

* **Green Bullet**

25th September 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 - 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](https://www.vsnw.org.uk/green-bullet) website.

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

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# *Campaigns*

**Climate change**

* A research team at Stanford University has outlined a new [roadmap for 139 countries - including the UK - to switch to 100% renewable energy](http://www.cell.com/joule/pdf/S2542-4351%2817%2930012-0.pdf) by 2050, which it claims would avoid 1.5C global warming, prevent millions of premature deaths from air pollution, while creating millions of net jobs, reducing the social impacts of power generation and increasing worldwide access to energy.
* **We often still get media coverage of climate change that is “balanced”, i.e. includes the views of people who choose, for whatever reason, to endorse the 2-3% of scientific studies that suggest that climate change is not driven by human activity, primarily burning fossil fuels, and instead attribute it to a variety of other causes – sunspots, the orbit of Saturn, oceanic cycles, and so on.** [New research](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00704-015-1597-5) **has attempted to replicate the results of a selection of 38 of these ‘contrarian’ studies, and has, perhaps unsurprisingly, discovered that it is** [impossible to replicate their results](https://qz.com/1069298/the-3-of-scientific-papers-that-deny-climate-change-are-all-flawed/) **due to methodological flaws and a pattern of common errors.**
* **This article provides a good insight into the dangers of subscribing to** [the notion that we can tackle climate change through individual actions](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/true-north/2017/jul/17/neoliberalism-has-conned-us-into-fighting-climate-change-as-individuals?CMP=share_btn_tw) **like ‘consumer choices’ and turning off lights: it’s a systemic problem and can only be tackled through major changes in regulation, business models and how markets operate.**
* **The Preston New Road Action Group have taken their campaign to** [get the decision to allow fracking in Lancashire overturned](http://www.pendletoday.co.uk/news/regional/campaigners-urge-appeal-judges-to-overturn-fracking-decision-1-8727727) **to the Court of Appeal**
* New research suggests that world energy demand will peak in 2025 before plateauing in 2030 as energy-related carbon emissions fall by almost 50% compared to today’s levels. However, this would still lead to [breaching the Paris Agreement’s carbon budget in the early 2040’s](https://eto.dnvgl.com/2017/download), leading to greater than 2C warming this century.
* The European Commission is preparing an update of its low-carbon economy roadmap for 2050 [in order to cut emissions by 100%,](http://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/news/eu-to-aim-for-100-emission-cuts-in-new-mid-century-roadmap/) acknowledging that the bloc's current target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions at least 80% by mid-century are insufficient
* Investment managers Shroeders reports that [£1.2 trillion could be wiped off private sector profit](https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/news/carbon-tax-could-wipe-out-polluters-profits-in-pursuit-of-paris-targets/)s if the tax regimes needed to implement the Paris Agreement are implemented

**Nature after Brexit**

Following publication of the European Union Withdrawal Bill (aka the ‘Great Repeal Bill'), Wildlife and Countryside Link launched a [campaign page](https://www.wcl.org.uk/take-action-for-the-environment.asp) to promote its joint [e-action](http://e-activist.com/page/10274/action/1?ea.tracking.id=WCL) with [Greener UK](http://greeneruk.org/), enabling people to contact their MP to remind them of their crucial role in defending current environmental laws, as well as ensuring that they are not vulnerable to future change without scrutiny. Please do it and share it!

**Air pollution**

**The UN’s special rapporteur on human rights related to toxic waste says that** [the UK government is ‘flouting’ its obligations](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/10/uk-flouting-duty-to-cut-air-pollution-deaths-says-un-human-rights-report) **to protect its citizens from harmful pollution - thereby violating their (our!!) human rights - following a fact-finding trip earlier this year.**

**Pesticides**

* **New research by Defra’s chief scientific advisor casts doubt on the assumptions made about the** [safety of industrial use of pesticides](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/21/assumed-safety-of-widespread-pesticide-use-is-false-says-top-government-scientist)**.**
* **38 degrees have a petition to Michael Gove to walk his ‘environmentalist’ walk in the upcoming vote and** [extend the ban on neonicotinoid pesticides](https://speakout.38degrees.org.uk/campaigns/2607?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=advert&utm_campaign=5_9_2017_emily_bees_beeslookalike_deadbee&bucket=facebook-advert-5_9_2017_emily_bees_beeslookalike_deadbee) **and keep it in place after we leave the EU; Friends of the Earth have launched a “**[we need bees because…](https://www.foe.co.uk/bees/make-poster-save-our-bees?utm_source=Friends+of+the+Earth+Communications&utm_campaign=e0d526b85e-LM1708047&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-e0d526b85e-20757677)**” e-action**

**Plastics**

* [The Scottish Government has announced](http://www.e-activist.com/ea-action/broadcast.record.message.click.do?ea.url.id=1037991&ea.campaigner.email=9fvwWIaMrZEXbizhjQl4ulESkN1MQhKC&ea.campaigner.id=BdU2tw7NTCmZkArzVWMSmA==&ea_broadcast_target_id=0)**that it will introduce a national deposit return system (DRS) for drinks containers. CPRE and others have long campaigned for DRS as the most effective way of reducing litter and increasing recycling in England. Their hope now is that with Scotland setting an example, the rest of the UK will follow. They’ve** [created a video](https://www.e-activist.com/ea-action/broadcast.record.message.click.do?ea.url.id=1037992&ea.campaigner.email=9fvwWIaMrZEXbizhjQl4ulESkN1MQhKC&ea.campaigner.id=BdU2tw7NTCmZkArzVWMSmA==&ea_broadcast_target_id=0) **that shows all the many benefits that come with a deposit return system and explains how it works.** [Greenpeace](https://secure.greenpeace.org.uk/page/s/bottle-deposit?source=em&subsource=20170920ocem01&utm_source=gpeace&utm_medium=em&utm_campaign=20170920ocem01) **have a petition asking for a DRS.**
* **The Environmental Audit Committee is**[re-opening its inquiry **into dealing with plastic bottles and coffee cups**](https://www.edie.net/news/5/MPs-to-relaunch-inquiry-on-plastic-bottles-and-coffee-cups/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%20029faa212c-dailynewsletter)**, and the** [European Commission](https://act.wemove.eu/campaigns/dam-the-plastic-flood-clone?utm_source=new_uk_member&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=dam-the-plastic-flood-clone) **is in the process of drafting a plastics strategy.**
* **New research shows that billions of people globally are drinking** [water contaminated by plastic **particles**](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/06/plastic-fibres-found-tap-water-around-world-study-reveals)**, with 83% of samples found to be polluted.**

**Ancient woodland & HS2**

The Woodland Trust claim that the biggest threat to ancient woodland in the UK is currently HS2. They say that [35 ancient woodlands are threatened by phase 2 of HS2](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/our-campaigns/hs2-rail-link/), bring the total to 98 so far.

**Marvellous Meadows**

The Cheshire Wildlife Trust has made a Pollinating Cheshire pledge – to restore 100 hectares of species-rich grasslands within 10 years. Changes in farming practices and a lack of awareness about the importance of grasslands have resulted in **a loss of 99% of Cheshire’s meadows in just 60 years**. Through Pollinating Cheshire, they’re recovering precious grasslands and [saving marvellous wildflower meadows](http://cheshirewildlifetrust.cmail20.com/t/r-l-jlijiijk-kjjkhhujdr-u/), and local businesses are contributing a [percentage of profits on meadow-themed products](http://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/meadow_products) to the campaign.

**Water**

Edie have compiled [10 alarming statistics](https://www.edie.net/news/4/World-Water-Week--10-distressing-facts-about-the-looming-water-stress-crisis/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%208ee21fe864-dailynewsletter) from research produced for [World Water Week](http://www.worldwaterweek.org/world-water-week-opens-in-stockholm-water-is-fundamental-to-achieving-the-global-goals/), showing the need to act now to address both water stress and flood risk worldwide.

***Information update***

## Brexit and beyond

* **The co-chairs of the** [Brexit and Environment network](https://www.brexitenvironment.co.uk/) **have blogged on the potential shape of** [environmental governance post-Brexit](https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2017/09/13/whos-afraid-of-the-ecj-lets-debate-environmental-governance/) **– i.e. not what the laws and regulations should be, but how they will be managed and enforced if we don’t have the European Commission to monitor and hold the Government to account, and the ECJ to enforce decisions against it with the threat of hefty fines – which have been required to make it take action in the past, and which our Supreme Court is not constitutionally capable of.** [Richard Benwell from the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust](https://www.wcl.org.uk/green-brexit-1-out-of-3-for-environmental-principles.asp) **and** [Matthew Stanton, from WWF-UK](https://www.wcl.org.uk/uk-government-needs-to-rethink-environmental-governance.asp) also discuss this knotty problem in response to the Government’s less-than-reassuring [position paper](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-a-cross-border-civil-judicial-cooperation-framework-a-future-partnership-paper) on enforcement post-Brexit
* **Last year, Green Alliance and the National Trust put forward the idea of** [Natural Infrastructure Schemes](http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Natural_infrastructure_schemes_in_practice.pdf) **to enable entrepreneurial farmers to secure payments for public environmental goods to replace the inevitable loss of subsidies following Brexit. Their new report** [updates this with practical examples](https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2017/09/12/how-michael-gove-can-unleash-a-new-wave-of-farming-entrepreneurs/)**, including in the North West which has some of the most vulnerable farms in the country.**
* Former Natural England grassland specialist Steve Peel looks at [how successful agri-environment schemes have been in England and how they could be improved](https://anewnatureblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/04/guest-blog-agri-environment-a-need-for-detailed-scrutiny-by-steve-peel/) in a post-Brexit world.
* Sir John Randall, former Tory MP and ex-deputy Chief Whip, has been appointed as Theresa May’s [special advisor on the environment](https://www.edie.net/news/11/Sir-John-Randall-installed-as-PM-s-environment-advisor--/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%202db28471c2-dailynewsletter).

## Energy

* Huge [reductions in the cost of offshore wind power](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/09/11/offshore-wind-power-175bn-investment-boom-costs-halve/) - described as [‘historic’, ‘unprecedented’ and ‘astounding’](https://www.edie.net/news/10/Historic--unprecedented--astounding--Industry-reacts-to-falling-offshore-wind-costs/?utm_source=dailynewsletter,%20edie%20daily%20newsletter&utm_medium=email,%20email&utm_content=news&utm_campaign=dailynewsletter,%2051ee92e1e1-dailynewsletter) - have triggered demands for the Government to [rethink its nuclear plans](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/11/huge-boost-renewable-power-offshore-windfarm-costs-fall-record-low), as nuclear now looks considerably more expensive - even without taking the risks and costs of waste disposal fully into account
* Over the next five years more than [800,000 social houses across England and Wales will be fitted with solar panels](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/news/solar-energy-deal-should-see-social-housing-tenants-pay-lower-bills?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_term=) as part of a new government scheme

## Planning

* The High Court has ruled that the Secretary of State acted unreasonably in [failing to be consistent](http://www.landmarkchambers.co.uk/userfiles/documents/Cumberlege%20judgment.pdf) with regard to his decision to approve a development of up to 50 dwellings in Lewes District. The judge said that “*It can only undermine public confidence in the operation of the development control system for there to be two decisions of the Secretary of State himself … reaching a different conclusion on whether or not a development plan policy is up-to-date without any reference to, or sufficient explanation in the later one for the difference*.” This illustrates the importance and value of highlighting the results and reasoning in previous cases when responding to proposals!
* A decision by Sajid Javid has confirmed that the presumption in favour of sustainable development’s ‘[tilted balance’](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recovered-appeal-land-at-former-molins-factory-site-haw-lane-saunderton-wycombe-ref-3135297-13-september-2017), i.e. that permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, does not apply in NPPF paragraph 14 locations, eg Green Belt and AONBs.
* An appeal for the development of 75 homes on the edge of a village has been dismissed due to the social and environmental impact of the proposal, because of the [disproportionate increase in the size of the village](https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?caseid=3167141). The proposal would increase the number of homes by 14%, and by 33% in combination with other approved applications. No weight was given to an emerging local plan, but evidence papers about the likely scale of housing in the village and a Neighbourhood Plan were taken in to account.
* An Inspector rejected an appeal for 175 houses that was brought on the basis of a claim that the council didn’t have a five year supply of land. The inspector used national policy to illustrate that [proposals only needed to show a realistic prospect of delivery](https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?caseid=3165880) to be included in land supply calculations, and not a certainty that they would be delivered – useful reference if land supply is being challenged, as it often is, on grounds of viability.
* 65 homes on the edge of a village have been [refused due to conflict with an emerging neighbourhood plan, even though the proposal was in line with adopted local plan](https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?caseid=3142524) policies. The inspector found that proposal would compromise the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and dismissed the appeal.
* An appeal for 150 homes was dismissed when the inspector found that the collective benefit of the application [did not outweigh the “less than substantial” harm](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cmzdiwgm2%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5CAn%20appeal%20for%20150%20homes%20in%20Durham%20has%20been%20dismissed%2C%20as%20the%20inspector%20did%20not%20find%20that%20the%20collective%20public%20benefit%20of%20the%20proposals%20did%20not%20outweigh%20the) to the setting of the town’s Grade 1 listed church and conservation area, and the effect on local landscape (even though it was not a “valued landscape”). Despite local plan policies being out of date, he found that the proposal would conflict with paragraphs 7, 17 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
* The [Green Belt has shrunk by 790 hectares](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642684/Green_Belt_Statistics_England_2016-17.pdf) over the last year as a result of Local Plans which Green Belt boundaries being published.
* A new report by the Federation of Master Builders suggests that a [lack of small sites is the main barrier](https://www.fmb.org.uk/media/35090/fmb-house-builders-survey-2017.pdf) to small and medium-sized housebuilders increasing their delivery of new homes.
* The number of [housing starts is up 13%](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/news/annual-housing-starts-up-13-in-england?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_term=) compared to a year ago, but [housing associations have slashed plans to build new affordable housing](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/news/housing-plans-dropped-owing-to-government-%E2%80%98indecision%E2%80%99-says-nhf?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_term=) by around 85% due to government indecision over funding. However, the number of [planning applications is down on last year](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644493/Planning_Applications_April_to_June_2017.pdf).
* Homes for the North, a coalition of housing associations, has said in a new report that [over half a million new homes are needed in the North](http://www.homesforthenorth.co.uk/new-research-reveals-500000-homes-needed-across-the-north-of-england-over-the-next-decade/) of England over the next ten years.
* After 7 years of preparation, the finally-adopted [Cheshire East Local Plan now faces a judicial review](https://www.consultationinstitute.org/consultation-news/legal-challenge-mounted-inaccurate-data/) by Muller Property, based on acknowledged flaws in its air quality data.

# *Publications*

**Clean Growth Plan – please!**

A new report from Green Alliance, supported by a variety of other campaigning organisations, calls on the Government to [quickly publish a meaningful Clean Growth Plan](http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Why_the_UK_needs_an_ambitious_clean_growth_plan_now.pdf), highlighting the UK’s good track record on climate action - showing ambition on its carbon goals at home and helping to set strong international standards – but noting that no significant policy plans have **been published to meet the ambition of the fifth carbon budget since it was set in June 2016, and that current policies fall short of meeting the fourth carbon budget. They conclude that “The UK government’s long-overdue Clean Growth Plan needs to prove that this government is serious about speeding up the low carbon transition, not slackening the pace.”**

**Greener roads**

Ahead of the Government’s next Roads Investment Strategy (RIS2), a coalition of transport and environmental groups has released a joint report calling for more innovative ways to enhance our road network for both people and the environment. ‘[Rising to the challenge: a shared green vision for RIS2](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/blog/roads/rising-challenge-shared-green-vision-ris2)’ advocates, for example, introducing more green bridges for wildlife, fixing our existing roads before resorting to building new ones, and providing better provisions for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and bus users.

**Farming and farmers**

[A survey by the NFU](https://www.nfuonline.com/news/press-centre/press-releases/public-positive-about-farmers-and-taking-action-survey-shows/) shows, amongst other things, that 75% of UK public agree that farmers should receive assistance towards protecting the environment and for dealing with climate change, and 82% feel that preserving the countryside is something the Government should support farmers with post Brexit.

# *Events*

**Friends of the Earth global climate action day**

**On 14 October people from all over the world will be taking action to protect our climate from fossil fuels.**  From groups fighting giant oil companies in Africa, to communities already feeling the impact of rising sea levels, the whole of **Friends of the Earth’s global community will unite for a day of action.** Their message to the world: keep fossil fuels in the ground. It’s our best hope of stopping the most devastating consequences of climate change. [Get a free action pack](https://act.foe.co.uk/act/protect-our-futures-join-day-action-14-october?utm_campaign=2d1bc1df93-LM1708035&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Friends%20of%20the%20Earth%20Communications&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-2d1bc1df93-20757677) for you **or your organisation, with props, leaflets, stickers and action cards and join in!**

**Transition Liverpool – Just Do It!**

**On Saturday October 14th, Transition Liverpool invite you to the sixth annual celebration of how grassroots communities are creating solutions to move towards a cleaner, healthier, fairer city region:** [Just Do It! Taking action together towards a more sustainable and enriching city](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/just-do-it-a-transition-liverpool-symposium-tickets-37220348063)**. Welcome and cuppa from 9.30, keynote speakers & discussion from 10, locally-sourced vegan lunch at 1, and hands-on workshops and activities (including Ideas Lab, Incredible workshop, Imagine Transition Liverpool creative mapping installation, storytelling, kids crafts and more) from 2-4.30. All welcome, it’s free but you do need to book a place!**

**Assessing projects for impact on ecosystem services**

**30th October 2017, Cranfield University** (near Milton Keynes). Find out how to evaluate new housing and infrastructure proposals in terms of whether they deliver [net gain or no net loss of ecosystem services](http://ecosystemsknowledge.net/events/housing-infrastructure-and-natural-capital-workshop). Three tools that may be suited to large housing and infrastructure proposals will be introduced, with discussion on what they can achieve and future requirements for their optimisation.

**Pennine Prospects annual conference**

8th November, Mytholmroyd. Including speakers and workshops on The South Pennines Regional Park, a thriving and resilient economy, local distinctiveness, and [a landscape for the future](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-south-pennines-in-the-21st-century-its-landscape-and-cultural-heritage-tickets-37423683244?aff=erelexpmlt).

[**Local Charities Day 2017**](https://dcmsblog.uk/2017/09/local-charities-day-2017/)The countdown to [Local Charities Day 2017](https://dcmsblog.uk/2017/09/local-charities-day-2017/) has begun! Building on the success of Local Charities Day 2016, December 15th this year will be another opportunity to shine a spotlight on the incredible work small, local charities are doing in communities across the country.

# *Resources*

**Natural capital accounting**

Barnet is the first London Borough to publish a [Corporate Natural Capital Account for its parks and open spaces](https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s40941/Appendix%202%20Natural%20Capital%20Account%20for%20Barnet.pdf). Headline figures include £19m as the annual value of the physical activity supported by 200 of the green spaces it manages (through the avoided health costs of inactivity). The value of recreational visits to these sites is estimated at over £41m per year. The Crown Estate has published a companion document to its Integrated Annual Report for 2016/17 which gives more detail on [the impact of its activities on its capitals](https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/media/1097910/crown_cr17_performance_against_our_capitals.pdf). For example, monitoring of their natural resources capital includes measurements of net carbon impact, amount of waste recycled and total water consumption. A research report by Historic England signals an appetite for [better inclusion of the historic environment in ecosystem services thinking](http://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15572&ru=%2fResults.aspx%3fp%3d1%26n%3d10%26rn%3d19%26ry%3d2017%26ns%3d1) and how ecosystem services can help make the case for conserving and promoting heritage

**Nature-based activities and wellbeing**

North Wales Wildlife Trust and Bangor University have published a rapid review of academic literature relating to [nature-based activities and their impact on well-being](http://www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/people-and-wildlife-work/wildlife-and-well-being). The report focuses on a wide range of factors that drive the well-being of young people.

**Unearthed**

Geenpeace have launched a new investigative journalism project, [Unearthed](https://unearthed.greenpeace.org/join-us/). It builds on their award-winning Energydesk blog, and has developed into a comprehensive website covering a much wider range of environmental concerns. [Sign up for news alerts](https://unearthed.greenpeace.org/join-us/) and get the breaking news first!

**Green Heart Heroes**

The Climate Coalition’s [Show The Love campaign](http://theclimatecoalition.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e71f91445b512de23a42499e6&id=0ceb77889f&e=178a98c197) is returning to celebrate all the people, organisations and politicians who are turning the vision of an environmentally sustainable world into a reality**. And this year they’re launching their first ever** [Green Heart Heroes](https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/green-heart-hero) **awards to show the love for all the amazing actions that people are taking, from community projects to sports clubs and schools, from businesses to MPs. Nominations close 1st December.**

# *Consultations*

**Objectively Assessed Need**

The most controversial element of almost every Local Plan examination and housing appeal for the last five years is finally being reviewed. Even the Secretary of State said it had led to “[an opaque mish-mash of different figures that are consistent only in their complexity](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/local-housing-need)”, bless him. Couldn’t have put it better myself. Initial assessments of the consultation on a [standardised methodology for assessing housing need](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals) suggest that it would substantially lower the housing need of around 144 councils, mainly in the North, but significantly raise the need of 156, mainly in the south (see [figure 1 of this briefing](http://lichfields.uk/media/3327/housing-need_september-2017.pdf)). [CPRE are quite critical](http://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/sound-bites/item/4673-cpre-comment-on-housing-consultation-launch) and their initial response may give you some food for thought in considering a response. The consultation also covers other important topics such as how councils co-operate on cross-border issues, providing certainty about housing numbers to neighbourhood planning groups, and making viability assessments more transparent. Overviews are provided in a number of [blogs](https://simonicity.wordpress.com/2017/09/20/housing-needs-assessed-or-assumed/) and [briefings](http://lichfields.uk/media/3327/housing-need_september-2017.pdf). Deadline 9th November.

**Raynsford Review**

A reminder that the Raynsford Review - set up to identify how the Government can reform the English planning system to make it fairer, better resourced and capable of producing better outcomes – is open until the end of October. The review team are particularly keen to hear from communities and individuals who have experience engaging with the planning system. See their [call for evidence](https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=6c717857-0be2-4327-aab0-16da25add560) for instructions or the [TCPA website](https://www.tcpa.org.uk/raynsford-review) for more information and other ways to submit your views.

**Full-time volunteering**The Government has launched an independent Full-Time Social Action review. This will consider what the voluntary sector, industry and, if needed, government can do to [support full-time volunteering](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/full-time-social-action-review-call-for-evidence). The review will work with a variety of stakeholders to develop recommendations, including consultation with the voluntary sector, young people, employment and regulatory experts, economists and parliamentarians. Initial call for evidence open until 13th October.

**Review of Natural Capital approach**

The Natural Capital Coalition is conducting its first 'Annual Review', to take a snapshot of the progress that has been made in recent years and understand future challenges. As part of this it is asking people to take part in a short [survey](http://ecosystemsknowledge.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0422cf0f805cd08eadbae5392&id=42e2be53a8&e=324a5c6036). The aim is to get a sense of the ways in which natural capital approaches are being applied, what decisions assessments are influencing, and how familiar the concept has become among organisations.

**New Homes Bonus**

This rather unexciting-sounding consultation onthe Local Government Finance Settlement includes questions on the [New Homes Bonus](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-finance-settlement-2018-to-2019-technical-consultation), the bribe paid to Local Authorities to encourage them to grant permission for new houses, so that they can continue to run the core services that they can no longer afford due to swingeing Government cuts. Deadline: 26th October.

**Aviation**

The report on the consultation earlier this year on the national Policy Statement for airports has been published, and the Secretary of State has said that there will be a [short, further consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/update-on-draft-airports-national-policy-statement-process) on this later this year.

# *Funding & fundraising*

**Bags of Help**

[Bags of Help](https://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/boh-grant-for-project-tes?utm_source=BenchmarkEmail&utm_campaign=Aug_23_2017_Email&utm_medium=email) is Tesco’s local community grant scheme, where the money raised by the carrier bag charge in Tesco stores is being used to fund thousands of community projects. Three community projects in each local area will be voted on by customers in Tesco stores throughout the UK, with projects changing every other month. Following the vote, the project that received the most votes in its area will receive a grant of up to £4,000, second place receiving up to £2,000 and third place up to £1,000.

**Fundraising training**

A range of free and low cost training opportunities are now available through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport’s  fundraising training programme for small charities. The training is open to small charities and community groups with an annual income of up to £1 million, which have a local focus within England. The Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) is running the programme in partnership with the Small Charities Coalition, Localgiving and the Charities Finance Group. The first year of the programme includes: [face-to-face training, intensive one-to-one advice sessions, skilled volunteering matches and webinars](http://www.thefsi.org/). Topics include: developing a fundraising strategy; fundraising from trusts and foundations; developing corporate relationships; crowdfunding and online fundraising. A series of face-to-face training events are now open for booking, including one in **Preston on** 9th November. You will need to register as a member of the FSI in order to book the training opportunities. Membership is free to small and local charities and community groups.

**Connected Communities Innovation fund**

The Office for Civil Society, in partnership with Nesta, has launched a £4m [Connected Communities Innovation Fund](http://www.nesta.org.uk/project/connected-communities-innovation-fund), to get more people aged 50 and over into volunteering roles alongside public services. The ‘Connected Communities Innovation Fund’ will test and scale innovations which address social issues including helping to bring communities closer together, reducing environmental waste and utilising digital solutions to enable volunteering opportunities. The fund is now open to expressions of interest for organisations throughout England: eligible projects are invited to submit a short expression of interest by midday on the 30 October 2017.

**Health & Wellbeing fund: social prescribing**

The Department of Health and Public Health England are inviting applications to set up a new [social prescribing scheme](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-wellbeing-fund-2017-to-2018-application-form) or to support the expansion of an existing scheme. Through this programme, the Department of Health, NHS England and Public Health England are working with VCSE organisations to promote equality, address health inequalities and support the wellbeing of people, families and communities. Deadline: 21st November

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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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