

Wildlife and Countryside Link position on the England Biodiversity Strategy Review

Set out below are the outcomes that Link's Biodiversity Working Group believe **the Natural Environment White Paper, and the re-drafting of the England Biodiversity Strategy (EBS)** should achieve if we are to meet the biodiversity elements (halting loss and restoration) of the EU 2020 target. *The colour coding refers to the diagram overleaf which shows the five routes to local delivery of the EBS.*

1. Biodiversity conservation is given real **political commitment** at the highest level and there is wide acceptance that this is of **equal importance** to tackling climate change (**red**). **Accountability** for annual progress towards the 2020 target resides with a Minister (**red**).
2. Meeting the EU 2020 biodiversity target is an **explicit aim** of the EBS (**red**), supported by clear, effective **mechanisms for driving delivery and resolving policy blockages** (e.g. in areas such as planning, agriculture and forestry) (**purple**).
3. **A clear definition** of what successful achievement of the 2020 target would look like and a concise set of **SMART indicators** to assess progress towards it are produced (**purple**).
4. A clear commitment to delivering the full range of requirements of the **EU nature directives** (**green**) is adopted.
5. A clear commitment is made to getting all **protected areas** into **favourable condition** (**black**).
6. The recommendations of the '**Making Space for Nature**' report are fully addressed (**red/purple**).
7. Commitment to the conservation of the **list of species and habitats of principal importance** for biodiversity in England (s41 list) is reaffirmed. (**red**)
8. The **Defra Biodiversity Programme Board** should be expanded to include **civil society** (e.g Link reps) and subsume the work of EBG to form a **New High-Level Biodiversity Group** (**red**). This group should be **chaired by the Minister** (**red**). This would reduce bureaucracy by merging these two groups and would improve transparency and accountability, including linkages with Other Government Departments.
9. **New, effective mechanisms** (such as a biodiversity/natural environment equivalent of the Committee for Climate Change) are needed to: a) ensure biodiversity is addressed within other Government departments (with cross-departmental scrutiny) and b) provide an **independent** assessment of progress on biodiversity outcomes (**red**).
10. **Every Government department and local authority** is aware of its role in furthering the conservation of biodiversity, has a clear duty and plan of action for doing so. Every public body should identify a senior person with responsibility for ensuring biodiversity conservation is delivered (**red/purple**).
11. **Local authorities and local partnerships** are empowered and resourced to deliver the conservation of S41 species and habitats wherever appropriate (**red**).
12. **The third sector** is empowered to play its full potential role in delivering biodiversity conservation (**purple**).
13. **Adequate advice** on conservation delivery on the ground is available for S41 species and habitats where appropriate (**purple/black**).
14. There are new and substantial sources of **funding for delivering landscape scale biodiversity conservation** (this will often cross local authority boundaries) (**black**)

