



This publication was withdrawn on 12 May 2020.

# Building partnerships for nature's recovery

Natural England Action Plan 2019/20

[www.gov.uk/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/natural-england)



# Chair's Foreword

During recent years we have been repeatedly reminded through the pages of scientific reports of the scale and speed of nature's decline. Both globally and here in the British Isles, there has been drastic change in our treasured landscapes and vulnerable species have declined or disappeared and the once commonplace wildlife has become scarcer.

We have reached the point where we face a clear choice: either we tolerate the continuing loss of the natural world, or we can act to conserve what is left, and begin the task of restoring at least some of what has gone. At Natural England, our mission is to act.

This Action Plan sets out the direction of travel for our organisation, identifying where we believe we can add most value and deliver the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. There are of course many issues and stakeholders demanding our attention, but in what is an area of great and increasing complexity, one thing is very clear: that is the extent to which nature's recovery will rely on collaboration. No single interest or organisation can achieve what is needed and that is why at Natural England we see the fostering of partnerships as central to what we must do.

Those partnerships and collaborations are especially important to achieving our four main goals of greener farming and fisheries; sustainable development; connecting people with nature; and resilient landscapes and seas. Together these will drive our practical work on the ground, leading nature's recovery.

All of us at Natural England look forward to working with all of the many groups and interests who will be central to reversing nature's long decline, and to inspiring the support that will be so central for us achieving our mission, including the financial investment needed to secure the many valuable benefits that nature brings to society.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Tony Juniper'.

**Tony Juniper**  
Chair

# Introduction from the Chief Executive

2019/20 is a year of transition for Natural England as we get ready to make the most of the opportunities that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment Bills will provide. The work done to prepare for EU Exit has brought new thinking and will provide new opportunities for how we protect and enhance our natural environment, whatever the eventual outcome.

We are therefore changing how we work so we can make the biggest impact possible in delivering the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. By leading and inspiring others to take action, as much as by the work we do ourselves, we will play a critical role in leading the recovery of nature by creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife.

Our role is both to set the national direction for the environment and to lead action locally. We will do this by combining our statutory purpose and powers with our expertise in environmental law and science and our track record of delivery in partnership with a wide range of people: landowners, businesses, communities, NGOs. We are uniquely placed to advise the whole of Government as all Departments consider how the natural environment can help them deliver their own objectives.

We will continue to innovate in how we do things, for example in developing district level licensing in regulation and using earth observation technology in monitoring. We will also continue to diversify our funding base across and beyond Government as part of a long term aim to be less reliant on our core Grant in Aid.

Even so, money continues to be tight which means we need to stop or slow some work. We simply can't do everything we used to do, especially as we need to create space for new priorities. This Action Plan therefore sets out what we will do in 2019/20, focused on our four main goals: greener farming and fisheries; sustainable development; connecting people with nature; and resilient landscapes and seas.

We all at Natural England look forward to working with you in the year ahead.



*Marian Spain*

**Marian Spain**  
Chief Executive

## Building partnerships for nature's recovery

*We are Natural England. We are nature's champion.  
For you. For the places you care about. For the long term.*

**We are the Government's statutory advisor for the natural environment, playing a vital role in delivering the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25 YEP). This describes an ambitious vision, bringing new opportunities to protect and enhance, and to achieve real outcomes for the environment.**

Our natural world needs our help more than ever before – to reverse decades of decline of the wildlife and landscapes we all love, improve ecosystems we all depend on and use nature-based solutions to tackle the twin imperatives of climate change and the extinction threat. Working with our partners Natural England is determined to succeed in its mission.

We are a unique organisation. We have an amazing wealth of knowledge and data about nature. We have statutory duties to care for the environment and legal powers that allow us to protect our most precious places whilst also allowing people to use our natural capital in a sustainable way. We are outcome driven and evidence based constantly striking a balance between the needs of people and wildlife. We bring organisations together nationally and locally to agree the right solutions for people and nature.

Devastating loss of species and climate change makes our mission more urgent. All of our work helps nature and people cope with the impacts of hotter summers, wetter winters and more extreme weather.

Our job is to lead nature's recovery, creating resilient landscapes that are alive with wildlife and people: with everyone and for everyone.

Our mission is to build partnerships to drive nature recovery. Here, we set out the four key things on which we will focus our efforts to achieve this:

- Greener farming and fisheries – supporting those who manage land and sea to operate in harmony with the environment.
- Sustainable development – creating great places for people to live and work.
- Connecting people with nature - promoting health and wellbeing through the great outdoors.
- Resilient landscapes and seas – protecting and restoring wildlife and natural beauty for future generations.

Increasingly, we are shifting the emphasis on how we deliver our work:

- Building on the quality of our local and national relationships; acting as convenor to bring partners together to agree and deliver shared priorities.
- Providing leadership using recognised environmental expertise to set the agenda and bring in new players.
- Identifying best practice in environmental management and accrediting others who work to those high standards.

Underpinning all of this, we will use our world leading science and evidence of what works to improve decision making, learn lessons and define best practice.

We don't do any of this alone. We work with a massive range of organisations – farmers, businesses, charities, NGOs and community groups. Through these partnerships, we are transforming England's treasured landscapes for the people who love them and depend on them.

Together let's make nature better



Turning hay in  
Yorkshire Dales

## Greener farming and fisheries

### Supporting farming and fisheries to operate in harmony with the environment

**European Union programmes and legislation help to set the current framework for how our land and seas are managed.**

As we prepare to exit the EU, a significant focus for Natural England's work will be to advise Government to help manage the transition and to maximise opportunities from future environmental, agricultural and fisheries legislation.

Natural England is uniquely placed to provide advice to farmers and land managers that will provide the opportunity for farm businesses to move away from short term market driven decision making towards a long term sustainable natural capital approach to farming and resource management.

One such example is our facilitation work with farmer clusters, where farmer-led groups work together voluntarily at a landscape scale, in what is proving to be an effective approach to driving shared conservation outcomes. Our long-established working relationships with over 25,000 farmers, including those in receipt of Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) advice on water, soil and air quality, are another way we maintain or increase the state of the environment.

A major way to achieve the ambitions of the 25 YEP is a market-based approach to farm support, moving away from the subsidy system and linking payments more closely to environmental outcomes - public money for public goods. We are piloting 'Payment by Results' for specific environmental outcomes; enabling those who know the land best to determine the management of it to achieve the results.

Nature based solutions are also essential to take up carbon from the atmosphere, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and build the resilience of business, wildlife and people to climate change. Farmland and the sea can both contribute to meeting national commitments to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. But it will require a transformation of the way we manage land, with many more trees, restored peatlands, improved soil and water management.



Black bream in MCZ

We also have a once in a lifetime opportunity, as the UK leaves the European Union, and therefore the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), to reform the fisheries management regime and help restore both our stock and our wider marine biodiversity. Natural England's key delivery priorities, including delivering well managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) for our wider seas will make significant contributions to these twin goals.

The 25 YEP, the Fisheries White Paper and the draft Fisheries Bill all chart a new course for commercial fishing, adopting an Ecosystem Approach. Natural England will work with Defra and the other marine bodies to make sure this can be achieved.

We will:

- Support Defra in planning for the emerging Environmental Land Management System (ELMS), including building on the best of our advice activities.
- Lead on the development of a major ELMS environmental guidance package which enables land managers to take greater ownership of the outcomes they are seeking to deliver and to contribute their own experience.
- Develop demonstration projects to support land managers and enable ELM in delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Continue to deliver a programme of aftercare to Environmental Stewardship (ES) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) customers to help them deliver more, and better outcomes.
- Provide advice to over 2000 customers with expiring Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) and/or CS agreements and continue to develop up to 300 CS Higher Tier agreements.
- Work with 5000 farmers to deliver improvements to water and air quality through Catchment Sensitive Farming.
- Work with the Environment Agency, Defra and water companies to tackle diffuse water pollution, and contribute to Water Framework Directive targets by 2027.
- Work with landowners and land managers to secure the restoration of upland blanket bog.
- Deliver specialist wildlife licensing services for the control of bovine TB.
- Provide the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) with conservation advice so that through the new Fisheries Bill powers they can reduce the impacts of fishing to our wider marine ecosystem.
- Work with the Defra group to develop a programme of actions to deliver an Ecosystem Approach to Fishing (EAF) and plan for Fisheries Ecosystem Assessments.
- Work with Defra in scoping a fit-for-purpose replacement to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund so that Government support to the industry can assist in delivering an EAF.
- Provide conservation advice to regulators such as the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) so that they can make fishing practices more compatible with MPA objectives through a “whole sites approach” for fisheries management.



London skyline

# Sustainable development

## Creating great places for people to live and work

**The 25 Year Environment Plan challenges the development sector to deliver new development in the right places, achieve a net gain for the environment and contribute to nature recovery and greener towns and cities. Natural England can help to achieve this.**

The natural environment, and the benefits it provides, need to become an integral part of housing and infrastructure development so that the people who live and work in new developments benefit from a better quality of life. As an adviser to Government and as a statutory consultee in the planning system, our statutory roles in planning and regulation mean we are uniquely placed to shape development and land use change in the right places, for the long term.

We will work collaboratively with the offshore and terrestrial development sectors. Through strategic engagement at a local level, we will encourage decision makers to value the environment, and consider it as an integral part of infrastructure planning; showing how natural capital and green infrastructure are key elements in place-making and can support economic growth.

We are committed to continuing to improve our statutory and discretionary advice services and are investing in innovative solutions, to make it quicker and easier for our customers, while ensuring the protection of the natural environment remains core to our work.

We will:

- Shape the local and national implementation of voluntary and mandatory biodiversity net gain and ensure net gain delivers positive outcomes for nature, local communities and developers.
- Use the learnings from the 25 YEP Pioneers to inform the development of Local Natural Capital Plans (LNCP). We will continue to develop capacity to use a natural capital approach in our spatial planning work.
- Deliver wildlife licensing casework to agreed service standards and introduce charging for some licences.
- Roll-out District Level Licensing for Great Crested Newts (GCN) to give greater certainty to developers and to enhance the conservation status of the wider GCN population.
- Continue to develop and expand our Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) to enable us to engage early with developer customers and secure better outcomes for the natural environment.
- Work with the Environment Agency to create a LNCP for the Oxford – Cambridge Growth Arc to direct and prioritise environmental investment as an integral part of the wider plans for the area.
- Provide expert advice to major infrastructure developers, including High Speed 2, offshore wind developers, and local authorities to maximise environmental opportunities from development.
- Work strategically with the MMO to further develop Marine Spatial Plans as one of the key tools for management of the wider seas, to achieve Good Environmental Status.
- Deliver high quality and timely planning advice to enable development that does not negatively impact on protected landscapes or on the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and that can help to deliver improvements for the management of sites.



Brown long-eared bat



Lee Valley Wildlife Weekend

## Connecting people with nature

### Promoting health and wellbeing through the great outdoors

**The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out a strong commitment to better connect people with the natural environment to improve their health and wellbeing.**

Natural England has a vital role to play in inspiring people to discover, enjoy, learn about and care for the environment. We can make a real difference using our environmental expertise, our evidence and our partnerships. We target our efforts on those communities that most need the benefits, which access to a high quality environment can bring.

Natural England, Defra and the Department for Education (DfE) have co-designed the three delivery projects within the Children in Nature Programme. The programme aims to enable more children to have the opportunity to experience nature within a variety of local natural environments, including school grounds, community forests, woodlands and care farms.

Natural England's ambition is to see:

- More people, from a wider cross-section of society, benefitting directly from the environment.
- More people understanding and valuing the relevance of the environment to their everyday lives.
- More people taking decisions and actions that care for the environment.

We want to do more to bring people and nature closer together, identifying new opportunities and initiatives, including through fulfilling our statutory duties relating to access and recreation.

We will:

- Inspire new generations through projects for Nature Friendly Schools; Growing Care Farming; and Community Forest and Woodland Outreach. All will deliver on the Government's commitment of encouraging children and adults to be close to nature, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas.
- Forge ahead with the delivery of the England Coast Path, a new 4,345km / 2,700 mile National Trail around all of England's coast. This year we will submit to Government at least 26 of the 34 remaining proposals for approval bringing the total published, to approximately 3,862km / 2,400 miles.
- Invest in the accessibility of our National Nature Reserves (NNRs) as places for everybody to enjoy the very best places for wildlife.
- Work with National Trails Partnership and Defra to explore and agree a new long-term sustainable funding model for National Trails.
- Link health and environment more clearly by progressing developmental work with the NHS and Public Health England to explore the potential for social prescribing to improve health and wellbeing through connection with the natural environment.
- Support the Year of Green Action to encourage more people, from all backgrounds, to get involved in projects to improve the natural world.
- Share best practice to inspire more young people to get involved and engaged in their local National Nature Reserve through citizen science.
- Pilot 'Nature Leaders', a programme for practitioners to share knowledge and experience across the environmental sector on how to deliver successful partnerships working at a landscape scale.



Dee Estuary SSSI

## Resilient landscapes and seas

### Protecting and restoring wildlife and natural beauty for future generations

**One of the flagship initiatives included in the 25 Year Environment Plan, is a new Nature Recovery Network. Natural England is keen to capture this enthusiasm and work in partnership to deliver early, quality examples of the concept on the ground through a number of nature recovery areas.**

The 25 YEP describes an ambition to develop a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife.

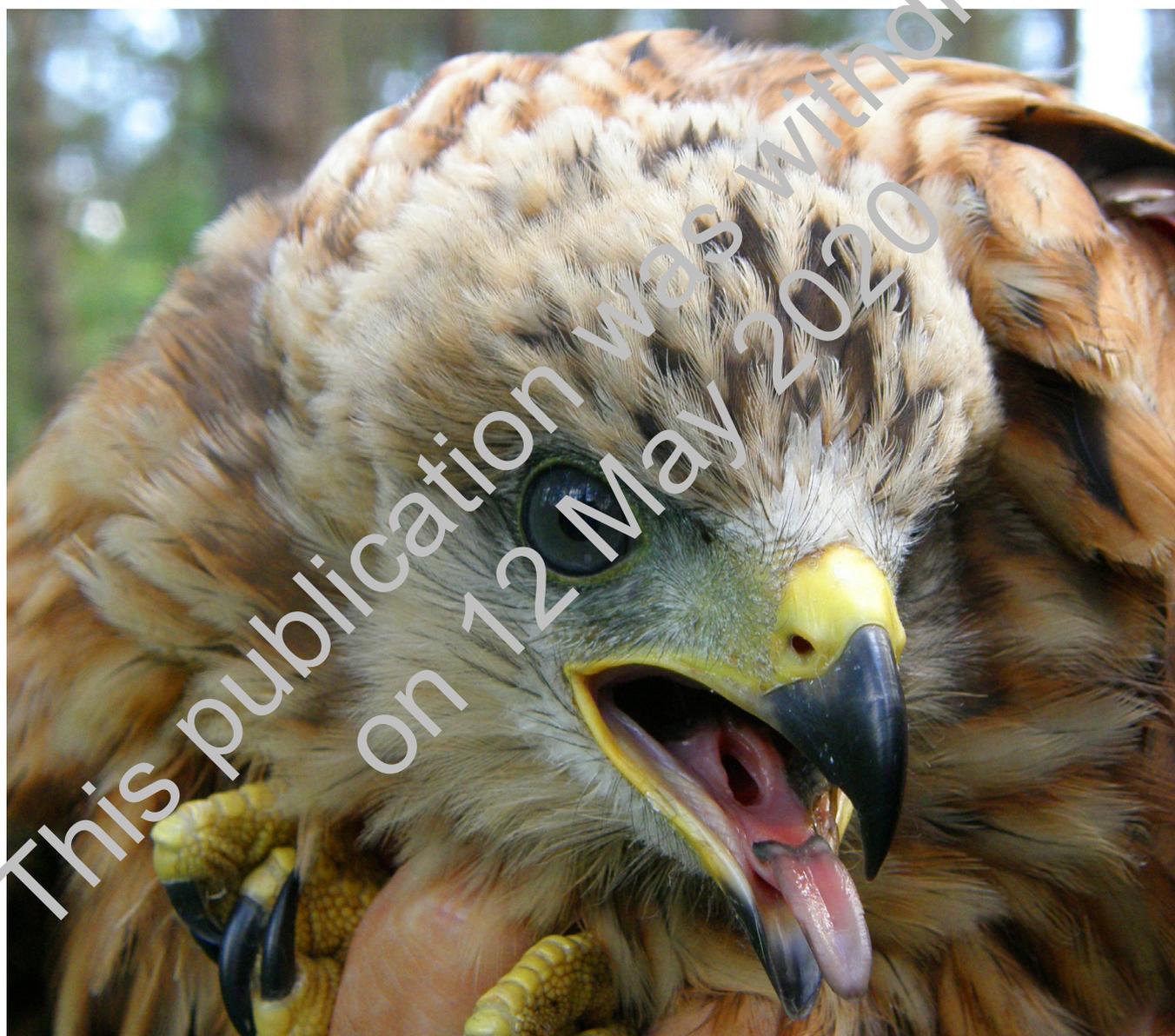
2019/20 will be an important year of transition as we work towards the new Nature Strategy. Natural England will take a leading role on the development of the Nature Recovery Network (NRN) and species recovery aspects of the Strategy. We cannot do this alone. For the NRN to succeed as the primary framework for planning and delivering nature recovery, it will need to be developed in partnership from the outset.

Rapid progress in large scale restoration and creation of carbon rich ecosystems, particularly forests, peatlands and estuaries is an integral part of meeting the UK's commitments to climate change adaptation and mitigation under the Paris Agreement including achieving net zero emissions by 2050. It is also essential that we plan nature recovery, taking account of inevitable changes in climate, including the risks presented by more frequent extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and wildfires.

Pressures on the marine environment are increasing. Climate change, invasive species and marine plastics reduce ecosystem and species resilience. Nature recovery in the marine environment is often more about removal of pressures, which enables the habitats and species to recover and thrive. The outcome we are aiming for is Good Environmental Status (GES), an International and European objective that the UK has enshrined in the UK Marine Strategy and confirmed its commitment to in the 25 YEP.

There are now 175 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in English waters which cover 9.1 million hectares, or 40% of the total English sea area. To ensure the MPA network is ecologically coherent, it needs to be managed effectively.

Natural England will continue to work with external funders like National Lottery Heritage Fund to help deliver more for nature. Over the past few years Natural England has convened the sector around priority areas for investment. Working with public bodies and NGOs we have identified priorities and convened large partnerships to tackle these issues strategically. By working together, we can develop bigger projects, pooling our expertise and resources to achieve more.



Red kite

We will:

- Lead, on behalf of Defra, the development of the Nature Recovery Network.
- Scope a species recovery plan with stakeholders.
- Ensure plans for all nature recovery areas assess and reduce the risks from climate change and take opportunities to maximise carbon uptake and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Deliver a targeted programme of proactive SSSI work to progress towards Biodiversity 2020 SSSI condition targets.
- Develop a SSSI condition monitoring reassessment programme.
- Conclude our formal advice on marine designations to support completion of the 'Blue Belt'.
- Provide evidence and advice to the review of Highly Protected Marine Areas (HMPAs).
- Ensure that MPAs are well-managed and delivering effectively towards the MPA network objectives and contributing to GES.
- Streamline our SSSI consent and assents service to deliver more for nature and our customers.
- Continue to deliver for priority species and habitats through specific initiatives including the Back from the Brink programme which will save 100 species from extinction and Dynamic Dunescapes which helps us maintain the most at risk habitat in Europe.
- Continue to provide evidence and advice to the Glover Review of designated landscapes to support the 25 YEP aim of enhancing their natural beauty and natural capital.
- Complete an extension to Suffolk Coasts and Heath Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Deliver a pipeline of new and extended NNRs including "super NNRs" which encompass and restore to NNR quality, for example 3,500ha lowland heath at Purbeck in Dorset.
- Work collaboratively with private and public landowners to better join up management across sites, such as the extended Ribble NNR where RSPB and Natural England share a visitor management post.



Staff and volunteer awards 2018

## Our People

**Our staff and volunteers are our most important asset. We need to be a flexible and responsive organisation, able to deploy our expertise and passion for the environment in response to evolving aims and opportunities, whilst putting our people's wellbeing at the centre of our work.**

Our People Strategy draws together the themes, objectives and activities that need to be in place to ensure that people have the right skills, in the right place, at the right time to deliver the aims of the 25 YEP. We have high expectations of our people, and aim to provide an organisational culture that helps every individual to meet these.

We are committed to enabling an inclusive workforce, where people are treated fairly, with respect, and are valued for what they bring. It is important that we look to the future and we will invest in and provide support for everyone's personal and professional development.

In turn, we will ask our staff to be flexible to change which will enable us to be quick to respond to and grasp potential positive opportunities this can offer.



Water-skiing off Alum Bay,  
Isle of Wight

## Science and Evidence

**Driving Natural England's science and evidence priorities is the need to understand the natural and cultural environments. We need to know whether what we are doing works; to understand natural processes, functions and benefits; to determine the pressures acting on the natural environment and to know the impacts of these and how we might respond effectively. We need to understand long term trends and identify emerging pressures.**

We will share our evidence with others to help them improve their own interventions and to build a collective understanding on the basis for decision making. Working collaboratively in collecting and using evidence, we can make more effective and transparent use of evidence to provide advice and inform actions on the ground locally and nationally.

We will provide scientific and evidence leadership in conserving, enhancing and managing the natural environment and ensure Natural England continues to operate as an evidence-based adviser.

We will:

- Lead improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of our monitoring activities within a new monitoring strategy. This will include implementing reforms to our protected sites monitoring and working closely with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and other agencies on a UK Marine Biodiversity monitoring programme. We will also develop an integrated approach to surveillance and monitoring of landscape change.
- Commission a new Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey and provide increased access to analysis of the evidence generated – particularly at a more local level.
- Prioritise the development and use of new technologies and techniques, such as earth observation and eDNA, which can improve our capture and analysis of evidence.
- Provide thought leadership, metrics and data around the 25 Year Plan so we can measure progress and change.
- Complete 10 years of monitoring pressures and environmental response through our long term monitoring network.
- Prioritise delivery of Natural England's commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation including developing a strategy for climate change mitigation through Natural England delivery and revising our Climate Change Adaptation Manual.
- Apply our evidence base and scientific expertise to inform the State of Environment report and the development of new interventions – prioritising those identified in the 25 YEP and in particular developing a new Environmental Land Management System, Net Gain, and the design of a Nature Recovery Network.
- Evaluate our major programmes to learn lessons and continue to improve delivery.



Pennine Way National Trail

## Our Finances

**Natural England’s future funding strategy will help us determine how we fund delivery of our statutory duties and our new contributions to the 25 Year Environment Plan.**

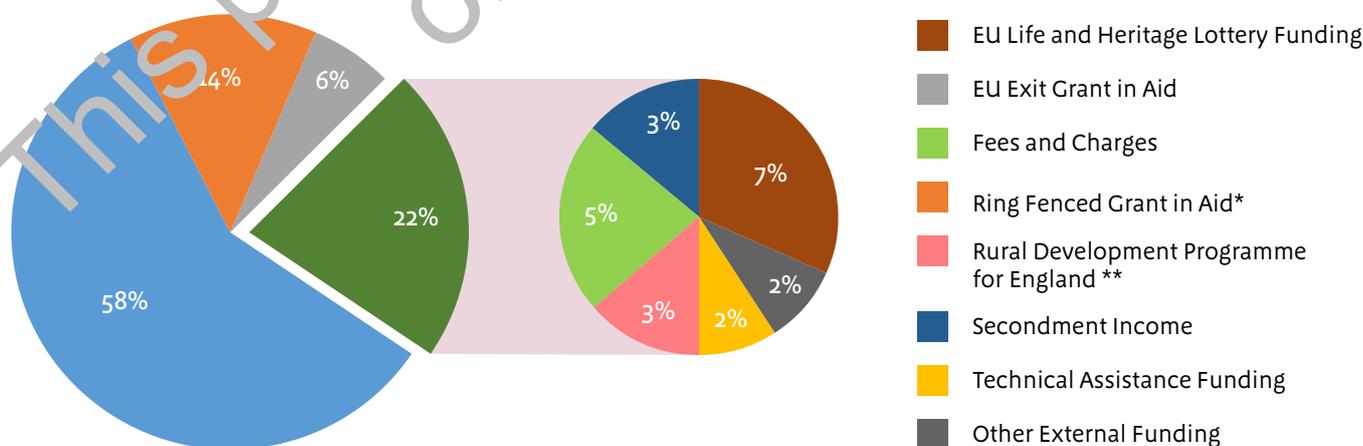
Our total income for 2019/20 is £109.8M of which 78% is Grant in Aid (GiA) funded by Defra, including £6.5M for EU Exit, £3.9M from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for District Level Licensing and £2.2M from the Department for Education for Children and Nature programmes. We also have £9.9M externally funded partnership projects agreed for 2019/20.

In 2018/19 we generated more than £5M through our commercial services, a 25 per cent increase on the previous year. We intend to build on this progress.

### 2019/20 Funding

Grant in Aid and total other funding

Other Funding



\* Includes England Coastal Path, Catchment Sensitive Farming, District Level Licensing, Children In Nature and National Trails.

\*\* Rural Development Programme for England Funding for Catchment Sensitive Funding.

Chart 1: Natural England sources of income 2019/20

## 2019/20 Expenditure

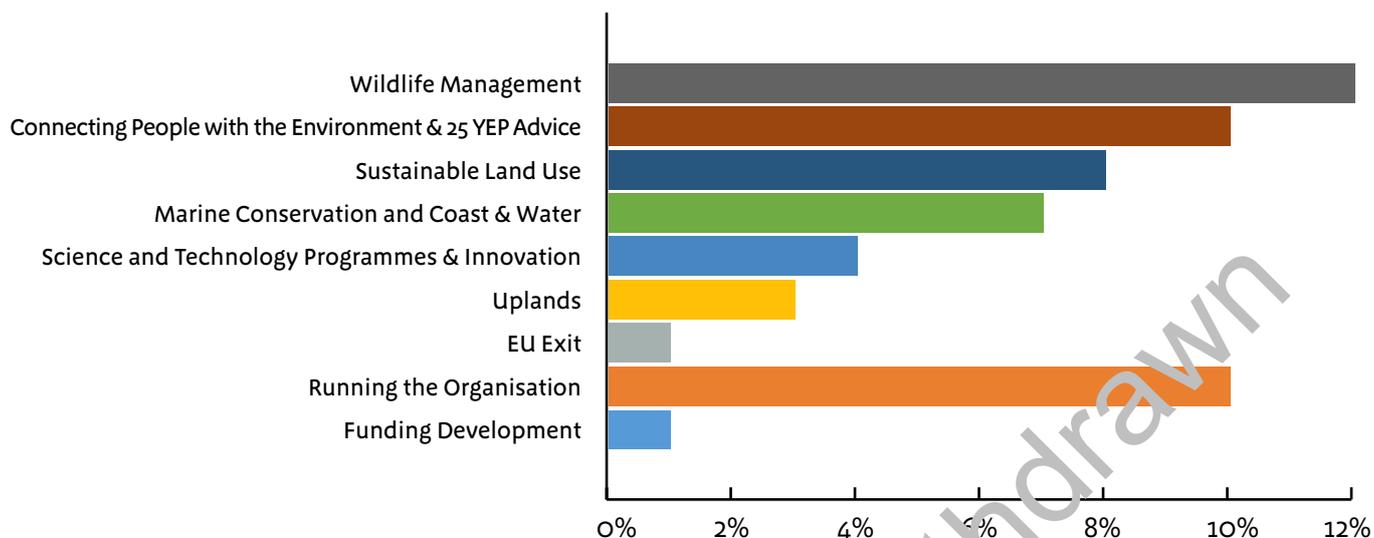


Chart 2: Natural England expenditure 2019/20

As financial resources remain tight, we will seek to diversify our funding sources. We will do this primarily through the following principles which underpin our financial strategy:

- Public money for public goods. This should not mean that public money is automatically viewed as the exclusive or preferred funding option.
- Where our services or outcomes benefit a particular group or organisation, and this group has the ability to pay for this, then the cost of the service should be met by this group as far as possible.
- We must operate within our legal powers, adhere to principles of regularity and propriety and ensure alignment with relevant wider Government policies.
- Consistency, in the application of charges, but also in the way we deploy GiA.
- Look to enable market delivery wherever possible and avoid creating market distortion.
- Consider funding options beyond GiA at the outset for any new programme or area of delivery.

Our future funding strategy will consider all forms of funding and income. It will set out how we can make optimum use of our GiA, as part of a wider funding mix, to achieve more for the natural environment.

# Measuring success: 2019/20 Key Performance Indicators

25YEP Key Areas	Our key goals	Our long term ambition	Our performance targets for 2019/20
Using and managing land sustainably	Greener farming and fisheries	An Environmental Land Management system (ELMS) based on payments for public benefits is delivering nature recovery where Natural England is playing a key advisory role.	<p>Natural England completes 300 Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and 1500 Higher Level Stewardship extension offers within agreed milestones to support the Rural Payments Agency in securing agreements with customers.</p> <p>Deliver Defra funded Payment By Results trial, in partnership with Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, undertaking monitoring, evaluation and reporting findings to inform ELMS development.</p> <p>Develop an ELMS guidance set of standards (informed by end user testing, engagement with stakeholders) for use in all guidance advice.</p>
		Diffuse pollution to air and water from agriculture is reducing.	Over 5,000 priority farms engaged by Catchment Sensitive Farming.
Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans		Fisheries practices adopted that restore and protect the marine ecosystem.	Develop and offer our science-based advice to Defra on sustainable fisheries policy.

# Measuring success: 2019/20 Key Performance Indicators

25YEP Key Areas	Our key goals	Our long term ambition	Our performance targets for 2019/20
Using and managing land sustainably	Sustainable Development	Net gain is established as a mandatory requirement and is delivering measurable benefits, including by contributing to the Nature Recovery Network.	Positive engagement with up to 25 local planning authorities/ combined authorities to seek to embed biodiversity net gain policies or approaches in statutory development plans or locally agreed guidance.  Support Defra in work to embed net gain into the Environment Bill.
		New development, housing, infrastructure and commercial, creates a better environment for those who live and work there and adds to local natural capital.	95% of planning applications are responded to within agreed deadlines.
		Our licensing functions are enabling responsible wildlife management and delivering real benefits for the population of protected species	35% of licence applications are processed within agreed deadlines.  127 strategic solutions are in place for GCN which helps reduce costs and uncertainty for regulatory customers.  A net gain of 250 ponds for GCN is secured.
Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing	Connecting People with Nature	New opportunities to access greenspace and nature are created through a range of mechanisms.	Proposals for 58 stretches of coast (85% or 3,729km / 2,317 miles of the cumulative total) to create the England Coast Path are submitted to Secretary of State for approval by March 2020.
		Significant investment is being made across government to realise societal benefits through contact with nature, notably for health, wellbeing, education and poverty alleviation.	Award and commence delivery of the three projects in the 4-year £10m Children in Nature Programme with the aim that 100 schools and organisations are actively involved by March 2020.
		People feel more connected to nature (as measured by 'nature connectedness') across England.	Complete, publish and promote the annual Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) report.

# Measuring success: 2019/20 Key Performance Indicators

25YEP Key Areas	Our key goals	Our long term ambition	Our performance targets for 2019/20
<b>Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes</b>	<b>Resilient Landscapes and Seas</b>	SSSIs are improving in condition. Landscape quality is improving, including in designated landscapes, which are also delivering improved benefits for biodiversity and people.	Maintain the condition of terrestrial protected sites (including, freshwater and wetlands SSSIs) so that 38.8% of SSSIs are in favourable condition and contribute to Biodiversity 2020 outcomes.
		Targeted species work is recovering England's most threatened species, including through reintroductions.	Progress our Species Recovery Programme including, for example, translocations.
		The Nature Recovery Network (NRN) has been planned and is being delivered across England, with demonstrable habitat expansion including through the establishment of large Nature Recovery Areas.	Agree a framework for the design and delivery of the Nature Recovery Network with partners.
		Management plans are in place and being implemented for the MCZ network and additional Highly Protected Marine Areas have been established.	Agree and deliver a programme of management advice to marine regulators to cover all MPAs by June 2021 (including 23 finalised Conservation Advice Packages published and 10-20 new MPA condition assessments completed).
<b>Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans</b>			
	<b>Managing our organisation</b>	Natural England is a great organisation to work for and to work with.	Improve wellbeing to allow all staff to achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and Natural England (10% increase in annual relevant staff survey measure).
		We have the financial resources needed to meet our goals from government and beyond.	Increase of 10% (1.42) of near hits reported to prevent serious accidents occurring.
		We produce world class science and data which other people can also use in decision-making and practice.	We deliver our financial outturn to agreed forecast (+/- 0.5% of year-end target).  We reduce our dependence on government funding by increasing the level of income generated through chargeable services to £5.7M.
			Publish a new monitoring strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our monitoring work across our remit, including through the use of new technologies.



Outdoor classroom

## Planning for the future

**The 25 Year Environment Plan and new legislation and policies as we leave the EU are a once in a lifetime opportunity to restore and enhance our natural environment for current and future generations. Investment now is crucial to seize that opportunity, otherwise it will be lost forever. This includes investment in actions which will achieve outcomes many years from now.**

Natural England has set out its immediate ambitions for this long-term strategy in this action plan for the natural environment to thrive, but they also need to be supported by long-term funding. We are currently developing a five year plan from 2020 which will build on this year of transition.

A healthy and resilient natural environment is important not just for habitats and species but also provides the means to mitigate carbon emissions and respond to a changing climate. It is also essential to help meet the social and economic needs of people, now and in the future, in particular playing a vital role in our health and wellbeing.

Investment in the natural environment now can help to deliver the breadth of the Government's agenda.

The forthcoming Spending Review provides a renewed opportunity for investment in the natural environment across Government departments.

Our submissions as part of the Spending Review will set out what we plan to deliver, our level of ambition, and what we will need to deliver that ambition. Particular emphasis will be placed on new activities such as Net Gain and Nature Recovery Networks and creating a firm foundation for future farming and fisheries policy.

Everything that Natural England does for nature and people is encompassed within the goals of the 25 YEP. We will be working hard this year and in the years to come to lead the recovery of nature, for everybody's sake.

**Front cover image:**

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**Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.**

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