

# **A Green Future**

## **The 25 Year Environment Plan**

### **21 March 2018**

**Tees Valley Nature Partnership & Your Tees Catchment  
Partnership**



# The plan's vision

It is this Government's ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it.

The plan will deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.





# The journey here



- The National Ecosystem Assessment (2011)
- The Natural Environment White Paper (2011)
- The Natural Capital Committee's third State of Natural Capital report (2015)
- Natural England's strategy: Conservation 21 (2016)
- "...we pledge to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it. That is why we shall produce a comprehensive **25 Year Environment Plan** that will chart how we will improve our environment" (2017)
- The 25 Year Environment Plan (2018)

# Developing the 25 Year Environment Plan

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- Long period of development (from 2015) – since Secretary of State appointment in July was substantially redrafted, but framed around a natural capital approach
- NE have worked closely with Defra, both through the 25 YEP Team and Policy Teams to draft its outcomes, policies and actions.
- The plan is now predominantly England focused.
- Food and Farming Plan now incorporated in 25 YEP, with more environmental focus than before. Agricultural Command Paper consultation open until 8 May 2018.
- Sets the strategic direction for future policies on agriculture and fisheries that will be expanded upon through ‘command papers’ in anticipation of the EU Withdrawal Bill.
- Will be an “open” plan, developed as stakeholders come on board, with the proposal to refresh the plan every 5 years.
- Accords well with Natural England Conservation 21 – uses natural capital approach to seek integrated solutions, resilience is used throughout and the benefits of connecting with people are key.
- Consultation March/April on independent body to scrutinise plan delivery, champion the environment and set standards.

## Government's ambitions

### We will achieve:

- Clean air
- Clean and plentiful water
- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently
- Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

### We will manage pressures on the environment by:

- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Minimising waste
- Managing exposure to chemicals
- Enhancing biosecurity



## Our policies will focus on:

- Using and managing land sustainably
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing
- Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste
- Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans
- Protecting and improving the global environment

# Key commitments in the plan

- Developing a **set of metrics to assess progress towards our 25-year goals**; working with experts over the next six months.
- Embedding an '**environmental net gain**' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure.
- Enhancing nature; 500,000ha of new priority habitat, developing a **Nature Recovery Network** and publishing a **strategy for nature**.
- Planting trees; supporting the development of a **new Northern Forest** and appointing a **Tree Champion**.
- Connecting people with nature; supporting more **pupil contact with local natural spaces** and helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces .
- **Improving soil health**; developing better information on soil health.
- Setting the direction of **future land and sea use policy** around a natural capital approach; developing new methods of agricultural and fisheries support **which put the environment first**.
- An ecosystem and whole-site approach to protecting the **marine environment**.
- New **strategies for water and air** – promotion of natural flood management solutions
- Strengthening leadership and local environmental improvement through better local delivery, including the development of **Natural Capital Plans**.
- Increase private funding of environmental enhancement; establishing a new **green business council** and exploring the potential for a **natural environment impact fund**.
- **Refresh the 25 Year Environment Plan** regularly and consult on a **new independent body** to hold government to account.

# Key actions in the plan for Natural England

## Resilient landscapes and seas

- A nature recovery network, targets for creating and restoring habitats outside of protected sites and new strategy post 2020.
- Moving to a more ecosystem based system of managing the marine environment, including demonstrating a whole-site approach to protecting marine sites and a sustainable fisheries policy.
- Environmental net gain across natural capital - delivering the growth that people need, whilst achieving investment in our natural capital assets.
- Delivering more with farmers – agri-environment, collaborative and innovative mechanisms (e.g. reverse auctions, supply chain, PES, conservation covenants, natural flood management).
- Smarter regulation/ new mechanisms and funding.
- Woodland and forestry expansion – Northern Forest, urban fringe woodlands
- New “Hobhouse” review of designated areas for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- New frameworks and strategies – air, water, soil, peat and biodiversity
- Delivery at a scale and in the places that will give the most value, led by what the evidence tells us.

# Key actions in the plan for Natural England

## Putting people at the heart of the environment

- Strategies, plans and decisions that work for people, the economy and the environment and involve communities in their development – shared plans for places.
- Developing approaches that deliver more and better Green Infrastructure, building from the new Green Infrastructure standard.
- Connecting people with the natural environment: delivering more where the majority of people live work and play; working out how to deal with environmental deprivation especially for the young.
- Increasing health and wellbeing through connection with the natural environment (prescribing).
- Involving, inspiring and empowering new audiences – finding new ways of engaging communities, voluntary action, educational initiatives etc.





# Key actions in the plan for Natural England

## Growing natural capital

- A natural capital framework will evaluate the health of natural assets at a national and local level. We are already showing leadership by working to develop and test out practical tools, indicators and approaches to inform this natural capital approach.
- Development and delivery of local Natural Capital Plans – to reflect the needs of people and the economy, work with the grain of local circumstances and that are built on an understanding of the attributes and requirements of resilient landscapes.
- Our outcomes approach can offer examples of what works and share good practice to inform the development of a local delivery framework for the plan.
- Developing new opportunities to lever in private funding for environmental outcomes - natural environment impact fund, visitor payback, carbon offsetting etc.



# A great opportunity to deliver Conservation 21

- The plan provides a unique opportunity to bring about a step change in delivering our ambitions for the natural environment
- The plan aims to put the natural environment centre stage in government decision making.
- We can all help Defra in achieving the cross-government action and NGO/ stakeholder buy-in that the plan's delivery needs.
- It will require environmental leadership, bringing together the tools, evidence and people to help deliver this and to be the respected accreditor of delivery.
- There is much in the plan that reflects our interests, but we will have to prioritise our contribution if we are to have impact.
- We are already working towards many of the policies and actions in the plan, but these need to be the policies and actions that could really make a difference in our areas.



# Issues and challenges

- The plan has great ambition, but we will need to prioritise our contribution in light of current resource constraints and organisational priorities.
- We will need to work with Defra to ensure that the plan is integrated and there is strong join up between its policies and initiatives.
- Delivery will require significant new public/private funding.
- Advice to farmers, land managers and others will be important and will need to be properly resourced.
- Need to influence and better coordinate the development, implementation and evaluation of a natural capital approach– this a key role for Natural England.
- Achieving local delivery that is responsive to local need and existing local structures – build on learning from focus areas and Pioneers.
- We will need to move quickly to help lead and develop shared plans of the actions that will help drive local delivery of Defra 25 Year Environment Plan and our ambitions for Conservation 21.

# LNPs/Catchment Partnerships

- LNP/CPs have a clear role to play in implementation of the 25 Year Environment Plan
- This will be through existing partnership work aligning with the 25 Year Environment Plan and with contributions of other organisations
- Once Defra have developed its strategy for the implementation of local natural capital plans (Summer 2018) LNPs/CPs will be a key stakeholders to support the Defra Group team to deliver on this
- LNPs will be key to bringing in non-environmentally focused organisations such as LEPs/Combined Authorities and Health & Wellbeing Boards

