

Natural England Board

Meeting 8
13 February 2007



Paper No: **NEB PU09 03**

Title: **Strategic Direction Refresh**

Sponsor: **David Young, Executive Director Strategy and Performance**

1. Purpose

1.1 To seek views on the first draft of the refreshed Strategic Direction 2008 -13.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Board provides feedback and comment to inform the development of a second draft of Strategic Direction.

3. Introduction

3.1 At its December meeting the Board discussed our potential direction on a number of strategic issues and a draft framework of objectives for our refreshed strategic Direction.

3.2 The first draft of our refreshed Strategic Direction has endeavoured to capture the key elements of the Board's discussion, along with a wide range of input from stakeholders gathered through conversations over the past four months.

3.3 The draft has been discussed at the Board Outcome Groups, and both Defra and key stakeholders have had a full briefing. However it has not been possible to fully reflect all of the comments in this version, however this will be addressed in the next draft.

3.3 Strategic Direction 2008-13 will be published as part of a set of documents in April 2008. The set will comprise:

- The State of the Natural Environment 2008, bringing together the best available evidence across Natural England's remit on the current state of the natural environment in England.
- Strategic Direction 2008 -13 will set out what we are seeking to achieve and how we will address the key challenges and opportunities for the natural environment, our approach to delivery and measures of success.

- The third element is the Corporate Plan 2008 - 11 which will set out our corporate plan targets, annual milestones, resource allocation and partnerships to deliver our Strategic Direction.

4. Strategic Direction 2008 – 13

- 4.1 The current Strategic Direction published in June 2006 was ‘an unusual document for unusual times’; part strategy and part corporate plan. In producing two complementary documents in 2008 we will focus Strategic Direction on the outcomes we want to achieve, our approach to making this happen and how we would measure success. The Corporate Plan will be more specific about what we will do each year within the context of the resources available.
- 4.2 The draft Strategic Direction can be found at annex 1 and comprises the following:
- Foreword from the Chair and Chief Executive – describing the suite of documents being produced and some key considerations in drafting our refreshed strategic direction;
 - Introduction – illustrating our four outcomes and framework of objectives and a narrative to expand on the objectives to provide both inspiration and a clear understanding of the integration;
 - Working in partnership with others emphasising the need to work together for the good of the natural environment and indicating we will work in a range of ways from leadership and coordination through to direct delivery on the ground; the specifics varying for each objective;
 - For each outcome a brief summary of the current situation and who we need to work with, and, by objective, what we want to achieve, how we will approach our delivery and our measures or indicators of success;
 - A final chapter on being a Distinctive Public Body includes a set of objectives that provide a framework for our internal management activities. These reflect the strategic shifts and direction of the transition programme to create a dynamic and innovative organisation that is flexible and responsive to change.

5. Next steps and Finalisation of Strategic Direction and Corporate Plan

- 5.1. The draft Strategic Direction will be circulated to Stakeholders for formal comment during February.
- 5.2 A revised draft incorporating the Board’s comments and Stakeholder views will be produced for early March.
- 5.3 As agreed at the December meeting, the Board Sub Group will hold a meeting in March (13th) to consider a revised draft of the Strategic Direction and a first draft of the Corporate Plan. The drafts will be circulated to all Board members who will be welcome to attend the Board Sub Group meeting or submit written comments. The final Strategic Direction and Corporate Plan will then be approved by Chair out of session.

Annex 1

Draft V 0.4 4 February 2008

Notes:

- *Physically the document will be A5 and similar in format to the current Strategic Direction.*
- *Audience is primarily stakeholders and staff but should also be suitable for interested public and customers.*
- *Measures of Success will be subject to further work and discussion*
- *A writer/editor will be used to reduce length (by approx one third) and ensure clear but inspiring language and coherence through SoNE – SD - CP once we have broadly the right elements in place.*

NATURAL ENGLAND

Strategic Direction 2008-2013

Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

FOREWORD

Natural England was created to enable the natural environment to be approached in an integrated way linking the conservation and enhancement of landscapes and biodiversity with opportunities for people to enjoy them and engaging society in understanding how the natural environment contributes to our well being and quality of life.

We are charged with delivering a number of significant programmes on behalf of Defra. These include some of the key activities Natural England will use to deliver its outcomes:

- Delivering the £2.9 billion funding for agri-environment schemes through the seven year Rural Development Programme for England.
- Leading the delivery of the England Biodiversity Strategy and our Biodiversity Habitat and Species Plan targets.
- Developing an action plan for the implementation of the European Landscapes Convention.
- Delivering the target to achieve 95% of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition by 2010.
- Advice on the implementation of access to the coast and identifying marine protected areas.
- Advice on the adaptation of the natural environment to climate change.

The Government's agenda to meet future housing needs through Growth Areas, Growth Points and Ecotowns, creating sustainable communities and commitments to renewable energy targets are creating development pressures with which we need to engage, identifying and advising on how development might be achieved in ways which protects and enhances the natural environment and contributes to quality of life at national, regional and local level.

The issues and plans being debated in Europe continue to provide much of our environmental legislation and funding. There are also trends towards greater regional and local governance taking decision making closer to the communities it affects. The Sub National Review proposes simplified sub national structures and strengthened accountabilities in promoting economic wellbeing and tackling deprivation. We will therefore engage to champion the natural environment at all levels from local to European.

Our remit is clear that we are conserving and enhancing the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations. Therefore we will work with Government to engage people in understanding the pressures and challenges on the natural environment, not least through climate change, raising awareness of the impacts of our actions and the choices society faces in determining the environment in which we live.

We will work in partnership with others to achieve the greatest overall impact for the natural environment, our advice and advocacy will be based on the best available analysis and evidence and our practical action on the ground will reflect regional variations and local circumstances.

Our thanks go to the national and regional partners who have contributed to developing our strategic direction working with us to identify challenges to the natural environment and how we should work together to address these.

Strategic Direction sets our agenda for action. The challenges to the natural environment have never been greater, our resources are limited, but we seek to identify and build on the opportunities to secure our natural environment and the benefits it can bring to our quality of life.

Chair and CEO

CONTEXT

Climate change has become a high profile issue attracting extensive media coverage and debate in political, economic and environmental circles. Severe natural events such as water shortages, flooding and tidal surges have made the public more sensitive to their dependence on the environment and climate.

Society has choices to make about climate change both in how we adapt to 'locked in' change and how we take action to mitigate against further change. Both will have consequences for the natural environment. Our understanding of these consequences is at a relatively limited and our precise knowledge of how our terrestrial and marine ecosystems might be affected by climate change, societies response, other development pressures, and the interactions between them, needs to be developed if we are to select the most appropriate and effective levers to secure our future environment.

Many of our vital resources are now subject to global pressures affecting the availability of energy, water and food which determine the movements of people and species and the challenges this presents in terms of land use and population dynamics.

Agriculture is entering a period where new pressures and forces will impact on the decisions and choices of land managers, these new economic drivers are likely to present challenges to the natural environment.

The rising cost of fossil fuels and the carbon impacts are driving new pressures on land use for renewable energy. Development pressure, transport and growing demands for food will put further demands on our finite land area. We need to understand the extent to which new technologies might contribute solutions to current problems, and also whether they might create new challenges of their own.

Our population and demands for housing are growing leading to significant development in Growth Areas, Growth Points and EcoTowns. Our population is aging and is increasingly obese, healthy eating and exercise are seen as potential routes to avoiding spiralling healthcare costs.

While the media is raising awareness of natural environment in the context of climate change levels of interest in and action for the natural environment are either equal or below those in previous studies.

What we do about these challenges is ultimately the choice of society. We therefore need to be able to convey well evidenced information about the environment and the challenges it faces and create opportunities for debate and informed choices.

Some of the arguments are around economic choices and we need to engage at all levels building the economic case for the natural environment focussing on the critical role the natural environment can play in enhancing people's wellbeing and quality of life, and by challenging conventional measures of prosperity.

There are gaps in the evidence base. This should not stop us making progress on the best evidence available but we also need to consider how to fill some priority gaps. These include the geographic distribution, condition and resilience to pressures such as climate change and peoples motivation and preferred methods of engaging with and taking action for the environment.

Against this background of change and unpredictability we need to remain alert and flexible to recognise how future challenges might create both opportunity and risks for the natural environment.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic Direction 2006-9, published in June 2006, gave focus and clarity of direction to our first eighteen months. We said then that we would develop our strategic direction in our second year to give a fuller expression of Natural England's vision and direction.

Our refreshed Strategic Direction is one of three linked publications:

- The State of the Natural Environment 2008
- Strategic Direction 2008-13
- Corporate Plan 2008 -11

The State of the Natural Environment brings together, for the first time in one place, the best available evidence across Natural England's remit on the current state of the natural environment in England. It sets a baseline for our future work.

In Strategic Direction we have assessed this current state, the risks and implications for the natural environment. We describe what we want to achieve, where we will

need to focus our own efforts, and who we will need to work with to build consensus and momentum for action.

The Corporate Plan is delivery focused stating clearly the actions we will take over the next three years, the levers and resources we will use, the specific partnerships we need to form, and how we will measure our delivery.

A new set of Public Service Agreement targets have been reflected in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review. In addition to contributing to other Government Departments targets, Natural England will make a substantial contribution to the delivery of the two Defra led PSAs: Securing a Healthy Natural Environment for Today and the Future, and to the domestic adaptation elements of the Climate Change PSA.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our remit

Natural England's purpose was defined in legislation:

"To ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development" (NERC Act 2006)

In contributing to sustainable development Natural England will seek solutions which, while achieving environmental benefits also provide long term economic and social benefits and avoid untoward economic and social impacts.

Our Strategic Direction

As an organisation, we have chosen to deliver the purpose through the pursuit of four complementary strategic outcomes under which we brigade our activities.

Insert diagram of four outcomes

We are here to look after our natural environment today, to influence decisions that will secure our environment in the future, and we will do this through engaging people and ensuring sustainable use of the natural environment.

A healthy natural environment. Natural England's actions to directly conserve and enhance our landscapes and biodiversity, on land and within our seas. Influencing the policy frameworks and supporting individuals, organisations, land managers and business to take action to conserve and enhance the natural environment today.

More people enjoying understanding and acting to improve, the natural environment more often. Engaging and mobilising people to use, explore and understand the natural environment and how it can enhance our wellbeing. Increasing the opportunities available for people to make the natural environment an enriching part of their everyday lives

The use and management of the natural environment is more sustainable. Working to influence how our land and seas are used and managed today. Developing and promoting sustainable solutions to environmental problems at national, regional and local level and as a result increasing the level of social and economic benefits provided by the natural environment.

Decisions which collectively secure the future of the natural environment.

Bringing together organisations and individuals that influence and shape our environmental future. Developing our vision and identifying opportunities to influence the decisions that will impact on the natural environment of tomorrow.

Beneath each strategic outcome are three objectives which both create a structure for the organisation and highlight the critical challenges currently facing the natural environment.

How we work

Integration will be at the core of how we work. We have used our outcomes and objectives to create a framework for our work and give clarity to what we want to achieve for the natural environment.

However, there are many challenges such as climate change and engaging people which will influence the delivery in all our outcomes. Work under one outcome will often inform and contribute to the delivery of the others.

In delivering our objectives we will do so in a way that integrates the issues and express them in language that is relevant to the individual or audience we are addressing.

Work with Government Departments and agencies including Regional Development Agencies, the Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and National Park Authorities will be critical to delivering an integrated approach to the natural environment.

Natural England achieves its objectives through a mix of leadership, coordination and facilitation, advocacy and advice, incentives, regulation and practical action according to the international, national, regional and local challenges the environment faces.

Through our partnerships we will endeavour to combine the levers available to us with those of others to achieve the greatest overall impact. A cornerstone of our approach will be flexibility to respond to differing regional and local needs within clear national frameworks.

In advising Government and others on the impacts of the policies that affect the natural environment, we will always explain our position clearly. We will not always agree with the Government, other authorities or our partners; however, they will be forewarned of our views. We will be a trenchant champion for the natural environment and a strident critic of choices that fail to adequately take the environment into account.

Sustaining many existing partnerships is important to us but we also need to reach out and explore new partnerships with organisations and individuals within the private and community sectors as well as public sector groups that may have been traditionally less closely engaged with the environment.

In working with people we need to both listen and understand how they want the natural environment to contribute to their quality of life but also share and explain our understanding of the pressures for change and the potential impacts on that environment and the actions needed to avoid undesirable impacts.

OUTCOME 1 – A HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. ENGLAND’S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE CONSERVED AND ENHANCED.

Why we are doing it

Natural England will conserve and enhance the natural environment today for its intrinsic value, because landscapes and wildlife enrich peoples lives, the services healthy functioning ecosystems supply and the economic prosperity that they bring.

Change will happen and we must ensure our distinctive landscapes and the wildlife they support are robust and resilient. We need the right features in the right place and in the right condition to be able to withstand and adapt to future pressures and challenges such as climate change.

We have a specific objective for the marine environment to add emphasis as it lags behind the terrestrial environment in terms of understanding and protection.

Insert outcome diagram with the three outcome 1 objectives

Current situation

England is renowned for its diversity of landscape character, and many of our finest iconic areas are designated as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Being shaped by the geology and soils, the biodiversity they support and the way we have used and managed our land, the distinctive character that gives us that diversity is highly susceptible to the pressures of climate change, development and changes in land use and agriculture. With notable exceptions, our more modern urban landscapes can be bland and poorly designed with little reference to local landscape character.

Our biodiversity is still in decline. The UK Government has committed to the internationally agreed target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. This target is delivered through the Government’s UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the England Biodiversity Strategy. Designated sites remain important as core areas for biodiversity but we need to understand the impacts of pressures such as climate change and ensure we have a long term view for the management of habitats and species, the connectivity and the healthy functioning of landscape scale ecosystems that will be resilient to future pressures.

The marine environment is not as well understood or protected as the terrestrial environment. It requires particular attention and focus to develop the evidence, protection, understanding and appreciation of our seascapes and marine biodiversity. Whilst we have a political commitment to secure our marine environment through a network of marine protected areas, we need the timetable, resources and agreement on how this is to be done.

We will work with:

The landscape we enjoy is the collective result of the actions of those who directly manage land or indirectly influence its use and management. We need to work closely with land managers and those organisations that regulate and advise on activities that impact on our landscapes including, Defra, DCLG, DoT, GOs, RDAs, CABE, Local Authorities, National Parks and AONBs as well as the NGO sector with a strong landscape interest such as CPRE and the National Trust.

We will work with Defra on the England Biodiversity Strategy and the SSSI PSA target, and with Defra and JNCC and NGO partners on the European strategies and legislation for Biodiversity. We will coordinate a wide range of Government and non Government organisations and businesses at national through to local level to deliver and monitor actions to meet our biodiversity targets.

In the marine environment we will work with Defra, BERR, JNCC and the other Country Agencies, the Marine Conservation Society and the Marine Management Organisation (once established) and the fishing and extractive industries on the identification and management requirements of Marine Protected Areas, as well as the management practices in the wider seas that will secure a more healthy ecosystem.

We will engage with communities and the public through implementation of the European Landscape Convention, England Biodiversity Strategy and work to raise awareness and understanding of the marine environment.

1.1 Our diverse landscapes continue to provide inspiration and enjoyment for people and enable our wildlife to adapt to the challenges of the future.

What we will do:

- Promote all landscapes as important, for people and biodiversity.
- Advocate urban and urban fringe landscapes that are well designed and incorporate accessible green space.
- Promote multi-functional landscapes which deliver transport, agriculture, forestry, energy, water, recreation and housing in a way that is integrated with and contributes to local landscape character
- Secure high quality semi-natural landscapes in a way that retains important features and allows for adaptation to climate change.
- Ensure that the natural values of existing designated areas are protected and enhanced

How we will do it:

Our delivery will focus on:

- Maintaining a strong evidence base understanding landscape character across the country and monitoring and highlighting change;
- Advocacy and advice at all levels on securing and incorporating landscape character in a changing environment;
- Working with National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to retain features and demonstrate best environmental practice, including adaptation to climate change, within our designated landscapes;
- Promoting the values and benefits of our diverse landscapes to people
- Identifying landscape priorities to be delivered through sustainable land use and management.

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- Traffic light report on all character areas and major development areas indicating their contribution to retaining landscape character
- No net loss of landscape character (Cside survey, CQC, ELS protection??);

- X% of all major urban development rated as providing 'good' in design reflecting local landscape character OR design guides for all character areas – and applied to x% of development;
- NP and AONB delivering above average environmental management of our finest landscapes: monitoring local character, tranquillity, biodiversity in favourable condition, exemplary access management.

1.2 Our rich biodiversity thrives across the landscape, with ecosystems and habitats resilient to climate change.

What we will do:

- Ensure that clear strategies are in place for both halting the loss of biodiversity and ensuring resilience to climate change by 2010
- Rebalance biodiversity research to significantly increase the evidence base on ecosystem and habitat scale conservation and adapting to climate change
- Expand and coordinate funding for biodiversity
- Work with partners on the ground to demonstrate how landscape scale delivery can be achieved.
- Lead the delivery of biodiversity conservation across England including demonstrating exemplary on-ground delivery
- Ensure that the natural values of existing designated areas are protected and enhanced

How we will do it:

Our delivery will focus on:

- The evidence requirements for an ecosystem and habitat scale approach and climate change resilience;
- The leadership and coordination of action to secure our biodiversity;
- Advice and advocacy at all levels (international to local) to secure the funding, support and delivery actions of others for biodiversity;
- Delivering and working with others on focused projects that demonstrate innovative landscape scale delivery;
- Identifying biodiversity priorities to be delivered through sustainable land use and management.

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- Index of resilience and connectivity of habitats and ecosystems in place.
- SSSIs assessed and monitored for condition against new resilience and adaptation measures.
- Landscape scale delivery exemplars for major habitats fully implemented, explained and interpreted as demonstrations of innovation and best practice

1.3 Our marine environment is better understood, valued and protected.

What we will do:

- Develop an increased understanding of the distribution and condition of marine habitats and ecosystems
- Identify a comprehensive and representative system of marine protected areas by 2012

- Ensure that the natural values of existing designated areas are protected and enhanced
- Promote the unique value of England's marine environment

How we will do it:

Our delivery will focus on

- The evidence to identify future MCZs and provide indicators of the ecological health of our marine environment
- Policy and advocacy to secure a Marine Bill with teeth and its effective implementation
- Public understanding and appreciation of our marine environment leading to support for the measures that deliver a healthy marine environment
- Demonstration and direct delivery through management of existing Marine Protected Area

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- Halt and reverse biodiversity loss in the marine environment
- A network of MPAs in place that represents our range of marine biodiversity, protects key features and allows for adaptation to climate change.

OUTCOME 2 – ENJOYMENT OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT – MORE PEOPLE ENJOYING UNDERSTANDING AND ACTING TO IMPROVE, THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, MORE OFTEN

Why we are doing it:

This outcome is about the engagement of people, we are doing it because the natural environment improves wellbeing, to ensure the natural environment is properly and fully valued and to encourage people to actively care for the natural environment

Natural England will ensure people have the opportunity to engage with the natural environment and enjoy and learn about the benefits it can bring to their social and economic wellbeing. We want people to enjoy the outdoor environment; as a recreational resource, as a healthy environment in which to live, work, visit and explore, a place of natural beauty as a source of inspiration and spiritual enrichment, and for the benefits it can bring to our wellbeing and quality of life. We will also play a lead role in helping people and communities understand and take action for the environment.

Our focus will be on understanding people's requirements, motivations and needs, to maximise opportunities and remove barriers to all forms of engagement. Everyone should be able to benefit from a healthy natural environment.

Insert outcome diagram with three relevant objectives

Current situation

The Defra survey on public attitudes to the environment indicates that the environment (at 19%) is still in the top four issues the public think the Government should be dealing with, it is in fourth place behind, crime (49%), health (47%) and education (36%), although the proportion is down from 25% in 2001. However, approximately a quarter of the population indicate little interest or concern for the environment nor see a need for action by society or individuals.

The National Transport Survey has shown that the number of walking trips per person fell by 15% in the ten years up to 2006. Obesity and physical inactivity are the greatest public health challenges, they cost England £2.5 billion and £8.2 billion respectively. Increasing access to the outdoor environment can play a pivotal role in efforts to increase activity and reduce obesity.

At present around half of the population visits the countryside or open space as an important source of recreation. However, a third of adults do not visit the countryside at all. The people who do use the outdoor environment are a subset of the wider population with some groups of people being significantly underrepresented.

For those that do want to directly experience the outdoor environment England currently has around 190,000 km of Public Rights of Way, 3,800km of National Trail, 865,000ha of open access land, plus access through agri-environment schemes, parks, open spaces, walks and attractions in public and private ownership. Yet are these providing the right type of access in the right places managed in the right way for 21st Century access and recreation needs? Is there sufficient provision in and around where people live?

We will work with:

We will look to establish new partnerships in new sectors to create opportunities to engage people with the natural environment and find ways of working with groups and communities who have less traditional engagement with our sector.

We will work with Defra, the media, private sector companies and a wide range of our partners to engage people in finding out about and taking action for the benefit of the environment.

The health sector at national and local level to increase recognition and prescription of access to the natural environment for our health, and work with the local authorities, community and health sectors on the provision and management of opportunities for healthy walking.

Education organisations at national and regional level to secure frameworks and facilitate overcoming barriers to the incorporation of formal and informal learning opportunities in education. We will work with providers of study places to ensure the coordination of provision of opportunities.

Similarly we will engage with Government initiatives on citizenship and volunteering to facilitate people engaging and taking action for the environment. We will work with voluntary committee and council members who make decisions on behalf of the environment, and commercial businesses to support their staff in using their skills to the benefit of the environment as well as with established experts in this area such as BTCV, National Trust, RSPB and Wildlife Trusts.

Partners providing managing and promoting access to ensure a joined up approach to the provision of sites, routes and information. These will include Local Authorities, National Parks, Forestry Commission, the Environment Agency, Sport England, Sustrans, AONBs, the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and private sector providers.

In identifying and addressing gaps, opportunities and barriers to use, including securing investment and the identification of business opportunities, we will work with local authorities, local access fora, community and voluntary groups, land owners and managers, private organisations and the business sector.

On the legislation and implementation of access to the coast we will work with Government, user groups, and land managers and their representatives.

2.1 People have places to access and enjoy a high quality natural environment

What we will do:

- Ensure the provision of an accessible network of places and routes which provide the opportunity for people to access and enjoy a high quality natural environment at a local, regional and national level.
- Champion sustainable access provision, particularly by expanding sustainable transport to areas with high demand.
- Integrate our plans to improve access to the natural environment with plans for recreation and health provision.
- Ensure the strategic use of National Natural Reserves to complement existing access provision.
- Develop new and innovative opportunities to experience the natural environment on National Nature Reserves, particularly in poorly serviced areas.
- Provide guidance on service standards for access to the natural environment
- Ensure access to the natural environment is actively promoted across the country.

How we will do it:

Our delivery will focus on

- the evidence regarding the current volume, type, proximity and quality of access available to people across the country, and where there are gaps;
- a strategic understanding of where additional or differently managed access provision is required and where more information or support is required to use existing provision.
- The provision of policies, advice, advocacy and facilitation to address gaps or improve quality of provision and its use (eg fora, bids etc).
- Direct delivery will be limited eg innovative work on NNRs or where they fill a gap in existing access provision.
- The identification of priorities for delivery in outcome 3

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- (X%) of the population can find accessible natural environment a short walk from their home (OR proportion of population taking part in visits to the outdoors from home and the frequency of these visits increases – closer to Defra indicator)
- Map and analysis of existing provision and gaps in access provision.
- Y% of population using or visiting the outdoor environment in 2013.

- X% of the population feel they have sufficient places to visit and enjoy outdoor recreation (would have to survey)

2.2 People fully understand and value the contribution of the natural environment to our quality of life.

What we will do:

- Ensure Education Authorities promote opportunities for young people to experience and learn about the natural environment and develop constructive attitudes and behaviours towards its protection and enhancement
- Develop and deliver high profile campaigns to advance understanding of key issues that may affect the natural environment and measures to ensure it is protected and enhanced.
- Develop and maintain a strong evidence base on levels of use of the natural environment, barriers to expanding use and needs for customer information and services.
- Establish clear indicators for the level of use of the natural environment

How we will do it:

Our delivery will focus on:

- Public awareness – using and developing the evidence on public attitudes and motivations and coordinating and facilitating actions to increase understanding and awareness of the natural environment and the benefits it provides, directly raising awareness on specific issues eg through campaigns and media.
- Education – working at strategic level to ensure Government policies are in place on understanding, conservation and enjoyment of the natural environment and the coordination and facilitation to provide and promote places for outdoor learning.
- Health – advocacy and advice to influence Health policies to secure the prescription of use of the outdoor environment for health care and coordination and facilitation of the provision of opportunities and activities to enable people to use the outdoor environment to benefit their health.

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- Increase levels of understanding and appreciation of the natural environment and how it contributes to people's quality of life in target audiences by 50% above baseline
- Increase the number of people using the natural environment by 2 million above baseline (from 2.2 but also a similar target for 2.1 - which is OK as it relies on provision of place and promotion/ encouragement to use)
- Prescription of walking outdoors as a part of a healthy lifestyle increased is by z %

2.3 People increasingly take action to protect and enhance the natural environment.

What we will do:

- Identify the actions people need to take to improve the conserve and enhance the natural environment and target these to key groups.
- Support organisations to expand their volunteer base.

How we will do it:

Our delivery will focus on:

- Lead action to remove barriers to individuals investing their time in the environment and encourage organisations and companies to support staff in acting for the natural environment.
- Coordinate efforts and facilitate increases in the number of people and opportunities and skills to enable individuals to take action for the environment.
- Work with others to identify and promote actions people can take for the benefit of the natural environment.

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- 0.5 million people actively engaged to protect and enhance the natural environment.

OUTCOME 3 – SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT – THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT IS MORE SUSTAINABLE**Why we are doing it:**

So that the use of the land, freshwaters and seas does not compromise the natural environment and that development can occur in a manner which protects and enhances the natural environment.

Natural England will engage with the big economic and social issues of today to show how a healthy natural environment is a vital part of the infrastructure of a healthy modern economy and quality of life, and to enable change while protecting and securing our environmental assets.

We will work with land and sea managers to secure a range of ecosystem services, - the benefits provided by a well managed environment, including: clean water, healthy food, flood/water management, landscapes, wildlife and access that support recreation and tourism, soil and carbon management

We will use clearly mapped information on the environmental resource to be able to communicate areas of high priority and how the range of delivery tools can be used most effectively to achieve a range of environmental outcomes on the ground (geographic literacy).

Insert diagram of outcomes and three relevant objectives

Current situation

England has a total land area of 13 million ha, around 70% is under agricultural uses and close to 20% is developed/ urban land with the remainder largely wooded or open water. The overall changes in land use are relatively small (1% out of agriculture in the last decade) these changes are perceived to be larger as they may be close to where people live and affect how they view or use their surroundings. There is a lack of evidence and understanding of the role that the natural environment and land managers play in providing ecosystem services and underpinning social and economic wellbeing.

The England population in 2006 was 50.8 m and is projected to reach 60.4 m by 2031. Over 80% of the population live in urban areas and over 25% live in London and the south east. England is likely to develop an even more diverse mix of cultures, with much of the population increase as a result of net in-migration.

The demand for housing is growing, with a significant gap between demand and supply. The latest projections are for households in England to grow by 223,000 per year up to 2026, with housing stock growing at only 185,000 a year. Government targets are for 240,000 additional homes a year. Growth Areas, Growth Points and Ecotowns, plus the infrastructure and transport networks to support the population and economic needs will present significant challenges to our environment.

Global trends and markets and EU policies, regulation and funding are some of the key drivers that affect how private land owners manage their land. They often need to secure a financial return from their asset, but that land management also delivers a range of public goods and services, such as biodiversity, landscape and the supply and quality of water. We need to be proactive and inventive in advocating future policies and funding frameworks that protect the environment from damage and provide incentives for management that delivers public goods and services.

The farmed environment is a key deliverer of public benefits but future trends in agricultural management are subject to a number of pressures such as longer term liberalisation of agricultural markets and trade and ongoing simplification of EU subsidy regimes. Commodity prices have soared since December 2005, due to: high oil prices, drought in parts of the world, depleted world grain stocks, surging demand from developing economies such as China and India, and growth in biofuels. How long this will remain and how agriculture in England will respond and the impacts on the environmental services provided is difficult to assess at present.

In the marine environment development activities impacting on the environment include coastal dredging, industrial and port infrastructure and windfarms, coastal defences and coastal development are reported as major risks to the environment. Fisheries impact on the marine environment in three ways; the physical disturbance from bait digging, bottom trawling fishing gear and dredging for molluscs, The impact of fishing on the species composition and age profiles and hence the food chain and reproductive capacity. Pollution also affects our marine environment through both discrete incidents such as oil spills, but also through regular activity such as inputs of sewage and other nutrients, since 1984 nitrogen inputs to the sea have increased by 22%.

We will work with:

Defra, DCLG, BERR, Dept of Transport, Treasury on national policies and frameworks that shape economic and social development.

Regional Development Agencies, Government Office, Local Authorities and various regional and local fora and development authorities, working together with Environment Agency and Forestry Commission to secure spatial strategies, Local Area Agreements, Green infrastructure, economic development activity and social provision that respects environmental limits but also draws on the benefits of a healthy natural environment.

Work with land managers and land management organisations, together with Defra, EA, FC, EH, NPs, AONBs, FWAG and others to provide clear consistent integrated

schemes, advice and guidance on the management of our natural environment, water and forest resources.

EU, Government (including Treasury), JNCC and Country Agencies FC, EA , RSPB, NFU, CLBA, Water Companies, National Trust and others to secure sustainable food and farming that protects the environment and provides incentives for environmental management, and public funding of incentives in cases of market failure.

In the marine environment we will work with Defra, BERR, JNCC and the other Country Agencies, the Marine Conservation Society and the Marine Management Organisation (once established) and the fishing and extractive industries on a planning system and management practices that delivers the effective management of MCZs and the wider seas to secure a healthy functioning ecosystem.

Outcome 3 – the use and management of the natural environment is more sustainable

3.1 Land is used for social and economic development in a way that recognises, protects and enhances the value of the natural environment

What we will do:

- Identify where land is critical for wildlife conservation and maintaining important natural processes, and ensure that the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is its primary purpose for this land.
- Advocate a planning system which includes planning for the future of the natural environment, including in particular its resilience to climate change.
- Identify key areas that have particularly high environment values and deliver essential environmental services, and ensure that economic and social development occurs in a way which maintains and enhances these values.
- Ensure that the value of the natural environment is fully recognised in spatial planning and land use decisions.
- Ensure that there is provision for high quality green infrastructure in all new urban developments.
- Seek opportunities to expand and improve green infrastructure in existing urban areas, particularly through regeneration projects.
- Continue to provide a strategic and consistent approach to the natural environment through national policies and frameworks.
- Influence all levels of national, regional and local governance to ensure that the natural environment is valued for its own sake and the contribution it can make to economic and social wellbeing.
- Identify clear regional and local priorities and define the environmental outcomes that are required in order to deliver on National policies.
- Influence both the generation and spend of regional and local development funding to deliver for the natural environment.
- Ensure national policies are well informed by and responsive to regional and local issues and needs.

How we will do it:

Our delivery will focus on

- Advice will fully integrate landscape, biodiversity and access interests as well as working closely with partners to integrate wider environmental interests.

- Advocacy at national through to local levels using language and approach that is relevant to the economic and social agendas.
- Advocacy in securing frameworks and policies in Government, Agencies and business and communities that lead to greater action to protect and enhance our environment.
- Solution focused proactive advice to ensure development takes place in appropriate locations and incorporating best environmental design.
- Be bold in arguing against development which will have a impact on the integrity of the natural environment
- Champion the ecosystem services provided by the environment and the contribution they make to economic and social wellbeing.

Five Year Measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- Each region and local authority district given a five year RAG status (based on a bundle of hard indicators) OR Some other quantification of losses and gains to the natural environment and access to it due to development across the country?
- A single environmental spatial plan in each region, joining land use and management, and linked to climate change strategies, adopted in RDA led integrated strategies
- Value of natural environment delivery / investment per region – by all sectors??

3.2 Land is managed in a way which delivers environmental services alongside other benefits.

What we will do:

- Continue to champion multifunctional land use, integrating agricultural production and other land uses with the protection of the natural environment and the delivery of other public benefits
- Ensure farmed and forested landscapes are managed for the full value of the public goods they deliver in addition to the value of the products they provide.
- Financially reward farmers and land managers for the environmental goods and services they deliver.
- Establish accepted standards for sustainable agricultural and forestry production and secure support for their application to the sale of food and other products
- Ensure there are appropriate regulations for land management in place to eliminate worst practice and protect the natural environment.
- Ensure that agri-environment funding is allocated in a manner that delivers the greatest return for the natural environment
- Ensure agri-environment schemes have the capacity to respond to regional and local environmental issues and needs (geographic literacy)
- Continue to advocate changes to agri-environment schemes where flexibility is needed to deliver environmental outcomes in the most cost effective manner
- Ensure that agri-environment schemes are not used to subsidise environmental regulation.
- Continue to reduce the administrative costs of delivering agri-environment schemes (while delivering .

How we will do it:

Our delivery will focus on:

- Geographically literate spatial understanding of the environmentally important areas and features to be protected and managed.
- Tactical plans that show how the different levers – regulation, advice, incentive, direct management and demonstration can deliver the spatial plans above.
- Continue to seek and demonstrate innovative approaches to land management.
- Take a leading and coordinating role in environmental advice and skills development for land managers as well as delivering regulation, advice and incentives in direct one to one relationships
- Work closely with FC, and EA to achieve integrated environmental land management and with RPA, RDAs, NPs, AONBs, EH and local authorities to coordinate Government/Agency advice on the ground
- Advocate and influence market led approaches to reward land managers or generate funds for incentives.
- Policy and advocacy to influence schemes and policies to maximise outcomes for the environment

Five year measures of success:*Examples to be developed*

Proportion of agricultural produce certified and marketed on its benefits to the natural environment increased by y%

Quantified geographically literate understanding of the areas and features being targeted, the achievement of those targets and quantification of the public benefits delivered.

Y% (Xha) of targeted land in agri-environment schemes (2013 uptake targets but focused on delivering priorities)

Use Defra's index of farmings positive and negative impacts on the natural environment

3.3 The use and management of the marine environment is more sustainable.**What we will do:**

- Advocacy and advice on ensuring planning and fisheries policies deliver for the marine environment
- Evidence and monitoring of their effectiveness.

How we will do it:

- Leadership in influencing the securing of the Marine Bill and EU regulations that provide the policies and mechanisms that will secure our objective.
- Advocate the development of an evidence base and monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of actions
- Advice and advocacy to secure an effective planning system for the marine environment.
- Work directly with fisheries and extractive industries to secure sustainable management practices

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- Clear objectives and management actions in place that will secure the condition of the MCZs
- Marine fish index established and five year reporting on the health of the marine environment

OUTCOME 4 – A SECURE ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE – DECISIONS WHICH COLLECTIVELY SECURE THE FUTURE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Why we are doing it:

The factors that affect the natural environment are complex and changing rapidly. The choices we make today we will have to live with tomorrow. They affect the places we live in and how we use them for work, relaxation, learning and play, both as individuals and as communities. We need to make choices that are affordable, satisfy the needs of people but do not compromise on the long term resilience of our environment.

The information and evidence is required to anticipate and plan for major changes.

Securing the natural environment for future generations is a big challenge for Natural England. This future depends on the choices that society makes about the state of the environment it wants and the rate at which it wants to improve its current condition and act to address future challenges.

We have identified climate change as a specific high profile challenge where we need to develop a deeper understanding of the implications and opportunities for the natural environment in the areas of both adaptation and mitigation in the marine and terrestrial environment.

Securing the resilience of the natural environment means understanding the processes and forces for change and working at a landscape scale to secure healthy functioning ecosystems that can adapt to unavoidable pressures.

Insert diagram of outcomes and three relevant objectives

Current situation

On a crowded island with a growing population and demands on our resources there is potential for increasing pressure and competition between land uses. Decisions on the use and management of our land and seas are taken in many different places with no overall unifying strategy to balance the different needs and demands. Future pressures for energy, housing, transport, food, space for water together with the impacts of climate change may require a more coherent and planned approach to balance demands and needs and secure our natural environment both for its own sake and our future quality of life.

A clear consistent spatial vision for our wildlife, landscapes and access that takes account of climate change, future land use and the needs of society, does not exist. We will develop such a vision to inform future plans and policies.

Horizon scanning, trends analysis, dimensions of uncertainty, future scenarios and other techniques have been increasingly used to help identify early signals of change or clarify strategic choices and options. We cannot predict the future but we can use

these techniques to help ensure we remain alert to change and rapidly assess the impacts and opportunities for the natural environment.

Much of today's funding for the natural environment is from Government and Europe. The heavy dependence on these two sources and the relatively short-term and politically-driven nature of public funding create risks around the future funding of environmental outcomes many of which require sustained financial input. We will seek to secure and grow public funding, encourage others to deliver environmental outcomes by demonstrating the importance of the environment to their agendas and explore new potential funding sources that might be used to deliver for the natural environment. We are already involved in the establishment of private sector and mitigation funds such as PR09 and the Aggregates Levy.

Climate change represents the most serious long term threat to the natural environment. There is an urgent need to reduce global greenhouse gas pollution if we are to avoid potentially catastrophic impacts on the natural environment. There is also an equally urgent need to develop strategies to enable the natural environment to adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already inevitable due to past and current activity. Changes in temperature and rainfall along with seasonal changes and extreme weather events will have direct impacts on the environment and indirect impacts will arise as society adapts to climate change which may create opportunities and threats for the natural environment.

We will work with:

A wide range of international to local stakeholders in developing a vision for the natural environment taking account of the wide range of interests.

Defra, EA, EEA, ERFF, LWEC, and other Government and private sector initiatives to scan for trends and issues that can impact on the natural environment. Engaging with Defra, DCLG, Foresight, National Trust and other partners and major landowners to understand future land use trends, pressures and strategic responses.

Land managers, EA and FC to anticipate and factor in the implications of climate change for land management. With developers and the energy sector to achieve goals for clean energy and development without unacceptable compromise of the natural environment.

With major businesses and institutions to adjust to the global trends in ways that secure our environmental future and with national and regional government to ensure policies and frameworks factor in climate change adaptation and contribute to domestic action on mitigation.

4.1 Our vision for the natural environment shapes future thinking and decisions at an international national, regional and local level.

What we will do:

- Establish a vision for the natural environment which fully integrates the conservation and enhancement of landscapes and biodiversity with the benefits of the natural environment for people.
- Ensure that future challenges are identified and translated into opportunities to secure the future of the natural environment

- Develop a land use strategy for England to ensure that our response to major trends such as globalisation, population growth and climate change result in protection and improvement to England's natural environment.
- Establish strategies for different types of landscape, to ensure that as landscapes change and evolve in response to climate change and other influences, England's overall landscape retains its diversity and distinctiveness.
- Lead the development of landscape scale ecosystem based strategies for the future of biodiversity across the country.
- Work towards a system of designations which establish integrated objectives for the natural environment and provide the flexibility to respond climate change

How we will do it:

- Use and build on existing work and studies in partner organisations and Natural England
- Evidence on trends and impacts affecting future land use and management
- Lead debate and discussion on developing a vision our future natural environment
- We will work with others to identify and advocate the land use strategy required to deliver our vision for the natural environment.

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- A spatial vision for the future (2050) natural environment in England which fully integrates the conservation and enhancement of landscapes and biodiversity with benefits to people.
- A (2050) Land Use Strategy for England that secures our environmental future and influences plans and funding at all levels of government.

4.2 Future challenges for the natural environment are identified and transformed into opportunities for conservation and enhancement.

What we will do:

- Track key international issues and national trends that provide the context to enable our development of effective national policies.
- Establish horizon scanning and long term monitoring and develop robust views of alternative futures for the natural environment in England.
- Engage at European level on priority areas to secure policies, funding and regulation that will support the future delivery of our outcomes.
- Continue to work to secure future EU and national Government funds for the natural environment.
- Broaden the base of funding for the natural environment from both the public and private sector
- Secure European environment and land management policy which ensures that farmers and land managers protect the natural environment.
- Secure the transfer of funds from income support to support for sustainable rural development, including securing environmental public goods in areas of market failure.
- Secure adequate funding for environmental land management in the context of a declining share of EU spending on agriculture

- Ensure that a higher proportion of public funding secures the the natural environment in the long term (buying not renting)

How we will do it:

- Work with others to advocate and provide evidence to secure delivery plans and indicators of success at European, national, regional and local government level that drive the funding and policies for the natural environment.
- Policies and advocacy to influence the CAP Reform and EU budget agenda.
- Evidence and innovation to secure funding from diverse sources for the environment.
- Draw on evidence from a wider range of sources to understand trends, dimensions of uncertainty and potential impacts on the natural environment

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- a clear view of the long term and emerging challenges for the natural environment.
- a European policy and delivery framework that fully recognises the contribution and the value of the natural environment
- Secure CAP Health check objectives
- Contributions from new public sources or innovative schemes for the management of the natural environment

4.3 The natural environment is resilient in the face of climate change

What we will do:

- Secure a legally binding national framework to provide a clear cross sector approach to climate change adaptation.
- Ensure that the natural environment is central to climate change adaptation policies and programmes.
- Develop a strategic and consistent approach to assessing the risk and vulnerability of the natural environment to climate change.
- Lead the development and coordinate the implementation of adaptation strategies for the natural environment
- Maximise the contribution of the natural environment to the mitigation of greenhouse gas pollution through both land use and management
- Secure incentives for land management practices that deliver measurable savings in greenhouse gas pollution
- Work proactively with the energy sector to identify areas of England where sustainable energy development can proceed in a manner which delivers long term benefits for the natural environment whilst minimising impacts.
- Assess the carbon footprint of recreation activities and actively promote and provide incentives for those which minimise their impact on climate change
- Reduce Natural England's greenhouse gas pollution in 2006/7 by 50% by 2010.

How we will do it:

- Leadership and coordination in adaptation of the natural environment
- Evidence to inform adaptation strategies

- Advocacy and advice to Government on the need for adaptation and the implications for the natural environment
- Contributing to mitigation activities delivered through land management and people's access and recreation activities
- Practical demonstration of adaptation and mitigation measures

Five year measures of success:

Examples to be developed

- A shared vision for our landscapes, adapted in response to climate change, which resonate with the public
- An effective legislative framework at both the UK and EU level
- The major risks identified and being addressed by public bodies
- More habitats and ecosystems in 'resilient condition'
- More land managers actively managing more land for Climate Change adaptation and mitigation

NATURAL ENGLAND WILL BE A DISTINCTIVE PUBLIC BODY COMMITTED TO PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Natural England will strive to:

Be independent and trusted
 Build consensus and lead opinion
 Be a catalyst for others and take action ourselves

We will continue to maintain and build a dynamic and innovative organisation. We are completing our initial transition programme in 2009. However, change will not end there; we are seeking to equip the organisation and establish a culture that will enable us to continue to adapt and absorb on-going change.

ONE ORGANISATION, ONE PURPOSE

- to focus on environmental outcomes as the driver for everything we do;
- to take an integrated approach: considering different interests, and understanding the whole business.

CREATING ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

- to inspire and advocate, internally and externally (boldly, responsibly, and in a timely fashion);
- to see the big picture and give a clear sense of direction and purpose;
- to build and enhance relationships with our colleagues and partners by doing what we say;
- aligning our passion and creativity to our purpose for the benefit of the environment;
- to always have the evidence to underpin what we say and do.

DELIVERING OUR BUSINESS

- to create and continually refine business processes which deliver our outcomes;
- to develop professional customer service and supplier management
- to achieve consistent delivery of business objectives by linking personal and team performance to organisational outcomes;
- to maximise the funding for the natural environment and manage all our resources with good governance and efficiency;

- to lead by example in adopting good environmental management and sustainable practices in all our activities

BUILDING CAPABILITY

to build the capacity of the whole organisation by:

- making our contract with the organisation;
- being excellent in people leadership: trusting and enabling people to deliver the right things;
- developing the skills of the individual and the team;
- being agile, flexible and embracing the change which future environmental challenges will require of us;
- learning through doing, and supporting our people to take risks
- to value the diversity and backgrounds of our people, stakeholders, customers and volunteers.