



● GREEN BULLET

25th July 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 andyuille@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](#) website.

CPRE has agreed to continue funding the Green Bullet throughout 2017 – many thanks!

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Campaigns

Air Quality

The Government has won the [latest court case over the inadequacy of its plans to reduce air pollution](#) – but only on the basis that it was consulting on a draft, and that any proposals could not be unlawful because they were only in draft and therefore subject to change. They were ordered to produce their final proposals by the end of July, after which the judge suggested that if Client Earth's concerns were not addressed, they may be subject to legal challenge again.

West Pennine Moors

The [West Pennine Moors](#) has become the largest new site of special scientific interest (SSSI) designated by Natural England since 2004, protecting wildlife over a total of 76 square kilometres between Chorley, Blackburn, Bolton and Haslingden in Lancashire and Greater Manchester.

Lake District – World Heritage Site

The Lake District has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site! [Success in their long campaign](#) has however brought out some severe questioning of the balance of [nature vs culture](#), [sheep-farming vs wildlife](#), and [whose cultural heritage](#) is being protected.

Healthy Outdoors

Cheshire West and Chester Council has released nearly £0.5 million for a new programme to tackle health inequalities in its area using natural outdoor spaces. The [Natural Health Service](#) project is in collaboration with The Mersey Forest. Over the next three years the aim is to engage over 3,000 people in activities that increase physical activity by 40% and wellbeing by 20% (on average). It is expected to deliver a 6:1 Social Return on Investment.

Plastic pollution

Humans have produced 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic since the 1950s, with the majority ending up in landfill or polluting the world's continents and oceans, according to a new report. The [first global analysis of all mass-produced plastics](#) has found that it has outstripped most other man-made materials, threatening a “near permanent contamination of the natural environment”. The study by US academics found that the total amount of plastic produced – equivalent in weight to one billion elephants – will last for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. And with production expected to accelerate over the coming decades, campaigners warn it is creating an environmental [crisis comparable to climate change](#). Meanwhile, Edie has reviewed the successes of the [UK plastic bag charging scheme](#).

Recycling

WRAP has launched a [Home Recycling Challenge](#) with children's TV presenter, [Maddie Moate](#). The challenge aims to engage children and their parents/guardians in finding out what they can and can't recycle locally by using [Recycle Now's Recycling Locator](#). There are loads of prizes up for grabs both for schools and families who take part in the challenge. The competition runs throughout the summer, deadline for entries is 25th September and the winner will be drawn during Recycle Week on 28th September.

Climate change

New research suggests that just [100 companies have been responsible for 71% of global greenhouse gas emissions](#) since 1988.

Information update

Brexit and beyond

- Wildlife and Countryside Link has published a [briefing](#) setting out members' collective views on what the Government needs to include in its long-awaited 25 Year Plan for the Environment if it is to restore nature within a generation. Three key requirements are: legally

binding environmental objectives; green investment in our towns, countryside and seas; and clear accountability for government and private sector actions that affect the environment.

- Wildlife and Countryside Link, along with their [sister Links](#) in each of the devolved administrations, has jointly submitted a [response](#) to the Government's [Repeal Bill White Paper](#). Their response, also supported by a large number of individual NWEL members, sets out three key elements that the Repeal Bill needs to include if it is truly to deliver on its objective "to transpose current EU laws into UK law, to ensure legal continuity when the UK leaves the EU". The response also calls for clarity on the extent to which the Repeal Bill will affect the current devolution settlements and stresses the need for the UK Government and the devolved administrations to work collaboratively.
- Link have also published a [series of blogs](#) from member organisations, many of which focus on Brexit and / or the 25 year plan.
- Michael Gove has delivered what is, in parts, a really surprisingly good speech setting out his [vision for the future of the natural environment](#)... But actions speak louder than words, with the 'great' Repeal Bill being described as "[very disappointing in many respects](#)" on the environment by Green Alliance, Friends of the Earth reaffirming that "[all the evidence suggest\[s\] that leaving the EU will be a disaster](#) for our environment", and MPs complaining of being "[fobbed off](#)" with the repeated delays to the long-awaited 25 year plan for the environment and of "[an enormous environment-shaped hole in the Government's Brexit plans](#)". I wonder [what the experts think](#)? And who will assess and improve the state of the environment without them? Watch – and [listen](#) – closely.
- The All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment have warned in a new report that [Brexit could prove disastrous for building](#) new homes and infrastructure by exacerbating already-increasing skills shortages
- Rural areas in England could become 'enclaves of the affluent' unless the government tackles the lack of affordable housing and the impact of austerity on local services, a group of national organisation have said. The [Rural Coalition](#), which comprises 12 organisations, calls on ministers to stop sidelining the countryside on Brexit and crucial public policy areas for around nine million people who are in danger of being "left behind", while [rural homelessness has increased by 32%](#) in the last five years.

Energy

- The government is to review the planning system to look at whether it could be simplified alongside other potential measures to encourage the development of local energy storage facilities, according to a [plan to transform how homes and businesses store and use energy](#), along with launching the first phase of a £246 million Government [investment in battery technology](#) – as Europe's [largest community battery](#) is set to be installed in Nottingham.
- Less than a year after being given the go-ahead, [Hinkley Point C](#) is already on track to cost £1.5 billion over budget and over-run its construction schedule by 15 months
- Sajid Javid has over-ruled a Planning Inspector to reject an application for a [solar farm in Cornwall](#)
- He also permitted only 2 of the 16 turbines proposed for the [Scout Moor wind farm extension](#), ruling that the 14 in Rossendale would have too significant an impact on the character and appearance of the landscape

Planning

- The Court of Appeal has handed down judgment in the [East Staffordshire Borough Council v Barwood Land II LLP](#) appeal, definitively confirming that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where there is an up-to-date local plan in place.

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The judge rejected the Inspector's claim that the presumption was a 'golden thread' running throughout the NPPF and said that it was "wholly misconceived" to widen its operation beyond Paragraph 14. It also explains the operation of NPPF para.14 more generally, including by providing an explanation of the proper approach to "specific policies" and footnote 9. The case therefore represents [the most up-to-date, comprehensive and important authority](#) yet concerning the workings of NPPF para.14. A similar judgement was made in the case of [Reigate and Banstead Borough Council v SoSCLG & Amtrose Ltd.](#)

- Other court judgements have confirmed that [Neighbourhood Plans](#) can legally be made in advance of Local Plans, and that challenging a made Neighbourhood Plan on the grounds of conformity with the Local Plan is likely to be difficult.
- A judge has ruled that a council was treated unfairly by an Inspector who decided against them at a planning appeal, having applied [both a 20% buffer and a 10% 'lapse rate'](#) to their five year supply figures. He also did not tell them during the inquiry that he would do this, or give any reasons for doing so.
- The House of Commons Library has produced a [briefing on all the proposed planning reforms](#) that are currently underway or in the pipeline
- In what could be a [highly significant decision](#), Sajid Javid has disagreed with a Planning Inspector to reject a housing application in Buckingham. The disagreement revolved around whether or not the application conflicted with a neighbourhood plan. Javid found that, as the application was for a site outside the settlement boundary and was not one of the sites allocated in the plan, a [conflict with the plan as a whole could be inferred](#). This is a significant ruling as the alternative interpretation, which the Inspector took, is that the plan is 'silent' about the site in question, and so the presumption in favour of development would apply. However, he does [seem to contradict himself](#) just a few days later in another decision in Warminster.
- The Government has published some initial [FAQs on brownfield registers and granting permission in principle](#), and is due to publish detailed guidance on these new tools over the summer.
- Sajid Javid has launched a [£2.3 billion fund](#) aimed at unlocking sites for 100,000 new homes in areas of high demand by building physical infrastructure such roads, bridges and energy networks, as well as schools and health centres.
- Javid has also made his first appeal decisions since the election, rejecting 3 housing proposals (in [Cornwall](#), [Bassingham](#) and [Scothern](#)) two of them due to conflicts with neighbourhood plans, which he gave significant weight. But in [Wiltshire](#) and [West Sussex](#) he approved applications in conflict with Neighbourhood plans because the local councils had less than a three year supply of housing land.
- Over the last five years, [housebuilders have failed to build more than 320,000 homes](#) that they have permission for, research by charity Shelter has suggested – a third of the total given permission. Shelter said the country's current housebuilding system encourages developers to sit on land and "drip out new homes so as to keep prices high".
- The Foundation for Integrated Transport are reviewing new '[sustainable' urban extensions](#), and finding them lacking in green space and almost impossible to travel around, to or from apart from by car.
- In response to the Government's programme of devolving powers to city regions and metro mayors, the [County Councils Network](#) has published a report, "A New Deal for Counties" calling for the devolution of more tax, spend and planning powers to the county level.
- [Analysis](#) shows that although starter homes will be 20% cheaper than market value, they will still [only be affordable to the top 10%](#) of earners.

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- Delayed by a mere two years, Government research shows that [bribing people to not object to inappropriate housing development](#) is unlikely to work.

Transport

- Transport for the North (TfN) has published the [evidence](#) on which it will base its transport strategy for the North, including a position statement, sustainability appraisal and initial major roads and rail reports, along with a series of factsheets that summarise the main findings. The Campaign for Better Transport is [engaging with environmental and community groups](#) to try to co-ordinate input to the process.
- The Government has published updated, detailed information on the [proposed HS2 route from Crewe to Manchester](#), as well as the 'phase 2b' business case. It gets a fairly rough ride from both the [left](#) and the [right](#) of the mainstream media. Channel 4 has ['factchecked'](#) some of the myths and misrepresentations around the project. Government has also introduced the [phase 2a \(West Midlands to Crewe\) hybrid bill](#) to Parliament. There are now open consultations on the [phase 2b Environmental Impact Assessment Scope and Methodology Report](#) and the [phase 2a Environmental Statement](#).
- The Government has cancelled three rail electrification projects, including [Oxenholme-Windermere](#), and has also said that the centerpiece of TfN's 'Northern Powerhouse Rail' project, [the Manchester-Leeds line, is unlikely to be electrified along its full length](#), calling into question current Government support for the Powerhouse concept. They have also [delayed an announcement](#) due on future rail funding until October.
- The Government has published its [Transport Investment Strategy](#), which sets out its transport objectives, priorities and delivery proposals. Lots of money for and emphasis on new and 'improved' roads, not much else. The campaign for Better Transport say that it ["ignores the reality of everyday transport"](#).
- The number of people using buses in England has fallen to its lowest level in a decade at 4.45 billion passenger journeys in 2016/17. The [Local Government Association](#) (LGA) warned that the decline in bus passenger journeys could lead to increased congestion and poorer air quality in local communities as well as leaving those who rely on the bus network unsupported. The [Department for Transport figures](#) show that overall there were more than 75 million fewer journeys across the country in the year to the end of March 2017 in comparison with the previous year – a decrease of 1.7 per cent. Buses in England, outside of London, had 1.1 per cent fewer journeys – a fall of almost 49 million – in the same period. Metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas saw a similar drop, with 1.1 per cent and 1.2 per cent fewer journeys respectively.
- The publication of the [Airports National Policy Statement](#) has been delayed until next year

Publications

Green Belt under siege

[New research by CPRE](#) has revealed a significant increase in houses – currently 425,000 - planned for the Green Belt, and yet most of these houses will be unaffordable to those who need them. Based on local and city-regional planning policies and new data from planning consultants Glenigan, CPRE's annual [Green Belt Under Siege report](#) shows that less than 30% of houses proposed for development are expected to be 'affordable'. It also demonstrates that just 16% of houses built on Green Belt land since 2009 outside local plans were classed as 'affordable'.

Green spaces

A new World Health Organisation report provides yet more evidence that interventions to [increase or improve urban green space](#) can deliver positive health, social and environmental outcomes for all population groups, particularly among people of lower socioeconomic status.

Nature engagement

Natural England's ongoing [Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment](#) survey provides data on people's use and enjoyment of the natural environment. An analysis of survey data, published in June 2017, reveals that just 11% of adults in England take over half (53%) of all visits to the natural environment. Interestingly though, concern for the environment was only weakly linked to frequency of visits.

Sustainable homes

A new report by consultancy Sustainable Homes rates the social housing sector as being [49% sustainable](#), where 100% would mean meeting environmental sustainability targets.

Flood resilience

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust has teamed up with the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management and other green and planning organisations to produce a report on [natural flood resilience](#) through SuDS

Renewables

By 2030 renewables should be able to produce at least 75% of our electricity while maintaining system reliability, Friends of the Earth have [claimed in a new report](#) which suggests that with the cost of renewable energy falling, and advances in grid management and storage technology, the UK can reliably be supplied with the clean, affordable energy it needs.

Events

Brexit Environmental Update

[9-12, Friday 20th October, London](#). The EU has been the major influence on UK environmental law over the last thirty years. Brexit has raised unique challenges and opportunities for future of environmental law in this country. Will international environmental conventions become more legally significant? In the absence of the European Commission and the European Court of Justice, do we have adequate legal machinery to ensure that government and public bodies comply with their environmental obligations? Should national Parliament have an enhanced role in the future? Will we see environmental law diverge within the devolved jurisdictions and does that matter? [Castle Debates](#) assembles experts to help us understand what is at stake and how we can tackle the problems.

British Food Fortnight

[British Food Fortnight](#), the biggest annual national celebration of British food and drink, takes place from 23 September to 8 October 2017. There are many ways you can support the event on a local level. Get nearby communities and producers involved in events/competitions/tours over the two weeks and promote the importance of local food in your area.

Valuing Nature Conference

12:00 Wednesday, 18th October 2017 - 15:30 Thursday, 19th October 2017, Edinburgh. [This conference](#) brings together people from diverse research areas and from business, policy and practice – all with the common goal of tackling Valuing Nature challenges.

Resources

Neighbourhood planning and landscape

CPRE has released a [new guidance document](#) to help community groups develop strong landscape policies in their Neighbourhood Plans, to influence future development decisions that would affect their local area. The guidance includes examples of existing neighbourhood planning policies, such as those designed to conserve landscape character, safeguard hedgerows, designate local green space and protect dark skies.

City trees

A [new report by Forest Research](#) describes the aspects of trees in urban areas that influence the benefits and dis-benefits trees provide. The report examines the trade-offs and synergies between different ecosystem services, and is intended as a useful guide for urban planning and design.

Green offices

Natural Resources Wales has produced a guide on [managing the grounds of office buildings](#) to create healthier places for wildlife and staff.

Climate resilience

The EU-funded EKLIPSE project has produced a report called *An impact evaluation framework to support [planning and evaluation of nature-based solutions](#) projects* which is aimed at people involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of nature-based solutions. It is focused on climate resilience in urban areas.

Eco Passenger

Compare the energy consumption, the CO2 emissions and other environmental impacts for planes, cars and trains for specific journeys in passenger transport at [Eco Passenger](#); do the same for freight at <http://www.ecotransit.org/>.

Recycling

WRAP have launched a huge new range of teaching resources for Key Stages 1 and 2, which have been developed in partnership with Wastebuster. All of the resources are available on the [Wastebuster resource library](#) and can be downloaded for free. They are also all available on [Recycle Now's resource library](#). They also have a range of resources for [Recycle Week](#), 25 September – 1 October, including supporters' badges, web banners, social media images, posters, details of the theme of the week and information on Recycle Now's activity during the week.

Social Investment

[Good Finance](#) is a new website to help charities & social enterprises navigate the often complex world of social investment. It was designed by charities & social enterprises and developed in collaboration with Big Society Capital, Access, Government and [key sector partners](#). [Get informed](#) offers practical support, guidance and information to help board members of charities and social enterprises understand the opportunities and risks of social investment, including the opportunity to [get a free social investment mentor](#).

Marine information portal

The Celtic Seas Partnership has developed an [information portal](#), containing data and documents on the marine environment of the Celtic Seas (including the west coast of Britain), which are relevant to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Charity Governance Code

Following recent consultations, the new, updated version of the Charity Governance Code has been published on its own website. The new Code is not a legal or regulatory requirement but sets out the principles and recommended practice for good governance. Good governance structures, and the right leadership from skilled trustees, can help charities best achieve their charitable aims.

Consultations

HS2 Environmental Assessment

The Government is consulting on the scope and methodology for the [Environmental Impact Assessment of HS2 phase 2b](#), including the route from Crewe to Manchester. So, this is not a consultation on environmental impact, but on what impacts should be considered and how they should be measured. Which is really very important. Closes 29th September.

It is also consulting on the [phase 2a Environmental Statement](#), covering the West Midlands to Crewe. This IS the actual assessment of likely significant environmental impacts along the route, and of measures to avoid, manage and reduce these. Closes 30th September.

Aviation strategy

The government has launched a consultation on [how the aviation sector should respond](#) to a range of technological, security, environment and customer service challenges. The consultation considers new forms of compensation for noise or designing targets for noise reduction, and how to make the best use of existing capacity at all airports around the country, as well as questions of air quality and carbon emissions. Closes 13th October.

Objectively Assessed Need for housing

Five years after the hilariously inappropriately named “objectively assessed need for housing” test became the major point of conflict and controversy in the planning system, with Inspectors at Local Plan EiPs often presented with a dozen or more variations, all claiming to be the result of objective assessment, the Government is preparing to release a consultation on a standard methodology to determine housing need within the next few days. The consultation is likely to run for 8 weeks, and providing a robust response to ensure that it doesn’t result in automatically artificially inflated housing numbers will be vital. It should be hosted on the [DCLG consultations website](#): keep an eye out!

Funding

Life Chances Fund

The [Life Chances Fund](#) was launched in July 2016 with the objective of helping those people in society who face the most significant barriers to leading happy and productive lives. The fund contributes to outcome payments for Social Impact Bonds and is now open for expressions of interest for six themes, including two new themes: Older People's services and Healthy Lives. Healthy Lives in particular would tie in with many Natural Health Service / Green Gym / environment-health initiatives. Expressions of Interest must be submitted by noon 15th

September 2017 via the [LCF website](#) where you can find more information and guidance on the policy areas.

Grassroots Giving

Now in its fifth year, Grassroots Giving was set up to support small community groups which might not normally attract any sort of funding. In 2017, a total of £82,000 has been made available to reward 164 groups. Applications are now open and can be made online at www.skiptongrg.co.uk. The groups which make it to the shortlisting stage in August are then profiled by Skipton building society, and then the public will be asked to vote for who they think is the most deserving.

To subscribe or contribute

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