



● GREEN BULLET

29th July 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 - 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.

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Campaigns

Earth Overshoot Day

Today (July 29th) is [Earth Overshoot Day 2019](#). It marks the date when humanity's total consumption of ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. The date is still getting earlier every year. The [UK's national overshoot day was back on May 17th](#) - this is when Earth Overshoot Day would be if everyone consumed resources like this country.

Climate change

- The UK Government has been compared to [Dad's Army](#) by its own climate change advisor, which warns that its plans are insufficient even to meet previous, less stringent targets, and [nowhere near sufficient](#) to meet the new tougher target of net zero emissions by 2050. Over the past year, [the Government has delivered just 1 of 25 critical policies](#) needed to get emissions reductions back on track.
- The [latest UN talks on climate change](#) have once again seen Saudi Arabia block the adoption of the landmark report, based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence, calling for planetary warming to be limited to 1.5C.
- As the latest heatwave sweeps [Europe](#) and [beyond](#) – including unprecedented [wildfires in the Arctic](#) - a new report from Cafod reveals that from 2010-17 the UK provided £7.8bn in financial support to foreign energy projects through a mixture of overseas development assistance, export credit guarantees and other official funding flows. [60% of this total went on fossil fuels](#).
- The LGA's General Assembly has joined more than 100 councils in [declaring a climate emergency](#).
- The new [President of the European Commission](#) has said that she will put climate change at the top of her agenda
- [Extinction Rebellion](#) once again blocked roads in five British cities to highlight the urgency of the climate emergency.

MPs and the environment

[People and Nature](#) is a new, cross-party campaign group, calling on the government to make all UK aid “nature positive” to enhance the natural environment, cease all harmful investments that contribute to deforestation and climate change, and negotiate a deal for people and nature at the Convention on Biological Diversity’s meeting in October 2020 that is integrated with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. A list of MPs supporting the campaign is [here](#): you can contact your MP and ask them to pledge support. There is also a new [Conservative Environment Network](#) made up of Tory MPs who advocate a new and urgent approach to tackling “the existential threat of environmental breakdown”. Rory Stewart had [committed to putting the environment at the heart of overseas aid policy](#) - but of course he’s not a minister any more.

Pollution incidents in England

The past year saw a [significant rise in ‘category 1 and 2’ pollution incidents](#) in England - spills and other pollution events that have a major, persistent or significant impact on the environment, people or property. Reducing these events is a key target of the Environment Agency, but staff cuts and Brexit preparation have dented the EA’s ability to investigate polluters. An investigation last year that revealed [site inspections by the EA dropped by more than a third](#) in four years, with the agency sharply scaling back on some of its key duties.

Lake District National Park

Friends of the Lake District have submitted a proposal to [extend the southern boundary of the Lake District National Park](#). This follows a successful years-long campaign, culminating in 2016, to extend the LDNP eastwards and the Yorkshire Dales westwards. You can also take part in a [short online survey](#) on the places you value in the Lakes and why, to help with developing

landscape change monitoring techniques, measuring the value held within the area and informing management within the landscape.

Litter

Michael Gove has said that [he personally supports an 'all-in' deposit return scheme](#), long campaigned for by environmental NGOs, in particular CPRE. However, this is not (yet) government policy and we do not know what views his successor may have on the matter. CPRE point out that the government's own impact assessment concludes that such a scheme would [boost the economy by £2 billion](#).

Air quality

Greater Manchester Combined Authority has complained that the Government is [treating the North unfairly](#) by refusing to provide support for small businesses in Greater Manchester to comply with new clean air plans in the same way that they did support such businesses in London. Meanwhile, Client Earth, the environmental lawyers who repeatedly won legal cases against the UK Government over air pollution, have claimed that [the GM plans have serious flaws](#).

Information update

Brexit and beyond

- New Prime Minister, [new cabinet](#), do-or-die commitment to leave the EU on 31st October, whatever the consequences might be. Desmog's analysis suggests this is the [most anti-climate action cabinet](#) ever; Businessgreen finds that there is [good alongside the bad and the ugly](#), while Edie reviews the [environmental views of the new Defra and BEIS Secretaries](#) and of [Boris Johnson](#). Drill or drop notes that the new [BEIS and MHCLG Secretaries are both fracking advocates](#). Little is being said about Robert Jendrick, new Secretary of State at MHCLG, although [Simonicity](#) notes that he was a member of the Commons Public Accounts Committee which published the [Planning and the broken housing market](#) report last month.
- Defra has published a [progress document on the Environment Bill, as well as written responses to six public consultations](#) that outline future measures to improve food waste collections, the resource efficiency of packaging and biodiversity improvements.
- A planner describes how proposed rules in the draft Environment Bill to secure 'net biodiversity gain' may in [effect accelerate biodiversity loss](#) and enable developers to bypass environmental protections.

Energy

- Despite 2018 being another record year for renewable generation, official figures on energy consumption across the UK last year suggest that [national 2020 renewable energy targets will be missed](#) – change is happening, but is far too slow.
- Details of plans to frack shale gas wells near Formby in Lancashire have been [published online](#). Aurora Energy Resources is seeking consent to drill, frack and test vertical and horizontal wells at a site near the village of Great Altcar. The company's planning application to Lancashire County Council comprises 70 documents, including a 411-page environmental statement and an 87-page planning statement.
- Business (in the form of the CBI) has criticized the UK's energy regulator for [failing to take adequate account of climate change](#) in its plans for Britain's energy system.

Planning

- The judgement in the [Monkhill vs SoS and Waverly BC](#) High Court case provides useful guidance on when and how the presumption in favour of sustainable development can be applied and resisted (especially paras 39 and 45), and on how national policy protecting AONBs and National Parks should be interpreted
- The government's [online planning practice guidance](#) has been updated on a variety of matters, including new guidance on appropriate assessment, effective use of land, Green Belt, housing for older and disabled people, housing needs of different groups, housing supply and delivery, and [how developers should protect specific species](#).
- More planning updates can be found in [MHCLG's latest update to chief planning officers](#).
- The [Greater Manchester Spatial Framework has been delayed](#) again, with confusion over the evidence requirements and whether it is capable of releasing sites from the Green Belt. Andrew Lainton considers [solutions to the problem](#).
- The Court of Appeal has ruled that even when land is vaguely identified in a plan for potential development, it [cannot be registered as a town or village green](#).
- A report suggests that planning applications in England are twice as likely to be blocked or delayed due to [sustainable drainage system \(SuDS\)](#) design compared to applications in Wales, despite (or perhaps because of) SuDS being much more likely to be the preferred method in Wales than England.
- CPRE is calling for [affordable rent levels to be set in relation to tenants' incomes](#), rather than market rates, and (as part of a coalition) for [£12.8billion Government investment in building social housing](#) each year for ten years.
- [London has been awarded the status of a National Park City](#), the first capital city in the world to be designated as such. The declaration was made on 22 July by the National Park City Foundation in recognition of London's open spaces, waterways and natural environment.
- The Public Accounts Committee has accused the government of a [lack of transparency and accountability](#) over its £12 billion investment in the Local Growth Fund, and that the LEPs (who receive the funding) "have been dogged by a lack of local accountability and there is little evidence that they have levered in the promised private sector funds".

Transport

- Boris Johnson has backed a [faster rail route from Manchester to Leeds](#) – but it's not clear what that means, if anything, for the wider, stalled 'Northern Powerhouse Rail / 'HS3' project, as [the mixed reactions](#) to his re-announcement suggest.
- The Transport Select Committee has criticized the Government's lack of any notable progress on delivering its [walking and cycling strategy](#), two years after its publication. They have called for increased funding, more ambitious targets, and better reporting. Meanwhile, the Government said it is [likely to miss a national target to double the number of cycling journeys](#) by 2025. It blamed local authorities for not investing enough in measures such as cycle lanes, apparently unable to connect this lack of investment with its own draconian cuts to local authority funding, rendering them unable to undertake much more than their bare-minimum statutory duties.
- A [briefing on HS2 from the House of Commons Library](#) said the additional capacity provided by HS2 on the West Coast Main Line appears to be over and above what is required to meet capacity and overcrowding pressures for several decades. It notes that £58 billion, the most quoted cost, is not a cost estimate but a funding envelope. The library says the costs is likely to be around £65 billion with benefits amounting to around £75 billion, largely from reduced journey times. It also notes that there are alternatives that could deal with the capacity constraints at a lower cost.

Publications

Building Better Building Beautiful Commission – Interim Report

The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission [published their interim report on 9 July](#). The Commission is an independent body that is advising government on how to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods. The Commission will recommend practical measures to help ensure new housing developments meet the needs and expectations of communities, making them more likely to be welcomed, rather than resisted, by existing communities. In their interim report, 'Creating space for beauty', the Commission have set out their work to date. The final report, which will include the Commission's recommendations to government, is expected in December 2019. [Create Streets](#) and [The Princes Foundation](#) have also released reports advocating better design as vital to increasing housebuilding and reducing opposition.

Food, farming and the climate crisis

The Land Workers Alliance have released a new report, [Food, farming and the climate crisis](#), aimed at illustrating how our agricultural systems can be repurposed and realigned in order to feed a hungry planet and contribute effectively to emissions reductions targets.

Events

Great Landscape Week

There's still time to sign up for one of Friends of the Lake District's (mostly free) events running from Saturday 3rd – Friday 9th August, [celebrating every aspect of the glorious Cumbrian landscapes](#), with something for everyone, whatever age or ability.

Valuing Nature Annual Conference

This year's (free!) [Valuing Nature Annual Conference](#) will be held at the Royal Society, London, Monday 28th -Tuesday 29th October. It will bring together people from diverse research areas and from business, policy and practice to share latest research findings from the programme and beyond, and to improve the ways in which we incorporate findings into practice.

Mersey Forest Partnership at 25

This Autumn, The Mersey Forest Partnership celebrates 25 years since the Forest Plan was approved by government, during which, among many other achievements, they have planted over 9 million trees. On 29th November they are holding a [conference at Mansion House in Calderstones Park, Liverpool](#), to celebrate this milestone, thank the many people who have helped to make progress and look ahead at the next 25 years of delivery.

Locality Convention

Join hundreds of people for inspiration, new skills and to celebrate the power of community at the [Locality Convention](#), Leeds, November 12-13.

Resources

Local climate action co-benefits toolkit

Ashden, a charity that promotes innovation in sustainable energy, has published a [toolkit](#) to help local authorities and local partners achieve their climate change ambitions. Each chapter of the

toolkit includes facts and figures, links to data for local areas, the business case for taking action, opportunities for action and inspirational examples of successful initiatives from around the country.

Tackling empty homes

The charity Action on Empty Homes has put together the learning from six demonstration projects using community-based approaches to bring empty homes into use. The [report](#) looks at the opportunities for local partnership, and how a strategic approach from councils can make limited resources go further.

Community-led housing

This new guide from Community First Yorkshire & the RTPI aims to help local authorities [support the delivery of community-led housing](#) development. It draws on experience from urban and rural planning authorities to demonstrate how local plan policy and development management practice can support community-led housing. It also highlights how it can be promoted through neighbourhood plans.

Neighbourhood planning guidance

Locality has produced new resources to help communities developing neighbourhood plans, including case studies on [embedding an ecosystems approach](#) into neighbourhood planning and [producing design-led plans](#), and using [online open data tools](#) to customise evidence about your neighbourhood.

Our planet, our business

Inspired by Netflix's groundbreaking Our Planet series, this [new short film from WWF](#) recognises that businesses have a vital role in building a sustainable future. It promotes a re-imagining of 'business as usual' to think about to avoid the environmental, social and economic impacts of runaway climate change.

The Catchment Based Approach and GIS

The [Catchment Based Approach Data Package V5](#) is now ready for download, containing over 150 data layers, it is a complete refresh of all the preceding data packages. Accompanying the data package is a user guide which explains how each layer can be used; where it has come from and any issues to be aware of.

Noise Action Plans

The Department for Transport has published a [policy paper covering large urban areas, roads and railways](#). Councils can identify certain Local Green Spaces (already designated on the basis of their tranquillity) as 'quiet areas'. The updated action plans take into account the 2017 noise mapping and views from the consultation held in 2018.

Wildlife Watch

For some great resources to engage children with the wonders of nature, check out the Wildlife Trusts' [Wildlife Watch](#) website. From [activity sheets](#) to [spotting sheets](#), there's a huge amount of resources for children to do outside (or inside on a rainy day).

Consultations

Heathrow expansion

There's still time to respond to the consultation on the [controversial expansion of Heathrow](#), already the country's largest single source of carbon emissions, which critics have said [makes a mockery of new plans to reach net zero carbon](#) by 2050. [Andy Boddington runs down some of the key facts, figures and issues](#).

Water consumption

The Department for Food, the Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) has proposed the introduction of a "[personal water target](#)" which would legally require individuals to keep their water consumption within a certain "budget". The proposal forms part of a public consultation examining how water can be better managed at individual, local and business levels, launched in the wake of the [Environment Agency's \(EA\) warning](#) that England could run short of water within 25 years. Deadline: 11 October.

Invasive alien species

Defra and the Welsh Government are seeking views on [plans for managing invasive alien species](#) (also known as invasive non-native species) which are widely spread in England and Wales. These plans set out how the species will be effectively managed as required by The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019. Deadline: 12 September.

Flooding and coastal erosion

The Government has opened a call for additional evidence on some [specific aspects of government policy on flooding and coastal erosion](#), to inform and influence the development of the government policy statement on flooding and coastal erosion. Deadline: 19 August.

Electric vehicle charge points

The government has published a consultation on proposals that would require [all new-build homes to be fitted with electric car charge points](#). Proposals aim to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles in the UK and make charging easier, cheaper and more convenient for drivers. The legislation, which the government claims would be a "world-first", seeks to complement wider government measures set out in the £1.5 billion [Road to Zero Strategy](#). In addition to the consultation, the government wants all newly installed public rapid and high powered charge points to provide debit and credit payment by spring 2020. Deadline: 7th October

Funding

National Lottery Heritage Fund

The NLHF has launched a new awards scheme, [Heritage Horizon Awards](#), which will invest £100 million over the next three years in heritage projects for UK heritage. There will be a particular focus on The National Lottery Heritage Fund's current strategic priorities: [landscapes, parks and nature](#) and heritage at risk.

Rural Community Energy Fund

The Rural Community Energy Fund, a £10 million programme which supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects, which provide economic and social benefits to the community, has been re-opened.

Resource Action Fund

The [Resource Action Fund](#) is an £18million fund, provided by Defra to support resource efficiency projects, with the goal of diverting, reducing, and better managing, waste through

supporting key policy outcomes in the areas of food, plastics, textiles, recycling infrastructure and litter. It will do this through a variety of mechanisms including large and small-scale grants, and through expert support in the areas of food and non-household municipal recycling.

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