



Annex 1: Environment Agency and Natural England Joint Working: Report on Triennial Review Action Plan – summary by action

Action Area	No	Actions/Activities	Timescale	Summary
Operational alignment	1	Ensure that EA and NE areas, despite differences in precise boundaries, are working closely together wherever possible and that Area Managers from each organisation have a dedicated point of contact.	April 2014	There are agreed arrangements to ensure closer working for area teams; including a single main contact arrangement between Environment Agency managers and their Natural England counter-part as well as common ways of working.
	1.1	Respective change programmes will define the organisational boundaries		
	1.2	Operational ways of working will be agreed, including specific ways for EA and NE to work together.		
	1.3	Dedicated points of contact identified, and local working relationship outcomes agreed		
	2	Share offices wherever possible and use opportunities of space being created. Presumption is that EA and NE will share offices in preference to other members of Defra network assuming this works for the operational needs of both bodies		
	2.1	Currently co-located or have touch down space in following offices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ghyll Mount, Penrith ▪ Guildbourne House, Worthing ▪ Rivers House, Kelvedon ▪ Riversmeet House, Tewkesbury ▪ Pevensey Office ▪ Rivers House, Blandford ▪ Sir John Moore House, Bodmin ▪ Romsey District Office ▪ Dragonfly House, Norwich 	2013/14	The current co-locations are working well and lessons learnt are being applied to potential new co-locations planned for 2014 onwards.
	2.2	Under Strategic Alignment (now known as One Business), the first of 6 additional collocating projects will start business cases in 2014. Once programme agreed, a programme plan will be worked up for the Estate Rationalisation work	2014/15	Work to develop co-location business cases for 2014/15 is well underway. Each project is underpinned by a formal joint governance structure. Completed business cases will be presented individually to the Property Portfolio Group for approval and funding.
2.3	Further options are being worked up for the rest of the estate, as part of the Strategic Alignment programme	2015/16 onwards	Options beyond 2014/15 are being constantly reviewed as opportunities arise	
Spatial Planning	3	Trial 4 approaches to joint working on spatial planning: Align work on national infrastructure including common processes for customers and work with Planning Inspectorate and the Major Infrastructure & Environment Unit		

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	3.1	We will seek customer feedback about our engagement with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) to ensure we learn from experience and feedback to innovate and continually improve our service.	Jan - Mar 2014 and again in Jan - Mar 2015	Environment Agency and Natural England agreed the survey process and questions and completed interviews with a sample of NSIP developers in June 2014, to learn from their feedback on working with us. Results of the survey feedback will be available in the summer, and we will use these to inform our continuous service improvements.
	3.2	We will ensure close liaison on all NSIP applications. For the most significant, and where the customer agrees, we will adopt a joint project team approach.	Ongoing from Dec 13	Environment Agency and Natural England have worked together to share good practice on NSIP cases and we have used this to develop a 'working better together' protocol. We'll use the NSIP survey results (above) to refine the protocol and then implement it.
	3.3	We will work with the Consents Service Unit in the Planning Inspectorate to develop consents and permitting management plans for NSIPs to streamline the process and to support developers in securing all relevant non-planning consents and licences in a timely and coordinated way.	Ongoing from Dec 13	Environment Agency and Natural England regularly have joint liaison meetings with the Consents Service Unit. We will embed ways of working with them.
4	Joint working arrangements with LEPs			
	4.1	We will continue to embed all elements of the Defra Network Offer to LEPs and City Deals to help facilitate sustainable growth in priority locations in a timely and efficient way.	Ongoing from Dec 13	Environment Agency and Natural England continue to deliver our Defra Network Offer to LEPs and City Deals by engaging with LEPs locally on their growth strategies and Growth Deals with Government.
	4.2	We will seek customer feedback from LEPs about our Single Voice engagement with them in order to understand how we can continue to deliver the services they need.	Apr - Jun 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England agreed to delay the LEPs survey because of concerns about the impact of the initial timing of the survey on our customers. We will be conducting the survey from October 2014 and we'll learn from the feedback and make improvements to our service.
	4.3	Using the LEPs' EU SIF Strategies and Growth Deals, we will identify where we can best target and align our resources to support delivery of shared outcomes.		Environment Agency and Natural England are developing a framework that will help us to prioritise our engagement with LEPs in the future, informed by LEPs' growth strategies and other factors. We continue to input to the finalisation of the Growth Deals and will use these to further inform our prioritisation. We will complete our input to Growth Deals and implement our commitments under them in specific LEP areas. We will implement the framework to prioritise our future engagement with LEPs.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting for the LEP EUSIF Strategies in our work planning 	Apr - Jun 2014	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting for the LEP Growth Deals in our work planning 	Jul - Sept 2014	
5	Engagement with other statutory consultees as part of DCLG's 'Big 5' initiative			
	5.1	We will evaluate the effectiveness and customer experience of our work with the Single Conversation	Jan - Mar 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England have worked together, along with MMO, to review our experiences of the

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		pilots, in particular the Humber pilot. We will use this to inform proposals for more integrated support to local customers from the statutory consultee bodies, including English Heritage.		Humber Single Conversation pilot and develop lessons learnt with practical advice to help colleagues who might need to take similar approaches.
	5.2	Working with DCLG and the main statutory bodies, we will develop a consistent and accessible expression of our 'offer' to our land use planning customers so that they better understand our respective roles and remits.	Jan - Mar 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England have worked with other statutory consultees and DCLG to produce 'Our Common Service Commitment' to planning customers from statutory bodies which was published on the Planning Portal in April.
	5.3	The EA and NE will review Development Management Procedure Order (DMPO) consultation requirements with DCLG. This will deliver a more risk-based approach, and reduce the consultation burden on developers.	By end of Mar 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England are expecting a possible consultation by DCLG later this year. In the meantime Natural England published its Impact Risk Zone maps for local planning authorities in May.
	5.4	We will further improve the quality of 21-day reporting for both pre-applications and planning applications advice, to ensure greater transparency on our performance.	Jul - Sept 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England began a common reporting approach to our 21-day performance in April 2014.
	5.5	We will deliver other commitments we have made for the 'Big 5' initiative.		Environment Agency and Natural England worked with other statutory consultees to develop and launch the 'Statutory Consultees Engagement Network'. We also worked with Local Government Association and Planning Advisory Service to develop principles for effective pre-application engagement. We will continue to work with the Big 5, at a senior level through the cross Whitehall Statutory Consultees Group, and also at a working level. We are planning a joint survey of Local Planning Authorities, which will report in Q3.
6		Identify ways to provide a seamless coordinated service for planning applicants		
	6.1	We will develop and implement joint training initiatives for EA & NE staff to embed a 'yes if', solutions focussed approach to our planning and permitting / licensing work and deliver a better customer service.	Apr - Jun 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England have worked together to share training resources. We will share Learning & Development priorities and will then work to identify opportunities for joint delivery.
	6.2	We will develop and embed joint working protocols on water quality and biodiversity issues in order to ensure that our planning advice on those applications where we are both consulted is consistent, seamless and complementary for Local Planning Authorities and developers.	Ongoing from Dec 13	Environment Agency and Natural England have developed joint working protocols on water quality and protected species. We have also developed a schedule of joint working protocols. We will continue to raise awareness of these protocols and monitor their implementation.

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	6.3	We will develop and pilot options for developing joint charging arrangements for pre-application planning advice to developers (where they want it) and evaluate their effectiveness using customer feedback.	Oct - Dec 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England are planning how we will pilot joint charging from October 2014 by sharing current practice and scoping options for delivering the pilot.
	6.4	We will develop and pilot options for providing a more integrated advisory service to LPAs and developers in the screening, scoping and evaluation of EIA and SEA processes.	Oct - Dec 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England are jointly investigating current practice on Environmental Impact Assessment consultations and scoping options for delivering this action. We will develop case studies by December 2014 to inform delivery of the action.
	6.5	We will work together to ensure that our advice to Government, developers and minerals planning authorities on fracking is fully aligned. Where both NE and EA statutory interests are potentially affected, we will work together with developers at pre-application stage, and submit joined up advice to minerals planning authorities.	Ongoing from Jan - Mar 2014	Environment Agency and Natural England have shared our respective processes, technical evidence and ways of working on fracking applications and are working together to develop external and internal guidance. We are working with DCLG to agree the best mechanism for developers to access our advisory services.
	7	Explore further the delegation of renewable energy advice for English offshore waters from JNCC to NE.	Dec 2013	JNCC have handed over all cases to Natural England, with one exception, which will happen shortly.
	7.1	Resourcing and delegation agreement completed		
	7.2	Transition of current cases from JNCC to NE advice		
Land Management	8	Pilot overarching environmental planning in 2 counties / 2 catchments to take forward recommendations of the synergies report:	Start now; Review 2014	The extended pilot scope has been agreed by Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and Defra. Pilot areas have been identified as Taw / Torridge (Devon) and Derwent (North Yorkshire). A small coordination group will facilitate implementation from June 2014.
	8.1	Developing the EA synergies mapping tool, and other decision support tools, in collaboration with EA and FC (recs 1 and 2)		
	8.2	Help understanding of how to deliver multiple benefits (rec 3)		
	8.3	Developing local coordination frameworks to support integrated planning for multiple environmental objectives (recs 4 and 5) Developing the catchment based approach including its contribution to multiple outcomes (rec 6)		
	8.4	Help develop and test common training and guidance on planning and funding multiple objective projects and using evidence on synergies (rec 30)		
	8.5	Review methods of engagement with stakeholders to		



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		promote better communications, improved participation and more coordinated planning and delivery of environmental objectives (rec 31).		
	9	Each organisation will look at scheme delivery criteria to enable delivery of multiple outcomes		
	9.1	Review the current FCRM reporting measures / indicators for Outcome 4 (environmental outcomes) to strengthen WFD obligations whilst not losing the contribution which the floods programme can make to domestic objectives under Biodiversity 2020. Develop pilot measures for testing	2014/15	The Environment Agency has shared a draft proposal with Natural England and principles have been discussed with environmental NGOs.
	9.2	NELMS - work together on the design for NELMS to enable resource protection objectives to be achieved through the programme	Consultation by Dec 2013. Defra submit Rural Development programme document to EC by Mar 2014.	A technical group including Natural England and Environment Agency staff and stakeholders has developed a proposed suite of soil and water land management 'options' and capital items for this scheme, to meet resource protection objectives alongside biodiversity and other scheme objectives. An RDP Programme document was sent to the European Union Commission on 11 June 2014. We have jointly developed a national targeting engine for the scheme. Local validation of NELMS targeting (including for resource protection) will continue until early August 2014. This is being led by Local Nature Partnerships and coordinated by Natural England (with support from the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission). Discussions about supporting NELMS activities for resource protection during 2014/15 and beyond have started.
	10	CAP Delivery IT system – provide a business case for EA access to the system, including the ability to add EA inspection information and provide EA spatial data into the system. EA to work with NE on NELMS needs for CAPD IT system	Autumn/Winter 2013	The CAP Delivery IT system is currently being designed to allow both direct (Pillar 1) payments and Rural Development (Pillar 2) payments to be made during the next round of CAP (2014 -2020). The Environment Agency is engaging in some Task & Finish groups that are informing the business requirements of the system. The Environment Agency has produced a business case and discussions are ongoing about what may be feasible within the new system.
Improved Customer Service	11	Agree shared approaches including piloting or implementing: Integrated advice to farmers and land managers		
	11.1	Audit on Joint Working for Catchment Sensitive Farming	January 2014	The final audit report has been received and implementation of the management actions is underway.
	11.2	Explore how advice and grants delivered through Catchment Sensitive Farming can most effectively sit	Jan - Mar 2014 (initial	The joint guidance note is being developed for agreement by the end of June 2014.

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		alongside, and inform, the regulatory activities of the Environment Agency.	discussion November 2013)	
	12	Coordination of scheduled farm visits		
	12.1	Test the potential for rationalising farm visits in a co-located office	Jan - Jun 2014	A workshop was held in April and produced valuable information and feedback about the customer experience of farm visits, what works well and what is important for farmers. A small farmer survey has also been completed to gather more feedback from farmers about their experience of farm visits.
	12.2	Evaluate the testing with a view to rolling out further if we can demonstrate greater efficiency and benefit to the customer	Jul - Dec 2014	The outputs of the project are currently being assessed in order to inform a decision about next steps.
	13	Integrated advice and single account manager for agri businesses		
	13.1	NE to maintain single point of contact for priority 500 farming customers and national account management for 6 major nationally operating farming customers	Jan - Mar 2014	Natural England has led the establishment and maintenance of a database of 900 key customers within the Genesis IT system. Each key customer has an allocated adviser as a single point of contact. Natural England and the Environment Agency submitted a joint formal response in January 2014 to the Red Tractor proposals. Both organisations are now participating in the Defra Farm Visits Steering group.
	13.2	NE and EA to provide joint response to Red Tractor proposals		
	14	Single account manager for developers We will pilot an approach for those major developers with whom we both currently operate senior account management arrangements where we integrate these into a 'single account manager' model where the developers want it.		
	15	Participation in meetings with developers' groups. We will develop the NE Developers Industry Group so that it also provides a forum for joined up developer engagement with the EA. This includes the NE email to DIG members including EA updates.		
	16	Integrated advice for local authorities and LEPS (See above actions under Spatial Planning)		
	17	Common customer service approaches and standards		
	17.1	As part of the two organisational change programmes, common service approaches and standards to be developed, taking account of different roles.	April 2014	Both organisations have published service commitments which have many common service principles. We play an active part in the wider Defra Customer Insights Network and One Business programme to improve customer experience within the Defra network. We will continue to contribute on identifying some common standards which



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	17.2	Both organisations to work with wider Defra Customer Insights Network and Strategic Alignment to improve customer experience with Defra network		help us measure customer satisfaction via existing methods.
	18	Work together and with other authorities to implement the Coastal Concordat		
	18.1	Produce joint operational guidance and training materials for staff implementing Concordat.	November 2013 (Launch)	Joint guidance was launched alongside the Concordat in November 2013. This common guidance product is now in use by staff across the Environment Agency, Natural England, MMO and local planning authorities, enabling a consistent approach to implementation. We are currently working on an update to the joint guidance following feedback from our staff and Local Authorities. We are also developing a feedback form to issue to developers on completion of the consenting phase of projects. This feedback will be used to further refine and develop the concordat model.
	18.2	<p>We will work together in participating estuarine and coastal Local Authority areas to implement the principles where we have shared interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a single point of entry into the regulatory system by signposting developers to each other where we have joint interests. ▪ Work together to agree a single lead authority for coordinating Habitats Regulations Assessments and produce shared assessments / advice if appropriate. ▪ Encourage applicants to engage early so we can jointly identify common evidence needs to inform our consents and permissions. EA leading on 29 workstreams and contributing to 21 others. 	<p>1st review by Defra, EA, NE & partners January 2014. Reducing Regulation Committee review March 2014. Full review of implementation September 2014.</p>	<p>Training of our staff for implementation of the Coastal Concordat in participating local authorities is nearing completion and 13 Local Authorities have adopted the Concordat. To date, eight development projects in England have come forward for treatment under the scope of the concordat. The Environment Agency and Natural England will continue to progress projects in the agreed local authority areas. As further local authority adopters are confirmed, we will be able to work together to further implement the principles of the concordat for development projects in these areas.</p>
	19	Maintain the pace of regulatory reform		
	19.1	<p>Fully input to the Smarter Guidance and Smarter Data projects through the SERR programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EA leading on 29 workstreams and contributing to 21 others. ▪ NE leading on 22 workstreams and contributing to 31 others. ▪ EA and NE considering implications of smarter guidance principles for its Corporate Plan and current delivery model of advice and guidance to customers through digital and other channels. 	Apr - Sept 2014	<p>Environment Agency and Natural England guidance is being re-written and simplified under the Defra Smarter Environmental Regulation Review (SERR) Programme, which will now be completed by March 2015. The Environment Agency's high level guidance was transitioned to GOV.UK in April 2014, while Natural England's will follow in September 2014.</p>
	19.2	EA GDS exemplar project developing new IT system	Phase 1 by Jan	Phase 1 of the exemplar project was delivered within time

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		for Regulation of Lower Tier Waste Carriers to meet regulatory change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1 externally hosted website allowing businesses to register as lower tier carriers Agile development approach for creation of fast new IT solution based on GDS principles 	- Mar 2014	and budget.	
	19.3	Zero based review of data requirements on those we regulate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence and support to Defra interviews & Challenge Sessions Scoping actions with Defra based on findings Actions will simplify data entry, including open data source and cloud based solutions		Defra have now published the Implementation Plan for delivering the agreed recommendations of the zero based review. The document details 92 actions, many of which will be led by the Environment Agency and Natural England, to be implemented by March 2016.	
	19.4	NE will deliver new Red Tape Challenge & related actions:			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch a major process change (Annex Licences) for bat and dormice licensing 	March 2014	Annex licences were launched for bats in March. Dormice have been delayed now until July.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work together to launch class licensing for activities affecting crayfish, delivering a system that avoids the need for separate NE and EA consent; 	March 2014	Natural England is working to launch a joint survey licence and a separate joint class licence for low impact maintenance and routine activities in June.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult on proposals for change to Class and General Licences, to reflect risk in licence decision-making; 	March 2014	The consultation commenced on 24 th February and closed on 19 th May. The consultation will be reviewed in order to prepare future proposals for Class and General licences.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and report on the low impact bat class licensing trial 	June 2014	Work is on target to complete the report by June. The report will inform the planned full launch of low impact bat class licence later in 2014.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the Defra-led GCN Task force 	Ongoing	Natural England is contributing to the Great Crested Newt (GCN) Task Force in work on predictive modelling and planning.	
Evidence and monitoring	20	Seek to agree common or aligned approaches to: Monitoring		This work is now being progressed through the Monitoring and Surveillance workstream of Defra's One Business Evidence. The monitoring strand of Defra's One Business Evidence programme has produced a business case and outline proposals for the alignment of monitoring across the Defra network and the realisation of efficiency savings worth an estimated £6 million in 2014/15.	
	20.1	Strategic Alignment workstream on Consolidated Evidence, focused on monitoring. Already progressed over the past 9 months with Defra and Network.			
	20.2	Proposals for monitoring developed by the end of December, discussion through to end of March and	April 2014		

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		outline plans for 2014/15		
	20.3	Aiming to achieving rationalised monitoring across whole Defra network, and delivering savings by April 2015	April 2015	
	21	State of the environment reporting Both organisations working with Forestry Commission to produce State of the Natural Environment assessments to support Policy makers. (Decision about publication yet to be made).	Spring 2014	Environment Agency, Natural England and Forestry Commission completed a joint compilation and assessment of the available evidence (based on 2012/2013 data). The Secretary of State agreed that this should be taken forward in 2015 to allow focus on higher priorities this year. The Steering Group is now focusing on lessons learnt from joint working so far.
	22	Joint work with academia Consider opportunities for common approaches to academic links, capacity building, etc.	Jul - Sep 2014	Work has started on a joint statement of evidence needs to share with academia. This will set out our areas of interest, provide information on our ways of working, and explain how our work can have greater impact by working with universities. This work supports the ambition of the new Evidence Strategy for Defra and its Network to ensure effective interaction between evidence providers and evidence users. Next steps are to publish a joint statement of evidence needs outlining our agreed approach to working with academia including knowledge exchange fellowships and doctoral training partnerships, that compliments the new Evidence Strategy for Defra and its Network.
	23	Common data sharing Further develop DataShare, to allow both NE and EA to disseminate more data to Partners and Contractors.	Jan - Mar 2014	DataShare is now established as a business as usual service and is the agreed way for both organisations to make environmental information available to partners and contractors. We will continue to improve the functionality and data available on DataShare based on user feedback and we will continue to develop a common mapping system to improve how we share data and maps.
Joint working culture	24	Agree a set of ground rules for when we are working together. Operational ways of working will be agreed, including specific ways for EA and NE to work together.	April 2014	See Action 1
	25	Agree a route to resolve issues that are potentially contentious at a local level.		Environment Agency and Natural England are currently refreshing the agreed process for resolving contentious local issues and will be re- communicating this shortly.
	25.1	Awareness programme for escalation protocol delivered in both agencies	April 2014	
	25.2	At least 10 cases reviewed under the process by	June 2014	



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	26	Both new Corporate Plans to carry aligned sections on working together and the Triennial Review action plan.		Both Corporate Plans highlight a clear commitment to joint working and to delivering the Triennial review Action Plan. We currently share reporting on two Key Performance Indicators: priority habitats and planning consultations.
	26.1	Corporate plans each have sections describing how we work with each other, and with the wider Defra network.	April 2014	
	26.2	We are working together to develop a jointly owned KPI on e.g. freshwater/coastal biodiversity. This will build on existing indicators and align them to capture the outcomes delivered by both organisations in creating and maintaining BAP and SSSI habitat, showing how together we are delivering the commitments in the England Biodiversity Strategy.	February 2014	
	26.3	We will work together on a shared outcome measures for WFD	February 2014	
Partnership working and innovation	27	Complete a review of EA's fisheries work - looking at where future activities are best carried out	April 2014	The Government has charged the third sector with delivering the National Angling Strategy. The Environment Agency is working with a range of partners including the Angling Trust, the Wild Trout Trust and the Rivers Trusts to support delivery of this work.
	28	Agree a process and timetable for Independent Fisheries Management advisors to be appointed to oversee decisions on control of fish eating birds and mammals	April 2014	Three Independent Fisheries Management Advisors have been recruited. The Environment Agency and Natural England will continue to work together to support this trial in 2014-15.
	29	On National Nature Reserves: increase community engagement; explore transfer of management and commercial opportunities and expand partnership working		
	29.1	Increase levels of community engagement (where staff resources allow), using public engagement standards to encourage new ideas and approaches.		Public engagement standards are now in place across 107 NNRs - bringing visitor access facilities up to a higher standard and increased access rights via a dedicated open access dedication programme.
	29.2	NE to progress discussions on 10-15 sites for potential transfer of management responsibility	Jan - Mar 2014	Natural England is continuing to progress 10-15 sites for potential transfer of management and is preparing a progress report for the Secretary of State.
	29.3	Expand partnership working with universities / academic establishments over the research uses and value of the sites and facilities		Natural England is using reserves as sites for the study of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, with a major partnership with the Met Office continues to gather momentum. A new Heritage Lottery Funded funded skills project has been approached, delivering 99 new opportunities for students to learn new environmental skills on reserves.
	29.4	Explore commercial opportunities through	Jan - Mar 2014	Natural England has identified a range of possible

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		engagement with social enterprises and businesses at the local level. NE to develop strategic framework for progressing commercial funding opportunities on NNRs		commercial opportunities and is implementing the first phase, including a commercial contract for charging film companies for using NNRs.