



JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT BOARD

This paper was provided to the Joint Committee for decision/discussion or information. Please refer to the minutes of the meeting for Committee's position on the paper.

To view other Joint Committee papers and minutes visit <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2671>

To find out more about JNCC visit <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1729>

JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Paper by Marcus Yeo

1. Implementation of Spending Review outcomes

- 1.1 Following the outcome of the Spending Review and the Cabinet Office review of Arms Length Bodies, focus within JNCC has shifted to preparing a business plan for 2011/12 and ensuring that JNCC has the structures and processes in place to deliver the plan.
- 1.2 A final draft business plan is presented to the Joint Committee for approval at this meeting (paper JNCC 11 P04).
- 1.3 JNCC ran a voluntary redundancy scheme in early 2011, with the aim of releasing a small number of staff by the end of the financial year. None of the applications received were considered to provide an opportunity, directly or indirectly, to place staff who are in redundant posts, and EMB decided not to progress any of the applications.
- 1.4 Defra has recently confirmed additional funding for marine work in 2011/12. Implementation of marine work programmes will require JNCC to recruit at least 10-15 new staff. To meet the Coalition Government's expenditure controls, a business case is currently being prepared to allow JNCC to recruit externally (i.e. outside the civil service). We are also exploring opportunities for collaboration with other organisations involved in marine work in different parts of the UK, including the country conservation bodies, devolved administrations, the Marine Management Organisation and Cefas. The additional posts may also help us to redeploy staff in redundant posts to other parts of JNCC.

2. Quality assurance of science and evidence

- 2.1 Over the past year, JNCC's science and evidence has come under greater scrutiny than in the past, especially in relation to the identification of marine protected areas. It is crucial that JNCC has the appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that the evidence underpinning our advice is robust.
- 2.2 An internal Science Quality Task Force was set up in 2009 and made a number of recommendations. The Task Force will now be reinvigorated, and steps will be taken to ensure that JNCC complies with Government Chief Scientific Adviser guidelines.

3. Public Bodies Bill

- 3.1 The Public Bodies Bill continues to make its way through the House of Lords. Along with a large number of other organisations, JNCC was originally listed on Schedule 7 of the Bill, which would have given ministers wide-ranging

powers to abolish, merge and change the functions of listed bodies. However, this schedule has now been deleted.

- 3.2 JNCC is still listed on Schedule 3 of the Bill. This schedule would give ministers the power to modify the constitutional arrangements of listed bodies. In JNCC's case this might include changes to the composition of the Joint Committee.

4. Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

- 4.1 In December 2010, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the creation of IPBES. This body will function as an international science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services, mirroring in many respects the role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will hold a plenary meeting later in 2011 to agree operational arrangements for IPBES.
- 4.2 IPBES is a high priority for Defra, and the UK has provided significant financial support. JNCC staff are working with Defra officials to agree procedures for UK engagement with IPBES. This will include consideration of a follow-up process to the UK's National Ecosystem Assessment.

5. Dogger Bank

- 5.1 Under a contract from the Netherlands, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) is developing fisheries management proposals to the European Commission for Dutch offshore Natura 2000 sites, including the Dutch sector of the Dogger Bank. The UK has now joined this process, and the project is being extended to produce an integrated management proposal for the Dogger Bank between the three nations that hold parts of the designation and involving other affected member states. This is a very positive development.