



The one-hundred-and-third meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to be held at 0915 hours on 4 June 2015, at JNCC, Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough, PE1 1JY

This paper was provided to the Joint Committee for decision/discussion or information. Please refer to the minutes of the meeting for Committee's position on the paper.

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Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Chief Executive's report on topical issues

Paper by Marcus Yeo

1. General Election

- 1.1. Following the General Election on 7 May a new Conservative UK government is in place. Liz Truss has been reappointed as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Other ministers within Defra are George Eustice, Rory Stewart and Lord Gardiner.
- 1.2. Annex 1 contains a summary of environmental commitments relevant to JNCC within the Conservative party manifesto. Other policy areas that are likely to have significant implications for JNCC include public sector expenditure, the EU referendum and devolution.

2. Pay remit for 2015/16

- 2.1. JNCC staff are employed on pay scales and associated conditions that were approved by Defra as part of JNCC's 2014/15 pay remit. The effective date for the next annual review of JNCC pay scales is 1 August 2015.
- 2.2. JNCC has to conform to the civil service pay guidance for 2015/16. As in 2014/15, this sets an upper limit of of 1% on the increase in remuneration cost for staff within each organisation.
- 2.3. JNCC's pay remit for 2015/16 will be discussed by the Remuneration Committee on 4 June and will then be submitted to Defra.

Annex 1. Nature conservation commitments in the Conservative Party Manifesto 2015

Protected areas

We will ... maintain national protections for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmental designations.

Natural capital

We set up the Natural Capital Committee to put hard economic numbers on the value of our environment, and we will extend its life to at least the end of the next Parliament. We will work with it to develop a 25-year plan to restore the UK's biodiversity.

Overseas Territories

We will create a Blue Belt around the UK's 14 Overseas Territories, subject to local support and environmental need. We will designate a further protected area at Ascension Island, subject to the views of the local community.

Marine Conservation Zones

We will complete the network of Marine Conservation Zones that we have already started, to create a UK Blue Belt of protected sites.

International

We will promote effective worldwide measures for tuna conservation, press for a total ban on ivory sales, and support the Indian Government in its efforts to protect the Asian elephant. We will press for full 'endangered species' status for polar bears and a ban on the international trade in polar bear skins, as well as for greater attention to be paid to the impact of climate change on wildlife and habitats in Polar Regions in the Arctic Council and other international fora.