



# ● GREEN BULLET

29<sup>th</sup> May 2019

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](mailto: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.

## CONTENTS

- Campaigns – Climate change, seas, pesticides, green growth, environmental justice, air quality, waste & recycling
- Information update – Brexit & beyond, energy, planning, transport
- Publications – nature in crisis, green infrastructure, climate change and land use, localism
- Events – The Time is Now, biodiversity net gain, Northern planning, sustainable Chester, LCR Year of the Environment, Bike Week,
- Resources – public dialogue on the environment, Natural England, climate change in neighbourhood plans, marine habitats, 30 Days Wild, Recycle Week, Youth Charter
- Consultations – National Flood and Coastal Erosion strategy, GM clean air strategy
- Funding – urban tree planting, village hall improvements

## Campaigns

### Climate change

- The [UK Parliament has declared a climate emergency](#), following in the footsteps of the Welsh and Scottish governments and dozens of local councils. However, unlike in Scotland and Wales, the UK Government has not committed to act on the stated will of Parliament and is not compelled to do so.

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- The Committee on Climate Change said the UK can and should lead the global fight against climate change by [cutting greenhouse gases to nearly zero by 2050](#), substantially in excess of current targets. Carbon Brief provides a [detailed but accessible Q&A](#) on what exactly this would mean. If other countries then followed the UK, there would be a 50% chance of staying below a 1.5°C rise by 2100. The committee say that the foundations for this shift are already in place, but transformational change is still needed, and the costs and impacts of that change must be equitably distributed. However, the committee's recommendations have themselves been criticized for being unambitious and, perhaps more seriously, the product [more of creative accounting than emissions reductions](#).
- Rewilding Britain have published a report calling for [large-scale nature restoration to be a central plank in decarbonisation](#) efforts, allowing rewilded ecosystems covering a quarter of the UK to sequester large amounts of atmospheric carbon, while Friends of the Earth call for a [doubling of UK forest cover](#)
- All four [legal challenges](#) against the National Policy Statement designating Heathrow for a third runway have been lost; Friends of the Earth and Plan B say they [will appeal](#).
- [Extinction Rebellion](#) and the [school climate strikes](#) continue to gather momentum and support, and [Greta Thunberg gave a speech to the UK Parliament](#). She did not share their view that they were doing everything that they reasonably could.

### Seas & oceans

Conservation and environmental lobby groups have [heavily criticised the government's revised UK Marine Strategy](#), describing it as a "spectacular failure" and saying that politicians need to radically revise their plans to tackle the growing emergency. The UK has only met four out of 15 indicators required for healthy oceans - and campaigners claim the revised framework and targets do not meet the [requirements of the UN's biodiversity report](#) on immediate action to prevent mass extinction of species and habitats.

### Pesticides

Environmental NGO umbrella body Wildlife and Countryside Link Link, alongside RSPB and Pesticide Action Network UK, has resigned from the Pesticides Forum and the Voluntary Initiative (VI) after two decades due to their [consistent failure to take meaningful action to tackling the ever-growing problem of increasing pesticide use](#). They are calling for these voluntary arrangements to be replaced with statutory measures.

### Beyond Green Growth

A Conversation piece about [why "green growth" is not the answer](#) to our social, environmental and economic problems, and a look forward to the alternatives.

### Environmental Justice Commission

Building on its pioneering work on environmental breakdown and its Commission for Economic Justice, IPPR is now launching a new [Environmental Justice Commission](#) to help develop the ideas and policies to bring about a rapid green transition that is fair and just.

### Air Quality

Environmental lawyers Client Earth have warned that Highways England's [failure to commit to measures to tackle air pollution on its roads is unlawful](#), and have written to the government calling for ministers to direct Highways England to come up with a concrete, time-bound plan as soon as possible, or face yet another defeat over air pollution in the courts.

## **Waste & recycling**

- A new report suggests that the [UK will miss its current target to recycle 65% of household waste by 2035](#) by more than a decade. It blames a lack of investment in recycling infrastructure and services, an ever-increasing reliance on incineration and an excess of incinerators, alongside consumer confusion and the growth in e-shopping and excess retail packaging. (The Committee on Climate Change's call for the UK to hit net zero by 2050 [requires recycling rates of 70% by 2025](#))
- The Scottish Government has committed to a [deposit return scheme for all plastic bottles, cans and glass](#), and green campaigners are urging the UK Government to follow suite.
- [Fly-tipping incidents have gone up by 40%](#) over the last five years – but the maximum penalty of a £50,000 fine or 12 months in prison, introduced five years ago, has never been handed out.
- The Government has [banned plastic straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers](#) in England from April next year
- Countries around the world – but without the US – signed up through a UN to a plan to [reduce the flow of plastic waste](#) to developing countries. Although there have been signs of some companies making [attempts to tackle the problem](#), these have been described by campaigners as a drop in the ocean.

## **Information update**

### **Brexit and beyond**

- The Environmental Audit Committee have said that the environmental principles that guide [European legislation and policy have been 'severely downgraded' in the Government's draft Environment Bill](#). They describe the bill as “weak” and “at odds with the government's claim that the bill places environmental accountability at the heart of government”. An alliance of green economy and related bodies has published a list of 7 assurances they want the UK Government to offer through the Bill, in order to "[put sustainability at the heart](#)" of the national economic model.
- [Green parties](#) saw a significant increase in support across Europe in the European elections, alongside liberal and nationalist parties, a trend reflected in the UK. You can check the parties' performance against [Greener UK's manifesto](#) for these elections.
- Beyond the high drama and the headlines, Greener U and Green Alliance remind us that [Brexit legislation still needs serious environmental scrutiny](#).
- The Government has published its [first progress report against the targets in the 25 Year Environment Plan](#)
- Edie's series of [Big Brexit Questions](#) podcasts cover Brexit's likely impacts on resource efficiency and waste management, biodiversity, renewable energy, and green finance.

### **Energy**

- [A Government survey](#) shows that opposition to fracking has doubled in the last six years to 40% of the public, while support has more than halved to 12%. 80% are concerned about climate change. Public support is increasing for all forms of renewable energy generation, in particular solar.
- Following the UK Government's decision not to support a tidal lagoon power plant in Swansea Bay, Swansea City Council are leading proposals for a significantly [reconfigured Swansea Bay tidal lagoon](#) project incorporating new renewable energy elements and thousands of 'floating' new homes. Meanwhile, Steve Rotherham is advancing the business case for a [Mersey Estuary tidal lagoon](#) project.

- The Government's [fracking tsar resigned](#) after just six months, accusing the Government of caving in to environmentalists. Which, obviously, it tends to do a lot...
- Angus Walker reviews the [state of offshore wind](#) in the UK, including a link to a [map](#) identifying offshore projects around the UK (and indeed the rest of the world, but the seas around the UK have the main concentrations).
- Labour has pledged to [install solar panels on 1 million social and low-income houses](#), with incentives for 750,000 more homes to do the same, if they are elected.
- The UK has maintained its top-ten position in a ranking of the world's [most attractive renewable energy markets](#) for investors, largely due to the Government's backing for offshore wind. Edie charts the [rapid rise of renewables energy generation](#) in the UK with a few key numbers, as power generation moved from 65% of the nation's carbon footprint in 1990 to 25% now.
- Renewables UK has warned that new policy is needed to ['re-power' onshore wind farms](#) as they reach retirement age.
- Despite "notable" progress towards the [UN's Sustainable Development Goal](#) (SDG) 7, Clean Energy for All, a [new report](#) shows that globally, policies, investment and physical infrastructure are still not sufficient to deliver on its 2030 targets.

## Planning

- The new Housing Delivery Test sets out more circumstances in which local authorities can be subject to the presumption in favour of development and other penalties, removing their ability to plan and opening them up to speculative development. Lichfields have produced a briefing on [how North West authorities fared against the test](#)
- The Natural Capital Committee has [criticized Defra's proposals for biodiversity offsetting](#) in other regions if development projects result in habitat loss. They say that Defra's proposed tariff system for biodiversity net gain "has the real potential" to be "bureaucratic, costly and distortionary", calling instead for a simple set of principles and a reduced emphasis on offsetting. Professional ecologists have also questioned [who really gains from the biodiversity net gain proposals](#).
- The Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy is set to include a social value measure, "to [ensure that the social and environmental impact of any future development](#) is considered alongside the more traditional economic measures".
- The Planning Inspectorate has [issued its response](#) to the [Rosewell review](#), which aimed to speed up the planning appeal inquiry process, in an action plan that sets out a roadmap to meeting the recommendations with the aim of implementing all of them by June 2020. Five of Rosewell's 22 recommendations had already been adopted, they said, one is being piloted, a further 12 are the subject of "testing" with appeal system users, and four are still at the earliest stage of progression.
- The Government has made £8.5 million available to [help neighbourhood planning groups \(NPGs\) to allocate sites for housing](#), alongside the existing [neighbourhood planning support programme](#), while new guidance gives NPGs the ability to [determine their own housing numbers](#) in exceptional circumstances
- National Planning Practice guidance on the highly controversial [viability assessments](#) has been updated
- [Permitted development rights](#) for larger home extensions, and converting high street shops to homes or offices, have been made permanent in the face of [widespread criticism](#) that the temporary rights have delivered poor quality development and undermined communities,

local authorities and the planning system. Labour have said that they would [scrap the changes](#).

- A survey of councillors on planning committees has shown a significant shift in priorities, towards providing affordable homes and economic growth and [away from protecting Green Belt](#).
- A court of appeal ruling has made it much more [difficult to register a village green within a defined settlement boundary](#), even if the site is not allocated for development.
- The Environment Agency estimates that the number of [houses built on flood plains will double](#) over the next fifty years, despite increasing risks and increasing awareness of the risks.

## **Transport**

- A new report by Friends of the Earth claims that the [Department for Transport \(DfT\) is "going rogue" on climate change issues by "side-lining" emissions reductions](#) in its strategies and projects. It is continuing to pursue high-carbon projects such as new roads or road expansions, over lower-carbon alternatives, and implementing policy frameworks which prioritise short-term economic development and congestion reduction over long-term carbon cuts. The report makes recommendations to get the Department back on track.
- North West metro-mayors Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham have called for [Northern to be stripped of its rail franchise](#) as soon as possible due to consistently poor service
- The Transport Planning Society has opened nominations for its [People's Award](#) to mark the official launch of Transport Planning Day 2019. The People's Award looks for the UK's best community transport initiatives that have made a real difference to people's access to services, quality of life and wellbeing.
- Thousands of trees planted along the High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) route will have to be replaced after saplings were not watered in last summer's drought. HS2 said [replacing the trees was more "cost effective" than watering them](#). Campaign groups branded it an "environmental disaster." Separately, the [Woodland Trust](#) and [RSPB](#) have criticized HS2 for the environmental damage it is causing, and it has been criticized for back-tracking on commitments to 'cycle-proof' the route and [destroying significant cycle networks](#) and connections. Analysts have suggested that the [costs would now outweigh the benefits](#), the [strategic case does not stack up](#), and that it would offer [little benefit to the North](#). The Lords' Economic Affairs committee suggests that [HS2 should be combined with Northern Powerhouse Rail](#) and delivered as one scheme to avoid disadvantaging the North.
- A group of over 80 MPs have sent a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pushing for commitment to [deliver Transport for the North's strategic plan](#) and fully devolve transport budgets to city and Metro Mayors
- Citizens Advice have warned that the [electric vehicle revolution must not penalize poorer members](#) of society

## **Publications**

### **Nature in crisis**

The UN's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services ([IPBES](#)) [2019 report](#) makes for grim reading. Its stark finding is that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history and the health of ecosystems on which [we and all other species depend](#) is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. The most comprehensive assessment of its kind, it concludes that a million species are threatened with extinction and that this is accelerating due to inadequate responses from governments across the globe, requiring

urgent transformational change that puts the public good above vested corporate economic interests. Green Alliance suggests [5 things the UK Government needs to do](#) in response. They have already commissioned a Cambridge professor to [review the economics of biodiversity](#), which may be useful but rather suggests that they are still looking through the wrong end of the telescope, and campaigners say that [now is the time for action, not more research](#). Headlines like this can seem overwhelming but it can be difficult to grasp and explain to others why it's imperative to act now - if not for the sake of the natural world, then for our own sakes. Is ecosystem collapse plausible? What would it even look like? How is all of this affecting our lives? Greenpeace attempts to explain in a [long article](#) and a [series of short videos](#).

### **Mainstreaming Green Infrastructure**

An [open access, special edition of Town and Country Planning](#) looks at the reasons why the movement towards widespread green infrastructure has stalled and how we might start to address these fundamental weaknesses through the planning system. Using case studies from around the world, it explores academic, policy and practice articles to signpost how green infrastructure can be better configured, communicated and employed to deliver responsible placemaking. It argues that the movement towards widespread acceptance of nature-based solutions is stuck in a rudimentary phase, noting that there is still 'widespread resistance to making things happen on the ground'. The TCPA have also produced a factsheet on [protecting biodiversity in urban areas](#) through better green infrastructure planning.

### **Cutting the climate impact of land use**

A [Green Alliance report](#) estimates that peatland stores around 40% of the UK's soil carbon. However, while it is vital for carbon sequestration, the majority of the UK's 2.7 million hectares of peatland have been degraded by unsustainable practices, including agriculture, forestry, peat extraction and burning for recreational purposes (such as for grouse shoots). This has led to the release of stored carbon through erosion and dissolved carbon lost to watercourses, making them a net emitter of greenhouse gases. Not all peatlands emit at the same rate. Lowland cropland is responsible for about 40 per cent of emissions, despite accounting for only seven per cent of the UK's peatland area. This report shows the potential for the UK to reduce its land use emissions by nearly 60 per cent by 2030.

### **Hitting Reset – localism & decentralisation**

In recent years, a sense of alienation from national politics has arisen in significant parts of the country and among significant cohorts. Localis' new report [Hitting Reset](#) lays out a roadmap to a decentralised UK, where democratically-elected local leaders have the power to govern, and the capacity of councils to bring together private and public actors to achieve local development is maximised. Bringing together cutting-edge academic work, international case studies and an extensive interview series, we make the case for local leadership.

### **Events**

#### **The Time is Now**

The Time Is Now is a mass lobby of MPs, organised by the Climate Coalition and Greener UK,. The Time Is Now will bring thousands of people together at the same time on the same day, demonstrating to MPs the importance and urgency of this issue. It's people power in action! Wednesday 26 June, 1pm – 4pm, Westminster, Central London (exact details available closer to the time). [Find out more, and access all the resources you need to get involved in person or at a distance](#).

### **Biodiversity Net Gain in Cumbria**

As human activity and development has expanded, so too has its impact upon the natural world, resulting in the rapid decline and disappearance of habitats and wildlife, along with the important ecosystem services they provide to our society. In response, the Government is seeking to embed the Biodiversity Net Gain approach to development within the planning system and leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. [Join this joint event](#) hosted by Natural England, Cumbria Planning Training Scheme and RTPI North West Young Planners to discuss the Biodiversity Net Gain approach, policy and guidance, and look at case studies of how it can be done in practice. Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 12 – 4pm (lunch and registration 12 - 1), Lake District National Park Boardroom, Kendal.

### **Planning for Northern People and Places**

In 2016, the RTPI and IPPR North published a [Blueprint for a Great North Plan](#) which built on 12 months of research and consultation with stakeholders across the North. It described how spatial planning could ensure that pan-Northern strategies improve places and quality of life across all of the North's cities, towns and villages. Over the last 12 months, RTPI has been working with the University of Newcastle and Peter Brett Associates to develop a set of shared ambitions to advance strategic planning and governance across the North. [This conference](#) will launch the RTPI's ambitions for transforming spatial planning in the North.

### **Sustainable Chester**

Sustainable Chester Fair, Saturday 16 June, 11am, Grosvenor Park. Celebrate and help create a greener more sustainable Chester at this open-to-all event including talks, stalls, children's activities, arts, crafts, and much more. Contact [helenchesterfoe@hotmail.com](mailto:helenchesterfoe@hotmail.com) for more info

### **Liverpool City Region Year of the Environment**

There are dozens of events and activities happening throughout June and beyond in the [Liverpool City Region 2019 Year of the Environment](#) calendar. Check them out, join in or add your own event!

### **Bike Week**

[Bike Week 8-16 June](#) aims to get many more people across the UK to give cycling a try, for commuting, leisure or exercise. Get your colleagues on their bikes for bike week, and join or register your own events!

### **Resources**

#### **Public dialogue on the environment**

The Ecosystems Knowledge Network has published a new page featuring a range of resources dedicated to [good practice in involving publics and communities](#) in discussions about environmental improvements, protection and impacts.

#### **Natural England quick start guides**

[These new guides](#) provide an introduction to the meanings of natural capital and the ecosystem approach and the benefits of operationalising these concepts.

### **Climate change in neighbourhood planning**

The CSE provides guidance on [incorporating climate change into neighbourhood plans](#) and proposals for doing this more effectively. In the report [Rising to the Climate Crisis](#), the RTPI and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) talk persuasively about the role local planning authorities can play in adopting climate mitigation and adaptation policies. Neighbourhood planning is an opportunity to nurture the consent needed that will enable local and national politicians to take action and to normalise and localise discussions of climate change, which are mostly so removed from daily experience.

### **Marine habitats**

This project aimed to develop a [national dataset of marine sites that are suitable for habitat restoration or creation](#). The dataset provides information to inform policy development that can help increase the amount of ecologically important habitat, where appropriate and in line with current legislation. There is also [updated guidance and supporting resources from Natural England](#) for understanding the Conservation Advice for Marine Protected Areas, including summaries and introductory videos

### **30 Days Wild**

This June, the Wildlife Trusts challenge you to [do something wild every day](#). That's 30 simple, fun and exciting Random Acts of Wildness. They'll give you a free pack of goodies to help you plan your wild month, plus lots of ideas to inspire you to stay wild all throughout June (and beyond!). You'll also get inspiring emails from your local Wildlife Trust, invites to exclusive events and a chance to join in on social media.

### **Recycle Week 2019**

Recycle Week 2019 will be held 23-29 September. The Recycle Week partner pack is now live in the WRAP [Resource Library](#). The pack contains the Recycle Week theme and the visual identity plus ideas of how all partners can get involved. As in previous years Recycle Now will provide content and template communication materials so that you can support the week's activities.

### **Youth Charter**

A new Youth Charter will be developed to set out a vision for young people over the next generation and beyond. The charter will reaffirm Government's commitment to give young people a strong voice on the issues they care about such as combating knife crime, addressing mental and physical health challenges and [concerns about the environment and climate change](#).

### **Consultations**

#### **Draft National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England**

The [draft risk management strategy for flood risk and coastal erosion](#) warns that any weakening of planning policy or its implementation could increase property damage from flooding by 38 per cent over the next 50 years. The strategy sets out urgent action needed to tackle more frequent, intense flooding and sea level rise. It states that a robust spatial planning process is essential to creating and maintaining places resilient to flooding and coastal change, especially in the face of changing climate. Deadline: 4th July.

### **Greater Manchester Clean Air Conversation**

Greater Manchester is asking businesses and residents for their views on a proposed 500 square mile Clean Air Zone (CAZ), covering 10 council areas, as well as other [measures to improve air quality in the region](#). The CAZ would come into force from 2021 and would initially mean that buses, coaches, HGVs, taxis and private hire vehicles that do not meet emission standards would be required to pay a daily penalty to drive in Greater Manchester. However, the CAZ will not apply to private cars after the authority argued it would negatively impact more deprived communities unable to afford to upgrade their vehicles. Deadline – 30<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Funding**

#### **Tree planting**

The Government has committed £10 million to planting 130,000 trees in England's urban areas. Grants will be made through the [Urban Tree Challenge Fund](#) over the next two years as the government looks to plan for one million urban trees by 2022. The Forestry Commission will administer the fund, which is open to individuals, local authorities, charities and NGOs. The fund opens this week for applications, and a map will be available to check eligibility before applying.

#### **Village Hall improvement**

The Autumn 2018 budget announced that, to mark the centenary of the Armistice, government would support several initiatives, including making available [grant funding to support improvement projects for village halls](#). The grant aims to help fund the updating and refurbishment of village halls so that they are fit for purpose and provide activities which seek to: Improve health and wellbeing/reduction in loneliness; demonstrate a positive impact on the environment; or support the local rural economy

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