

## How we can work together

The Government alone cannot achieve the ambitions in the Natural Environment White Paper. The natural environment belongs to us all. Working together is the way forward. In realising these ambitions, the Government will provide leadership, and all that follows directly from it.

### Key areas of Government activity are:

- **Leadership** – setting the vision and ambition, inspiring and supporting others, leading by example
- **National priorities** – setting national priorities and reflecting European and international obligations on the environment
- **Risks** – managing and intervening where the biggest national risks or impacts exist for the environment or public welfare.
- **Regulation** – using better regulation where it is justified, where it is necessary to implement EU law, or to ensure fair and consistent outcomes. Using regulation to address economic distortions and environmental externalities, and setting minimum standards where needed to encourage innovation and remove the most damaging activities.
- **Funding** – in order to commission particular outcomes, set priorities and facilitate the involvement of the private sector and civil society
- **Data and information** – Government held data should be available to ensure actions are well-informed and appropriate. The national data would be used to take a strategic overview on national issues and cross-boundary impacts.
- **Facilitation and capacity building** – where barriers exist preventing others from taking action, and where Government action is needed to address them, or to convene partnerships of those who can.

Across the UK environmental policy is a devolved matter, and the UK Government works closely with the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. All four administrations share common objectives on environmental policy through our joint UK representation in the EU. We also co-operate on major studies, such as the UK National Ecosystem Assessment. Later in 2011, we will invite the representatives of the UK Devolved Administrations to work with us to publish a joint statement on the importance of our natural environment, and to develop principles for protecting and enhancing it where action is needed at a UK level.

The Government's environmental bodies, such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission and Marine Management Organisation, carry out vital delivery and regulatory functions. Work is in hand to develop closer working relationships between these bodies and local communities, land managers and civil society (see box below).

In the future, our environmental bodies will undergo triennial reviews that aim for continuous improvement. A critical aspect of these reviews will be the extent to which public bodies fulfil the Government's ambitions and commitments set out in this White Paper.

## **Strengthening Government's bodies which work for a better environment**

- **The Environment Agency** gives expert advice to the Government and takes action to improve the quality of water, land and air and reduce the risk to people, households and business from flooding; and (from September 2011) provide support and guidance on adapting to climate change.
- **Natural England** is the main delivery body for the Government's objectives on landscape, biodiversity and the natural environment, and advises on landscape and nature conservation.
- **The Forestry Commission** has a general duty to promote the interests of forestry, develop afforestation and the supply of timber and other forest products.
- **The Marine Management Organisation** makes a significant contribution to sustainable development in the marine area and promotes the UK government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas.

These bodies will **collaborate to deliver joined-up outcomes for the environment, for society and for the economy in more cost-effective ways**, particularly through:

### **1. Excellent customer services**

- Working more closely to deliver responsive, reliable and respectful customer-focused services
- Providing simpler and more direct routes to access consistent, efficient, high quality service

### **2. Smart and effective regulation**

- Aligning their positions on regulation creating a more consistent, proportionate and better targeted regime
- Enforcing protection while also providing coherent, consistent and streamlined advice to facilitate the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development

### **3. Joined-up evidence, analysis and advice**

- Working closely together in delivering high quality and accessible evidence, analysis and advice
- Integrating expertise and supporting partnerships with Government, communities and businesses

### **4. Integrated and targeted delivery**

- Joined-up delivery that integrates outcomes for the environment, society and the economy
- Focussing delivery to enable more people and firms to benefit from a healthy natural environment

Action by Government is not of itself sufficient. Businesses, civil society organisations, local government and communities, individual citizens must also roll up their sleeves and get stuck in. Change for the better will come because our society has been big enough to make it happen. The box below illustrates some the action that different sections of our society could take. The stakes are high. If we pull together and make the natural choice, we will achieve the ambitions of this white paper and realise the value of nature.

<b>Making the natural choice - a role for everyone</b>	
<b>Individuals, consumers and communities can...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose to connect with and be inspired by nature, for better health and well-being, in neighbourhoods or through our nation's countryside, coast and seas.</li> <li>• Make good environmental choices at home, in the garden and when shopping.</li> <li>• Take part in collective action to improve the environment in neighbourhoods and communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Land Managers can...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not only maintain but improve the range of important services that the land provides, supporting their livelihood, and the livelihood of their wider community and economy.</li> <li>• join-up efforts with neighbouring land managers, to protect and improve nature's services on a bigger scale and create a network for nature.</li> </ul>
<b>Users of the sea...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage fish stocks sustainably.</li> <li>• strike an appropriate balance between marine conservation and the utilisation of marine resources, to ensure communities gain a range of social, environmental and economic benefits.</li> </ul>
<b>Businesses can...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, manage, reduce and report on their impacts on natural capital throughout their supply chains at home and abroad – reducing risks and improving their brand image.</li> <li>• Exploit new business opportunities for greener products and services which improve natural capital.</li> <li>• Support employees and local communities in action to improve the natural environment locally.</li> </ul>
<b>Local councils and partnerships can...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish better ecological networks locally, including Natural Restoration Areas.</li> <li>• Identify and improve the local economic and social benefits of a healthy natural environment, working with Local Enterprise Partnerships and others.</li> <li>• Establish and support a Local Nature Partnership.</li> <li>• Support neighbourhoods and communities to take action and improve nature on the doorstep.</li> </ul>