

● GREEN BULLET

27th July 2021

The Green Bullet connects and supports networks of voluntary, community and public sector organisations across a wide range of environmental and related issues, in North West England and beyond, originally produced by North West Environment Link (NWEL).

NWEL was a partnership of environmental NGOs established to respond jointly to regional environmental challenges and opportunities. NWEL was wound down after regional governance arrangements ended, and remaining funds supported the continued production of this bulletin. More recently CPRE North West has supported its production and retained the same aim.

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 [VSNW](#), the regional voluntary and community sector network.

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Campaigns

Earth Overshoot Day

[Earth Overshoot Day](#) marks the date when humanity’s demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. In 2021, it falls on July 29.

Planning

- A coalition of environmental, planning, transport and built environment groups including countryside charity CPRE and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has warned the government that its proposed planning changes risk “ousting” nature and local communities, and called on it to “change course” in its upcoming planning bill. The coalition of 20 organisations sent a letter to the secretary of state Robert Jenrick attaching a [key concerns and six “tests”](#) by which it would “assess whether its vision for planning will become a reality in the planning bill”, which is due to be published later this year.

- The [Community Planning Alliance](#) has grown to include 485 grassroots campaign groups, and has posted a [Youtube video](#) introducing the Alliance and its aims. It exists to lobby on planning related issues on behalf of its members, and support members in their environmental or planning campaigns. Their focus areas are environment & biodiversity, community engagement, and evidence-based need/affordability.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows have been a defining feature of the English countryside for over a thousand years, bringing landscapes to life with character and beauty. They connect habitats and provide pathways, shelter and sustenance for wildlife, while protecting the soil, cleaning the air and absorbing carbon emissions. But around half our hedgerows have been lost since the end of the Second World War. This has left us vulnerable to the threats of climate breakdown, while intensifying nature's decline. The government's own climate change advisors have said we need 40% more hedges by 2050. CPRE have launched a campaign to [demand that the government acts on this recommendation](#).

Wilder national parks

Rewilding Britain is calling on the UK and devolved governments to [make our national parks wilder](#). They claim that the UK Government's [initial response](#) to the Glover Review "screams poverty of ambition", with no clear plans for boosting biodiversity or for supporting nature's recovery in protected areas, despite three-quarters of nature reserves in national parks being in poor condition.

Information update

Brexit and beyond

- Greener UK have produced a further set of [briefings on the various sections of the Environment Bill](#). Intended to inform debate during the Lords Committee stage of scrutiny, they provide a solid background to the current and future issues the Bill faces on matters such as water, nature, chemicals, waste and resource efficiency, and the UK's global footprint, with clear recommendations for improvement.

Covid recovery

- According to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) [Sustainable Recovery Tracker](#), just 2% of the Covid-19 stimulus funding promised by nations has been spent on clean energy, meaning that global emissions are likely to hit a record high in 2023 and continue rising thereafter.
- Specialist biodiversity groups are concerned that the upcoming review of regulations protecting species and habitats, to come up with a new system to replace EU rules, are [likely to reduce protection for a range of endangered species](#) such as adders, water voles, mountain hares and red squirrels.

Climate change & energy

- Local authorities in England are struggling to engage with the government on the transition to net-zero as ministers have yet to clarify local government responsibilities for delivering targets or determine which should be on a statutory footing. In a [highly critical investigation](#), the National Audit Office (NAO) reveals that 91 per cent of councils have adopted at least one commitment to decarbonise their activities or local areas. More than a third of single and upper-tier authorities are committed to decarbonising their areas before 2030. However, their ability to deliver these goals is hampered by a lack of clarity and support from Whitehall departments.

- Reflecting these findings, a coalition of local government, environmental and research organisations have [called for urgent powers and resources for local authorities](#) so that they can help to address the climate crisis, and more than 30 mayors and council leaders from across the UK have [co-signed a new communique](#) urging the Government to grant them additional funding and powers to transition to net-zero across sectors including energy, transport and the built environment. Recently published research from Savills suggests that less than one-fifth of [councils that have declared a climate emergency](#) have an up-to-date local plan that includes specific policies to increase energy efficiency or cut carbon emissions.
- The BEIS select committee has warned that the Government is [failing to take the public's views into account in the net-zero transition](#) and ensuring that impacts are socially fair. Following up on the proposals made by the UK Climate Assembly, they said that “at the heart of the Climate Assembly UK proposals were the principles of public engagement and fairness, but Ministers have so far failed to engage the public on any of the big changes we expect to see in the years ahead”.
- New research from Oxfam and the Stockholm Environment Institute shows that the wealthiest 1% of people in the UK each produce [11 times the amount of carbon emissions](#) of someone in the poorest half of the population. Over 25 years, the richest 10 per cent of Brits were responsible for over a quarter (27 per cent) of total emissions – roughly the same as the poorest 50 per cent (28 per cent).
- Parts of the Amazon rainforest are now emitting more carbon than they are absorbing, according to a [new study](#). Lead author Luciana Gatti, with Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE), told the BBC that deforestation had heavily impacted the ability of the rainforest to store carbon: "In the eastern part of the Amazon, which is around 30% deforested, this region emitted 10 times more carbon than in the west, which is around 11% deforested".

Planning

- Following the government's [response](#) to the March 2021 consultation on draft changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and new National Model Design Code, the new [2021 version of the NPPF](#) and [final version of the NMDC](#) have now been published. The final version of the NPPF is substantially the same as the draft version. Angus Walker has provided a [marked-up version of the new NPPF](#) comparing it to the previous, Feb 2019 version. The main changes to the NPPF concern a positive-sounding stronger focus on design and beauty, and incorporating trees and “integrating” opportunities to enhance biodiversity in new development. They also embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals in national planning policy. Less positively, it makes it harder to resist the application of permitted development rights. While the [response](#) says that there may be a future review to update policies on climate change to include the commitment to net zero, the new NPPF does little to strengthen climate policy. The TCPA say that this failure is “[a betrayal of our collective future](#)”.
- The long-awaited response to the Planning for the Future white paper consultation has been delayed again, this time until “the autumn”. In a [speech to the Local Government Association](#), Robert Jenrick said “I don't think we need to rip up the planning system and start again” – the exact opposite of what Boris Johnson said in his foreword to the Planning White Paper, suggesting that the public and political opposition to the proposed reforms is generating still-unfolding second thoughts. He also claimed that the [reforms would be “council-led”](#) and enable wider participation. A Planning Bill has been promised “shortly” after the response, but Jenrick has said, in response to a request from the Chair of the HCLG select committee, that [a draft bill to enable pre-legislative scrutiny](#) first might be a good way forward.

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- The Climate Change Committee has warned that thus far, the planning system “has not been recast to meet our legal and international climate commitments”, and that [climate change “must be a key consideration in the government’s proposed planning reforms”](#). They note that proposals to extend permitted development rights and scrap the duty to cooperate make it more difficult to address the issue.
- A new [Office for Place](#) has been launched to drive up design quality standards. This year it will work with the local councils and communities piloting the National Model Design Code. A [second phase of this pilot](#) has been announced, with the call inviting neighbourhood planning groups as well as local authorities to apply.
- [Places for Everyone](#), the successor to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, has been published ahead of a joint committee meeting next week (20 July) and a proposed public consultation this summer. It [seeks to maximise brownfield land and urban spaces](#) and protect the green belt from the “risk of unplanned development”. It allocates around 60% less Green Belt land for development than the original version – however that still amounts over 1,700 hectares.
- Liverpool has been [stripped of its World Heritage Site status](#) as new developments, particularly Peel’s Liverpool Waters project would “irreversibly damage” the site.
- In its latest report, the Housing, Communities and Local Government (HCLG) Committee has called on the government to halt the introduction of its new 'class MA' commercial-to-residential permitted development (PD) right, saying that it would [“fatally undermine” the ability of councils to plan their areas](#).
- Nearly 40 leading homebuilders endorsed the newly-released [Future Homes Delivery Plan](#), which outlines how the industry will work together to meet the government’s target of zero-carbon ready homes by 2025. Other key goals in the plan are building low-carbon and nature-rich developments by 2025 and using production and construction methods that are net zero and sustainable by 2050, with substantial progress to meet that goal by 2025.
- Local authorities in England will be given compulsory purchase order powers (CPO) to take over and transform derelict buildings and convert them into homes if property owners stall on regeneration plans as part of the government's high street strategy [Build Back Better High Streets](#)

Transport

- The Government has unveiled its much-anticipated [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#), designed to align all modes of domestic transport with the national net-zero target. Published following months of delays, the Plan outlines the Government’s approach, in terms of timings and technologies, to decarbonising the UK’s highest-emitting sector. It covers all domestic forms of transport including road, rail, shipping and flights, but international shipping and aviation are not covered. A headline commitment of the new Plan is to ban the sale of new diesel and petrol heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and buses by 2040. This follows on from the decision to bring forward the [ban of sales of new, all-petrol or diesel cars](#) to 2030. The overall thrust is that there will be no suppression of demand for transport, and that technological solutions will be found.
- Off the back of the publication of the Transport Decarbonisation Strategy, Highways England has unveiled its vision of [creating a net-zero roads system by 2050](#). The plan consists of reaching operational net-zero emissions by 2030, delivering net-zero road maintenance and construction by 2040 and then supporting zero-carbon transport by 2050. Contractors and suppliers will also be committed to reducing carbon emissions annually.
- The [High Court has rejected Transport Action Network’s legal challenge](#) that the decision to approve the government’s £27.4 billion road-building programme did not need to show evidence that it had considered the programme’s impact on legally-binding climate targets.

TAN has sought permission to appeal and is [crowdfunding](#) for its further legal costs. It has a further separate legal challenge to the National Networks National Policy Statement. On 22 July, the DfT confirmed that while it would now [review the policy to 2023](#), it would not suspend it, so this claim also remains live.

- HS2 expects parliament to start discussing plans for its [Manchester to Crewe route](#) in December

Nature and biodiversity

- The UN biodiversity body has released the first draft of a global agreement to halt nature and wildlife loss in the next nine years. The [document](#) will form the basis of negotiations ahead of a biodiversity summit in Kunming, China, where governments are due to agree on a post-2020 framework to protect life on Earth. But while the draft text sets out aspirations and objectives for 2030 and beyond, it [fails to provide a concrete action plan](#) to meet them, campaigners say. The 12-page document sets out 4 long-term goals to 2050, 10 milestones against which to assess progress at the end of the decade and 21 targets addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss to be met by 2030. These include protecting at least 30% of the Earth's land and seas, cutting pesticide use by two thirds, and halving food waste and overconsumption by the end of the decade. At least \$500 billion of harmful subsidies annually would also need to be eliminated by 2030.
- Government policies and targets to improve the natural environment [are 'grandiose statements lacking teeth'](#) and all too often government departments spend more on practices that exploit the natural environment than conserve it, according to a new report by the Environmental Audit Committee.
- [A major new report](#) from WWF, 'Thriving Within our Planetary Means' finds that if the UK is to properly address its impacts on nature and the climate, it must reduce the environmental impact of products made domestically and imported by 75% this decade. The report proposes reduction targets for ten key drivers of environmental impact and outlines the actions we need to take to achieve them. It reiterates that the UK has missed previous domestic targets and is off-track to meet future goals relating to several key environmental focus areas, including land degradation and use change, air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- MPs have spoken overwhelmingly in favour of a [new "wild belt" land use designation](#) being embedded in the planning system, with the housing minister saying he is "open to some of the proposals". Then "wild belt" idea is part of the [Wildlife Trusts' campaign](#) to make the planning system more wildlife-friendly.

Devolution

- The government has announced that [Cumbria will be divided into two unitary authorities](#), East (Barrow in Furness Borough Council and Eden and South Lakeland District Councils) and West (Carlisle City Council and Allerdale and Copeland Borough Councils). Parliament will need to approve the plans and local elections will be held in May 2022. The controversial decision will leave the councils and communities that supported [one of the three other options](#) unhappy.
- The Local Government Commission, established by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), published its report entitled '[Local by Default](#)', looking at options for the future of local government up to 2030. Identifying the degree of centralization as a key problem, it called – amongst other things – for a 'reset' of the relationship between central and local government, more powers for local government, a clear devolution framework, greater diversity and better community engagement.
- The County Councils Network and Price Waterhouse Coopers launched their publication '[Future of Local Government](#)', again looking forward to 2030. It also called for a more

equitable relationship between national and local government that would empower local government and enable it to deliver the 'levelling up' agenda at the local level, alongside a longer term view on how local government is funded and more investment in it.

Publications

Land Justice

Earlier this month, CLES released [the final report of the Liverpool City Region Land Commission: Our Land](#). Reflecting the findings of England's first Commission to review the use of land for community wealth building, commissioned by metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, the report argues that a new approach to land should put communities, not profit, at its heart. It recognises that land is the fundamental basis of wealth for communities, and that attempts to ensure that communities benefit from fairer ownership and stewardship models for land face significant challenges in England. It traces the history of ideas and practices around land ownership, focusing particularly on the history of the Liverpool City Region, in order to gain a deeper understanding of present-day challenges around land justice, and makes some radical recommendations.

Marine Plans

The government has published and adopted [Marine Plans](#) for the North East, North West, South East and South West. A full suite of plans is now available, covering all English waters. For the first time, England has a complete and integrated marine planning framework to manage how to use, develop, protect and enhance our marine environment. Marine Plans *should* guide developers, planning authorities and other decision-makers so that their activities happen in a sustainable and coordinated way.

National Food Strategy

Headlines about [the National Food Strategy](#) focused on proposals for taxes on sugar and salt and prescriptions for fruit and veg. However, as well as outlining how the UK's food systems are delivering sub-optimal outcomes for health and wellbeing, ultimately increasing the strain on the NHS, it also puts forward recommendations for transforming the food value chain in line with long-term climate and biodiversity goals. Recommendations on environmental grounds include: Clarity on how the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme [detailed in the Agriculture Bill](#) will be rolled out; a guarantee of ELM funding to current levels until at least 2029; the creation of a map of land use across England, assessing the suitability of each piece of land for various environmental incentive schemes; and the creation of a list of core minimum standards to be embedded in all future trade deal

Local food

Sustain and the RSPB have published a new report on local food. They highlight key environmental, economic and social benefits to growing the local food market. Fundamental within this is supporting farmers in shifting to agroecology. Local food as a movement can deliver on good jobs, community equity, public health, climate and nature, and more resilient farming businesses. Key recommendations include:

- Government should develop a growth plan to deliver a 10% retail market share for non-multiples by 2030.
- Create a Local Food Investment Fund to provide strategic support for sustainable local food systems.
- Every local authority area in the UK should be served by a food partnership by 2025.

Events

Local climate policy training

Climate Emergency UK has launched a new [Local Climate Policy Programme](#), designed to give attendees a 3 week crash course in Council climate policy and action. The free online workshops, alongside the practical experience of assessing local climate action plans, are designed to help you develop your knowledge, skills and experience around local climate policy and action. Your assessments will also help create a new National Scoring System for local authorities - helping your community and other people around the UK understand how well Councils are tackling the climate crisis, who's doing well and what is possible.

Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool

Online, 23 September, 1pm-2pm. The [Environmental Benefits from Nature tool](#) is designed to work alongside Biodiversity metric 3.0 and provide developers, planners and other stakeholders with a means of enabling wider benefits for people and nature from biodiversity net gain. [This webinar](#) will provide a walk through the new tool, illustrating different aspects of its functionality and application. It will also provide an opportunity for a question and answer session with its creators and update on in depth case-study evaluation work that will be taking place over the remainder of the financial year.

CaBA (Catchment Based Approach) Health and Wellbeing Evidence Base

Online, 29 July 2021, 12-1pm. [Join this webinar](#), featuring Ellie Brown of the Ribble Rivers Trust, to find out more about their health and wellbeing initiative. The CaBA Health and Wellbeing Evidence Base developed by Ribble Rivers Trust provides a series of maps that evidence current health and wellbeing issues across England, with a particular focus on illnesses associated with mental health, obesity and inactivity. It is designed to help identify opportunities where the creation or improvement of publicly accessible blue & green space could have the greatest benefits for people's health and wellbeing.

Locality Convention

[Locality's annual Convention](#) is the biggest community sector event of the year and it is back for 2021! It offers unique access to the most inspiring and pioneering leaders, policy-makers, thinkers and doers, whose ambitious work is transforming our communities. 16-18 November 2021, online and at The Eastside Rooms, Birmingham.

Resources

Local Authority Climate Officers and Climate Contacts

Have you ever struggled to find contact information for who to contact in your council about climate related matters? Climate emergency UK are creating a directory of who to contact about climate related things within all local authorities across the UK, and they need your help. Who would you contact within your local authority? Are you the contact? [Please complete this form.](#)

Zero Carbon Britain Hub & Innovation Lab

This [online hub](#) provides resources to help councils, communities and other organisations to act on the climate and biodiversity emergencies. You'll find "inspiration, tools, reports, guidance, training, webinars and more, to support your action on net zero." From building design guides to community engagement software; scope 3 emissions calculation guidance to a joint climate plan checklist there's lots of useful resources. If your favourite one is not there, do contact them at <https://cat.org.uk/contact-us/>.

Biodiversity net gain

The new [Biodiversity Metric 3.0](#) – which will be used to assess biodiversity net gain in development proposals - was launched on 7 July, alongside a [Small Sites Metric](#) in beta test format. A recording of the launch event is now available on [YouTube](#). In addition, Defra's [report on lessons learned from the Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\) pilots](#) was published on 12 July.

New Nature Prescription Handbook

A [new handbook](#) has been created for organisations and providers of nature on prescription to help understand how green social prescribing can help improve mental health and conditions such as depression, anxiety and stress. This free resource provides guidance and best practice for organisations to develop beneficial, safe and sustainable services. The handbook may also be of interest for GPs, link workers and others in this evolving area.

Green infrastructure standards conference recordings

Organised by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) on behalf of the Green Infrastructure Partnership and Natural England, this online conference provided an opportunity to gain an understanding of the role of networks of natural features in a 'healthy green recovery'. The conference included an update on the development of the Green Infrastructure Standards for England. [Access the recordings and slides here](#).

Nature-based solutions – Living Lab

To understand better how to build investor confidence in nature-based solutions, [The IGNITION project](#) aims to demonstrate the benefits, economic and other wise by exploring innovative financing mechanisms and developing the arguments for NBS through the Living Lab at Salford University. The full IGNITION nature-based solutions living lab tour is now available to [watch here](#), as well as a [new website](#) that will host the research and monitoring data that will soon be live from the lab.

Cumbria Sustainability Network

The [Cumbria Sustainability Network](#) brings together community groups working towards climate awareness and action. They would like to hear from any new or existing groups who are not currently part of the network, or from individuals hoping to start a group in their area. Support and advice is available to help new groups get off the ground, and they're eager to put you in touch with others in your locality!

Consultations

NSIPs

The government is reviewing the [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime](#), and is inviting, although somewhat quietly and selectively, “industry, local authorities and communities, statutory consultees, and other users of the regime” to contribute their thoughts on and experience of the regime to help shape its reform. You can also sign up to a mailing list to be kept up to date with info on NSIP reform at InfrastructurePlanning@communities.gov.uk.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel mandate

The [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#) outlined the Government's approach to delivering a net-zero domestic aviation sector by 2040 and net-zero international aviation by 2050. In terms of emissions from planes, Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs) were positioned as a key solution, with the Department for Transport (DfT) stating that they are likely to reach commercial maturity sooner than electric solutions. Building on this, the DfT has launched [a consultation](#) on the need

for a SAF mandate. It is floating a requirement for jet fuel producers to ensure that at least 10% of their production annually is SAF by 2030, rising to 75% by 2050. They estimate that these targets could reduce the sector's annual emissions by up to 23 megatonnes from 2050. Deadline: 19 September.

Funding

England Woodland Creation Offer

Landowners, land managers and public bodies can apply to the [England Woodland Creation Offer](#) (EWCO) for support to create new woodland, including through natural colonisation, on areas as small as 1 hectare. EWCO replaces the Woodland Carbon Fund, which closed for applications in March 2021. The grant is administered by the Forestry Commission and is funded through the Nature for Climate Fund.

Vacancy

CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region & Greater Manchester Assistant Planning Manager (50% Part-Time)

CPRE the countryside charity fights for a better future for the countryside. They work locally and nationally to protect, shape and enhance our beautiful countryside and green spaces for everyone to value and enjoy. CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region & Greater Manchester have an exciting opportunity for a [part-time Assistant Planning Manager](#) to help with their core planning work. The postholder will provide technical training and support to Planning Volunteers across their region, and support their Planning Manager.

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