



Natural England Update 2019

www.gov.uk/natural-england

- Natural England is the Government's Statutory Advisor on the Natural Environment.
- A key purpose of Natural England is that of 'conserving and enhancing the landscape', including parklands and other designed landscapes.

This 'includes, but goes wider than, conserving the natural beauty of the landscape. It could, for example, cover conserving field boundaries (such as hedgerows and dry stone walls), and monuments, buildings and sub-surface archaeological features which contribute to the landscape' (paragraph 63 of the Explanatory notes to the NERC Act).

Cultural, historic dimension of England's landscape is acknowledged by the Act and the supporting guidance, and is included within the definition of the term 'natural environment'.

- 25 Year Environment Plan: sets out Government's goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it. It details how we in government will work with communities and businesses to do this.
- Defra will lead
- "Safeguarding and enhancing the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage."



Update on Natural England's Structure

New Chair – Tony Juniper CBE

Well-known environmental champion

Previously involved with WWF, University of Cambridge
Institute for Sustainability Leadership, Birdlife International
& Friends of the Earth

New Chief Executive Officer – Marian Spain

Previously with Plantlife International, Environment Agency
and the Countryside Agency.

New optimism within the organisation.



Natural England's Historic Environment Strategy

- Endorsed by Natural England's Senior Leadership Team
- Recognition of the wide ranging role of Historic Environment work across the organisation – from the more traditional Agri-Environment Schemes to Net Gain and Natural Capital

A **new Historic Environment Strategy** has been endorsed by Natural England's Senior Leadership Team. This is in recognition of the wide ranging role that the historic environment plays across the whole gamut of Natural England's business – from its more traditional place within Agri-Environment Schemes or NNRs, to its potential new role to enhance our work for People and Places, Net Gain and Natural Capital.

- Restatement that Historic Environment is part of Natural England's core business.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) is unambiguous about Natural England's role in conserving and enhancing the landscape "for aesthetic, cultural and historic purposes", which includes "monuments, buildings and sub-surface archaeological features which contribute to the landscape".

Key Developments



- However, the Historic environment expertise within Natural England has **reduced by 90%** since 2010, to 2.78 FTE
- Plus one temporary post (until March 2020)
- Following SLT sign off of the new Historic Environment Strategy the aim now is to consolidate and increase HE expertise (within budget restraints).

Excludes Inheritance Tax Exemption Scheme staff (whose work is externally funded by HMRC) and historic environment experts deployed in Evidence Services (whose work doesn't relate to heritage) and ELM Guidance team (whose work is externally funded by Defra).

Net Gain

- Biodiversity 'net gain' – way of funding and delivering growth and recovery of ecosystems at landscape scale
- Aims to leave biodiversity in a better state than it was before a development started
- Secures wider benefits for people and the environment
- Primarily driven by planning, but can be applied more broadly
- Enshrined in law with regular targets for Government

Likewise, look out for consultations that you can feed into on these.

Natural Capital

- Sustainable use of natural resource – forests, rivers, land, air, minerals, oceans.
- Sometimes referred to as 'ecosystems services'
- Critical for delivery of Net Gain
- Natural Capital Accounts – important tool
- Parkland/ designed landscapes should feature in 'provisioning' and 'cultural services' sections of NC Accounts

Likewise, look out for consultations that you can feed into on these.

Nature Recovery Networks

- Detail of concepts and approaches still being discussed
- Large “corridors” – landscape scale ecosystem recovery
- Underpinned by shared GIS mapping
- Partnership working across public, private and third sectors
- Critical for delivery of Net Gain

Likewise, look out for consultations that you can feed into on these.



Environmental Land Management (ELM) Scheme

- New post-Brexit agri-environment scheme
- Dependent on the Agriculture Bill
- Defra's scheme - Natural England provide technical advice
- Development slow due to external factors (Brexit progress / General Election)

These projects will have periods / further periods of stakeholder consultation. Historic Landscape Association and others in the sector should keep an eye out for these coming round.

Although it says "Nature" this is where the future opportunities for the Historic Environment will lie.

Glover Review

- Now published – available in full online
- 27 high level recommendations
- Government aims to respond to the proposals with detailed plans towards the end of 2020.



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- Administration of Countryside Stewardship Scheme transferred from Natural England to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on 1st October 2018.
- About 600 Natural England staff transferred to the RPA with the scheme
- HLS agreements have been being extended by 1 year, subject to criteria being met
- Leaving the Countryside Stewardship Scheme mostly for new applicants
- NE advisers are inputting into this process before approaching individual agreement holders