

News story: Natural England Deputy Chair appointed

Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, has appointed The Rt Hon the Lord Blencathra as Deputy Chair of Natural England (NE) until the end of his term as an NE Board Member on 11 March 2021. This follows the announcement of his [appointment to the NE Board](#) in March 2018.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body, set up under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Its remit is to ensure the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations.

Non-executive board members of Natural England have collective responsibility for the strategic direction and overall performance of the organisation. They make sure that Natural England is properly and effectively managed and provide stewardship for the public funds entrusted to the organisation.

Lord Blencathra will continue to receive remuneration at the rate of £328 per day although there will be an increase to his current time commitment of 36 days per annum.

Biography

Lord Blencathra is a Member of the House of Lords where he chairs a Select Committee and has been appointed to the Council of Europe. He was formerly Minister of State at the Home Office and a Minister at the Department of the Environment in the 1990s. At the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 he led for the UK and launched the Darwin Initiative. He formerly represented England's largest rural constituency as the Member of Parliament for Penrith and The Border. He joined the Natural England Board in March 2018. Lord Blencathra has multiple sclerosis and uses a wheelchair.

Research and analysis: Public sector energy efficiency loans scheme: evaluation

In the 2015 spending review, HM Treasury approved a £255.3 million funding uplift for the [public sector energy efficiency loans scheme](#) in England, under the condition that a broad evaluation is conducted. The evaluation will

include a process, impact and economic assessment of the scheme since 2013.

This interim report summarises the findings from the first phase of the evaluation:

- descriptive statistics of scheme participants
- interviews with key stakeholders
- early impact findings

The report findings are broken down by:

- scheme outcomes
- participation, design and delivery
- wider lessons from the evaluation

Research and analysis: Recommendations to inform a UK ocean acidification monitoring strategy

This report provides advice and recommendations on how the UK could contribute to the effort to measuring OA at a whole-ocean level.

This report was written by the Defra Science Advisory Council Ocean Acidification sub group.

National Statistics: Road fuel prices: 30 July 2018

Cost of unleaded petrol (ULSP) and unleaded diesel (ULSD) in the UK as at Monday 30 July 2018.

Scottish Home Pony reaches new heights

More than 200 show jumpers from across the UK and Ireland recently descended

on SRUC's Oatridge campus in West Lothian for a spectacular four days of action at this year's Harbro Scottish Home Pony.