



ENGLISH  
NATURE

# Business plan 2004/05



working today  
for nature tomorrow

## **We aim to protect and enhance England's natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations.**

The natural environment plays a part in our quality of life in a variety of ways including:

- **Appreciation** – nature for our enjoyment and spiritual enrichment, a better environment, cultural meanings and artistic inspiration.
- **Knowledge** – a resource for education, scientific and historic discovery and environmental monitoring.
- **Products** – sustainably produced goods such as food, fuel, medicines and construction materials.
- **Services** – our basic life support systems including our air, soil, breaking down waste, and pollution. The natural environment can also buffer us against the extremes of climate, flooding and erosion.

We work by:

- **Advising** – Government, other agencies, local authorities, interest groups, business, communities and individuals.
- **Regulating** – activities affecting the special nature conservation sites in England.
- **Enabling** – helping others to manage land more sustainably through grants, partnership projects and information.
- **Enthusiating** – advocating nature for all and biodiversity as a key test of sustainable development.

Our core values are that we will be:

- Outcome-orientated.
- Forward-looking.
- Open and consultative.
- Flexible and innovative.
- Evidence-based.
- Customer-focused.

We also endorse the seven principles of public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Every employee and every volunteer is an ambassador for English Nature and is expected to live up to these values.

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# Foreword

Over recent years English Nature has developed its strategy so that conservation is pursued as a forward-looking, creating and inclusive process. We have made significant gains by working closely with landowners to improve the management of special sites; by undertaking larger scale projects in partnership with other organisations to provide a variety of public benefits; and by highlighting the need to tackle diffuse pollution and the damage done to the marine environment. Yet, so much more needs to be done to restore ecological integrity to the whole landscape.

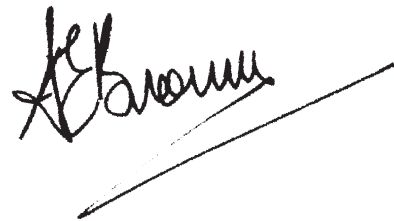
Nature and the landscape perform a variety of functions that satisfy our physical and spiritual needs: food, raw materials, energy, research and study, adventure, relaxation, sport, recreation, art, poetry, personal reflection and much more. However, the pressures and demands on these assets continue to grow. We all need to search for solutions, which integrate economic, social and environmental objectives, not through crude trade-offs, but through the wider recognition of the value of the natural environment and the pursuit of mutually reinforcing benefits.

There are major opportunities ahead arising from reform of the Common Agriculture Policy, new legislation and policies, devolution to regional and local levels and more joined-up approaches to the way rural, urban, coastal and marine areas are managed. The challenge for Government, and for us, is to ensure changes improve the current situation, and are cost-effective and well managed.

The next 12 months will be a key test of the Government's commitment and resolve in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and the benefits it should bring to all sectors of society. Let's hope that the winners are nature, and present and future generations, so that we continue to be surprised, confounded, rewarded and delighted by the natural world that we all ultimately depend on.



**Sir Martin Doughty**  
Chair



**Dr A E Brown**  
Chief Executive

# 1 Introduction

English Nature is a public service organisation, working with Government, industry, regulators, charities, landowners and managers, and local communities. We seek to sustain and enhance England's natural heritage for all to enjoy, both now and in the future.

We work in close partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and contribute to the delivery of Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. Of particular importance are targets relating to Sites of Special Scientific Interest, farmland birds, access, protection of the rural, urban, marine and global environment and sustainable agriculture.

The *Business plan* for 2004/05 is based on a Grant-in-Aid (GIA) funding of £71.455 million and a total budget of £83.2 million. In addition to GIA Defra will provide £3.3 million for the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, an estimated £2.7 million for existing legal commitments for peatlands restoration and £3 million for the Sheep Wildlife Enhancement Scheme. The GIA is a significant reduction on the previous corporate planning figure (£74.5 million) for 2004/05, but is a small increase in real terms on the previous year and allows us to continue to make progress against our key targets. In using the additional funds that we have received for 2004/05, we have kept a balance between directing funds at land management for some immediate gains and investing in longer-term solutions. The programme sections describe the priorities and revised targets for the period of this plan.

Decisions during the year in relation to funding for 2005/06, the next spending review (SR 04) and implementation of the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme will inevitably influence the *Business plan*. We will need to adjust priorities and targets depending on the resources available not only to deliver both existing and future commitments, but also to manage any organisational change required. Without sufficient resources the natural world, and the social and economic benefits that we derive from it, will decline.

Our performance and achievements are published in our *Annual report and accounts*, which is available from July each year. You can view this document on our website [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk).

## How English Nature contributes to Government PSA targets

Defra PSA targets	English Nature contribution	Other Government PSA targets
<p>Care for our natural heritage, make the countryside attractive and enjoyable for all, and preserve biological diversity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bringing into favourable condition by 2010, 95% of all nationally important wildlife sites;</li> <li>• reversing the long-term decline in the number of farmland birds by 2020, as measured annually against underlying trends; and</li> <li>• opening up public access to mountain, moor, heath and down and registered common land by the end of 2005.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering direct land management, negotiating agreements with owners, leverage of others' resources to achieve favourable condition of SSSIs.</li> <li>• Advising on design, targeting and delivery of agri-environment schemes and other policy measures.</li> <li>• Implementing species recovery projects in partnership with others.</li> <li>• Improving public access to, and enjoyment of our NNRs.</li> <li>• Providing advice and guidance on integrated management for open access and wildlife.</li> </ul>	<p>Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Achieve a better balance between housing availability and the demand for housing in all English Regions while protecting valuable countryside around our towns, cities and in the greenbelt – and the sustainability of existing towns and cities.</p>
<p>Protect and improve the rural, urban, marine and global environment and to lead integration of these with other policies across Government and internationally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to delivery of the England Biodiversity Strategy.</li> <li>• Collecting and co-ordinating the information on national wildlife resource.</li> <li>• Using an ecosystem approach and landscape-scale programmes to achieve environmental protection and economic growth and social benefits.</li> <li>• Delivering statutory responsibility for protected species.</li> <li>• Providing policy advice to integrate natural environment with other sustainable development objectives.</li> </ul>	<p>ODPM. Promote better policy integration nationally, regionally and locally; in particular to work with departments to help them meet their PSA floor targets for neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion.</p>
<p>Promote sustainable, diverse, modern and adaptable farming through domestic and international actions. Promote sustainable development across Government and the country as a whole as measured by achieving positive trends in the Government's headline indicators of sustainable development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributing to the implementation of the Mid Term Review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).</li> <li>• Advising on sustainable development indicators across Government and sustainable solutions to development proposals.</li> </ul>	<p>HM Treasury. Protect and improve the environment by using instruments that will deliver efficient and sustainable outcomes through evidence-based policies.</p>
<p>Deliver more customer-focused, competitive and sustainable food and farming as measured by the increase in agriculture's gross value added per person excluding support payments; and secure CAP reforms that reduce production-linked support, enabling enhanced EU funding for environmental conservation and rural development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a sound evidence base to underpin policy advice.</li> <li>• Providing national advocacy and advisory services to secure policy changes in key economic sectors that impact on the natural environment.</li> <li>• Providing an area and regional advisory service to make best use of existing policies and to implement policy changes.</li> </ul>	
<p>Reduce the gap in productivity between the least well performing quartile of rural areas and the English median by 2006, and improve the accessibility of services for rural people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing advice and support for Local Nature Reserves in and around urban areas.</li> <li>• Re-connecting people and nature, through greenspace design and management, art, music and drama.</li> <li>• Building understanding, support and community involvement.</li> </ul>	<p>ODPM. Deliver effective programmes to help raise the quality of life for all in urban areas and other communities. Home Office. Increase voluntary and community sector activity, including increasing community participation, by 5% by 2006.</p>

# 2 Designated sites

## Desired outcome

Over the next five years we want to see England's designated sites managed more sustainably and to be in a significantly better condition than they are now. The country's special wildlife and geological sites will be more accessible for people who want to use and enjoy them.

## Context

Designated sites are the country's very best wildlife sites and they help protect our rare habitats and species. Effective conservation of these sites is an essential component of the overall conservation strategy for England. We now have both the knowledge (assessment of the condition and causes of that condition) and the legislative mechanisms to achieve this. Given adequate funding, the next few years will see steady progress in improving the condition of these sites.

## Drivers

The Government's Public Service Agreement target – that 95% of England's SSSIs shall be in favourable condition by 2010 – will be the main driving force behind the Designated Sites Programme over the coming years. This target is challenging and will require joined-up working across Government and beyond.

Other targets in the *Business plan* also reflect our national and international statutory obligations for site designation, our vision to increase public access to special wildlife sites, and our desire to improve the service we offer to our customers.

## Priorities

- To increase the area of National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in favourable condition.
- To increase the area of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in favourable condition, both terrestrial and marine – especially operational delivery (financial, legislative and political) to bring about change in the uplands and estuaries.
- To improve public access to, and enjoyment of, our NNRs.
- To provide advice and guidance on managing the right of open access and the needs of wildlife.

## Risk management

Risk	Action being taken
Demand for statutory advice and maintenance of favourable condition results in not delivering required increase in area in favourable or recovering condition.	Forward plans from all Area Teams on SSSI delivery, and liaison with Defra on models to predict remedy and timescale. Programme Board to monitor Area Team delivery on a quarterly basis against expected/planned progress via the English Nature Site Information System. Programme Board to alert General Managers/Team Managers to take action where there is shortfall.
Failure to set example by achieving 85% by area of NNRs in favourable or recovering condition by 2005.	As above for SSSIs, plus a three-year rolling NNR Delivery Action Plan.
Lack of public support and conflict arising from poor management or progress with public access provisions.	Quarterly report to the Programme Board of progress made in each Area Team, checked against planned activity. Corrective action taken through Regional General Managers. This is a key component of several external funding projects, reflected in their management and reporting systems.

## High-level targets and critical actions

One-year targets 2004/05	Critical actions
Area of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition: a 4% increase during 2004/05 in partnership with Defra to achieve a cumulative figure of 67% by March 2005.	<p>Advise, and support financially, SSSI owners and occupiers to deliver effective site management.</p> <p>Advise, and support financially, Area Teams to deliver effective site management.</p> <p>Ensure rigorous but proportionate application of legislation to protect nationally and internationally designated sites.</p> <p>Ongoing work with external partners to review the impact of, and revoke where appropriate, consented activities on SSSIs.</p> <p>Match external funding for SSSI improvement.</p> <p>Implement and support management plans for marine Special Areas of Conservation.</p>
Area of NNRs in favourable or recovering condition: a 5% increase in 2004/05, to achieve a cumulative figure of 85% by March 2005.	<p>Effective NNR management by English Nature staff.</p> <p>Using the Reserves Enhancement Scheme to work in partnership with others to manage NNRs in their ownership.</p> <p>Land purchase to support NNR management.</p>
Achieve 90% of standards for access and interpretation across all English Nature 'Spotlight' NNRs. Establish a programme for delivery of standards on non-Spotlight NNRs.	<p>Develop electronic versions of our documents and ensure people may respond to us electronically over statutory consultations.</p> <p>Ensure project development and resourcing of Spotlight NNR standards programme.</p> <p>Implement access requirements arising from Countryside and Rights of Way Act.</p>



## 2.1 Projects planned for funding (£000)

<b>Project</b>	<b>2004/05</b>
NNR management resource	3,634
NNR buildings	305
<b>NNR total expenditure</b>	<b>3,939</b>
SSSI unit management	9,787
SSSI general support specific projects	2,838
<b>SSSI total</b>	<b>12,625</b>
Condition assessment – terrestrial	111
Condition assessment – maritime	359
Validation monitoring	80
Site-related research	305
<b>Research and survey total</b>	<b>856</b>
Land Purchase Grants	20
Management of European marine sites	180
Environment Agency Review of Consents support	100
Practical application of conservation techniques (FACT/GAP)	120
Access – extra arising from CRoW Act	120
Projects co-funded with other programmes	144
<b>Projects total expenditure</b>	<b>684</b>
River Avon & Valleys Initiative (LIFE & HLF)	50
To be confirmed (Nature for People, LIFE, Aggregates Levy, HLF)	300
<b>External funding projects total</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Commitments to peatlands</b>	<b>2,760</b>

## 2.2 Resources (£000)

	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>
Running costs (including salaries)	17,249	18,118
Direct expenditure	18,665	18,563
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,914</b>	<b>36,681</b>
Capital Modernisation Fund	4,000	0
Peatland commitments	320	2,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,234</b>	<b>39,381</b>

# 3 Wider environment

## Desired outcomes

Over the next five years we want to restore and re-create ecosystems across England, by working with partners at a landscape scale. This approach will support the Designated Sites Programme in meeting its nature conservation targets, ensure that protected species thrive and increase the ability of ecosystems to adapt to change. It will also provide more widespread opportunities for people to experience and enjoy nature.

## Context

The wider environment comprises over 90% of England's land area, and this is where most people come into contact with wildlife. The role of English Nature in the wider environment is essentially that of a facilitator and advisor to others. We recognise the central role of people and economic sectors in achieving healthy sites in a healthy landscape. Given the breadth of the task in the wider environment, it is essential that other external partners play a strong role, as partnership in funding and action is critical to success.

## Drivers

- The Government's farmland birds Public Service Agreement (PSA) target, to reverse the long-term decline in their number by 2020, will require landscape-scale improvement of farmland habitats and this will benefit a variety of other species.
- The England Biodiversity Strategy provides specific habitat and species targets and there are a variety of statutory responsibilities for species protection.
- Climate change demands an 'ecosystem approach' and adaptive countryside management.
- European legislation, especially the Water Framework Directive and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, requires a sustainable approach to development.

## Priorities

- To integrate national and local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) delivery.
- To contribute to delivering the PSA targets for farmland birds and SSSI condition.
- To support the implementation of the England Biodiversity Strategy, the national BAP targets on which English Nature leads, and secure gains for geological conservation.
- To promote the monitoring of England's wildlife.
- To provide a landscape-scale approach for achieving biodiversity objectives.

## Risk management

Risk	Action being taken
Failure to secure appropriate management around and between SSSIs will lead to deterioration of sites.	We are adopting an ecosystem-based approach and pursuing projects at a landscape scale. This will include guidance on English Nature's role and how allocated funds should be used. This will identify areas where SSSI condition is dependent on wider conditions.
Inadequate progress towards farmland birds PSA target.	We will adopt the 'Living Landscapes' system as our spatial framework. We will identify farmland birds and other landscape-scale species as 'flagships' for each area and Area Teams will specify what is required and how available and potential new schemes can contribute.
Other BAP targets, in particular those for which English Nature is responsible, not met through lack of clarity about specifically what contribution is required across the full range of protected sites, semi-natural habitats and other areas.	We are emphasising ecosystem integration to ensure species targets are addressed alongside Habitat Action Plan targets. We have endorsed a 'flagship' species approach that should cover the landscape-scale requirements as well as providing ecological quality indicators for individual habitats and features.

## High-level targets and critical actions

One-year targets 2004/05	Critical actions
<p>Deliver English Nature's contribution to the England Biodiversity Strategy through achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Halt or reverse the decline on a further 5% of BAP habitats for which English Nature is the lead partner. Cumulative achievement to rise to 47% since the UK BAP was published in 1994.</li> <li>- Halt or reverse the decline on a further 6% of the priority species for which English Nature is the lead partner. Cumulative achievement to rise to 45% since the UK BAP was published in 1994.</li> <li>- Restore or re-create 800 hectares of chalk grassland, 886 hectares of freshwater and 223 hectares of coastal habitats outside SSSIs.</li> </ul>	<p>Implement five Habitat Action Plans for which English Nature is the lead partner and deliver recovery targets for 104 associated priority species.</p> <p>Draw up and implement a 10-year plan specifying which BAP species need to be managed by individual Species Action Plans. Deliver those for which English Nature is the lead partner.</p> <p>Use habitat re-creation funds to achieve measurable hectare benefit, linking designated sites by re-establishing links and buffer zones of suitable habitat.</p>
Implement one landscape-scale partnership project in each Government Region and measure biodiversity gains from these specific sustainable development partnerships.	Promote and contribute to the funding of landscape-scale partnerships to bring environmental, social and economic benefits in each Government Region.
Increase the numbers of county record centres supported by English Nature from the existing level of 60% to 75%. All record centres must comply with NBN Metadata standards and supply information to NBN gateway.	Provide financial support for local record centres and promote their use as main repository for environmental information via the National Biodiversity Network (NBN).

### 3.1 Projects planned for funding (£000)

<b>Project</b>	<b>2004/05</b>
Biodiversity Action Plan direct delivery	1,396
Landscape-scale partnership projects	730
BAP partnership support – Voluntary Conservation Organisations	700
Statutory duties – licensing	160
Support for geology and Regionally Important Geological sites	75
Support for Local Biodiversity Action Plans and local record centres	695
National data and surveillance	569
Other contributions and projects	63
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund	3,079
<b>Total project expenditure</b>	<b>7,467</b>

### 3.2 Resources (£000)

	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>
Running costs (including salaries)	4,667	4,167
Direct expenditure	4,300	4,388
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,967</b>	<b>8,555</b>
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund	3,907	3,079
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,874</b>	<b>11,634</b>

# 4 People and policies

## 4.1 People's awareness, access to and enjoyment of nature

### Desired outcome

Over the next five years we want to significantly increase the opportunities for people to learn about, access and enjoy nature.

### Context

Whilst many people have opportunities to access and enjoy high-quality natural environments and greenspace, many others do not. The links between social exclusion, a poor-quality environment and health are profound. There is growing concern about the lack of environmental justice. More socially-inclusive and participative community-based approaches in conservation are required. People need nature to enrich the quality of their lives, and nature depends on the choices people make, whether as policy makers, land managers or individuals.

### Drivers

- Government's social inclusion, health and education agendas.
- The need to reach out to new and diverse audiences and make our work more relevant to people in urban areas.

### Priorities

- To improve public access to, and enjoyment of, our National Nature Reserves.
- To promote better design and standards for greenspaces and, in particular, develop access and interpretation on 'Spotlight' Local Nature Reserves.
- To provide advice and guidance on managing the right of open access and the needs of wildlife.
- To provide information about nature to existing and new audiences.
- To use more participative approaches in conservation planning, policy development and management.
- To make explicit the links between biodiversity recovery, economic growth and social benefits.

### Risk management

Risk	Action being taken
Failure to maintain positive, credible external profile and to reach out to new audiences.	Strategic direction for the People and Nature Programme agreed and an action plan developed for Programme Board delivery across the organisation.
English Nature perceived by parts of Government as irrelevant and not delivering its priorities.	Social policy programme agreed and being implemented. We are also forming strategic partnerships with influential organisations in the health and social policy areas. Senior staff and Chair to implement advocacy plan.
Urban work remains ill-defined and under-resourced.	Council to consider an Urban Strategy and action plan in March 2004.

## High-level targets and critical actions

One-year targets 2004/05	Critical actions
<p>Promote greenspace standards for people and nature through the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment – Space and other partnerships. Secure more funding for Local Nature Reserves and urban greenspace.</p>	<p>Promote the benefits of greenspaces for health and wellbeing, social inclusion and community participation.</p> <p>Increase the external funding support for greenspace activities, in particular Local Nature Reserves.</p> <p>Promote artistic/cultural interpretations of nature to a wide audience across England.</p>
<p>Achieve 90% of standards for access and interpretation across all English Nature ‘Spotlight’ NNRs. Establish a programme for delivery of standards on non-Spotlight NNRs. (Lead responsibility for this target is with the Designated Sites Programme.)</p>	<p>Develop electronic versions of our documents and ensure people may respond to us electronically over statutory consultations.</p> <p>Ensure project development and resourcing of Spotlight standards programme.</p> <p>Implement access requirements arising from Countryside and Rights of Way Act.</p>
<p>All SSSI citations, maps and condition information available on-line. (Lead responsibility for this target is with the Designated Sites Programme.)</p>	<p>Further work to design a user-friendly interface.</p>

### 4.2 Policy advice for sustainability

#### Desired outcome

Over the next five years we want to see policy makers across Government – national, regional and local – integrate the recovery of biodiversity, landscape quality and ecosystem resilience into policies, plans and programmes and so achieve progress towards sustainable development.

#### Context

Policies of Government and many public bodies impact on the natural environment directly and indirectly. Whilst there has been some shift towards more environmentally-friendly policies, many remain which either have a negative effect or fail to contribute positively to the restoration of environmental quality and properly functioning ecological systems. Policies at all levels need to contribute constructively to sustainable development, within which biodiversity is a key measure of success.

A policy framework which integrates the natural environment in decision-making is essential if Government is to achieve its targets to bring SSSIs into favourable condition, to reverse the long-term decline of farmland birds as a proxy for the health of the wider environment, and to achieve the priority habitat and species targets in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the England Biodiversity Strategy.

## Drivers

- The Government's PSA targets – that 95% of England's SSSIs shall be in favourable condition by 2010, and to reverse the long-term decline in farmland birds by 2020.
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the England Biodiversity Strategy.
- UK Sustainable Development Strategy review.
- The Planning Bill and the pressures for housing development and associated infrastructure.
- Various EU Directives including the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Water Framework Directive and the Environmental Liability Directive.
- Government targets for the natural heritage; improvements in the rural, urban, marine and global environments; sustainable communities; neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion; energy; and transport.
- Government's social inclusion agenda.

## Priorities

- To maximise environmental opportunities within existing reforms of the Common Agriculture Policy and provision of advice for 2006 reforms.
- To integrate action at catchment level to address water quality (especially diffuse pollution) and quantity problems and develop new approaches to flood management that can deliver multiple benefits for people.
- To secure changes to fisheries policy and managed realignment of the coast in response to climate change and sea-level rise.
- To contribute to changes in the planning system, in particular national policy guidance, regional planning and co-ordination, and services to local authorities.

## Risk management

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Action being taken</b>
Focus on domestic agenda neglects the need to influence policy change at European level.	Maintain active European project ensuring close liaison with Defra and Joint Nature Conservation Committee support unit.
Inadequate capacity to engage effectively in the rapidly evolving regional agenda.	Harness expertise and potential of Council members where appropriate; increase opportunity for Regional General Managers to adjust Area Team resources in order to contribute more effectively at regional level; ensure appropriate division of labour with other environmental organisations.
Inadequate staff skills in policy awareness, analysis and influencing.	Develop series of skills workshops and develop intranet pages including guidance.

## High-level targets and critical actions

One-year targets 2004/05	Critical actions
<p>Secure commitment to further investments in environmental quality in the agriculture and water sectors.</p>	<p>Secure implementation of CAP reform and realise the benefits in ways that do not undermine longer-term objectives for further reform.</p> <p>Secure more effective and better-funded agri-environment schemes and contribute to the design of new schemes, including measures to address both over- and undergrazing.</p> <p>Develop and define the principles of statutory farm advisory systems that contribute to environmental standards and outcomes.</p> <p>Continue to advise Defra, Ofwat and water companies on Price Reviews '04.</p> <p>Advise Defra and the Environment Agency on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, including characterisation of water bodies by December 2004, and early action to control diffuse pollution from agriculture.</p> <p>Work with Defra, Environment Agency and other stakeholders to develop integrated approaches to flood management that can deliver multiple benefits for people.</p>
<p>Champion the recovery of marine biodiversity and the adoption of an ecosystem-based approach in the marine environment with stakeholders.</p>	<p>Ensure that second generation Shoreline Management Plans provide a blueprint for sustainable management of the coast, are consistent with the conservation objectives for protected areas, support delivery of the SSSI PSA target and help to achieve UK BAP targets.</p> <p>Advise Government on integrated coastal management for mobile coasts and on remedies for existing constraints (eg review of PPG20).</p> <p>Develop an effective strategic framework for marine spatial planning and sustainable management at national and regional level.</p> <p>Establish a representative and coherent network of Marine Protected Areas.</p> <p>Develop and co-ordinate demonstration project(s) to deliver an ecosystem-based approach (eg sentinel fisheries) and environmental integration for fisheries management.</p>
<p>Maintain well-evidenced and timely advice to regional bodies and local authorities.</p>	<p>Achieve integration of biodiversity targets in regional plans and processes in all nine English Regions.</p> <p>Develop a strategic approach to advice on Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships.</p> <p>Establish regional partnerships that demonstrate how to make best use of existing policies to achieve nature conservation targets, through solutions fit for particular places.</p> <p>Deepen the understanding of the contribution of environmental quality to the regional economies and people's well-being.</p>



### 4.3 Projects planned for funding (£000)

Project	2004/05
<b>People – Awareness, access and enjoyment of nature*</b>	
Wildspace! grant scheme	200
Other projects (eg Green Flag Awards, Health and Nature, Gardening for Wildlife, Local Nature Reserves, community participation)	295
<b>Policy advice for sustainability</b>	
Agriculture	225
Coastal and marine	155
Forestry	55
Freshwater	155
Planning and the Regions	291
Implementing sustainable development	85
European project	50
Parliamentary programme	15
Knowledge management & capacity building	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,531</b>

\* Other measures are included within Designated Sites and Wider Environment Programmes.

### 4.4 Resources (£000)

	2003/04	2004/05
Running costs (including salaries)	3,616	3,805
Direct expenditure (people's awareness, access to and enjoyment of nature)	375	495
Direct expenditure (policy advice for sustainability)	1,125	1,036
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,116</b>	<b>5,336</b>

# 5 Managing the organisation

## Desired outcomes

Over the next five years there are likely to be significant changes driven by external and internal events. Through this period we will ensure that we maintain high standards of corporate governance, that staff have the necessary skills and support to maintain delivery, and that we manage changes effectively.

## Context

English Nature continues to refine its strategy and a greater focus is required on:

- public participation, access and awareness;
- fewer, longer-scale, multi-objective conservation projects;
- more adaptive management of nature;
- increased delegation to other organisations;
- seamless exchange of information; and
- greater awareness of socio-economic issues and their impacts on nature.

Managing and developing the organisational awareness of the need to address these issues will shape our systems and competency development.

Lord Haskins has completed his review of Rural Delivery and Government is now developing its full response.

Reforms of public services remains a high priority of Government and the Lyons and Gershon reviews are significant.

Defra is outsourcing its information technology and English Nature will have to decide whether or not there is a strategic fit and sound business case to participate in the contract.

## Drivers

**Setting standards.** This includes our corporate governance framework, our approach to managing risk, our work to maintain the Charter Mark, Service First and Investors in People standards and environmental management.

**Devolution of responsibility.** The main driver for delivery is the development of our information infrastructure and technology.

**Flexibility.** We are working to make English Nature a more agile organisation through being more flexible on how we are able to respond to changing business needs.

**Choice.** Although our remit as an organisation is very specific, we aim to provide choices for our customers about how our services are delivered. We are enhancing e-service work and undertaking website improvements. Our Service Improvement Programme also aims to improve the quality of the services we offer.

## Priorities

- To implement the Government's Modernising Rural Delivery Programme.
- The effective, flexible and efficient deployment of staff.
- To implement the 2004/05 plan for the Information Systems Strategy.
- To optimise the contribution of external funding to our corporate priorities.
- To maintain corporate standards verified through external accreditation.
- To prepare accounts and complete audits, continuing to maintain high standards of corporate governance.

## Risk management

Risk	Action being taken
Resources provided are insufficient to fulfill statutory commitments.	Provide input to 2004 Spending Review and 2004/05 planning round. Maximise external funding in line with organisational need and capacity.
Externally-driven organisational change that disrupts delivery and leads to poorer service.	Work closely with Defra and others following the Government's response to the Haskins report and implementation of the Modernising Rural Delivery programme. Advise Defra of the impacts on service delivery.
Failure to reach Information Age Government targets.	Develop electronic service delivery through Nature On-line. Further develop electronic document and records management systems.

## High-level targets and critical actions

One-year targets 2004/05	Critical actions
Achieve full Statement of Internal Control.	<p>Further embed risk management in the way we work and integrate it more fully into the work of Programme Boards.</p> <p>Proper operation of key internal control and management systems for human resources, finance and corporate business.</p> <p>Drive improvements to service delivery throughout English Nature through implementation of the agreed service improvement plans and ensure that appropriate standards are in place, known and applied.</p>
Further develop appropriate HR and corporate business frameworks to achieve organisational agility to enable flexible deployment of staff.	<p>Development and application of management information systems.</p> <p>Taking forward work on management of team profiles to ensure better flexibility and optimise service delivery.</p>

## High-level targets and critical actions

One-year targets 2004/05	Critical actions
Deliver against the Information System Strategy 2004-2007.	<p>Roll forward the Information System Strategy and effectively engage Programme Boards and key stakeholders/system owners in the delivery of English Nature information needs.</p> <p>Build on service delivery improvements, review and raise service level agreement targets and further increase the resilience of English Nature's information systems.</p> <p>To meet national archive requirements for the management of electronic records. Ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act (1998), Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2005).</p>

### 5.1 Projects planned for funding (£000)

Project	2004/05
<b>Resource and business management</b>	
Consultancy	80
Staff training programme	594
Vehicle replacement programme	267
Office accommodation	187
<b>Communication and information</b>	
Communications	926
Video-conferencing improvements	55
Challenge fund: Environmental Management proposals	50
PC replacement programme	110
Office equipment	162
IS/IT initiatives	631
E-services	250
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,312</b>

### 5.2 Resources (£000)

	2003/04	2004/05
Running costs (including salaries)	8,658	9,058
Direct expenditure – resource & business management	1,276	1,128
Direct expenditure – communications and information	2,774	2,184
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,708</b>	<b>12,370</b>

# 6 Science

English Nature's whole approach is evidence-based. We rely on scientific knowledge and understanding in the form of information, evidence and practical experience to inform our actions and decisions. We are, therefore, a user and commissioner of scientific research, rather than a research organisation.

The scientific understanding that we base our judgements on falls into three areas:

- Distribution, abundance and status of wildlife and geodiversity, and how these change over time.
- Impacts of specific actions that might be beneficial or detrimental to biodiversity and geodiversity.
- Fundamental ecological processes that underpin the workings of the natural environment.

We organise our science programme to reflect these elements, the structure of the organisation and the most cost-effective way of acquiring the new information. Our programme falls into three categories:

- Operational science – the day-to-day need of conservation staff in Area Teams.
- Tactical science – generic issues, relating predominantly to impacts, which require in-depth evaluation by our specialists, and the involvement of experts as contractors or collaborators, to resolve them.
- Strategic science – major issues that are not resolved through one-off projects but which need long-term, multi-disciplinary studies to improve our understanding.

## Operational science

Our priorities for operational science are driven largely by local issues, such as casework. We recognise that local survey information is important for nature conservation on designated sites and in the wider environment. Actions and resources are included in each Programme.

## Tactical science

In coming to judgements about our priorities, our specialists use their internal and external contacts (through learned societies, published literature, scientific conferences and personal contact) to assess trends and priorities in their specialist areas, and to integrate these into an overall programme. In most cases, English Nature will not have the detailed expertise or equipment to undertake such studies ourselves, and we use contractors in academic or research institutes to ensure the highest scientific rigour.

## 6.1 Project areas funded from the tactical science budget (£000)

Project area	2004/05
Marine effects of global warming	27
Fisheries advice	25
Geomorphological advice	32
Science for the Marine Strategy	30
Lundy No-Take Zone	15
Biodiversity value of gardens	20
Climate change	36
Pollution and climate change	25
Water and wetlands	20
Geological site management	17
Framework for integrity indicators	20
Eutrophication	25
The role of large herbivores	30
Sustainable grazing	40
Management demonstrations and trials	32
Biodiversity and agriculture	15
Woodland indicators	25
Landscape conservation of bumblebees	16
Foot-and-mouth impacts	55
Grassland and woodland birds	70
Alien species and biodiversity	15
English Nature-sponsored PhDs	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>656</b>

### Strategic science: our long-term science needs

There are major issues facing nature conservation that are not easily resolved through commissioning simple, one-off projects. Understanding, predicting and managing for change is one such area. We approach such fundamental issues through investigating the underlying processes through broad studies, using different techniques and approaches in one place, as well as similar methods in a number of locations. Only by understanding the context can we unravel the general rules and principles of the underlying processes.

This strategic approach will need longer-term, less prescribed studies, in which new relationships between practitioners and researchers are forged. It also needs time and commitment. English Nature will be bold in its approach, and work with others to take this forward. We commit a significant proportion of our strategic research budget to three consortium projects that are aimed at our main areas of interest.

### a Ecosystem processes at the landscape scale

We are helping to fund a broad programme of work by five leading universities and the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. The objectives of the UK Population Biology Network are to examine the effects of biodiversity change on the sustainability of ecosystems, landscapes, and livelihoods, and to consider what strategies we should employ to mitigate these effects.

### b The ecosystem approach in the marine environment

English Nature, with many others, needs to understand what is going on within marine ecosystems, so that this can be integrated with social and economic factors in an ecosystem approach to managing the resources of the sea. The aim of the partnership work is to operate at a sufficiently large scale to encompass the interacting elements, but initially within an area (The Irish Sea) that allows solutions, both political and practical, to be reached. We have established the multi-agency Marine Science Technical Advisory Group as the mechanism for this.

### c The use of an evidence-based approach in nature conservation

There are many parallels between the way the conservation practitioner operates and the issues that were faced by General Practitioners and medical Consultants before their 'evidence-based revolution'. By independently verifying and systematically reviewing all available published evidence, clinical practice became more effective. Such an approach is thought to be equally applicable to nature conservation.

English Nature has established a working partnership with Birmingham University to explore and develop the evidence-based approach for nature conservation. If, as seems likely from preliminary work, the approach is valid and useful for nature conservation, we plan to work with other organisations to carry this concept forward.

## 6.2 Science budget

The table below shows the budget that will be allocated for science work in 2004/05. The operational element of the science budget is allocated and delivered through the Designated Sites and Wider Environment Programmes.

### Science expenditure 2004/05

	<b>2004/05 £k plan</b>
Running costs (including salaries)	1,087
Strategic	262
Tactical	656
<b>Total strategic and tactical science</b>	<b>2,005</b>
<b>Operational science within other programmes</b>	
Designated sites – survey and research	856
Wider environment – information and surveillance	569
<b>Total operational science</b>	<b>1,425</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,430</b>

## 6.3 Measuring progress

We have two high-level objectives that we monitor our overall progress against. They are:

- a. to have sufficient scientific information and understanding to make sound judgements that benefit nature conservation; and
- b. to have a sufficiently sound reputation, in terms of scientific understanding and judgement, so that the scientific information we present is able to withstand robust challenge, and our advice is accepted.

Our Science Steering Group is responsible for assessing internal delivery, and uses its understanding of English Nature's strategy and priorities, the resources available, and the work undertaken, to judge the adequacy of our science programme.

We now have a Natural Sciences Advisory Group (an external group of eminent applied scientists working across the breadth of our remit) to advise us on the future scope and content of our science programme, given their perspective on existing research and likely future developments. We also use this group to assess and provide feedback on our performance in relation to our reputational objective.

# 7 Efficiency plans

With increasing pressure on resources we will continue to seek to improve efficiency. In 2004/05 we plan to make efficiency gains in the following areas.

## 7.1 Procurement

English Nature continues to develop the professional skills in procurement in order to deliver better value through the procurement process. Following the investment in new finance software in 2003/04, the Procurement Unit will use better supplier and product information to help rationalise supplies and negotiate better pricing with major suppliers. We will continue to identify opportunities to use the benefits of collective purchasing with other Government departments and agencies. We will use framework contracts to reduce the cost of individual tender exercises. The corporate charge card will be used for at least 80% of low-value orders to minimise transaction costs. We expect our savings from procurement on 2004/05 to be approximately £400k.

## 7.2 Improving our information systems to support frontline delivery

During 2004/05 we will improve our management of information to make it easier to retrieve information. We are web-enabling English Nature's Site Information System to provide easier retrieval of information and we are training staff to make more effective use of document storage and retrieval systems. We will introduce simple spreadsheet tools to support the management of casework. From 2004/05 species licenses applications can be made on-line, leading to more efficient handling of applications as well as improved service to our customers.

## 7.3 Spreading best practise and increasing productive time

During 2004/05 we will be making improvements to the way species casework is handled to both improve service and achieve efficiency gains. We will implement improvements in information provision and exchange with local authorities, following review work carried out in 2003/04. We will also seek to improve our handling of designated sites casework.

## 7.4 Summary of total planned efficiency gains for 2004/05

Procurement	£0.4 million
Information Systems	£0.4 million
Reductions in travel/increased use of video conferencing	£0.1 million
Increasing productive time	£0.3 million

## 7.5 Maximising External Funding

No matter how efficient we are, we need funding from sources other than Grant-in-Aid to deliver our overall programme. In 2004/05 we expect to receive £5.4 million from sources such as the National Lottery and European Union. This external funding includes:

- New projects funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage Programme, such as Restoring the Sea of Heather (Ow Taswul Ros An Avor), Coversands, Waves of Heath and Restoring the Heaths of the Vale of York.
- The Minerals Valley Heritage Lottery Fund project.
- Wildspace! a New Opportunities Fund project.
- Goss Moor LIFE-Nature project.
- Potential EU-funded projects such as the River Avon LIFE-Nature project and Interreg bids such as the Climate Change project and Heathlands Interreg bid.



# 8 English Nature's special functions

English Nature and its two sister agencies act jointly through the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to deliver their special statutory responsibilities for nature conservation in Great Britain and internationally. The involvement of the Environment and Heritage Service, an agency of the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland), allows a consistent approach across the United Kingdom, wherever this is appropriate.

The work on our special functions is delivered through our involvement in the Committee, through the Support Unit staff assigned from the three country agencies. The Committee participates in a wide variety of inter-agency groups and can also work through one country agency acting as a lead agency on a particular topic. We will continue to play an active part in this productive partnership. We will work with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and support them in implementing the outcome of the Financial Management and Policy Review.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee publishes its own *Corporate plan* which is available from May/June and can be found on their website [www.jncc.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.gov.uk)

# 9 Resource tables

## 9.1 Baseline budget 2003/04-2004/05 (£000)

Programme	2003/04	2004/05
<b>Designated sites</b>	35,914	36,681
Capital Modernisation Fund	4,000	0
Peatland commitments	320	2,700
<b>Wider environment</b>	8,967	8,555
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund	3,907	3,079
<b>People and policies</b>	5,116	5,336
<b>Managing the organisation</b>	11,708	12,370
Capital Modernisation Fund	1,000	0
<b>Science</b>	1,719	2,005
<b>Total Grant-in-Aid spent on English Nature Programmes</b>	<b>72,651</b>	<b>70,726</b>
<b>JNCC</b>	3,392	3,359
<b>Depreciation and capital charges</b>	3,381	3,381
<b>Total Grant-in-Aid</b>	<b>79,424</b>	<b>77,466</b>

## 9.2 External funding (£000)

	2002/03 outturn	2003/04 budget	2004/05 plan
<b>Other operating revenues</b>			
Lottery grants	2,223	2,514	2,104
New Opportunities Fund	1,221	1,671	1,460
Landfill Tax Credit Scheme	70	50	100
Income from nature reserves	525	545	600
Sale of publications and advice	105	110	115
Contributions	520	530	540
Sponsorship	70	75	80
Other Government grants	95	105	115
Other	200	210	220
Share of JNCC income	335	340	345
<b>Total other revenues</b>	<b>5,364</b>	<b>6,150</b>	<b>5,679</b>
<b>Current grants from EC</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>1,553</b>	<b>1,796</b>
<b>Interest receipts</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Total external funding</b>	<b>6,019</b>	<b>7,873</b>	<b>7,645</b>

Figures for the later years may change if we enter into new projects.

### 9.3 Expenditure by resource accounting category (£000)

Notes:

2002/03 and 2003/04 each include £5 million from the Capital Modernisation Fund.

2002/03 includes £91.1 million for the bulk pension transfer.

2003/04 includes £1.219 million for the final bulk pension transfer.

2003/04 includes additional Grant-in-Aid of £381k for English Nature and £183k for JNCC.

These are not final planning figures for two reasons: (1) Capital Grant-in-Aid has not been settled for 2004/05, and (2) Grant-in-Aid has not been settled for 2005/06.

2004/05 includes £2.7 million being an estimate of the highest final payments due to Scotts and £3.311 million for the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

	2002/03 outturn	2003/04 budget	2004/05 plan
<b>Departmental expenditure limit resource</b>			
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Staff costs	117,260	29,974	30,344
Other operating and administration expenditure	44,402	47,302	49,496
Depreciation	1,817	2,694	2,531
Impairment of fixed assets	1,068	400	300
Loss (gain) on sale/disposal of fixed assets	63	20	20
Increase (decrease) in pension provision	-1,420	0	0
Cost of capital	540	287	550
<b>Total resource expenditure</b>	<b>163,730</b>	<b>80,677</b>	<b>83,241</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Other operating revenues	3,935	6,150	5,679
Current grants from the EC	485	1,553	1,796
Interest receipts	192	170	170
<b>Total resource income</b>	<b>4,612</b>	<b>7,873</b>	<b>7,645</b>
<b>Departmental expenditure limit capital</b>			
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Capital acquisitions – existing buildings	5	200	200
Book value of sale of existing buildings	0	0	0
Capital acquisitions – other tangible assets	8,599	6,300	1,550
Book value of sale of other tangible assets	-143	-50	-50
<b>Total capital expenditure</b>	<b>8,461</b>	<b>6,450</b>	<b>1,700</b>
<b>Annually managed expenditure</b>			
Accruing Superannuations Liability Charges (ASLCs) notional receipt	-1,812		
<b>Total annually managed expenditure</b>	<b>-1,812</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Table continued overleaf

<b>Less items not in resource accounting budgets until 2003/04</b>			
Depreciation	1,817		
Cost of capital	540		
Interest receipts	-192		
Impairment of fixed assets	1,068		
Increase (decrease) in pension provision	-1,420		
<b>Total adjustments</b>	<b>1,813</b>		
<b>Resource Grant-in-Aid</b>	<b>165,766</b>	<b>79,424</b>	<b>77,466</b>
Cash requirement	165,370	75,873	73,915

#### 9.4 Staff resources on baseline budget

Pay band	Anticipated 1.4.04		Planned 1.4.05
	Posts filled	Vacancies	
Senior Civil Service and bands E, F and G	73	1	73
Bands C and D	495	10	493
Bands A, B and β	308	8	309
<b>Total</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>875</b>

These staffing figures are based on permanent English Nature staff (full-time equivalent). They do not include those on secondment, assigned to the JNCC Support Unit or on unpaid leave. We expect to be carrying around 20 vacancies at any given time. These figures assume that most, but not all, posts vacated through age retirements or natural wastage will be re-filled and they also take account of returns from unpaid leave. Staffing levels will be subject to affordability.

#### 9.5 Regional direct spend 2004/05

	Designated sites	Wider environment	People and policies	Total
<b>Regional Government Office</b>				
East Midlands	1,038	177	25	<b>1,240</b>
East of England	1,735	327	93	<b>2,155</b>
London	44	63	22	<b>129</b>
North East	1,264	178	20	<b>1,462</b>
North West	2,178	198	39	<b>2,415</b>
South East	2,661	253	45	<b>2,959</b>
West Midlands	827	191	43	<b>1,061</b>
South West	2,682	321	98	<b>3,101</b>
Yorkshire & the Humber	4,638	177	65	<b>4,880</b>
National	4,196	5,582	1,081	<b>10,859</b>
<b>English Nature total</b>	<b>21,263</b>	<b>7,467</b>	<b>1,531</b>	<b>30,261</b>

# 10 Comment

We welcome views from our users, stakeholders and the public on our plans, including comments about the content and presentation of this plan. We have included a feedback questionnaire that we hope you will complete and return. This will help us to improve this publication.

If you are happy with our service, please tell us about it. It helps us to identify good practice and rewards our staff.

If you are unhappy with our service, please tell us how we can improve it.

You can also view our plans via the internet at [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)

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