

E-bulletin: September 2012

Welcome to Link's September 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](#).



Nature Check parliamentary launch

The launch of Link's *Nature Check 2012* report will take place on 27 November, at a parliamentary reception hosted by Joan Walley MP, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee. Link will be joined by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Owen Paterson MP who will be delivering the key note speech.

Joint Links Conference

On 25 – 26 September Northern Ireland Environment Link hosted the biennial Joint Links Conference in Belfast. The conference, titled 'Valuing Our Environment: *helping people to recognise what nature does for us*', looked at the attitudes to the environment across the UK; the ways we can raise its profile and how Link members can most effectively deliver their work.

Delegates from Links in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England took part in workshops on CAP reform; the marine environment; measures of societal success and working together. A highlight of the event was a reception and guided tour at the Stormont Parliament Buildings, hosted by Simon Hamilton MLA, Deputy Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Environment Committee.

Delegates were also treated the next day to a boat trip around Strangford Lough, where representatives from the Environment Agency and Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership gave a fascinating insight into the natural history, geology and environmental threats relating to the Lough.

Blueprint for PR14

On 17 September the Blueprint for Water coalition published its position on the 2014 periodic review of water pricing: *Blueprint for PR14*. The publication has been shared with water companies, the Consumer Council for Water, Ofwat and Defra, as well as other relevant stakeholders. It is also available on our [website](#). Going forward, the Blueprint coalition will continue to engage with PR14 and its potential to deliver environmental outcomes, for both today's and for future customers.

Management Committee meeting

On 20 September Link's trustees and staff held their usual quarterly meeting, which included discussion of the 2013 budget and progress with the review of Link's operational strategy. Link will be circulating a consultation document on the strategic review to members at the beginning of October, followed by a one month consultation period. Link will be primarily seeking written

responses but will also welcome the opportunity to discuss its future operational strategy with members.

Joint Links update

For a quarterly update from our three sister Links [click here](#).



Rural Development Programme

Link and member organisations are involved in stakeholder engagement groups with Defra and Natural England to discuss the design of the next [Rural Development Programme for England](#) (RDPE) and will be meeting with senior officials in Defra in October to discuss this in more detail.

MacDonald Task Force on Regulation

On 5 September Link met 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 in the governance and implementation of [Biodiversity 2020](#). A Link representative attended the Terrestrial Biodiversity Group meeting on 6 September, which included a discussion of the implementation plan for *Biodiversity 2020* and a progress update from Task and Finish Group 4 – where Link also has a representative – who are working on Local Engagement and Delivery. Link has continued to push for a greater profile for *Biodiversity 2020* outside of Defra, a greater profile for vulnerable and priority species within the strategy, and for appropriate incentives and resources for the NGOs who are involved in the strategy's delivery.

The group will be meeting with Robin Mortimer, Director for Sustainable Land Management and Livestock Farming and Chris de Grouchy, Deputy Director, EU and UK Biodiversity Policy Delivery at Defra, on 8 November to discuss these and other issues.

UK Biodiversity Indicators Stakeholder Group

A representative of Link also attended the recent UK Biodiversity Indicators Stakeholder Group seminar on 7 September. The agenda included the disaggregation of UK indicators, a review of which indicators could be produced at a country level (i.e. England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), and evaluation of a proposal to develop a new UK habitat indicator based on the country Habitats Directives reports.



Forests

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 Minister of State for Agriculture and Food, David Heath MP, to discuss the implementation of the report's recommendations.



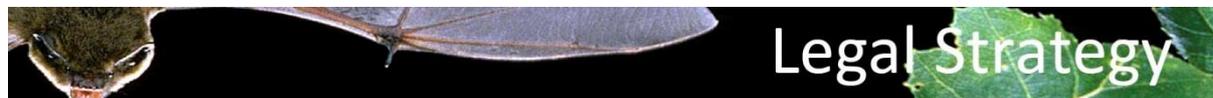
Land Use Planning

Sustainable Development indicators

The Land Use Planning working group is leading Link's response to the consultation on new [Sustainable Development indicators](#). The Link response will look both at proposed headline and supplementary indicators, including those on: natural resource use; land use and development; wildlife and biodiversity; status of species and habitats; water availability; and river water quality.

National Planning Policy Framework

The group is also looking at the options for gathering evidence around the implementation of natural environment policies in the [NPPF](#).



Legal Strategy

Working Group meeting

On 24 September the Legal Strategy Working Group met to plan Link's response to the Law Commission's [consultation paper on Wildlife Law](#). The group will be seeking a meeting with the Law Commission in October and will be holding another working group meeting at the beginning of November. For further information on the Law Commission review, click [here](#) or contact [Julie](#).

Conservation covenants

On 18 September Link submitted a document to the Law commission on the concept of conservation covenants and how they could contribute to the achievement of conservation objectives. This document combined comments from members of Link and Heritage Alliance.



Marine

Marine Socio Economics Project Workshop and NSMC Conference

On 24 - 25 September, Link attended a [New Economics Foundation](#) workshop in Bristol, exploring the socio economic benefits of marine protected areas. Link also attended a conference organised by the [North Sea Marine Cluster](#) which debated how the management, enforcement and monitoring of the proposed Marine Conservation Zone network should be funded. Ideas included, private sector

funding, philanthropic donations, public / private partnerships, tax incentives, product labelling and certification, biodiversity offsets and risk-sharing investment structures.

Mobile Species Project Report

Link has been invited to provide comments on the draft report of Defra's mobile species project. The final report is due to be published later this autumn.



Blueprint for Water scorecard

The Blueprint coalition will be holding the launch of its *2020 Blueprint for Water scorecard* on 6 November, at a breakfast reception in parliament hosted by Anne McIntosh MP, chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Water. The scorecard will assess progress against the 10 steps to sustainable water, as set out in the [2010 Blueprint for Water](#), and will also be an opportunity to build on progress and to push the urgent water agenda forward.

Smart Metering

The Blueprint coalition is also preparing a response to Department for Energy and Climate Change's Smart Metering Implementation Programme consultation.



ASCOBANS

Link will be attending the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) meeting of parties which will be held in Brighton at the end of October. Link will be submitting recommendations to Defra ahead of the meeting.



Working Group meeting

On 18 September the Wildlife Trade Working Group met to discuss recent Joint NGO Liaison Group meetings; UK CITES Charges; the Law Commission review; Environmental Audit Committee updates; exotic pets and CITES communications in the UK. The group will be seeking a meeting with enforcement authorities in November.

Elections for Police and Crime Commissioners

On 15 November elections for police and crime commissioners will be taking place across England. Over the next month Link will be writing to each candidate to outline why we believe they should set wildlife crime as a priority.

