

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**)



KEY

Green – overarching international drivers

Red = Accountability and coordination for delivering vision – linked to OGDs

Purple = technical support & delivery (includes local delivery, habitat groups, taxon group, lead partners)

Black = the Five Routes to Local Delivery:

1. Government action, directly or via Arms Length Bodies, through incentives, advice and regulation.
2. Civil Society actions for species and habitats, through advice, projects & policy advocacy.
3. Landscape-Scale projects – e.g. IBDAs/ERZs/National Parks.
4. Local Nature Partnerships. Civil society-led partnerships, involving local authorities, landowners, businesses, communities and statutory agencies.
5. The Planning framework, protecting sites from development, agreeing local strategic priorities

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) brings together over 30 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.

This position is supported by the following 11 organisations;

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
- Bat Conservation Trust
- Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
- Butterfly Conservation
- The Grasslands Trust
- The Mammal Society
- People's Trust for Endangered Species
- Plantlife
- Pond Conservation
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- The Wildlife Trusts

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