

E-bulletin August 2013

Welcome to Link's August 2013 e-bulletin. See below for this month's top stories and updates from each of our working groups. If you would like to subscribe to our e-bulletin or submit news items, please contact [Louise](#).



EU Balance of Competences

In August Link coordinated a [Joint Links response](#) to the call for evidence on the impact of EU policy and legislation on the environment, as part of the Government's review of the EU Balance of Competences. The response, supported by 20 members of Link, 10 members of Wales Environment Link and by Northern Ireland Environment Link, made the point that many of the UK's most important environmental policies come from membership of the EU, and associated EU power to act in these areas. Engagement and cooperation at EU level ensures that we can rise to current and future environmental and economic challenges.

Link members also contributed case studies to the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) report '[Does the EU benefit the UK environment?](#)'.

UK MEP briefing on co-financing and modulation

Link has produced a [briefing for UK MEPs](#) on modulation and co-financing, supported by 12 Link members, Northern Ireland Environment Link and Scottish Environment Link. The briefing aims to raise awareness of these important issues and urges MEPs to do the following to ensure the CAP delivers public benefits for UK taxpayers:

- Reject mandatory co-financing of transfers into Pillar II in order to ensure such transfers are affordable for Member States.
- Ensure the maximum rate for transfers into Pillar II remains no less than 15% and the reverse modulation rate is reduced as far as possible.
- Reject reverse modulation as further reductions to Pillar II funds will seriously undermine prospects of meeting EU environmental targets.

CAP stakeholder event

On 12 August Elaine King, Link's Director, attended a Ministerial stakeholder event on implementing the CAP with the Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Secretary of State confirmed that a formal consultation on the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) will commence in October and will cover *inter alia* modulation of CAP funds. It was also highlighted at the meeting that Defra has published status reports on the new [RDP](#) and [Direct Payments](#).

Link seminars

Link will be holding a marine seminar on 16-17 September for marine officers from the Joint Links membership. The seminar will provide an opportunity to hear updates from each country and discuss issues such as ecological coherence and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Link will also be holding a workshop on natural values for members on 2 October. The seminar will include an introduction to the basic issues including ecosystems, natural capital and the economics of nature, as well as the political and policy context. This will be followed by a workshop-style session to identify key messages and discuss the opportunities and threats of a 'natural values' approach.

If you are a Link member and would be interested in attending either of these please contact [John Sadler](#) for the marine seminar and [Kate Hand](#) for the natural values seminar as soon as possible, as spaces are limited.

Policy Directors meeting

Link will be holding a Policy Directors meeting on 26 September to discuss Nature Check, Link's election strategy and updates on Link's Change Programme. If you are a Link member and would like to attend please contact [Kate Hand](#).



Working Group away day

On 1 August the Agriculture Working Group held a productive away day at the Ebworth Centre, a National Trust pastoral farm in Gloucestershire. The group had a tour of the farm and discussed greening of the CAP, the next RDPE, food security, uplands and Parliamentary activity.



Letter to the Minister

Link has written to the Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon MP, regarding the linkages between Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs), following a discussion at the England Biodiversity Stakeholder Group meeting in July.

Trilateral meeting

On 9 September Link will be attending a trilateral meeting with Defra and Natural England to work through the delivery questions about *Biodiversity 2020*, which were identified at a Terrestrial Biodiversity Group meeting. If you would be interested in attending this meeting or for more information, please contact [Kirsten Loveday](#).



Invasive Non-Native Species

Species lists teleconference

On 22 August Link held a productive teleconference to discuss developments with our invasive non-native species (INNS) lists at a GB and EU level.

Task and Finish Group meeting

In mid-September Link members will be meeting to discuss the review of the GB Strategy, the forthcoming EU legislation and raising the profile of INNS in the UK.

APPG for Biodiversity meeting

In collaboration with the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Biodiversity, Link has organised a visit on 17 October to the London Wildlife Trust site, on the River Crane, and to WWT's London Wetland Centre in Barnes. The visit provides an opportunity for MPs and members of the APPG to observe and discuss the impacts of invasive species.



Land Use Planning

Planning practice guidance

On 28 August the Government launched in draft format its national planning practice guidance as a new online resource. The new format is being tested with the intention of making planning practice guidance more accessible and making it easier to keep up-to-date. The online resource is open for public comment until 9 October and Link will be submitting a response. The final online guidance is due to go live in the autumn.

Working Group meeting

The Land Use Planning Working Group will be meeting on 25 September to discuss the newly published national planning practice guidance, fracking and Nature Check.



Marine

Joint Links marine seminar

Link will be holding a marine seminar on 16-17 September for marine officers from the Joint Links membership. The seminar will provide an opportunity to hear updates from each country and discuss issues such as ecological coherence and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. There will also be a number of speakers at the seminar, including Professor Callum Roberts from the University of York. If you are a Link member and would be interested in attending please contact [John Sadler](#) as soon as possible as spaces are limited.

Marine planning teleconference

On 15 August the Marine Working Group held a teleconference to discuss a Link response to the Marine Management Organisation [consultation](#) on the draft East Inshore and Offshore marine plans.

Crown Estate HRA meeting

The Crown Estate recently announced a new offshore wind test and demonstration leasing programme. The Crown Estate is required to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of this leasing plan. On 29 August Link attended a stakeholder meeting to hear more about the Crown Estate's approach to the HRA.

Red Tape Challenge marine proposals

The [proposals](#) emerging from the marine element of the Water and Marine Theme of the Government's Red Tape Challenge were announced in early August.

Transport Select Committee oral evidence

On 2 September two Link representatives will be providing oral evidence to the Transport Select Committee regarding the impact of pollution from shipping on marine wildlife. The evidence session is part of the committee's ongoing [inquiry](#) into the Government's strategy for the maritime sector.



Biodiversity offsetting meeting with Owen Paterson

As Chair of the Natural Values Task and Finish Group, Frances Winder (Woodland Trust) represented Link at a meeting on biodiversity offsetting with the Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on 29 August. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Secretary of State to update stakeholders on progress and discuss views on some of the issues that will feature in the forthcoming green paper, due to be published in September.

Natural values seminar

On 2 October Link will be holding a workshop on natural values for members. The seminar will include an introduction to the basic issues including ecosystems, natural capital and the economics of nature, as well as the political and policy context. This will be followed by a workshop-style session to identify key messages and discuss the opportunities and threats of a 'natural values' approach. If you are a Link member and would be interested in attending please contact [Kate Hand](#) as soon as possible as spaces are limited.

Deregulation Bill

Link will be submitting written evidence to the [Joint Committee's Call for Evidence](#) on the draft Deregulation Bill by the 16 September deadline.



Meeting with the Environment Agency

On 12 August Link met with the Environment Agency to discuss dredging and their proposed pilots that will reduce the regulatory requirements around desilting Main River watercourses. The Blueprint for Water remains of the opinion that the proposed Regulatory Position Statement (RPS) risks significant and avoidable damage to the environment.

Meeting with Gavin Shaker MP

On 15 August members of the Blueprint for Water met with Gavin Shaker MP, Shadow Defra Minister, to discuss the Water Bill. Discussions focussed on: the Resilience Duty in the Water Bill; upstream competition; abstraction reform; metering and dredging.

Meetings with Defra

The Blueprint for Water will be meeting with Defra on 2 September to discuss abstraction reform and on 6 September to discuss the Water Bill.

Southern Water's draft Water Resource Management Plan

The Blueprint has [submitted a response](#) to the consultation on Southern Water's draft Water Resource Management Plan (dWRMP). The response covers *inter alia* resilience, catchment management, water re-use and water efficiency. The Blueprint will also be developing an overall view of the WRMPs.



Crown Prosecution Service consultation

Link has [responded](#) to the Crown Prosecution Service consultation on the Interim Guidance on Victims' Right to Review. The response calls for the scope of the policy to be extended to include wildlife crime and enable those who are not victims, but have a legitimate interest and involvement in a case, to represent the interests of biodiversity.

Illegal wildlife trade stakeholder meeting

Link members will be attending a stakeholder meeting on illegal wildlife trade (IWT) on 11 September to discuss the aims and scope of the forthcoming high level IWT summit, due to take place in February 2014.



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