

# Making Space for Nature

Sir John Lawton



# Terms of reference

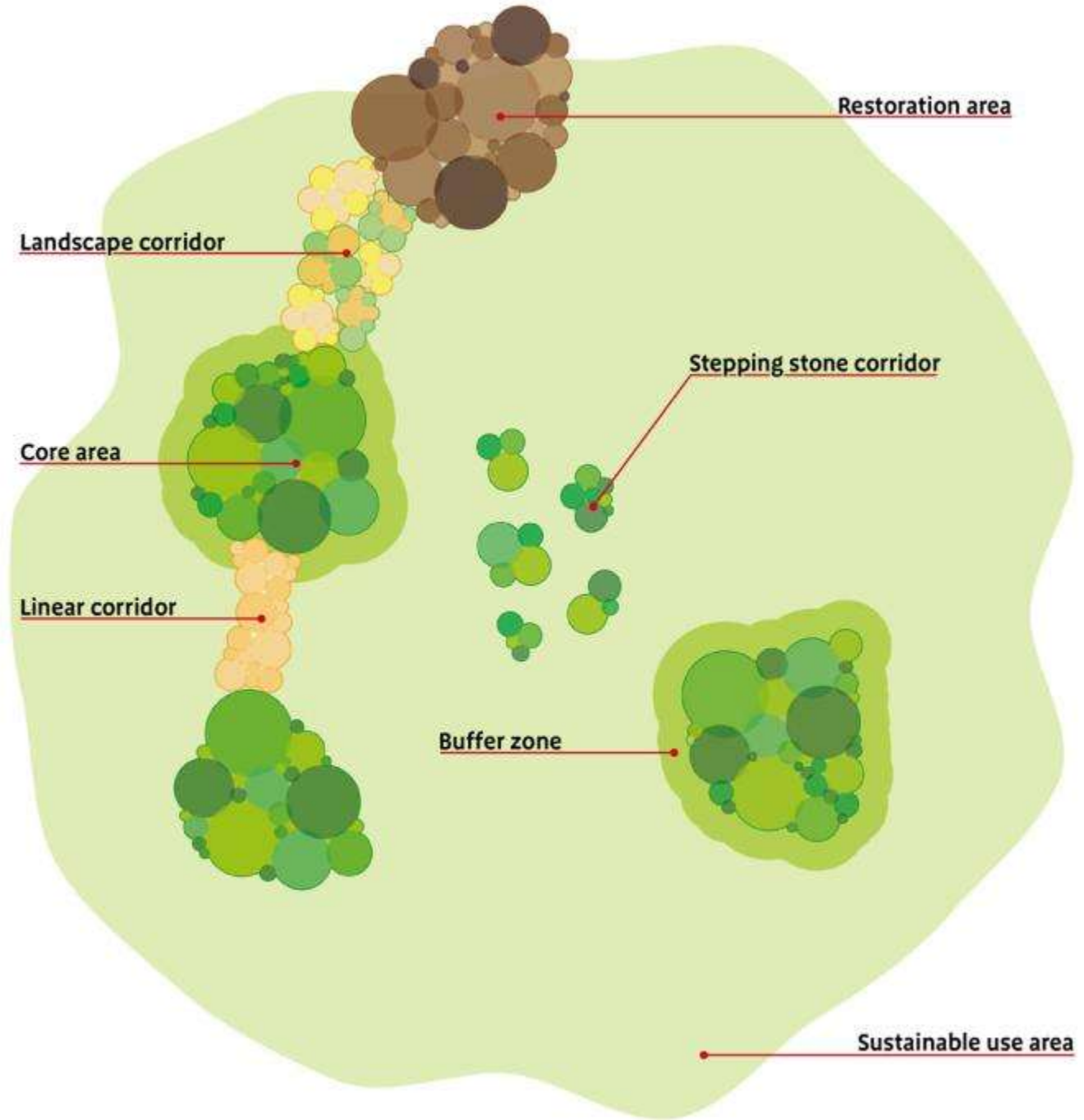
- Examine evidence on the extent to which England's collection of wildlife sites represents a coherent and resilient ecological network capable of adapting to the challenge of climate change and other pressures (looked at 2°C temp. rise)
- Examine the evidence base to assess whether a more inter-connected network would be more effective today and in the future and, if so, how this could be delivered
- Taking account of the ecological, economic and social costs and benefits, make costed and prioritised recommendations

Commissioned by Defra

Terrestrial, freshwater and coasts (i.e. not marine)

Looking forward to 2050

Natural England provided the Secretariat



# Vision for England's ecological network

“Compared to the situation in 2000, biodiversity is enhanced and the diversity, functioning and resilience of ecosystems re-established in a network of spaces for nature that can sustain these levels into the future, even given continuing environmental change and human pressures.”

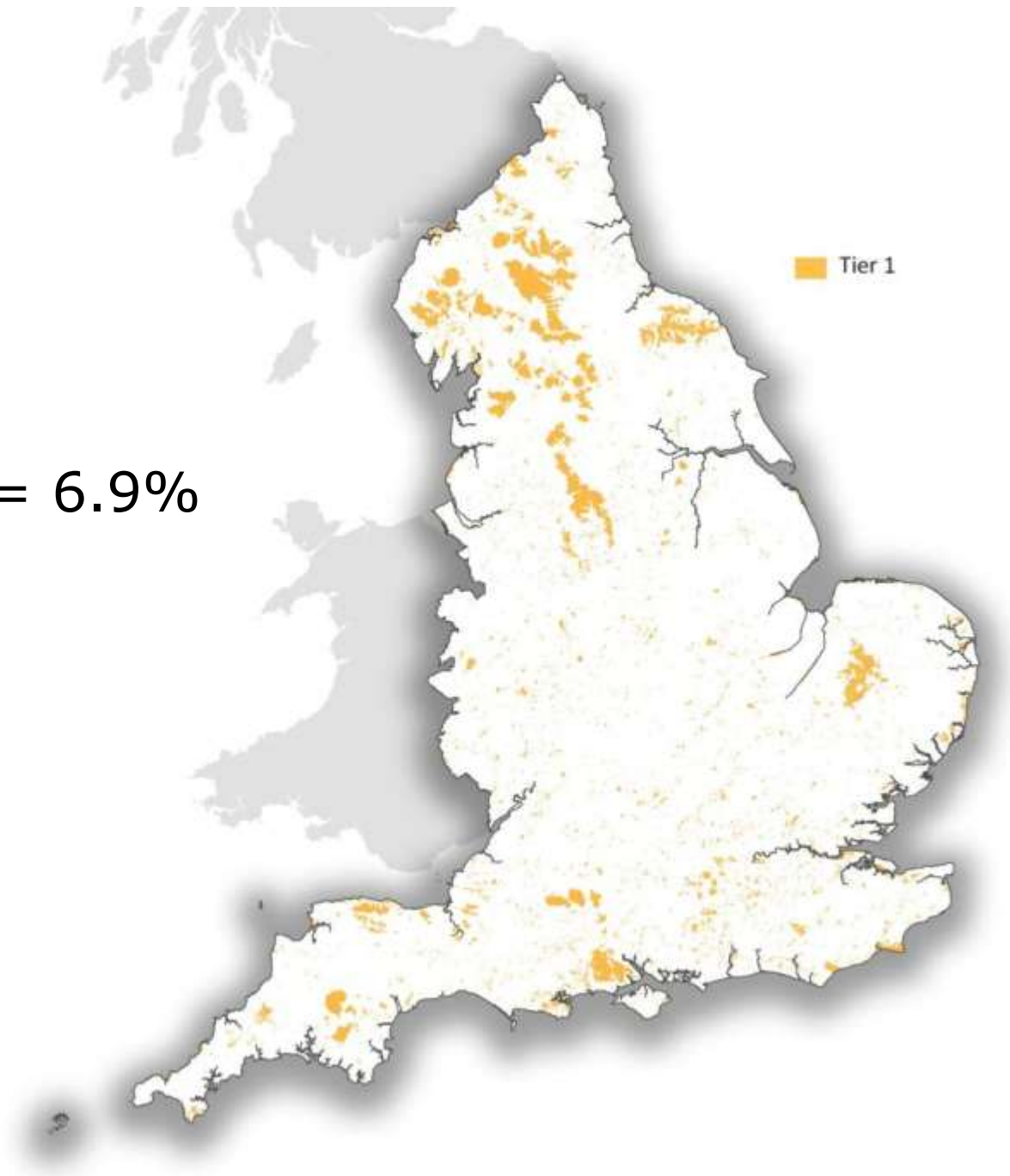
Achieve a step change in the way conservation is delivered

## Three tiers of wildlife sites

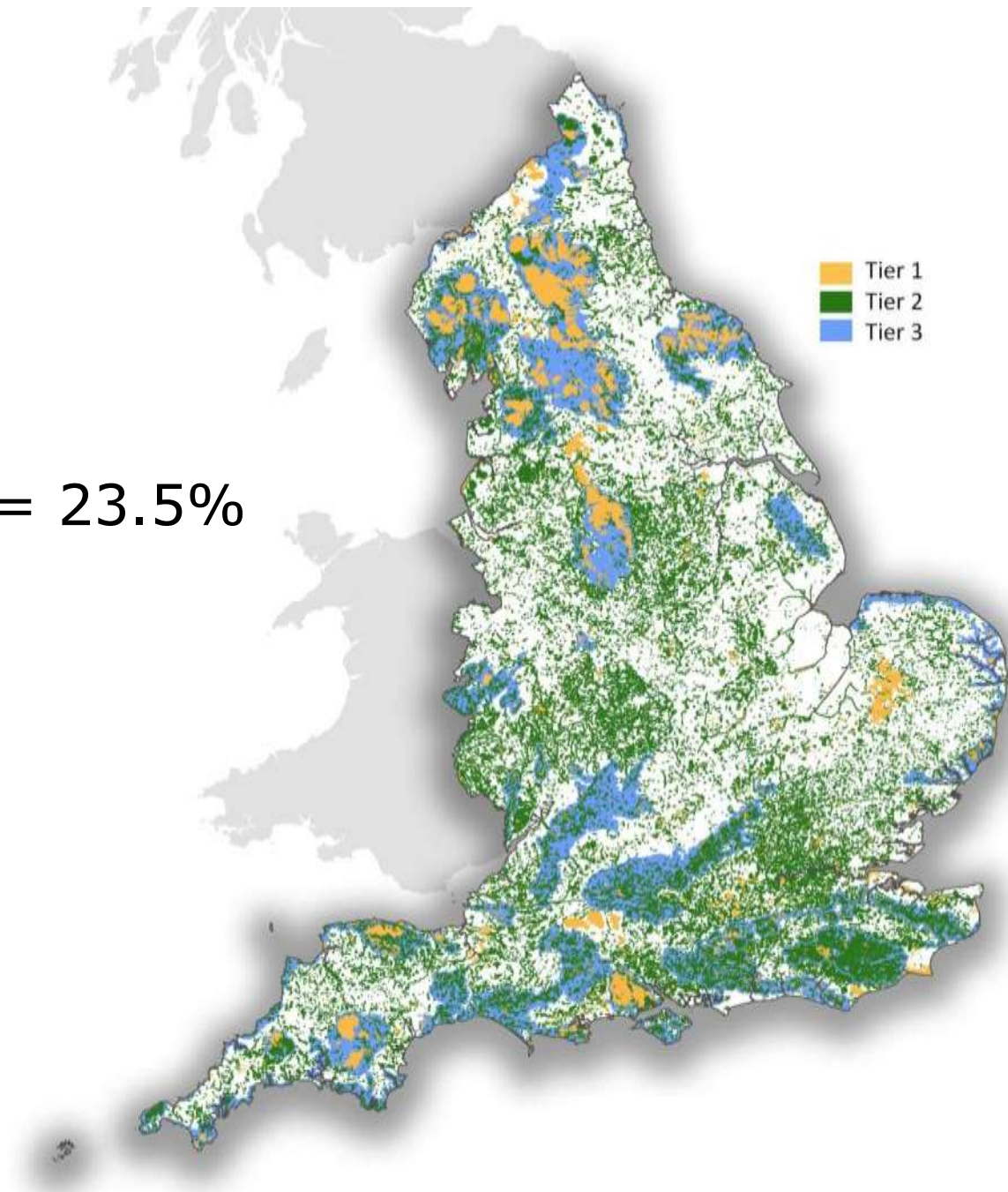
- Tier 1– sites whose primary purpose is nature conservation and which have a high level of protection either due to their statutory status or ownership.  
SSSIs, SACs, SPAs, Ramsar, NNRs, Local Nature Reserves, and voluntary conservation-sector owned reserves
- Tier 2 sites - areas designated for their high biodiversity value but which do not receive full statutory protection.  
Local Wildlife Sites and Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Tier 3 sites - primarily designated for other reasons but wildlife conservation included in statutory purpose  
AONBs and National Parks

N.B. The review recognises (indeed emphasises) that there are other important areas for wildlife, that are outside ‘sites’.

Tier 1 = 6.9%



Tier 3 = 23.5%



# So why don't England's wildlife sites comprise a coherent and resilient network?

- Many of England's wildlife sites are too small (77% of SSSIs and 98% of LWS are smaller than 100 ha)
- Losses of certain habitats have been so great that the area remaining is no longer enough to halt additional biodiversity losses without concerted efforts
- With the exception of Natura 2000 sites and SSSIs, most of England's semi-natural habitats important for wildlife are generally insufficiently protected and under-managed
- Many of the natural connections in our countryside have been degraded or lost, leading to isolation of sites
- Too few people have easy access to wildlife.

# What do we need to do? - ecological solutions

## “MORE, BIGGER, BETTER AND JOINED”

- Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management (and enhance heterogeneity)
- Increase the size of current wildlife sites
- Create new sites
- Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through ‘stepping stones’
- Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites

Better management of existing sites > Bigger sites >  
More sites > Enhance connectivity > New corridors

‘Reducing the pressures’ sits outside this hierarchy

# Where you are matters



Increase habitat diversity  
and quality



Create new habitat / increase  
size of sites

Everywhere, but on a large  
scale in **ECOLOGICAL  
RESTORATION ZONES**

# Costs

- Estimated total annual cost of all 24 recommendations is £600 million (BAP target cost study) to £1.1 billion (LUPG agri-environment study)
- Specific estimates for certain recommendations, e.g. for competition to establish Ecological Restoration Zones
- Society has to bear many of the costs anyway, in flood control, supplying clean water, coastal management, recreational 'corridors' etc. We need 'joined up' solutions that benefit people and wildlife.
- Specifically explores links to ecosystem services
- There may be other imaginative solutions e.g. Biodiversity Offsetting

# Take-home messages

- It's not all bad. We have made considerable progress with site management and species recovery and this needs to continue
- Our wildlife sites do not comprise a coherent, resilient ecological network but establishing such a network would provide an effective response, with benefits for wildlife and people
- Ecological networks, including restoration areas, need to be properly planned. This should involve (and be led by) local stakeholders but be informed by a national framework in partnerships
- Large-scale 'Ecological Restoration Zones' should be established in some areas.
- We need a step change on what we do: **LIVING LANDSCAPES** are the Wildlife Trusts' vision for the future

Read the report for yourself at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>