

# Press release: £5 billion investment by water companies to benefit the natural environment

The Environment Secretary Michael Gove has challenged water companies to increase investment and improve environmental outcomes by 2025.

The ambitious measures set out by the Environment Agency in the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) will see up to £5 billion of investment by water companies in the natural environment through 2020 to 2025.

This will help tackle some of the biggest challenges facing the water environment, from the spread of invasive species and low flows to the effects of chemical and nutrient pollution.

Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

I want water companies to invest in the long term future of our environment. It is right that the Environment Agency is challenging water companies to go further.

This significant investment will help tackle some of the biggest challenges facing the natural environment. It will help to improve our waterways, increase biodiversity and combat non-native invasive species. This will support our goal to leave the environment in a better state for future generations.

Water companies have a duty to protect and enhance the natural water environment. The government expects water companies to meet the obligations set out in the Environment Programme (WINEP) by 2025.

The investment will:

- Protect and improve at least 6000km of our waters
- Protect and improve 24 Bathing Waters and 10 Shellfish sites
- Protect and improve 1800 hectares of protected nature conservation sites
- Enhance nearly 900km of river and 4276 hectares through wider biodiversity improvements

The measures in WINEP represent the basic measures required by water companies to meet their environmental outcomes. However this also presents an opportunity for the industry to develop innovative approaches which will benefit customers, communities, the environment and natural capital.

Environment Agency Chair Emma Howard Boyd said:

A clean water environment keeps us healthy, sustains wildlife, and is essential to the success of the economy. Water quality has improved in recent decades but water companies are still responsible for at least one serious pollution incident every week.

We put together a programme of work for water companies over the next five years which will produce significant environmental improvements: protecting and improving over 6,000km of rivers, 24 bathing waters, 10 shellfish waters and 18000 hectares of protected nature conversation sites.

Water companies have until later this year to submit more detailed plans to Ofwat. I'm looking forward to seeing more innovation and less pollution.

Certain aspects of the WINEP, on an exceptional basis, will be considered for extension of the 2020-2025 timeframe if they facilitate long term sustainable outcomes and maximise environmental benefits.

Water companies have until 30 June to submit their case for extension to the Environment Agency and Ofwat.

This ambitious programme marks a real step forward in delivering the environmental outcomes set out in our [25 Year Environment Plan](#).

Notes:

- Environment Secretary, Michael Gove's speech to the water sector can be found [here](#).
- Environment Agency report on State of the Environment water quality can be found [here](#).

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## **[Notice: Ford Transit pick up: vehicle seizure notice](#)**

Read the notice to find out how to claim the seized vehicle.

The claim period ends on 7 July 2018.

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# News story: Natural England's chair announces retirement

Natural England's chair Andrew Sells has announced his intention to retire in January 2019.

Andrew Sells has held the position of Natural England chair since January 2014 and during his tenure the organisation has demonstrated its vital role in promoting conservation and protecting biodiversity.

## **Natural England's chair Andrew Sells said:**

It has been a huge privilege and pleasure to serve as the chair of Natural England and, thanks to the highly capable and committed staff, the organisation has changed for the better.

During my tenure, we have tried to work much more with people to achieve shared outcomes and moved closer to the people we work with through a devolved area structure; we have radically reformed our licensing activities; we have published our Conservation Strategy and have been instrumental in shaping the Government's 25 year Plan for the Environment; we have advised on 90 Marine Conservation Zones and we have made long strides towards completing a path around England's coast.

I would also like to thank the Secretary of State for leading the Government's commitment to improve the environment within a generation; and James Cross, our chief executive, for his drive, determination and tireless hard work to reform our organisation.

## **Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:**

Natural England plays a vital role in safeguarding our natural environment as well as enabling people to access and enjoy it. Andrew Sells' energy and commitment have been exceptional and I am very grateful for all that he has delivered as chair.

## **Natural England's chief executive James Cross said:**

I want to thank Andrew for all his hard work leading Natural England's dedicated staff and volunteers across the country. Natural England's great achievements over recent years are testament to Andrew's driving passion for reforming Natural England and protecting our environment.

The recruitment process for the new chair will commence shortly.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Natural England chair Andrew Sells' letter to Environment Secretary Michael Gove**

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to let you know in good time that I intend to retire as chair of Natural England in January 2019 when I will have completed 5 years in the role. I have always believed that 5 years in any such job is long enough and I discussed this timing with the Appointments team at No.10 last summer. Also, as I approach yet another significant birthday it seems right to move on to new challenges as there are other things I wish to do in my life.

May I take the opportunity to say what a huge privilege, and pleasure, it has been to serve as Chair of Natural England. I have nothing but admiration for our highly capable and committed staff, and I have also been fortunate to have the constant support of a high calibre board. I am also grateful for the support I have had from Defra colleagues.

I would like to think that Natural England has changed for the better during my tenure: we have tried to work much more with people to achieve shared outcomes and moved closer to the people we work with through a devolved area structure; we are radically reforming our licensing activities; we have published our Conservation Strategy and have been instrumental in shaping the Government's 25 year Plan for the Environment (from first draft to last, quite literally); we have advised on 90 Marine Conservation Zones (unseen and unsung work but hugely important); we have made long strides towards completing a path around England's coast, and much more besides, although of course much remains to be done.

On a personal note, may I also say what a pleasure it has been to work with you as Secretary of State. If I may say so, from the day of your appointment the Department has felt like a different place; your hugely welcome commitment to the environment and to the work of Natural England is much appreciated. Indeed, the fact that the Prime Minister herself launched the Government's 25-year Plan for the Environment is testament to the Government's commitment to leave the environment in a better condition for the next generations. As we seek to reverse decades of decline I am encouraged that the Government's commitment to 'Net Gain' and Natural Capital (both policies urged by Natural England) have the potential to be transformative.

I will of course be happy to help in any way I can to ensure a smooth transition to my successor.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our outstanding Chief Executive, James Cross: many of the reforms we have introduced would not have come to fruition without his drive and determination and I am most grateful to him and his senior team for their tireless hard work.

With every good wish,

Yours always,

Andrew Sells

## **Environment Secretary Michael Gove's response to Natural England chair Andrew Sells**

We shall be very sorry to lose you as part of the Defra group leadership, and I am very grateful for all that Natural England has delivered under your chairmanship. As you rightly record, both on land and at sea, NE has played a vital role in safeguarding our natural environment and enabling people to access and enjoy it.

This has been a period when Natural England has undergone huge changes and delivered major new projects, including the England coastal path, and your energy and commitment has been exceptional.

I am very grateful for your thoughtfulness in giving us notice of your retirement, to enable a smooth succession.

I have asked my office to work with yours on the timing of the public announcement of your plans and we'll initiate the process of recruiting for your successor shortly so that we can have someone in post by January.

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## **Notice: LE17 4JA, GC Metals Limited: environmental permit issued. EPR/PP3233RS/V002**

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: GC Metals Limited
  - Installation name: GC Metals Limited
  - Permit number: EPR/PP3233RS/V002
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## World news story: Bids open for projects to tackle the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)

- The IWT CHALLENGE FUND aims to help developing countries by reducing demand, strengthening enforcement and improving criminal justice, and providing alternative livelihoods. The deadline for Stage 1 applications is Thursday 10 July. Information on how to apply can be found [here](#).
- The DARWIN INITIATIVE – a programme funded by the UK's Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) aims to protect biodiversity and the natural environment in developing countries. The deadline for Stage 1 applications is Tuesday 24 July. Information on how to apply can be found [here](#).

The British Embassy strongly encourages environmental and conservation organisations working in Guatemala and/or Honduras to apply. According to official statistics species such as exotic birds (macaws), reptiles (iguanas), and mammals are seeing their numbers rapidly decline as a direct consequence of IWT.

To address this issue the United Kingdom aims to build coalitions by engaging with the private sector, NGOs and academia. We also believe it is important to harness technology and innovation, and ultimately to close markets for illegally traded wildlife products. Project proposals may draw on any of these objectives.