



25 Year Environment Plan

Newsletter

July 2022





Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Welcome to our 25YEP Stakeholder Newsletter

The purpose of this newsletter is to summarise activity taking place across Defra and government more widely, relating to the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Thank you to all of you who have requested to sign up so far. Please feel free to share this with colleagues in your organisation who you think might be interested in receiving this newsletter, and we will add all requests to sign up to the distribution list. To request this please email richard.white@defra.gov.uk

Contents:

Page 3 – 25YEP Annual Progress Report

Page 4 and 5 – Live consultations

Page 6 – Nutrient Neutrality

Page 7 – Environment Agency

Page 8 – Sustainable Farming Incentive

Page 9 and 10 – Trees and Forestry

Page 11 – Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund

Page 12 – Department for Education

Page 13 – Other Announcements

Page 14 – Useful publication links

25 Year Environment Plan

Annual Progress Report

On 20 July we [published](#) our 2021/22 Progress Report for the 25 Year Environment Plan.

- Our 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our goals for improving the environment, ensuring we protect and enhance our vital natural capital for future generations to enjoy. This fourth annual progress report – our first statutory report under the Environment Act 2021 - describes where progress has been made towards achieving the long-term vision of the plan. It also highlights the challenges that still remain in improving the environment within a generation and which we are committed to addressing.
- This report spans a year in which the Environment Act 2021 came into force, establishing the statutory framework for the government to deliver its environmental ambitions.
- Alongside the progress report, we published our update to the [25 Year Environment Plan Outcome Indicator Framework](#) in May. As part of improving our understanding of changes to the natural environment, the 2022 update includes an assessment of indicator data categorising direction of environmental changes observed over different historical time periods. An online, interactive [dashboard](#) is available as part of the Outcome Indicator Framework, improving transparency and enabling a much greater degree of user interaction by offering direct access to the underlying indicator data.
- Also on 20 July we [published](#) Defra's response to the Office for Environmental Protection's first monitoring report on the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

Live Consultations

Marine Net Gain

- On 7 June we [launched](#) a consultation which sets out our proposals and seeks views on the principles of marine net gain. This will inform the policy and approaches to marine net gain implementation. The [consultation](#) closes on **30 August 2022**.

Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs)

- On 6 July we launched a consultation to seek views on the proposals to designate a number of candidate Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) in English waters. We are consulting on five candidate HPMAs and following this consultation government will choose which of these to designate. The [consultation](#) closes on **28 September 2022**.

Live Consultations

DCMS Dormant Assets spend

- On 16 July, DCMS [launched](#) a consultation to decide on future good causes to benefit from the £738 million Dormant Asset Fund in England. The [consultation](#) seeks views on the social and environmental purposes of dormant assets funding in England and closes on **9 October 2022**.

Consultation on improved reporting of food waste by large food businesses in England

- On 13 June we launched a consultation seeking views on different options to improve food waste reporting by large food businesses in England. The [consultation](#) closes on **5 September 2022**.

Nutrient neutrality

Government sets out plan to reduce water pollution

On 20 July, Government **launched** a further package to tackle nutrient pollution, which is a significant problem for our freshwater habitats and estuaries.

- In order to drive down pollution from all development in the relevant catchments, we will be tabling an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. This will place a new statutory duty on water and sewerage companies in England to upgrade wastewater treatment works to the highest technically achievable limits by 2030 in nutrient neutrality areas. Water companies will be required to undertake these upgrades in a way that tackles the dominant nutrient(s) causing pollution at a protected site. Our proposed Environment Act target to tackle wastewater pollution across the country will still see upgrades brought in elsewhere, on a slightly longer timeframe. Wastewater treatment upgrades will reduce a significant source of nutrient pollution, helping to recover these crucial habitats, which will thereby reduce the level of nutrient mitigation required by developers in 'nutrient neutrality' areas when legislation comes into force.
- In addition, in order to make mitigation easier to find, Natural England are to establish a Nutrient Mitigation Scheme, working with Defra and DLUHC. Defra and DLUHC will provide new funding to pump prime the scheme: this is intended to frontload investment in mitigation projects, including wetland and woodland creation. This will then be recouped through a simple payment mechanism where developers can purchase 'nutrient credits' which will discharge the requirements to provide mitigation. Natural England will accredit mitigation delivered through the Nutrient Mitigation Scheme, enabling LPAs to grant planning permission for developments which have secured the necessary nutrient credits. Wetlands and woodlands can also provide additional benefits, for example on biodiversity and access to nature.

Environment Agency

Working with nature report

- On 12 July the Environment Agency [published](#) its Working with nature report. This report discusses the importance of nature in providing ecosystem services and presents recent and historical trends in biodiversity. It outlines some of the main pressures affecting England's habitats, wildlife and ecosystems: land use; climate change; pollution; invasive non-native species; and hydrological change.
- The report focuses on the opportunity we have to work with nature to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises in England, but refers to the UK or Great Britain where information for England is unavailable.
- The Environment Agency have worked closely with the Forestry Commission and Natural England in producing this report.

Annual report on water and sewerage companies

- On 14 July, the Environment Agency [published](#) its annual reporting for 2021 on the environmental performance of the 9 water and sewerage companies, including the Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA).

Appointment of new chair

- On 19 July Environment Secretary George Eustice [confirmed](#) Alan Lovell DL as the new Chair of the Environment Agency.

Sustainable Farming Incentive

Applications opened

On 30 June, the Sustainable Farming Incentive [opened](#) for applications in England. The scheme is available to all farmers who currently receive Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments, designed to be accessible, and will reward sustainable practices which support food production and benefit the environment.

- The Sustainable Farming Incentive is the first of three new environmental land management schemes being introduced under the Agricultural Transition Plan, the UK's new system of farming now we are outside the EU which is designed in the best interests of English farmers.
- The schemes will ensure long-term food security by investing in the foundations of food production: healthy soil, water, and biodiverse ecosystems. Defra has worked with more than 4,000 farmers to test and trial the new approach.
- This is the initial rollout of the scheme – which will be expanded over the next three years as Direct Payments are reduced. The full set of standards will be in place by 2025.

Trees and Forestry

Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund

On 13 June the Forestry Commission introduced the [Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund \(WCAF\)](#).

- This is a simple fund with a total value of just under £8,000,000 (£7.8m). It is designed to support Local Authorities with the new staff and expertise needed to kickstart woodland creation and tree planting plans
- The Fund will provide at least 50 Local Authorities with financial support to bring on board the professional expertise they need to drive tree planting and woodland creation commitments.
- [Available](#) to Local Authorities across England, newly trained or employed staff could include project managers, woodland creation officers, community engagement officers, funding consultants, or specialist advisors, such as landscape architects or archaeologists.

Forestry England

- On 16 June Forest Research released the [21/22 woodland statistics](#). Click on the link to see the key findings as well as the full report.

Trees and Forestry

Woodland Creation offer

On 22 June the Forestry Commission [introduced](#) four changes which came into effect for the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO). These were:

- maximising the benefits of the Nature Recovery Additional Contribution: increasing species and structural diversity in new native woodlands;
- implementing a new Biosecure Procurement Requirement Pilot: preventing the introduction and spread of non-native pests and diseases;
- increasing flexibility to apply for the Public Access Additional Contribution: allowing those outside of the targeting area to apply if conditions are met;
- helping plant more woodland along water courses eligible for the Riparian Buffer Additional Contribution: additional standard costs for capital works so livestock can access drinking water where tree planting and fencing block access to water.

EFRA Committee reponse

- On 20 June the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee [published](#) the Government's response to its Tree Planting report. EFRA welcomed the 'positive' government tree planting plans.

Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund

NEIRF Community of Practice

- Following the [announcement](#) in May of 50 Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund awards to help organisations develop nature projects so they can attract private investment, the NEIRF Community of Practice will now provide a programme of engagement, support and events, as well as learning from NEIRF funded projects for those interested in markets for ecosystem services and innovative financing for nature recovery. (see example of the NEIRF funded Wendling Beck Environment Project taken forward by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#))
- The NEIRF Community of Practice includes the 86 NEIRF supported projects and is open to other nature projects, NGOs, developers, water companies, businesses, academics and investors, and is being delivered with support from the [Ecosystems Knowledge Network](#) and [Green Finance Institute](#).
- Those interested in joining the NEIRF Community of Practice should email NEIRF NEIRF@environment-agency.gov.uk . You can also get further information via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Department for Education

National Education Nature Park and Climate Leaders Award

- After a competitive tender exercise, a strategic supplier to deliver the National Education Nature Park and Climate Leaders Award will be appointed shortly. The National Education Nature Park will encourage nurseries, schools, colleges and universities to think of this land as one whole 'park' with vast potential to help halt the decline of biodiversity in this country. The Climate Leaders Award will help children and young people develop their skills and knowledge in biodiversity and sustainability, celebrating and recognising their work in protecting the local environment. The Department for Education is also finalising the appointment of a geospatial mapping service to provide tools for young person-led data capture and analysis across the education estate which will underpin the National Education Nature Park. Both the Park and Award are due to launch in the Autumn term.
- As part of this, the Urban Greening Factor (UGF) (which was promoted as part of the DfE specification to promote sustainable green infrastructure practice) is mandatory on all DfE centrally funded capital projects and has its origins in the London Plan. All DfE projects must meet a target factor score of 0.35 for the minimum proportion of greening on the school. UGF is anticipated to work alongside Defra's mandatory biodiversity net gain. This approach works to strengthen the National Education Nature Park strategy and recognises the opportunities and need to improve access to greenspace by children and young people by helping to create greener communities, especially in areas of deprivation or where there is poor or unequal access.

Other Announcements

Nature placements

- On 20 July, National Lottery Heritage Fund [announced](#) a partnership with Groundwork UK to deliver paid, nature-based work placements for young people – diversifying the sector and creating a natural legacy to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Applications to be a host organisation are [now open](#) to the New to Nature programme.

Biosecurity

- Under our 25 YEP goal of enhancing biosecurity, the UK are hosting the First [International Plant Health Conference](#). It aims to address new and emerging plant health challenges, including climate change impacts, the risks associated with significant increase in international trade, the rapid loss of biological diversity and new pest pathways such as e-commerce by exploring more efficient national, regional and global policies, structures and mechanisms.
- The Conference will be held in London on 21 – 23 September 2022 and is co-organised by the Defra and the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention. The deadline to register for the conference is **31 July 2022** and you can sign up [here](#).

Useful publication links

- [25 Year Environment Plan](#)
- [25 Year Environment Plan: Annual Progress Report](#)
- [25 Year Environment Plan: Outcome Indicator Framework](#)
- [Net Zero Strategy](#)
- [Environment Act](#)
- [Levelling Up White Paper](#)
- [Clean Air Strategy](#)
- [National Framework for Water Resources](#)
- [England Trees Action Plan](#)
- [England Peat Action Plan](#)
- [DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#)