

How does Edge Space contribute to the Natural Capital of a city?

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Abstract

To test ideas within the UK government's new 25-Year Environment Plan, four Pioneer projects have been established, one of which, the Urban Pioneer, is in Greater Manchester. The Urban Pioneer aim is to improve the natural capital – the natural assets and services which contribute to human health and well-being – in the city. The Natural Capital of Edge Space, the private gardens and other smaller areas of green spaces in a city whose primary purpose is not to provide a public environmental service, is currently under recognised. Private gardens alone constitute around 15% of the area of Greater Manchester, yet there is limited data on the characteristics and spatial diversity of this green space. Using aerial photography, the size, features and management level of Edge Space is being measured and analysed. Spatial patterns are emerging from these data as are patterns in natural capital value across an urban environment. As the purpose of natural capital is to benefit human well-being, the Edge Space account is being compared to data on multiple deprivation (2015) collected from national census data. By combining the detailed account of Edge Space with social data on the effects of social variation, the value of this hidden resource of natural capital is being exposed.

Keywords

Urban green space. Edge Space. Urban Pioneer. Multiple deprivation. Natural Capital.