

* **Green Bullet**

28th October 2016

North West Environment Link (NWEL) is a partnership of environmental voluntary sector organisations, representing hundreds of thousands of members in the North West.

We are members of VSNW, the regional voluntary sector network for the North West, whose purpose is to support a connected and influential voluntary and community sector (VCS).

This bulletin is intended to keep NWEL members and wider networks up to date on events and issues that will be of interest to environmental voluntary and community sector organisations in the North West. Please send any items for inclusion in the next bulletin to andyyuille@gmail.com - and feel free to forward all or parts of these bulletins throughout your own networks to help spread the word!

The Green Bullet is also available to download from the [VSNW](http://www.vsnw.org.uk/publications/nwel-green-bullet) website.

**CPRE North West have kindly agreed to continue their support to enable the Green Bullet to be produced throughout 2016 – very many thanks!**

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***Campaigns***

**Climate change**

* Law firm Client Earth has released a reported concluding that the Government is [in breach of the Climate Change Act](http://www.clientearth.org/uk-climate-change-act-isnt-working-and-must-be-revived/) and that urgent action is necessary to get the country back on track (which presumably wouldn’t include giving the go-ahead to fracking in Lancashire and advocating a new runway at Heathrow)
* The Climate Change Committee has launched three new reports – on [UK climate action following the Paris Agreement](https://documents.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UK-climate-action-following-the-Paris-Agreement-Committee-on-Climate-Change-October-2016.pdf), [Meeting Carbon Budgets: Implications of Brexit for UK climate policy](https://documents.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Meeting-Carbon-Budgets-Implications-of-Brexit-for-UK-climate-policy-Committee-on-Climate-Change-October-2016.pdf), and [Next steps for UK heat policy](https://documents.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Next-steps-for-UK-heat-policy-Committee-on-Climate-Change-October-2016.pdf), and has called for ‘concrete green policy action’. Edie has summarized their recommendations into [10 key policy issues](http://www.edie.net/news/11/Climate-Change-Committee-UK-reports-on-Brexit-low-carbon-heat-Paris-Agreement/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%20da3499030b-dailynewsletter).
* Concentrations of atmospheric carbon dioxide remained [above 400 ppm](http://www.ecowatch.com/400-ppm-climate-change-2020749650.html) (parts per million) in September for the first time ever – September is the annual low point for CO2 concentrations.
* Good news: on October 5th, the threshold for [ratifying the Paris Agreement](http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9444.php) was reached – it will come into force on November 4th. No, Britain hasn’t ratified it yet.
* The international [aviation industry](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-37573434) has reached a deal on reducing carbon emissions, but the EU’s MEPs have said it’s [not enough](https://www.euractiv.com/section/transport/news/global-deal-to-curb-aviation-emissions-not-enough-meps-warn/), and green groups have criticized it as ‘[a timid step in the right direction when we need to be sprinting](http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/10/06/green-groups-warn-deal-lower-aviation-pollution-weak-shell-game)’.
* The Government has indicated support for a new runway at Heathrow. A National Policy Statement will now be drafted and consulted on, with a Parliamentary vote probably a year away. Local and national opposition is continuing, with [legal challenges](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/media/press-releases/greenpeace-joins-councils-preparing-heathrow-legal-challenge-20161017) being considered, [MPs resigning](http://www.transport-network.co.uk/Heathrow-expansion-faces-legal-challenge-as-Goldsmith-resigns/13421) (well, one at least) alongside the usual [petitions](https://act.foe.co.uk/act/stand-against-heathrow?utm_source=Friends+of+the+Earth+Communications&utm_campaign=67b424f6d5-LM1610025&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-67b424f6d5-20757677) etc, and the battle is really only just beginning in earnest. The Committee on Climate Change has asked the Government for a [strategy to manage emissions](https://www.theccc.org.uk/2016/10/25/uk-aviation-emissions-must-be-consistent-with-uk-climate-change-commitments-ccc-says/) from aviation in light of the decision.

**Rewilding**

Rewilding Britain is campaigning to bring back nature back to the countryside, restore ecosystems, reverse biodiversity loss, and reconnect people with wild nature big and small. See how you can [get involved, partner them or use their resources](http://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/).

**Fracking**

The Government has [allowed one appeal for fracking in Lancashire](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/558278/16-10-06_DL_Cuadrilla.pdf) at Preston New Road, and has said he is minded to allow the other one at Roseacre, subject to more information about highway safety impacts. Local campaigners are still [fighting the proposal](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-37704463) and have launched a [legal challenge](http://stopfyldefracking.org.uk/latest-news/community-group-challenges-governments-fracking-decision/) (which is being [crowdfunded](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/fight-fracking-injustice-in-lancashire/)) and have [collated some national reactions](http://frackfreelancashire.org.uk/cms/?p=1550) to the decision. Friends of the Earth are calling for [a ban on fracking](https://act.foe.co.uk/act/ban-fracking-now?utm_campaign=735365355a-LM1609019&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Friends%20of%20the%20Earth%20Communications&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-735365355a-20757677) (and are seeking people to pledge to undertake [actions beyond petition-signing](https://www.foe.co.uk/page/pledge-take-action-against-fracking?utm_source=Friends+of+the+Earth+Communications&utm_campaign=0a75fe8fb2-LM1610011&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-0a75fe8fb2-20757677)), as are the [Labour Party](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37470549), [the LibDems](http://www.thewestmorlandgazette.co.uk/news/14787282.Tim_Farron_slams_decision_to_allow_fracking_in_Lancashire/) and of course the [Green Party](https://my.greenparty.org.uk/civicrm/profile/edit?reset=1&gid=48).

**Food waste**

There are about 55 million people in food poverty in Europe - and the food wasted throughout the continent could feed them over 9 times over. The European Parliament is about to vote on whether to halve Europe’s food waste by 2030. This will enter into UK law before Brexit and be difficult for the UK government to go back on. [Sign the petition](https://www.change.org/p/let-s-cut-europe-s-food-waste-in-half?utm_source=Friends+of+the+Earth+Communications&utm_campaign=7117e1e443-LM1610015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-7117e1e443-20757677) to support the most ambitious agreement on food waste the world has ever seen.

**Air quality**

Once again taking the Government to court over its failure to produce plans that would [bring air pollution in Britain down to legal limits](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/18/treasury-blocked-moves-to-charge-diesel-cars-to-enter-polluted-uk-cities), Client Earth asserted that the Treasury blocked plans that might actually work in favour of 'absolute minimum' measures. The case is now closed and a judgement is expected soon. It is also expected that the losing side will appeal. A [new runway at Heathrow](http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/official-heathrow-airport-expansion-threatens-to-worsen-londons-air-quality-a3379151.html) will not help this particular issue.

***Information update***

**Brexit & beyond**

* The Environmental Audit Committee’s inquiry into [The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/future-of-the-natural-environment-after-the-eu-referendum-16-17/) is ongoing and is currently hearing oral evidence: including from Andrea Leadsom, who admitted that around [a third of EU environmental legislation would be difficult to transpose](http://www.edie.net/news/11/Leadsom-admits-uncertainty-over-EU-environmental-law-repeal/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%20bd290b7a35-dailynewsletter) into British law. Wildlife and Countryside Link have submitted a [joint statement](http://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Wildlife%20and%20Countyside%20Link%20response%20to%20the%20EAC%20inquiry%20%20into%20the%20future%20of%20the%20natural%20environment%20-%20FINAL%20-%20Copy.pdf) supported by many NWEL member organisations – many members have also submitted their own their own evidence, which can all be found in [the full list of evidence](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/future-of-the-natural-environment-after-the-eu-referendum-16-17/publications/). The Committee is [still taking written submissions](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/future-of-the-natural-environment-after-the-eu-referendum-16-17/commons-written-submission-form/), so you can still contribute.
* Wildlife & Countryside Link continues to provide a platform to give a strong, ongoing focus on what Link members want to see environmentally post-Brexit. This month’s blogs have covered  [farming reform](http://www.wcl.org.uk/our-best-chance-for-farm-reform.asp), [marine protected areas (MPAs)](http://www.wcl.org.uk/we-need-to-protect%2C-cherish-and-love-our-seas.asp), the [World Conservation Congress](http://www.wcl.org.uk/the-world-conservation-congress-%E2%80%93-talking-shop-or-true-force-for-change.asp) and [the need to prevent invasive species from altering marine ecosystems](http://www.wcl.org.uk/ballast-water-management-%E2%80%93-why-does-it-matter.asp).
* Campaigners are trying to [turn threat into opportunity](http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/brexit-save-wildlife-nature-rspb-wwf-farming-agriculture-a7340161.html), with four major conservation groups launching the joint manifesto “[A new policy for our countryside](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/blog/thewildlifetrustsblogger/2016/09/30/second-chance-our-countryside)” to try to shape Government thinking and action.
* Green groups have called for clarity and certainty over [Defra’s 25 year plans](http://www.edie.net/news/11/Industry-leaders-call-for-strong-long-term-domestic-environmental-policy/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%207c084bb591-dailynewsletter) for the environment and for farming – which Defra are insisting will be developed in isolation (presumably they believe that farming has nothing to do with the environment…)

**Energy**

* [New figures from BEIS](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/563236/Summary_of_key_findings_BEIS_Public_Attitudes_Tracker_-_wave_19.pdf) show that public support for renewables is increasing and support for nuclear and fracking is decreasing, echoing similar recent polls by [ComRes](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/20/onshore-windfarms-more-popular-than-thought-uk-poll-finds) and [YouGov](http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2467937/survey-only-a-third-of-public-would-support-local-fracking-projects-despite-offer-of-bribes).
* In [its last report](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/energy-and-climate-change-committee/) before being disbanded, the Energy and Climate Change Committee (ECC) has urged the UK Government to “get a move on” with incentivizing innovative energy storage and demand response technologies that could provide a clean, flexible and secure energy system fit for the future.
* [New statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/556297/Press_Notice_September_2016.pdf) show that over the last year, coal’s contribution as a percentage of the UK energy mix fell to an all-time low, replaced with a big increase in gas – but the contribution from renewables fell as well over the year...
* Although for the past six months [solar alone has been generating more energy than coal](https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-uk-solar-beats-coal-over-half-year), and Scotland produced [100%+ of its electricity needs](http://blueandgreentomorrow.com/2016/10/05/wind-power-output-scotland-created-astonishing/) by wind on two days in September.
* In the year to August, 26 (13%) of onshore wind appeals were allowed, with 170 (87%) refused. All but one of the 26 allowed were for single turbines.

**Planning**

* The draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – the country’s first strategic plan since the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies – is about to go out for public consultation: see “consultations” section for more detail and links. This is very significant nationally, regionally, and locally. As a headline, it proposes building almost quarter of a million new homes over 20 years, over a quarter of which would be on the 4,900 hectares of Green Belt that would be released for development.
* The Government has received [51 expressions of interest in building new settlements](http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/51-bids-for-garden-villages-support/7017255.article) under the Garden Villages programme. It’s not yet clear where they all are! The Government initially intended to support 12.
* Research by Indigo Planning suggests that the number of [homes allowed at appeal is set to treble](http://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1410624/homes-allowed-appeal-set-treble-five-years-research-shows) over the last five years, with the stricter five-year-supply rule brought in by the NPPF as the main factor in over-ruling local wishes. Unfortunately this article is behind Planning Resource’s paywall, and Indigo don’t seem to have released the research themselves yet, but you could contact [the authors](http://www.indigoplanning.com/news/520-planning-for-housing.html) directly.
* The Prince’s Foundation have defended [NIMBY attitudes](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/05/prince-of-wales-charity-says-there-is-nothing-wrong-with-being-a/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter), saying that until the quality of new housing improves it is quite right for people to object. CPRE’s Shaun Spiers agreed, stating that ‘people aren’t saying “not in my backyard”, they’re saying “no s\*\*\* in my backyard!’ and defending people’s right to stand up for beauty, nature and quality of life.
* Sajid Javid has indicated that he will [broadly support](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/news/article/424/sajid_backs_expert_group_s_local_plan_reforms_as_new_bill_makes_waves?utm_source=PPQ+Newsletter&utm_campaign=7133d61e8e-Newsletter_13102016_HTML&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_734e0b63a9-7133d61e8e-6976173) the recommendations of the [Local Plans Expert Group](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-plans-expert-group-report-to-the-secretary-of-state) for further planning reform. He has also promised a new housing bill with [yet more “significant” planning reforms](http://press.conservatives.com/post/151284016515/javid-speech-to-conservative-party-conference) before the end of the year
* The latest [Notes on Neighbourhood Planning](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notes-on-neighbourhood-planning-edition-18) from CLG includes a briefing on the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, links to a wide range of resources, and details of available support. [CPRE](http://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/sound-bites/item/4372-neighbourhood-planning-bill-an-initial-response) have also responded to the draft Neighbourhood Planning Bill and produced a [briefing](http://www.cpre.org.uk/local-group-resources/campaigning/bill-briefings/item/4403-neighbourhood-planning-bill-second-reading-briefing): the Bill covers much more than just neighbourhood planning, eg [amendments](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/news/article/436/government_promises_new_local_plan_reforms_in_bill?utm_source=PPQ+Newsletter&utm_campaign=ac51b3d145-Newsletter_27102016_HTML&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_734e0b63a9-ac51b3d145-6976173) to enable County Councils to take over Local Plans where they don’t meet next April’s deadline, and for the Secretary of State to order councils to make joint plans.
* A Neighbourhood Plan has been [overturned by the High Court](http://www.bailii.org/cgi-bin/format.cgi?doc=/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2016/2512.html&query=(stonegate)), after ruling that its evidence base was inadequate, and in another first, a [Neighbourhood Plan has been rejected at referendum](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/news/article/434/residents_reject_derbyshire_neighbourhood_plan) after the Parish Council asked people to vote it down because they claimed that the Examiner had forced it to change too far away from their intentions.
* Meanwhile Sajid Javid has rejected an appeal for 90 homes due to [conflict with a Neighbourhood Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/560048/16-10-13_DL_IR_Walton_Farm_Kineton_3132123.pdf), saying that the Plan’s policies “represent the choice expressed by local people to ensure that they get what they perceive as the right types of development in the places that they consider right for their community”, and another for 100 homes [despite the council lacking a five year housing supply](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562862/16-10-26_DL_IR_Longworth_Lane_3051153.pdf) – the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies for housing were still given significant weight.
* Planning Minister Gavin Barwell has [intervened in Bradford’s Local Plan](http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/barwell-blocks-councils-local-plan-over-green-belt-development/7017195.article) after a local MP requested that he do so over Green Belt concerns. This is the second time these powers have been used since they were granted this spring, and suggest a new ‘last ditch’ measure for local groups campaigning against Green Belt release.

**Waste**

* Making “cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” will prove to be one of the most critically important Sustainable Development Goals of this century. In particular, SDG 11.6 commits us all “by 2030, [to] reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality, municipal and other waste management”. [Zero Waste Cities](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mariel-vilella/zero-waste-cities-at-the_b_12029704.html) are at the forefront of achieving this goal – find out about some great case studies, the challenges ahead, and how your city can be part of the solution instead of the problem.
* 11 giant coffee up bins have landed in Manchester for 3 months in an attempt to [recycle an extra 20,000 coffee cups](http://www.ciwm-journal.co.uk/hubbubs-new-experiment-focuses-coffee-cup-recycling/), as part of environmental charity [Hubbub’s](https://www.hubbub.org.uk/) new recycling initiative.
* Wales has [doubled its recycling rate](http://www.recyclingwasteworld.co.uk/news/recycling-in-wales-doubles-in-a-decade/146568/) in just 10 years; other UK countries need to learn lessons from their neighbor! The new – and, can you believe it, first – [national recycling guidelines](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/recycling-guidelines-0) from WRAP should help…
* The Environmental Services Association is calling for brands such as McDonald's, Coca Cola, Costa Coffee and Wrigley to become a "big part of the solution" to the amount of litter plaguing UK streets, by working with the Government to implement an [Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme](http://www.esauk.org/esa_reports/20161011_The_Role_of_Extended_Producer_Responsibility_in_Tackling_Litter_in_the_UK.pdf).

***Publications***

**Living Planet Index**

The number of wild animals living on Earth is set to fall by two-thirds by 2020, according to the [Living Planet Index 2016](http://www.livingplanetindex.org/home/index), part of a mass extinction that is destroying the natural world upon which humanity depends. The analysis, the most comprehensive to date, indicates that animal populations plummeted by 58% between 1970 and 2012, with losses on track to reach 67% by 2020. Researchers from WWF and the Zoological Society of London compiled the report from scientific data and found that the destruction of wild habitats, hunting and pollution were the main causes.

**Fracking & biodiversity**

A [new scientific report](http://butterfly-conservation.org/48-13590/fracking-threatens-biodiversity-study-reveals.html) suggests that fracking poses significant risks to UK biodiversity. Most of the areas that have been licensed for fracking have above-average levels of biodiversity, and only protected species and habitats tend to be considered in planning decisions. However, that will not be enough to protect areas that are rich in wildlife and vital to the functioning of ecological networks. This study suggests a new way to prioritise areas according to their wildlife value.

**Climate change, farming and forestry**

This new “[Report Card](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/partnerships/ride/lwec/report-cards/agriculture/)” gives an overview of how climate change is affecting agriculture and forestry in the UK, and how it might affect these two types of land use in future. It summarises the major changes that have occurred in these sectors in recent decades, including some that can be attributed to climate change, and also outlines the possible effects of future climate change.

**Natural Infrastructure Scheme**

Green Alliance and the National Trust have launched a report proposing a new payment mechanism, [the Natural Infrastructure Scheme](http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/natural_infrastructure_schemes.php) (NIS), which establishes natural markets to bring new income streams into farming, supporting a fundamentally different approach to land use. It makes recommendations for how the government, alongside private endeavour, could accelerate the creation of these viable markets for ecosystem services.

**Nature’s Worth?**

The Marches LNP have published an [assessment of the value of the environmental assets](http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/environment/SWT-Natures-Worth-Booklet-L_2.pdf) in their area, in a move that other LNPs may be tempted to follow. While the approach has its merits, it has its problems as well…

**Green buildings are good for you!**

Employees working in certified 'green' buildings are likely to have better cognitive abilities, fewer 'sick building' symptoms and higher sleep quality scores than those working in non-certified buildings, according to [a new study](http://www.chgeharvard.org/resource/impact-green-buildings-cognitive-function) conducted in the US.

***Events***

**Valuing our distinctive landscapes**

[Pennine Prospects’ Annual Conference](http://www.pennineprospects.co.uk/news/pennine-prospects-conference-2016-valuing-our-distinctive-landscapes), 8-9 November 2016. [Day 1](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pennine-prospects-annual-conference-site-visits-tickets-27881946653) – choice of three site visits to explore the wonderful South Pennines landscape around Hebden Bridge with a recreation, community or woodland heritage focus. Free. [Day 2](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/valuing-our-distinctive-landscapes-pennine-prospects-annual-conference-tickets-27539216538) - talks and workshops with local, national and international speakers, exploring what makes a landscape distinctive, designation strategy, challenges and opportunities of non-designated landscapes, the value of landscapes, and engaging people in appreciating landscape character and engendering buy-in to protecting and maintaining our special places.  The Shay Stadium, Halifax, HX1 2YS, £25 (including lunch & refreshments). It is hoped that one of the outcomes from the annual conference would be a UK (and wider) network of organisations involved in non-designated landscapes that can share their expertise and experiences and promote the message that all landscapes, especially distinctive landscapes, have a value and deserve support and resources.

**Trustees Week**

A [coalition of charities, regulators and professional bodies](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-coalition-focus-on-leadership-development-for-trustees-week-2016) has announced details of this year’s [Trustees Week](http://trusteesweek.org/), 7 to 13 November 2016, featuring a series of events, resources and information on the theme of good leadership and effective chairing of charity trustee boards. Trustees’ Week is also inviting charities and other bodies [to list trustee-matching, training and celebration events](http://trusteesweek.org/contact-us/) on their website.

**Community-powered change**

[Community-powered change](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-powered-change-vsnws-annual-conference-2016-tickets-28721125660), VSNW’s annual conference, takes place on December 5th at the People’s History Museum, Manchester. The [full agenda](http://www.vsnw.org.uk/news/view/2016-10-20-vsnw-s-conference-and-agm-2016-community-powered-change) includes keynotes speakers, panel discussions and workshops on devolution, inclusive growth, transforming the voluntary sector, and health and social care.

***Resources***

**Free trees!**

The Woodland Trust are [giving away thousands of tree packs](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/in-your-community/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=woodlandcreation&utm_content=ctp) of up to 420 saplings to schools and community groups: apply before January 6th for packs to be delivered and planted in March. Every pack is different, but each one contains saplings from seeds which were collected and grown in the UK. Decide which pack you want, complete an online application and they’ll send the pack out to you. Help them reach their goal of planting [64 million trees](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blogs/woodland-trust/2016/09/our-goal/) in the next ten years!

**Natural capital accounting**

Sheffield has released a set of natural capital accounts for all of its greenspace. These are the first city-wide accounts of this type. [A briefing note](http://ecosystemsknowledge.net/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2016/Briefing_The-value-of-city-parks-and-greenspaces_September%202016.pdfhttp%3A/ecosystemsknowledge.us12.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=0422cf0f805cd08eadbae5392&id=79ebee9430&e=324a5c6036) has been released to summarise the findings. The methodology, data and a template for these accounts will also be published separately on the National Trust’s [FutureParks](http://www.futureparks.org/) website.

**Heritage values of parks and gardens**

Recent research has shown that parks and gardens have considerable heritage values for people, suggesting that their appreciation extends beyond obvious aesthetic and/or recreational values. These essential environmental and cultural assets provide areas for recreation, leisure, and social activity; contribute to our health, local economies and wellbeing; offer space for nature to flourish; and enhance the environmental resilience of the built environment. A new practice note from the Living With Environmental Change project, [Taking account of heritage values of parks and gardens](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/partnerships/ride/lwec/ppn/ppn36/), considers the implications of this for managers of these important open spaces.

**Inspiring Impact**

[Inspiring Impact](http://inspiringimpact.org/)have launched two new tailored versions of their free *Measuring up!* tool, to help more organisations demonstrate the difference they make. [Measuring Up!](http://inspiringimpact.org/measuringup/) is a straightforward, step-by-step self-assessment tool that allows you to review and improve your organisation’s impact practice – that is, the way you plan, evidence, communicate and learn from the difference that your work makes. There are now three versions available:  for small organisations, medium to large voluntary organisations, and funders.

**Solar in character**

CPRE and BRE Solar Centre have released [design guides](http://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/latest-news-releases/item/4385-new-design-guide-will-help-solar-panels-shine) for industry and householders setting out design principles to improve the acceptance and take-up of solar power by improving solar aesthetics.

***Consultations***

**Greater Manchester Spatial Framework**

Greater Manchester’s [new spatial framework](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-green-belt-gmsf-12053737) will plan for nearly an extra quarter of a million homes by 2035 – equivalent to building a new city of Manchester in 20 years. Over a quarter of them, plus additional industrial development, will be in the Green Belt, with major Green Belt releases planned for Trafford, Salford, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham and Stockport: 4,900 hectares in all. The [draft Framework](http://gmsf.objective.co.uk/file/4216139) is due to be approved by the Executive today and to go out for [public consultation](https://gmsf-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/) on Monday until December 23rd. The MEN [outlines the plans and provides a map of sites](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-green-belt-gmsf-12053737), and you can also see the [full list of sites and how they were assessed.](http://gmsf.objective.co.uk/file/4216152) All the documents will be available on their consultation portal when the consultation opens, and general information on the process so far is available from the [GMCA’s website](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/info/20018/greater_manchester_spatial_framework).

**North West Coast Connections**

National Grid has opened the final [public consultation](http://www.northwestcoastconnections.com/) for the detailed plans of its North West Coast Connections project. [Public consultation meetings](https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c72f5368-64b3-4a41-87b5-d6e9b1c6f524) will run at venues along the west coast from Tuesday 1st November to Saturday 10th December. The full consultation window will run from 28 October 2016 until 6 January 2017. Thanks in large part to campaigning by Friends of the Lake District, CPRE and the Campaign for National Parks, they are proposing to [underground all cables](https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/news/lake-district-power-line-to-go-underground) passing through the Lake District, run cables under Morecambe Bay rather than overland for one stretch, and to underground some existing powerlines, getting rid of pylons, which is fantastic – but there are still very significant impacts proposed from pylons and powerlines on vulnerable landscape outside the Park boundaries.

**Greater Manchester People's Plan**

The [Greater Manchester People's Plan](http://www.peoplesplangm.org.uk/) is now underway.  They have a number of consultation [events](http://www.peoplesplangm.org.uk/events/) scheduled, including on the environment on 1st December. There is also an [online survey](http://www.peoplesplangm.org.uk/online-inputs/) to collect views on what the plan should emphasise and a promise that you will shortly be able to submit suggestions in free text format.

**National Infrastructure Assessment**

The National Infrastructure Commission is launching a 15-week [Call for Evidence](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-infrastructure-assessment-call-for-evidence) to shape the development of its National Infrastructure Assessment, which will set out the country’s needs over a 30-year time frame. All interested parties are encouraged to submit evidence, ideas and solutions. Do we need more runways or more forests?

**Transport Impact Assessment**

The Government are consulting on the way that [proposed transport schemes](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transport-investment-understanding-and-valuing-impacts) are assessed to see which will go ahead. They are proposing giving greater weight to ‘wider economic benefits’ in the area. Transport assessment is already heavily weighted towards assumed (unproven and often non-existent) economic benefits and away from social and environmental impacts. You can tell them not to make this situation worse until: 22nd December.

***Funding***

**Community Business Bright Ideas**

**Do you have a local community asset that you’ve saved but don’t know what it could be turned into? Or a community business idea that you don’t know how to get off the ground? If you are a community group or organisation who would like to set up a community business but need a bit of help, the new Community Business Bright Ideas fund is for you, offering** [tailored support and grants of up to £20,000](http://mycommunity.org.uk/funding-options/bright-ideas-fund/) to 80 groups to develop their projects.

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North West Environment Link (NWEL) is a partnership of environmental voluntary sector organisations, representing hundreds of thousands of members in the North West.

VSNW is the regional voluntary sector network for the North West, whose purpose is to support a connected and influential voluntary and community sector (VCS).

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