

Natural Environment White Paper Implementation Update

19 December 2012

The Natural Environment White Paper, *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature*, was published on 7 June 2011. This fifth update reports activity since July 2012.

Since July, we've made progress on a number of fronts as Government Departments and agencies, business, landowners, local authorities, environmental organisations and others all work together to meet the ambitions in the White Paper.

Highlights since July include the announcement of a further 7 Local Nature Partnerships, bringing the total to 48, the Ecosystem Markets Task Force has released its interim report, Lord de Mauley gave the key-note speech at the Integrated Habitats Design Competition, and Minister Richard Benyon led the UK delegation to the 11th meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Hyderabad.

Progress on ambitions

The White Paper set out four ambitions. Highlights of progress since July on commitments to deliver the ambitions follow.

Protecting and improving our natural environment

We've recognised an additional 7 **Local Nature Partnerships** (LNP) in September, bringing the total to 48. This key commitment in the Natural Environment White Paper, LNPs herald new ways of doing things locally and some are now beginning to establish themselves in their areas. Some have held their inaugural meetings or launches, others are putting their permanent governance arrangements in place whilst others are starting to engage seriously with other sectors about local priorities. A major advantage for LNPs will be to talk and work together.

LNPs are locally formed for the benefit of local areas. However Defra hopes to build a close mutual relationship with the network of LNPS across the country so that, by LNPs acting on local priorities, they will prove a really valuable way of helping us to deliver our national priorities. We brought all LNPs together in October with the aim of initiating not only that valuable relationship but also useful networking amongst LNPs. (Commitments 4-6). See:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/local-nature-partnerships/

The twelve government-funded **Nature Improvement Areas** (NIAs) which started work in April are making good progress. These initiatives are landscape-scale in nature, and aim to ensure that land is used sustainably to achieve multiple benefits for people, wildlife and the local economy. The £7.5m invested by Government has generated £43m in funding & in-kind support from a range of sources. For example, Birmingham & the Black Country NIA has secured funding from Carillion to re-plant on a site of ancient woodland in Park Hall Nature Reserve; and Dearne Valley Green Heart NIA has secured £1.8 million from HLF's Landscape Partnership programme (Commitments 8-11). See: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/nia/

We have been continuing with our review of the role of industry-led initiatives in meeting environmental

outcomes (Recommendation 18). On 22nd November, the 2012 Review of the Greenhouse Gas Action was published (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/sectors/agriculture/>) which measures progress towards targets (benefiting both the environment and farming efficiency). This and other work assessing partnership approaches has contributed to some emerging conclusions that we have discussed with stakeholders. The research covering the Campaign for the Farmed Environment will be published in the New Year and a full report responding to the recommendation, indicating where voluntary approaches are most applicable and what factors help drive their success, is on track for March (Commitment 18).

Our improvements to the options for the Entry Level Stewardship scheme submitted to the European Commission in November 2011 to **make Environmental Stewardship more effective** (MESME) have been approved. IT changes are in hand for implementation from 1 January 2013, and new scheme handbooks detailing new/changed options have been available to applicants from Natural England since mid-October for agreements coming into force from January. (Commitment 19). See: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/mesme.aspx

By November, Natural England had published the first 23 profiles of England's 159 **landscape character areas**. Each profile identifies the

environmental potential of landscape areas, to inform national policies such as agri-environment schemes and help local communities and planners to make informed decisions about land use. (Commitment 24). See: www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/default.aspx

There has been good progress in developing the approach to **catchment level partnerships**. The findings are being evaluated from **the 66 pilot catchments** as we approach the end of our pilot phase. This will inform decisions on wider adoption from April 2013. (Commitments 28). See: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/131506.aspx

In August 2012 the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) announced that the next areas for marine planning would be the South Inshore and Offshore marine plan areas. The MMO are now working with local stakeholders to develop the Statement of Public Participation. (Commitment 34). See: <http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning/areas/south.htm>

Growing a green economy

In July, the Office for National Statistics and Defra launched a consultation on how we fully include **natural capital in UK national accounts**. A Stakeholder

workshop to discuss priorities for ecosystems accounts was held on 22 October (Commitment 35).

The independent **Natural Capital Committee** is up and running and has now held four meetings. It will be advising Government on where natural capital is being used unsustainably through an annual state of natural capital report – with the first to be published in Spring 2013. The Committee has given advice to the Defra Secretary of State on several key policy issues and has held its first public event, hosted by the Royal Society (Commitment 36). See: www.defra.gov.uk/naturalcapitalcommittee

The final report ‘scoping study to develop understanding of a **natural capital asset check**’ has been submitted and is currently being reviewed (Commitment 37). See: www.defra.gov.uk/naturalcapitalcommittee/work/natural-capital-asset-check/

We published the UK Statement on sustainable palm oil on 30 October. It draws together new and existing specific commitments on the sourcing of sustainable palm oil which have been made by key organisations representing businesses within the palm oil supply chain in the UK. (Commitment 41). See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2012/10/30/palm-oil-uk-statement/>

On 6 November, the independent, business-led **Ecosystem Markets Task Force** released its interim report. The report sets out the aims of the Task Force, its emerging thinking on why nature should matter to business and the potential opportunities for business from valuing nature (Commitment 44). See:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/ecosystem-markets/work/publications-reports/>

We have published a research project reviewing **water tools for business** and evaluating different approaches (Commitment 46). See:

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=17962>

On 25 July, we published a public consultation into draft of new **guidance for businesses on how to measure and report their corporate environmental impacts**. Analysis of results is now being undertaken (Commitment 48). See:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2012/07/25/environmental-kpi/>

The first Annual Report on pan-government progress against the **Greening Government Commitments** was published on 14 December (NEWP Commitment 53). See:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2012/12/14/pb13846-greening-government-commitments/>

Reconnecting people with nature

For 2013/14, the **Pupil Premium** will increase to £900 per pupil. Natural England have published a report into School Leader and Teacher insight into **Learning Outside the Classroom in Natural Environments**, which shows a strong interest in using Pupil Premium for outdoor learning (Commitment 62). See:

<http://education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium> and <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1989824>

On 25 October, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced that a consortium led by Keep Britain Tidy had would continue to operate the Green Flag Award scheme under licence for the next 5 years (Commitment 66). See:

<http://greenflag.keepbritaintidy.org/>

The **Green Infrastructure Partnership (GIP)** was gold sponsor of the Integrated Habitats Design Competition conference and awards ceremony which celebrated projects demonstrating why integrating nature is good for biodiversity, neighbourhoods, business and climate change adaptation. Defra Minister Lord de Mauley provided the key-note speech which promoted the work of the GIP. (Commitment 67). See:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/green-infrastructure/ and <http://ihdc.org.uk/>

Defra Minister Lord de Mauley has written a letter in support of Kielder Water & Forest Park's application for Dark Sky Park status and Northumberland National Park's application for Dark Sky Reserve status. Lord de Mauley's letter will form part of the Parks' application to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) (Commitment 70).

The consultation on simplifying and streamlining the processes for **recording and making changes to public rights of way** closed on 6 August. The results are being analysed (Commitment 72).

The VisitEngland **destination managers resource** has been launched and is currently being populated with content. This covers a variety of guidance and support information relating to destination management, including visitor gifting schemes. VisitEngland is working with Nurture Lakeland, who have recently launched a national framework for visitor gifting schemes and are developing tools and supporting materials for developing local programmes (Commitment 74). See: www.visitengland.org/destinations

A new *My Environment* portal is due to be launched at the end of 2012 making it easier for people to find environmental information across a range of Web sites. This will be supplemented by a new environmental mapping service replacing the existing

MAGIC service in April 2013 with further developments to respond to user feedback once the services are live (commitment 78).

To encourage the **consumption of underutilised sustainable fish species**, the scoping phase of a project to explore how a community-supported fishery model linking consumers up more closely with local fishermen can promote the use of these fish species, has now completed and three communities in (in Brighton, Chichester and Horsham) have been chosen to take part in the Community Supported Fishery. (Commitment 80). See: www.catchbox.coop

International and EU leadership

To contribute to **implementation of the Nagoya agreement at the international level**, Minister Richard Benyon led a UK delegation from across Whitehall at the 11th meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Hyderabad where we secured decisions on many different biodiversity related issues, including; mobilisation of resources for implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; designating Protected Areas & designating Ecologically and Biologically Sensitive marine Areas; and advice on applying biodiversity safeguards to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) (Commitment 82). See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/tag/hyderabad/>

Monitoring and reporting progress

Membership of the **Ecosystems Knowledge Exchange Network** has reached 560 people throughout the UK, representing a range of private, public, charity and academic sector organisations with interests in an ecosystems approach.

The Network website has been expanded with new project examples and sections and links to a wide range of tools, and guidelines to assist land and marine management projects apply an ecosystems approach in their work.

The Office for National Statistics have published some outputs from the Measuring National Wellbeing Programme. An article on Where we live was published on 24 July with one on the Natural Environment on 7 November (Commitment 89). See: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/wellbeing/measuring-national-well-being/where-we-live/art-where-we-live.html> and <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/wellbeing/measuring-national-well-being/natural-environment/art-the-natural-environment.html>. Their Life in the UK report was published on 20 November: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/wellbeing/measuring-national-well-being/first-annual-report-on-measuring-national-well-being/art-measuring-national-well-being-annual-report.html>

EFRA Committee

The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (EFRA) inquiry on the Natural Environment White Paper published its report on 17 July. It can be found at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmenvfru/653/65304.htm>.

The Government's response was published on 25 October and is available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmenvfru/653/65304.htm>

You can find out more about the White Paper at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/

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