Ospreys in the Spey Valley, imbue Living Landscapes with an economic value that can attract eco-tourism to an area (L-MG, Trustee, 2014, 32:37). However, another Trustee expressed the concept of Living Landscapes in another way:

I think they [the general public] probably find it easier to relate to nature reserves and things they can go and visit which are clearly delineated. ... it's trying to get people to think nature's not just [confined] to very small areas. (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 23:22)

And as one stakeholder from another conservation organisation thinks:

Nature is everywhere and the landscape partnership is everywhere. It isn't about 26 locations that we're doing stuff, it's about the whole area. We had this phrase very early on of celebrating the valley. Celebrating is a brilliant word, because celebrating is about the people who live there recognizing that they live in a special place. They always knew they lived in a special place, but they didn't know why. And I hope that we are helping them to understand why. (Q-JG, conservation partner, 2014, 42:58)

One scheme manager recognises wider and competing discourses for an environment that extends beyond the movement's core business of the:

... protection of wild places and wildlife, and education of people about wild places and wildlife. So ... biodiversity, landscape and education - [are also] the Wildlife Trust [business]. ... but there is a school of thought that thinks that Wildlife Trusts can run landscape initiatives without involving other elements of landscape, such as the built, and the industrial heritage and very - to a lesser degree, the community. (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 07:51 and 09:05)

These examples point to several interpretations of conservation, suggesting conflicting meanings that may be found in the wider landscape reflecting a special place or totemic image and economic effects that attract tourists (Gailing and Leibenath, 2015:132). However, care needs to be taken in translating abstract ideas into practical actions. It is perhaps easy to lure people to these special places and educate them. But the next step, ensuring that they become actively engaged with Living Landscapes is problematic. Nevertheless, totemic images of Ospreys, Red Kites, Badgers and Otters, echo throughout my interviews. Such images recur in the discourses I identified through the keywords and phrases used to describe Living Landscapes. Thus, the LSC discourse has discursive sub-sets: nature and heritage conservation,

community engagement, education, politics, partnerships and socio-economic benefits. I discuss some of these in the following sections.

6.3.2. The Conservation discourse for Living Landscapes

It is clear from my interviews that most Living Landscape stakeholders believe that the focus should be on nature conservation. This is interpreted as the creation and/or conservation of habitats and species. For some funders, such as HLF, conservation is a prerequisite for landscape partnerships. For some this is about the protection of iconic species and habitats (E-MG, volunteer, 2014, 11:58). The challenge according to this volunteer is about making the transition from:

nature [being] ... a thing that a few older people do, to people realizing it's everything on their doorsteps. ... I think when someone actually finds a way of explaining ... that the nature around them is what their planet actually depends on for existence, we'll have fixed everything (E-MG, volunteer, 2014, 16:55 & 17:37)

One volunteer believes that most farmers consider themselves conservationists, using the example of some large estates farmers that work together to link up various habitats by replanting hedges (E-KB, scheme manager, 2014, 06:42). In another example, the whole county is considered a Living Landscape with objectives set around specific focal points (Trust V). Some interviewees identify a spirit of collaboration with a vision for a “thriving landscape” shared between different conservation organisations (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 08:18, 09:05 and V-LP, conservation partner, 2014, 17:11).

Wildlife Trusts specialise in preserving special habitats for flora and fauna in dedicated nature reserves. Some Trusts still believe that the movement should “just concentrate on what we're good at doing”, which is interpreted as managing nature reserves (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 71:35). Others believe that nature reserves should be a focus for Living Landscapes, where buffer zones, stepping stones and wildlife corridors are elements in an ecological network. This is because, as one director of conservation opines:

We see reserves as having a very integral part, they are the core [...] - [the county] has a longer history of nature reserve and fighting to keep the special areas ... It was [...] coming to the view that islands of nature were not going to survive long-term, and that's been the basis for [...] a policy of expanding and buffering nature reserves so that they are not small areas. ... The [...] reserves [...] are tiny in the

overall contract. ... studies ... in the late '90s [demonstrated ...] that these isolated fragments did have something more around them and you weren't going to get horrendous species losses as time goes on. But we recognised that long before it became flavour of the month. (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 69:07)

This is important because a reasonable distribution of reserves within any geographic area permits a flexible approach to LSC. Such flexibility uses buffering as a mechanism for extending nature reserves into the wider countryside without expending resources on land acquisition. This philosophy is justified because:

... there are a handful of focus areas which change according to the resources available (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 20:08).

Therefore, Living Landscapes provide a solution to the conundrum of focusing on the special role of reserves whilst addressing the importance of connectivity across ecological networks or ecosystems within the landscape. It is clear from my document analysis that TWT's conservation is in transition. This is a shift from protected special places for nature to nature having a special place in the wider countryside. TWT is making the transition from the narrow focus of nature reserves to the bigger picture of ecosystems and LSC. It is still protectionist but it has embraced a wider membership demographic and is no longer seen as the preserve of ecologists and botanists: in short as one conservation manager states it is less exclusive (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 15:47). Along with a broader membership base comes a demystifying of conservation, where the scale of conservation is under discussion as one stakeholder reports:

... analyzing things for our next five-year plan, we've started drawing our lines on the map of where our living landscape areas are, and they do cover a large proportion of the county. [But] "we're not going to not do anything in that area if there's something that needs doing" but there are areas where we will put less effort (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 23:35).

Nevertheless, the balance between nature reserves and Living Landscapes within a portfolio of Trust activities is delicate because resources are finite and should be used effectively.

6.3.3. The educational discourse within Living Landscapes

Living Landscapes are didactic because they provide opportunities for instruction in practical community based conservation and education. This educational discourse is in tune with TWT's charitable objectives and Living Landscape vision, and is supported by senior managers (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, and E-SV, scheme manager, 2014). Several of the examples of Living Landscapes cite education as a component of their schemes, one example illustrates the principle:

Advance the education of the public and local communities, emphasising the important relationships between sustainable upland hill farming, agriculture and wildlife conservation (TWT, 2007:32).

Some interviewees suggest that there is a community engagement agenda, with an educational element, designed to empower volunteers (L-FW & KW, senior managers, 2014). My node analysis noted that education is not restricted to instruction about nature conservation and restoration of habitats, but also includes learning about the holistic features of the landscape and its heritage, as well as the human interventions that support ecosystem services. In one Living Landscape the education element includes inputs from RSPB, a canal Trust and Railway enthusiasts as well as farmers and food producers (Trust Q). Similarly, engagement may not be restricted to an educational remit but encourage the enjoyment of the countryside as a therapeutic experience that makes "the whole landscape a welcoming and healthy place for people and wildlife" (TWT, 2007:44).

Another view of the educational value of Living Landscapes draws on the core strengths of the movement: local connections with expertise and experience of local nature reserves, pride in and affection for their locality, and long-term commitment (Trust U). These strengths have inspired people to engage in the protection and management of natural wildlife-rich spaces (Trust C). These educational characteristics reflect the movement's registered charitable objects:

... to promote the conservation and study of nature, the promotion of research into such conservation and to educate the public in understanding and appreciating nature, in the awareness of its value and in the need for conservation. The society primarily does this by supporting the work of the Wildlife Trusts to restore "a Living

Landscape" and secure "Living Seas", which are its two key strategic objectives. (RSWT, 2015)

The importance of education was reiterated during one interview:

The education community team ... developed some fantastic programmes that interact with thousands of people every year. (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 12:26)

Education is implicit in a popular view of the movement. One farmer explains this as educating the next generation of nature lovers as individuals and communities through talks explaining the experience and importance of Living Landscapes (E-DL, conservation partner, 2014, 9:25). Although education is “a sub-set of what the Wildlife Trusts do” (E-KB, scheme manager, 2014: 4:52), Living Landscapes are something the Trusts want to “share with more people” (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 5:29). Therefore, whilst all Trusts have this educational remit, their individual objectives lead towards a common cause (L-FW&KW, senior managers, 2014, 30:00).

However, it emerged that there is a tension between the educational and aspirational value of Living Landscapes and the need for community engagement a means to boost membership. This tension exists because the vision has become “subsumed by processes” rather than action (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 08:57). This dichotomy is resolved in the recent iteration of the vision that encourages public engagement and a life-long learning experience (TWT, 2015b). Nevertheless, individual Trusts interpret its educational remit by adopting different strategies such as educational and citizen science (V-DG, senior manager, 2014, 28:21).

6.3.4. The political discourses behind Living Landscapes

The Living Landscape political discourse promotes conservation and influences decision makers at local and national levels (RSWT, 2015). My research identifies key nodes in this discourse as influence and advocacy, which are important roles for TWT. But it is a challenge to the current neo-liberal “political discourse [which] is so anti-environment” (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 22:56). The Living Landscape political discourse has many facets, here I highlight three, Living Landscape as: a socio-economic tool, advocacy, and a sustainable mechanism.

Living Landscape - a socio-economic tool

This requires a wider perspective than the parochial approach of, and focus on, nature reserve based conservation might imply. This is because, as my document analysis revealed, the Living Landscape remit extends from nature conservation into socio-economic development, health and social well-being, and cultural and heritage conservation. Such issues encounter conflicts in land-use and development, whilst solutions may be found in traditional land management practices and other socio-economic and cultural elements (TWT, 2007:52, 53, 56 & 59).

To cope with the challenges of this broader perspective, some Trusts have adopted a strategic business-like approach to their conservation, through methodical and systematic approaches to their activities. Within this strategic framework, the political context surrounding Living Landscapes leverages other activities in addition to nature conservation. The justification for taking a strategic view with a socio-economic perspective comes from a Natural Environment White Paper and the Lawton Report (Defra, 2011b; Lawton et al., 2010). The ideas expressed in these reports have:

... stood the test of time - not that there's much time - but we're just updating our strategic plan at the moment for the next - doing the next five-year plan. We have sorted out a few high-level objectives in terms of Living Landscapes ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 17:43).

The interviews revealed that these reports exert significant influence on TWT. They provide a policy framework and scientific justification for Living Landscapes. This legitimises the movement's approach to LSC. Thus, this political discourse provides a framework from which individual Trusts formulate their own conservation actions, building upon traditional conservation activities as one manager opines:

We keep our vision and add in other things. ... We haven't had to drop anything. ... If you can have a bigger picture, a bigger vision, then that's more the better. (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 24:38)

Living Landscapes as advocacy

The interviews revealed a dichotomy within the political discourse, a tension between advocacy - giving nature a voice - and conservation activities. Some interviewees were concerned that advocacy distracts from operational activities

- just getting things done (e.g. E-RH, senior manager, & L-PJ, Trustee).

Nevertheless, such is the importance of advocacy to the movement that it is suggested that the term diplomacy should be used for the process of negotiating with national organisations and government, with the term advocacy having a more local voice (RSWT, 2014).

Some interviewees cautioned that lobbying is counter-productive: “... you can shout too loudly, and people might be turned off” (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 24:10). There is an underlying concern that Trusts might upset their members, influential patrons or funders. There is a delicate line to tread, although some are happy to challenge organisations, such as the National Farmers Union (NFU), about their conservation credentials. Some stakeholders prefer to develop personal relationships with the farming and landowning community, working “behind the scenes” (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 2:37). This sentiment from a landowner and past Trust chairman who has been an advocate for LSC since the 1960s provides an example of a farmer who supported the Wildlife Trusts’ approach to Bovine TB and badger vaccination, but who was pressurized by the NFU to withdraw his support for the vaccination programme. This demonstrates the potential political conflict and tensions between farmers, conservationists, science and nature.

This is one reason why “land owners and farmers would probably talk quietly about what they’re doing” (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 2:51). This low-key approach is balanced with TWT’s public and outward facing image. However, the face-to-face approach may yield more conservation outcomes in small scale activities (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 04:13). This local political discourse is central to people’s engagement with Living Landscapes, because:

... [these projects are all about] people in particular places [and] ... you must have some idea of what you’re trying to do ... you must have something [written] down which you can all sign up to (V-LP, conservation partner, 2014, 38:00 and 40:39).

Finally, whilst acknowledging the importance of political discourse, there is a risk that Living Landscapes may be open to political interference. The example of fracking exemplifies the polarisation of views and competing discourses, particularly as those who wish to protect the landscape do not wish to combine conservation with elements of sustainable economic development. Therefore, political discourses are polarised, as one conservation manager opines:

... personally I would like to see us campaign more vigorously on wider range of things because at the moment - the political discourse is so anti-environment, that's when you, perhaps, do need to be more controversial - in political campaigning terms - while still working with real people on the ground, whether it's farmers or to companies, whoever, to demonstrate changes. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 22:56).

It is claimed that TWT has a popular mandate from their membership that is greater than some political parties' membership (L-KW, senior manager, 2014, 2:16 and V-TH, senior manager, 2014, 11:03). But this mandate is diluted by the spectrum of political discourses within the movement, which evolve and are packaged for different audiences. For example, advocacy is targeted at local and central government, businesses as well as public relations. Another example is that the conservation discourse is fragmented with environmental protection at one extreme and ecosystem services at the other. To deal with this, conservation organisations regularly refresh their conservation offer - for example restating the Living Landscape vision or the NT strategy called "Playing our Part", which seeks to "nurse the natural environment back to health and reverse the alarming decline in wildlife", which is similar to TWT's Living Landscapes' "recovery plan" (NT, 2015d; TWT, 2015b).

Living Landscapes - sustainable conservation

One example from Trust E demonstrates the sustainable nature of LSC. They have a recovery plan for nature that is not a short-term fix for the loss in biodiversity, which will take several generations to recover. It is a strategic approach to nature conservation that has, in the opinion of one conservation manager, an ambition to: "... create a new landscape ... for wildlife and people" (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 00:55). This new landscape has four aims: create new habitats, provide access to them through "enabling people and engaging with" them to appreciate the new landscape that has been created, stimulate the local economy, and develop ecosystem services associated with the landscape through suitable management practices (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 00:55). This example of Living Landscapes has long-term inter-generational objectives to stimulate and engage with communities. This strategic approach to LSC is reiterated in the Master and Action Plans for Living Landscapes, a process that translates the vision into action plans, which are then incorporated into local authorities' local plan (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 17:41).

Periodically, the vision is reviewed (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 18:28), in line with good practice (Hudson, 2009:117).

However, some stakeholders are concerned that Living Landscapes are not sustainable in the current neo-liberal political climate:

At the moment, the political discourse is economic growth, growth, growth, growth, growth, growth. ... As soon as their natural supporters start saying, "You're ruining our natural environment. We don't want this fracking, we don't want this, we don't want that," ... So, it's just a natural cycle of things. ... But there are major opportunities, for example, when flooding and things like that happen where some of the things we can say about working with nature can be brought to the fore and can become a political capital. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 15:47).

But, given current political uncertainties of Brexit, this economic uncertainty may just be a phase in the natural political cycle and stability will return.

6.3.5. The partnership discourse - The Wildlife Trusts in Transition

My research suggests that partnerships are an inclusive collaborative approach to LSC, which may provide a solution to its sustainability. Partnerships are key institutions that help define Living Landscapes, but they also represent part of the governance discourse, due to their collaborative nature, which I discuss in chapter 7. I have chosen to discuss partnerships here because of their influence on LSC governance. Collaboration is a key node in this discourse, along with TWT's facilitation and leadership roles. Here I give some examples of TWT partnerships and consider the role of partners in determining the meaning of Living Landscapes and the evolution of the movement.

Partnerships, and their development, are a solution to the challenge of funding and delivering LSC objectives. The importance of partnerships emerged from TWT's vision and interviews. Some of the Living Landscapes schemes are formal partnerships funded with significant public money (e.g. HLF, Trust Q), others benefit from agri-environment schemes and were facilitated by Trusts (e.g. Trust L), whilst others are a loose collaboration of landowners where a Trust might provide administrative support (e.g. Trust E).

Partnership examples

One of the challenges facing Trusts is the search for greater efficiencies and funding. Partnerships with other conservation organisations is one solution as

the costs of conservation may be shared. Many Trusts say that their relationships with Natural England and the Environment Agency (and their precursors) have always been partnerships. These are important institutions, which continue with Living Landscapes. But there is a tension between some Trust members who wish conservation to focus on reserve management, with partnerships that seek a balance between protecting vested interests and identifying new conservation opportunities.

For example, Trust E facilitates a group of landowners who collaborate to link up the fractured landscapes by replanting hedgerows. This long-term scheme sees landowners with a shared vision reconnecting isolated woods across an arable landscape. In fact, Trusts are dependent upon them as one volunteer comments:

... they're very dependent on the landowners - farmers - doing their stewardship, and getting on with it, and managing, and talking to each other.” (E-MG, volunteer, 2014, 27:06)

This partnership is low key and will take many years to meet its objectives, but it has the blessing of government agencies (E-KB, scheme manager, 2014, 09:02). Trust E provides administrative support to access grants, coordinates input from volunteers in keeping the woodlands managed with traditional methods, whilst the landowners clear the ditches and replant the hedges. This reflects what one senior manager considers important because Living Landscapes:

... should inspire people and increase understanding and knowledge of nature. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 00:27)

In another part of England, the partnership relationship in a Living Landscape was less obvious because the HLF's landscape partnerships dominated the narrative (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 25:22). Here conservation is about the whole environment - not just nature - where partnerships extend beyond those who fund or deliver conservation objectives to encompass other heritage conservation groups.

Other examples of such inclusive partnerships include a Living Landscape with an economic working group (Trust E) or business forum (Trust V) that develop business opportunities. Whilst other Trusts are exploring ways to overcome conservation barriers, where it is suggested that nature reserves should be

closed to people to preserve its flora and fauna. Such inclusive partnerships widen its remit by explaining that nature is not restricted to box-like reserves but is everywhere and should be accessible to all (E-MG, volunteer, 2014, 08:43).

These partnerships help stakeholders understand their role in the landscape by encouraging them to reconnect with nature (V-DG, senior manager, 2014, 33:17). This is believed to improve people's quality of life as they become inspired with their "increased knowledge and understanding of nature" (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 00:02 & 00:27). These examples keep conservation fresh in peoples' minds and differentiate between providers (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 18:47).

Therefore, the challenge is to bring people together in Living Landscapes partnerships that involve all partners, be they landowners and farmers, or businesses and other types of corporate support, or the public. In these partnerships, as one Trustee observes:

... It's the recognition that this is a shared endeavour. ... by its very nature, landscape has got a scale, conservation is recognizing that you can't do it on your own. So actually you won't achieve if you don't create that partnership. ... I think a Living Landscape which isn't a partnership is not a Living Landscape (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 40:50 & 42:43)

Thus, Living Landscape partnerships seek innovative ways to increase their effectiveness. The business issue is whether the Trusts should do this by themselves, or call in expertise, at a price, or group themselves together to make efficiency savings.

Efficiencies may be found in back-office activities, or by relying on a head-office to provide marketing, fundraising, recruitment, and relationship management services⁵². If this is an indication of a movement in transition, then it is encouraging. But it also raises questions about the management, organisational, and leadership skills within Trusts and whether they can manage transition (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 26:58 & 29:05). Nevertheless, Living Landscapes are

⁵² One such group of Trusts is developing an integrated marketing and communications campaign that will introduce efficiencies and increase revenue streams (L-FW, 2015).

an opportunity for partners to contribute to the development of managerial and operational skills within the movement.

Role of partners

The role of partners in Living Landscape programmes varies, with differing perceptions of the programmes. Partners may be divided into strategic or operational, each bringing different skill-sets. This is perceived to be one of the strengths of partnership working (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 15:41).

Strategic partners include funders, government agencies, local authorities and corporate supporters. Their understanding of LSC is reflected in a range of strategic documents and reports⁵³. Operational partners are concerned with the delivery of project objectives, which are covered in management reports⁵⁴. This group includes land managers and farmers as well as ecologists, conservationists and volunteers.

Amongst partners there may be conflicts of interest, especially where land management is concerned, between conservation and development when some landowners may also be community representatives on planning committees.

One Living Landscapes manager recognises these tensions and the need for “hearts and minds” conversations:

... a lot of farmers who are involved within the district council as counsellors, and they see land coming out of agricultural production, so this is land that was returning a good income, and they were growing carrots and stuff. We're telling them, “but in the future this is going to be good for local economy when we've created a tourist attraction”. (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 16:36)

Living Landscapes are not always about large estates; thus, the range of partners is broader than might be expected (E-KB, manager, 2014, 06:42). Others point out that delivery partners may be landowners with only a few acres, who, for example, contribute to conservation objectives by helping clear riparian reaches for angling clubs or replanting hedges as game cover (L-PJ, Trustee). This is indicative of competing discourses exercised by different stakeholders to achieve their particular aims.

⁵³ Examples of this may be seen at <http://www.greatfen.org.uk/great-fen-masterplan> and <http://www.greatfen.org.uk/about/partners-supporters/funders> [accessed 27th April 2015]

⁵⁴ This type of report, covering project implementation, is confidential.

One delivery partner spent several years within a HLF landscape partnership without hearing the term Living Landscape (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 08:06). This oversight arose from an overlap in language between the Trust and funder, where the Landscape Partnership was about creating a sustainable environment with the whole environment functioning together. This partner was surprised that “the Wildlife Trust was [...] interested in more than nature, that they were interested in the whole environment” (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 26:33). As a result, this partner felt that the programme achieved something new:

... my personal objective, was to say, "Is there a different way?" I have no desire to be in a partnership where every day I'm fighting against the other members of the different organisations, and battling the community, and thinking, "Actually, I'm doing something here that isn't wanted. ... But I think it has reinforced our view that what we want to do is well-liked. (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 25:22)

Another perspective on the role of partners is sanguine as one observer opines:

... we only control what we can do - we can provide a lead and facilitate bringing people together and, yes, we have our own vision that we can share but how do you bring people with you - there's a time to ram something down people's throat and to campaign, but you've to choose the right moments. ... yes, give the messages softly, but looking for opportunities to demonstrate in practice ... leading by example, and actually doing things on the ground. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 21:25)

Another aspect of partnerships is its role in developing organisational resilience, which requires flexibility and leadership. One Trustee and representative of another conservation organisation believes resilience emerges when:

you need someone to stand up and say, "actually, we are going to lead this. This is really important. We're going to find more resource. We're going to lead fundraising. We'll put in a partnership bid." (V-LP, Trustee, 2014, 63:53).

I discuss resilience further as part of the Lockwood framework in chapter 7.

6.3.6. Community engagement: people and Living Landscapes

The community engagement discourse, where Trusts develop relationships with the communities in their Living Landscapes, has volunteering at its heart. It is central to the movement's ethos because TWT relies on volunteers to perform governance, administrative and conservation tasks. Volunteers include trustees,

reserve wardens, administrative and data entry support, and business and community volunteers who regularly contribute to conservation working parties. One regular volunteer, a career scientist who understands the importance of volunteering as a resource thinks that it is:

... a real problem, that they don't have the staff resource to be able to throw at, making the most of it. And they're very, very dependent on their volunteers just going off and surveying. (E-MG, volunteer, 2014, 27:06)

I discovered during my interviews that most respondents had once been volunteers. This was an experience that triggered their commitment to nature conservation. One example is typical: a conservation manager had been immersed in a culture that appreciated the natural environment from an early age. This was reinforced by living in an idyllic part of the English countryside and working with The Conservation Volunteers organisation. This experience led to a career in nature conservation (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 71:07).

Another example comes from a reserve manager whose career was facilitated by volunteering:

At the time, I was in the construction industry, and I was getting a bit bored and fed up with that. I went to ... school just to try and get the grey cells going again, ... It was just a GCSE out of interest and followed that up with an A-level. ... I ... took on all the geological conservation work for The Trust, as a volunteer ... initially for nine months which covered my HND, ... I ended up doing 18 months as a full-time volunteer ... [before being employed as a reserve manager] (L-SF, reserve manager, 2014, 2:19)

Another example comes from a senior manager, who although a biochemist had worked as a management consultant. He explains the transition as follows:

I was sick and tired of making money for people who had too much anyway. But also, I wanted to do something that was a little bit more rewarding and that I enjoyed. ... I started volunteering with the Wildlife Trust. Volunteered with them for a couple of years, and then with other organizations, including the RSPB, and local charities including bat groups, reptile and amphibian groups, and the like. When I got my first job with the Wildlife Trust, I had been volunteering ... with about eight or nine organizations ... to try and get as wider experience as possible. (L-KW, senior manager, 2014, 01:09)

The importance of this depth of practical understanding cannot be underestimated - it is a fundamental connection to the landscape. However,

others require something more aesthetic to help them make that connection.

One senior manager explains the symbolism of totemic images:

... people tend to appear to understand it [i.e. Living Landscapes] better ... when you can actually demonstrate something through an iconic photograph. (V-TH, senior manager, 2014, 04:50)

Such images, be they in the mind's eye or captured digitally, on film, or canvas, are totemic in that they are associated with Living Landscapes. However, this may lead to the charge of elitism because these iconic landscapes are also used as marketing tools:

... to the ordinary person living in a town, perhaps they're not that interested or they would never go there. Why would they ...? So our marketing is perhaps just aimed at a certain sector of society (V-TH, senior manager, 2014, 06:00).

Nevertheless, images associated with a particular location stimulate communities and visitors to become engaged with Living Landscapes. This is a different type of shared vision, as one observer notes:

Well, there is shared vision. But that is based on the local. Everybody that's in the partnership, everybody that's part of the running and leading of this, has an interest in the valley - as well as outside the valley. No, it's locally driven. [...to] make this valley as good it can be and protect it as we love it. (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 01:52)

This is evidence of the value that can be derived from volunteers, who are a focal point for this discourse because totemic images often attract individuals to a place. Such association with a place with its nature, archaeological or historical or geomorphic features motivates volunteers to contribute their time and labour. Throughout my interviews, interviewees showed an inherent pride in working on their Living Landscapes. This undercurrent is epitomised by this delivery partner who emphasises the importance of the banal:

The massive difference with our project, as against how [other conservation groups would behave] within this valley, and how we would have interacted with this valley, and the community of this valley beforehand, is that our teams are here in the valley, working in the valley, our office is based in the valley, our tool sheds are based in the valley, most of our employed and key volunteer staff live in the valley, so we're actually part of it. So we don't have to have any kind of particular-- so we're driving our message from within" (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 02:18 & 03:06).

Some recognise that it is difficult to explain the conservation message in a way that is understandable to all. One volunteer explains that it's a message that perhaps is understood by an educated populous, or expressed simply: "It's preaching to the converted, isn't it?" (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 18:00). The message is that nature is all around us, but it needs help if it is not to degrade or fail to provide us with our well-being and a range of goods and services. An alternative way to explain the message is that the whole of a county might be considered a Living Landscape. Although few Trusts have sufficient resources to manage such a remit, so they concentrate on a few areas to provide a marketing and operational focus to their activities (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 08:18). However, despite the importance of volunteering, I found little evidence that community engagement resulted in communities becoming involved in Living Landscape decision making.

6.3.7. Socio-economic discourse

This section examines the influence of socio-economic development on LSC. This is important because it provides an opportunity to develop other funding streams and increase the influence of the movement. For example, the HLF focuses on socio-economic development within its Landscape Partnerships. These partnerships support green infrastructure, rural and peri-urban regeneration, and conservation in delivering LSC objectives (HLF, 2013; Clarke, 2015; Pearson et al., 2015). Some Living Landscapes have incorporated socio-economic development with support from HLF (e.g. Trusts E and Q). My analysis found that the key nodes in the socio-economic discourse revolved around developing diverse income streams, embracing cultural and historical features in the landscape that encourage tourism, and providing opportunities for encouraging health and well-being. In this discourse nature is not excluded but is given equal weight with non-nature objectives.

Nevertheless, a competing discourse is evident when some Living Landscapes focus on nature reserve conservation, protecting endangered species and habitats from encroaching agriculture and development (e.g. Trusts L and V). For others, the imperative is to place human livelihood within the context of the landscape. Here the focus is on the communities within the Trusts remit is important (e.g. Trusts E, L and Q). From whichever perspective, TWT has a

socio-economic context as Living Landscapes deliver specific objectives, sometimes just nature conservation, but may include socio-economic development. Therefore, Trusts are likely to have a range of Living Landscape objectives linked to their specific geographic situations.

As mentioned above, HLF is a significant funder of landscape partnerships; but, as one observer points out that there is a shortage of evidence of their success:

Well, we are short of evidence and we are getting into our next five-year plan, collect more socio-economic evidence, because we don't know the value of 60,000 people coming to look at the fields every autumn ... If we can get 60,000 people who come to visit the fields to visit one more place, then the tourist side of things starts poking up and we get more attention. (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 6:01)

However, such attention is controversial amongst conservationists because nature reserves, and other important nature sites, may not cope with external pressures from large numbers of visitors. This is contested ground between funders and the Trusts. Trusts may concentrate on conservation objectives because they are uncomfortable with incorporating socio-economic development into their Living Landscape programmes. Some Trusts are concerned that public accessibility to Living Landscapes will degrade the environment. One response is to improve the infrastructure in the area (Trust E). Such infrastructure is a precursor to generating economic success, but it may conflict with conservation needs (Trusts AD, E, U and V). Others are concerned that Living Landscapes which include historical heritage assets will dilute the impact of nature conservation (Trusts AD, C, Q, V). Such landscape assets include archaeological sites, railways and industrial buildings, which have potential to create alternative revenue streams.

An example helps demonstrate how economic benefits may be derived from Living Landscapes and how socio-economic development may be integrated into Living Landscapes. An exemplar is woodland management that delivers natural, cultural and economic benefits through local partnerships that coppice woodlands to produce charcoal, faggots, walking sticks and beanpoles. This Living Landscape is sustainable because it produces economic and conservation benefits (Trust V).

However, one senior manager considers that the political discourse of economic growth is damaging the environment (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 15:47).

Although, the scientific language associated with ecosystem services may obscure the public understanding of the term. For example, one volunteer cautioned that many Living Landscapes provide the living conditions and livelihood for farmers, which may be at odds with the public who consider that nature exists in special protected spaces, such as nature reserves (E-MG, volunteer, 2014, 08:43). This tension may be resolved by educating people to understand that nature is everywhere not just in special places, and that agricultural landscapes are integral to Living Landscapes. However, access to Living Landscapes may be limited.

Expanding the concept of conservation to take account of socio-economic aspects of Living Landscapes is a challenge, but it is evidence of TWT's evolution as it reflects new institutions and discourses. Nevertheless, as one Trust admitted they had to employ both economists and sustainability experts to help them understand the wider implications of conservation and its role in ecosystem services (V-LP, Trustee, 2014, 31:31). However, it may be easier to explain what these services might be, than to think strategically about, for example, where to place pollinators in the landscape (V-LP, Trustee, 2014, 33:13).

6.4. Chapter summary

In this chapter I have examined the evidence for the institutions and discourses that create a shared meaning about Living Landscapes. It is often the Living Landscape institutions that influence peoples' understanding and interaction with Living Landscapes. The movement, as Berger and Luckmann suggest, is transformed through the application of these institutions. The informal institutions include the physical attributes of Living Landscapes, those iconic and special places, whilst the administrative and financial mechanisms that drive them are formal institutions. However, to many members of the movement one informal institution, nature reserves, remain its core purpose. Nature reserves are central to the concept of Living Landscapes. But the role of this institution is evolving, breaking the path dependency of isolated special places to being the core areas around which Living landscapes are created.

Volunteers are another important institution, particularly as many of my interviewees had been volunteers. Volunteers come in all forms and

backgrounds, ranging from dedicated ecologists, people wanting to improve their physical and mental well-being, to amateur nature lovers. Without such volunteers running TWT would be difficult. These volunteers become involved as trustees and council members, and provide administrative support, event management and nature reserve management. Providing opportunities for volunteering is central to the conservation movement and its engagement with people connecting them to nature, providing sources of expertise and labour. However, it is not known whether Living Landscapes have attracted more people to volunteering, although anecdotally community engagement has reached people not normally associated with the movement.

Nature conservation dominates the Living Landscape discourse, but others are important. These include education, engagement, political, socio-economic development, and partnerships. In particular, education is essential because it conveys the shared frame of meaning of Living Landscapes and ecosystem services across generations of stakeholders. It has a wide remit covering engagement with schools, colleges and universities, but also with businesses and communities within Living Landscapes where opportunities for volunteering exist.

The Living Landscape discourse is sophisticated, with one Trustee recognising that it has “different messages for different audiences”, but that “we over complicate the stuff sometimes” (V-LP, Trustee, 2014, 20:22 & 21:00). The discourses discussed above, particularly partnerships, are not the sole preserve of TWT. For example the NT’s current campaign “Landscapes for Everyone” is billed as a shared vision from a consortium of organisations, where the Trusts are conspicuous by their absence (NT, 2015b). Similarly, the RSPB’ campaign “Give Nature a Home” (RSPB, 2014), although not a specifically LSC, covers the ground covered by the Trusts; it also does not feature TWT as an official partner.

The Living Landscapes discourses are critical to transforming the movement and keeping the membership informed about how conservation is evolving. The movement is in transition from protecting special places for nature to providing a special place in the wider countryside - Living Landscapes. This transition in the meaning of the conservation discourse is facilitated using institutions that both communicate, govern and manage these schemes. In this context, the

didactic discourse is important because it motivates participation in Living Landscape, but it raises questions about communication: (a) who is the intended audience, and (b) what is an appropriate vocabulary to convey the message. These questions are important because since Living Landscapes began in 2006 the vision has remained broadly constant, whilst its interpretation has been refreshed, but the concept of ecosystem services still confuses stakeholders.

Both Hajer and Arts and Buizer argue that formal and informal institutions drive the evolution of discourses, and vice versa. For example, the Living Landscape conservation discourse is evolving to include ecosystems services, with partnerships providing strategic guidance during the delivery of their activities. Such transition requires a didactic discourse to reinforce the transformation of the conservation discourse from one of reserves to that of ecosystems. This is also evidence of a change in direction of path dependency associated with some institutions, particularly nature reserves and governance. For example, the partnership institution requires decisive leadership and effective communication to convey their Living Landscape message to their stakeholders. In this respect, the term “Living Landscapes” means different things to different stakeholders, but it might have been better to use the term “Landscape Scale Conservation” to avoid confusion with brands such as Futurescapes. Although if TWT wants to develop the “Living Landscapes” brand, it can be identified with a specific conservation movement. This type of brand recognition could be a powerful institution that attracts increased support and funding.

Chapter 7. THE GOVERNANCE OF TWT'S LIVING LANDSCAPES

7.1. Introduction to Living Landscape governance

In this chapter I answer my second and third research questions by using Lockwood's framework to interpret the governance of Living Landscapes through five Wildlife Trusts case studies. I interviewed representatives from these Trusts' staff, Trustees, and partners from their Living Landscape programmes. I examine the Trusts' governance structures and analyse perceptions by referring to Lockwood's governance principles (Table 18). I build on the discussion of conservation governance in chapter 3. First, I discuss what the charity sector in England calls governance, then I examine some of the evidence for LSC governance from my research with reference to governance institutions and discourse before putting governance into the context of TWT.

Table 18 Lockwood's Governance Principles

Legitimacy	Accountability	Fairness
Transparency	Inclusiveness	Connectivity
Resilience		

Source: adapted from Lockwood (2009 and 2010)

Governance in the voluntary sector relies on financial probity and legislative compliance, combined with oversight from their membership (CSG, 2010; Charity Commission, 2012). Here I present the evidence from my research for the role of partnerships in governance. TWT's partnerships include government agencies and local authorities. In Living Landscapes these partnerships include local communities, farmers, landowners and managers, and businesses.

Living Landscape governance is important because the scale of conservation involves a wide range of stakeholders - multiple landowners and managers. This is a departure from existing governance structures that focuses on internal checks and balances to a wider accountability. For example, a common objective is to have greater community engagement, but there is a reluctance to extend their governance structures to demonstrate accountability to such communities. To support this contention, I refer to specific governance material

contained in funding applications (Trust R) and proposals (Trust T), management plans (Trusts R & V), and partnership guidance (Trusts E, Q, T, & U).

7.1.1. Evidence for governance in transition

My main source of governance material is Living Landscape management reports, which provide feedback to partners about the progress and implementation of the schemes. I collected ten reports in response to my email survey from nine Trusts. All the reports emphasised the importance of partnership, with Trusts E & W using the term over two hundred times each. Amongst the other Trusts none used the term more than 90 times. However, few discussed how such partnerships are developed or governed.

Reports from Trusts E, G, T, W and Z provided me with information about the preparation for, and delivery of Living Landscapes. These reports focused on the creation or restoration of habitats through partnerships. The role of these partnership varied from coordination of the consultation process (Trust E), through providing an overview of delivery (Trust G), and annual reporting against budget and target delivery (Trusts T & Z), to providing a strategic framework for LSC (Trust W).

Cooperation is the concept that emerged from this analysis. It leads to agreed conservation goals with benefits that extend beyond traditional environmental objectives. The innovative aspect of this cooperation is the involvement of representatives from communities, land owners and managers. However, existing partners still dominate the process with government agencies, local authorities, and funding bodies, being the main stakeholders. The benefit of this wider partnership approach is the prospect of social as well as conservation outcomes. The former include development of thriving communities and the realisation that the landscape scale approach is also relevant to peri-urban initiatives such as green infrastructure (Hostetler et al., 2011; Pearson et al., 2015).

7.1.2. Introduction to TWT's governance institutions

My analysis of Trust websites, and personal experience of one Trust, show that there is a variety of Trust governance structures: some have a board of directors, others a board of Trustees, others combine the two, yet others have a

council as a governing body. Trustees may also be directors under company law, and only members of a Trust can be appointed to its council or board of Trustees. Trustees are often, in terms of their background, position, training and experience, representative of the influential, not only in conservation but also socio-economically within the Trust's geographic area. In contrast council members were representative of the grass-roots membership, often on behalf of local conservation groups.

The operational head of a Trust is the Chief Executive, who may have served as a rank and file Trust staff or have been head-hunted. Some are career conservationists, either from the movement or from other conservation organisations, others came from private sector backgrounds. In some Trusts, staff may be members of their own Trusts, but may not vote in any proceedings or place resolutions to any meeting, nor be a Trustee⁵⁵ for reasons of possible conflict of interest.

I examined all the English Trusts' websites to determine the scale of their Living Landscape programmes. This provided an insight into the culture of the movement and how it varies between Trusts. These websites have similar corporate identities, but the level of detail provided varies, some giving access to annual reports, visionary documents, accounts and reviews of its activities, whilst others providing pen-portraits of their Trustees and senior management team (SMT). The websites often provide links to their Living Landscape schemes, some of which have dedicated websites with governance information.

I augmented my review of the websites with an email survey and interviews that gathered further information about the governance and implementation of Living Landscape partnerships. The governance institutions that enable such partnerships to function require an element of trust between stakeholders. The transparent mechanisms required to hold partners accountable are still being developed, of which partnership boards and community fora are examples (Trust E). This information revealed that the governance institutions within the movement, particularly partnerships, are in transition.

⁵⁵ During my research, I came across one instance where a member of staff is a Trustee.

7.1.3. Importance of the governance discourse within TWT

Governance is an important LSC discourse because it is the framework around which conservation activities take place across property boundaries. For Living Landscapes, governance is about complying with the appropriate legislative framework and fiscal requirements before managing relationships between neighbouring landowners. Lockwood has developed seven principles that manage these relationships in statutory conservation areas in Australasia (Jepson, 2005; Lockwood, 2009; Lockwood, 2010; Lockwood et al., 2009; Lockwood et al., 2010). I apply his approach to TWT's Living Landscapes in England having discussed his governance principles during my interviews with Living Landscape stakeholders.

Trusts do not explicitly apply these are principles to their Living Landscape programmes, although some principles may be implicit in the Trusts' codes of conduct or articles of association. My interviews were an opportunity to assess the relevance of the principles to Living Landscapes and gauge the extent to which they achieve these principles of good governance. Next, I outline how TWT governs its activities before exploring governance further with five case studies. Then I examine each of Lockwood's governance principles within the context of TWT and interpret them to produce knowledge about Living Landscapes.

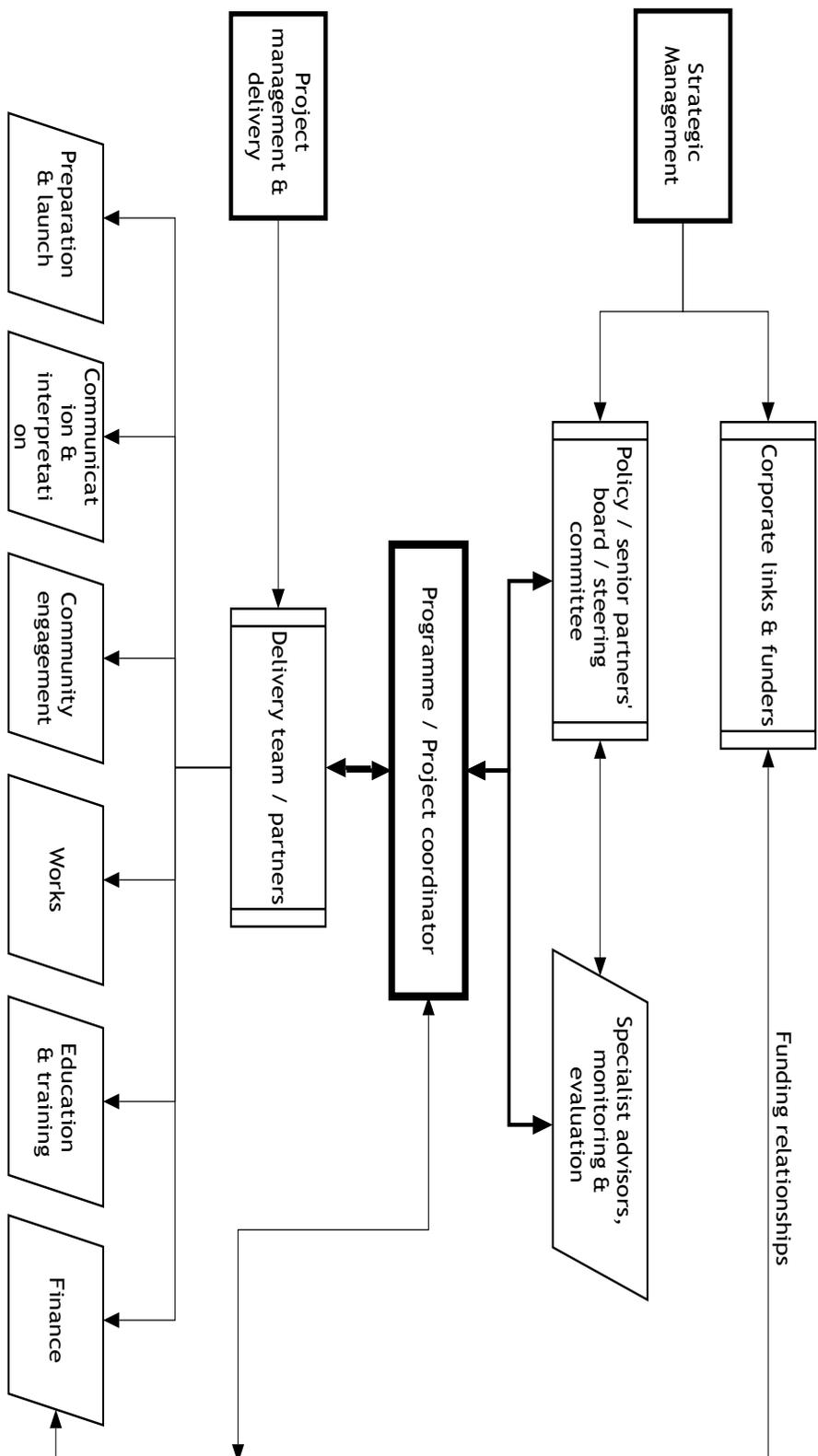
My research found that TWT governance has been formalised since the late 1950's and is enshrined in Memoranda and Articles of Association, which establish a governance framework covering nature conservation, its objectives and activities. As such TWT is a fiduciary movement, holding and managing natural assets in Trust for this and future generations. Thus, it could be argued, borrowing political concepts, that its member Trusts have a strict mandate, a duty to consult, weigh interests and provide reasons for decisions (Magnette, 2003). The governance and management framework is a dual structure with governance responsibility resting with trustees or directors, and management of the charity with the executive. This framework varies little across the movement and is reviewed periodically. It has been adapted to govern Living Landscapes, although some funding organisations impose additional layers of governance to account for the use of public funds. Living Landscapes provide an

opportunity for Trusts to assess the appropriate governance mechanisms and may herald a watershed moment for greater accountability and transparency. In my case studies, I use organograms, extrapolated from Trust annual reports, to represent the governance structures. The charts depict how conservation is governed, how Trusts keep in touch with their membership, and reveals aspects of their culture through the structure of the administration. I have also prepared indicative examples of governance structures used in two HLF Living Landscape partnerships. For example, Figure 43 shows a HLF partnership that separates strategic and operational activities, but it is notable that community engagement is an integral part of the delivery. It recognises the importance of access to external advice along with a feedback loop from a dedicated monitoring and evaluation team. The HLF Living Landscape partnership example in Figure 44 shows an integrated approach to LSC with responsibilities for delivering the Living Landscape resting with the programme manager, with a separate community forum providing links to communities within the scheme. These structures ensure that governance principles are applied to the planning, implementation and decision-making processes. The structures in themselves do not guarantee good governance, but their absence might suggest a lack of leadership, transparency and accountability. But good governance requires leadership to ensure that project objectives are met. In this respect two management positions are crucial: the programme manager and financial controller. The manager should blend both strategic and operational skills, but as one respondent noted:

... it's definitely important to have one person leading ... But I don't think there's any one person who can do [everything] (L-SF, reserve manager, 2014, 44:16)

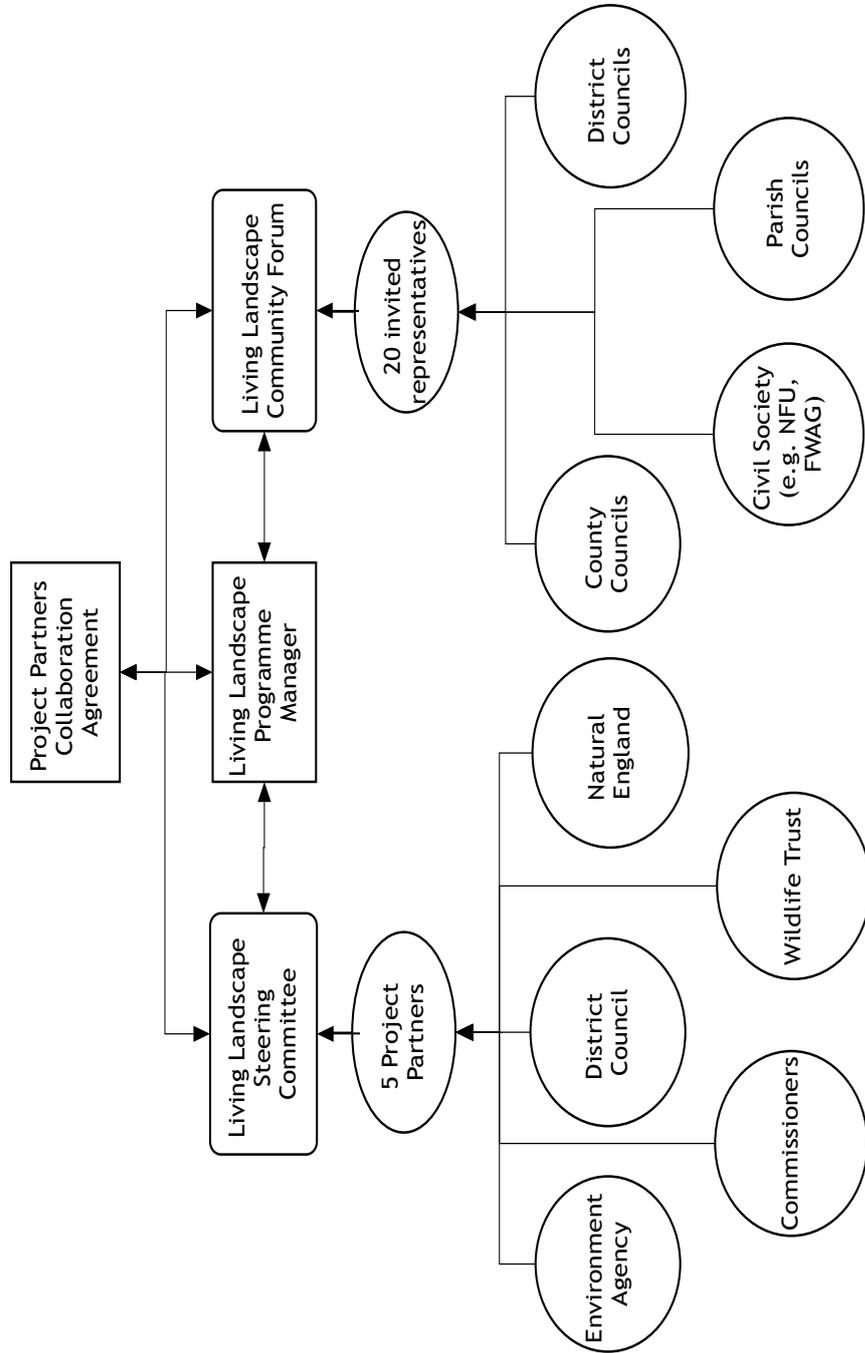
The choice of governance structure provides insight into organisational cultures, leadership styles and scheme objectives. The variation in these structures contribute to answering my research question about the governance of Living Landscapes.

Figure 43 Example A of Living Landscape Partnership



Source: Adapted by this author from HLF Landscape Partnership, Trust Q, 2014

Figure 44 Example B of Living Landscape Partnership



Source: Adapted by this author from Trust E's Landscape Partnership, 2014

7.2. Five case studies

These case studies describe the governance structures of five Trusts whose partners I have interviewed. I use these examples to examine Living Landscapes, its governance and implementation and they provide what Hajer calls storylines about the Trusts. Although it is not possible to generalise from them, my case studies exemplify different approaches to understanding Living Landscapes (Thomas, 2011:4). These case studies demonstrate how Trusts have approached LSC and its governance in 2014. Each case study's organisational chart captures various approaches and cultures of governance.

7.2.1. Trust AD

Trust AD has a board of Trustees and Directors, and a Council that includes Honorary Officers made up of volunteers. The board provides the overall governance of Trust's activities, which include Living Landscapes. The Council reflects the Trust's membership and advises the Board, along with 20 teams of specialists made up of staff and volunteers. The Trust has an interest in several trading subsidiaries and a mutual company that recruits new members for a group of Trusts. Figure 45 represents Trust AD's governance structure and culture, which reflects the inclusive input from its grassroots membership through the council. It is a hybrid administration, with various layers of governance, represented by the council, board and the teams. It is an approach that some Trusts have discarded in favour of a hierarchical approach, despite the benefits of the direct link with the membership through the Council and its teams. Trust AD also works with several other organisations or groups of organisations that may be loosely termed partnerships, where there are financial connections as well as mutual conservation interests. These partnerships have formal arrangements with a Memorandum of Understanding or Articles of Association between the parties. There are also informal groupings, without written terms of reference, but with an agreed agenda of activities.

This example shows how complex governance structures can become, where diverse sources of funding and support are used to achieve conservation objectives. This hybrid structure blends access to membership with a formal Trustee board and suggests deep-seated roots within the membership aligned to

a consultative culture, whilst maintaining an autocratic organisation directed through an executive group.

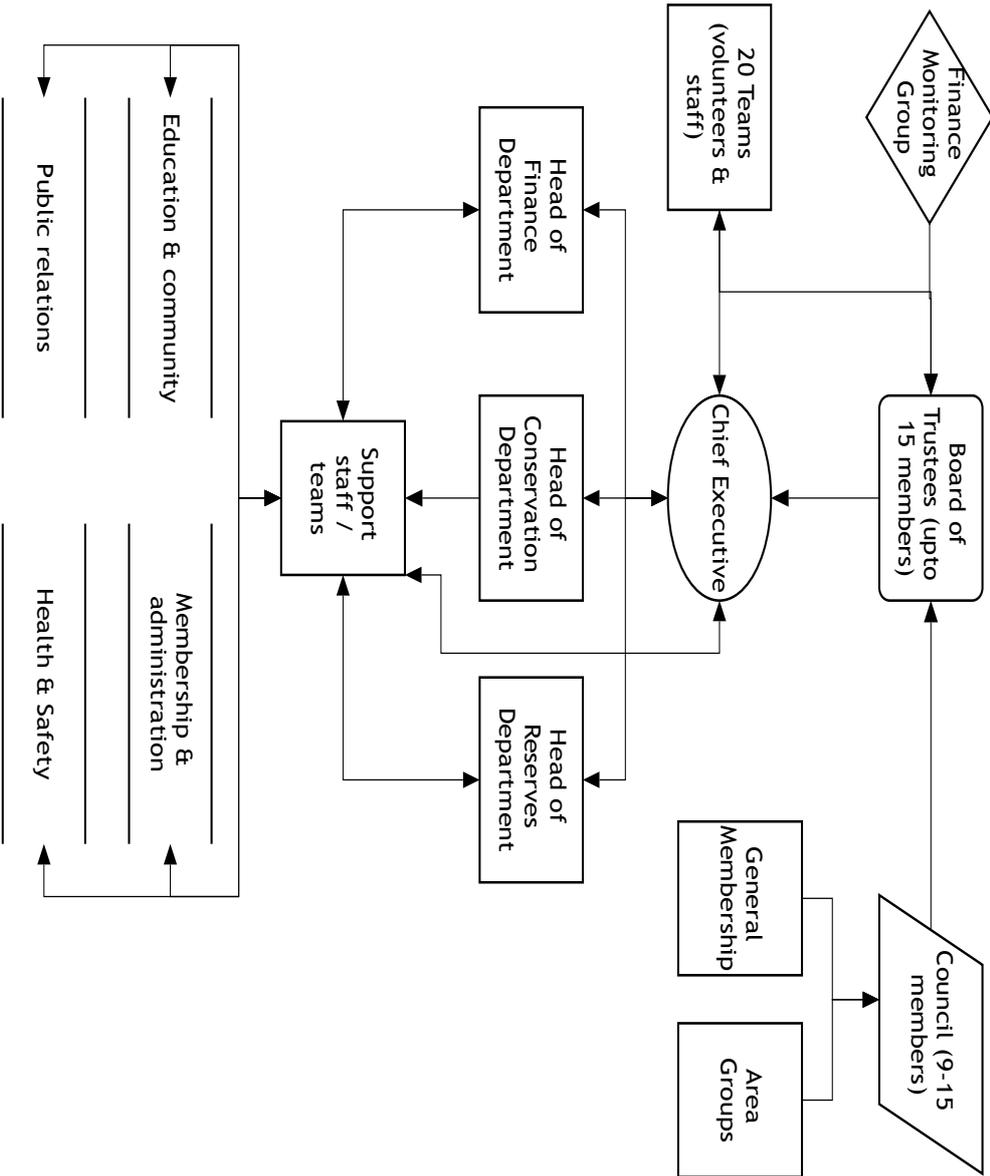
7.2.2. Trust E

Trust E has a comprehensive website containing reports and documents covering all aspects of its governance and operation, including Articles of Association. Its governance structure (Figure 46) consists of a Council of Trustees (members are elected for a three-year term) whose officers may include: chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary and others as appropriate (Trustees may serve up-to six years on Council). This council is supported by two committees: resources and conservation. The latter also covers educational and community matters. This model is a balance between a traditional council and a modern board. The day-to-day management is delegated to a CEO who reports to the Council. The CEO is supported by an executive board that implements the Trust's Corporate Plan.

The executive board is equivalent to a SMT and is made up of directors responsible for administration and finance, Living Landscapes, and marketing, fundraising and communications. Operational teams report against performance indicators to the Director of Living Landscapes. These teams are multi-functional, combining aspects of conservation, education and community functions.

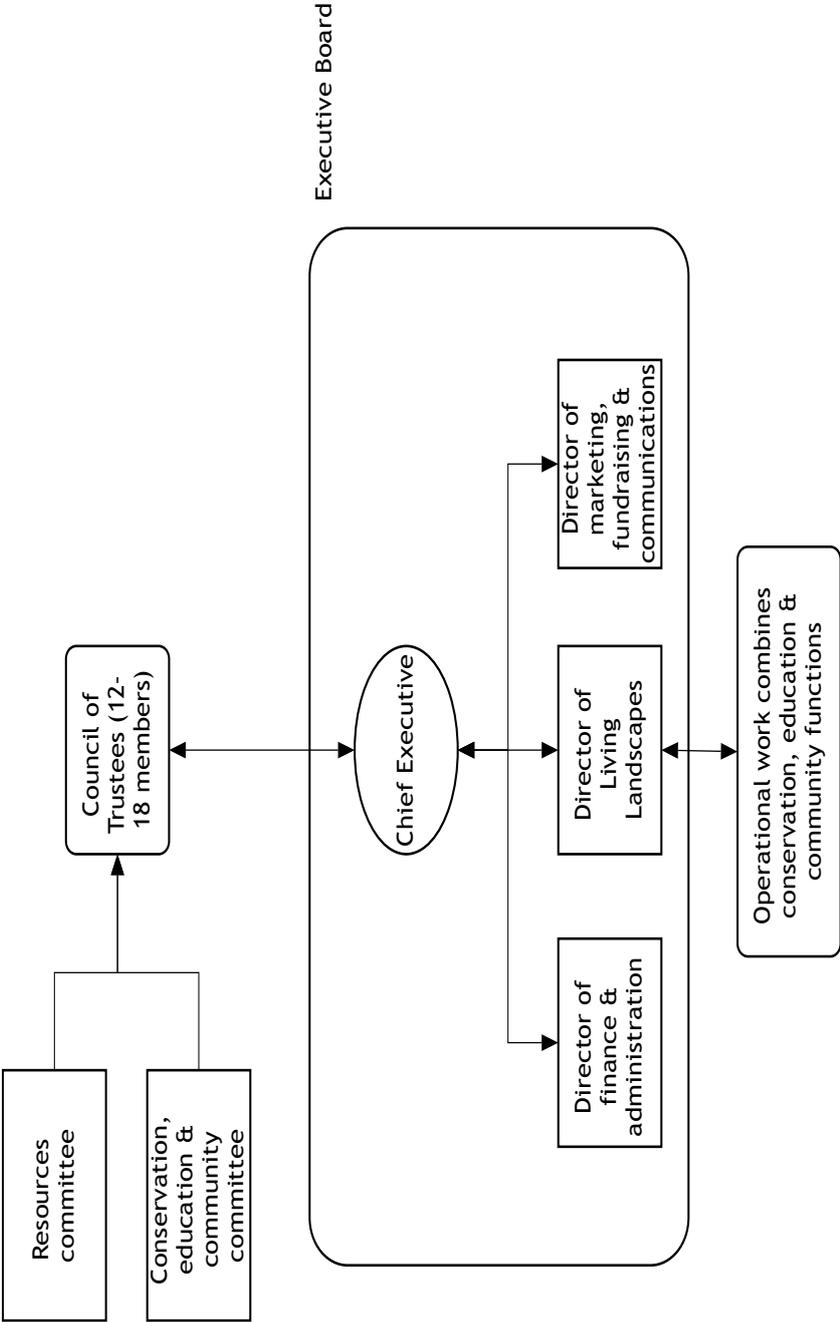
This Trust's website includes a page that sets out its vision, mission and values. But neither the vision nor the mission mentions Living Landscapes, although the vision stresses people's close relationship to wildlife. The values have an element of inclusiveness, reflecting one of Lockwood's principles, but emphasises the need to adopt a business-like approach and the importance of partnerships. This is an example of an executive board leading a flat organisation with two governance committees overseeing resources, conservation, education and community engagement. The organisational culture is collaborative, which may encourage innovation whilst maintaining a strong leadership style.

Figure 45 Trust AD - Indicative organisational chart



Source: Adapted by this author from the Annual Report for Trust AD (complement of 63 as of March 2014)

Figure 46 Trust E - Indicative organisational chart



Source: Adapted by this author from the Annual Report for Trust E (complement of 93 as of 2013)

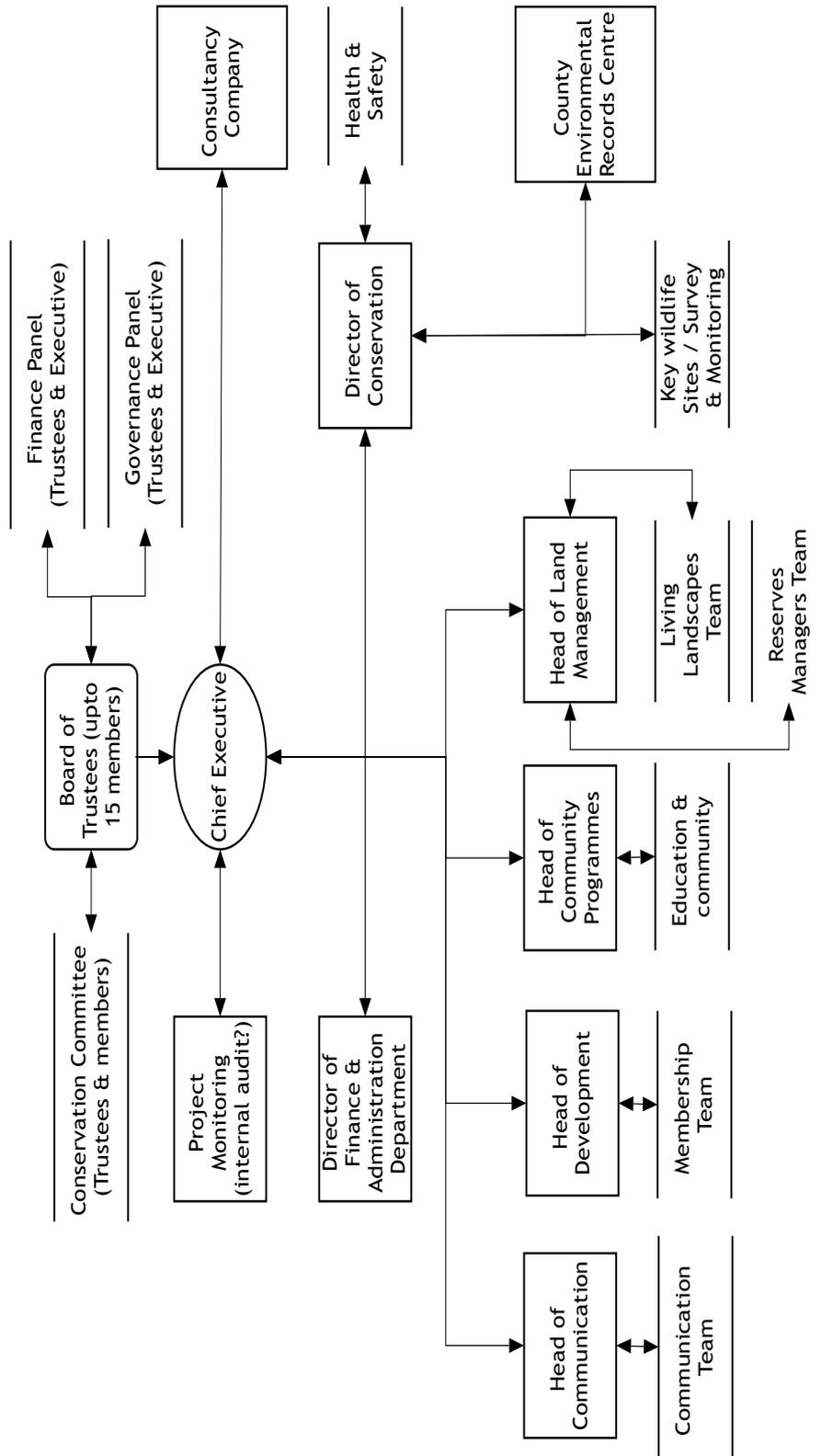
7.2.3. Trust L

Trust L (**Error! Reference source not found.**) has a board of Trustees with a chairman and vice chairman. This board is the governing body, which has several committees or panels advising it; neither these nor the officials are stipulated in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The panels' remits cover conservation, finance and governance. In addition to the board, who are also volunteers, there is a president and two vice presidents who augment the governance structure. The president is a high-profile public relations role, whilst the vice presidents are largely honorary. The Trustees and SMT are identified on its website and in its annual report; each is accompanied by a short profile. Trustees' skills are regularly assessed and their performance reviewed, with any skill-gaps being filled when Trustees retire on rotation.

The Trust is led by a CEO with a SMT, which consists of two directors: finance, and policy and conservation, and five heads of department: development, communications, land management, living landscapes and community programmes. The manager of the county environmental record centre is also represented on the SMT. At an operational level, there are educational and marketing teams, reserve managers and wardens, who report to their appropriate line manager. These teams are supported by volunteers. This Trust's website does not have current copies of its Articles of Association. There are summary strategic plans for 2014-2017 and 2017-2022. One of the Trust's four values, published on the Charity Commission's website for the Trust, is inclusiveness, and they are committed to a collaborative approach to their work.

This Trust's indicative organisation chart is notable because before the appointment of the current CEO this Trust was a very flat organisation with two directors in the SMT. Now the SMT has been expanded to include heads of department and there is clear accountability and responsibility throughout the organisation, particularly for Living Landscapes. Living Landscapes are a core activity that emphasises partnerships, but there is no information about the mechanisms used to develop and sustain them. This organisation structure is evolving into a hierarchical organisation, with the appointment of team leaders and the devolution of responsibility to encourage decision making at the lowest possible level.

Figure 47 Trust L - Indicative organisational chart



Source: Indicative organisation chart for Trust L (complement of 36 as of March 2015)

7.2.4. Trust Q

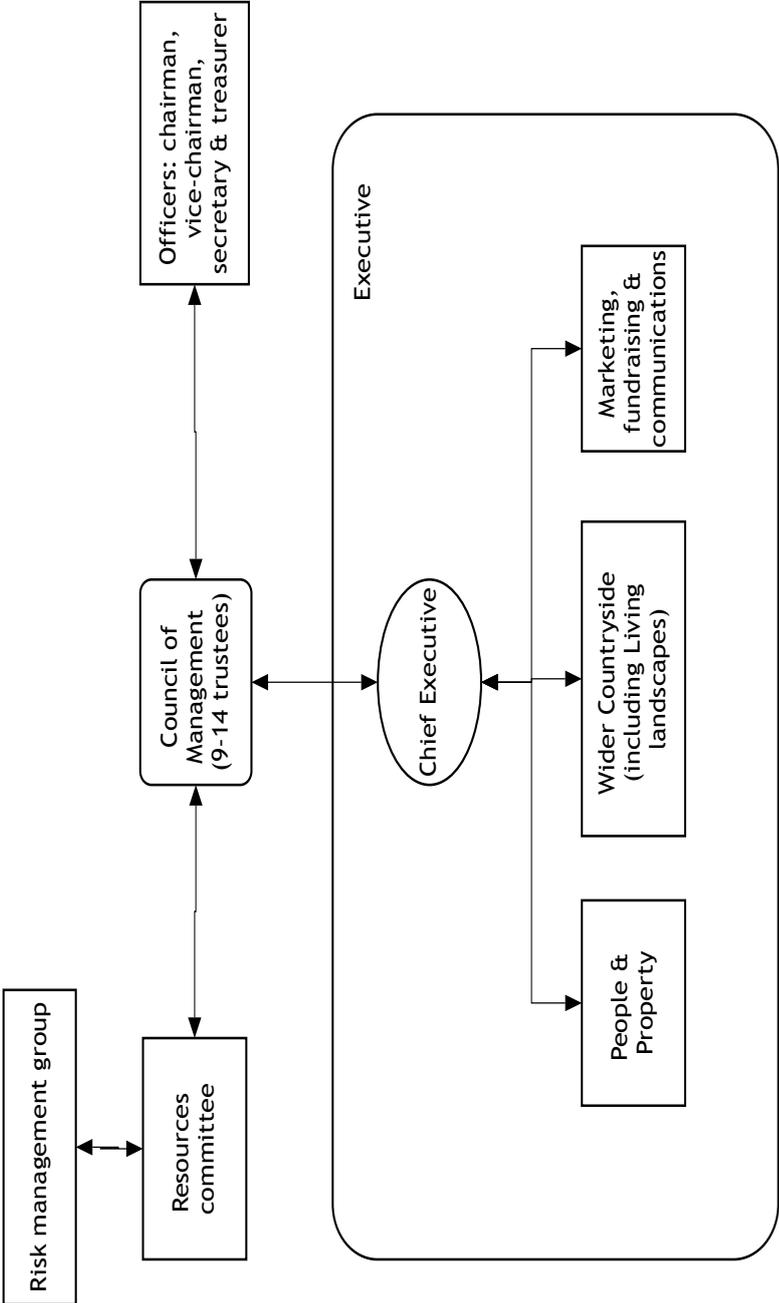
Trust Q (Figure 48) has a council of management whose members are Trustees who may become officers of the Trust. The officers are chairman, vice chairman, secretary and treasurer. The council delegates the day-to-day management of the Trust to the CEO and reviews these powers annually. This review also involves renewal of the terms of reference of all advisory committees and trading subsidiaries. There are no details of the SMT provided in its reports or the website; however, a new CEO was appointed in 2015. Therefore, changes may be expected to the organisational structure, which might clarify the governance of Living Landscapes. This Trust reviewed its entire governance structure for the first time since its foundation in 1969 between September 2013 and January 2015 and subsequently published revised Articles of Association. The findings of this review are not yet available, but the revised articles are posted on the Trust's website.

As part of an assessment of its resilience a risk management group was established and it reports to the Council through a resources committee. It reviews annually a risk register and a disaster recovery plan, which includes a self-checklist on internal financial controls. It is notable that there is a clause in the articles dealing with conflicts of loyalty and interest. It is not appropriate to examine this Trust's approaches and culture until more information becomes available. However, a recent examination of its website shows that the executive consists of just the CEO and a head of conservation delivery, which suggests a tight management rein.

7.2.5. Trust V

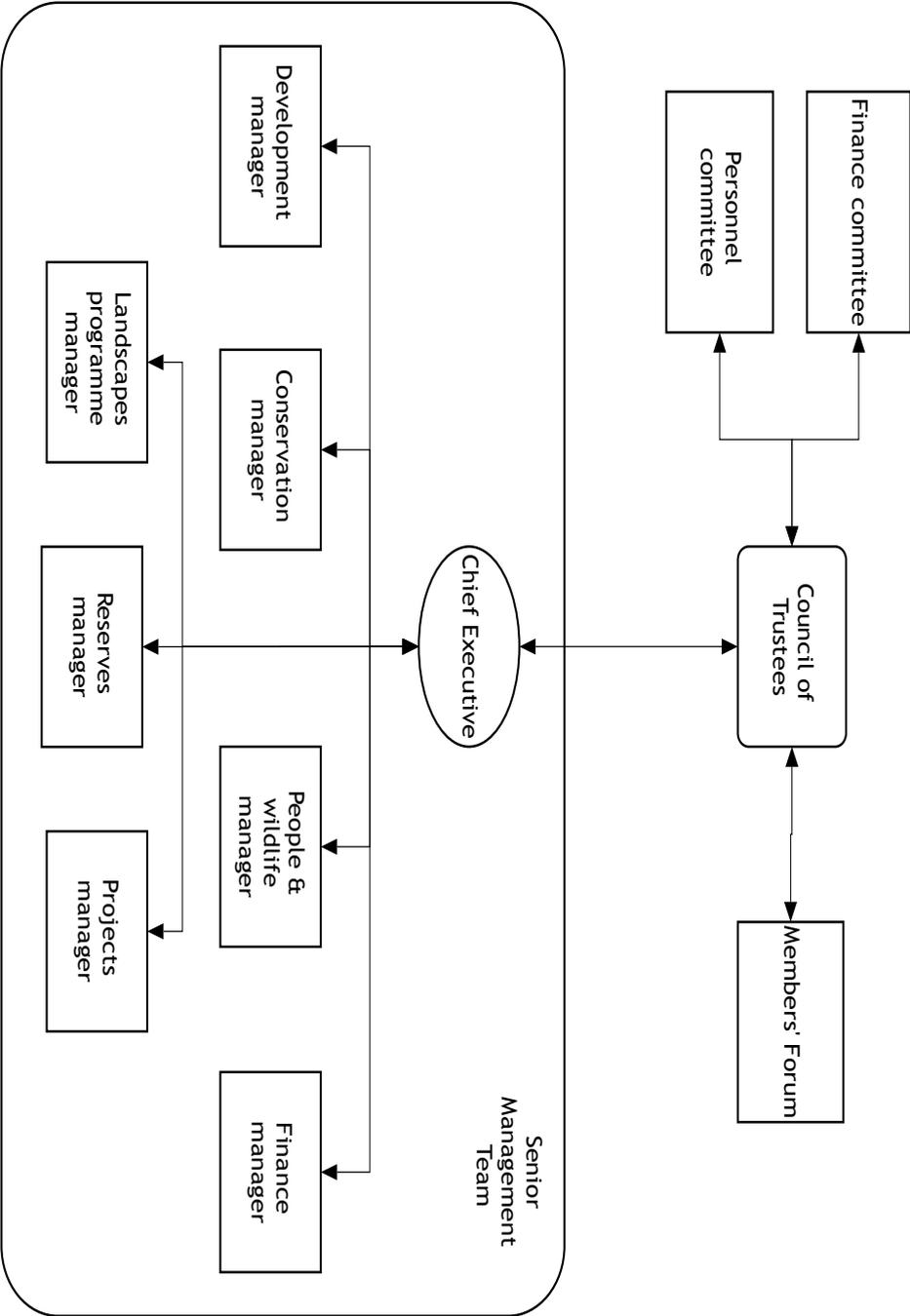
Trust V (Figure 49) has a Council of Trustees, appointed by Trust' members. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were amended in 1983 and 1988. Council officers include president, chairman, treasurer and secretary who are responsible for setting the Trust's development plan. Three subsidiary committees report to the Council covering finance, a member forum and personnel. The Council reviews the systems that assess strategic, business and operational risks annually. The Trustees are identified on its website accompanied by a short profile. It and its SMT, are identified in the annual report.

Figure 48 Trust Q - Indicative organisational chart



Source: Adapted by this author from the 2013 Annual Report for Trust

Figure 49 Trust V - Indicative organisational chart



Source: Adapted by this author from the 2013-14 Annual Report for Trust V

Trustees' skills are regularly assessed, and they review the trust's performance through regular reports and the Members' Forum. The CEO leads the SMT, which consists of managers covering, conservation, development, finance, landscape partnership programme, people and wildlife, reserves and river projects. It is a flat organisation with a council structure, a members' forum and four area or branch groups. Each branch conducts its own affairs through an Annual General Meeting (AGM), with the Trust holding a consolidating AGM. There are no records of these AGMs or reports on the web-site. This broad executive suggests a collaborative and inclusive culture.

7.2.6. Case studies - conclusions

Current guidance⁵⁶ recommends that financial probity and legislative compliance should encourage full disclosure through accountability and transparency (Charity Commission, 2015a:10). These case studies may not be representative of the movement, but they demonstrate that Living Landscape schemes have a range of governance structures, based upon the Trust's internal governance processes. Where these structures are hierarchical they provide opportunities for greater accountability and transparency, thus reflecting two of Lockwood's principles.

The organisational structures are a snapshot of the governance and operating framework within the movement; they provide the basis for my investigation of LSC governance. The partnership board mechanism is not applied to all Living Landscape schemes, perhaps because they introduce additional administrative costs. This is to the detriment of Lockwood's governance principles. Where partnership boards are not used, Trusts adapt existing governance mechanisms for Living Landscapes. In my conversations with Trusts E and Q it emerged that HLF funding imposes partnership boards upon Living Landscapes, which improves accountability and transparency. All but Trust L adopt relatively flat organisational structures, which suggests an autocratic leadership style. But it is interesting to note that there is recent evidence that flat structures encourage innovation and creativity (Gale, 2016).

⁵⁶ Trusts' annual reports are required to set out their governance structures by the Charity Commission. However, there is no requirement to explain different approaches to governance.

In two examples (Trust AD and V), a members' forum or council provide wider accountability. These examples show how governance has evolved from a council, grassroots, organisation structure (Trust AD) to one with unpaid professional board (e.g. Trust L). These examples are counter-balanced by Trust E and Trust Q, where partnerships are a central governance mechanism.

7.3. Governance of Living Landscapes - approaches and cultures

In this section I use evidence from my interviews and case studies to examine Lockwood's principles. This helps me understand how Living Landscapes are governed and whether good governance principles are followed. Below I provide details about the governance of Living Landscapes derived from an analysis of the interviews where I discussed Lockwood's seven principles. I reproduce selected quotations to illustrate how Lockwood's criteria are applied, highlighting governance themes as they occur. These themes are linked to the Lockwood's principles and criteria and represent new knowledge about LSC governance in England through the example of Living Landscapes. The relationship between Lockwood's principles, criteria and the themes are shown diagrammatically at the end of each section.

7.3.1. Legitimacy

Lockwood's identifies four criteria for his first principle legitimacy: mandate, acceptance of authority, cultural attachment to the protected area, and integrity. The themes that emerged from my research on legitimacy are summarised in Figure 50 and those that stand out are TWT's historical mandate, cultural attachment and landownership aspects of legitimacy.

Democratic or legal mandate

Two of the Trusts I interviewed were involved in HLF Landscape Partnerships that give them legal mandates for LSC. These agreements are between the HLF and the lead partner: the accountable body (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 14:48). Many Living Landscapes do not have this type of legitimacy, because they rely on a Trust's governance mandate for managing nature reserves. I interpret this as a form of historical precedent or justification for Trusts leading LSC.

One observer explains this legitimacy:

... where does legitimacy come from ... I suppose, the intellectual and heritage legitimacy ... comes from ... Charles Rothschild in 1910. And from that grew the whole concept of nature reserves, ... The great second leap forward, [... is] Living Landscapes. (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 02:57)

This historic link from nature reserves to Living Landscapes is important to the movement because, as one respondent considers, with:

... membership of around ... 3% of the county ... We did feel that we had a mandate to do something ... (L-KW, senior manager, 2014, 00:36)

But there is a discrepancy in this position, a presumption of legitimacy, because as another interviewee stated: "I think there's a lack of open discussion" (L-MG, Trustee, 2014, 56:57). Conversely, one ex-Trustee is a dissenting voice when considering the legitimacy of Living Landscapes:

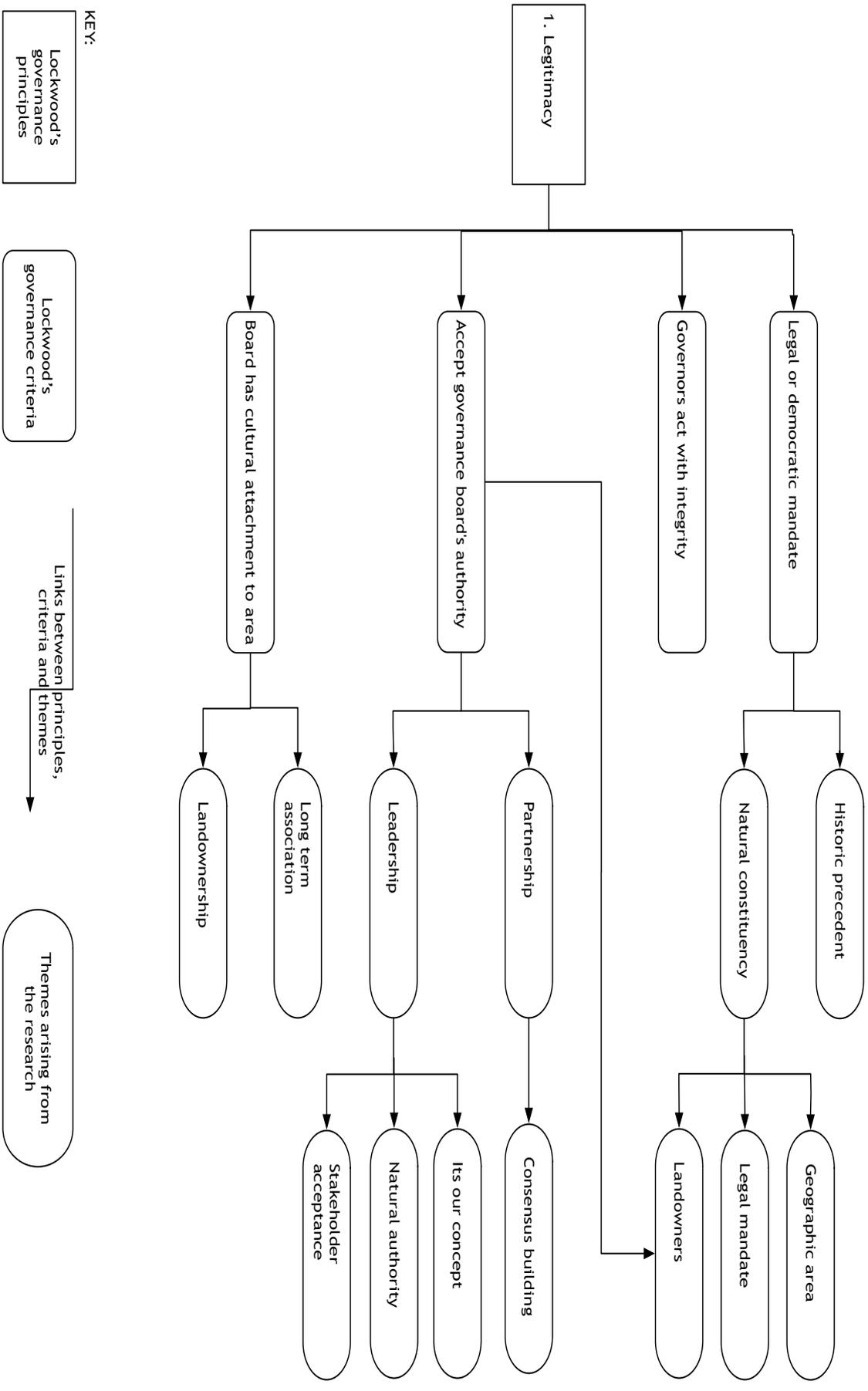
... I think that there's a bit of illegitimacy there, actually. ... the only legitimacy is when they are protecting wildlife, and educating about wildlife ... (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 01:18)

Another aspect of TWT's legitimacy is expressed by one senior manager:

The Trust's been around for over 50 years. It's managed money well so far and it's had successes in their projects ... So there is an element of trust that things are done well. (V-TH, senior manager, 2014, 18:00)

There are three types of legitimacy emerging from my research. First, the predominate view is that historic precedent provides the legitimacy for the movement's activities, which extends from nature reserves to Living Landscapes. However, this amounts to neither a democratic nor legal mandate to manage LSC, but it does confer some sort of experiential legitimacy. The second form of legitimacy derives from those occasions where considerable amounts of public funding are provided through a legal partnership agreement, binding Trusts to funding streams (c.f. HLF with Trusts E & Q). And the third type of legitimacy is embedded in TWT's natural constituency that confers legitimacy based upon their membership's mandate.

Figure 50 Legitimacy - Lockwood's first governance principle



KEY:
 Lockwood's governance principles
 Lockwood's governance criteria
 Links between principles, criteria and themes
 Themes arising from the research

Source: adapted by author from Lockwood (2009 & 2010) with results from the author's research

Governance with integrity

I found no specific evidence from the interviews and websites to support this criterion. However, in my discussions personal integrity emerged as an element in the proposed code of conduct for Trustees and it is implicit in the conflict of interests and loyalty policies and is part of TWT's proposed leadership and management charter.

Stakeholders acknowledge the mandate

My research finds that partnerships are a common approach to conservation governance (c.f. Trusts AD, E, Q, & V). This implies that there is broad stakeholder acceptance of the governance board's authority where stakeholders invest in developing an understanding between them and the Trusts. However, it takes time to build such relationships. Another observer of the Living Landscape process considers that:

... People think, "Wildlife Trusts, ... their heart must be in the right place, and therefore they are appropriate". Whether, they're appropriate to take on landscape partnerships is another question. (Q-AN, consultant, 2014, 23:16)

This natural legitimacy and respect for TWT is assumed to be wide spread; but one Trustee acknowledges that there is another perception of this historical legitimacy:

The image is we know about wildlife, and we know what to do about it ... they have this image which I'm not sure is justified. (L-MG, Trustee, 2014, 55:23 & 56:17)

A manager from the same Trust also recognises this dichotomy:

We felt that we were probably the people best-placed. ... Whether or not we had a mandate is questionable. (L-KW, senior manager, 2014, 00:36)

This natural authority is qualified by their CEO's observations:

I don't think there is a mandate actually ... it's about getting stakeholder engagement right. (L-FW, senior manager, 2014, 02:16)

One programme leader develops this concept further by suggesting that it is not an automatic mandate:

I don't think anything does and I think that's the problem. I think the answer's different internally and externally. I think internally, it's the

wealth of experience. ... [others⁵⁷] have earned the right to hold the mantle for landscape scale restoration in the country. (V-DG, senior manager, 2014, 00:32)

This view is articulated further by another observer:

... they are non-accountable. ... So they have legitimacy ... only through the fact that they are recognised as worthy organisations. (Q-AN, consultant, 2014, 22:29)

Therefore, legitimacy cannot be taken for granted, it needs to be worked at because Living Landscape partnerships are complicated arrangements. Nevertheless, partnerships are integral to stakeholder acceptance because partners need to endorse business plans and actions, which requires good communication between partners. The development of stakeholder recognition is a bottom up process, where consensus is important as this Living Landscape manager says:

As ... we start to get more and more ... people involved ... we will create new forms of legitimacy for them. ... It has to work from the bottom up. ... the historical legitimacy, and the organisational and structural legitimacy, ... (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 06:26)

Hence, engagement, getting people involved, is a prerequisite for legitimacy. This is because it generates interest as well as membership, building consensus as engagement develops and legitimacy is established. Lockwood's next criterion, cultural attachment, keeps these partnerships working together.

Cultural attachment

During my interviews, I found that respondents made frequent mention of strategic partners who had an attachment to Living Landscapes. This cultural attachment helped Trusts engage with and inspire local communities (Q-AN, an independent consultant, 2014, 28:31). The extent of this cultural attachment may be deduced from the extensive lists of active partners associated with Living Landscapes and the names of some of the Living Landscapes, such as John Clare Country, The Great Whin Sill, and The Stiperstones.

Cultural attachment is expressed through communication strategies: identifying what gets people interested; i.e. what drives consensus building. Observers consider that building consensus is grounded in mutual agreement around the

⁵⁷ This would include Trusts, RSPB and possibly National Trust (V-DG, 2014, 22:29).

cultural attachment to an area. However, there is a suggestion that relevance may be a more pertinent expression than cultural attachment:

I think legitimacy comes from different levels. The partnership, obviously, gives legitimacy. ... a lot of legitimacy must have to come from ... stakeholders. I guess we would call it relevance, not legitimacy. ... (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 04:31)

Thus, physical attachment to an area amounts to cultural attachment, particularly where there is community engagement. Although, some partners choose not to become visibly involved for commercial reasons, the importance of attachment through land-ownership was prevalent, as this manager observed:

We don't need to own all the land, within [our LSC]. ... [But] ownership makes what we want to do easier. ... (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 02:57)

Landownership as legitimacy is explored next.

Landownership as an adjunct to legitimacy

In this example legitimacy is wrapped up within the context of landownership because:

... landholding ... [is] a demonstration of what can be done, and as a means of encouraging others to go down the same path. ... one does need these physical investments in a Living Landscape, as well as the people investment too ... But I don't think one necessarily would work without the other. (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 74:19)

Landownership may confer legitimacy and provide a mandate, particularly when investment is necessary. One landowner recognises this but also considers the importance of leadership:

... the key is land driven, and you've got to find a flag bearer. (E-DL, conservation partner, 2014, 05:25)

Another perspective is that legitimacy is based upon the landowners' voluntary participation in LSC as one landowner opined:

... It's voluntary work, ... we are custodians of the countryside, and we've got to improve it. ... (E-DL, conservation partner, 2014, 01:11)

Here, landownership confers legitimacy through entitlement and stewardship. This historic legitimacy, acknowledges the mutual obligation between landowners. However, there are other perspectives as this manager says:

Even where you own ... land ... You can't divorce yourself from ... the surrounding land. ... So, no, it doesn't confer [legitimacy]. Its land

ownership, its stewardship. ... Legitimacy's ... wider than just ourselves
- as wide as society. ... (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 01:15)

One Trust recognises this and has recently set a strategic objective to increase its landholdings by 10%, some 108 ha, by 2022 (GWT, 2017:2&5).

Therefore, landownership facilitates rather than legitimizes Living Landscapes, i.e. owning land allows Trusts to deliver specific conservation outcomes without reference to other stakeholders. Communities develop cultural attachment for land managed by Trusts, and nature reserves have recreational value as well as being places of conservation, which legitimises Trusts' activities. Other landowners contribute to LSC by becoming partners and embracing its conservation objectives thus catalysing LSC.

7.3.2. Transparency

Lockwood identifies four transparency criteria: governance and decision-making are open to scrutiny by stakeholders; reasoning behind decisions is clear and evident; both achievements and failures are evident; and information is presented to stakeholders in an appropriate manner. My analysis identifies several resonant themes, including specific consensual mechanisms or procedures to justify decisions. Other themes covered metrics, reporting and outward facing communication. These themes are summarised in Figure 51. Of interest are the need to open-up decision-making processes to members, beyond Trustees, with a greater use of social media.

Decisions open to scrutiny

The main element open to scrutiny is the funding of Living Landscapes, particularly where public money is involved. However, financial reporting on Living Landscapes is aggregated into the annual accounts rather than being published separately. The extent of this transparency is debatable, as one senior manager opines:

... you don't really want to be too transparent about some of these things ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 44:47)

Although, one reserves manager admitted:

... you got to be able to justify what your money is being spent on if it's public money ... People ... [have] the right to know ... (L-SF, reserve manager, 2014, 53:13)

Further, the level of scrutiny appears minimal. At least one Trustee thought minutes of meetings were not kept or disclosed (L-MG, Trustee, 2014, 62:42).

One manager mused:

... you have to be transparent. It's just how transparent you want to be ... (L-SF, reserve manager, 2014, 53:43).

Scrutiny is fundamental to democracy as one observer articulates:

... we make sure that we don't have any adverse impacts on any of our neighbours. And we let them know of what we're doing ... Do we need to be any more open and transparent? ... there's got to be a certain amount of openness and transparency - for more people to listen to you. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 05:28)

In other circumstances, the level of openness is restricted to the partnership (Q-TB, HLF mentor, 2014, 18:19). But one Trustee points out that this may be a function of Living Landscapes:

... I actually think the Trust(s) have tended to see this as being their own vehicle and how much they've brought other organizations into it ... Therefore, maybe it's not that transparent and if it was truly a shared Living Landscape for everybody, you've got to get everybody round to agreeing with your vision ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 44:52)

Another Trustee is "slightly worried" about the lack of administration:

... This is why I would like us to have a sort of monitoring ... (L-MG, Trustee, 2014, 64:21).

And another manager admitted:

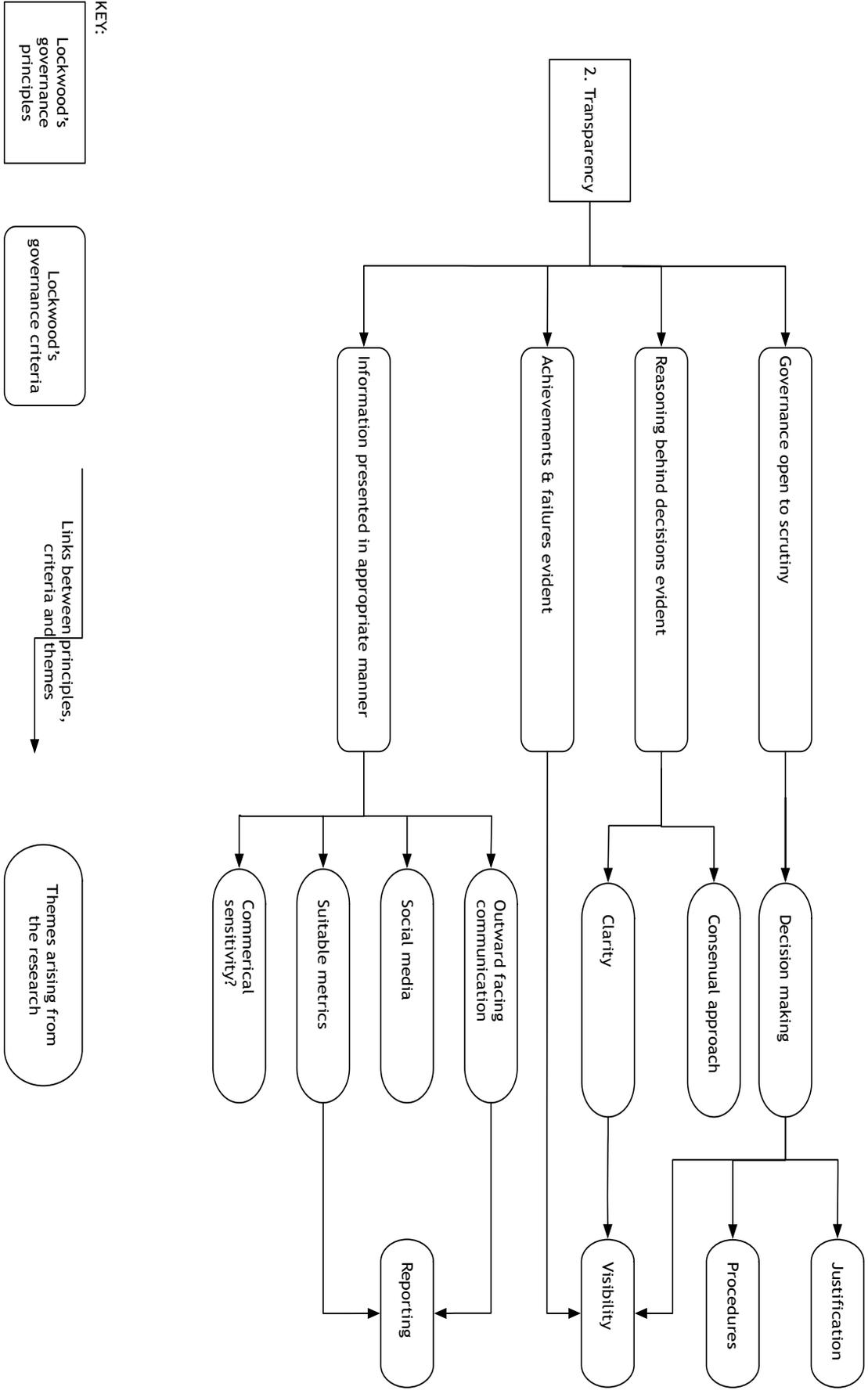
We haven't really consciously considered [transparency] (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 35:54).

But, another Trustee admits that he's "against transparency" because:

... I'm part of the old guard that used to trust people ... Now, that's all broken down ... I still don't think that you need to be too transparent. ... you waste a huge amount of time and lay yourself open to democracy, which I think, most of the time, is a pretty useless way of behaving. ... but I'm not mad keen on transparency, except when legitimate governance goes wrong. ... (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 03:46)

Therefore, scrutiny appears to elicit a mixed response, partly because it is difficult to explain Living Landscapes, and there's a reluctance to commit too many resources to external communication. Lockwood's next criterion examines the reasoning behind decision-making.

Figure 51 Transparency - Lockwood's second governance principle



KEY:

Lockwood's governance principles

Lockwood's governance criteria

Links between principles, criteria and themes

Themes arising from the research

Source: adapted by author from Lockwood (2009 & 2010) with results from the author's research

Reasoning behind decisions is evident to stakeholders

Within a partnership board structure consensual decision-making is the mechanism used to resolve disputes amicably. As one manager explains:

... We only do things behind closed doors on sensitive element(s) ... [or] internal conflicts ... or ... where things do need to be kept confidential ... everything else is completely open. ... (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 02:26 & 03:17)

From a partner's perspective, it was observed that:

... the big decisions ... have ... always been done at full partnership board with everybody in the room ... (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 24:33)

Consensus is the core of the democratic process within the movement. But, minutes of meetings of the partnership board structure are not publicised.

This is a pragmatic rather than sinister response to providing too little or too much information, because as one manager observed:

... if people ask the question, you've always got to be prepared to answer it. ... (L-SF, reserve manager, 2014, 50:19)

Consensus was the dominant concept amongst my interviewees, but discussions always returned to the reluctance to disclose financial decisions.

Achievements and failures are evident to stakeholders

Lockwood's third criterion for transparency is openness with an emphasis on both success and failure. I found that Trusts tend to emphasise the positive over the negative. Previously, reference was made to balancing the amount of information available, how much information should be provided, and some may want to know more than Trusts are prepared to reveal. For example:

The thing is if you put ... all the information out ... expenses, and all that. ... Some people will pick up on it and will use it to criticise other people ... (L-SF, reserve manager, 2014, 51:21)

There is a dichotomy between open scrutiny and letting the Trusts get on with what they do. Although some major donors require full transparency:

... in some respects we have no choice because we have HLF funding ... there's no reason why we shouldn't be openly transparent. (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 11:09)

This is reiterated by a partner:

... I think if you're going to ... spend ... [HLF] money, what you do has got to be open and transparent to the public. ... (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 13:33)

Several respondents raised the financial aspect of transparency:

... I think one of the things that has obscured this has been the way the projects have been funded. ... I'm not sure the board has been that keen on uncovering some of the deliverables either ... The more you buy in stakeholders, your transparency has to go up. (L-FW, senior manager, 2014, 12:23 & 13:33)

Some Trusts will not provide additional information unless it is requested, largely because it is expensive to provide. Therefore, there is a lack of visibility in terms of success and failure, rather than there being an opaque decision-making process. Transparency is only taken so far; the movement is quite circumspect in respect of revealing failings, as one partner observes:

... [these] processes can be incredibly complex and difficult to explain, ... You do need to trust that somebody is spending money effectively. ... (V-LP, Trustee, 2014, 43:23)

Information presented appropriately to stakeholders

Lockwood's fourth criterion concerns communication, but the terminology used during my interviews referred to the current jargon of outward facing communication. Most Trusts' websites have a page on their Living Landscape programme but the art of communication is being reinterpreted:

... I think we try to be open ... [but] there's almost no point at all of detailing all of that stuff ... [because] kids today don't use websites ... They use social media. ... so there's no point in us producing a website ... (V-DG, senior manager, 2014, 12:07 & 12:22)

How much information to make available is a question of finance as well as transparency. Innovative thinking, in the shape of social media, is having an impact. For example, using a Quick Response⁵⁸ code, which:

... goes straight through to our website and ... we get information out to people ... through Twitter (V-DG, senior manager, 2014, 14:34)

Other methods of communication target specific audiences, such as walkers:

... more and more people ... [are] using social media. ... in terms of getting stuff across to what we're doing ... is done through a

⁵⁸ QR code is a type of matrix barcode.

smartphone app called ViewRanger© ... (V-DG, senior manager, 2014, 15:07)

A counterpoint to this is the belief that people should ask if they want information. However, others consider that waiting for questions to be asked “sounds like a bit of a cop out” (AD-IM, 2014, 39:21). Alternatively, information could be put on a website, but websites take considerable resources to keep up to date. The implication is that you can only take transparency so far, and that you should manage expectations, particularly when resources are scarce (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 41:50 & 40:52).

Trusts consider several questions about Living Landscape communication: who is in the partnership, how wide is it, does it extend to the public, and if public money is involved should it not be clearly accounted for, does it need to be presented in a fresh manner? As one Living Landscape partner explains:

... you should be ... very open, ... providing detailed summaries of how that process is working, ... how the money is being spent, what the income is ... (V-LP, Trustee, 2014, 42:58)

The inference is that it is a governance responsibility:

... I think that it's also important to put it back on the partners ... It's up to them to ask questions as well. (V-LP, Trustee, 2014, 43:54)

One answer is to establish a set of metrics to present information appropriately to stakeholders. One approach is:

... We needed to know the community are with us ... [We] got them volunteering ... [These] volunteers who are quite negative ... are out there helping us count things and check whether actually we are achieving the stuff we said we would. ... (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 02:17)

Most information is available in Living Landscape reports, but:

They're tabulated in such a way as not to make it easy to read ... I suppose if anybody actually wanted to see it, they could ask to see it ... (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 48:37 & 49:07)

In summary, transparency is perceived not to be an issue amongst interviewees because information is there if asked for. And amongst HLF Landscape partnership schemes information is in the public domain. And published accounts are revealing more details of how public funds and unrestricted income are used as accounting standards change (Charity Commission, 2015a). Nevertheless, availability is no guarantee of people's interest, as this conservation director notes:

... overall finances are available for people to see. I don't know how many look at them, but in looking round the room at the AGM on Saturday ... there were the full accounts for people to pick up as they go in the door ... I found that nobody bothered to pick up a copy. (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 44:00)

7.3.3. Accountability

Accountability, Lockwood's third principle, has five criteria: clear definition of roles and responsibilities, accountability to a constituency, formal acceptance of responsibility by the governing body, which is accountable to a higher authority, and power is exercised appropriately. These are summarised in Figure 52. In my interviews, respondents consider accountability in three ways: allocation of responsibilities, answerable to a constituency and management, and the chain of command. Interviewees thought that roles and responsibilities were clearly defined, and were satisfied that governance rested with the board or council.

Clearly identified roles and responsibilities

Accountability to TWT's membership is a cornerstone of the movement. This reflects current guidance that emphasises the need for documented delegated powers with clear responsibilities and answerability to a constituency and higher authorities (Charity Commission, 2012). One respondent explains:

... we are constitutionally answerable to our membership, through the governance bodies. Externally, we don't have to be answerable to any other landowner or political body or council. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 08:15)

Their constituency is their membership and the higher authorities are internal and external to the Trust. Internally these authorities may be a board or council who represent the membership and/or partnership. Externally, it includes the Charity Commission, HMRC, funding partners and government agencies.

Accountability is how TWT is questioned about its proposals and actions, but one observer believes that:

... accountability's quite difficult ... because people ... don't always want the same thing ... We're not communicative members, but as long as you continue to do the right thing, we'll support you. ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 53:27)

Applying accountability to Living Landscapes, where partners are as important as members, emphasises the importance of effective communication between partners. As one observer notes:

... There is a gap between strategy and delivery, which requires a shift in vision ... It's a challenge for partners to see the big picture and recognize the cooperative nature of the project. There is a champion to drive the process but the messages need to be internal and external in order to secure a lasting legacy / sustainability (Q-KR, consultant, 2014, 10:30-13:00)

To be accountable, governing bodies need to be able to switch from strategic to operational perspectives to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of Living Landscapes. This is important because monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of programmes is not well established, except where required by funders⁵⁹.

Therefore, accountability is an opportunity for engagement with constituents to give voice for their concerns and comments.

Finally, two points emerged from my interviews as critical to accountability.

First, there is a need for more engagement with communities, but second there are limited sanctions if accountability fails.

Acceptance of responsibilities

One scheme manager thinks that TWT's responsibility for a wider environment extends beyond the movement's core business of the:

... protection of wild places and wildlife, and education of people about wild places and wildlife. So ... biodiversity, landscape and education - [are also] the Wildlife Trust [business]. (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 07:51)

But this manager believes that within TWT:

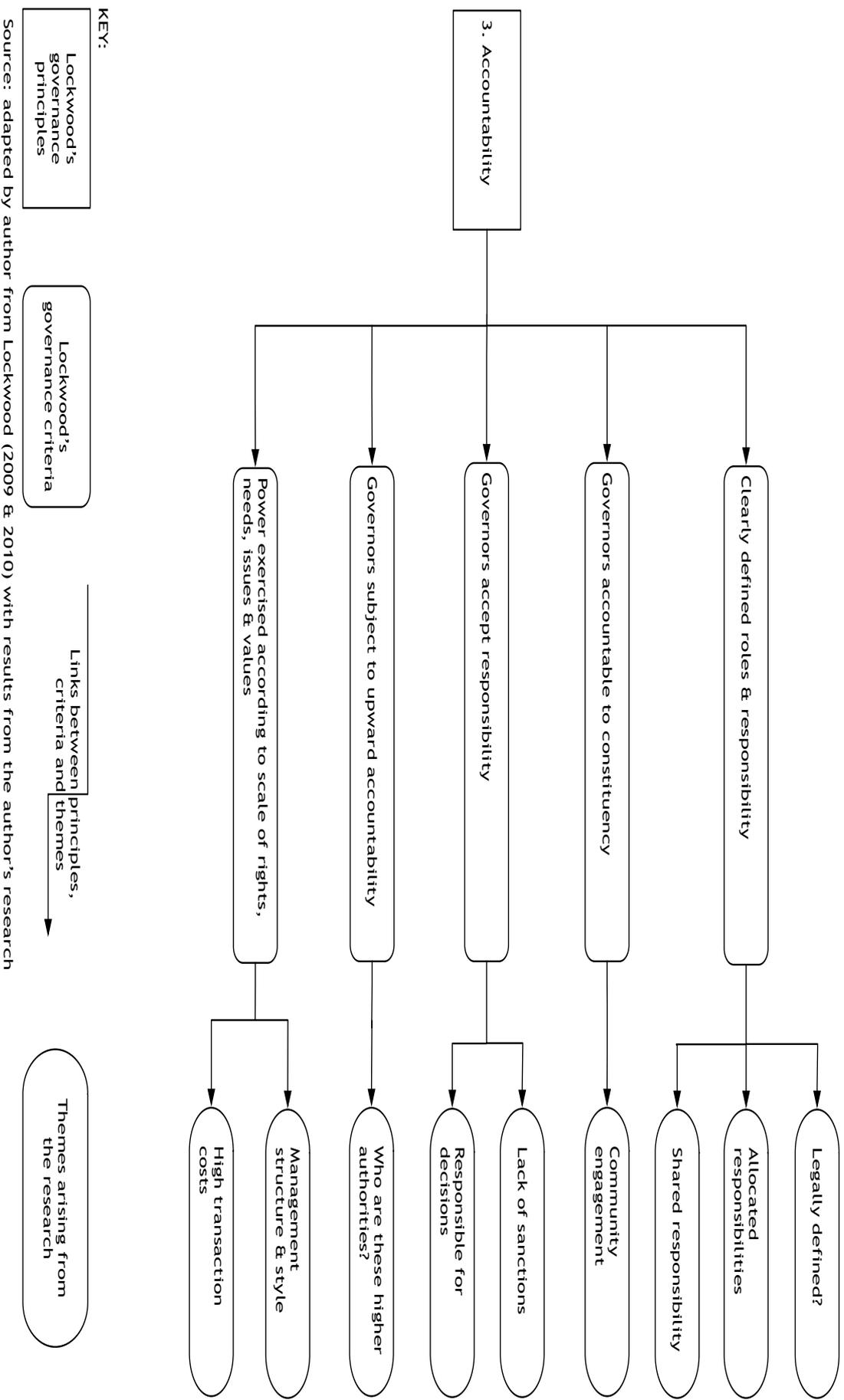
... there is a school of thought that thinks that Wildlife Trusts can run landscape initiatives without involving other elements of landscape, such as the built, and the industrial heritage and very - to a lesser degree, the community. (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 09:05)

One Trustee agrees that TWT's natural constituency is its membership (V-DH, 2014, 38:18). However, actual responsibilities are often not defined. Other observations about the democratic nature of the movement are instructive:

... are we totally open and transparent, democratic? No we're not. ... If nature really was up there with the economy and society ... then there might not be a need for us ... (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 11:07)

⁵⁹ M&E are addressed under Lockwood's sixth principle: connectivity.

Figure 52 Accountability - Lockwood's third governance principle



Living Landscapes generally require more accountability than traditional conservation work on nature reserves, because of the wider constituency and the use of public monies.

However, there is at least one example of a Living Landscape partnership with a narrow constituency. One such partnership consists of one landowner who drives the programme forward with like-minded neighbours with administrative support from Trust E.

An example of a wider partnership comes from Trust Q, where the consultant responsible for its M&E considers that accountability: “... stops with the people on the partnership board ...”, although he acknowledges that:

sometimes people on these partnership boards are there because somebody asked them to go along, and they don't actually contribute that much and that's a bit of a concern (Q-AN, conservation director, 2014, 37:38).

In summary, Living Landscape partners accept their responsibilities and take them seriously, but they may not be itemised.

Answerable to a constituency

Trustees delegate day-to-day operational activities to the CEO, who distributes them down the management structure. This allocation of responsibility and decision-making is extended to Living Landscapes. One manager considers that “the vast majority [of powers] ...” are delegated (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 12:32). This is because the team leader has:

... quite a lot of autonomy in coming up with plans about ... what actions we're going to take, to try and achieve our Living Landscape vision. ... There is a lot of trust down to different levels ... But ultimately ... the Chief Executive is still going to be accountable to the trustees. ... Trustees will take a very high level and look at the risks to the organisation. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 13:01 & 49)

This reputational risk is a concern to most Trusts where adverse publicity may result in a decline in membership and brand equity, compromise of charitable aims, or a reduction in funding (Bales, 2016; Blake, 2014; McCurry, 2014).

Several Trusts have had experience of government funding being clawed back by Natural England⁶⁰, with attendant negative impact. One partner reflects:

⁶⁰ This claw-back was mentioned during conversations with Trusts L, Q and V.

We have partners who have signed the legal documents, and we have partners who haven't ... What the implications of that are, I'm frankly not sure. (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 07:06)

This raises several issues as one manager observes:

... if there's to be a better future for wildlife and for nature, then there's got to be engagement across all those different sectors. So society: Are we accountable to them? Well, accountability has to be two-way. Why should we be accountable to others, when others are not willing to be accountable to us? (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 09:46)

Therefore, there is a distinction between three sets of stakeholders. First, there are those who the Trusts must engage with, e.g. funders and government agencies. Second there are those who the Trusts wish to engage with, e.g. conservation partners. And third, those sectors of society who are open to engagement, e.g. those who benefit as potential members from local communities. Trusts are accountable to all these constituencies.

Upward accountability

My research suggests that upward accountability has two aspects. First, publicly funded Living Landscape programmes have upward responsibility to their funding source and government agencies (HLF, 2013). Second, internal Living Landscape programmes may have external funders (restricted funding⁶¹), or they drawdown Trusts' unrestricted funding⁶². Trusts account for such funding in their Annual Reports and AGMs. At AGMs, members hear accounts of the Trust's performance, and have an opportunity to ask questions. However, detail may be comprehensive or lacking. For example:

... we are accountable to our members ... [At] our AGM, ... we give them a very detailed presentation of what we've been doing. Not just the accounts ... but we explain to them in a lot of detail, we ... talk about the projects, and explain what we're doing and why we're doing it. (E-KB, scheme manager, 2014, 28:31)

This reflects a good relationship with the membership, but as one observer opines, it is a mutual responsibility:

⁶¹ Restricted funding is funding (grants or donations) that comes with restrictions or specific targets or purpose uses; examples might be HLF or Environmental Stewardship.

⁶² Unrestricted funding are donations, such as membership fees, that may be used for any purpose and often used to cover core costs of a Trust.

I would say that there's a collective responsibility amongst the Trustees and the CEO and probably senior staff. (V-TH, senior manager, 2015, 20:15)

This is reflected in similar sets of Articles of Association within the movement. However, the level of membership participation does not reflect the whole picture of accountability. For example, membership fees provide nearly 50% of the working capital, unrestricted funds, of one Trust, but the level of transparency varies. One senior manager recognises the importance of accountability to funding sources:

I'd put funders and the agencies first. I mean, if the board has signed up to the strategy and they [accept] some of the accountability ... you're immediate accountability is to [them] ... if you're using members money, you need to be accountable to members too. (L-KW, senior manager, 2014 16:40)

Therefore, prime accountability is to funders, which implies that Living Landscape governance has adapted to reflect this. But this assumes that members are satisfied with the level of accountability provided at AGMs.

Exercise of power / influence

The types and styles of power within Living Landscape programmes vary reflecting the operational and strategic influence of Trustees and SMTs. There is a level of autonomy within volunteer working parties out on reserves. But their remit is defined by the reserves management plan. Divining who exercises power in Living Landscapes is complex. Is it the: lead partners; management partners; or delivery partners? Or is power shared, or do communities have any influence? One director opines:

... it's all of them really, because everyone is responsible and accountable for whatever it is that they're doing. The Wildlife Trust is technically the accountable body. ... But everyone's got their role to play ... (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 51:53)

The roles people play impinges on the management style: are you authoritarian or enabling or empowering? This director continues:

You've got to have the confidence in your key staff at each level. Your CEO's got to have confidence in their managers in various areas ... (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 54:29)

Accountability is defined by the type of funding involved in the specific Living Landscape, although a willingness to engage more widely with the communities may be encouraged. My exploration of accountability reveals different

discourses. For some it means autocratic leadership, others refer to their charitable status and the structures in place to oversee their operations, whilst others seek a collaborative approach of mutual responsibility. One senior manager recognises this tension: "... in some cases, lead and accountable body are different" (AD-IM, 2014, 29:32). It is an HLF requirement for one specific organisation, an accountable body, to take responsibility for the management and disbursement of funds, whilst the lead organisation may coordinate operations and activities (HLF, 2013).

At less formal levels, there may be a terms of reference for Living Landscape partnerships. But such agreements require lengthy consultation even if there are no contentious issues around funding⁶³. One senior manager's experience is revealing:

I chair the [...] partnership by default, probably, because I think the Trust is putting more into it all in terms of effort than other organisations, although other organisations are putting more funds. ... there is now a signed agreement ... [District council] is accountable for the funding and we are accountable to make sure it all gets done. ... So, it depends on what you call leadership. (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 31:53)

This account raises several questions: did no one else want to take on responsibility, was the Trust the obvious choice, are administrative costs the defining factor on the size of the partnership, is there a general reluctance to engage with community groups, is this an elitist approach to conservation, and where is the public's say / contribution to the process? These questions are explored later. In conclusion, one programme manager warns that the lack of sanction limits the effectiveness of Living Landscapes because Trusts carry:

... all the financial risk; [the] management team [is] funded 100% by HLF, so if partner underspends or overspends that contribution is lost or has to be found by [the Trust] (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 1700-1800).

No amount of accountability can legislate for poor performance if legal agreements between partners have limited sanctions or do not exist. Although there are claw-back clauses in some agreements, someone must take responsibility to address any malpractice or should a project fail. Accountability

⁶³ I prepared such a ToR for a prototype Living Landscape scheme in 2015, which went through several iterations before agreement was reached.

should encompass all Living Landscape schemes irrespective of any legally binding agreements.

7.3.4. Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness is Lockwood's fourth principle, it has two criteria for the governance process: first, all stakeholders should have an opportunity to participate, and second it should engage with marginalised and disadvantaged stakeholders. I use these criteria, shown in Figure 53, to understand what is understood by inclusiveness.

Participation

One senior manager considers that resource availability is critical to the level of participation, but that some form of focus is required:

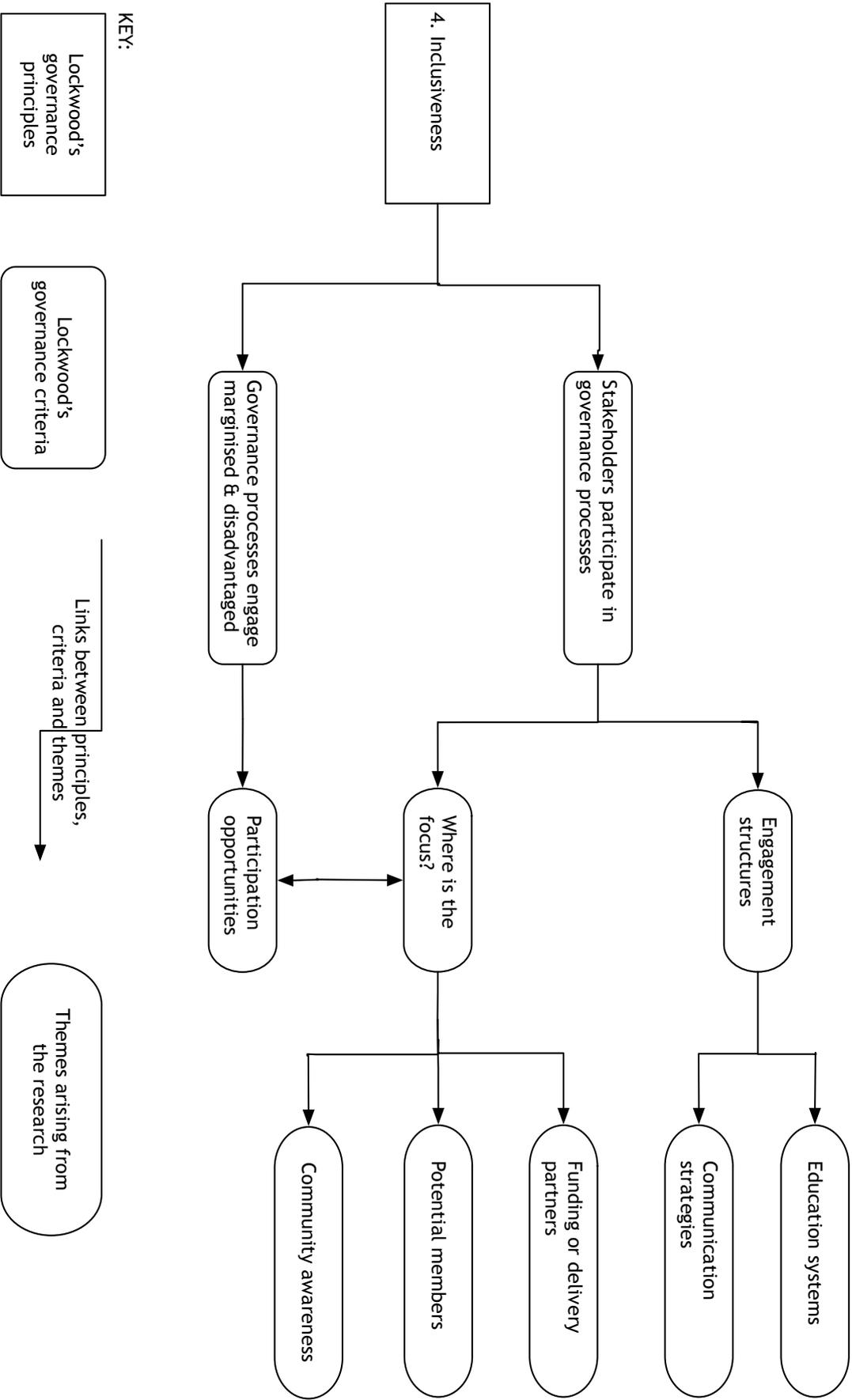
... I think the Trust would definitely sign up to the sort of general lottery fund principle of the long-term legacy being everyone, the community, valuing the local landscape. ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 48:50)

However, partnerships are limited by finances and time as this manager says:

... [there is a] conflict within the ... Trust as to how much time you spend talking to people versus actually getting on and doing it. ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 52:34)

But another observer considers that a Trust's priority should be focused: "all we should be concentrating on is wildlife" (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 19:11). This requires appropriate engagement structures to address inclusiveness. Two approaches emerged. First, adopt a community as a focus of activity, where engagement is an aspect of building partnerships. And second, adopt an educational element, reaching out to schools.

Figure 53 Inclusiveness - Lockwood's fourth governance principle



Source: adapted by author from Lockwood (2009 & 2010) with results from the author's research

One Trustee understands this:

... I think inclusiveness is ... a real challenge for the Wildlife Trust because this gets to ... their comfort zone ... the white middle-class, love for nature. ... we do a lot of community work through the schools, but it seems to be compartmentalised. ... I think it's a real challenge to get the educational sides involved in Living Landscapes. ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 00:01)

All Trusts have educational programmes, because it is part of their charitable objective; however, it has not been integrated into all their Living Landscapes.

Another recurring facet is communication, which is critical to all aspects of governance: how are people kept informed? Lockwood talks about an “informed citizenry” with decision-making processes open to a wider stakeholder group (Lockwood, 2009:2). In the case of one landscape partnerships a “formal protocol” has been adopted, but coordination with stakeholders is managed in an “ad hoc ... totally informal way, it sort of works” (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 62:03). However, there is apathy amongst the membership, which is reflected here:

... looking round the room at the AGM ... there were the full accounts for people to pick up ... I found that nobody bothered to pick up a copy. (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 44:00)

If communication is an adjunct to the Trusts’ education programmes, then Living Landscape programmes need a strong communication element. But, none of the interviewees were able to be specific about how they achieve inclusiveness.

Another perspective on engagement is diversity, where:

... [County] is not particularly diverse, but [name] city is. We certainly haven't as a Board tapped into that, ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 62:35)

This is a challenge to governance bodies to be open-minded about inclusiveness and what it entails, and what is achievable.

Engagement with disadvantaged groups

At least one Trust has made the link from Living Landscapes to mental and physical well-being when people experience nature and the countryside. The challenge is to integrate these benefits into Living Landscapes. As one Trustee observes:

... your mental, and physical health, and well-being, is becoming more and more obvious. ... if you just go back to the basics of ... access to

green space on a regular basis, you're probably going to feel better than if you don't. (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 3:56)

Another observer talked about involving disadvantaged groups in environmental conservation and thought good leadership is the key to success, but it was a challenging skillset, leading a mixed ability group of conservation volunteers (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 60:31).

All the Trusts interviewed have departments dedicated to community work and education programmes that include activities on their reserves. But, there are caveats that prevent wider engagement and inclusiveness. Because, as one manager thinks:

It depends on the makeup of the core group of organisations that are driving through some action. (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 48:27)

Trusts need to identify opportunities and ways to engage with a wider and inclusive stakeholder community. Anecdotally, some Trusts are successful in equipping disadvantaged groups with conservation skills, but without specific funding it is challenging to integrate such activities into Living Landscapes.

My research suggests that inclusiveness has three aspects. First and foremost is the availability of resources and funding. Second, there needs to be a target audience, i.e. potential members within a community, that may be a potential source of income. And third, Trusts need to be committed to reaching marginalised communities. It was evident from my interviews that it was difficult to identify what inclusiveness means for the 5 case study Trusts and how to encourage engagement and participation with appropriate activities. Nevertheless, there is an awareness amongst the Trusts of the need for increasing community engagement and participation, particularly from disadvantaged groups.

7.3.5. Fairness

Lockwood identified six criteria for assessing fairness. These are summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.** and include: respect amongst the organisation and various levels of governance, consistent decision making, human rights, intrinsic value of nature and the distribution of benefits. My analysis revealed no new themes, although respondents believed that fairness was inherent in the movement.

Respect towards stakeholders, staff and officer holders

Lockwood believes that the views of stakeholders, staff and office bearers should be given fair hearing and be treated with respect (Lockwood, 2009:12). In my conversations with interviewees, fairness is considered part of the exercise of authority, where, as when one Trustee believes, the:

... focus [is] on ... the best return for the investment ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 09:42)

Another perspective is that it is:

... a governance decision as to where the resources are best placed ... so where the fairness lies, I don't know. (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 00:42)

One Trustee highlights a dichotomy between fair play and democracy:

... we're quite fair-minded, and there is a national characteristic almost - that fair play and all those sort of things. ... I think we do come from a country where democracy has been around for a very long time, people perhaps are a bit less trusting? (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 49:54)

Another angle on fairness comes from a Living Landscape scheme that stresses the importance of planning and flexibility of non-discretionary funding:

... project aims are very useful ... in setting out exactly what we need to be doing and how we need to be doing it. Common sense, I think supplies the rest. ... The funding is very specific ... (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 23:58)

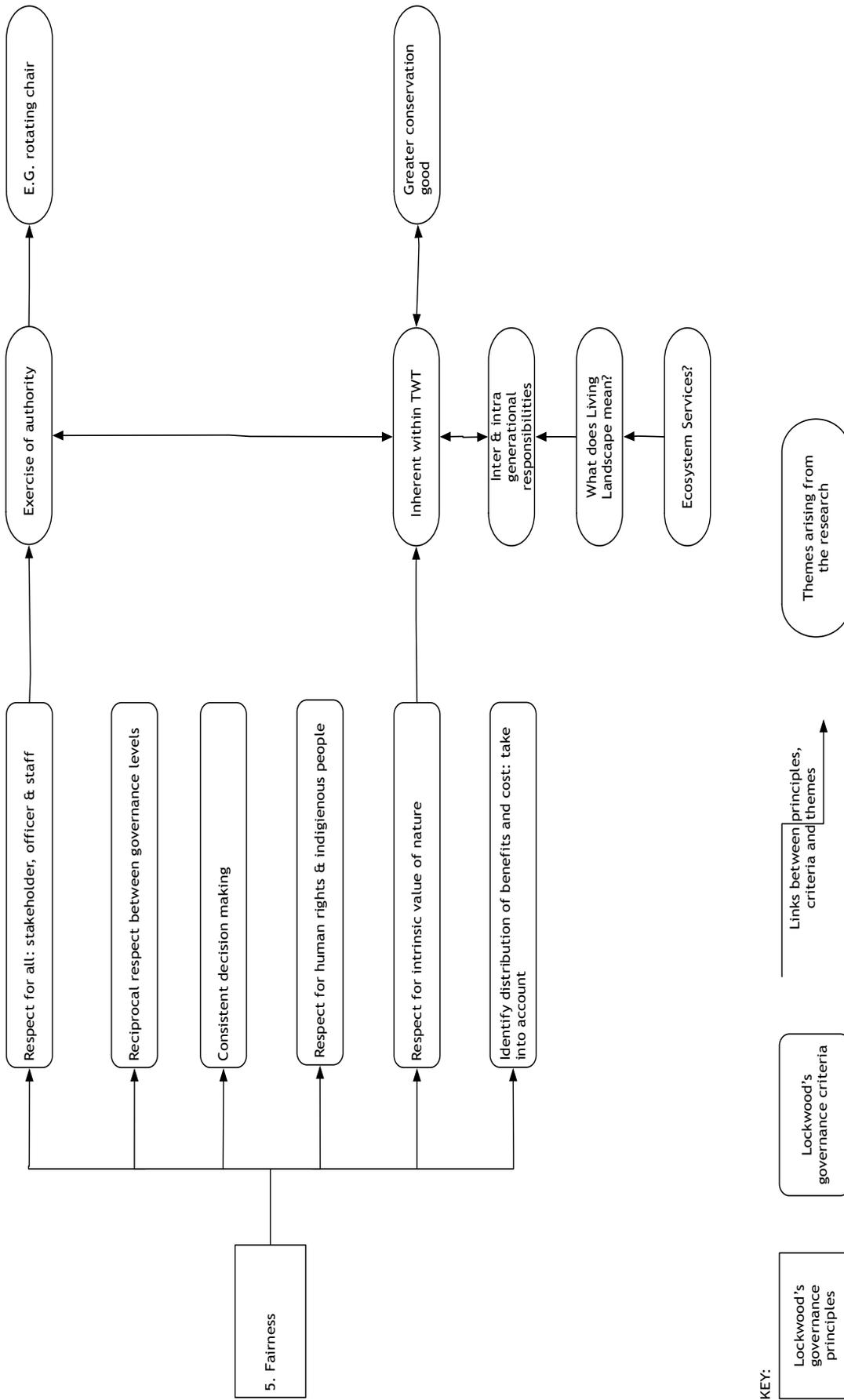
However, one manager has a different view of fairness:

Do you even need to? ... If there's wider economic benefits, technically they don't worry who that accrues to ... [The] Wildlife Trust, as a major landowner, needs to think about the long-term sustainability of our management, and therefore there may need ... income sources. At the same time, we want the local population to be with us, and if other landowners or tenants ... need discreet benefits, and if those are complementary to the overall vision and the benefits accrue to them ... that doesn't matter. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 00:20)

Finally, one programme manager says:

Fairness? ... If you look through the budgets, you can see it's been impartial ... decisions are made at partnership board ... (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 16:42)

Figure 54 Fairness - Lockwood's fifth governance principle



Source: adapted by author from Lockwood (2009 & 2010) with results from the author's research

In summary, fairness assumes that processes are transparent from planning to implementation. This might be achieved by rotating the chair of meetings to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to express their views or raise concerns about decision making, resource use or progress (Trust Q). This example encourages equal voice of participants and mutual respect.

Reciprocal respect between levels of governance

I found little resonance with respondents for the importance of mutual respect between governance levels. Except for L-JP, a Trustee, none of the interviewees were prepared to discuss the governance role of RSWT. His opinions are recorded in the section on connectivity.

Consistent decision-making

Amongst my respondents, consistent decision-making was considered a trait within the movement as one volunteer reflects:

... I think stakeholders think that we're influential and helpful. (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 26:31)

However, some think that fairness is not an issue because there:

... wasn't really any money about, fairness is not really an issue. ... How you spread the benefits around, if you use big HLF money ... it's a different matter. (L-MG, Trustee, 2014, 00:24 & 00:28)

Respect for human rights and indigenous peoples

None of my interviewees found this aspect of Lockwood's fourth criterion of respecting human rights and those of indigenous peoples to be relevant.

Intrinsic value of nature

The issue of fairness, as a basic principle of governance, is not explicitly addressed by the movement. However, many interviewees believed that the intrinsic value of nature is inherent in the movement's activities. One Trustee opined that nature conservation is an intrinsic attribute of charitable activity because:

... when you're dealing with conservation issues, it's not about fairness anyway. It's about the marginal gains in the conservation work that you're doing. ... It's a much bigger picture. (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 62:33)

However, one scheme's partner said:

We're not really getting any financial benefit out of it. But it's meeting our [conservation] objectives, so ... it's the right thing to do. (V-LP, conservation partner, 2014, 56:45)

This partner expands on why the greater conservation good is the guiding principle when it comes to fairness:

But ... bringing partners along with you, ... if they get benefit from something, they're going to be more likely to be engaged to with it. (V-LP, conservation partner, 2014, 57:18)

In terms of the value of nature, one respondent envisaged it as:

... enabling people to see, and recognise, and understand some of the things, which are great natural assets, which they won't own, ever, but somehow they can explore and enjoy ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 06:23)

In summary, the intrinsic value of nature is inherent in nature conservation, and as one delivery partner thinks, Living Landscapes have intrinsic value because of their social benefits (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 44:00). There are also social contexts and benefits, which are reflected in Lockwood's sixth criterion: inter and intra generational benefits and responsibilities.

Inter and intra generational benefits and responsibilities

For many of my respondents, the context and relevance of fairness has financial connotations in terms of their contribution and allocation across communities.

As one senior manager says:

... it depends on how much money they're putting in if they're a founder or a donor, but also from the community side, how do you share out the benefits? (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 52:11)

Another interviewee grasped the importance of this aspect immediately:

Some of this is about interim intra-generational benefits. With nature it's quite easy to assess ... and you can see the long-term impacts, or you can imagine what the long-term impacts should be. ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 10:00)

This observer goes on to explain that there are other values:

... Has it got an aesthetic value, a functional value? ... Sometimes the free benefits are so undervalued that actually the value almost isn't recognised. ... we'll notice it when it's gone, but we won't notice it while it's there. ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 10:45)

One senior manager summarises the complexities of fairness:

... Each different landscape area has got very different approaches. [One] has got the lottery that has technical stuff and community

engagement, lots of fun and science ... [Another is] ... very much about land acquisition and restoration ... How do you get people to look after them, fund people to clear scrub and then got livestock on? (V-TH, senior manager, 2014, 33:14)

Drawing these points together, respondents are familiar with fairness as a concept but find it difficult to place a value on conservation so that it might be distributed fairly. This is perhaps because the economic value of an activity does not equate to fairness or ease of distribution.

7.3.6. Coordination and connectivity

Lockwood has three questions about connectivity. First, is there connectivity between various levels of governance? Second, the horizontal governance within an organisation needs to be examined. And third, the consistency of governance amongst partners should be considered. My analysis links these criteria with several themes, which are summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.** These include: the importance of the movement wide approach, programme monitoring and evaluation, coherence, long-term vision, added value and succession planning. Of interest to my research are the challenges in modernising governance and management so that it develops into a more collaborative culture.

Connections between governance levels

My analysis shows that coordination between Living Landscape schemes has two facets. First, Trusts may have a dedicated Living Landscape officer, who ensures internal connectivity and coordination. And second, many schemes are contiguous with neighbouring Trusts' initiatives, and activities may be coordinated. Formal borders of schemes may cross County boundaries as one manager observes this "overlap ... [facilitates] share[d] ... experience ..." (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 61:07). This is because:

... you can go to a meeting on Monday and ... on Wednesday and see most of the same people, but talking about a different area ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 60:17)

This demonstrates connectivity between governance levels can led to improved coordination. One volunteer says that this way she is "plugged in" to the movement's internal and external activities (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 04:33). And one senior manager acknowledges that these linkages extend to

other conservation organisations (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 07:30). However, these examples of ad-hoc coordination suggest that there is something in TWT's business culture that inhibits a formal and structured approach to coordination⁶⁴.

I have observed that some Trusts have modernized their management structures, but few senior managers have professional managerial qualifications or experience outside the movement. This is not to say that TWT is an amateur organisation, but that their business culture is slowly evolving⁶⁵. However, as one trustee points out, within the movement:

... there's a wide range of models ... [for] the way they operate. ... Some of them [have] far more interaction and joint thinking ... then ... [there is] the variation in the nature of each Living Landscape ... (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 66:52)

This variability emphasises the importance of connectivity if lessons are to be learnt and shared. However, there is some cynicism. A past Trust chairman exposes some of the problems with the movement wide approach as he reflects on its independent mentality:

I think if we were a business that relied on coordination, we'd be bust by now. The fact that we're a federation of sorts ... means that connectivity doesn't really exist at all. ... Lessons are not being learnt and passed onto any other Trusts, and there is very little communication between Trusts at any of the chairman's meetings ... but in terms of formal exchanging of views and learning from them, and the reporting of science, and learning from that, and the connectivity from top to bottom I think is worse than any company could possibly imagine. (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 01:58)

Further, he opines on how to make collaboration work:

... It's going to take a very, very strong person to get it into shape. ... The current way of doing it is wonderfully old fashioned. ... And that grass roots strength is huge. ... That's the trouble, and that's the big weakness of the Wildlife Trust in terms of its ability to even roll out a cohesive Living Landscapes. (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 06:37)

This view reflects the difficulty of coordinating disparate Trusts, which is perhaps due to regional variations as well as cultural differences.

⁶⁴ In my experience, during the early days of Living Landscapes there were regional gatherings of Trusts to discuss the lessons that may be learnt from sharing experiences. These gatherings don't seem to happen now, perhaps because the Trusts are competing for funding.

⁶⁵ TWT England run senior management courses developed specifically for the movement.

Another emergent concept is the importance of stakeholder engagement in making connections between governance levels. One programme manager believes this element of governance is evolving:

We have a community forum, which is an annual event. This was a requirement of the collaboration agreement, ... we've been through different formats, and we still haven't quite found the right format of that. (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 29:44)

This Trust, as does Trust V, has both a steering committee and a business forum that encourage corporate participation in Living Landscapes. However, it is not clear how these fora have contributed to connectivity, except that considerable administrative resources are required to organize them.

Another Trust, Q, focuses on stakeholder engagement and connectivity by having two tiers of governance. First, they have a strategic partners' board, like the steering committee used by Trust E. Second there is a delivery team that ensures compliance with HLF's regulations. This example is discussed further in the next section.

Horizontal governance connectivity

My research shows that horizontal governance is evident from the informal and formal liaisons between conservation partners. In one example, a manager has a regional brief within his organization:

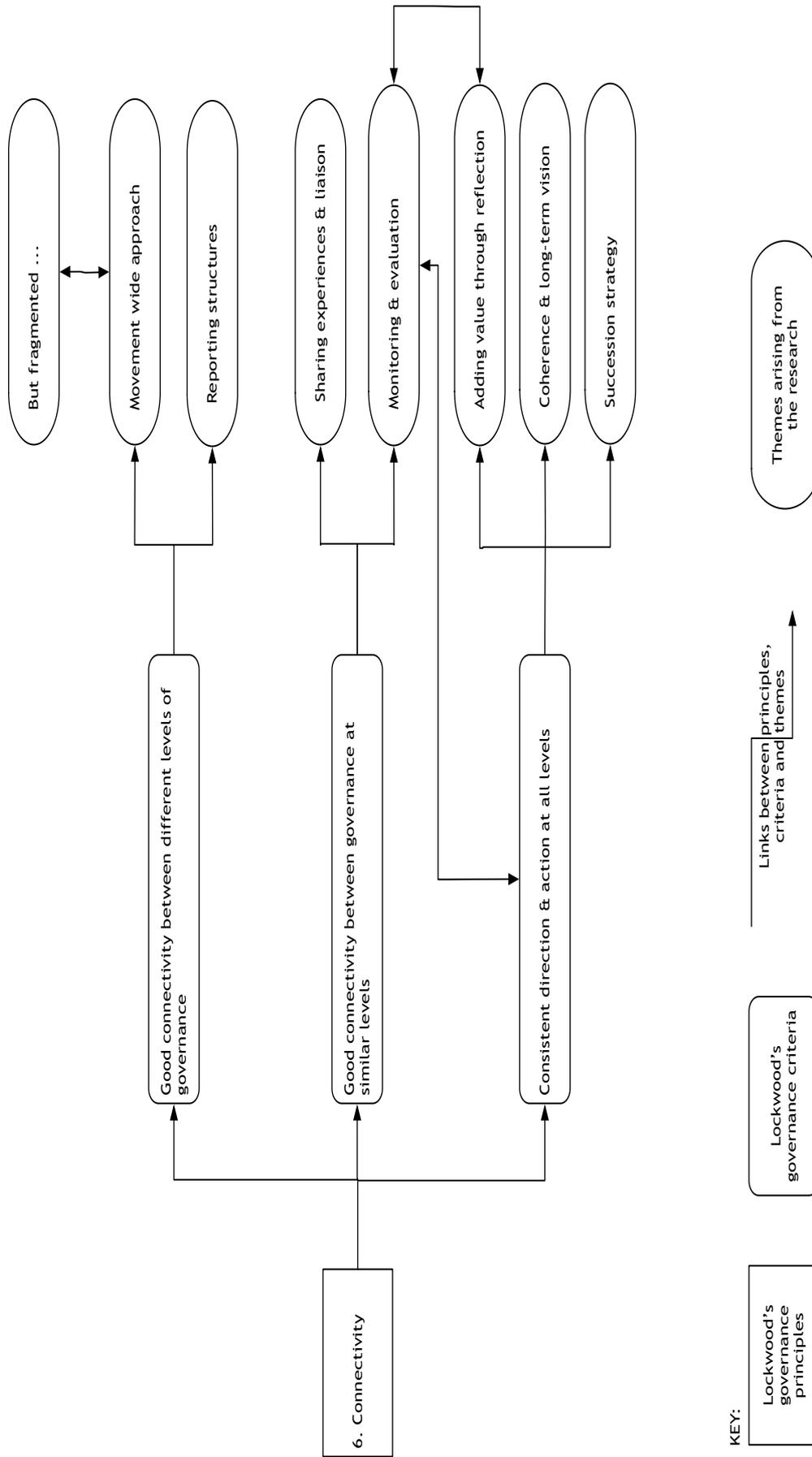
... we've actually learned quite a lot ... in terms of how we approach partnership working ... So I've put a lot of the lessons and ideas about how we do things and how we maybe shouldn't do things and applied that to other landscapes where I work. ... (V-LP, Trustee, 2014, 58:14)

To ensure horizontal connectivity, some Trusts integrate monitoring into their Living Landscapes. For example, one consultant produces regular reports for the partnership board and programme manager, which are integrated into management processes (Trust Q). However, as one observer notes:

... what you want to show firstly is it has been a success. You need to put in monitoring. You need to do your background work, get your basic data, monitor the work you're doing, and then see how that data's changed. ... (L-SF, reserve manager, 2014, 67:29)

This aspect of connectivity requires internal and external communication and discussion of results.

Figure 55 Connectivity - Lockwood's sixth governance principle



Source: adapted by author from Lockwood (2009 & 2010) with results from the author's research

This is problematic as explained by one naturalist:

I suspect ... small is beautiful, and big is very difficult and hard to do, and we should be moving away from that, which is one reason why I'm worried about monitoring them. I fear that ... Living Landscape is maybe going to die a death because it's too big and too difficult, because nobody's trying to monitor it. (L-MG, Trustee, 2014, 05:13)

This experience needs sharing more widely, but finding a forum to share such information and knowledge, tapping into the wealth of experience available at ground level, is problematic. One project manager talks about their approach to connectivity:

Separate to the partnership-board, we have a delivery-team meeting ... because that's a forum where everybody has their three minutes to talk about their project. ... (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 47:46)

These meetings are operational and are an opportunity to share information about individual projects and discuss ways to solve common issues⁶⁶ as this manager explains:

Projects were getting on, ... but then we realised that other people didn't know what other people were doing. ... we put together a rota so that a, everybody gets a chance to chair, everybody gets their chance to influence meetings ... (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 20:46)

Tellingly, this sharing continues after the formal meeting is over:

Then there's the discussion, ... after the meeting ... but it's how to share the experience. Without the delivery-team meetings, ... problems we've had [...] wouldn't have been resolved. (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 48:04)

The third and final aspect of connectivity is about consistency, which includes several themes: coherence, long-term vision, and internal consistency.

Coherent connectivity

The importance of a coherent approach to Living Landscapes was expressed by one manager:

... we are conscious of being within a broader ... living landscape ... (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 03:26)

⁶⁶ I attended one of these delivery meetings on one occasion, and sat in on other operational meetings where day-to-day issues were hammered out.

However, her colleague qualifies this observation:

That's something I don't think we're that far advanced with, ... we are in the process of putting in place ... Living Landscape teams ... cross counties ... (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 03:51)

One senior manager believes that these ideas provide a connectivity feedback-loop:

... We do have internal departmental meetings, internal county meetings ... It's ... nowhere near as effective as it should be, and ... needs to change and improve ... (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 04:40)

He continues by reflecting on the movement's inherent fragmentation:

... there are things we could do across the ... movement, but there's also things we could do with other partners, ... so connectivity, ... could certainly be improved ... because it is so fragmented. (E-RH, senior manager, 2014, 06:32)

Discussing connectivity across the movement, one Trustee considers that it takes time to build relationships and trust:

Learning lessons for any organisations ... actually takes time. ... building in the time to learn the lessons as you go along: to do reviews, to learn at the end, to pass them on ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 12:27)

Later, he refers to the importance of M&E because it adds value and coherence to LSC (L-DM, 2014, 13:42). But then he considers the key to internal consistency is:

... A clear strategy document ... [how] ... this individual project is contributing to the overall objective ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 15:39).

As each Living Landscape scheme is different, it is difficult to be consistent even within a single Trust across all its activities, and by extension it will be difficult across the movement. Nevertheless, consistency may be achieved by reference to long-term vision and framework for Living Landscapes. Connectivity is as important for the Trust with a few Living Landscapes, as for TWT' with over 150 Living Landscapes. The long-term vision provides a framework for connectivity by building integrated partnerships as one manager opines:

... it is actually vital to a project of this sort, that we keep it connected, because it's very easy for ... project partners ... to get their blinkers back on ... so we've got budgets that are cross-reliant, that was designed in. ... one project partner is finding that some of the things that other partners have to offer, is adding value to what they wanted to do. ... [there are] connections between the natural heritage

drivers ... and the built heritage drivers ... [which] are getting stronger and stronger all the time. ... (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 18:37)

This example demonstrates that nothing happens by chance, that careful planning is required, and the synergy between the natural and built environments is valuable. Another perspective on long-term vision is explained as legacy, which:

... is very much the current issue ... They've been talking about it now for probably six months. ... we're considering making additional funding bids ... It's a whole series of dimensions of legacy that ... I call it a succession strategy. (Q-AN, consultant, 2014, 03:20)

This long-term thinking is important because it helps develop an institutional memory about how Living Landscape programmes are developed and managed. Therefore, Living Landscapes are an integral part of TWT's strategic planning and long-term thinking for the future of nature conservation in England.

7.3.7. Resilience and adaptability

In my discussions with interviewees, five criteria for resilience or adaptability emerged, these are summarised in **Error! Reference source not found..** They include the culture of the organisation, flexible attitude to processes and procedures, formal mechanisms to secure protected areas over the long-term, adaptive planning and management processes, and procedures organisations use to identify, assess and manage risks. My analysis identified several additional themes: anticipation, coordination, and the dissemination and use of new knowledge that comes from reflecting on the performance of Living Landscapes. These themes had resonance with my interviewees, who recognised the strategic nature of resilience within the movement, and the need for recognition of Living Landscapes as official protected areas.

Organisational culture

The contribution of TWT's organisational culture to resilience is reflected in their Living Landscapes in two ways. First, Trusts adapt their existing governance style, which can be quite insular, to Living Landscapes. And second, engagement with funding bodies that support collaborative partnerships initiates cultural changes within Trusts. However, one Trustee believes that there is little collaboration between partners and other conservation organisations, and

where it exists it is ad-hoc and adds little value (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 22:02).

Continuing, he opines that the:

Crux of governance is being very clear about what you want to achieve - making sure it's staying in the straight and narrow in terms of: proprietary, and fairness, and impartiality ... Trying to stay in touch with your membership as best you can, to ensure what you're doing is reflective of them. ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 24:59)

Therefore, TWT's culture should be the epitome of clarity of thought and membership engagement. But it is a sensitive subject and many respondents did not comment on organisational culture. However, this Trustee continued:

... I always feel Living Landscapes is a really, really good thing to be doing. ... They don't quite seem to be as top - and they're part of our overall objective. ... sometimes the Living Landscape comes ... as a special item, as opposed to being, what's cutting through everything we do. (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 26:09)

This suggests that Living Landscapes have yet to be embedded in the Trusts' culture. This might be because:

... if they're also about our general philosophy ... they've now become more project-focused and general philosophy-focused. And do everything - look at everything through a Living Landscape lens - well, we probably don't always do that. (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 26:46)

These musings suggest that the Living Landscape concept was imposed on the Trusts to integrate their purpose and develop resilience. However, they have yet to be integrated into day-to-day operations, not because they are not a good idea but because they require a different approach, which may be alien to a Trust's culture. Thus, if Living Landscapes are to assist in adapting and building organisational resilience then they need to be sustainable and this requires consistent funding.

One reserve manager considers that funding has an influence but as your actions become part of the way you do things, an organisation's culture evolves (L-SF, 2014, 74:27). He continues by setting the wider context:

... These wild habitats have been here for thousands of years. We can't just look at it in our own lifetime. (L-SF, reserve manager, 2014, 75:25)

This requires a change in governance perspective, as well as culture. Another manager believes that:

... What they do need to do, right at the Trustees level, is get far better links between long-term aims and process. ... and how it's

governed by the Trustees has to be much closer connected to the program-led things on the ground. ... (Q-SP, scheme manager, 2014, 27:38)

Reflecting on resilience, one Trust ex-chairman considered this:

... a really interesting question ... because in order to be resilient you've got to have a really good idea. Is Living Landscapes a really good idea? ... But I do think it's an idea of our time ... (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 10:39)

My conversation with this interviewee continued by considering the importance of continued support as the bedrock to resilience:

... resilience relies on people caring about wildlife. ... one of the keys of resilience, is the public subscribing to ... The big idea of Living Landscapes ... I think it has to be reinvented in terms of how it's put across and perhaps even what it's called ... (L-PJ, Trustee, 2014, 14:17)

In the absence of secure public funding, the future of nature conservation depends upon public engagement and support. Current and future generations should be inspired about nature, so that nature conservation becomes sustainable through their support.

Flexibility with internal processes and procedures

One Living Landscape partnership has a dual governance structure with a high-level strategic partnership board, made up of funders and local authority representatives, and a middle management project delivery panel where many representatives are volunteers. One volunteer's experience was:

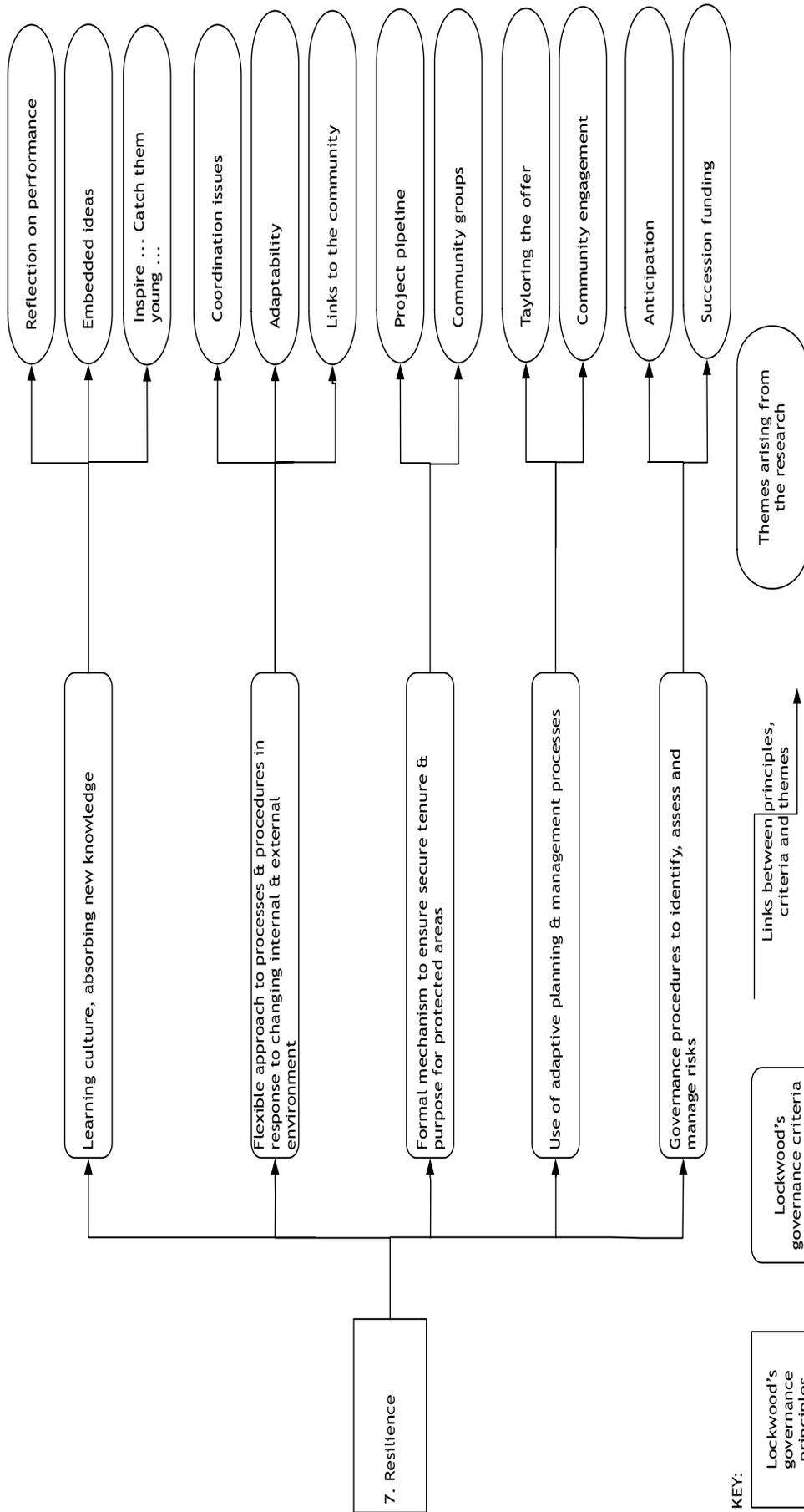
... just to go and share our experience of what we've been doing, of what's happening, what our new projects are, how we can help each other to deliver our new projects, that's got to be something that everyone can buy into ... (Q-JG, heritage conservation partner, 2014, 52:17)

Another view of flexibility is provided by one observer who admits that Trusts have had to adapt:

... there's been quite a bit of reorganization of headings and things within the programme ... I think this is inevitable, because when you're putting a bid in, you're working in ... a vacuum ... But then you're faced with the realities on the ground. So you've got to be prepared to reassess your targets ... (V-DH, Trustee, 2014, 69:08)

Trusts have adapted to the governance demands of Living Landscapes and They are aware of the need to be resilient.

Figure 56 Resilience - - Lockwood's seventh governance principle



Source: adapted by author from Lockwood (2009 & 2010) with results from the author's research

But they are conservative when developing new procedures and processes. Another route to resilience is getting people and communities involved at a grassroots level. One manager sums this up:

... it's the way partnership meetings are managed, ... which gives people the [opportunity] ... to say what they really think ... And they do because ... they're the bottom level of community development ... (Q-AN, consultant, 2014, 07:01).

Mechanisms to secure long-term protection of protected areas

During one interview, a conservation director identified three phases in the lifecycle of Living Landscapes:

That is where it is very, very difficult, and I don't know if we've got the answer. We've sort of taken up a concept that we're floating around recently of whether you're worrying, steering, or cheering! (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 33:24)

Within this context, funding is an important factor, because of worrying:

... Successive funding is just a nightmare, and it's becoming worse ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 64:28)

This director believes Trusts need to be steering, i.e. being proactive and strategic because they need:

... more forward planning in terms of investments. (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 64:52)

And to respond to crises or changes in the business environment, the Trust is:

... pretty fleet of foot. ... I think that everyone should be within part of a living landscape to some extent ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 66:06 & 67:34)

Some Living Landscape governance structures adapt to changing circumstances by being driven by “senior staff and some of the Trustees” (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 66:20). As one manager recognises:

... one of the hallmarks of ... [Living Landscapes] is that it has been flexible and adaptable ... (E-SV, scheme manager, 2014, 33:35 & 34:57)

Therefore, governance structures should prepare organizations to be relevant, and resilience is important in this context because many Living Landscape programmes have a time span over 50 years. Part of building resilience is the role of community groups and partnerships (Q-AN, consultant, 2014, 07:01).

This is achieved because:

... As we raise our profile more, people come in. ... It could be branches, it could be people who want to come on work parties, it could be people who just want to come and volunteer ... do something on their local patch. (V-TH, senior manager, 2014, 44:23)

This recognises the need for a different type of management philosophy that is described in the next sub-section.

Use of adaptive planning and management processes

I found a common situation emerging when engaging with communities:

... to build to capacity, we've got to invest in [volunteers] ... It's paid off because some of the volunteers we've had have come on to be ambassadors for us ... (V-TH, senior manager, 2014, 45:03)

One adaptive approach is to tailor the conservation offer, for example:

If we just stuck with ... woodland linkage ... we wouldn't have got anywhere. We have to say: ... we'll come and talk about deer management. [Then, we'll] ... talk about ... grants ... (E-KB, scheme manager, 2014, 03:29)

There is some evidence from my conversations that adaptive planning is being used; for example, one Trustee recommends that Trusts should:

... box clever ... in relation to where you are in terms of the pervading sense of political climate, you might have to do different things to deliver different outcomes. ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 20:10)

However, Trusts may have to recognize that just focusing on conservation may not be the best strategy in meeting conservation objectives:

... there might be ... different ways of getting there. ... conservation is naturally something everybody's going to sign up to you, and you have to be clever about how you get there. ... (L-DM, Trustee, 2014, 20:51)

Finally, it was noted that adapting to the circumstances by engaging with communities may be contentious:

... But whether the Trusts would go out to involve communities in general landscape matters rather than very specific wildlife ones, is probably a moot point, ... It depends on the makeup of your core partnership, ... (AD-IM, conservation director, 2014, 48:50).

7.4. Conclusions - drawing together the threads of governance

TWT is a grassroots conservation movement, governed by either a council or board, or a hybrid mixture of the two, that is based upon the fiduciary principle - holding natural assets in trust for this and future generations. The council based system has members drawn from their constituency and works in

partnership with the executive. A board of Trustees or directors, recruited for their specific management skills, supervises the executive and management. Nearly all Trusts adopt a flat type of organization, similar to what Henry Mintzberg calls simple structures or a professional bureaucracy that allows flexibility (Mintzberg, 1983). However, such management structures may be unsuitable for the types of partnerships involved in LSC. This is because of the potential for conflicts of interests between partners and stakeholders that may impact upon the oversight of the LSC. Nevertheless, a council or board of Trustees provides oversight of Living Landscapes, particularly where there is no dominant funder, just as they do over traditional nature reserves owned or managed by Trusts. Complex Living Landscape programmes, especially where funding comes from national schemes such as the HLF Landscape Partnership grant programme require a more sophisticated style of governance (HLF, 2013). Consequently, Trusts adapt their governance regimens to take account of funding requirements.

Lockwood's framework for wider governance was developed for natural resource management of protected areas (Lockwood, 2009). But LSC governance in England is an expansion of the model used for nature reserves. Nevertheless, Lockwood's framework represents common sense principles, which the Trusts in my case studies adopt unconsciously. These five case studies show some strength in the principles of resilience, legitimacy, fairness and accountability, whereas they are weak in transparency, inclusiveness and connectivity. However, Living Landscapes are not recognised protected areas, except where they include a NNR or SSSI, or are part of a National Park or AONB. Although they often encompass nature reserves, the surrounding farmland, woods, and recreational spaces do not have any official conservation designation. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask: are Lockwood's governance proposals applicable? Judging from my interviews and case studies, there is a reluctance to widen governance principles to Living Landscape partnerships, which would require greater transparency and accountability. Living Landscape appear to be most effective at a local level where partners share a common purpose and agreement on governance mechanisms. Next, I examine this situation further by examining governance through the lens of Lockwood's principles and then by the themes elicited during the interviews.

Chapter 8. OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON MY RESEARCH

8.1. Introduction to my observations on TWT's Living Landscapes

In this chapter I review my research journey, how I came to understand the social construction and governance of LSC through exploring empirical examples of TWT's Living Landscapes. I use a critical perspective, as suggested by Lock and Strong (2010:8) to reflect on the concept of Living Landscapes as a subset of LSC. I interpret the interdependent institutions and discourses associated with Living Landscapes to produce knowledge about Living Landscapes.

I develop this critical perspective by considering Living Landscape governance with reference to Lockwood's framework. This represents the rules that Berger and Luckmann say can be applied to, for example, LSC. I also present my research outcomes and general observations before concluding with some personal reflections.

TWT has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach to LSC in England through its Living Landscapes (Elliott et al., 2011; Macgregor et al., 2012). LSC does not replace reserve-based conservation but is an adjunct that has ecosystem services as its driving paradigm. In England, other LSC approaches include NIA's⁶⁷, NT's plan to nurse the environment back to health, and RSPB's Futurescapes, all of which have had government endorsement (Defra, 2010; Lawton et al., 2010).

The Living Landscape narrative addresses the decline in biodiversity by adopting wide-scale conservation and ecosystem services. The stories individuals tell about a particular Living Landscape, become amalgamated into a discourse, which does not attempt to dominate nature, rather it is a partnership with nature. Such partnerships are institutions that produce environmental goods and services through the ecosystem management of the landscape for the benefit of both nature and communities. Stakeholder evidence from my research suggests that there is a shared frame of meaning about LSC, where different stakeholders balance their differing objectives. Hajer notes that interactions between institutions and discourses confer meaning upon social and physical phenomena.

⁶⁷ NIA funded ended in March 2015 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-improvement-areas-improved-ecological-networks/nature-improvement-areas-locations-and-progress#update-on-progress>).

Thus with Living Landscapes, for example, there is a tension between conservation focused on species and habitats and the need to consider wider issues of biodiversity and ecosystems (Lawton et al., 2010:38). Living Landscapes can resolve this tension by reflecting the size and scope of LSC, but through interactions between the various institutions and discourses associated with them.

Living Landscapes have physical characteristics, informal institutions, that may become iconic; these include names, archaeological, geological, natural and cultural features. These social and physical phenomena, as Hajer has identified, become part of the narrative or storyline associated with Living Landscapes (2005). The scale of Living Landscapes is variable, with some being not much larger than a nature reserve (Trust I). Although at least one covers a whole county (Trust V), and some are larger than an AONB (e.g. the OnTrent Initiative and the Lakeland Living Landscape). Whatever the scale and institutions, they encourage collaboration between different landowners. But there are significant challenges in effecting such partnerships.

In some schemes, the challenge is associated with single-issue conservation organisations, who prefer to orchestrate their activities in the service of their champion species, rather than take a holistic ecosystem approach. Such organisations are examples of how different interests construct the issues of LSC. This may be interpreted as one end of the LSC spectrum as discussed in the next section. Another interpretation is the trend for collaboration between conservation organisations, leading to large aggregate schemes, with a portfolio approach. For example, NT, BC and RSPB are partners in LSC initiatives.

Such initiatives protect SSSIs, local nature reserves and the key wild life sites that lie at their heart. There are protected with a buffer of neighbouring landholdings that allow species to migrate. These initiatives, covering areas greater than 500 ha, have the potential to protect both biodiversity and ecosystem services because their conservation activities cascade down from an ecosystem to a sub-system at the reserve level. However, it is argued, that such schemes generate governance issues because they involve more than one landowner and multiple stakeholders (Müller et al., 2010).

8.2. Social construction

There is a spectrum, according to Arts and Buizer, within SC that reflects the range of institutions and discourses associated with a subject and its texts (2009:342). This concept is useful when applied to Living Landscapes because it accounts for a range of interpretations with a shared frame of meaning evident in the examples in TWT's vision (2007). Subsequently, my analysis of interviews corroborated the findings from my initial textual analysis. I used Gailing and Leibenath's approach to identify a range of different institutions and discourses (2015). The institutions, both informal and formal, reflect the physical characteristics and administrative institutions of Living Landscapes; whereas the discourses often overlap (e.g. conservation and education), sometimes they are in competition (e.g. conservation and socio-economic development). Here I consider how SC has contributed to my research by illuminating the spectrum of thought about Living Landscapes. I then reflect on the institutions and discourses associated with them.

8.2.1. Spectrum of Living Landscapes schemes

One definition of Living Landscapes is that they are a "naturally functioning landscape", but this has a range of meanings (TWT, 2015b; TWT, 2007:55). My research identifies three core objectives of Living Landscape: ensure that nature recovers, enhance biodiversity, and restore landscapes. The first two embrace an ecocentric conservation paradigm that requires reversing the decline in species numbers, restoring their habitats and linking these spaces together. These ecological conservation objectives, which some Wildlife Trusts are content to focus on, is one end of the spectrum and is exemplified by case studies AD and V. At this end on the spectrum, there is some interaction with local communities through volunteers' work.

However, the use of the term Living Landscapes implies that people are an integral part of LSC. This begins to illuminate what landscape means. Case study L expands the meaning of landscape to incorporate some aspects of cultural and historical institutions. At this point on the spectrum, there is more interaction with local communities through various conservation groups, but these Living Landscapes still concentrate on ecological issues.

My case studies show that Living Landscapes benefit from engagement with local communities, where people volunteer in conservation activities. Of particular note is case study E where other institutions and discourses emerge. There are education opportunities for young and old, tourism prospects are developed where foot paths and other elements of green infrastructure encourage enjoyment, exercise and physical and mental well-being. Here, Living Landscapes focus on peoples' interaction with nature. This is the middle-ground of the spectrum.

At the far end of the LSC spectrum, conservation embraces the cultural, historical, natural and social environment and heritage. Here Living Landscapes, exemplified by case study Q, integrate wildlife conservation along with heritage conservation with opportunities for archaeology, eco-tourism, and economic development through the sustainable use of resources. These Living Landscapes need collaborative partnerships between landowners, conservationists, local authorities, communities and funders.

8.2.2. Institutions and Discourses within Living Landscapes

The Living Landscapes spectrum may also be viewed in terms of the range of institutions and discourses associated with them. The informal and formal institutions have evolved over time with both physical and administrative characteristics. The physical, informal, institutions are the characteristics of the landscape; these include woods, fields, hedgerows and rivers, and the landmarks of geological features and agricultural and industrial buildings. Many of these features are iconic and hold special meaning for people. Other informal institutions include traditions (i.e. TWT's volunteer management groups for nature reserves) and shared world views (i.e. Living Landscapes). The administrative, formal, institutions are part of the governance and management discourses that include formal governance rules and regulations, partnerships, and the established land management activities that have been fine-tuned over time.

The discourses include conservation, education and other forms of community engagement, and socio-economic development, as well as the governance of Living Landscapes. However, in Living Landscapes these discourses may not be in conflict as suggested by Gailing and Leibenath, rather they complement and

reinforce each other. These discourses also evolve as discussed by Arts and Buizer, and Hajer; this is evident in various versions of the Living Landscape vision. Beyond the conservation and educational discourses espoused by TWT, the prominent discourses are governance, politics and partnerships. The prevalent governance discourse supports the need for legal compliance, financial probity and accountability to members. The broad political discourse embraces the social environment where landscapes are made up of different landownership interests that include agricultural, amenity and economic concerns of ecosystem products and services. There are sub-sets of the political discourse that include advocacy and stakeholder partnerships, but there may be competing interests within these partnerships.

Partnerships are a feature of all Living Landscapes, even the smallest schemes involve partnerships between landowners, Trusts and government agencies. Intermediate schemes include partnerships with local communities, whilst the largest schemes have varied partners including funding agencies and charitable Trusts, businesses, other conservation organisations and local government. These partnerships use a range of administrative institutions for the governance and management of Living Landscapes, which I discuss later.

In summary, I have used institutions and their associated discourses to understand what Living Landscapes mean and how conservation is evolving. However, there are strengths and weaknesses associated with my approach. The key strength is that my approach identifies the discourses and institutions associated with Living Landscapes. One weakness is significant in terms of accessibility of the subject, as any form of jargon may alienate a constituency such as TWT. An alternate approach would be to consider the various stories, narratives, associated with Living Landscapes or to treat the case studies as an ethnographic study.

8.2.3. New knowledge arising from understanding LSC

Living Landscapes have several facets, with narratives covering a mosaic of small nature reserves that provide space for wildlife to roam to swathes of land that encourages landowners to work together to deliver ecosystem services. The concept also permits a holistic approach to conservation that includes preserving our cultural, historic and natural heritage, and providing space for education,

engagement, health and social well-being. These interpretations are not mutually exclusive as Living Landscapes include different narratives where these various interpretations of Living Landscapes are not in conflict.

These interpretations have some characteristics that are associated with the institutions and their attendant discourses. These institutions include the physical characteristics, informal institutions, within the Living Landscape, and the administrative mechanisms, formal institutions, that govern and manage them. Some Living Landscapes adopt the institutions of their host Trust, whilst complex schemes require sophisticated partnership boards and community fora to cope with the range of stakeholders. The literature indicates that the choice of administrative institutions influences the dominant and subsidiary discourses. And my research suggests that the dominant discourse reflects the choice of administrative institution. For example, Living Landscapes with HLF funding requires multifaceted governance mechanisms that emphasise community engagement and economic development. Whilst simple conservation schemes adopt simpler governance institutions within a conservation discourse.

There is an interplay between discourses and institutions; neither are static and both influence the other as Hajer, and Arts and Buizer have observed. In the next section I focus on the governance discourse, and examine how it reflects different types of Living Landscape.

8.3. Governance

Lockwood's framework revisits the principles of good environmental governance. Evidence from my interviews suggests that his seven principles are common sense aspects of governance. However, some of his principles are forgotten elements in Living Landscape governance. I draw on Gailing and Leibenath use of institutions and discourses to identify different systems, and frames, of meaning to Living Landscapes. Such systems are evident in the three types of governance mechanism I have identified in my case studies.

At the smallest scale of Living Landscapes unitary governance mechanisms predominate. These mechanisms, otherwise known as closed or elitist, involve reporting hierarchies and Trustee oversight committees on behalf of a constituency, its membership (Sehested, 2003). As Living Landscapes involve more landowners and stakeholders, embryonic partnerships develop. These

involve there is a hybrid form of governance with all the aspects of the unitary model with institutions that promote community engagement. These institutions are informal, representing interested parties and providing direction and coordination. The complex, pluralistic, examples of Living Landscapes, employ formal institutions that provide strategic direction, operational coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of the schemes. This last form is largely at the behest of the principal funders.

The following sections highlight the experience of interviewees to Lockwood's governance principles.

8.3.1. Legitimacy

Lockwood has four legitimacy criteria. The main criterion is mandate from which two themes emerged from my research. First, TWT's constituency provides legitimacy through their membership. Second, the influence of a Trust's land holdings gives it virtual free rein, apart from legal obligations, over their land. Landownership confers legitimacy because Living Landscapes involve like-minded landowning neighbours, a homogenous geographic area, and a commitment to mutual stewardship. Landownership suggests that property rights confer a mandate for Trusts when they negotiate with neighbouring landowners.

Examining Lockwood's second criterion, integrity, there is an assumption that this is inherent within the movement's activities. Evidence, from Trusts' codes of practice for volunteers and Trustees support this. Lockwood's third criterion, acceptance of authority, is evident in TWT's leadership and its ability to pull together disparate organisations into effective partnerships.

Lockwood's final criterion is cultural attachment to an area. Historic evidence for this is demonstrated by TWT's 100 years of experience in managing nature reserves, where the Trusts have established connections between local communities and those special places. This experience, plus knowledge and skills, is transferable from managing a portfolio of reserves to developing Living Landscapes. Cultural attachment is also evident where nature reserves form a focus for Living Landscapes, which is reinforced through their association with volunteers and communities. However, a governance body's cultural attachment to a Living Landscape is harder to establish, although some partners

can demonstrate long-term association with an area, through landownership, business interests, or residency.

Legitimacy is the foundation upon which TWT can lead and participate in LSC, and its relationship with Living Landscape generates authority over a wider constituency than its membership. This new constituency includes a range of stakeholders: landowners, farmers and other conservation organisations, as well as the communities in which Living Landscapes sit. All of whom may have a cultural attachment to an area. Legitimacy is also conferred when funders and social partners recognise TWT's leadership in landscape partnerships.

Social perspectives of Living Landscapes help reveal its many facets. One perspective is that legitimacy is important because, from a historic position, the movement would like to demonstrate that they have a mandate and precedent for their leadership in conservation dating back 100 years. This mandate is associated with TWT's cultural attachment with those special places, nature reserves, within geographic areas, and is based upon their experience, expertise and knowledge. However, the assumption that this legitimacy may extend beyond nature reserves to Living Landscapes is contested, because there is often no legal or democratic mandate for the Trusts to lead on such conservation.

Some interviewees believe legitimacy is inherent within the Trust's constituency. Others thought it was embedded in the movement because of TWT's role as a respected landowner. Yet others suggest that some Trusts have a legal mandate to lead on LSC. Now economic criteria, rather than the notion of protecting nature and the landscape for future generations, are prevalent amongst farming communities. However, one landowner reported that the notion of stewardship⁶⁸ has become old-fashioned. Yet, the principle of holding land in trust for future generations recurred repeatedly, but there was an underlying current of thought that TWT was chasing funding, rather than focusing on nature conservation. Still, all agreed that the most important factor in legitimacy was the individual leading the scheme, not just in terms of stakeholder acceptance, but because an individual's leadership skills, management acumen and charisma resulted in successful projects.

⁶⁸ Stewardship is a concept that is often found amongst farmers and landowners, where the land is held and managed for the benefit of future generations: an early form of sustainability.

8.3.2. Transparency

Most interviewees believe that transparency is inherent in democracy because consensual decision-making is transparent. However, this process might not be open to scrutiny and the reasoning behind decisions may not be evident to a wider audience. Transparency is significant because social media makes it easier to communicate selected information. Social media may obscure the decision-making process because they are selective and open to abuse. I found there was a perception that decision-making processes should be opened-up to members and some interviewees thought that there is a lack of visibility around decision-making. This suggests that TWT's inward and outward communication skills need development. Further, some interviewees believe that there is an element of obfuscation in financial reporting, although it is improving⁶⁹.

The need for transparency about how public money is used should be self-evident. However, some interviewees believed that members only had to ask if they wanted information. But I found that some Trusts were reluctant to disclose information about their Living Landscapes, even in reports to governing bodies. This may be because of deficiencies in M&E. There was also an assumption that the membership is not interested in the minutiae and detail of Living Landscapes. I found that most examples of Living Landscapes in my case studies addressed transparency through communication strategies that raised the visibility of the scheme, often using social media to reach new audiences. However, there is a tendency to celebrate successes, rather than explain failures. Some Trusts have rigorous M&E systems with indicators chosen to show how much money is spent, upon what and what is achieved. This requires clear objectives and good administration to record inputs and outputs of the programme.

In summary, effective communication facilitates transparency by presenting information appropriately but there are two considerations. First, social media achieves greater engagement within the movement's constituency. But it is not a substitute for providing detailed information about Living Landscapes, which requires a website or literature or meetings. Second, most Trusts have a

⁶⁹ For example, it is difficult to determine the actual cost of managing Living Landscapes from the accounts publically available on Trusts' websites.

communications department but Living Landscapes often have a communication element that is separately funded. There should be synergies between them, but often there appears to be duplication of effort.

8.3.3. Accountability

Lockwood's criteria for accountability match the governance guidance for charities in England. However, I discovered that opportunities to be accountable to a wider membership are limited because there are too few opportunities and a Trust's AGM is restricted to members. Some Trusts hold patron and funders events for those who might not be members to make them aware of Living Landscapes. Such events provide insight to the progress of these schemes and are opportunities for feedback.

All the Trusts I spoke to regularly review their governance structures. This might reflect an evolution in a Trust's constituency from a traditional membership base to a wider field of stakeholders involved in Living Landscapes, who are often significant funders, as well as legal requirements and best practice. This constituency has a range of stakeholders from local authorities and businesses, landowners and land managers, to communities and social groups. But, communities at the core of Living Landscapes may not have a voice.

One of Lockwood's accountability criteria, the exercise of power, is a limiting factor for Living Landscapes. This is because, irrespective of funding and the use of volunteers, significant resources, over and above than that of reserve-based conservation activities, are required. Therefore, power is limited by and to the choice of the activities being funded. The costs of these activities may be difficult to quantify as they are often transactional, but they should be identified when preparing programme schedules and activities.

8.3.4. Inclusiveness

The fourth of Lockwood's criteria focuses on stakeholder engagement. In Living Landscapes, I found that inclusiveness is addressed through various activities, including the adaptation of access routes to encourage use of the facilities by disadvantaged groups, and by holding conservation events within communities. However, some respondents, whose understanding of Living Landscapes is dominated by nature conservation, believe such actions detract from it, because

some species or habitats should not be disturbed. Therefore, the choice of activities is important in determining how inclusive Living Landscapes can be. Inclusiveness is significant because TWT is challenged to make their reserves more accessible to disadvantaged and minority groups. This is important, not only because future funding may be contingent on it, but because access to nature should be encouraged. However, the administrative costs associated with expanding stakeholder engagement, the cost of reaching out to communities that had previously not been involved in nature conservation, are significant and may be a deterrent. These costs are assumed to be additional to those associated with conservation activities on nature reserves. Inclusiveness is also a challenge because reaching out to, and engaging with communities requires appropriate methods of engagement. It requires the reworking of delivery systems to capture the attention and interest of this new audience, and a concomitant revision of communication policies and strategies.

Living Landscapes aspire to reach an extended network of stakeholders as the community engagement discourse suggests, but wider constituencies have a series of externalities that bring additional administrative burdens. These should not be barriers to engagement but recognised as a continuous trade-off between the competing call on resources and building relationships with stakeholders. This competition reflects a tension between the use of resources, especially those associated with habitat restoration and management. This tension between different discourses, for example between nature reserve conservation and ecosystem services requires careful management.

The limited resources of TWT might suggest that they are not natural leaders in LSC. But they have shown some facility in leading partnerships, a key institution requiring community involvement beyond the nature reserve. Living Landscapes are a challenge to the movement because it requires considerable engagement with local communities, with remits to engage with other cultural and heritage assets that has the potential to attract a wider field of stakeholders.

8.3.5. Fairness

I found that Lockwood's criteria for fairness are difficult to articulate in relation to Living Landscapes, despite it being a trait that charities are assumed to embody (Garen, 2010). I found little evidence to demonstrate fairness was a

characteristic in Living Landscapes. In fact, some respondents suggested that it is not relevant to nature conservation as ecological considerations outweigh distribution of financial benefits. Most interviewees believed in the intrinsic value of nature and inter and intra generational responsibilities. This is perhaps because sustainability is a well-established currency in environmental management with nature conservation having equal weight with sustainable development.

Respondents' opinions indicate that TWT appears to be even-handed in managing conservation benefits within its Living Landscapes. This is echoed in recent research (Standford, 2014). One interviewee suggested that rotating the chairman's role at meetings, be they strategic or operational, helped eliminate partner predisposition towards project activities and gave them an equal and fair voice in the distribution of benefits.

Fairness is taken for granted and not contested within the movement, and is perceived to be inherent across all TWT's activities, and by extension Living Landscapes do not merit special consideration. This recognises that embedded governance institutions for reserve management have been transferred to Living Landscapes. These institutions, management and conservation committees with Trustee oversight, are common across the movement and have been developed over 50 years. I found no evidence to suggest that Living Landscape partnerships were not a fair approach to LSC. Nevertheless, national public funding streams, such as the HLF, have introduced modern governance institutions. These include strategic, partnership and operation boards, which may be a model for ensuring a fair distribution of benefits across Living Landscapes, should the approach be contested.

8.3.6. Connectivity

Lockwood's connectivity concerns coordination between various levels of governance. On the surface, TWT's nationwide movement ensures such coordination through a regular exchange of ideas and experience. In practice Trusts are independent and almost insular in their activities. I found limited evidence for horizontal collaboration between conservation organisations, although it does exist (Trusts Q and V). Nevertheless, there are links between neighbouring Trusts, and some have formed loose regional associations. But

those at the geographic edges of such associations may feel more affinity with Trusts from an adjacent region rather than their own, which may encourage wider collaboration.

Governance connectivity is also about coherence and coordination between various vertical levels of policy and governance within a Trust, between individual members of the movement, and with RSWT. But it is also about the relationship between Living Landscape partners where a measure of connectivity is an essential tenet of strategic planning. Building such connectivity should be a core governance competence that engenders success for the individual Trusts and the movement (Johnson and Scholes, 1999:174).

8.3.7. Resilience

Resilience is significant to Living Landscapes not just to nature in the landscape, but because of its relevance to strategic management, the long-term performance and sustainability of the movement. It is an important facet of governance as Trusts adapt to changing circumstances, becoming sustainable, both financially and in their conservation activities. Resilience is a topical concept for both strategic management and conservation.

All interviewees agreed that it was the role of Trustees and the SMT to anticipate changes to the business environment and plan and identify alternate funding sources accordingly. Some of the aspects of developing resilience, e.g. improving coordination between Trusts and partners with the reflection and learning processes, are also linked to connectivity. To become more resilient, Trusts are adopting modern management techniques and strategies, sometimes these are imposed by funders requiring more accountability. However, TWT is reflecting on Living Landscapes as many schemes approach their 10-years anniversary. Issues such as sustainability, funding, implementation and collaboration, and governance mechanisms are being reviewed. At least one Trust has extended the life-span of their Living Landscapes to 50-years, which will require sustainable funding and long-term partnerships. Perhaps one route to resilience would be the recognition of LSC as official protected areas and guardians of ecosystems. However, another interpretation of resilience might be that some Trusts will be tempted to retrench their activities and refocus on their nature reserves rather than LSC.

8.3.8. Summary and conclusions of governance

Reflecting on Lockwood's seven principles, I find the most resonant amongst interviewees to be legitimacy, transparency and connectivity. These principles convey and reflect their perspective on the prevalent governance narrative that financial probity and legal compliance are inadequate governance criteria. During my interviews, I found that there was some reluctance to empathise with inclusiveness and fairness as governance characteristics. Although interviewees recognise that nature is open to all, there has been only limited engagement with disadvantaged communities. There is recognition that the movement needs to be more resilient; here improved coordination and inclusiveness may be important factors. Thus, better connectivity and collaboration between Trusts and other conservation organisations may be the key to resilience.

Amongst the Living Landscapes represented in my research there is a range of funding, which influences LSC governance. Some are agri-environment funded and others are supported by Lottery monies. The former tends to have unitary governance structures, mirroring those of the host Trust. The latter have more structured and pluralistic governance with partnership boards and delivery panels.

There is an underlying current of distrust of Lockwood's principles, perhaps because they are perceived to be associated with an increased administrative burden, particularly in relation to transparency and accountability. Such extra administration has cost implications that might ultimately mean the demise of unsustainable Living Landscapes unless successive funding is secured. Indeed, some Trusts are retrenching around nature reserves as Living Landscapes prove difficult to implement. Nevertheless, the knowledge emerging from my research suggests that LSC is being integrated into nature conservation, whilst challenging preconceptions and expanding its activities. Therefore, reimagining LSC governance may be the final element that secures their future.

8.4. Research outcomes - new knowledge from the research

Here I consider some new areas of knowledge about governance that have emerged from my research. I present them by their association with Lockwood's principles.

New knowledge of TWT's legitimacy focuses on three themes: natural constituency, the use of partnerships, and the importance of landownership. TWT's natural constituency has an historic perspective dating back over 100 years of nature conservation. This is associated with proven reserve management skills that are being transferred to Living Landscapes partnerships. These partnerships share a demographic that is interested in ecosystems and LSC. Therefore, Trusts have developed a wide constituency of stakeholders, with the expectation that they will become active partners and supporters. Partnerships extend beyond government agencies and funders to those who benefit from the Living Landscape schemes. Hence conservation land holdings facilitate partnership development and catalyses LSC.

New knowledge associated with transparency includes the importance of consensual processes, better internal and external communication, and meaningful M&E metrics. Consensual decision-making is the accepted process, but it often takes place behind closed doors, diluting the little information that is readily available to the public. Communicating information about what Living Landscapes mean is a priority, because it raises the profile of Living Landscapes and attracts additional support. Although not all stakeholders are interested in the minutiae of LSC. The use of social media encourages stakeholders to become engaged in Living Landscapes, but stakeholders need to know and understand the metrics used to determine the progress and success, or otherwise, of Living Landscapes.

New knowledge arising from Lockwood's accountability principle has a single theme: community engagement. Minor themes that may become significant are the lack of sanctions and the reluctance to legally define responsibilities. Focusing on increased community engagement means that the definition of Living Landscapes has expanded with a wider constituency, but this dilutes the conservation effort, taking resources away from nature reserves. This is challenging because some Trusts wish to concentrate on nature conservation rather than the wider cultural, social and economic aspects of conservation. Nevertheless, some sources of funding are demanding a broader definition of LSC, which makes some Trusts uncomfortable.

The knowledge arising from Lockwood's inclusiveness principle has two themes. The first covers new ways of extended engagement through partnership

structures. The second is the challenge to finding a focus for the increased opportunities for participation, particularly to improve the wellbeing of the disadvantaged. TWT is beginning to understand these challenges by learning how to focus and adapt engagement to attract wider support, particularly if funding is associated with LSC.

New knowledge has accrued from my analysis of how fairness is framed in LSC issues. It recognises the complexity of stakeholder relationships in Living Landscapes, where the broad conservation agenda challenges the hegemony of the Trusts. This knowledge has three themes: exercise of authority, the concept of the greater conservation good, and being clear about whose benefit is at stake. The exercise of authority is enshrined in the movement through mutual respect; but, the introduction of partnerships challenges TWT's hegemony in conservation. The second and third themes are intertwined. The greater conservation good is part of the Living Landscapes message, which is wrapped in the challenge of explaining what it means.

New knowledge around connectivity covers three themes. First, there is strength in a movement wide approach to LSC, but this is counterbalanced by a potential weakness because there is evidence that the movement is fragmented or at least independently minded. Second, there is a need to reflect on the successes and failures of Living Landscapes, but this requires more expenditure on M&E. Third, the benefits of volunteering need to be assessed in terms of the added value it provides, which needs to be tempered with efficient and effective management of this resource. The lessons from Living Landscapes are not being shared effectively around the movement, but recent research is rectifying this. This may be because competition amongst Trusts is inherent in bidding for national funding. Such fragmentation may undermine the added value accruing from the synergy of collaboration, impede succession planning and the sustainability of Living Landscapes by restricting opportunities for innovation, fresh ideas and continuity.

This new knowledge about resilience focuses on three themes. First is the need to embed or mainstream the idea of Living Landscapes into all Trust activities. Mainstreaming requires a culture of a learning organisation, inspiring people to become involved in nature conservation from an early age, and an appreciation of ecosystem services. This leads to the importance of community engagement,

which is crucial to programme sustainability and may help secure succession funding, which needs to be anticipated and planned. This requires the development of a project pipeline, i.e. projects that are prepared and ready for financing that may commence without delay to take-up any financial slack.

In summary, TWT is beginning to understand how Living Landscapes might contribute to the resilience of the movement. It will require careful marshalling of resources, tapping into the reservoir of volunteers and embracing a wider concept of conservation. Strategically, this will require governance structures that are more inclusive with management frameworks that encourage innovation, value and reward the contribution of all staff and volunteers.

8.5. Some additional observations on the research

Some other observations have emerged from my research because I am interested in the challenges of modernising governance within the movement as they develop a collaborative culture. First, I have observed a shift in ethical perspective that LSC has brought to conservation. Second, there are various social perspectives on Living Landscapes resulting in examples of good practice that have been adopted by the Trusts that I have observed. Finally, I consider the role of leadership and TWT's vision in driving forward LSC.

8.5.1. Ethical perspectives of LSC

Three ethical perspectives are apparent from my case study analysis of Living Landscapes, which have been evident in north America for some time: technocratic, ecocentric, and collaborative (Mullner et al., 2001). I found from a study of the historical institutionalism within the movement evidence of a transition between these perspectives. It has been suggested that this is how dominant paradigms become unseated, although identifying the catalyst for such changes is illusive (Hay and Wincott, 1998; Peters et al., 2005). LSC is an approach to nature conservation that builds on the benefits of nature reserves, key wildlife sites and SSSIs. However, it is too early to understand whether LSC will yield long-term conservation benefits (Dudley et al., 2016). But my case studies are evidence of some institutional change within TWT.

The transition between ethical positions is reflected in the journey that some Living Landscape stakeholders make. I have identified, from the case studies, three phases in this transition:

Phase I (technocratic): Living Landscapes focus on nature conservation and its ecological returns, i.e. autocratic and technocratic management demonstrated by habitat creation and species protection (e.g. Trust AD).

Phase II (ecocentric): Living Landscapes became dependent upon interaction with stakeholders, schemes led by stakeholders with Trusts providing administrative support and advice (e.g. Trusts E and L).

Phase III (collaborative): Living Landscapes become more holistic, encouraging wider socio-economic partnerships around economic and social attachment to its cultural and natural heritage. Living Landscapes become collaborative arrangements around the communities they serve (e.g. Trusts Q and V).

These transitions are reflected in the various Living Landscape governance models described next, where there is some partial mapping between ethical position, institutions and discourses.

8.5.2. Living Landscape governance institutions

I have identified three governance institutions from my analysis of Living Landscape; these are summarised in Table 19. They are a unitary structure, a transitional arrangement, and a pluralistic model, which Trusts adapt to suit their Living Landscape objectives.

Table 19 Living Landscape institutions, discourses and governance ethics

Case study		AD	E		L			Q	V	
Living Landscape		AD-1	E-2	E-3	L-4	L-5	L-6	Q-7	V-8	V-9
Dominant discourses	Ecosystem	X	X		X	X	X		X	
	Nature conservation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Cultural heritage		X				X	X		X
	Economic development			X			X	X		

Case study		AD	E		L			Q	V	
Institutional & governance ethic	Unitary (technocratic)	X			X					X
	Transitional (ecocentric)			X		X				
	Pluralistic (collaborative)		X				X	X	X	

The unitary model uses established governance institutions for nature reserves. Their objective is to conserve wildlife, which may include an element of ecosystem services (e.g. catchment area farming or flood alleviation). A director or head of conservation reports to the CEO who liaises with a council or board of Trustees (Living Landscapes AD-1, L-4 & V-9). The characteristics of this unitary model are that there are few stakeholders. They are mainly landowners, and volunteer assistance contributes to the management and/or administration of the scheme, which has limited conservation objectives. Government agencies may be involved to ensure national conservation objectives are met.

It was evident from my interviews that some Trusts are content to remain in this ethically technocratic phase, where the emphasis is on a nature conservation discourse based around nature reserves and wildlife education which has resonance with their constituency. This unitary governance institution, with its roots in the origins of the Wildlife Trusts, has been associated with a silo mentality that focuses on ecological objectives (Taylor, 2015:149). This model is evolving through the streamlining of institutions, driven by the Charity Commission and modern accounting practices. These evolutionary drivers are equally applicable to the transitional and pluralistic models.

The transitional governance institution involves more stakeholders, including landowners, community groups, and local authorities, any of whom may provide funding. The schemes' objectives go beyond nature conservation to incorporate ecosystem services. It augments the unitary governance institution with some form of community input through a forum or review panel (Living Landscapes E-3, L-5) that reports to the CEO through a Director of Conservation or Head of Living Landscapes. The governance oversight mechanism is Trustees over the

CEO as in the unitary model. The characteristics of this institution are that there are more stakeholders, consisting of government agencies, other nature conservation organisations, landowners, community groups and local authorities. The discourses associated with this institution focus on community engagement and education, whilst its institutions encourage community participation. Volunteer assistance contributes to the management and/or administration of the scheme, which has nature conservation and community objectives. This institution is aligned with an ecocentric ethic and is a preliminary stage in the development of the collaborative approach that is a feature of the pluralistic institution in response to a partnership ethic.

The pluralistic governance institution is a function of a funding arrangement where the principle funder imposes strategic and collective oversight (Taylor, 2015:152). The funder, e.g. HLF, influences the structure of the scheme with institutional pathways associated with the socio-economic discourse. There are a multitude of stakeholders representing a range of interests that include cultural heritage and socio-economic development in addition to nature conservation and ecosystem services (Living Landscape E-2, L-6, Q-7, V-8). This institution's characteristics include multiple stakeholders, consisting of heritage and nature conservation organisations, government agencies, funders and businesses, landowners, community groups and local authorities. In particular volunteer assistance contributes to the management and/or administration of the scheme, whose conservation, cultural and community objectives are augmented with socio-economic objectives. These include ecosystem products and services such as tourism and small-scale production (e.g. timber or coppice products) and green infrastructure. There are multiple discourses, embracing community engagement, education, and a wide range of cultural conservation objectives. The associated institutions are inclusive in their involvement with local communities and various conservation interests.

These three institutional types represent different points in the spectrum of Living Landscapes. Other points on the spectrum accommodate justifying free conservation advice to landowners, embracing cultural and heritage conservation objectives, and adapting to nature being an important element in society's health and well-being. As a result, Living Landscapes have the

potential to deliver wide community benefits in addition to wildlife conservation.

8.5.3. Examples of good practice

My case studies reveal similar storylines based around TWT's vision for Living Landscapes. It is hoped that will lead to increased collaboration, and greater conservation gains through the protection of key sites, buffering of significant habitats, and the creation of corridors that allow species to migrate. The range of Living Landscapes stakeholders is consistent amongst my case studies; they include local authorities, conservation groups, landowners and managers, and farmers. Amongst funders, HLF is dominant with EA, NE and FC are frequently mentioned. At a community level, local authorities are prevalent. Less frequent are other conservation organisations, charitable trusts and the private sector.

Living Landscapes' conservation modalities and institutional practices revolve around a core conservation team supported by volunteers. The core team coordinate conservation activities and manage the finances with assistance from volunteers. Volunteers may come from local communities or travel some distance to participate. Other sources of volunteers may be away-day activities where companies allow their staff to spend time participating in conservation work. Another source is local educational establishments, where students, as part of their course work, contribute their time to conservation activities. Other examples include a partnership with a local authority to provide work experience for young offenders, disadvantaged or unemployed. Examples of governance good practice are summarized in Table 20 with ideas for specific activities or actions. Of note, in terms of accountability and transparency, are the availability of key Living Landscape documents, such as annual report, accounts and strategic plan. These documents could be placed on a website or circulated with notice of the partnership meetings. There are a few examples of such reports (Trust E and Q). It would be helpful if they could contain details of key decisions made throughout the lifetime of the partnership. The most appropriate form of oversight is contested, some consider Living Landscapes should have a separate oversight body external to a Trust, others maintain existing provisions are adequate to safeguard accountability and transparency.

Table 20 Examples and proposals for good practice according to Lockwood’s principles

Lockwood’s principles	Example of good practice	Trust Evidence	Proposed action or activity
Accountability	<p>Pen portraits of Trustees are included on the Trust’s website</p> <p>Pen portraits of SMT are included on the Trust’s website</p> <p>Availability of strategic plan and financial records – updated after each AGM</p>	<p>E, L, V</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>Pen portraits of Trustees and senior management team (SMT) on website</p> <p>Register of delegated powers, with reference to the Board meeting when they were approved⁷⁰.</p> <p>Summary of annual report and financial details published in Quarterly magazine and available on Trust’s website.</p> <p>Prepare schedule of delegated powers, with date of board approval with timetable for regular review</p>
Connectivity	<p>Establish community and business fora</p> <p>Build into the programme a programme of monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Setup delivery team meetings to facilitate exchange of project level information</p>	<p>E</p> <p>Q</p> <p>Q</p>	<p>The purpose of these fora may include publicity and public relations, as well as facilitating internal sharing of information.</p> <p>Set achievable and realistic metrics for measuring the effectiveness of the programme.</p> <p>These internal meetings facilitate exchange of best practice information as well as providing opportunities for networking.</p>
Fairness	<p>Programme design ensures equitable access to funds.</p>	<p>Q</p>	<p>Reinforce design by collaborative partnership board’s oversight of activities</p>
Inclusiveness	<p>Councils made up of representatives from the grass root membership.</p>	<p>AD</p>	<p>Consider ways to include grass root membership in the governance processes⁷¹.</p>
Legitimacy	<p>List heritage assets in accounts</p> <p>Living Landscape governance panel, reporting to Trust Board with</p>	<p>E</p>	<p>Define heritage assets as cost based value of reserves, along with freehold land & buildings and land in tenure.</p> <p>Establish governance panel with oversight for all Living Landscape projects, membership extending to</p>

⁷⁰ In the instance of Trust L, there is specific mention in its Articles of Association for Directors to approve membership applications; this duty is delegated to the executive but the minutes of the meeting when such delegation was authorized is lost to memory. The chairman of this Trust considers that it is a run of the mill matter, but that should exceptions to membership occur that they would be raised with Directors.

⁷¹ Some Trusts have Councils made up of representatives from their local conservation groups. Not all Trusts have such groups, although they may become more important as Trust seek new ways to engage with their local communities.

Lockwood's principles	Example of good practice	Trust Evidence	Proposed action or activity
	<p>membership extending to all stakeholders – annual meeting</p> <p>Merge memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Articles of Association (AA)</p> <p>Review, and amend as necessary, terms of reference and powers of delegation</p>	<p>L</p> <p>Q</p>	<p>community stakeholders, as well as Trustees, staff & volunteers</p> <p>Review MoU and AoA and merge into a single document in accordance with current company law</p>
Resilience	<p>Establish risk management review procedures and report on these on an annual basis</p> <p>Review of succession planning for all key personnel</p>	<p>L, Q, V</p> <p>V</p>	<p>Consider establishing a resource committee to oversee activities associated with maintaining resilience of the Trust</p> <p>Implement a programme of succession planning, that is reviewed regularly on, for example, a five-year basis</p>
Transparency	<p>Articles of Association setting out procedures and roles</p> <p>Detailed accounts placed on website, and kept up-to-date</p> <p>Annual review placed on website, and kept up-to-date</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E, Q</p> <p>E, Q</p>	<p>Articles of Association placed on website</p> <p>Accounts to contain detailed breakdown of income & expenditure</p> <p>Identify and delivery a clear and consistent communication strategy for Living Landscapes</p>

8.5.4. TWT's Vision - a Living Landscape institution

TWT's vision to "restore the UK's battered ecosystems for wildlife and people" is a shared frame of meaning within the movement (TWT, 2007:2). It is an evolving LSC narrative, an institution that is adapting to the times. Individual Trusts interpret it to reflect local conservation priorities, whilst emphasizing the national nature of the vision. For example, the big picture in Sussex is that "The Wildlife Trust's vision is an environment rich in wildlife for everyone" (TWT, 2007:4). Whilst, The Great Fen expresses it as being able "to walk in wonderful wild countryside all day without retracing your steps, among habitats and species that cannot be seen anywhere else on this scale" (TWT, 2007:50).

Other Trusts take a more intellectual approach, for example in the South West the vision is focused on rebuilding biodiversity based on scientific evidence

(TWT, 2007:21). This focus demonstrates how biodiversity enhancement “can help boost local economies” (TWT, 2007:36). Another group of Trusts working around the River Trent talk about a broader vision where the river is “rich in wildlife habitats, landscape and historic features for the benefit for all, both now and in the future” (TWT, 2007:23). Yet another riverine programme has a narrower vision to “conserve wetland wildlife in a severely degraded landscape” (TWT, 2007:26).

Therefore, through various interpretations, the core vision is enabling and empowering rather than didactic. The themes articulated within the vision inspire and motivate people to become engaged in Living Landscapes. However, a vision may be a barrier or obstruction to public engagement though the use of obscure language, which interferes with the public understanding of conservation.

The idea that a vision may become an obstacle to public engagement arose from the difficulties in articulating TWT’s vision so that it captures the imagination of the public. Conservation groups have long used interpretation boards to communicate special features of, and confers value on, nature reserves (Schweinsberg et al., 2013). This strength needs to be applied to LSC. Interpretation is more than the presentation of facts associated with a nature reserve or Living Landscape programme. Tilden considers it an educational activity that reveals “meanings and relationships ... by first-hand experience and by illustrative media” (1977). It has been suggested that conservation organisations are still exploring ways to make their communication efforts more effective (Kohl, 2005). One response is to focus interpretation on provoking a response or action, rather than merely instructing, so developing the relationship between good interpretation, education and funding.

8.5.5. Leadership for good governance

All my case studies emphasise that the key to good governance is leadership. Here the relevant discourse is good governance with leadership as an institution. Gailing and Leibenath compare HI and DA, and similarly from my case studies I examine leadership within the context of good governance. Anecdotally, there has been a struggle for power, between governance and leadership, between a board of Trustees and CEO, since the beginning of the movement. But its

institutions are evolving with advances in knowledge about nature conservation and ecosystem services. Likewise, the nature conservation discourse, which has remained consistent for 100 years, is now evolving with the concept of LSC.

There are different facets of leadership - it may be a person, position and process, and/or a result. The context, especially how leadership emerges, is dynamic and culturally specific, i.e. associated with the Trust's organisational culture. Strategies need to be developed to identify priorities and who to influence, examples are seen in three case studies (Trust L, Q and V). But leadership does not necessarily emanate from the top of an organisation. It may be brought or bought in, or exist in lower levels of management, or come from the Trustees. In fact, anyone may take on the responsibility of leading Living Landscapes (see Trusts L and Q).

Another aspect of leadership identifies multiple governance strategies, but there is little discussion of tactics, how one adapts, to different circumstances (Case et al., 2015:20). Therefore, one of the critical leadership skills is building consensus. This is evident in the work of Trusts Q and E, where the Trusts act as bridging and blending institutions, which help establish their legitimacy to leading LSC.

8.6. Reflections

I am not alone in thinking of my research process as a journey, a stage in my educational and personal development (Mishra, 2015). For me this journey was the fulfilment of a lifelong ambition to develop my intellectual capacity in an area of interest: the application of business management skills to the environment. Here I reflect on how I came to understand Living Landscapes, the stories they tell, and the governance of nature conservation. I also consider some of the limitations in the design of my research before reflecting on my approach to the research, drawing on lessons from various false starts. Finally, I deliberate on my personal circumstances.

8.6.1. Methodological approach

I initially assumed that information about TWT's Living Landscape programme would be readily available. Although there was limited information on websites, responses to my email survey and interviews provided insight into individual

examples. Many stakeholders were not willing to examine their own approach to governance, but were happy to discuss their objectives. It was apparent that their experience of partnerships is fraught with ambiguities and tension. On one hand, the focus is on partnerships with government agencies and funders; and then on the other, communities, particularly volunteers, are crucial to successful Living Landscapes.

The excellent response to my email survey led me to underestimate the time needed to analyse subsequent interviews, which generated more material than I anticipated. In retrospect, the interviews were too complex, largely due to the complexity of Lockwood's governance framework. However, without this framework I could not challenge the status quo of the governance institutions within TWT, where financial probity and legal compliance dominate the governance institutions and discourse.

I had expected that my initial choice of analytical tools, particularly the quantitative document analysis, to provide insights into my research questions. But, although it provided pointers for my research, one shortcoming to my content analysis was its inability to reflect the context in which "the content appears" (Carley and Palmquist, 1992:605). Nevertheless, it provided the initial basis for subsequent DA.

My qualitative analysis strategy was to create case studies using NVivo©. These case studies were vehicles for identifying and presenting the institutions and discourses associated with Living Landscapes, particularly how they have evolved with the movement. This approach allowed me to analyse different aspects of the research in isolation, searching for evidence of institutions and discourses, whilst providing an overview of the whole research process. Once the documents were uploaded to NVivo© I begin coding. My coding strategies in Stage I and subsequently were different. I began with a quantitative approach based upon word analysis, but this approach lacked structure and insight. Therefore, in subsequent coding I adopted a qualitative approach based upon Lockwood's framework. I used his seven principles as a skeleton for the coding process, whilst allowing free-form nodes to be created when ideas emerged signposting possible discourses and institutions. My interview guide also provided nodes for coding my interview texts. I held a few ad-hoc interviews with volunteers I had met during my visits to Living Landscapes. But they were

“off the cuff” and I was not able to record them. Therefore, I made notes as soon after as possible. If I had more time I would have interviewed more stakeholders, particularly representatives from local communities, farmers and landowners.

In my case studies, I analyse the strategic management of Living Landscapes by looking at their governance institutions. Another approach would have been to examine LSC issues as examples of “wicked problems” (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Ludwig, 2001). For example, Ludwig calls for a participatory approach based on dialogue between interested parties (Ludwig, 2001:763). Alternatively, Rayner proposed a flexible approach to problem solving based around Roberts’ coping strategies (Rayner, 2006; Rayner, 2014; Roberts, 2000). Both of these alternatives would have suited my use of case studies and contributed to my understanding of LSC.

8.6.2. Limitations to research design

The initial design for my research was in five Stages, with a series of working papers (WP):

- ✓ Stage I: preparation, concept development and literature review (WP 1: literature review, WP 2: conceptualisation, WP 3: methodology);
- ✓ Stage II: document analysis with Wild Life Trusts in the South West of England (WP 4: scope and scale of landscape scale projects);
- ✓ Stage III: governance of landscape scale projects (WP 5: governance of landscape scale projects);
- ✓ Stage IV: qualitative analysis of case studies (WP 6: best practice workshops); and
- ✓ Stage V: collating, reflection and editing working papers into thesis.

There were three limitations to this approach: literature review design, the availability of material, and the lack of homogeneity between Living Landscapes. I discuss these in turn with respect to my research questions.

My first approach to the literature review was limited because there were few LSC articles, so I extended my search to consider other applications of social construction that might be applied to LSC. Most of the papers I reviewed were empirical studies, for example from the forestry sector, whose findings I compared with LSC. The main limitation was my initial positivist position, which evolved into an interpretivist view as I read more on the subject. Further, a

substantial amount of material was grey literature, including conference papers, studies, government reports, reports to funding agencies and unpublished dissertations. The use of grey literature is contentious (Bellefontaine and Lee, 2014:1379; Conn et al., 2003:256). Therefore, I revised my literature review from a social construction perspective based on Arts and Buizer's discursive and institutional framework before discovering Gailing and Leibenath (Arts and Buizer, 2009; Gailing and Leibenath, 2015).

In Stage I, I gathered material on Living Landscapes from the TWT website. It contains a directory and map of the Living Landscape schemes (TWT, 2015a). This material consisted of the names of the schemes, their size, with a brief description, which I validated against individual Trust websites and documents. However, it contained limited quantitative data, although some schemes showed their size, which I had hoped to use for an initial categorisation to answer my second research question about developing an LSC typology. Living Landscapes are difficult to categorise because of the variation in habitats across the country and there has been no attempt to categorise them according to their national landscape character (NE, 2006). There was also no reference to the European Landscape Convention and Natural England's action plan to implement it (COE, 2000; NE, 2009). Therefore, I classified them according to their ecosystem type (Watson and Albon, 2011). However, there was insufficient quantitative data to develop this (Czech et al., 1998).

Another limitation to my research design was that it was not possible to focus on similar Living Landscapes, despite 60% of schemes in England covering either grasslands or freshwater. One reason for the lack of comparability lies in the underlying geology of the landscapes, which varies markedly across superficially similar landscape features such as grasslands, woodlands and freshwater.

As my research progressed I became aware that the best practice workshops were problematic because a lot of Trusts were reluctant to participate because of time restrictions and lack of willing participants. Therefore, because there was a reluctance to discuss my research, particularly governance, I adapted my work programme to take account of those willing to be interviewed and the restrictions of my personal circumstances. Those interviewed contributed to my case studies which answered my third research question about the governance of Living Landscapes.

8.6.3. Lessons from my chosen methodology

First, although the email survey had 70% response rate, it produced a paucity of detail about the governance and management of LSC schemes. I filled this gap with information from the interviews. This paucity may be because the Trusts are reluctant to share such information, or that it does not exist in a shareable format. Even if the material exists, it may not be in the public domain.

Understandably, there is a limit to the storage capacity of individual Wildlife Trust websites. Thus, the documents I examined may not be representative.

I had anticipated from the initial responses to my email survey that gathering a cohort of interviewees would not present a difficulty. However, it proved harder than expected. Subsequently there is a lack of balance between types of interviewees. I would have liked to have more contributions from partners and other stakeholders, especially community representatives.

Another weakness is that TWT schemes are not categorised according to habitat, largely because they incorporate more than one. Therefore, I use a scheme's predominant habitat as the best fit to NEA habitat type. Thus, my use of the NEA criteria to categorise Living Landscapes is simplistic. Some ecologists are reluctant to simplify nature conservation, and others view it as a specialist technocratic science. Nevertheless, my attempt to categorise Living Landscapes seeks to demystify the subject and my use of the NEA criteria reflects the current emphasis on the importance of ecosystems.

In 2009, I refined my research by framing my objectives and questions to consider landscape, governance and conservation. These questions determined my research methods: literature review, document analysis, questionnaires and interviews, and the development of the case studies. I discovered that there was limited opportunity to use quantitative tools such as statistical analysis due to limited primary data. For example, the populations for the email survey and interviews were small (Living Landscapes, $n = 112$; email survey, $n = 30$; Trusts agreeing to be interviewed, $n = 5$; and interviewees, $n = 25$). Also, the information on the schemes contained limited quantitative information. What little there is, is presented in chapter 3. There was little to gain from obtaining additional quantitative data especially as material collation was time consuming, despite the use of computerised storage and analysis techniques.

I spent a significant amount of time developing an understanding the concept of social construction. Whilst this was valuable, it detracted from examining what Wildlife Trusts and their partners thought about Living Landscapes. It was not until I read Arts and Buizer (2009) and Gailing and Leibenath (2015) that I appreciated how institutions and discourses could unlock the meaning of Living Landscapes.

One final lesson concerns my case studies and the organisational charts that accompany them. They have not been ratified and remain my interpretation of the information contained in Annual Reports from the five Trusts. I appreciate that Trusts may have a different interpretation of my representation. However, although interviewees had the opportunity to comment on the transcripts of their interviews, time constraints prevented any detailed discussion on my text.

8.6.4. Personal considerations and reflections

I have been involved with Living Landscapes since 2006 as a volunteer, trustee and student. But mostly it has been a daily experience as I walk around the countryside with my dog. Often, I pause and reflect on the landscape around me, an agricultural landscape that changes with the seasons and has evolved through the ages, at least since the Neolithic judging by the number of ancient monuments within walking distance of my home. For me the landscape is what the eye sees as it scans the near and far horizon, be it viewed from a window, from a train, home, or car. However, paraphrasing Barbara Hepworth, without the human figure the landscape is meaningless (Read, 1952; Hawkes, 1953; Causey, 2006). Therefore, as this human figure, I have some observations.

The few iconic features in my landscape are in decline. The Cotswold stone walls are crumbling, ancient monuments have been ploughed in or their standing stones robbed, barns lay derelict, and cottages are holiday residences rather than agricultural workers' homes. However, closer inspection reveals a multitude of species in the hedgerow and field, despite intensive agriculture. Species of flora and fauna have adapted to the changes brought about by human intervention. For me the challenge of LSC is to combine the detail of nature conservation with the large scale and obvious human intervention. My research journey explores this by reflecting on TWT's Living Landscapes.

LSC in the English landscape is deeply rooted in culture and traditions, where landscape scale policy may date from the “preservation period (1870-1940)” (Winter, 1996:176). English nature conservation has historically been based around the concept of nature reserves, which focus on SSSIs or local key wildlife sites. If its sites are complex to categorise, how much more challenging would the classification of Living Landscapes be? I have tried to simplify it by considering ecosystem services and their governance structures.

Several personal circumstances interfered with the progress of my research. First, it was delayed whilst I had an overseas assignment. Then further interruptions due to family circumstances prolonged it. However, these factors deepened my appreciation of LSC through my role as a Wildlife Trust Trustee.

My dual position as a researcher and Trustee exposed a tension with Living Landscape stakeholders. I was aware of potential conflicts that might arise between nature conservation (my responsibility as a trustee) and the socio-economic benefits arising from land management (the broader benefits of LSC). Other potential conflicts included competing access rights, conflicting opportunities for conservation and development, and apathy towards ecosystems services. This tension was also influenced by my background as an environmental scientist, manager and policy adviser. My experience of managing European Funding within a strict regimen of rules and procedures was in tension with the multi-faceted approaches to LSC in England. I was aware of this undercurrent to my research, not just in the approach to gathering material but also in its interpretation, which could at times be too literal and bound by conventions rather than interpretive. Such conventions are evident in my bureaucratic and pragmatic background, but they are also present in conservation organisations with their technocratic approaches to LSC. Nevertheless, my systematic analysis justifies TWT’s various governance institutions. Finally, my insider position as a Trustee added scientific rigour to my research. Nevertheless, there may have been bias in my interpretation of material because interviewees may have been inhibited in their responses.

As my research progressed I became aware of some limitations. These arose from my research design, implementation and interpretation. With hindsight, I would have developed the case study approach further by expanding their number and by reducing the size of the questionnaire so that it became focused

on governance. Nevertheless, my research has shown that Living Landscapes are an opportunity to involve more people in the appreciation of wildlife. It helps them appreciate the way the natural environment works as a system and its importance to our lives through the provision of ecosystem goods and services.

My own understanding of the social construction of LSC has evolved, drawing on my own experience of TWT movement as a volunteer, coloured by my own interpretation of Living Landscapes, and my responses to the views, preferences and opinions expressed by interviewees. These have coloured the way I have interpreted my research.

To conclude, this chapter has examined my research journey; its contribution to my research questions is discussed in the final chapter. Living Landscapes are a sub-set of LSC, and are contingent upon the social world that surrounds them, and what people believe about them. They are about connecting people to nature through both conservation activities and improved access to nature in the landscape, especially at those special, iconic places and sites. There is a growing appreciation of ecosystem products and services, which makes a strong connection between people and the landscape, but many have a stronger connection to those special places, nature reserves within or near to their communities. But this connection is only just being reflected in its governance. There is considerable interest in a wider interpretation of the landscape, which embraces socio-economic opportunities and the protection of a wider landscape, where archaeological, cultural and industrial heritage artefacts are an integrated part of the landscape with its natural habitats and attendant species.

Chapter 9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1. Introduction

My thesis investigates the phenomenon of LSC through the example of TWT's Living Landscapes. These Living Landscapes extend beyond the boundaries of the nature reserve and are TWT's interpretation of what LSC means in practice. They involve partnerships between landowners and conservationists and provide space for nature to move around the landscape for people's benefit and enjoyment.

In this chapter I reprise why Living Landscapes are important and how my methods and research processes answered my research questions. I present my results in the context of these questions before considering what my research has contributed to the literature, LSC and its governance. I draw together the ideas discussed in earlier chapters, interpreting the concepts of discourse and institutions, to synthesize what is meant by Living Landscapes. I have identified various interpretations, each with their own form of governance, and associated discourses and institutions. I then conclude with suggestions for further research.

The context for my research has personal and social aspects. I am a volunteer for a Wildlife Trust, which has given me an insider's view of nature conservation in England. The social context is provided by the role of civil society in nature conservation, which has a long history. TWT can trace its roots to the early years of the 20th Century, and has been in its current form for over 50 years. TWT's predominant conservation mechanism is nature reserves, where land is owned and/or managed to protect specific habitats and species. Despite the existence of nature reserves and protected sites for decades biodiversity is still decline. Increasing recognition of habitat fragmentation has led to LSC as a solution to this fragmentation that will allow species to adapt and migrate across the landscape as well as protecting their supporting ecosystems.

I chose a mixed methodology to underpin my research. First, I adopted a quantitative approach to determine the scale of Living Landscapes using material taken from TWT's records for its Living Landscapes. To understand Living Landscapes, I used TWT's interactive map to identify the size of the Living

Landscapes and their main habitats. I summarised the material by grouping and visualising them in terms of the NEA habitats to determine the range and scale of Living Landscapes. I then used a crude word count technique to identify key themes in this material, which led to the qualitative stage of my research.

The qualitative approach to understanding Living Landscapes began by examining their institutions and discourses hinted at by the themes identified at the end of my quantitative study. I analysed Trust documents and transcripts of interviews with Living Landscape partners. There were three sources of material: TWT and Wildlife Trust documents, responses to an email survey of the Wildlife Trusts in England, and a series of interviews with Living Landscape stakeholders from five Wildlife Trusts. I analysed this textual material with NVivo®, interpreting the texts by coding and examining its context. It was coded by themes associated with the questions in the email survey and interviews. I also assigned free-form nodes to any text that did not correspond to my templates. This coding allowed me to identify the formal and informal institutions associated with Living Landscapes, their discourses as well as their approaches to governance. This provided me with a snap-shot of what Living Landscapes mean to their various stakeholders.

I explored Living Landscape' governance further by examining five Wildlife Trust case studies according to Stål and Bonnedahl's approach to institutional and discursive analysis. These cases studies unlocked what Living Landscape governance means by providing examples of the formal and informal governance institutions used by TWT in their Living Landscapes.

9.2. Key findings of my research

In this section I bring together my findings, and relate them to my research questions. First, I summarise what Living Landscapes mean. Then I examine the social construction of LSC through the institutions and discourses associated with Living Landscapes, before presenting my results in the context of my research questions.

9.2.1. Living Landscapes: a 21st century perspective on conservation

I examined 101 different Living Landscapes schemes in England. I reviewed data about their size against benchmarks in the literature discovering that 77% of

them were larger than 1,000 ha and 82% were larger than 500 ha. They range in size from 56 ha to 25,700 ha with a median of 4,000 ha and a mean of 16,000 ha. These schemes cover a greater area of England than National Parks and are approaching the coverage of AONBs. They are significant not just because of their size, but because they contribute to the protection of ecosystem services and provide corridors for species to migrate and adapt to the pressure of climate change and anthropogenic activities.

The predominant NEA ecosystem habitat types within Living Landscapes in 2012 were freshwater (37% of schemes by area and 27% of all schemes), grassland (24%, 43%) and woodland (16%, 15%)⁷². There are now over 150 Living Landscape schemes in the UK⁷³. Living Landscapes share the LSC agenda along with National Parks and AONBs, together they provide contiguous areas of conservation to protect species, habitats and ecosystem services, and permit public access to the landscape. Further, volunteers carry out conservation activities, such as fence repair, wall building and keeping footpaths open, thus providing opportunities for people to engage with the countryside. However, Living Landscapes are not protected areas, although some include such designated sites within them. This relative lack of protection may place in jeopardy the value they provide to protecting the environment. Although there may be some level of local protection if Local Nature Partnerships adopt NIAs and incorporate them into their strategic plans.

LSC has been classified by the type of landownership (a single or group of landowners), areas targeted by government schemes, and those led by civil society working in partnership with other conservation organisations. Examples of Living Landscapes fall into all these categories and occur mainly at the sub-county level, although some extend over several counties, and most include local protected areas and SSSI. I have developed two other classifications to help understand Living Landscapes: their NEA habitat type and their governance structures. The former may provide insights into the ecological benefits of

⁷² Of the examples, I examined 75 had readily identifiable ecosystem habitats.

⁷³ This number is taken from TWT's website, <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/living-landscape/schemes>, accessed 26th November 2015.

Living Landscapes, whilst the latter reflects the partnerships that govern them and the extent of community participation.

Living Landscapes consist of informal institutions, often identified by a toponym and include the physical characteristics of the Living Landscape, which encourage local communities to identify with their local environment through association with Living Landscapes' iconic features and characteristics. These Living Landscapes are also what Hajer calls a set of concepts that make up a discourse. These concepts aim to restore, recreate and reconnect natural habitats for the benefit of wildlife and people, and they represent a break or change in the path dependency associated with nature reserves because of the adoption of new governance regimens. However, they are threatened by availability of financing and uncertainty of how to protect ecosystem services.

9.2.2. The social construction of LSC

LSC has its origins in the theories of island biogeography and ecosystems, and is a response to fragmented habitats and biodiversity loss prevalent across the English landscape. The conservation response is to reconnect these fragmented spaces with a network of ecological corridors, buffers and stepping stones, which vary in size and purpose. Their size is greater than 500 ha, and their conservation purpose is agreed amongst stakeholders, including constituent landowners, manager, local communities and funders. These networks encompass more than the conservation of a species or habitat. They protect and enhance ecosystem goods and services and embrace all facets of our natural and cultural heritage. Therefore, Living Landscapes have the potential to be multi-dimensional with various attributes.

I use these attributes, informal and formal institutions, as suggested by several authors discussed in my literature review, to understand the social construction of LSC. In particular Arts and Buizer, Gailing and Leibenath, Greider and Garkovich, Hajer, and Stal and Bonnedahl were influential. These institutions, together with a series of discourses, illuminate what LSC means to different stakeholders. The prominent discourse is nature conservation, but other discourses are important because they recognise the human aspects of LSC. These include education, community engagement, partnerships and governance.

I am interested in LSC governance, not just because it oversees the relationship between stakeholders through its formal and informal institutions, but because it is a key environmental discourse. And because there are more stakeholders in LSC than there are in nature reserve conservation their interaction in the governance of LSC is complex. This complexity arises in setting priorities, agreeing objectives and actions, but also in how best to engage with stakeholders, especially the communities who enjoy and benefit from LSC.

My research framework was designed to understand, not only the physical attributes of Living Landscapes, their informal institutions, but also the formal institutions that govern and manage them. And through DA I understand that different stakeholders have different interpretations of, perspectives on, and aspirations for, Living Landscapes. Such articulations range from a single-minded focus on nature conservation through to the holistic approach that manages and enhances ecosystem services and products through partnerships with landowners, farmers, communities and conservationists.

The role of social construction, institutions and discourses, in understanding Living Landscapes is summarised in the following sections where I answer my research questions. Together they provide a picture of Living Landscapes. Thus, social construction provides a framework for understanding the different perspectives on, and interpretations of, LSC; it also signposts suggestions for future research and underpin the contribution of new knowledge about LSC.

9.2.3. Research Question 1 - how is LSC socially constructed in England?

To explore the social construction of LSC I needed to understand its terminology. I used two aspects of social construction to provide insight into LSC: institutions and discourses. The institutions reflect both the physical attributes of Living Landscapes that people identified with, and the administrative structures through which they were governed - at times with a light touch and at others with a more ridged formality. The discourses represent different aspects of LSC that may overlap and compete according to stakeholder predisposition.

Living Landscapes Institutions

The institutionalist perspective on social construction, as used by Gailing and Leibenath, suggests that any social construct, such as LSC, has two types of institutions: formal and informal. The formal institutions include administrative and financial support, management (e.g. the executive, SMT, reserve and scheme managers) and governance (e.g. Trustees, councils and partnership boards) mechanisms. Whilst their physical features and toponyms, constitute informal institutions, although there are also informal administrative institutions (e.g. volunteer groups and community fora). It is these informal institutions, notably the physical characteristics that have most resonance with stakeholders I interviewed.

The role of these institutions is to provide a framework that ties Living Landscapes to existing conservation initiatives (e.g. nature reserves), and allows stakeholders to identify with the schemes through discourses. But these institutions also evolve, in so doing they break, for example, the path dependency associated with nature reserves. They are a framework through which the values and features of LSC are passed on from one generation to another, during this process they evolve and adapt. In this way, they support an organisation's institutional memory, which is the sum of experience and knowledge that make up the framework of tradition, legislation, rules and norms that govern LSC.

Living Landscape Discourses

Living Landscapes accommodate a broad church of stakeholders. Some Wildlife Trusts concentrate on habitat or species conservation, whilst others identify with an ecosystems approach. Within this spectrum, my analysis identified seven discourses: conservation, education, political, partnerships, engagement and socio-economic benefits, and governance. These discourses represent the varying purposes of Living Landscapes. There is often an overlap between them as they represent multiple benefits.

It is not surprising that conservation is the dominant discourse, as it is one of the charitable objectives of TWT. Nevertheless, all the discourses, except governance, are mentioned in TWT's vision for Living Landscapes. The Living Landscape conservation discourse not only includes nature and wildlife, but uses

the landscape motif to unify the cultural and natural heritage features in the countryside. Within the landscape there is an increasing focus on green infrastructure, ecosystem services and products, which are difficult to articulate at the level of nature reserves that have been the focus of TWT's nature conservation. Nevertheless, nature reserves remain important because they represent those special places where species and their habitats are protected. Living Landscapes link up these special places, providing an opportunity for species to migrate across the landscape. Thus, a landscape is more than a special place; it provides an identity for ecosystem services and the products that benefit society and nature.

Living Landscapes provide a home for wildlife that extends beyond the natural world to the human sphere. It is a home that sustains us, nature, wildlife and our cultural heritage. This framing of Living Landscapes may be understood not only in terms of conservation but also through its social discourses: community engagement, education and socio-economic benefits. These benefits include opportunities for volunteering, learning about conservation with exposure to nature as a catalyst for promoting health and well-being, or providing touristic opportunities, and economic products and services.

One final discourse, governance, is significant because it reflects the level of stakeholder engagement in each Living Landscape. I have identified three levels of engagement or governance models that represent an administrative spectrum. At one end of the spectrum, there is the unitary governance institution, which is essentially the governance of nature reserves. At the other end of the spectrum is the pluralistic institution that embraces inputs from community and funding organisations with partners and stakeholders guiding LSC. In between is a transitory phase where there is some community involvement in governance, but responsibility still rests with Trusts rather than stakeholders. The level of engagement across Living Landscapes has implications for the governance discourse because it reflects the scope of their objectives: nature conservation, and/or cultural and heritage conservation, and/or protection and enhancement of ecosystem services and products.

All the Living Landscapes discourses interact. The balance between them changes over time to reflect the various landscapes, their stakeholders, and the priorities of the communities they serve. Likewise, TWT regularly reviews their

governance models to reflect their changing constituencies as Trusts are under increasing stress as finances become tighter and expectations from the communities they serve change with increasing social pressures. This reflects the path dependency of the institutions associated with the various discourses. This is discussed in answer to my second research question.

9.2.4. Research question 2 - how do these constructions influence the designation and implementation of LSC projects by TWT?

Here I expand on the institutions and discourses discussed above by examining how LSC schemes are designed and implemented. The conservation discourse drives TWT's Living Landscapes, with socio-economic considerations being incorporated according to availability of public funding, public engagement and accountability. With increased public funding, the discourses of education and engagement become important adjuncts in the implementation of Living Landscapes. In common with Greider and Garkovich my research shows that Living Landscapes are symbolic environments, permitting a range of activities and interpretations.

Living Landscape Design

The Living Landscape discourses reflect what the schemes mean to the stakeholders and public. All schemes acknowledge the conservation discourse, and to some extent the educational one. But social engagement, as part of the wider political discourse, is becoming central to Living Landscapes. This merging of discourses allows Living Landscape partnerships to produce greater socio-economic outputs and reflect a wider conservation remit of cultural and heritage artefacts.

The process by which potential Living Landscape schemes are identified hinges around their conservation potential - identifying those areas that would benefit ecologically from buffering and connection to other areas. Subsequently, the refurbishment of heritage buildings may be included as opportunities for education and public engagement emerge. In larger schemes, consideration is given to the extent that ecosystem services and products are provided, perhaps in terms of a catchment area, wooded areas or habitat mosaic. In some Living Landscapes, iconic associations with features such as heaths, moors, rivers and woodlands, help determine the extent of the proposed area.

Living Landscape Implementation

The informal and formal institutions are influential in encouraging community engagement, generating funding and volunteer support. The design of Living Landscapes often reflects informal institutions such as the toponyms associated with the iconic features within the landscape, the importance of location, and the heritage context of the conservation. The formal administrative institutions influence how Living Landscapes are implemented, they include boards, panels and committees that provide oversight, be-it strategic, managerial or operational. These institutions encourage stakeholders and community representatives to participate in and influence the schemes.

One notable institution that encourages individuals to contribute to Living Landscapes is volunteering. This is a popular activity on nature reserves and has been extended to Living Landscapes where they assist in the day-to-day management, and in the M&E of conservation objectives.

LSC categorisations

Initially, I attempted to classify Living Landscapes by their habitat type using the NEA habitat classification. In England, the predominant Living Landscape habitats involve freshwater, grasslands and woodlands. However, these NEA categories are very broad and each Living Landscape contains multiple habitats and the NEA approach does not recognise any subdivision. Therefore, although I could generalise about the main habitat type, it was not possible to identify the main type of ecosystem service or product protected in the examples of Living Landscapes in my five case studies. Consequently, I refer to the three types of governance institutions rather than habitats to categorise Living Landscapes.

9.2.5. Research question 3 - what are the implications for the governance and management of LSC projects

My literature review suggested that one view of the social construction of any concept may be divided into discourses and institutions. This has implications for my research, which I now discuss drawing on Hajer's contention that institutions and discourses interact. First, I reflect on the institutions involved in the implementation of Living Landscapes. Second, I consider the discourses

associated with them. Finally, I consider whether these implications apply to LSC and not just to Living Landscapes.

Living Landscape Institutions

My research into Living Landscapes identified various institutions that I have divided into two categories: formal and informal. Here, I reflect on its implications for LSC. Subsequently, following my analysis of formal institutions, I identified three categories of governance associated with Living Landscapes.

The first category is an extension of existing unitary governance institutions, where existing governance mechanisms for nature reserves are extended to include Living Landscape with some community involvement. The second category is a transitional system where external funders and partners collaborate on the delivery of an agreed set of nature conservation objectives with some community input in the form of volunteer participation. Third, a collaborative pluralistic approach to governance is adopted for Living Landscapes with multiple land owners and stakeholders, who all have a voice in governance.

LSC's informal institutions include the physical characteristics and features that can be seen in the landscape. These include the ecological, geological and geomorphological features of the landscape that have resonance with many people, not least TWT's membership. However, some consider conservation extends beyond the border of nature reserves to cover archaeological, cultural, industrial and social heritage features. This range of physical institutions, which are often iconic, draws people to their protection and conservation. Therefore, appreciating LSC institutions helps overcome the ideological barrier to conserving the wider landscape, but they also extend governance responsibilities, which requires the movement to acquire more technical and management skills.

These institutions are associated with a break in path dependency where, for example, TWT's existing administrative mechanisms adapt to changing requirements over time. Understanding the role of these institutions can assist in the transition. For example, new institutions can draw on the best of accepted ways of governing and managing conservation organisations. This helps organisations adapt to changing circumstances and a wider range of stakeholders.

One challenge is that the movement's membership constituency is no longer the only stakeholder in Living Landscapes. Some Trusts have retrenched around protecting their nature reserves. Whilst others seek to increase their resources by considering the role of landscape in society. My case studies show that there is a range of good practice within TWT that may be applied to LSC.

Living Landscapes' Discourses

The conservation discourse associated with Living Landscapes is no longer restricted to nature and wildlife. Rather, they reflect a holistic and integrated approach to a landscape made up of its features that reflect its cultural, geographical and geological, industrial and social heritage. All these features are worthy of conservation. However, this requires considerable funding, a preoccupation of governance regimens.

My research revealed that some Wildlife Trusts prefer to concentrate on a narrow nature conservation discourse, despite human well-being and the benefits from exposure to nature emerging as considerable benefits. Yet others consider their experience of nature conservation is transferable to issues of cultural and heritage conservation, a wider expression of the conservation discourse. The narrow interpretation of the conservation discourse is becoming a niche subject with several single-issue organisations adopting LSC as an opportunity to participate in LSC partnerships, thus adding value to their own conservation discourse.

One aspect of governance is whether the leadership and management skills associated with TWT's nature reserves are transferrable to complex Living Landscapes. My research has shown that the movement has the required conservation skills, but that the management and human resource skills are still being developed using either in-house training or buying it in. In particular, the movement is beginning to acquire the necessary skills to manage and govern inclusive Living Landscapes that reach disadvantaged sectors of society.

Nature and wildlife education has been a TWT objective for at least 50 years. The challenge is to use Living Landscapes as a vehicle to expand its didactic remit to include biodiversity, ecosystems, sustainability, health and wellbeing. Living Landscapes are an opportunity to reach out into communities, encourage

people to be more appreciative of nature, improve their health and wellbeing, and inspire them to participate in nature conservation.

Education is also an element in the engagement discourse because nature and wildlife education is an opportunity to win over heart and minds of future generations. There is increasing interest from commissioning services in local government who consider Living Landscapes as a mechanism for tackling teenage and adult well-being by encouraging their enjoyment of nature. This prospect extends into the partnership and socio-economic discourses, where it is recognised that no single organisation can deliver all the needs of complex social issues. This holistic approach requires a broader approach to governance, because of the range of interests and stakeholder voices that need to be acknowledged and included.

Other implications

I use Lockwood's governance framework to help me understand LSC. His framework challenges charitable governance in England because it has a broader definition of governance than is customary. It reinforces the strategic importance of governance and asks questions about an organisation's effectiveness and efficiency in terms of transparency, fairness and inclusiveness.

I suggest that this wider governance remit may be addressed by considering the balance between various LSC institutions and discourses. For example, a review of TWT's strategic purpose for Living Landscapes exposes a range of evolving institutions and discourses that need to be reconciled. This requires a strategy with a hierarchy of priorities that their members and other stakeholders are willing to support. Once agreed, appropriate formal and informal administrative institutions can be reviewed and updated.

I found that the extent of stakeholder involvement in the governance of Living Landscape varied. For example, some funders had direct strategic involvement with objectives being monitored and evaluated, whilst the role of communities varied depending on the scale of the Living Landscape. The role of volunteers was evident in all Living Landscapes irrespective of their scale, with most requiring their input either in practical scheme management or administration.

I have shown that the appropriate approach to governance depends on the size and compass of LSC. Broadly, Wildlife Trusts prefer unitary institutions, but

external funders require a pluralistic approach. Whatever the nature of the governance institutions, Lockwood's principles challenge the long-standing focus on financial probity and legal compliance.

9.3. Contribution and significance of this research

Here, I reflect on the significance and contribution of my research. I consider how social construction helps us understand LSC, then I reflect on the policy context by considering the Wildlife Trust movement. Finally, I contemplate the broader political context of LSC.

9.3.1. The contribution of social construction to understanding LSC

I have adopted institutional and discursive approaches to social construction because the history of nature conservation in England has a body of information that lends itself to study. I use the interaction between the institutions of the Living Landscape vision, with the conservation and governance discourses to explore what LSC means, drawing on Berger and Luckmann's view that social construction is about the relationship between ideas and their social context.

The Living Landscape vision

The complexity of Living Landscapes is evident in the range of institutions and discourses associated with them, that is revealed in the language used to describe them. The informal institutions include the physical characteristics of Living Landscapes, names of the schemes and its vision; they make the concept tangible and provide connections to local communities. Further, there is a path dependency amongst the formal administrative institutions that is evolving with the move from reserve based conservation to Living Landscapes. These institutions cover the plethora of committees, community fora and expert panels that provide oversight, direction and management.

However, Arts and Buizer's believe that discourses become institutionised. For example, the range of discourses associated with Living Landscapes, evident in TWT's key institution, it's vision, include conservation, education, community engagement and partnerships are becoming institutionised. Specifically, Trust AD has an Education and Community team; Trust E has operational teams covering education and communities and a Director of Living Landscapes; Trust L

has a Head of Community Programmes and a Head of Communication; and Trust V has a people and wildlife managers and a Landscape programme manager.

The vision's discourses are tied to the keywords that stood out in my analysis. These keywords are part of the terminology used to reach the different audiences that Living Landscapes seek to influence. Keywords, such as reconnect, restore and recreate explain the importance of connected habitats in Living Landscapes. This linking of habitats in the landscape is TWT's recovery plan for nature. These keywords are tags that Trusts choose to describe and communicate their own interpretation of the vision. The vision is significant because it establishes a framework for understanding what LSC means and how it is understood by stakeholders, members of the movement, funders, implementing partners and the wider public. Nevertheless, each stakeholder interprets LSC in their own way. For some it means an opportunity to escape to the countryside and experience nature. Others consider LSC essential to conservation of wildlife and nature. Yet others have a perspective where ecosystems are important. Some interpret LSC to include cultural and heritage features that encourages a wider engagement and hence participation in conservation. This wider participation has attendant health and wellbeing benefits for the communities within LSC areas.

The language in the vision includes scientific and technical terminology. Examples include: biodiversity and ecosystems services, business and master plans, mission statements and actions plans, each with a hierarchy of aims and objectives. Such concepts prove useful, especially when Trusts need to be competitive in attracting funding, which may be contingent upon a Trust's administrative and governance institutions. TWT's vision has evolved to articulate complex ideas in a language that Purdon calls vulgarisation, a language that is accessible to all.

Governance of Living Landscapes

The importance of governance systems that comply with financial and charitable requirements is acknowledged. In addition, Living Landscape objectives are validated through specific indicators and outcomes. However, financial and human resources are rarely allocated to these objectives or their inputs. Nevertheless, such language is appropriate because it targets potential funders

and the corporate minded Trustees. The vision is broadly accessible and representative of conservation science, and is a distillation of policy ideas and issues that have been discussed at length within the movement. It is an outward facing statement of intent targeted at conservation groups, membership and supporters, as well as affirmation of a common direction of travel for the movement. But the move towards an ecosystems approach, within a holistic and integrated landscape, is contentious because some see it as a distraction from single site nature conservation.

Living Landscape discourses

TWT's nature conservation discourse has been reframed by LSC. Sites and species are still important, but biodiversity and ecosystems services reflect TWT's aspirations for Living Landscapes. The vision is both for nature and people, it allows nature to re-establish itself in the landscape and people to benefit from access to it. This represents a move towards an equilibrium between humans and nature, a sharing of the landscape in a blend of the ecocentric and partnership ethics. Nature reserves, which for many people form the heart of nature conservation, remain, but they are being connected and buffered as part of an integrated landscape.

Two further discourses are important because they help determine how TWT responds to the challenges of LSC. These are collaborations and socio-economic development. One example of these collaborations are the partnerships with national funders such as HLF that encourage socio-economic development. Such partnerships encourage Trusts to think outside the boundaries of the nature reserve and incorporate socio-economic development into their conservation programmes. This recognizes that nature provides the living conditions for life, and the living world provides opportunities for socio-economic development in communities that rely on the natural conditions that surround them.

TWT's articulation of LSC in the designation and implementation of Living Landscapes, reconnects people with nature through their names, governance structures, and volunteering. My research suggests that the movement is ambitious for Living Landscapes, whose message is becoming focused on how to influence people's perceptions of nature conservation and how it is funded. Thus, TWT's approach to conservation is adapting to the 21st Century through

Living Landscapes. Nature reserves are still important, but people's relationship with nature is being recast as more inclusive. Consequently, TWT is rethinking the financing of Living Landscapes to support activities not normally associated with the movement, such as restoring heritage buildings and leading well-being experiences. This may be too difficult a task in the current economic and political climate, and it risks alienating its membership.

9.3.2. TWT and Living Landscape policy

The key message from my research defines what Living Landscapes mean. There has been a paradigm shift in TWT policy, whose nature conservation framework has shifted from site and species-specific conservation, through preserving biodiversity to providing ecosystem services. Living Landscapes facilitate this transition by association with a notable physical or natural feature, place or person, which allows people to identify with them. This is a tangible link between people, their communities and the natural and cultural heritage that surrounds them. Although Living Landscapes were initially limited to nature conservation, they have expanded to embrace cultural heritage and other iconic elements in the landscape.

The formal institutions associated with Living Landscapes are also evolving. However, Living Landscape governance may become an administrative anachronism if Trusts restrict their governance structures to their closed membership. This style of unitary governance is in transition as Trusts embrace a wider constituency and invite them to participate in pluralistic governance. Increasingly, Trusts are searching for ways to reach out into communities where concepts of membership organisations are alien or abhorrent. Trusts are seeking new ways, such as Living Landscapes, to engage with people and their communities to gain their support. However, this fresh approach to conservation is in jeopardy if funding streams dry up.

In summary, there is a tension between reserved based conservation and Living Landscapes. This is largely due to competition over resources, although there may be ideological issues associated with scale: reserves or Living Landscapes. Also, the pace of institutional change is slow and the rules of the game have not changed significantly. Perhaps this because TWT is entrenched in its membership modalities, and has not embraced the challenge of wider

engagement with society and is yet to fashion new institutions, or adapt existing ones.

9.3.3. Some policy implications

LSC is part of a national conservation policy agenda to adapt to climate change, which allows species to develop resilience by ensuring that they have space to move along ecological corridors between suitable habitats. More recently, the importance of cultural ecosystem services has been added to the agenda. My research contributes to this by using social construction to understand LSC, particularly the collaborative approach within the governance discourse.

Collaboration refers to the movements' engagement with stakeholders and external organisations, which includes coalitions as described by Arts and Buizer, and partnerships as proposed by Beus and Dunlap, and Case and his colleagues. These partnerships may be restricted to government agencies, or embrace alliances and cooperation with other conservation organisations. This has not been a strength within the movement. But now TWT acknowledges that its objectives are shared. Its hegemony is being dismantled as its resources augment synergies through closer collaboration with like-minded organisations.

One area where collaboration has excelled within the movement is the mobilisation of volunteers. They are a resource that underpins both the practical aspects of conservation and the administrative support that makes it possible. The challenge is to harness groups of volunteers who buy-into LSC, especially those schemes that include cultural assets, socio-economic enterprises and well-being activities.

The governance discourse is central to LSC, not just because it ensures that strategic and management objectives are met, but also because it provides a forum for community voice and opinion. Good governance is a central tenet within the voluntary sector. However, its reliance on financial probity and legal compliance needs augmenting with greater accountability and transparency as advocated by Lockwood. Governance is important at a landscape scale because of the varied land tenure and ownership regimens, and the prospect of increased engagement with communities requires greater accountability. Governance remains a challenge for Living Landscapes, not least because it takes the focus

away from nature reserves that are critical to the protection of endangered species.

If the trend in LSC initiatives continues, particularly the link to ecosystem services as suggested by Gerber, the role of voluntary sector conservation organisations, with their local connections to landowners and groups of volunteers, will be crucial. Trusts periodically examine their priorities, by identifying their core discourses and institutions they may become holistic organisations. In response, Trusts may have to re-craft their governance institutions to reflect these core discourses and their stakeholder involvement. My contribution to the policy debate requires what amounts to a policy rethink, where conservation priorities are reinforced with a focus on ecosystem products and services with greater transparency and accountability of the use of public funds.

9.4. Suggested future directions for research

I have divided possible areas for further research into three categories: social aspects of conservation, nature conservation, and governance.

9.4.1. Social aspects of nature conservation

One element of Living Landscapes that I have only mentioned in passing is the issue of funding. There is some public funding through the HLF and its landscape partnerships, but in this uncertain socio-political environment new funding mechanisms need to be found if the aspirations for LSC are to be met.

Social construction is sometimes associated with power relationships. I noted tension during my interviews, especially when TWT's traditional hegemony is challenged by other conservation organisations, or where leadership is critical to success or a direction of travel. This could be examined further in case studies.

Another possible area of interest would be to examine the narratives associated with LSC. This could build on the existing case studies and reveal more about peoples' perceptions of LSC, particularly if the links between institutions and discourses is explored further.

9.4.2. Suggestions for conservation research

From my research, three areas of possible interest emerged: specific landscapes and their informal institutions, the relationship between nature conservation, ecosystems, and LSC designation. With the current focus on LSC, it would be interesting to develop the UKNEA by examining specific landscapes, not just in ecological terms, but by considering ethnography, visual objects and features, iconography, photographs and maps.

I found some resistance to the move from reserve based conservation.

Therefore, it would be interesting to explore the relationship and balance between biodiversity and ecosystems. For example, could LSC be used as a cultural ecosystem services indicator? Linked to this, as Living Landscapes are not designated protected areas, it would be helpful to review existing designations and consider ways to incorporate LSC as a recognised protector of ecosystem services, perhaps as NIAs.

9.4.3. Suggestions for governance research

Much of the study of environmental governance relates to national and international protected areas, but my research is parochial. Governance research could be expanded by considering the different perspectives of those involved in the socio-economic dynamic of LSC. And an examination of the transaction costs associated with extending nature conservation from nature reserves to LSC, could be productive in securing strategic funding.

My case studies are examples of different governance institutions, especially the development of pluralistic institutions. They could be developed further by preparing a flow chart to determine appropriate types of governance institution. A schematic showing the relationship between these institutions, with a table showing the strengths and weaknesses of each model, would be informative and assist in developing LSC.

I have shown that governance means different things to different people in the voluntary sector. Further research could focus on three levels: high level (e.g. public agencies and funders), operational (e.g. local partnerships with other conservation organisations and contractors), and internal aspects (e.g. individual Trust practices and the use of volunteers). For example, an examination of the

relationships between RSWT, TWT and individual Trusts could demonstrate the transition from one set of rules to another, which has implications for the movement as a whole. This is especially of interest where RSWT and TWT have invested resources in long-held rules, institutions, with a path dependency on a set of practices that are beginning to adapt to changing circumstances.

9.5. Conclusions

In this final section I reflect on TWT and its Living Landscapes, whose common features include multiple stakeholders with agreed conservation agendas, often with community input. My perspective on LSC was formed by my experience of Living Landscapes when I became a Wildlife Trust Trustee in 2006. Then, Living Landscapes were in their infancy; now, they are a long-term component of Trust activities. I began as a volunteer combining working on nature reserves restoring habitats and maintaining their infrastructure with being a trustee. I was a trustee for nine years, and still serve on two committees overseeing conservation and performance. As my research progressed, I was influenced by social construction, in particular discursive and institutional concepts have framed my appreciation of Living Landscapes. This has helped me appreciate different perspectives encountered during my research.

Five Trusts contributed to my research, selected from those Trusts who responded to my email survey. I conducted interviews with 25 stakeholders, made up of four groups of people: trust staff (covering executive, financial and managerial functions), trustees, volunteers and partners. Unfortunately, some Trusts and RSWT were reluctant to participate, despite being initially very supportive.

I appreciate that my interviewees may have been influenced by seeing the interview guide in advance, or by my unconscious prompting during the interviews. However, I considered that their views on TWT's Living Landscape vision and their interpretation of LSC were unbiased because of their personal integrity. My own interviewer bias may have influenced conversations, obscuring the interviewee's perspective on LSC. Naturally, their perspective varied depending on whether they adopted a Trust's world view, or articulated a personal agenda, or an entrenched conservation standpoint.

To understand Living Landscapes and its governance, I focussed my attention on its institutional and discursive attributes because interpreting these attributes produces new knowledge. The discourses of conservation, education and community engagement, particularly the role volunteers play in the management and administration of conservation were prevalent. But it was the formal and informal institutions of Living Landscapes that helped me understand what they mean to stakeholders. The physical characteristics, informal institutions, of Living Landscapes change with their geographic location and human activity but they have resonance in the Living Landscape story. Other informal institutions, such as toponyms, are also an important characteristic, providing a focus and identity based on a landmark or notable person or feature. Most formal, administrative, Living Landscape institutions reflect unitary governance models that have existed for over 50 years. Some Trusts have adopted a pluralistic approach with partnerships boards providing strategic and operational direction, and community fora to encourage community engagement. This adoption of pluralistic governance means that TWT is in transition from a narrow membership based movement to an inclusive and holistic conservation movement.

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Annex I. Additional tables

Table 21 Key Authors & Journals

Author's Name	Citations	Journals / conference
Berkes, F	1195	Conservation Biology (2004) ⁷⁴
Borrini-Feyerabend, G	99	Organizing Negotiation and Learning by Doing (2000)
Cortner, H J	111	Landscape & Urban Planning (1998), Sustainable Forestry (2001)
Haines-Young, R	92	Environmental Management (2003), Landscape & Urban Planning (2006)
Koontz, T M	28	Social Science (1999), Landscape & Urban Planning (2003), Policy Studies (2005)
Lockwood, M	102	Social and Natural resources (2009)
Manuel-Navarrete, D	40	Research in Human Ecology (2004), Ecology & Society (2006)
Meadowcroft, J	88	International Negotiation (1999), Landscape & Urban Planning (2002), Environmental Policy & Planning (2007)
Prager, K	44	Land Use Policy (2008), Environmental Management (2009)
Slocombe, S D	188	Bioscience (1993), Landscape & Urban Planning (1998)
Stenseke, M	39	Environmental Science & Policy (2006), Land Use Policy (2009)
Stoll-Kleemann, S	110	Society & Natural Resources (2002), Environment (2005)
Szaro, R C	103	Landscape & Urban Planning (1998 & 2005)
Tress, B	211	Landscape & Urban Planning (2001), Land Use Policy (2007)
Van den Hove, S	153	Ecological Economics (2000), Land Use Policy (2006)

⁷⁴ It was first published in 2002 as part of Conference of the Society-for-Conservation-Biology held in Canterbury, England

Table 22 List of Selected Journals

Agriculture and Human Values	Environment and Planning C
Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment	Government and Policy
Ambio	Environmental Management
American political science review	Environmental Planning and Management
American sociologist	Environmental Policy & Governance
Annual Review of Ecology and Evolutionary Systems	Environmental Policy & Planning
Annual Review of Environment and Resources	Environmental Review
Applied Ecology	Environmental Science & Policy
Australian Geographer	Environmental Ethics
Biogeography	Estuarine, Coastal and Shelf Science
Biological Conservation	European Environment
BIOECON	FOCUS on Geography
Bioscience	Forestry
Conservation Biology	Forest Policy & Economics
Conservation Ecology	Geoforum
Corporate Governance	Global Ecology & Biogeography
Ecological Applications	Global Environmental Change
Ecological Complexity	Global Environmental Politics
Ecological Economics	Governance: An international Journal of Policy and Administration
Ecology and Society	Governance Directions
Ecology Letters	Grounded Theory Review
ECOS	Human Ecology
Environment	Human Relations
Environment and Planning	Insect Conservation
Environment and Planning A	International Negotiation
	ISIS

Journal of European Public Policy
Journal of Environmental
Management
Journal for Nature Conservation
Land Lines
Land Use Policy
Landscape and Urban Planning
Landscape Ecology
Landscape Online
Landscape Research
Leadership
Management of Environmental
Quality
MIS quarterly
Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector
Quarterly
Ocean Development & International
Law
Policy Sciences
Policy Studies
Political Studies
Progress in Human Geography
Renewable Resources
Research in Human Ecology
Restoration Ecology
Rural Sociology
Rural Studies
Science
Social Forces
Social Science
Society and Natural Resources
Sociologia Ruralis
Sustainable Forestry
Theory and Psychology
Transactions in GIS
Transactions of the Institute of
British Geographers
Trends in Ecology and Evolution
Wildlife Society Bulletin
Wilson Quarterly
World Politics

Table 23 Spectrum of research approaches

Activity	Research Approach	Landscape Context - leading to possible research questions	Relevance to "landscape scale"
Discovering the particular	Photographs & maps	The English landscape as depicted in art, literature, memory & mythology. Are such images valuable or are they idealistic mementoes of the past?	Accuracy & subjectivity. Possible case studies – GWT / SWWT?
Describing the experience of discovery	Heuristics: personal & introspection	How has landscape affected our understanding of the countryside? What are the effects of landscape on stakeholders? (Goldman and Tallis, 2009; Goldman et al., 2007; Schläpfer et al., 2008)	This may be useful tool for following the living landscapes project managers.
Dissecting the discovery	Phenomenology: observation & exploration	Any particular landscape is made up of many elements. Which elements are important i/ are they part of my focus of research? (Greider and Garkovich, 1994; Ohta, 2001)	Am I interested in landscape elements such as hedgerows? Relatively easy to measure and record, but the conservation value requires regular monitoring.
Interpreting the discovery	Hermeneutics: interpretation	Landscapes may be interpreted in different ways depending on the perspective of the stakeholder. Are these perspectives really different? (Busck, 2002; Howett, 1988)	Cultural & historical context for both "text" & interpreter
Development of discovery through hypothesis testing	Experimental design	The Wildlife Trusts are "experimenting" with landscape scale conservation. How might these "experiments" be used to measure landscapes scale conservation? What models or simulations might be drawn from them?	Induction leads to hypothesis through empirical truth & probability. Deduction evolves from hypothesis through logical & analytical truth.
Discovering the abstract	Maths & Statistics		Analysis of survey results & review of Wildlife Trust websites.

Source: Adapted from R Higgins (Higgins, 1996, p 29, 26-27)

Table 24 Strategic questions

Strategic	Questions for Research from a Strategic Perspective / (Sources of data
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perspective (key questions) ⁷⁵	for answers)		
	Landscapes	Conservation	Governance
What is the nature / social reality of the phenomena being investigated? ⁷⁶	What is meant by landscape in the context of Wildlife Trusts (review of websites & literature)?	What is meant by conservation in this context (examples from Trusts)?	What types of governance are being used by the Wildlife Trusts (examples from Trusts)?
What knowledge or evidence exists that I may want to investigate? ⁷⁷	What type of landscapes are involved (review of websites & literature)?	What type of conservation initiatives are involved (review of websites & literature)?	What range of governance models are used in landscape management (literature review)?
What is the broad topic of research?	Management of landscapes	Linking conservation with landscape	Models of governance at a landscape scale
What is the intellectual puzzle?	How has our management of landscapes developed (Literature review)?	What types of conservation work at a landscape scale (questionnaire & interviews)?	How can collaborative / participatory modes of governance work (questionnaire & interviews)?
What do I wish to explain or explore?	Is it best to protect them or let them evolve?	Agriculture & conservation: Trade off or bed fellows	Development of collaborative approaches
What type of puzzle is it?	Development	Comparative: different for each type?	Mechanical: how it works
What is my purpose? Why am I doing it?	Understand management of landscapes	Make the connections between agriculture / conservation / landscapes	Understand how governance may be used to maintain the landscape

75 Developed from Mason (2007: 12-23)

76 Ontological perspective

77 Epistemological position

Table 25 Lexicon of technical words in the Living Landscape core document

adapt	adapting	biodiverse	biodiversity	celebrate
connects	connect	connected	connecting	connectivity
conservation	conserve	conserving	create	created
creates	creating	creation	diversification	diverse
diversity	ecological	ecologically	ecology	ecosystem
ecosystems	encourage	encouraged	encourages	enhance
enhanced	enhancement	enhances	enhancing	framework
frameworks	habitat	habitats	improve	improved
improvement	improving	landscape	landscapes	local
localised	locally	manage	managed	management
manager	managers	managing	mechanism	mechanisms
objective	objectives	opportunity	opportunities	partner
partners	partnership	partnerships	policy	policies
process	processes	processing	promote	promoted
promotes	promoting	promotion	promotional	regenerated
regenerating	regeneration	restore	restoring	restoration
scale	scales	strategic	strategically	strategies
strategy	vision			

Table 26 Word group frequency amongst Living Landscape objectives

catchment	4	establish	4	mitigate	4	buffer	5
approach	6	extend	6	character	7	heath	7
adapt	8	appropriate	8	encourage	8	engage	8
future	8	inspire	8	involve	8	network	9
countryside	11	diverse	11	education	11	enjoy	11
forest	11	partners	11	access	12	deliver	12
objective	13	benefit	14	climate	14	link	14
exist	15	wetland	15	ensure	16	grassland	16
heritage	16	ecological	17	flood	17	promote	17
sustainable	17	change	18	connect	19	fen	19
improve	19	develop	20	opportunity	21	biodiversity	22
communities	22	restoration	22	support	23	woodland	23
environment	25	provide	25	conservation	27	enhance	28
create	38	natural	41	local	46	manage	47
area	49	landscape	50	habitat	64	wildlife	70

Source: These word groups were derived from the lexicon of technical words, generated by Scrivener©, from the Wildlife Trusts' various objectives for Living Landscape schemes.

Table 27 Word group frequency in the Living Landscape core document

Celebrate	0	Vision	17	Enhance	27	Opportunity	40
Adapt	5	Framework	18	Ecological	30	Scale	53
Ecosystem	6	Improve	19	Policy	30	Biodiversity	57
Connect	12	Objective	19	Strategic	31	Manage	77
Mechanism	14	Diversity	20	Partner	35	Conserve	90
Regenerated	14	Process	24	Restore	38	Local	121
Encourage	16	Promote	25	Create	40	Habitat	140
						Landscape	195

Source: These word groups are derived from the lexicon shown in

Table 25.

Annex II. Email survey - explanatory text

The text of emails sent to the Wildlife trusts in England is reproduced below; it was sent to 40 Wildlife Trusts in England during June 2011 and responses were received from 75% of them, once reminders were circulated in October 2011.

Sent to Programme managers at the various Trusts.

“I am conducting research for my PhD at the Countryside and Community Research Institute, which is part of the University of Gloucestershire. I am a landowner, and a volunteer worker and trustee with a Wildlife Trust and my research is about how large-scale conservation is being integrated into the wider countryside - “beyond the reserve”. As part of this research I am looking to create a typology of the Wildlife Trust’s Living Landscape schemes in England, including their governance and management structures.

I have gathered information from The Wildlife Trusts’ and individual Trust’s websites, and would like to augment it with more details about the individual Living Landscape schemes in your area. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you could send or email me any documents about the scheme which explain in particular, the:

- ✓ Objectives of the scheme,*
- ✓ Scheme delivery mechanisms,*
- ✓ Stakeholders /partners involved, and*
- ✓ Any other information that you think would be of interest.*

I hope that you can help with this request for information and look forward to hearing from you.”

Annex III. Interview guidelines

Living Landscape – A conversation guide examining the status of the concept

UID: (made up of Trust code letter, and a number for each respondent)	
Interviewee Name:	
Position in organisation:	
Date:,
Time start:	00:00,
Time finish:	00:00

Introduction

The purpose of our conversation is to provide insights to my research questions about landscape scale conservation in England through an examination of the Wildlife Trusts' Living Landscapes. This guide is in four sections with each section having a number of questions, and there is an indication of how long each section should take to complete. Overall the questionnaire should be completed in under 90 minutes.

- Section A is intended to provide a brief background to your involvement in Living landscapes,
- Section B examines the visions, or high-level objectives you have for them,
- Section C studies the governance of the schemes, and
- Section D helps me verify some of the findings of my research.

Section A – Background to your living landscapes (20 minutes)

Aim: to illicit information about the context of the living landscapes schemes in your area from your own perspective.

A.1 Please provide me with a brief personal career history to understand how you, the respondent, got to where you are today.

A.2 How long have you been involved in project?

A.3 What is the nature of your involvement?

A.4 What motivated you to become involved in the Wildlife Trust movement?

A.5 Can you briefly outline your Living Landscape programme?

A.6 What are its aims and objectives?

A.7 Have the aims and objectives of your Living landscape schemes changed, if so, how?

A.8 Who was involved in arriving at these objectives?

A.9 How was agreement reached about these objectives?

A.10 How easy was it to achieve consensus?

A.11 Are there still issues unresolved?

A.12 Were there areas where it was difficult to reach agreement?

A.13 What worked well and what has been challenging?

Section B – Visioning / aspirations / core values (30 minutes)

Aim: to understand your Trust's interpretation of Living Landscapes.

To place this conversation in context, I would like to discuss three statements from The Wildlife Trusts' core documents, Living Landscapes, (TWT, 2007) and (TWT, 2010); these statements provide a background to their overarching vision for Living Landscapes.

First, in a revised Living Landscapes document (TWT, 2010) the vision encompasses "*a recovery plan for nature - restore, recreate, reconnect A Living Landscape is a recovery plan for nature championed by The Wildlife Trusts since 2006 to help create a resilient and healthy environment rich in wildlife and provide ecological security for people. ... where ... people recognise the economic and social value of nature and the many ways it improves their quality of life*" (TWT, 2010:7).

B.1 What is your reaction to this statement, in terms of *resilience, economic and social value, and quality of life*?

B.2 What do you understand by the term "vision" in the context of Living Landscapes?

B.3 If your Trust has a "vision", what does it mean to you, and how does it relate to your Trust's values?

B.4 If your Trust does not have a "vision", what concepts or core values resonate for you in the context of Living Landscapes?

B.5 How does your "vision" or core set of values relate to your Living Landscapes and conservation?

B.6 How should these deliverables achieved?

Second: there is a tendency to "*move from nature as special interest to nature as providing our living conditions – locally, regionally and globally*" (TWT, 2007:5), which begins to hint at a less "technical" approach to conservation.

B.7 What is your reaction to this second statement?

Third, there is a "*move from a situation of nature in boxes to nature in the neighbourhood and nature in the landscape*" (TWT, 2007:5).

B.8 What is your reaction to this third statement?

B.9 Does everyone in your organisation share the same vision?

- a. What issues are subject to agreement/disagreement?
- b. Are there any contested areas?
- c. What are the solutions to these tensions?

B.10 What are the opportunities to make a difference, in terms of:

- a. Conservation, and
- b. Socio-economic benefits?

B.11 Does your vision differ from your Trust / organisation or from that of RSWT?

B.12 To achieve your vision, what needs to change in your:

- a. Organisation,
- b. Organisation's activities, and
- c. Funding?

Section C – Governance structures (20 minutes)

Aim: to understand your Trust's governance of Living Landscapes.

One of the ideas behind my research is that “*The Wildlife Trusts provide an essential level of governance to landscape scale conservation partnerships*”. In this section I want to understand more about the partnership you have developed for your Living Landscapes; these partnerships are often important elements in meeting your aims and delivering your objectives.

It has been suggested that governance frameworks or structures provide accountability and leadership to agreed goals (Jepson, 2005); also, it has been suggested that governance empowers people (Kerr, 2014), through example and interaction between stakeholders as a result of social learning (Rijke et al., 2012), which confirms, amongst other credentials, legitimacy (Lockwood, 2010:758-762).

There are seven (7) ideas or facets of governance that I would like to discuss with you:

C.1 First, is the Trust's authority important to your Living Landscape scheme (LSS)? If so, can you elaborate; for example, how do you confer such authority, or in what way does your Trust have authority (i.e. legitimacy), upon your LLS; put another way how did you arrive at a mandate for this type of conservation scheme?

- a. How was it decided who should be involved in LLS?
- b. What are the main criteria for inclusion in the partnership?
- c. To what extent was their existing involvement with your Trust important?

- d. To what extent is it important that your partner organisations have objectives / mandates which are consistent with your LLS?
- e. In your view, are there any organisations / individuals who are missing from the partnership / governance board?

C.2 Second, is openness an important aspect of LLS? If so, how would you go about making your decision-making on your LLS more open (i.e. transparency)?

- a. Who are you being open (i.e. transparent) for and about?
- b. How is performance information shared with stakeholders?
- c. To whom are the minutes of LLS meetings circulated?
- d. What other steps do you take to ensure openness?
 - 2. Has your Trust held meetings with local community stakeholders?
 - 3. Have there been any occasion when people have questioned why a particular decision was made or action taken?
 - 4. How often do you measure your success with respect to openness?

C.3 Third, is answerability an important component of your LLS (i.e. accountable)?

- a. To whom do you need to be held responsible / answerable (i.e. who makes up your constituency)?
- b. Do your Trustees / Directors accept the need to be held responsible?
- c. How do you, if it all, delegate responsibilities?
 - 2. At what level of management are these responsibilities held (i.e. to whom do you delegate)?
 - 3. What mechanisms do you use to ensure this answerability?
 - 4. How do you measure your success with respect to answerability?

C.4 Fourth, is it important for your LLS to be exhaustive in their approach to partnerships? If so, how do you ensure your dealings are exhaustive and complete (i.e. inclusive) in terms of the depth and breadth of your social and economic partners?

- a. What do you understand by exhaustive and complete in this context?
- b. At the beginning of the planning for Living Landscapes, who was involved in discussions about the scheme?
- c. Were there people / organisations that were not included in the discussions that on reflection should have been?
- d. To what extent is there public / local community ownership and commitment to the scheme?

e. Which mechanisms / opportunities do use to ensure inclusiveness?

C.5 Fifth, is impartiality an important aspect of your LLS? If so, how are your LLS activities impartial to all stakeholders (i.e. fair)?

- a. What do you understand by impartial in this context?
- b. How do you measure impartiality of your LLS?
- c. How were your stakeholders identified and encouraged to participate?
- d. Has there been an attempt to assess the short and long-term costs and benefits of LLS; if so how?

C.6 Sixth, is coordination an important facet of LLS? If so, how do you ensure coordination (i.e. connectivity) between and amongst your LLS?

- a. What do you understand by coordination in this context?
- b. How do your LLS reflect coherence between policies for them and nature reserves?
- c. How do you manage coordination between stakeholders on your LLS?

C.7 Seventh, is flexibility a feature of your LLS? If so how important is it and how do you ensure that your LLS are flexible enough to respond to future economic, environmental and social changes (i.e. resilience)?

- a. What do you understand by flexibility in this context?
- b. What methods do you use to support this flexibility?
- c. How have new knowledge / experiences been incorporated into decision-making?
- d. Are there any threats or opportunities arising from your experience LLS?
- e. What evidence exists to demonstrate the Trust's flexibility?
- f. Has the Trust adapted its governance of the LLS project to respond to changing circumstances, if so, how has it adapted?

C.8 Finally, reflect on the role of governance in achieving your vision for Living Landscapes. What has worked well, what has not been so successful? What are the successes, where are the challenges?

Section D – Verification (20 minutes)

Aim: to verify the finding of my research derived from the documents you gave me.

As part of my research I have reviewed a number of documents that I collected from an email survey of the movement in 2012; these have been summarised in the Annex to this questionnaire. From these documents I have examined your objectives, delivery mechanisms and partnerships associated with your Living Landscape schemes. The following questions relate to the governance

of your Living Landscape schemes and serve to verify the conclusions I have arrived at, whilst recognising that time has moved on and that your approach to Living Landscapes may have evolved.

D.1 In the case of your Trust, partnerships were a key element in the restoration of the Wrekin. What lessons were learnt from that programme and were applied to the Meres and Mosses?

D.2 Do you agree / disagree with the following statements:

D.3 Are there keywords / aims missing? If so what are they?

D.4 Do you think that your management and governance structures are adequate for you schemes, if not why, and

D.5 If yes what makes them successful?

D.6 What lessons have you learnt from your Living Landscapes?

D.7 Living Landscapes was the “big idea” for the new millennium; please give your views with reference to your own objectives for Living Landscapes in your area.

- a. Consider whether Living Landscapes have had its day, and
- b. Has it been superseded by “nature matters”, if so what role will Living Landscapes have in the future?

D.8 Ranking value statements

The table below is adapted from some research commissioned by Defra⁷⁸ on Landscape scale conservation (LSC), which resulted in a typology for LSC, divided into actions, approaches and purpose (Elliott et al., 2011). Please assign one of the three priority statements to each of the typologies based upon your own Living Landscape schemes; this will be used to gauge the Trusts approach to LSC.

⁷⁸ Adapted from a Cambridge University report (Elliott et al., 2011).

Annex IV. Living Landscapes

Table 28 Living Landscape Objectives and their Context

Trust Living Landscape Schemes	Objectives from redacted documents collated from the Wildlife Trusts' Living Landscape policies and strategies – conjunction of action verbs (create and enhance) and partnerships	
Trust B	Create Living Landscapes across ... <i>the county</i>	
Trust C	Create Living Landscapes in ... <i>the county</i>	Protect and enhance existing wetlands
Trust C	Ensuring that the character of the wider landscape is conserved and enhanced, including features such as walls, hedgerows and ancient trees;	
Trust C	Create robust, resilient and connected landscapes for the benefit of wildlife, communities and business that depend upon them.	
Trust E	Acquire land of high conservation value, and create new habitats	
Trust E	Enhance the unique biodiversity through better management, maintaining or reinstating traditional coppicing, widening rides	
Trust E	Conserve and enhance features of importance to the historic environment	Create and sustainably manage a varied mosaic of characteristic fenland and fen-edge habitats, linking ... Nature Reserves.
Trust E	Create a new resilient ... landscape which delivers major wildlife and heritage benefits and achieves high standards of sustainability in all respects	
Trust E	Create an accessible, inspiring and tranquil environment for recreation, education, health and wellbeing	
Trust E	Create opportunities for new jobs and income streams through land management and visitor enterprises.	
Trust E	Create a network of species-rich flood meadows, floodplain grazing marsh and wet woodland	Create a large and connected area of chalk grassland
Trust E	Create a network of species-rich flood meadows, floodplain grazing marsh and wet woodland	
Trust E	Conserve and enhance the natural heritage in the area ..., including, the management and, where possible, restoration of the lost limestone grassland landscapes	
Trust E	Enhance and safeguard the river ... corridor, its tributaries and surrounding habitats through buffering and extending the Trust's existing reserves,	

Trust Living Landscape Schemes	Objectives from redacted documents collated from the Wildlife Trusts' Living Landscape policies and strategies – conjunction of action verbs (create and enhance) and partnerships	
	purchasing new sites and working in partnership with landowners and farmers to help them manage their land in a more wildlife-friendly way.	
Trust I	Create a network of wildlife corridors, to link the Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites	
Trust I	Enhance and conserve the heritage assets	
Trust J	Aim to help re-create a landscape that: is open and varied, is great for wildlife, is important to local people, has links with local farming, reminds people of their heritage	
Trust K	Create inspirational, accessible landscapes: full of wildlife and rich in opportunities for people - contributing to sustainable economies.	
Trust L	Enhance riparian wildlife populations (especially water voles) through involving local people in learning, surveying and monitoring and habitat management.	
Trust L	Create new wetland habitats through ambitious and innovative habitat creation projects	
Trust L	Make significant contributions to the restoration and enhancement of 5 UK BAP habitats and to the increase and spread of 9 UK and 4 <i>county</i> BAP species	Build on the existing partnership of individuals, communities and organisations dedicated to delivering biodiversity gain in the long term
Trust M	Working with a range of public and private landowners to enhance, extend and link existing wildlife habitats and encouraging them to manage the surrounding land in a wildlife-friendly manner.	
Trust O	Create extensive new wetland areas	Enhance arable farmland for wildlife and environmental protection
Trust P	Create more natural habitats in the floodplain	
Trust P	Enhance the quality of life for local communities through a high quality landscape and increased opportunities for informal recreation	Enhance and strengthen the identity of the <i>river</i> valley as a high quality, living landscape
Trust Q	Create and connect beautiful places where people can explore and enjoy water, landscape and wildlife, and to ensure that careful extraction and restoration of the area's many sand and gravel quarries will leave a sustainable network of wildlife habitats, public amenities and agricultural land.	
Trust Q	Enhance, restore and connect the mosaic of grassland habitats, and to ensure the continuation of sustainable land management practices, so that the species that depend on them can increase in population size and range	

Trust Living Landscape Schemes	Objectives from redacted documents collated from the Wildlife Trusts' Living Landscape policies and strategies – conjunction of action verbs (create and enhance) and partnerships	
Trust Q	Enhance, restore and connect the woodland habitats, and to ensure the continuation of sustainable land management practices, so that the species that depend on them can increase in population size and range.	Protect, enhance and restore good water quality within the River ... and its headwater streams.
Trust T	Communicate effectively with important target audiences, including landowners and managers, local authorities and other project partners, volunteer naturalists, local community bodies, and other Wildlife Trusts nationally	
Trust T	Enhanced conservation of core forest areas - buffer and extend the influence of designated sites.	
Trust T	Promoting achievement of biodiversity targets by others; a strong emphasis is being placed on working in partnership with key organisations to deliver conservation objectives in the <i>area</i> .	
Trust U	Create and improve wildlife corridors between existing woodlands and other semi-natural habitats	
Trust U	Enhance the area for the benefit of people, through education, engagement and the promotion of sustainable tourism and land management in order to improve social and economic wellbeing.	Enhance the area for the benefit of wildlife, adopting a landscape-scale approach to conservation in order to protect habitats and species in a changing world affected by climate change, working to fulfil the regional Landscapes for Living vision.
Trust U	Target practical habitat creation and link and improve management of existing BAP habitats, particularly woodlands, in order that a diverse and robust mosaic of priority BAP habitats will be established, enhanced	Protect, enhance and connect local populations of priority national and local BAP species
Trust U	Integrate the Strategy into local, regional and national strategies and to promote the partnership in order to raise the profile of, and secure continued funding for, the area.	
Trust U	Partnership development	Develop a large scale and long-term strategy and partnership of control towards managing problem species such as Spanish bluebell, muntjac deer and grey squirrel.
Trust W	Raise awareness of the environment of the partnership area as an educational resource and a source of local pride, creating stronger links between urban and rural areas.	Support and complement the work of partners through linking and securing resources and expertise

Trust Living Landscape Schemes	Objectives from redacted documents collated from the Wildlife Trusts' Living Landscape policies and strategies – conjunction of action verbs (create and enhance) and partnerships	
Trust W	Conserve and enhance the unique biodiversity, geo-diversity, landscape, heritage and cultural assets of the partnership area and strengthen and develop local character and distinctiveness.	Empower local people to participate in activities and decision-making on the environment.
Trust X	Enhancement of water quality, more stable water resources and more robust wetland ecosystems bringing a whole host of biodiversity benefits.	
Trust AA	Create a managed mosaic of tall scrub patches amongst the shorter, more open heathland vegetation as this patchwork has the greatest habitat and structural diversity for characteristic heathland plants and animals.	
Trust AB	Create 10ha of new reedbed and 10ha of wet woodland.	
Trust AE	Create connections between them so that the whole landscape, including countryside and urban areas, is more accessible to wildlife as it adapts to climate change	
Trust AE	Enhance the value of areas which are already rich in wildlife <i>and</i> expand them	
Trust AF	Re-create natural systems to support biodiversity and other land management objectives such as the delivery of sustainable farming and the restoration of river features and floodplain systems to alleviate flooding.	
Trust AG	A partnership approach (because an ecological network can only be achieved by different organisations and individuals working together).	

Source: Derived from TWT's Living Landscape policy and strategy objectives of different Wildlife Trusts

Table 29 Living Landscape Keywords and phrases - Examples from Living Landscape

Trust	Support	Promote	Shared vision	Come together
M-2 example	Achieve delivery	Developed a plan for the delivery	Provide opportunities for people to discover, explore & learn	Help people take part in looking after and celebrating the natural & cultural heritage
	To conserve or restore the built or natural features	Distinctive character	Provide opportunities for people to develop skills to care for and share the special heritage	
M-1 example	Create connected network	Extend and enhance existing nature reserves and create a new nature reserve	Helping local people restore the management of woods	Deliver a range of landscape and wildlife enhancement projects.
	Work with local people, volunteers and a range of partners to provide management advice to landowners, work with local farmers, and involve young people in looking after their environment.			
M-3 example	Organise a networking seminar	Buffer the core area by encouraging the surrounding land to be managed in a wildlife-friendly manner.	Setting up monitoring programmes for bats, moths, yellowhammers, frogs and toads	Raising awareness
	Inspire local people about the value of the natural environment and demonstrate how a more wildlife rich environment can support local businesses and benefit local communities.	Involve local people in monitoring the changes in wildlife richness in the project area	Working with local landowners, farmers, countryside partnerships and local authorities.	Continue programme of courses, including practical training in conservation management with demonstrations of useful techniques
	Working with a range of public and private landowners to enhance, extend and link existing wildlife habitats and encouraging them to manage the surrounding land in a wildlife-friendly manner.			

Trust	Support	Promote	Shared vision	Come together
G-1 example	Green infrastructure (GI) ⁷⁹	GI provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people.	Must have GI and it must be actively maintained and, if necessary, restored.	GI is essential for sustainable communities providing liveability for present and future generations.
	Key stakeholders with statutory agencies came together to improve .	Partnership ... has made resources available ... led to multiple benefits	Project developed organically	
E-3 Partnership ⁸⁰	Clarify working relationships	Further the aims	Management & restoration	Promoting community action
	Promoting partnership action	Promote & achieve thriving communities	Increased awareness	Responsible use of resources
	Defined membership	Specialists may be invited	Chair is elected & reviewed annually	Meetings on regular basis
	Action points recorded & circulated	Agendas prepared in consultation with members recorded & circulated	Setting and reviewing the overall aims and objectives	Ensure joint efforts and concerns are efficiently and effectively coordinated and executed
U-1 Partnership	Deliver regional Biodiversity Action Plan targets	Support a greater diversity of species	More robust in terms of population genetics	Enable species to adapt to the long term impacts of climate change
	Increasing concerns over habitat fragmentation	Landscape connected by a network of hedgerows, rich in wildlife and accessible to all	Enhance ... for the benefit of wildlife	Promote sympathetic, sustainable land management
	Create and	Integrate the ...	Promote the	Target practical

⁷⁹ "An interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations".

⁸⁰ Types of partners include: lead stakeholder, core project management, steering & working groups, stakeholder responsible for delivery, contracted stakeholder, grant scheme recipient (delegated), small projects recipient, Monitoring & Evaluation staff / contractor.

Trust	Support	Promote	Shared vision	Come together
	improve wildlife corridors between existing habitats	strategy into local, regional and national strategies	scheme in order to raise the profile of, and secure continued funding	habitat creation and link and improve their management
	Protect, enhance and connect local populations of priority national and local BAP species	Enhance the ... area for the benefit of people, through education, engagement and the promotion of sustainable tourism and land management in order to improve social and economic wellbeing	Develop a large scale and long-term strategy and partnership of control towards managing problem species	Re-build and reinvigorate the Partnership through liaising with key organisations, landowners, land managers, local communities and interest groups
	Promote the area and its wildlife through positive engagement.	Adopting a landscape-scale approach to conservation in order to protect habitats and species	Increase the partnership's status in the local community by developing a communication plan	It offers an opportunity within the region to demonstrate that conservation and the enhancement of biodiversity can go hand-in-hand with social and economic regeneration

Annex V. Living Landscapes Typology

Table 30 Summary of the responses to LSC typology

Landscape Scale Conservation Typology		Immediate priority	Medium term priority	Long term priority
Actions	Creating new sites	3	7	8
	Improving / restoring existing sites	12	3	2
	Buffering sites	11	4	0
	Improving the wider environment	9	6	4
	Expanding existing sites	7	7	1
	Linking / connecting habitats / features	10	4	1
	Monitoring / surveying	10	6	5
Approaches	Property acquisition	4	7	6
	Land management by organisations	6	9	3
	Targeted grants to landowners	7	4	6
	Advice to / encouragement of landowners	12	5	2
	Partnership development	14	2	0
	Education / training	8	6	2
	Community engagement	12	4	1
	Use of volunteers	10	6	3
Conservation purpose	Species / habitats - led conservation (i.e. biodiversity)	9	5	2
	Regulating ecosystem services	5	9	2
	Provisioning ecosystem services	4	8	3
	Cultural ecosystem services	5	10	2
	Local economy or employment	4	11	3
	Climate change adaption	4	7	6
Source: Frequencies derived from responses to my interviews June -November 2014				