

* **Green Bullet**

27th January 2017

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](mailto: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.

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# *Campaigns*

**2017**

Edie highlights some of the [hot environmental topics](http://www.edie.net/news/9/What-will-be-the-big-environment-events-in-2017-/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%208f7e115e18-dailynewsletter) to follow in 2017, along with [17 reasons to be hopeful](http://www.edie.net/news/9/Happy-New-Year-2017-reasons-to-be-excited-green-economy-sustainable-business/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%20b95b5ffbc6-dailynewsletter) this year.

**Climate change**

* The world’s major climatic agencies, including NASA and the Met Office, have confirmed that globally, [2016 was the hottest year on record](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/releases/2017/2016-record-breaking-year-for-global-temperature), with scientists clearly stating the most significant cause as being human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. 16 of the hottest 17 years on record have been this century. The leaders of the USA, the planet’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases, are hard at work trying to figure out [how the Chinese have managed to keep their hoax going](http://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2017/1/18/14313126/trump-pruitt-climate-hoax-lukewarmism) for quite so long.
* Defra's 2017 new [climate change risk assessment](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584281/uk-climate-change-risk-assess-2017.pdf) highlights the need to ramp up national efforts on climate change over the next five years. It draws on expert input from a range of world-leading scientists and academic institutes, and outlines the Department's views across six priority risk areas, including flooding, natural capital, water shortages, coastal change, and food protection and trade. Within the 24-page document, the Government pledges a continued commitment to climate issues [post-Brexit](http://www.edie.net/news/browse_by_tag.asp?tags=brexit), with an assurance that the country’s national targets will remain “unaffected” by the decision to leave the EU. Despite the “urgent priorities” addressed by the report, the Government didn’t announce or comment on its release in any way, behavior so unheard of that it led to [claims of attempts to bury it.](http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change-risk-assessment-global-warming-government-accused-burying-report-a7540726.html)
* The Scottish Government has put forward new proposals to achieve a [66% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2032](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-36519506), after surpassing its 2020 targets six years early. The new draft plan states that by 2032 the country will have a fully decarbonised electricity sector, 80% of heat provided by low-carbon technologies, and a fleet of ultra-low emission carbon cars and vans that represents 40% of all vehicles on the road. Can the rest of the UK keep up?

**Air quality**

Some parts of the UK [exceeded their air pollution limits](http://uk.businessinsider.com/london-exceeded-its-annual-air-pollution-limit-in-just-5-days-2017-1) for the entire year within the first week of 2017. Air pollution causes 40,000 early deaths in the UK every single year. Other health impacts of dirty air – asthma, heart disease and even lung cancer – wreak havoc on people’s lives. Children are particularly vulnerable. Today, pollution from traffic is the biggest problem, with diesel vehicles the worst of all. Friends of the Earth are campaigning to [phase out diesel vehicles](https://act.foe.co.uk/ditchdiesel?utm_source=Friends+of+the+Earth+Communications&utm_campaign=b29dda86e5-LM1701007&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-b29dda86e5-20757677) by 2025, and Greenpeace are campaigning to [ban new sales of diesel cars](https://secure.greenpeace.org.uk/page/s/no-new-diesel-cars?source=em&subsource=20170105apem02&utm_source=gpeace&utm_medium=em&utm_campaign=20170105apem02).

**Footpaths**

The Ramblers’ [Big Pathwatch report](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/news/2016/november/big-pathwatch-report-launch.aspx), the country’s biggest ever footpath survey, has found that more than half (56%) of paths are well-kept and signposted. More than a third (35%) need improvement and nearly a tenth (9%) are difficult or impossible to use.

**Food waste**

The EU has agreed an historic commitment to [halve food waste across Europe](https://www.foe.co.uk/blog/historic-plan-cut-eu-food-waste-half-thank-you?utm_source=Friends+of+the+Earth+Communications&utm_campaign=c3b2c6987c-LM1701034&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-c3b2c6987c-20757677), following campaigning by almost 50 organisations to demand that countries across Europe commit to tackle the scandal of wasted food. For the first time ever, members of the European Union have formally pledged to cut their food waste by 50% by 2030, in line with global Sustainable Development Goals. The changes should come into force before Britain leaves the EU.

# *Information update*

## Brexit & beyond

* MPs are calling on the UK Government to [build environmental safeguards into the Great Repeal Bill](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/) during Brexit negotiations, with a fresh report proposing the introduction of a new Environmental Protection Act to maintain current standards. Government watchdog the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) warns that green regulations must not be weakened during or after the process of leaving the EU, and Ministers must take action in the early stages of the Article 50 process. Around 80% of our environmental regulations come from the EU, and Andrea Leadsom has admitted that around a third of these are ‘not easy to transpose’, leaving the prospect of a sudden and dramatic loss of environmental protection.
* The [Greener UK coalition](http://green-alliance.org.uk/launch_of_greener_uk_coalition.php) are still looking for people to write to their MPs to ask them to sign the Pledge for the Environment to secure backing for strong environmental protections post-Brexit. The [Wildlife Trusts](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/Brexit) have the details, recommendations for action, and wider reading on the subject.

## 25-year plan for nature

The [latest report from the Natural Capital Committee](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/585429/ncc-annual-report-2017.pdf) states that Defra’s Plan has progressed “considerably slower” than hopes and expectations and must advance rapidly if there are to be demonstrable improvements in England’s natural capital before 2020. They set out 16 recommendations to assist with the Plan’s implementation, including leadership to be taken by a specific governing institution, quantifiable and measurable targets to evaluate progress, and consistency with the Climate Change Committee’s decarbonisation guidance. The group has also called for legal status to be given to the 25-Year Plan to increase its bearing on public policy.

## Energy

* New analysis by Green Alliance shows that [investment in renewables in the UK is falling off a cliff-edge](http://www.energylivenews.com/2017/01/05/uk-renewables-investment-to-fall-95-in-three-years/), with a [95% reduction](http://green-alliance.org.uk/2016_UK_infrastructure_pipeline_analysis.php) expected in the next three years, threatening climate change and air quality targets.
* Sajid Javid has refused permission for a [solar farm near Heathrow](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recovered-appeal-land-at-bath-road-poyle-berkshire-sl3-0hy-ref-3144685-19-december-2016), and a [single turbine in an AONB in Devon](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/called-in-decision-land-at-winslade-farm-frogmore-kingsbridge-devon-ref-3136298-19-january-2017).
* Environmental campaigners have lost their High Court action against a decision to [allow fracking to take place in North Yorkshire](http://www.theplanner.co.uk/news/legal-challenge-to-fracking-approval-in-north-yorkshire-is-rejected), which now joins Lancashire as the second site where the controversial technique has been approved
* Figures from analysts [Carbon Brief](https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-uk-wind-generated-more-electricity-coal-2016) revealed that coal-generated electricity in the UK fell from 22.6% in 2015 to just 9.2% in 2016. In comparison, wind power provided 11.5% of all generation in 2016, which is actually 0.5% lower than figures for 2015.
* The Federation for Small Businesses is calling for greater incentives for small businesses to reduce their environmental impact, in a [new report](http://businessadvice.co.uk/procurement/supplies/energy-efficient-small-firms-are-key-to-closing-britains-carbon-gap/) showing that just over a tenth of SMEs generate their own electricity.
* The Hendry Review into the [Tidal Lagoons](https://hendryreview.wordpress.com/#content) has enthusiastically backed them, which is likely to shore up the Government’s wavering enthusiasm for the Swansea Bay scheme - although doubts remain over cost efficiency.

## Planning

* The country’s first 14 “[garden villages](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-ever-garden-villages-named-with-government-support)”, and three new “garden towns” have been announced, with associated storms of controversy as to whether they will be high quality eco-friendly communities, sensitively located to respect the local environment, or identikit car-dependent estates plonked down unceremoniously on often beautiful and wildlife-rich countryside. Given that some at least are merely green-washed re-brandings of previous schemes, I know which way I’d bet. Either way, there are four in the North West, near Lancaster, Carlisle, Handforth and Knowsley. More money is being made available for further garden village proposals, and there is likely to be another call for proposals this year.
* The Government has [amended the New Homes Bonus](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2017-to-2018), whereby they effectively pay (some would say bribe) councils for each new home built in their area, so that they will no longer pay the bonus for ‘normal growth’ in housing. In practice, the Bonus has redistributed Government funding from the north to the south and been used to put financial pressure on councils to approve inappropriate development, as core council funding is progressively cut. This change will worsen this effect, and suggested further changes next year will increase this pressure further.
* The Government has responded to consultations on imposing [planning conditions and neighbourhood planning](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/news/article/484/ministers_press_ahead_with_pre-commencement_conditions_revamp_and_neighbourhood_plan_regime_changes?utm_source=PPQ+Newsletter&utm_campaign=466a560f1a-Newsletter_22122016_HTML&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_734e0b63a9-466a560f1a-6976173). Their responses, if enacted through the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, generally weaken councils’ ability to ensure that development is acceptable by imposing pre-commencement conditions, but should improve the working of neighbourhood planning. The RTPI has published a [briefing on the Bill](http://rtpi.org.uk/media/2173230/House%20of%20Lords%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20Bill%20Briefing_13%20Jan%202017.pdf) as it passes through the Lords.
* The Housing White Paper remains long-awaited, with DCLG sources saying that it will be published next month. Which is what they said last month and the month before that. The hold-up appears to be due to disagreements about the relative priorities to be awarded to Green Belt protection and getting houses built.
* According to homelessness charity Shelter, the [landbanks](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/12/18/top-10-biggest-house-builders-control-land-almost-one-million/) of the ten biggest housebuilders alone are enough to build 1 million homes on.
* Sajid Javid has gone against the advice of his Inspectors in two housing appeals in areas with neighbourhood plans, [rejecting one](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recovered-appeal-land-at-station-road-earls-barton-nn6-0nt-ref-2213617-19-december-2016) due to its conflict with the plan and giving much greater weight than the Inspector to environmental harm, but [approving another](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recovered-appeal-land-at-the-junction-of-narrowleys-lane-and-moor-road-ashover-ref-3133527-19-december-2016), despite significant environmental harm, due to a very low 5 year supply of housing land in the wider district.
* A group of housebuilders are [threatening legal action](http://offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/NewsAttachments/RLP/NP_WMS_legal_challenge.pdf) against the Government’s move last month to effectively [only require a three year supply](http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-12-12/HCWS346/) of housing land in areas with a neighbourhood plan that allocates land for housing. DCLG have rejected all of the alleged grounds for complaint: next stop, the High Court.
* The Government has published [draft regulations](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2017/9780111152812/contents) that will implement their proposals for granting [planning permission in principle](http://nlpplanning.com/blog/housing-and-planning-act-2016-essential-guide-to-pips-may-2016/) to sites allocated in Local Plans or included in brownfield registers. They intend them to come into force later this year.
* Household projections, which are the starting point for deciding housing requirements, will in future be prepared by the [Office for National Statistics](https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/news/transferofhouseholdprojectionstoons), instead of DCLG, as part of an ostensible attempt to ‘depoliticise planning’.

## Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

* The GM Spatial Framework continues to cause controversy with its proposals for the first major rollback of GM’s Green Belt in a generation. Its status as the first statutory larger-than-local plan since the abolition of the RSS and the first to involve the upcoming new breed of ‘metro mayors’ makes it of interest far beyond the plan’s borders. The Manchester Evening News covers the [main debates and issues](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/how-greater-manchesters-20-year-12349927) at stake, including air quality, transport and affordable housing (and politics!), as well as Green Belt loss, and has [listed the major sites](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/see-every-site-greater-manchester-12078925) under discussion.
* The [Campaign to Protect Rural England](http://www.nwtar.org.uk/perspectives_17january.php) has produced a substantial response to the consultation on the draft plan that includes a population analysis by a demographer which challenges the housing figures and claims they should be 30,000 lower than they are.
* [Andy Burnham](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/andy-burnham-green-belt-development-12441497), Labour’s mayoral candidate, has denounced the plan as ‘unfair and disproportionate’ and has called for it to result in no net loss of Green Belt, while the Lib Dem candidate [Jane Brophy says she’d scrap it and Sean Anstee](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/greater-manchesters-mayoral-candidates-row-12445676), the Conservative candidate and currently leader of Trafford Borough, is backing the plan. The final plan will need sign off by the new ‘metro mayor’ as well as by all 10 boroughs.
* [Opposition to the plan from all parties in Stockport](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/stockport-green-belt-building-plans-12482073) mean that it will have to undergo substantial revision following the phase of consultation that has just closed in order to have any chance of the unanimous 10-borough support it needs to be adopted; however, a move to get the borough to torpedo the plan by withdrawing entirely has been avoided.
* [Steady State Manchester](https://steadystatemanchester.net/calendar/) are hosting an event on March 2nd, 6.30pm, Methodist Central Hall, Oldham Street, where they will show Tom Bliss's film that reviewed the Garden City concept and suggested applying it retrospectively to an existing city (Leeds), then discuss in relation to creating an alternative vision for the future of the Greater Manchester City Region.

# *Publications*

**Planning from local councillors’ perspectives**

A new survey by the [National Trust and the Local Government Information Unit](https://ntpressoffice.wordpress.com/2017/01/11/national-trust-and-lgiu-survey-shows-lack-of-democracy-in-local-planning-system/) suggests that the vast majority of ward councillors think that the planning system is too weighted in favour of developers over councils and local communities, with a majority also stating that sites are being approved that conflict with their local plans, and anticipating that their council will have to roll back the Green Belt.

**Food, farming and nature after Brexit**

[A Pebble in the pond: food, farming and nature after Brexit](http://peopleneednature.org.uk/a-pebble-in-the-pond-new-report-launched-on-the-future-of-farming-food-and-nature-after-brexit/) is the first policy report from new environmental charity [People Need Nature](http://peopleneednature.org.uk/), which exists to highlight the positive relationship between people and nature and the many benefits that nature provides. It demonstrates the benefits of channelling money from the public purse to land managers in such a way that they can both produce food, help nature and provide all the other benefits society needs.

**Local Food Guide**

Choosing local produce can offer benefits to your health, your community and your local environment. Whether living in the city or the countryside, local food sources are around, and to help you along the way CPRE have created a new [pocket guide to local food](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/farming-and-food/local-foods/item/4475-local-food-your-pocket-guide) with the best reasons to choose local food as well as tips on helping you to find it.

# *Events*

**North West Gathering for the Environment**

You are part of an amazing network of people across the North West who make change happen! And on 25th February, Friends of the Earth are organising a day to [come together, celebrate, learn and plan](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-north-west-gathering-for-the-environment-tickets-29604719513?utm_campaign=c67c95ed44-LM1701022&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Friends+of+the+Earth+Communications&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-c67c95ed44-20757677) for an incredible 2017. The event is open to anyone wanting to find out more about the key environmental issues for the region. It's a great opportunity to meet like-minded people, get clued up on the latest updates on key local and national campaigns and share ideas, challenges and successes.

**Greater Manchester Natural Capital Group Annual Conference 2017**

On Wednesday 1 February 2017 9.30-4.30, Greater Manchester's Natural Capital Group is hosting their [annual conference](http://gmlch.ontheplatform.org.uk/article/gm-natural-capital-group-annual-conference-2017) at The Lowry to discuss the multiple benefits and opportunities that natural solutions can bring. The conference will bring together leading practitioners from across the public, private and third sectors to consider ‘What can Natural Capital do for our urban environments’. This event will provide you with the opportunity to find out more about how we can encourage and support growth of the Natural Capital agenda and identify opportunities for delivering multiple benefits. It’s free but places are limited and you need to [book online](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/greater-manchester-natural-capital-group-annual-conference-tickets-28943222959).

**Save the date: Northern Upland Chain**

The Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership’s Annual Forum will be held at The Morritt Hotel, Greta Bridge on the afternoon of Thursday 9 March. The theme of this year’s Forum will be: ‘Natural Capital in the Northern Upland Chain’.  There will be an opportunity to hear about some of the work that is being done in the name of the LNP and cutting edge projects from elsewhere, and to participate in discussion about future priorities for action.  More details to follow, or visit <http://www.nuclnp.org.uk/>.

**Natural capital accounting**

This half-day seminar on 8th March in Liverpool provides an introduction to [natural capital accounting](http://ecosystemsknowledge.net/events/local-accounting-2017) at the local and landscape scale. You’ll learn about the methods applicable, relationship with other tools and approaches, the skills and resources required, and how it can be used to influence decision-making. NGOs and public sector can register at a discount.

**Community Forest Conference**

23rd March at the Birmingham Midland Institute from 9:30am to 4:30pm. [Taking stock of last year’s changes and setting out an agenda for the future](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/englands-community-forests-annual-conference-2017-tickets-30178098505). Community Forests continue to tackle some of the key issues facing our towns and cities, but there are real challenges.  Tree planting in England is at its lowest level for 100 years. Budget pressures on local authorities is putting management of urban trees at risk. We face challenges from climate change, pests and diseases and competition for land. We need new ways of working and thinking. Join the debate with a great line up of speakers and an opportunity to discuss ideas with some of the people who will be writing national plans and policy for the environment and forestry.

**Sustainability in turbulent times**

These are turbulent times in which to advance sustainable development. [How can research, policy and business meet global challenges?](http://www.thenexusnetwork.org/events/sustainability-in-turbulent-times-how-can-research-policy-and-business-meet-global-challenges-conference-thursday-16-march-2017-london/) Join 350 professionals from academia, policy, business and civil society to explore how research, policy and business can meet these global challenges. Free conference, Thursday 16 March 2017, London, but early registration required to secure a place.

**National Parks Dark Skies Festival 2017**

National Parks remain some of the darkest places in England and they are celebrating this with their **second** [Dark Skies Festival](http://www.darkskiesnationalparks.org.uk/), 18 to 26 February 2017. It’s all about [discovering](https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/Event/dark-skies-star-gazing), learning and enjoying the dark and the stars you can see as a result. This could mean getting out for an activity such as cycling, walking, running or caving at night, attending a stargazing party, or taking part in a daytime event, learning more about star constellations or making a rocket.

# *Resources*

**Mapping the countryside**

Seeing something on a map can be so much clearer than having it explained in words. With more official data available to us, maps can help you understand your countryside better than ever. CPRE are [reviewing and making public](http://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do/item/4470-maps) a variety of maps showing countryside features and impacts. Currently available are their light pollution, tranquillity, and Green Belt maps, along with an archive of older mapping projects.

**Living With Environmental Change Policy & Practice Notes**

The Living With Environmental Change policy and practice note series is now complete and may be found [on the NERC website](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/partnerships/ride/lwec/ppn/).   There are 36 notes in total, which present key findings in non-technical language for public, private and third-sector audiences. The topics covered are wide ranging, from building coastal resilience to sea level rise and storm surges, through mapping ecosystem services, to the heritage value of public parks and gardens. Printed copies of all the notes are still available and if you would find any of these useful for colleagues, for meetings and events, or for your own information please email [anne.liddon@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:anne.liddon@ncl.ac.uk).

**Mapping ecosystem services**

There is growing interest in mapping ecosystem services at a landscape scale as part of implementing the Ecosystem Approach.  It is important that new initiatives are able to collaborate with and learn from existing projects.  The [Ecosystem Services Mapping Gateway](http://www.nerc-bess.net/ne-ess/) provides an interactive way to explore projects and to share [good practice](http://www.nerc-bess.net/ne-ess/data/Resources/Guidelines%20to%20mapping_180214.pdf).

**Payments for Ecosystem Services**

Defra has published its review of 16 [pilot projects on payments for ecosystem services](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578005/pes-pilot-review-key-findings-2016.pdf) that it supported between 2012 and 2015. The review contains a helpful description of what payments for ecosystem services are, as well as an overview of the findings from the pilots.

# *Consultations*

**Industrial strategy**

The Government has released its [industrial strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-unveils-plans-for-a-modern-industrial-strategy-fit-for-global-britain) Green Paper, and are [inviting comments](https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/strategy/industrial-strategy/consultation/intro/) until mid-April. Green-leaning [commentators have mixed responses](http://www.edie.net/news/11/Industrial-Strategy-A-welcome-commitment-or-too-little-too-late/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%20a2a8eca20a-dailynewsletter), viewing it as an opportunity, but with significant gaps. The [Labour Party are also consulting on their industrial strategy](http://www.labourbeis.org/), which includes sustainability as a main objective to reach a “prosperous” and “competitive” low-carbon economy. It seeks contributions on how to achieve productivity based on a transition towards reduced energy consumption, green innovation, a balanced energy policy, and meeting the goals set under the Paris Agreement. Deadline: 16th February.

# *Funding*

**J4B Community**

[J4B Community](http://www.j4bcommunity.co.uk/default.aspx) provides information on over 3,000 grants available to the voluntary and community sectors, and can help you identify the ones that are most suitable for your project or organisation. It also features regular updates, a useful newsletter and Twitter account which might be worth following.

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*To subscribe or contribute*

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