






Natural England End of Year
Performance Report
2006/7

OVERALL SUMMARY OF MARCH PERFORMANCE

Summary of Outcome 1: England's Natural Environment will be Conserved & Enhanced

- Natural England has successfully delivered Environmental Stewardship (ES) throughout the year and allocated within 97% of the UK budget element and 95% of the EU element. Successfully implemented provisional agreements to ensure continuity through the period of uncertainty over voluntary modulation and the new RDPE. Classic scheme claims paid a month ahead of deadline was also a notable achievement .
- The new RDPE overall budget has been agreed, with £2.9B over 7 years secured for ES. This doubles the funding compared to the previous programme and, subject to the uptake of ELS, is expected to includes over £500M for HLS
- Agreement in principle has been reached with Defra to improve environmental outcomes from ES as a key objective of the ES review
- As predicted the delivery of the SSSI target milestone has fallen short by 3% (75% against 78%) due to in year cuts across the Defra family

	2006/07
Overall	
Outcome 1	
Outcome 2	
Outcome 3	
Outcome 4	

Summary of Outcome 2 : More People Enjoying, Understanding & Acting to Improve the Natural Environment, More Often

- Good progress has been made in all the long term targets that make up this outcome with most of the milestones for the year having been met. Outcomes for this year are:
 - the launch of the Health Campaign
 - the successful delivery of advice to Government on the best way of improving access to the coast
 - a programme to develop access for the most deprived communities has been developed and is ready for implementation once the BIG Lottery funds become available
 - Initial phases to Improving access and service at Natural England National Nature Reserves have been completed including an interim service framework for visitors
 - The interim re-badging of NNRs has been completed along with investments to increased public access and enjoyment opportunities at 8 NNRs

Summary of Outcome 3: The Use and Management of the Natural Environment is More Sustainable

- Very good progress has been made in delivering these long term targets. Key achievements are:
 - The Catchment Sensitive Farming Project has been set up, advice delivery has started and a grant scheme is in place.
 - The Farm Demonstration programme for this year has been successfully delivered
 - The Farm Business Advice programme has been successfully completed.
 - Success in securing environmental policies within a number of regional spatial strategies.
 - We have received data from customers showing a positive feedback on our regulatory activities, particularly wildlife licensing, and have fully embraced the better regulation agenda.

Summary of Outcome 4: Governments, businesses, communities and individuals make decisions which collectively secure the future of the natural environment.

- Some major milestones have been reached this year including
 - the inclusion of many of the Marine Spatial Planning points Natural England has raised in the new Marine Bill and in partnership with others we have succeeded in getting commitment to the proposal to establish marine protected areas
 - the inclusion of climate adaptation in the Climate Change Bill.
 - green infrastructure strategies are now in place for all major growth areas,
 - the completion of a report on how to enhance the role of land managers as carbon managers.

Outcome 1: England's Natural Environment will be Conserved & Enhanced

Summary of Outcome 1

- Natural England has successfully delivered Environmental Stewardship throughout the year and allocated within 97% of the UK budget element and 95% of the EU element. Successfully implemented provisional agreements to ensure continuity through the period of uncertainty over voluntary modulation and the new RDPE. Classic scheme claims paid a month ahead of deadline was also a notable achievement .
- The new RDPE overall budget has been agreed, with £2.9B over 7 years secured for ES. This doubles the funding compared to the previous ERDP and, subject to the uptake of ELS, is expected to includes over £500M for HLS
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	2006/07
Outcome 1	A
Objective 1.1	A
Objective 1.2	G

Objective 1.1: To conserve and enhance England's natural environment

- Single account management arrangements for customers are being implemented as part of achieving and integrated service delivery model for land managers
- ELS agreements now past 4m ha (43% coverage) on track to meet 60% target through the rest of 2007.
- OELS at 217k ha. Uptake steady but lower than anticipated
- HLS at 98k ha. 93% of February end of year HLS payments made by due date 100% of claims received and payable now paid.
- Classic scheme payments achieved a month ahead of schedule. Farm woodlands claims completed and successfully transferred to the Forestry Commission
- Biodiversity Action Plan targets of restoring or recreating an additional 3,750 Ha of priority agricultural habitats and 175 Ha of priority wetland habitats have been exceeded
- The target to establish 90% of regional biodiversity partnerships & 90% of county biodiversity partnerships has been exceeded
- Voluntary modulation regulation and level of domestic funding agreed RDPE programme finalised. Outcome is better than expected for ES- £2.9B over 7 years and, subject to the uptake of ELS, is expected to includes over £500M for HLS. Agreement in principle with Defra to secure a stronger suite of environmental outcomes and value for money a key objectives of the ES review
- SSSI target: 75% achieved this year against a milestone of 78%. Major factor responsible for this has been in year cuts across the Defra family. Proactive approach to delivery of HLS on SSSIs is beginning to show some benefits.
- Farmland Bird Index has levelled off largely driven by increases in generalist species, many of historically declining specialist species still in decline.

Objective 1.2: To conserve, recover and enhance the marine environment

- A project to build on the success of the State of the Marine Environment report on track to deliver in 2007
- In partnership with others we have succeeded in getting a commitment to establish marine protected areas in the Marine White Paper. We continue to press for a Marine Bill with teeth to ensure effective protection of the marine environment

Outcome 2 : More People Enjoying, Understanding & Acting to Improve the Natural Environment, More Often

Summary of Outcome 2

- Good progress has been made in all the long term targets that make up this outcome with most of the milestones for the year having been met. Outcomes for this year are:
 - the launch of the Health Campaign
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2006/07	
Outcome 2	G
Objective 2.1	G
Objective 2.2	G
Objective 2.3	G

Objective 2.1: Increase the number, diversity and frequency of people enjoying the natural environment

- A programme to develop access for the most deprived communities has been developed and is ready for implementation once the BIG Lottery funds become available
- A project to establish baseline data on access to the natural environment is on track and new surveys are planned for 2008.
- Expanding the 'Walk your way to health' initiative received a set back during the year when a BIG Lottery bid was unsuccessful due to very strong competition. Contingency plans have been implemented to identify funding opportunities for Green Exercise portfolio projects.

Objective 2.2: Increase everyone's understanding of and ability to take action for, the natural environment

- A project to seek joint venture partners to develop a dynamic web based information product, promoting has been scoped
- The interim re-badging of NNRs has been completed by the end-March deadline. Seeking business partnerships to improve NNR facilities has been carried forward to 07/08
- We have not been able to measure progress this year in increasing the number and diversity of people volunteering their time to help conserve and enhance the environment. Due to the absence of baseline data an action plan for delivery in 2007/08 is being developed.
- Our outline proposals for sustainable leisure travel have been shared with key stakeholders and a project plan is in place for delivering this target in 2007/08
- An interim service framework for visitors to individual National Nature Reserve is in place.

Objective 2.3 : Improve places for people to enjoy the natural environment

- Investments were made leading to increased public access and enjoyment opportunities at 8 NNRs. These include a joint project with National Grid at Saltfleetby NNR to provide land for new parking arrangements; provision of circular footpaths and hides at Gossmoor NNR again in partnership with National Grid; provision of an observation platform at Hatfield and Thorne Moors NNR with UK Coal; and establishing additional interpretation material at Lathkill Dale NNR as part of wider project involving Seven Trent Water and the Government Office.
- Cotswold Trail, due to open in May - delays in SW coast path Street Gate improvement with reluctance of land owners to enter agreement and impact of coastal access proposals. Maintenance undertaken Hadrian's Way, Pennine Way to meet existing standards.
- The target to advise Government on the best way of improving access to the coast, has been delivered successfully.
- Negotiation with internal stakeholders has identified the main elements of a pilot plan to connect people to the natural environment in London from 2007/08
- Our approach to establishing partnerships with 30% of County Councils in England now focused on realigning research to tailor route selection to local need and Natural England priorities. Project plan in place and buy in already secured from Cheshire, Shropshire, Nottinghamshire and Herefordshire.

Outcome 3: The Use and Management of the Natural Environment is More Sustainable

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 - The Farm Business Advice programme has been successfully completed.
 - Success in securing environmental policies within a number of regional spatial strategies.
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	Current
Outcome 3	G
Objective 3.1	G
Objective 3.2	G
Objective 3.3	G
Objective 3.4	G
Objective 3.5	G

Objective 3.1: To improve the quality of environmental land and sea management through the development and adoption of sustainable practices, taking account of the impact of climate change

- Preparation for new Habitats Regulations (due end April) on target. Emphasis on advisory material (horizontal working with other teams and partners) to reduce licensing burden (Better Regulation). Customer feedback: high satisfaction from licensees with service (>90%), with a resolution of problems in over 50% of cases, especially badgers (>80%).
- Demand for cross compliance advice has been strong throughout the year. Over 34,500 farmers have received advice over the last two years, a third of all SPS claimants. Nearly 10,000 farmers and land managers received face-to-face advice during 2006. Overall, 75% of farmers say their understanding of cross-compliance has improved during 2006.

Objective 3.2: Environmentally sustainable farming, fishing and forestry with protection of natural resources, reductions in diffuse pollution and enhancement of the natural environment

- A draft Initial report highlighting the most beneficial & damaging land & marine management practices on protected areas completed and is out for consultation with a plan to finalise by mid May 08.
- The on Farm Demonstration programme for this year has been successfully delivered. Demonstrations include sustainable land management, promoting public access, water and energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- The final year of the Farm Business Advice Service has been successfully delivered.

Objective 3.3: To influence markets and supply chains to develop and adopt more sustainable practices and cut greenhouse gas emissions

- Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) project: 36/40 catchment appraisals completed, catchment steering groups established in all catchments, framework advice contract signed by Defra and £2.6 million committed. Advice delivery underway in all catchments. Preparations for CSF capital grant scheme completed, with launch date of 2 April. Twenty associate CSF projects on target to deliver.
- Most of the research and demonstration projects associated with connecting sustainable food production and the natural environment have been successfully completed.

Objective 3.4: Secure commitment to natural environmental goals in EU, national, regional, local and sectoral, policies and strategies

- Regional Spatial Strategies remain the most important and significant opportunity for influence. Significant gains for the natural environment have been secured through strengthened environmental policies and full participation in 4 Examinations in Public. Written statements have been prepared for 2 EIPs in 07/08 and response to modifications in one region has raised the profile of the Habitat Regulations Assessment process'.

Objective 3.5 : To increase investment in environmental enhancement and thereby the contribution of the natural environment to national, regional and local economies.

- Issues with the Port Authorities on the way to establish 220ha of intertidal habitat remain.
- Ahead of target the 330ha original target has been met with a substantial under spend. Additional land has been identified which could lead to a maximum area of 396ha being planted.
- Work with house builders in Growth Areas to accelerate the adoption of the accessible green space is ongoing.

Outcome 4: Governments, businesses, communities and individuals make decisions which collectively secure the future of the natural environment.

Summary of Outcome 4

- Some major milestones have been reached this year including
 - the inclusion of many of the Marine Spatial Planning points Natural England has raised in the new Marine Bill and in partnership with others we have succeeded in getting commitment to the proposal to establish marine protected areas
 - the inclusion of climate adaptation in the Climate Change Bill.
 - green infrastructure strategies are now in place for all major growth areas,
 - the completion of a report on how to enhance the role of land managers as carbon managers.

	2006/07
Outcome 4	G
Objective 4.1	G
Objective 4.2	A
Objective 4.3	G
Objective 4.4	G

Objective 4.1: Engage public and specialist audiences in debating what our future natural environment should be like.

- Work is ongoing to assess the evidence base for the current and future state of the natural environment.
- All parts of major growth areas now covered by a green infrastructure strategy. Work proceeding to secure exemplary sites to demonstrate the importance of strategies to deliver quality green space networks.
- Marine Bill now published and addresses many of Natural England's points on Marine Spatial Planning. Our policy advice and influencing supported by actively contributing to initiatives in Europe and Unesco, and through leading interagency MSP activity.

Objective 4.2: Increase the ability of the natural environment to adapt to climate change and contribute to greenhouse gas pollution reduction.

- Research is underway to test the methodology to assess the impact of climate change in 4 Joint Character Areas (North Pennines, The Broads, Salisbury Plain and Shropshire Hills) is underway. There are integrated activities with the NEMO project.
- Draft report on how to enhance the role of land managers as carbon managers is currently being peer reviewed prior to publication in 07/08
- Need to increase consistency and evidence base in response to planning casework for both on and off shore clean energy proposals
- Target area for biomass energy production has been met but the final scale of achievement will not be known until planting has taken place. Farm Demonstration activity has been used to support the delivery of this target.
- Spatial guidance on energy crop establishment and its impact on biodiversity and landscape has been developed in the South West and ready for implementing nationally. We have made progress in getting carbon and environmental sustainability issues recognised by government and to input, together with other key partners into the design and implementation of key EU/UK biomass/bio fuel strategies.

Objective 4.3: Ensure that future threats to the natural environment & opportunities for environmental improvement are identified and acted on

- The development of a pilot framework for assessing the cumulative impact of development on the natural environment is at an early stage and being taken forward in two regions.

Objective 4.4: Ensure society lives within the limits of the natural environment, growing and developing the evidence base to support this

- The first phase of delivering a programme of local community projects linked to the BBC Breathing Places series is in place and plans for the 15 City Events in early 2007/08 are well advanced.
- A £25m BIG Lottery Fund bid for a programme to improve access to the natural environment was secured earlier in the year. Final audit checks should be finished in April after which the programme will be implemented,