

**From:** Hilary Winter  
**Sent:** 24 May 2011 12:31  
**Subject:** FW: NE Board meeting

NE Board meeting tomorrow

[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about\\_us/ourpeople/neboard/meetings/may11/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/ourpeople/neboard/meetings/may11/default.aspx)

Delivery on Outcome Two, outlined in the Chief Executive's Report

[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/NEBPU2402\\_tcm6-26535.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/NEBPU2402_tcm6-26535.pdf) spells out performance in the areas of access and engagement.

🕒 **450,000 Children appreciate the Natural Environment** – We have continued to provide more opportunities for children to appreciate the natural environment. This quarter over 100,000 more children have participated, enabling us in total to reach 677,906 children and exceeding our annual target by 50%. This total includes 293,355 children who have visited Educational Access farms,

exceeding our annual target by 30%; we have now divested this work to the Access to Farms Partnership. 42,300 children from 1,435 schools are members of Big Wildlife Garden (BWG) site, exceeding our annual target of 40,000 and meaning that 4,916 hectares of wildlife gardens are now registered on the site; we have now also divested this work alongside the Scout

13

Naturalist Badge. 56,082 children have participated in our National Nature Reserve (NNR) outreach events, exceeding our annual target by 24%; 156,444 children participated in Access to Nature projects, exceeding our annual target of 55,000 and 15,739 children participated in Green Exercise and Health Walks, exceeding our annual target by 96%;

🕒 **200,000 People get Improved Access to Nature** – We estimate that awards made this year to Access to Nature, Aggregates Levy and Natural Assets schemes will support around 531,000 countryside visitors (including 160,000 children), based on indicators from our current projects. We are continuing to engage at a strategic level with BIG Lottery on the potential for a successor scheme. After the challenges we overcame earlier in the year, we want to ensure that improving the quality of data collection is taken forward as a key lesson;

🕒 **New Coastal Access rights on 20 km of Weymouth Coast** – Consultation on the draft proposals for new coastal access rights closed in early January and we subsequently carried out a detailed examination of responses which resulted in amendments, risks and issues being referred to the Weymouth Project Board. The Weymouth Report was signed off and submitted to the Minister on 22 March;

🕒 Finally in Outcome Two, we have reported previously that our **Capacity Building Training Programme** for volunteers would not be delivered due to Government Spending Controls on all new consultancy contracts. As also noted in Quarter three, Defra have indicated they may ask us to consider options

## PLUS

### Divestment of the Walking for Health scheme

1.6.1 Natural England's contract with the Department of Health to expand the highly successful Walking for Health Initiative by a fourfold increase in numbers of walking participants was successfully re-negotiated during the autumn and winter of 2010. The election of the new Coalition Government precipitated a reconsideration of the appropriateness of the initiative with the outcome that Walking for Health was selected for divestment into civil society control as part of the Government's ambitions for Big Society. A new contract variation with the Department of Health was agreed to facilitate this new direction.

1.6.2 The divestment process has engaged teams from Natural England and the Department of Health working together with a specialist body, Knowledge into Action to establish the options for divestment and the provision of funding for the work to continue without resources from central Government. Although the Department of Health is project manager for this work, the critical legal and procurement advice is being taken from within Natural England, to ensure that the entire divestment process is fair and transparent for all those participating and acting as either future hosts or funders.

1.6.3 Staff working on the current programme within Natural England are on fixed term appointments and are included in the divestment process until their contracts expire. Negotiations are proceeding with a number of national medical charities to assess the level of potential funding and the scope and size of a suitable body to host the ongoing work. A successful conclusion, signed off by Natural England and the Department of Health is expected in the late autumn of 2011. 9

### 1.7 National Nature Reserves (NNRs)

1.7.1 As a result of the Secretary of State's announcement in February regarding the NNR estate, Defra confirmed that the ownership and management of Natural England's NNRs will remain unchanged. The focus is now on reviewing the operation of these NNRs in order to enhance the contribution these sites make to the delivery of our agreed priorities and to further partnership working.

1.7.2 Staff who had been developing a mutual to take-on the running of Natural England's NNR estate have decided to suspend any further development of this proposal in the light of the ministerial announcement.