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JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

JNCC BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2004/05

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1. Background

- 1.1 In 2002, Defra and devolved administrations put in place new corporate planning arrangements for the JNCC. It was agreed that the JNCC would produce a business plan on an annual basis, setting out a work programme for the coming year. Following each Spending Review (i.e. biennially), the JNCC would produce a corporate plan containing a three-year costed work programme and subsuming the following year's business plan.
- 1.2 Following these new arrangements, the JNCC published a corporate plan for 2003-06 in 2003. Because of uncertainties regarding grant in aid for 2004/05 and 2005/06, the plan presented two funding scenarios for these years:
 - i. baseline funding of level grant in aid in real terms;
 - ii. an increase of £1.1 million, in line with priorities identified in the submission to the 2002 Spending Review.
- 1.3 Within the Support Unit, work has begun on preparing a business plan for 2004/05. Targets and indicative financial allocations have been rolled forward from the three-year corporate plan, and have been updated where necessary.
- 1.4 This paper contains costed options for enhancing existing areas of work and undertaking new projects, over and above baseline funding for 2004/05 and 2005/06. Priorities have provisionally been identified.

2. Baseline funding

- 2.1 The JNCC's grant in aid for 2003/04 is £5.526 million. As discussed by Committee in March 2003, this is approximately £300k short of the funding required to deliver all the additional burdens and new priorities during the year.
- 2.2 Baseline grant in aid for the next two years (based on level funding plus inflation) is £5.664 million in 2004/05 and £5.806 million in 2005/06 (see Annex A). This baseline funding is primarily comprised of core advisory work, long-term surveillance programmes, contractual commitments and salary costs. Some money (*ca* 2-3% of total grant in aid) will be freed up as time-limited projects come to an end (notably publication of the GCR series). Some of these

funds are required for new commitments; small amounts (<1% of grant in aid) have been earmarked within the baseline funding to enhance work on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, to pilot the production of UK wildlife statistics, and to develop electronic systems for the management of GCR information.

- 2.3 As in previous years, Government has indicated that funding for FMPR implementation must be found within the JNCC's grant in aid allocation.
- 2.4 Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (ASLCs) for staff assigned to the JNCC have previously been paid by the country agencies, but from 2004/05 onwards these costs should be met by the JNCC (see Annex A). This will not involve any net increase in funding from Government to the JNCC and the country agencies, but will require appropriate funding to be transferred from agency grant in aid allocations to the JNCC.
- 2.5 The JNCC is committed to reducing running costs wherever this is compatible with discharging our functions. For example, office services budgets for 2003/04 have been capped at 2002/03 levels, absorbing inflationary increases and the costs associated with taking on additional staff. However, the extent to which further efficiency savings can be made is finite. In some cases, it is also necessary to make an initial investment in order to increase efficiency in the longer term.
- 2.6 In summary, there is very little flexibility in the JNCC's baseline funding. Any reduction in the baseline would impact on the JNCC's ability to undertake its core activities.

3. Priorities for funding above baseline

- 3.1 The preferred funding scenario described in the corporate plan for 2003-06 was based on an increase of £1.1 million in grant in aid. Within the plan, the work that could be undertaken with increased funding was clearly specified under each strategic theme. These proposals and associated costs have been reassessed in the light of the JNCC's developing strategy; new Government priorities have also been taken into account.
- 3.2 Costed proposals for enhancing existing areas of work and undertaking new projects are evaluated and prioritised in Annex B. Summary costs are provided in Annex A. The proposals have been divided into three categories: new burdens from Government, other high priorities, and lower priorities (see 3.3-3.6 below).

New burdens from Government

- 3.3 This category includes work that Government is likely to require the JNCC to take on over the next two years, e.g. in order to meet the obligations imposed by new environmental legislation. The total cost of anticipated new burdens is estimated to be at least £210k in 2004/05 and £335k in 2005/06. The prominence of marine work reflects Government's commitments to marine nature conservation under EU directives and other international instruments.

The potential new role for the JNCC in co-ordinating work on non-native species may have substantial resource implications, but cannot yet be scoped. Accordingly, costs are not included in Annex B.

- 3.4 The JNCC can only take on these new burdens if additional funding is made available by Government. There is no scope for accommodating the new work within existing budgets.

Other high priorities

- 3.5 Increased funding is also considered to be a high priority where specific services/products would provide clear benefits to Government or country agencies, e.g. quality assurance of the common standards monitoring programme, more focused intelligence on emerging European issues. Other high priorities include investments to deliver longer-term efficiency gains (e.g. website development and records management), and work to support new strategic directions for the JNCC (e.g. ecosystem management and conservation initiatives in the Overseas Territories). The total cost of this high priority work is estimated to be £370k in 2004/05 and £445k in 2005/06.

Lower priorities

- 3.6 The lower priorities are all considered to be important areas of work, but immediate delivery is less critical. Implementation could be postponed depending on the availability of funds. The total cost of the lower priority work is estimated to be £135k in 2004/05 and £165k in 2005/06.

4. Funding for 2004/05 and 2005/06

- 4.1 Defra are currently starting an exercise to determine resource allocations for 2004/05 and 2005/06. This is in effect 'unfinished business' from Spending Review 2002. In line with the revised arrangements for determining the JNCC's grant in aid that were put in place in 2002, Defra and the devolved administrations will jointly agree budgets for the JNCC for 2004/05 and 2005/06. The appropriate amounts will then be ring-fenced within each of the country agencies' grant in aid settlements.
- 4.2 It is hoped that ongoing discussions between the Support Unit and funding bodies will ensure that these new arrangements run smoothly in 2003. Initial meetings with country agencies and Government administrations will be held in September 2003.
- 4.3 A separate exercise is being undertaken across Government to set baseline allocations for 2005-08 as part of Spending Review 2004.
- 4.4 Support Unit staff are currently evaluating the options for seeking external sources of funding to support some of the JNCC's activities. A paper on this issue will be presented to the Joint Committee in December 2003. Most of the projects listed in Annex B are core JNCC work, and are therefore most appropriately funded from grant in aid. However, opportunities for attracting

external funding are being explored where appropriate. For example, a bid to the EU INTERREG programme is being planned to support work on seabed habitat mapping.

Annex A. Breakdown of grant in aid figures

Total JNCC grant in aid (including EHS contribution) for past two years:

2002/03 (out-turn): £5,412k
 2003/04 (planned): £5,526k

Proposed grant in aid for 2004/05 and 2005/06 (all figures in £k)

	Baseline funding ¹		Funding above baseline		
	From 2003-06 corporate plan	+ ASLCs ² (estimated costs)	+ new burdens from Government	+ other high priorities	+ lower priorities
2004/05	5,664	6,040	6,250	6,620	6,755
2005/06	5,806	6,220	6,555	7,000	7,165

¹ Baseline funding = grant in aid capped at 2003/04 levels in real terms

² Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (ASLCs) have previously been paid by the country agencies, but from 2004/05 onwards these costs should be met by the JNCC; this will require appropriate funding to be transferred from agency grant in aid allocations to the JNCC

Annex B. Proposals for new/developing work requiring funding above baseline

i) New burdens from Government

Project	Total baseline cost (excluding salaries) (£k)		Additional cost above baseline (£k)		Targets/actions	Drivers
	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06		
OSPAR	10	10	70	70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a mapping programme for priority habitats within the OSPAR area by 2005, and initiate a holistic mapping programme Begin to identify Marine Protected Areas within UK waters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSPAR Convention WSSD commitments on marine protected areas (a priority in Defra's strategy for 2003-06)
Marine Natura 2000	90	90	75	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake broadscale surveys of possible SACs/SPAs beyond territorial waters and prepare site management plans <p><i>Scope of work depends on the timing and content of new offshore regulations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Habitats and Birds Directives WSSD commitments on marine protected areas (a priority in Defra's strategy for 2003-06)
UK/EU marine strategy	3	3	15	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to initiatives to identify marine protected areas on the High Seas Provide technical support to Government following public consultation on the recommendations arising from the Review of Marine Nature Conservation in 2004 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up to Government's Review of Marine Nature Conservation 6th Environmental Action Programme marine thematic strategy Convention on Biological Diversity
Non-native species	0	0	?	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate GB work on non-native species <p><i>The JNCC is likely to be named as the appropriate body to undertake this role in Government's response to the Review of Non-native Species Policy; the scope and cost of the work require more detailed assessment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up to Government's Review of Non-native Species Policy Convention on Biological Diversity (initiatives on alien invasive species)
Mammal surveillance	130	130	50	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the mammal Winter Transect and Sign project (currently managed and funded by Defra) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU directive, UK BAP and MEA reporting requirements UK/international environmental policy formulation and decision-making
Offshore site monitoring	0	0	0	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devise, and begin to implement, a programme for monitoring offshore SACs and SPAs <p><i>Current indications from Defra are that the JNCC will have a role in monitoring offshore SACs and SPAs but the scope of this work requires further discussion</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Habitats and Birds Directives WSSD commitments on marine protected areas (a priority in Defra's strategy for 2003-06)
TOTAL			>210	>335		

ii) Other high priorities

Project	Total baseline cost (excluding salaries) (£k)		Additional cost above baseline (£k)		Targets/actions	Drivers
	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06		
Overseas Territories	5	5	5	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide greater support for nature conservation initiatives in the UK's Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FCO's PSA target on improving the environment of the Overseas Territories Commitments under the Environment Charters for the Overseas Territories WSSD commitments on reducing global biodiversity loss (a priority in Defra's strategy for 2003-06)
UK's global footprint	0	0	0	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop advice to Government on the effects that UK activities and policies have on biological and geological diversity internationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSSD commitments on reducing global biodiversity loss (a priority in Defra's strategy for 2003-06) Convention on Biological Diversity commitment to assist the biodiversity-related programmes of developing countries
European influencing	65	65	25	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote greater JNCC/country agency engagement with priority European issues by providing more focused intelligence on emerging European environmental issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU legislation and policies affecting the environment, e.g. CAP, CFP, 6th Environmental Action Programme, EC Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, EU Sustainable Development Strategy Defra and FCO PSA targets on CAP reform
Climate change	25	20	15	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop advice on the implications of climate change for nature conservation policy and practice (building on the outputs from MONARCH and other research programmes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a wide range of UK, EU and international policies and legislation
Ecosystem approach & sustainable development	2	2	25	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare best-practice guidance on application of ecosystem management in the UK Support Defra in their cross-departmental sustainable development role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MEAs, in particular Convention on Biological Diversity and Ramsar Convention EU Water Framework Directive WSSD commitment on marine ecosystems UK Sustainable Development Strategy and Defra PSA target on promoting sustainable development across Government
UK BAP	3	3	20	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional support for the UK BAP, and in particular begin to co-ordinate monitoring and surveillance activities to enable reporting on the status and trends of priority habitats and species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK BAP reporting requirements

Project	Total baseline cost (excluding salaries) (£k)		Additional cost above baseline (£k)		Targets/actions	Drivers
	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06		
Common Standards Monitoring	40	25	50	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a comprehensive quality assurance programme for designated site monitoring, including an independent scientific assessment of the methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defra PSA target on SSSI condition in England (and similar devolved administration targets in other parts of the UK) EU directive and MEA reporting obligations (UK-wide common standards are essential to meet these obligations)
Habitat surveillance	20	20	15	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully implement a programme for the surveillance and monitoring of terrestrial, freshwater and coastal Annex I and BAP priority habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Habitats Directive, UK BAP and MEA reporting requirements UK/international environmental policy formulation and decision-making
Marine habitat surveillance	20	20	50	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully implement a surveillance programme for marine priority habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Habitats Directive, UK BAP and MEA reporting requirements UK/international environmental policy formulation and decision-making
Biodiversity reporting	3	3	30	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Government in its efforts to harmonise international reporting obligations Pilot outcome-based reporting for the Habitats Directive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU directive and MEA reporting requirements
Website development	20	20	30	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a content management system for the JNCC website (and other websites run by the JNCC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency gains for the JNCC (costs should be recouped over a period of 2-3 years)
Records management	0	0	20	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-evaluate the options for electronic document and record management, and draw up an implementation plan to be initiated from 2005/06 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency gains for the JNCC Government targets for electronic records management
IT services	134	112	75	70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the JNCC's IT system by undertaking a capital replacement programme, upgrading the telephone system, and providing improved facilities for remote working to outposted staff <p><i>Proposals need to be prioritised</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency/effectiveness gains for the JNCC
HR management	86	86	10	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide increased training and development opportunities for JNCC staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To equip JNCC staff with the necessary skills to fulfil current and future role
TOTAL			370	445		

iii) Lower priorities

Project	Total baseline cost (excluding salaries) (£k)		Additional cost above baseline (£k)		Targets/actions	Drivers
	2004/05	2005/06	2004/05	2005/06		
Biodiversity indicators	1	1	10	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support for the creation of UK, European and international indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK/international reporting requirements UK, EU and global sustainable development programmes/policies
GCR information	15	25	25	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convert an additional 8 GCR volumes to a searchable electronic format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider/easier access to a key environmental data set
Seabird & cetacean surveillance	70	70	15	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend survey coverage to include additional bird species (e.g. storm petrels) <p><i>JNCC may also have a role in managing the Joint Cetacean Database from 2005/06 but this needs further consideration</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Birds Directive (site selection and reporting requirements)
Species surveillance programmes	45	45	20	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the coverage of species, biotopes and geographical areas within the Butterfly Monitoring Scheme Pilot national surveillance programmes for dragonflies, fish, reptiles and amphibians <p><i>A review of existing surveillance programmes and analysis of priorities is needed before launching new schemes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU directive, UK BAP and MEA reporting requirements UK/international environmental policy formulation and decision-making
European species	0	0	0	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a European context for assessing the UK status of butterflies and/or vascular plants by forging closer links with European organisations and specialist networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK/international reporting requirements UK/international environmental policy formulation and decision-making
Pollutant levels in birds	40	40	15	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test potential new components of the monitoring programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK/international environmental policy formulation and decision-making
Seabed habitat mapping	40	40	20	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand coverage of project to map seabed habitats within UK waters to include non-JNCC/country agency datasets and the offshore zone Translate all data into a single classification system <p><i>Scope of work may be significantly expanded if bid for European funding is successful</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for a wide range of activities, including environmental reporting and decision-making
Recorder	30	30	15	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review whether the Recorder software is the best method for standardised collection of biodiversity data, and, depending on results, undertake priority enhancements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for biological recording by amateurs, NGOs and statutory bodies
Marine habitat information	30	20	15	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect MarLIN and Marine Recorder to the NBN, develop web-based reporting tools, and enhance GIS capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced collection and dissemination of marine data
TOTAL			135	165		