

E-bulletin: August 2012

Welcome to Link's August e-bulletin. Please see below for our top stories and updates from our working groups. If you would like to subscribe to our e-bulletin or submit news items, please contact [Louise](#).



Law Commission review

On 14 August the Law Commission published its [consultation paper on Wildlife Law](#), the three-month consultation period ends in November 2012. The Legal Strategy Working Group will be meeting in mid-September to discuss Link's response to this consultation. Due to the overarching nature of the paper, other working groups will be contacted for input into the response. For further information on the Law Commission review, click [here](#) or contact [Julie](#).

Link briefs Defra on marine issues

Link attended a meeting in Plymouth with senior marine biodiversity officials from Defra to discuss a range of issues including Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ), impact assessments, mobile species and European Marine Sites. As part of the two day meeting, Link took Defra out on a boat around Plymouth Sound to visit a nearby Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a recommended MCZ.

Blueprint for PR14

The *Blueprint for PR14* is to be launched in September, followed by a roundtable event attended by CEOs from Blueprint members and water companies on 15 November. Based around the Blueprint's ten steps to sustainable water, the report sets out the specific environmental outcomes the Blueprint would like to see from the 2014 Price Review (PR14), to be delivered between 2015 and 2020. The report is supported by all Blueprint for Water members.

IUCN nomination

Jonathan Hughes, Director of Conservation at the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Trustee of Scottish Environment Link, is standing for the IUCN elections for Regional Councillor for Western Europe on 12 September. If you would like more information please contact [Jonathan](#) directly or visit his [candidate page](#).



Greening CAP

The Agriculture Working Group has written a letter to the Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee, Anne McIntosh MP, in response to their recent report on greening of the CAP. The letter outlines Link's position and seeks a meeting with the Committee to further discuss greening measures.

Green Food Project

On 5 September Link will be meeting with the Chair of the [Farming Regulation Task Force](#), Richard Macdonald, to discuss the implementation of the regulatory recommendations set out by the task force and accepted by Defra.



Biodiversity 2020 outcomes

The Biodiversity Working Group is continuing to engage with Defra on the outcomes and delivery plan of [Biodiversity 2020](#) through the Terrestrial Biodiversity Group and the England Biodiversity Stakeholder Group. Link has received a letter from Ben McCarthy, Principal Adviser at Natural England (NE) in response to a Link letter regarding the definition of Outcome 3 of *Biodiversity 2020* (which relates to the prevention of species extinction). Link also continues engagement with NE on Taxon Groups to encourage effective group working.



Forestry Panel Report

The Forests Group is currently working to respond to the final report from the [Independent Panel on Forestry](#) which was published on 4 July. The group has also requested a meeting with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Lord Taylor of Holbeach, to discuss the implementation of the report's recommendations.



Working Group meeting

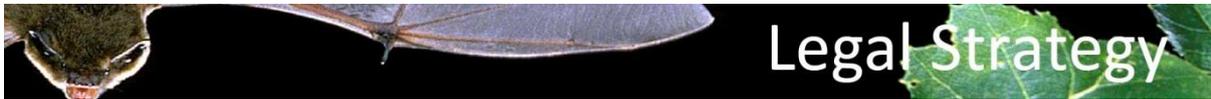
On 14 August the Land Use Planning Working Group met to discuss joint working with the Biodiversity Working Group on technical guidance to support the implementation of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF). The group also planned a NPPF roundtable for local planners, to be held at the London Wetland Centre in early November.

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) research programme

The Land Use Planning Working Group will shortly be giving recommendations for DCLG's 2012/13 research programme.

Sustainable Development Indicators

The Land Use Planning Working Group will be leading the Link response to the [Sustainable Development Indicators](#) consultation. Other Working Groups have been contacted for input to this cross-Working Group response.



Conservation covenants

The Legal Strategy Working Group will be submitting comments to the Law Commission from across the sector on the concept of conservation covenants in the coming weeks, and how they could contribute to the achievement of conservation objectives.



European Marine Sites (EMS)

Defra has written to Link regarding a change in the approach it will be taking to the management of commercial fisheries in EMS to ensure all sites are protected in line with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive. The new approach will be more proactive, assessing the potential impact of commercial fishing activities in EMS and, where appropriate, introducing local management measures to prevent damage to those sites. If a fishing activity is proposed within an EMS, and is considered by the relevant consenting authority to be a plan or a project which is likely to have a significant effect on the site, it will need to undergo an Appropriate Assessment before a decision is taken on whether or not that activity can proceed. Defra has set up an Implementation Group to take forward the changes and Link has been offered two places on the group.

Vice Chair

We are sad to report that Kate Sugar has stepped down as Vice Chair of the Marine Working Group, as she will shortly be leaving the RSPB to take up a new role. We would like to thank Kate for her invaluable work for Link and wish her all the best for the future.



NEWP+1

On 13 July, Link published its report, '[The first year of the Natural Environment White Paper: is the ambition being delivered?](#)'. The report concludes that, while significant 'milestones' have been achieved since [The Natural Choice](#) was published, three key issues present a risk to its effective delivery: the need for greater cross-Government commitment to delivery; insufficient urgency in identifying funding mechanisms; and a lack of clarity of purpose and dedicated support for certain initiatives. Link will continue to provide support to the Government in realising fully the ambitions laid out in *The Natural Choice*.

The EFRA Select Committee also launched a [report into the NEWP](#), calling for the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to lead a cross-Government programme of action to put nature at the centre of the country's economic decision-making.



Water Working Group meeting

On 30 August, the Water Working Group held a meeting hosted by the National Trust at their Heelis offices in Swindon. Agenda items included: discussion of the 2014 price review (PR14); updates from the Abstraction Reform Advisory Group; updates from the National Drought Management Group; the Blueprint briefing on the draft Water Bill and the Blueprint scorecard due to be launched in November.

Water Company Customer Challenge Groups

The Blueprint has written to all the CEOs of water companies and the chairs of each company's Customer Challenge Group (CCGs) to ask whether the companies have representation from environmental NGOs on their Group. The CCGs allow customers of each water company to input in the business planning for PR14, and the Blueprint believes that both the impacts on the natural environment and future customers are well represented by environment NGOs. So far, there has been a very positive response from water companies.



International Whaling Commission

Link wrote to the Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon MP, to thank him for attending the recent International Whaling Commission (IWC) meeting in Panama. The letter also thanked the Minister for his ongoing leadership on governance and financial issues at the Commission and for the UK's support for the small cetacean fund and environmental and welfare matters. In addition, the letter addressed several outstanding issues coming out of the IWC such as Greenland's aboriginal subsistence whaling quota and the Republic of Korea's proposed scientific whaling programme.



Working Group meeting

On 18 September the Wildlife Trade Working Group will meet to discuss the recent JLG meetings, UK CITES Charges, the Law Commission review, Environmental Audit Committee updates and potential up-listing and down-listing proposals at CoP16 in March 2013.

