

## EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

5 July 2011

### RECENT POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS (DEFRA)

#### Report of the Chief Executive

**Purpose of Report:** To advise Members of the publication by Defra of Uplands Policy Review; Natural Environment White Paper and Defra's response to The Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (the Lawton Report).

**Legal and Equality Implications:** National Parks and National Park Authorities are referred to in a number of recent policy announcements from Defra. The Authority will need to take these into account when setting priorities and in preparing the Partnership Plan for Exmoor National Park

**Financial and Risk Implications:** No direct financial implications arise from the reports.

**Business Plan action:** No specific action in the Business Plan.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the Authority NOTES the recent policy documents published by Defra and the implications for the National Park and for the Authority.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has published a number of key policy documents in recent months that will have an impact on the National Park and the work of the National Park Authority. The most significant are:

- Uplands Policy Review published in March 2011;
- Natural Environment White Paper entitled "The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature" published on 7 June; and
- The Government's response to The Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (the Lawton Report) also published on 7 June.

1.2 The new biodiversity strategy for England is also expected to be published in June 2011 and a Water White Paper is scheduled for December 2011.

## 2. DEFRA UPLANDS POLICY REVIEW

2.1 The Defra Uplands Policy Review has resulted from a commitment in the Government's Coalition Agreement and also forms the formal response to the 'High Ground, High Potential' report published by the Commission for Rural Communities in June 2010.

- 2.2 The statement sets out the conclusions of the Government’s policy review, along with a range of actions which the Government will take, in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors, to help secure the future sustainable development of the English uplands. Appendix 1 provides a list of actions taken from the Executive Summary of the review statement.
- 2.3 The focus by Defra on communities in upland areas is welcome as is the commitment to the actions set out in the review. A number of the actions have particular implications for farming in the National Park and some of these are set out in table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Uplands Policy Review actions supporting England’s hill farmers and delivering public goods from the uplands environment**

Defra action set out in the Uplands Policy Review	Implications for Exmoor National Park
Create an “Uplands Theme” within the new delivery arrangements for the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)	There is evidence that Regional Development Agencies have had different approaches when considering proposals for RDPE funding to farmers in upland areas. An uplands focus and greater consistency is to be welcomed.
Ensure that funding is available within the 2007-13 RDPE to allow all farmers in the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) to enter Uplands Entry Level Stewardship (Uplands ELS).	Whilst welcome, the most significant concern on Exmoor is likely to be the future availability of funding for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) schemes. Less HLS will mean that most farmers leaving the ESA scheme will only be eligible for ELS and UELS with only ELS for outside the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA)
Ensure, longer-term, that reform of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2013 supports both the competitiveness of hill farms and makes adequate payment to secure the provision of public goods from the uplands, beyond those the market provides; and, that any future redesignation of Less Favoured Areas (LFA) fully captures the land in England that we consider to be genuinely ‘naturally handicapped’.	This action is broadly in line with the approach being advocated by the South West Uplands Federation.
Promote new ways to pay for ecosystem services (especially those related to water and carbon/peat).	A pilot ‘ecosystems services’ project is currently underway within the immediate catchment of Wimbleball Lake. The outcome of this work will be reported to Defra to help in the development of practical schemes to deliver new payment regimes.

- 2.4 The Policy Review envisages a role for National Park Authorities and includes the action to: *“encourage National Park Authorities to play a more active role in facilitating local partnerships to create shared plans of action, which can deliver multiple policy outcomes from land management.”*
- 2.5 Other actions are aimed at benefitting uplands communities and economy and some of these are set out in table 2 where there are implications for communities in the National Park.

**Table 2 - Uplands Policy Review actions supporting sustainable upland communities**

<b>Defra action set out in the Uplands Policy Review</b>	<b>Implications for Exmoor National Park</b>
Explore the scope for joint Defra/DCMS opportunities to support rural tourism, including in the uplands.	Progress will be monitored to ensure that Exmoor is able to benefit from specific measures as they are developed.
Explore the scope for channelling more tourism revenue towards those who manage upland landscapes, working with organisations such as the Prince's Countryside Fund.	The 'CareMoor for Exmoor' scheme led by the Authority and supported by local tourism businesses provides some income for conservation and access projects in the National Park. Developing a scheme that can help fund farming and land management in a significant way will be a considerable challenge.
Create a rural Community Broadband Fund expected to be worth up to £20m and to be jointly funded by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and Defra (using RDPE European funds).	The Authority is supporting a partnership led by Somerset and Devon County Councils to increase superfast broadband infrastructure across both counties including rural areas. The partnership has secured more than £30 million for broadband from BDUK and is currently seeking a private sector delivery partner. The ENPA Chairman has written to the Defra Minister to seek support for Exmoor from the proposed Rural Community Broadband Fund and received a reply stating that details of the new fund will be available in the Autumn.
Assess Ofcom's reports on the coverage of mobile telephone and broadband networks in rural areas and, where appropriate, consider possible further action to eliminate enduring "not spots".	ENPA planning team has been actively encouraging mobile phone providers to extend their coverage in the National Park. So far, success has been achieved in securing an additional mast serving Lynton but there is general reluctance to invest in infrastructure where there will be little phone traffic.
Ensure that upland businesses can benefit from the new business support arrangements being introduced across the country.	We will monitor initiatives as they develop to help ensure that Exmoor businesses benefit wherever possible.
Ensure that national policies promote the survival and, where possible, expansion of existing rural services, and work with local authorities and civil society partners to create the conditions in which entrepreneurs and communities can set up new services for rural communities.	We will monitor initiatives as they develop to help ensure that Exmoor communities benefit wherever possible.
Ensure that upland households and communities are able to benefit from the extensive range of energy efficiency and fuel poverty schemes in order to reduce their heating bills and take control of their own energy needs.	This is likely to form an important element of the next phase of the programme aimed at achieving a carbon-neutral National Park building on the recent success of the Low Carbon Communities Challenge.

- 2.6 The Defra Uplands Policy Review notes the strong link between National Parks and the uplands as almost two thirds of the uplands lie within a National Park. The review refers to the current review by Defra of governance arrangements in National Park Authorities and confirms its support for the vision for National Parks set out in the *Government Vision and Circular for the English National Parks and the Broads* published by Defra in March 2010.
- 2.7 The Review also sets out the government response to the recommendation made by the Commission for Rural Communities in its September 2010 report. This stated that *“Defra should enhance the role and value of the National Park Authorities by increasing their statutory responsibilities to give equal priority and status to foster the economic and social well being of local communities alongside the existing statutory purposes set out in section 61 of the Environment Act 1995.”*
- 2.8 Defra has responded to this specific recommendation with an action to consult widely on a possible change to the legislation on the role of National Park Authorities to reflect the importance of sustainable development. More fully, the Defra response states:

*“108. The Government has carefully considered extending the scope of the National Park purposes and has reviewed the responses to the Governance Review of the National Parks. We recognise that National Park Authorities already have a socio-economic function, which means that they are expected to deliver socio-economic benefits when pursuing their purposes and work in cooperation with local authorities and others who have the prime socio-economic responsibility. We also recognise that National Park Authorities already engage in socio-economic activities, for example running training courses in rural skills or advising small businesses. Indeed, it is hard to envisage the existing purposes of National Park Authorities being effectively delivered without their also being active on the socio-economic front.*

*109. The Government has therefore concluded that there are no overwhelming arguments for adding a socio-economic purpose. However, the National Park Vision and Circular are based around the premise of sustainability (each of the National Parks already fund sustainable development), and supporting sustainable development is inherent in what they do. The Government thinks that it may therefore be appropriate to change the legislation to reflect the importance of sustainable development. We will consult widely to seek views on this proposal.”*

### **3. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WHITE PAPER**

- 3.1 On 7 June Defra published the Natural Environment White Paper. The stated intention of the White Paper is “to mainstream the value of nature across society by:
- facilitating greater local action to protect and improve nature;
  - creating a green economy, in which economic growth and the health of natural resources sustain each other, and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature;
  - strengthening the connections between people and nature to the benefit of both; and
  - showing leadership in the European Union and internationally, to protect and enhance natural assets globally.”

- 3.2 The Executive Summary of the White Paper is attached at Appendix 2. The White Paper takes forward concepts developed in the recent 'UK National Ecosystem Assessment' and 'Making Space for Nature' report. The 'UK National Ecosystem Assessment' is the first analysis of the UK's natural environment in terms of the benefits it provides to society and economy and the role of ecosystems in providing services that bring benefits to people. The 'Making Space for Nature' report is based on an independent review of wildlife sites and the ecological network in England.
- 3.3 Few specific mentions are made of National Parks in the White Paper. However, the policy set out in the White Paper will form a key consideration for all bodies supported by Defra and we will need to ensure that the implications are taken into account in the forthcoming Partnership Plan for Exmoor National Park.
- 3.4 The White Paper includes a commitment to establish Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) to strengthen local action for biodiversity. The county Wildlife Trusts have taken the initiative to bring together partnerships involving a wide range of groups and organisations.
- 3.5 Natural England is being asked to identify 12 new Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) supported by £7.5 million of funding. The aim of NIAs is "to enhance and reconnect nature on a significant scale, where the opportunities and benefits justify such action". Early indications are that NIAs would be expected to cover around 10,000 hectares and be led by local partnerships with a key role for farmers and landowners. The process for identifying areas will be a competitive one and there is an expectation that National Parks could take a lead in this initiative.
- 3.6 On Exmoor, an area such as the Brendon Hills might be an appropriate focus for a NIA bid. This would build on the achievements of the Exmoor ESA and has the potential to provide additional support to farmers and land managers who are unlikely to be eligible for HLS schemes when their ESA agreement comes to an end. The bid will need to have the active engagement of landowners and farmers if it is to succeed and it is proposed to take local soundings once guidance has been issued for the NIA bidding process.
- 3.7 The White Paper also refers to reforms of the planning system so that development can contribute towards enhancing natural networks. A particular mechanism being explored is that of biodiversity offsets where adverse impacts from development on biodiversity might be offset through conservation initiatives elsewhere. This is a controversial area, however, with concern that the concept of offsets does not lead to the loss of sites that would otherwise be protected. It is likely that the impact of these measures within the National Park is likely to be limited in scale.
- 3.8 There is a commitment to develop payments to reward providers for maintaining so-called 'ecosystem services' such as water quality and carbon sequestration. Policy relating to the water environment are likely to be set out in a forthcoming Water White Paper in advance of the forthcoming negotiations between water companies and OFWAT. South West Water is actively involved in these discussions and, along with several other water companies, is encouraging OFWAT to ensure that its guidelines include measures to enable water companies to pay for water supply (quantity and quality); for sewage works protection (e.g. by maintaining river flows), and to protect downstream areas from flooding.
- 3.9 Other measures announced in the Natural Environment White Paper will help encourage greater public engagement in achieving a healthy natural environment. Examples of particular relevance to Exmoor include encouragement for schools to

teach outdoors and support for more volunteering opportunities. Other measures such as the ability to designate new 'Local Green Areas' may be of interest to some communities and proposals to support the development of 'green infrastructure'.

#### 4. MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE

4.1 In September 2010, the committee chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton published its independent review of wildlife sites and the ecological network in England. Entitled 'Making Space for Nature', the review summarised that more needs to be done to help halt biodiversity loss. The words: *'more, bigger, better and joined'* were used by the committee to communicate the actions that it feels are necessary to sustain wildlife and prevent further decline in the future. Appendix 3 is an extract from the Lawton report that explains the component parts of a well functioning ecological network that forms the underlying vision set out in the report.

4.2 The Lawton report contains 24 recommendations with a specific recommendation for National Parks in recommendation 14, as follows:

***"Recommendation 14:*** *In view of the opportunity presented by their existing statutory remits, in National Parks and AONBs:*

*(i) favourable condition of SSSIs should be achieved as quickly as possible;*

*(ii) non-SSSI semi-natural habitat should be brought under management equivalent to SSSI standards; and*

*(iii) other land should be managed so as to enhance connectivity."*

4.3 In June 2011, Defra set out the government's response to the *Making Space for Nature* report at the same time as it published the Natural Environment White Paper. Government has accepted the broad thrust of the report and incorporated the *'more, bigger, better and joined'*, within the White Paper ambitions.

4.4 The government's response in full to recommendation 14 of the Lawton report is as follows:

*"The English National Park Authorities Association recently published "Beacons for Biodiversity", which reports in more detail on the contribution that National Parks currently make to biodiversity. Government agrees that because of their unique governance, close engagement with local and visitor communities, and their statutory purpose to "conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage" and their obligation for nature conservation, National Parks, alongside AONBs, should be at the forefront of the recovery of England's biodiversity.*

*(i) In England, 27% of land designated as SSSIs falls within National Parks. At the end of December 2010, 96.9% of SSSIs in National Parks, including those owned by National Park Authorities and those in private landownership were in 'favourable' or 'recovering' condition; for AONBs it was 97.6%. As part of the post 2010 policy framework for SSSIs, Natural England has developed a new trajectory to achieve the move from 'recovering' into 'favourable' condition with monitoring of sites to measure success. This has been presented in Natural England's Corporate Plan (see also response to Recommendation 11). There is much potential for National Parks to be in the vanguard of achieving this objective.*

- (ii) *For the majority of land in National Parks and AONBs that is under private ownership, action for biodiversity is best pursued through close working with landowners and voluntary agreements both within and outside SSSIs. We will therefore continue to encourage National Park Authorities and AONB partnerships, working closely with Natural England, to encourage landowners to adopt and maintain suitable land management practices to deliver habitat restoration and increased connectivity within and between designated wildlife sites, including the potential role of Environmental Stewardship and other incentives. There is also a role for businesses, such as water companies, to support initiatives that secure improved habitat management alongside other public benefits such as improved water quality and carbon sequestration; tourism businesses can also contribute, for example through payback schemes.*
- (iii) *There are examples of close collaborative working to enhance biodiversity in all National Parks and AONBs as exemplified in the “Beacons for Biodiversity” publication. Building on this experience, we will encourage National Park Authorities and AONB partnerships to work in collaboration with other Local Authorities to extend this enhanced connectivity outside the boundaries of the National Park or AONB, and develop their own responses to Making Space for Nature.*

.4.5 This response by Defra sets out the expectation that National Park Authorities will play a lead role in taking forward the recommendations of the Lawton report and the proposals set out in the White Paper. Working closely with the people who own and manage land in the National Parks is regarded as central to achieving the vision set out in the Lawton report.

**Nigel Stone**  
**Chief Executive**  
**21 June 2011**

**Background papers:**

*Uplands Policy Review.* Defra, March 2011

*Natural Environment White Paper.* Defra, June 2011

*Government response to the Making Space for Nature review.* Defra, June 2011

*‘Making Space for Nature’.* Report of the Lawton Committee. Defra,

*High ground, high potential – a future for England’s upland communities.* Commission for Rural Communities, June 2010

*UK National Ecosystems Assessment*

## **Government Actions as set out in the Executive Summary of the Defra ‘Upland Policy Review’**

### **Supporting England’s Hill Farmers**

The Government recognises that it is harder for hill farmers, who are highly dependent on livestock, to make a living out of agriculture alone than it is for farmers in the English lowlands who have a wider range of options open to them. Our intention is to support and encourage all hill farmers to improve the competitiveness of their core agricultural business.. At the same time, it is vital that hill farmers grasp the opportunities to diversify, whether as managers of the natural resources and ecosystems of the uplands, or through other business opportunities. To support this two-fold approach, we will:

- Create an “Uplands Theme” within the new delivery arrangements for the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) to provide targeted support to upland areas through specific schemes and/or weighting towards the uplands in national schemes. Through RDPE’s Axis 1 and 3, this will support improvements in hill farmers’ competitiveness, skills, professionalism, and ability to diversify.
- Ensure that funding is available within the 2007-13 RDPE to allow all farmers in the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) to enter Uplands Entry Level Stewardship (Uplands ELS).
- Update the existing Uplands ELS guidance to make it even clearer what commoners need to do to ensure their applications can be processed as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that Natural England works actively with hill farmers, land managers and other stakeholders in the uplands to explore how they can best work in partnership to deliver the multiple benefits these areas can provide.
- Look for opportunities to bring about greater co-operation and networking between the various demonstration farm initiatives, including those in the uplands.
- Remove unnecessary cost burdens which may undermine the competitiveness of hill farmers, taking account of the forthcoming recommendations of the Farming Regulation Task Force.
- Ensure, longer-term, that reform of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2013 supports both the competitiveness of hill farms and makes adequate payment to secure the provision of public goods from the uplands, beyond those the market provides; and, that any future redesignation of Less Favoured Areas (LFA) fully captures the land in England that we consider to be genuinely ‘naturally handicapped’.

### **Delivering Public Goods from the Uplands Environment**

There is growing evidence of the value of the natural environment and the diverse range of benefits that it delivers to society. Our uplands are endowed with natural assets that are important for delivering a range of these valuable “ecosystem services”, including food and fibre, water regulation, carbon storage, biodiversity, renewable energy and recreational opportunities for health and wellbeing.



In many cases, however, the market does not adequately repay the providers of these public goods for their services, so we need to find new ways to better capture their value and develop mechanisms for income to flow in future to those who manage these vital natural assets. We will therefore:

- Promote new ways to pay for ecosystem services (especially those related to water and carbon/ peat): the Natural Environment White Paper to be published later in 2011 will provide a foundation for this, and we will hold an expert workshop later in 2011 or early 2012 to explore and review the opportunities and challenges for the use of payment for ecosystem service approaches, including in upland areas.
- Ensure that Natural England continues to work together with the Moorland Association and other stakeholder groups to establish the most appropriate moorland management regime needed to deliver multiple policy outcomes.
- Consult widely on a possible change to the legislation on the role of National Park Authorities to reflect the importance of sustainable development.
- Encourage National Park Authorities to play a more active role in facilitating local partnerships to create shared plans of action, which can deliver multiple policy outcomes from land management.
- Explore the scope for joint Defra/DCMS opportunities to support rural tourism, including in the uplands.
- Explore the scope for channelling more tourism revenue towards those who manage upland landscapes, working with organisations such as the Prince's Countryside Fund.

By combining more efficient agricultural practices with the delivery of wider ecosystem services, hill farms will have opportunities to build and plan for a more sustainable future and communities in both the uplands and lowlands will reap the benefits.

## **Supporting Sustainable Upland Communities**

The Government is committed to supporting and promoting rural communities everywhere by ensuring that the interests of rural people and places are reflected fairly in all policies and programmes; by enabling Local Authorities to serve the particular needs of their rural citizens through flexible and locally-relevant planning and delivery; and by empowering local communities to identify and address their issues and concerns.

The strength of England's upland communities, deep rooted in the distinctiveness of their history and traditions, means that they have a long track record of solving problems through their own effort and initiative - a tangible example of the Big Society in action. But the Government has an important role to play as well, by monitoring the impacts of policies and initiatives in these areas and acting, where appropriate, to address any problems that arise; by gathering and publishing examples of good practice by national government, local government and civil society to celebrate achievement and inspire others; and by taking proactive steps in particular policy areas, such as the roll-out of high speed broadband, where national-level intervention is needed to secure important benefits for rural communities. We will therefore:

- Create a rural Community Broadband Fund expected to be worth up to £20m and to be jointly funded by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and Defra (using RDPE European funds)

- Work to ensure the success of the rural broadband pilots and apply the lessons learned as high-speed broadband is rolled out to the rest of the country.
- Assess Ofcom's reports on the coverage of mobile telephone and broadband networks in rural areas and, where appropriate, consider possible further action to eliminate enduring "not spots".
- Ensure that the new freedoms and opportunities created for local authorities and communities by the Localism Bill are fully and fairly applied in upland areas.
- Ensure that upland businesses can benefit from the new business support arrangements being introduced across the country.
- Ensure that national policies promote the survival and, where possible, expansion of existing rural services, and work with local authorities and civil society partners to create the conditions in which entrepreneurs and communities can set up new services for rural communities.
- Ensure that upland households and communities are able to benefit from the extensive range of energy efficiency and fuel poverty schemes in order to reduce their heating bills and take control of their own energy needs

## **Driving and Monitoring Change**

The Government is clear that the uplands have often been marginalised by policy-makers, that their potential and diversity have not always been properly recognised, and that their interests have not always been taken fully into account in policies and programmes. We are determined to change this for the benefit of upland communities and the country as a whole. The needs and potential of the uplands will in future be properly reflected in national- and local-level policy-making and delivery, not through a grand national strategy, but by:

- Defra Ministers actively promoting the needs and potential of upland areas as part of their wider role as champions of rural communities.
- A strengthened Rural Communities Policy Unit in Defra providing an uplands focal point for Government as a whole, and taking on responsibility for co-ordinating the Government's interests in the uplands across all the policy areas covered in this Statement.
- Maintaining a sound evidence base for future policy making by supporting further research into upland issues and regularly publish key uplands data and indicators.

## Executive summary of the Natural Environment White Paper, Defra, June 2011

1. Nature is sometimes taken for granted and undervalued. But people cannot flourish without the benefits and services our natural environment provides. Nature is a complex, interconnected system. A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing.
2. This is why we must properly value the economic and social benefits of a healthy natural environment while continuing to recognise nature's intrinsic value. The Government wants this to be the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than it inherited. To achieve so much means taking action across sectors rather than treating environmental concerns in isolation. It requires us all to put the value of nature at the heart of our decision-making – in Government, local communities and businesses. In this way we will improve the quality and increase the value of the natural environment across England.
3. We will mainstream the value of nature across our society by:
  - facilitating greater local action to protect and improve nature;
  - creating a green economy, in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other, and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature;
  - strengthening the connections between people and nature to the benefit of both; and
  - showing leadership in the European Union and internationally, to protect and enhance natural assets globally.

### Protecting and improving our natural environment

4. The National Ecosystem Assessment shows that over 30% of the services provided by our natural environment are in decline. The Lawton Report, *Making Space for Nature*, found that nature in England is highly fragmented and unable to respond effectively to new pressures such as climate and demographic change.
5. Past action has often taken place on too small a scale. We want to promote an ambitious, integrated approach, creating a resilient ecological network across England. We will move from net biodiversity loss to net gain, by supporting healthy, well-functioning ecosystems and coherent ecological networks. We will publish a new Biodiversity Strategy for England, responding to our international commitments and setting a new direction for policy over the next decade.
6. We will establish a clear institutional framework to achieve the recovery of nature:
  - We will establish Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) to strengthen local action. LNPs will enable local leadership and may operate across administrative boundaries. They will raise awareness about the services and benefits of a healthy natural environment. They will contribute to the green economy and complement Local Enterprise Partnerships, with which we are encouraging them to form strong links.

- We will create new Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) to enhance and reconnect nature on a significant scale, where the opportunities and benefits justify such action. Local partnerships will come together to form NIAs. We will set up a competition to identify 12 initial areas and will provide £7.5 million to support this.
  - Through reforms of the planning system, we will take a strategic approach to planning for nature within and across local areas. This approach will guide development to the best locations, encourage greener design and enable development to enhance natural networks. We will retain the protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives of the planning system. We will establish a new, voluntary approach to biodiversity offsets and test our approach in pilot areas.
7. More broadly we will achieve a better quality natural environment by taking and promoting concerted action across our farmed land, woodlands and forests, towns and cities, and rivers and water bodies. We will press ahead with our ambitious commitments for the marine environment.

### **Growing a green economy**

8. Economic growth and the natural environment are mutually compatible. Sustainable economic growth relies on services provided by the natural environment, often referred to as 'ecosystem services'. Some of these are provided directly, such as food, timber and energy. Others are indirect, such as climate regulation, water purification and the productivity of soil.
9. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity study shows that protected natural areas can yield returns many times higher than the cost of their protection. There are multi-million pound opportunities available from greener goods and services, and from markets that protect nature's services.
10. Too many of the benefits we derive from nature are not properly valued. The value of natural capital is not fully captured in the prices customers pay, in the operations of our markets or in the accounts of government or business. When nature is undervalued, bad choices can be made.
11. We will put natural capital at the centre of economic thinking and at the heart of the way we measure economic progress nationally. We will include natural capital within the UK Environmental Accounts. We will establish an independent Natural Capital Committee to advise the Government on the state of natural capital in England.
12. Government alone cannot create a greener economy. Markets that trade sustainably in natural goods and services are essential. More businesses should benefit from new market opportunities, and from using natural capital more sustainably in their own supply chains. Government and business have a shared interest in protecting natural capital and should work together. Action we are taking includes the following:
- We will publish an action plan to expand markets and schemes in which payments are made by the beneficiary of a natural service to the provider of that service.
  - We will set up a business-led Ecosystem Markets Task Force to review the opportunities for UK business from expanding the trade in green goods and the market for sustainable natural services.
  - We will publish a review of waste policy later this year.

- We will issue new guidance for businesses by 2012 on how to measure and report corporate environmental impacts.

### **Reconnecting people and nature**

13. The NEA and the Marmot Review, *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*, demonstrate the positive impact that nature has on mental and physical health. High-quality natural environments foster healthy neighbourhoods; green spaces encourage social activity and reduce crime. The natural environment can help children's learning.
14. Human activity can, in return, enrich nature. Voluntary activity to improve wildlife habitats or remove litter increases the value of nature. Well-informed choices made by people in their everyday lives – for example as shoppers, householders and gardeners – also have a positive impact. These connections are good for people and good for nature.
15. We need to make enhancing nature a central goal of social action across the country. We want to make it easier for people to do the right thing, with action in the health and education systems and in our communities. Particular action includes the following:
  - To help local authorities use their new duties and powers on public health, Public Health England will publish practical evidence about improving health, including through access to a good natural environment.
  - We will remove barriers to learning outdoors and increase schools' abilities to teach outdoors when they wish to do so.
  - We will create a new 'Local Green Areas' designation to allow local people to protect the green areas that are important to them.
  - We will establish a Green Infrastructure Partnership with civil society to support the development of green infrastructure in England.
  - We will launch a new phase of the Muck In 4Life campaign, offering volunteering opportunities to improve the quality of life in towns, cities and the countryside.

### **International and EU leadership**

16. We will show environmental leadership internationally and within the EU, to protect and enhance natural assets globally, promoting environmentally and socially sustainable growth. We will advance internationally the approach and principles set out in this White Paper.
17. We will press for effective implementation of the 2010 Nagoya agreement by the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, we will promote the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.
18. We will improve the quality of the lives of some of the poorest people on the planet by providing £25 million for biodiversity and ecosystem projects through the Darwin Initiative. Through the International Climate Fund, we will support action to prevent dangerous climate change in developing countries and help those affected by the change that is happening. The £2.9 billion of finance we have announced for 2011–15 will include funding to reduce emissions from deforestation and achieve biodiversity benefits.

19. We want the EU to become the world's largest green economy and market for environmentally sustainable goods and services. We will work with our partners to put in place appropriate strategies and sectoral policies, to achieve low-carbon, resource-efficient growth. We are working to achieve:
- greening of the Common Agricultural and Common Fisheries Policies to improve environmental benefits, while achieving our other policy goals;
  - implementation of an ambitious new EU Biodiversity Strategy, to put into effect what was agreed at Nagoya;
  - a powerful 'EU2020 Strategy' that achieves low-carbon, resource-efficient growth; and
  - an effective EU Roadmap for a Resource-Efficient Europe.

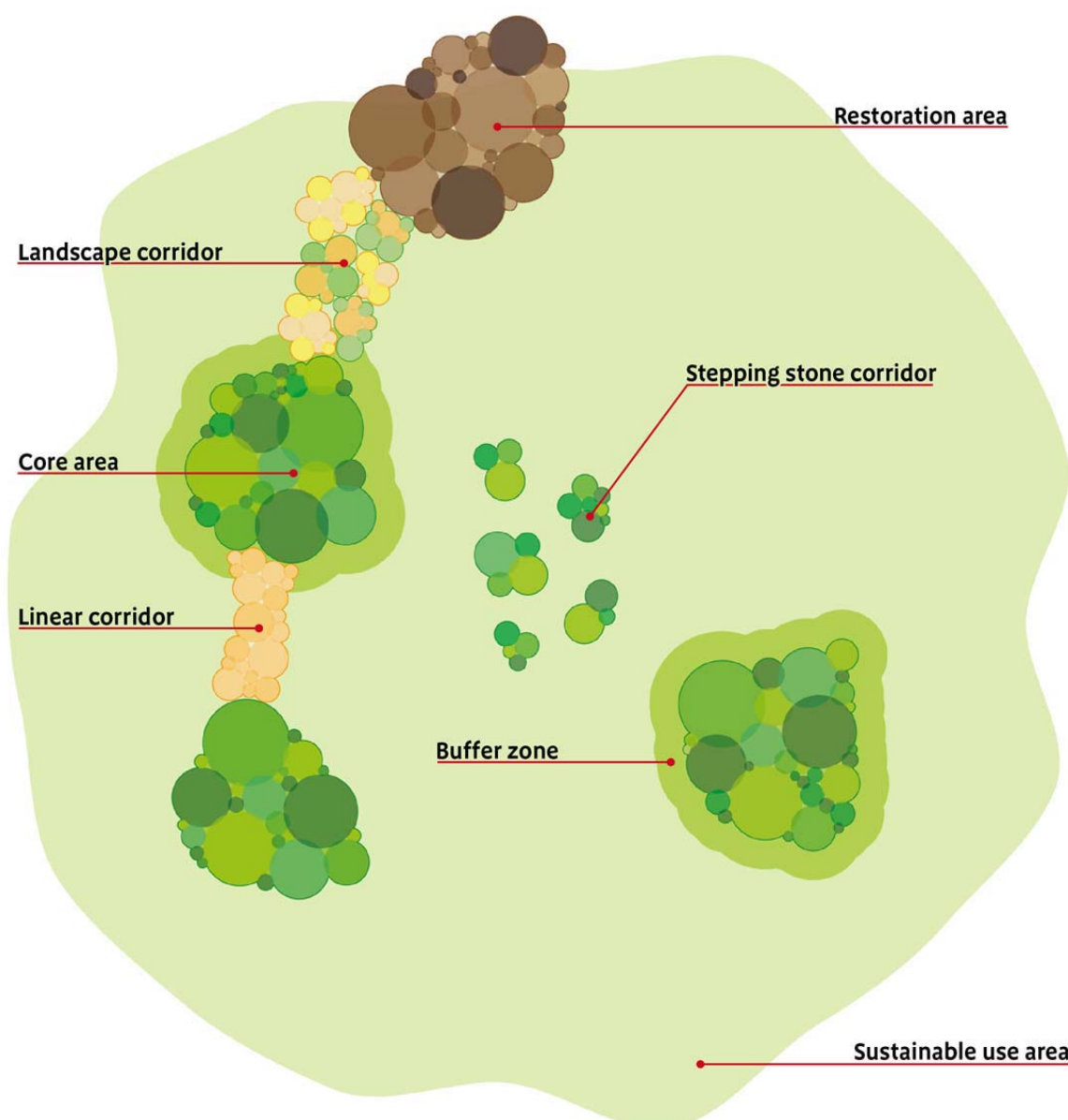
### **Monitoring and reporting**

20. We will develop a set of key indicators by spring 2012 to track progress on this White Paper. We will publish periodically a single concise and integrated report about the state of the English environment.

## COMPONENTS OF AN ECOLOGICAL NETWORK AS SET OUT IN THE MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE REPORT

“Ecological networks generally have five components (see Fig. 1) which reflect both existing and potential ecological importance and function. All of these are relevant in an English context.

**Figure 1 – The components of ecological networks**



### (i) Core areas

These are areas of high nature conservation value which form the heart of the network. They contain habitats that are rare or important because of the wildlife they support or the ecosystem services they provide. They generally have the highest concentrations of species or support rare species. Core areas provide places within which species can thrive and from which they can disperse to other parts of the network. They include protected wildlife sites and other semi-natural areas of high ecological quality.

*(ii) Corridors and 'stepping stones'*

These are spaces that improve the functional connectivity between core areas, enabling species to move between them to feed, disperse, migrate or reproduce. Connectivity need not come from linear, continuous habitats; a number of small sites may act as 'stepping stones' across which certain species can move between core areas. Equally, a land mosaic between sites that allows species to move is effectively an ecological corridor.

*(iii) Restoration areas*

These are areas where measures are planned to restore or create new high value areas (which will ultimately become 'core areas') so that ecological functions and species populations can be restored. They are often situated so as to complement, connect or enhance existing core areas.

*(iv) Buffer zones*

These are areas that closely surround core areas, restoration areas, 'stepping stones' and ecological corridors, and protect them from adverse impacts from the wider environment.

*(v) Sustainable use areas – 'softening the matrix'*

These are areas within the wider landscape focussed on the sustainable use of natural resources and appropriate economic activities, together with the maintenance of ecosystem services (Bennett and Mulongoy 2006). Set up appropriately, they help to 'soften the matrix' outside the network and make it more permeable and less hostile to wildlife, including self-sustaining populations of species that are dependent upon, or at least tolerant of, certain forms of agriculture. There is overlap in the functions of buffer zones and sustainable use areas, but the latter are less clearly demarcated than buffers, with a greater variety of land uses.