

Wildlife and Countryside Link statement: Budget 2012

For immediate release: Wednesday 21 March 2012

Commenting on today's Budget statement, Dr Elaine King, Director of Wildlife and Countryside Link said:

"It is worrying that the Chancellor persists in wrongly casting our natural environment as a barrier to growth and prosperity. Claims that vital environmental protections stifle good development are groundless.¹

"The Budget's description of planning reforms suggest that the Government will focus on economic growth at the cost of genuinely sustainable development. The Government still has the chance to ensure its new reduced planning rules will properly protect our wildlife and countryside, not put it all up for grabs.

"Last October, our Nature Check report showed the Government had rapidly lost ground in its claims to be the 'greenest Government ever'.² We want to help the Government repair its reputation but that has to start with proper restoration of our natural environment and not treating it as an endless resource."

Notes

1. Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) brings together 37 voluntary organisations concerned with the conservation and protection of wildlife and the countryside. Our members practise and advocate environmentally sensitive land management, and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic and marine environment and biodiversity. Taken together our members have the support of over 8 million people in the UK and manage over 690,000 hectares of land.
2. Dr. Elaine King can be contacted at the Link office on 020 7820 8600, or at elaine@wcl.org.uk.

¹ Link's response to the review of the implementation of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives: http://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Link_response_to_Nature_Directives_060212.pdf; Link's response to the draft National Planning Policy Framework: http://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/2011/Link_response_to_NPPF_consultation_171011.pdf.

² *Nature Check: an analysis of the Government's natural environment commitments*: http://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Link_Nature_Check_Report_October_2011.pdf.

