



Turning science into action for nature, people and the planet

JNCC BD 23 02
June 2023

JNCC Support Co.

Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23

Cover Note by Rob Porter

Executive Summary

1. Action required

- 1.1. Review this paper including the draft Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) at Annex 2, noting the current status of NAO's audit and decisions made at the June ARAC
- 1.2. Determine whether the Board is content in delegating final ARA signing to the Chair, subject to the same conditions regarding material amendments as agreed at ARAC.



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Paper by Rob Porter

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The preparation of the 2022/23 Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) has progressed well with the JNCC finance team developing a comprehensive and informative document meeting statutory and other reporting requirements to an ambitious but realistic timeline.
- 1.2. Following a relatively light-touch and successful interim audit in February/March this year the National Audit Office (NAO) began their planned year-end testing on 24 April. NAO have communicated that their audit work is near complete, but testing has been extended to examine revenue recognition treatment in more detail. That said, less detailed queries are still being received relating to other areas of the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA).
- 1.3. NAO have confirmed that they are holding 26 June for the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) to sign off the final accounts, however this could be accommodated earlier if NAO complete their work sooner. Given the timing of the NAO work and scheduling of expected C&AG sign off it is unfortunate that we are unlikely to be able to complete sign off at our company board on 19 June as is our normal practice. That said it is not an unusual step for a company board to approve for final signature of the accounts to be delegated to the Chair of the board in such circumstances.

2. Next steps

- 2.1 The ARA is near complete but remains subject to change for any issues emerging from NAO's final testing.
- 2.2 ARAC met on Monday 12 June and conditionally approved the draft ARA (version as 5 June), recommending it to the company board subject to there being no material amendments in its final version. It was agreed that any misstatements identified by NAO would only be corrected if the net total exceeded £335k (being 75% of NAO's materiality figure). The net total misstatements communicated by NAO at 14 June was running at £160k.
- 2.3 Since the version reviewed by ARAC, the Finance team have continued to update the document to accommodate NAO's requirements. A list of the more

important changes made is provided in Annex 1. The draft ARA as at 14 June is provided in Annex 2.

- 2.4 Enquiries have been made of NAO as to whether the change of Chair has any wider impact on the ARA signing process but we anticipate that only a minor amendment at the foot of the Foreword is required.
- 2.5 Within NAO's draft Audit Completion Report reviewed by ARAC on 12 June, there was a note that NAO's audit fee would increase to £42.5k for the current year. NAO had previously communicated that they had seen large deficits on the audit in previous years and they intended to increase fees to c£40k from 2023-24 onwards. The fee for the current year had previously been set at £29.5k, this itself being an increase on the previous year's £24.5k.
- 2.6 NAO committed to show ARAC how their future fee would baseline against audits of similar size and complexity.

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Annex 1

A list of changes made between ARA at 05/06 and 14/06:

1. A handful of small tweaks to the Sustainability Report, following our new Sustainability Manager's meeting with DEFRA. This includes a few additional sentences on the chosen carbon calculation methodology.
2. Minor changes to some of the bandings in Table 2: Joint Committee member remuneration, pg 73
3. New disclosure for 'Consultancy and Temporary Staff Expenditure' as advised by NAO, pg 81
4. The updated Audit Certificate has now been provided by NAO and is included from p84 -87
5. The accounting adjustment to recognise the EMODnet contract as an agency agreement has been put through. This has reduced Turnover and Cost of Activities by equal and opposite amounts (£560k). The net deficit is unchanged at £325k.

**Joint Nature Conservation Committee and JNCC Support Co
Annual Report and Accounts for year ending 31 March 2023**

Report presented to Parliament and Scottish Parliament pursuant to paragraph 18 of Schedule 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Accounts presented to Parliament pursuant to Article 6 of the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 (Audit of Non-profit-making Companies) Order 2009.

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JNCC SUPPORT CO.
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

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All pages within this document also serve as the NERC Act submission.

Chair's and Chief Executive's Foreword

During the 2022 to 2023 financial year, JNCC continued its mission at the heart of nature conservation and recovery. We raised our ambition, deployed our convening power, strengthened our governance, enhanced our profile and invested in our people to provide world-class scientific evidence and advice to tackle the global biodiversity crisis.

We convened the Chairs and Chief Executives of the UK Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) to instigate and coordinate an unified approach ahead of the most significant global nature treaty in a decade – the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15). This culminated in JNCC hosting a highly successful event to launch a joint statement on nature recovery ahead of COP15 (<https://jncc.gov.uk/nature-recovery-joint-statement/>). The sense of mobilisation at the event was powerful, showcasing JNCC in our convening role. JNCC's scientific expertise was central to the UK's COP15 delegation. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework represented a 'Paris moment for nature' and JNCC will be pivotal to advising the UK, the four countries of the UK, the UK Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies on achieving the new global targets.

In parallel, we created our nature recovery strategy – *Together for Nature 2023 – 2030*, which will be launched on the United Nations (UN) International Day for Biological Diversity 2023. *Together for Nature* sets out our new vision, mission, strategic priorities and values. Co-created by staff and our Joint Committee, *Together for Nature* represents our north star – guiding our energy, endeavour and excellence. Three new Joint Committee sub-groups – UK Co-ordination, Marine and International – were established to strengthen our governance. A new JNCC Delivery and Assurance Board and UK Co-ordination, Marine and International Programme Boards were also established to develop and drive the delivery plans underpinning *Together for Nature*.

The JNCC UK Sponsor Group, with representatives of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Northern Ireland Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government, was reconstituted and agreed the 2022 to 2023 JNCC Business Plan. Our grant-in-aid, provided by the governments of the four countries of the UK and the UK Government, was supplemented by additional income (primarily from other government bodies). In total, JNCC received £19.4 million funding for the year. This funding was deployed to deliver a critical programme of work in the UK, UK Overseas Territories, Crown Dependencies and internationally for nature conservation and recovery. Additional monies received for other work totalled £3.1 million.

The revised JNCC framework document was agreed between Defra, DAERA, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and JNCC, in accordance with HM Treasury's handbook *Managing Public Money* and was approved by HM Treasury. The framework document sets out the broad governance framework within which JNCC operates and describes the governance and accountability framework that applies to JNCC and our funders.

The following are highlights of JNCC's work in the 2022 to 2023 financial year.

UK Coordination

Co-operation and exchange across the UK enables greater insight into changes in nature to improve future policies and investment. It also helps to streamline meeting the UK's international reporting obligations. JNCC's work focuses on maintaining a consistent picture of how biodiversity is changing, building our understanding of what is driving the changes and providing advice on action to address these.

JNCC completed the seventh Quinquennial Review of Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (QQR) and submitted its recommendations to governments. Evidence submitted as part of the stakeholder consultation has been analysed and incorporated into a series of recommendations regarding the improvement of future QQRs. These include recommendations concerning individual species in relation to the addition, retention, regrading or removal of species listed and, if adopted, could significantly contribute to the level of species' protection given overall.

JNCC reviewed and renewed flagship long-term monitoring and surveillance schemes to continue monitoring the UK's birds, bats, butterflies, plants and pollinators. The long-term datasets derived from these schemes support policy decision-making, and bring together a diverse range of specialists to agree research and development objectives for the next five years. Through the long-term data and reporting from the schemes we can better show the links between the UK's natural environment and our natural capital – the ecosystem services that benefit society and the economy.

On behalf of the Common Standards Monitoring Inter-Agency Working Group, JNCC published a revised Common Standards Monitoring statement (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/0450edfd-a56b-4f65-aff6-3ef66187dc81>). The revised Statement (2019, subsequently updated in 2022) defines the common standards, supports current monitoring, summarises the current approaches to protected area monitoring and suggests potential applications of Common Standards Monitoring, whilst also ensuring alignment with a set of common standards. These standards are important to provide consistency in assessments across the UK to help better understand changes and what is driving them.

JNCC continued to work with the four countries of the UK to explore how protected areas could be reviewed and reformed. As a result, a new Protected Areas Inter-Agency Group was formed and is working on a joint statement on principles for protected areas, to be published in 2023. The group are also tasked with identifying where joint work is necessary to identify and address shared evidence requirements to support an adaptive UK network of protected areas, and to develop monitoring approaches for a potentially re-purposed, and expanded, network.

JNCC worked on a new pilot tool (Air Pollution Assessment Service, formerly known as UK AERIUS) for the risk assessment of air pollution effects on ecosystems in the UK to inform decisions and statutory reporting requirements. Once live, the Air Pollution Assessment Service conservatively estimates a saving for UK agencies and users of at least £3.5 million per year based on time savings for assessment,

decision-making and advice to better protect the environment from air pollution effects. The tool will enable a step change in the way emission sources are modelled cumulatively and the information available to undertake 'in-combination' assessments.

UK Marine

JNCC has responsibility for nature conservation in the offshore marine environment. This environment supports a diverse range of habitats, and many important species, and is vital to many aspects of human wellbeing, such as supplying food and energy, and regulating global climate. We play a key role in supporting government and industry to use the offshore environment sustainably, including through identifying, monitoring and advising on protected areas, and through the provision of advice on the impacts of offshore industries.

JNCC supported implementation of the British Energy Security Strategy through its evidence and advice work on offshore wind and hydrocarbons. JNCC responded to the Habitats Regulations Assessment consultation for the first UK Offshore Carbon Dioxide Storage Licensing Round, and the 33rd Offshore Oil & Gas Licencing Round. JNCC also maintained its biodiversity advice service standards to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED) in relation to oil and gas casework.

JNCC conducted a review on Scottish Marine Protected Area (MPA) fisheries proposals, which provides advice to Marine Scotland on the compatibility of proposed fisheries measures with the recovery of MPA features. This advice will facilitate decisions on fisheries management interventions. Taken together with measures in other parts of the UK these will contribute to the UK's international 30by30 commitment on well-managed MPAs.

JNCC worked with Natural England to develop advice on how fisheries management can deliver against MPA and wider Good Environmental Status objectives. Advice and technical support was provided to government in the development of Fisheries Management Plans, with a view to plans delivering positive biodiversity outcomes. JNCC also responded to an in-year advice request from Defra on the ecosystem effects of restricting sandeel fisheries in English waters.

In collaboration with NatureScot, JNCC completed the draft of Highly Protected Marine Area selection guidelines for Scotland and continued informal consultation with stakeholders while we await Marine Scotland's launch of the public consultation. This will form the basis of a multi-annual process to identify and designate Highly Protected Marine Areas in Scotland with participation from Scottish stakeholders.

Working with Scottish Government, JNCC set up a two-day UK-wide workshop – 'Exploring an Integrated Approach towards a Sustainable Blue Economy' – which discussed the sustainable use of ocean resources, with a view to seeking new ways to work with the marine environment that are low in carbon, low in impact and high in nature. The workshop included topics on incentivising private investment to finance transition to a sustainable ocean economy and provided an opportunity to look for

synergies and shared interests across the UK and internationally, as well as to discuss new partnerships and collaborations.

UK Overseas Territories

The UK Overseas Territories are rich in biodiversity and geodiversity, making a significant contribution to global biodiversity, but this diversity is also often fragile and vulnerable. JNCC provides technical assistance to support the Territories' biodiversity and wider environmental management strategies. JNCC also provides scientific advice to the UK Government on a variety of policy initiatives and funding programmes related to the Overseas Territories.

In 2022 to 2023, JNCC, with Defra, undertook a Call for Evidence (<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/biodiversity-in-the-uk-overseas-territories/uk-overseas-territories-biodiversity-strategy/>) inviting all interested parties to help shape the forthcoming new UK Overseas Territories biodiversity strategy to ensure it meets the needs of both nature and the Territories' inhabitants; and in parallel ran 7 dedicated workshops with territories and environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

JNCC supported 6 of the UK Overseas Territories in taking a collaborative approach to restore and protect coral reefs. Work under this project involved a wide range of stakeholder engagement and communications, strategic prioritisation and data management support across the six Overseas Territories. It included also monitoring coral reefs and treating Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in 5 Overseas Territories, and developing disease and bleaching response plans with 3 Overseas Territories.

JNCC delivered support to 7 of the UK Overseas Territories in strengthening their resilience against natural disasters and climate change, including piloting and mapping nature-based solutions in 4 Overseas Territories, developing and refining environmental and economics indicators, flood models, and soil mapping in five Overseas Territories. The work involved extensive stakeholder engagement, communications, and data management activities across the Overseas Territories.

JNCC supported Defra's launch of the new Darwin Plus Local (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/>) grant scheme, exclusively for organisations and individuals in the UK Overseas Territories. The scheme funds small-scale environmental projects to build capacity in the Territories and contribute to local economies. In the first round, the scheme received 61 applications of which around 75% were approved. This will provide nearly £1.5 million in funding to new projects in the 2023 to 2024 financial year across the 13 UK Overseas Territories that applied.

International

JNCC is the UK Government's statutory nature conservation and recovery adviser in international fora. As part of that role, we advise on the UK's implementation of international conventions that relate to biodiversity, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and take forward the views from the four countries of the UK to inform international policy development.

JNCC provided valuable scientific support to the Defra-led delegation to CITES COP19 (the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of fauna and flora). A record 365 decisions were adopted to advance protection of threatened wildlife species while at the same time allowing international trade.

As part of the Defra core negotiation team, JNCC staff played a key role in the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) at CBD COP 15. Two JNCC-developed indicators (on the management effectiveness of protected areas and the environmental impacts of consumption (<https://commodityfootprints.earth/>)) were included as part of the Monitoring Framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

JNCC is delivering 10 chemical waste mitigation projects in South Africa under the Reducing Pollution through Partnership project (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/reducing-pollution-through-partnership/>), funded by Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) through Defra. The projects will deliver scalable solutions to managing solid and water-based chemical contamination that can be further developed or applied to other low- to middle-income countries in the future. Work in 2022 to 2023 has included establishing agreements with in-country partners, site visits to understand local challenges and data gathering activities to enable implementation activities in 2023 to 2024.

Through the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ocean-country-partnership-programme/>) JNCC worked with partner countries to deliver tangible, positive impacts on the livelihoods of coastal communities. Work has included, exploring effective marine environmental management with the governments of Maldives and Belize, leading the UK Government's support to the Eastern Tropical Marine Corridor transboundary MPA (<https://jncc.gov.uk/news/jncc-leads-support-for-the-worlds-largest-trans-national-mpa-network/>), and providing experts to assist Peru during an emergency response incident.

Investing in our people

In mid-January, our Peterborough-based staff moved from Monkstone House to Quay House – a modern government building designed for collaborative working. To support modernisation, we contracted new corporate systems which integrate human resources and finance and planning data, processes and reporting. We continued to strengthen JNCC's cyber security by completing the roll-out of an enhanced password policy and implementation of multi-factor authentication. We progressed implementation of a system that will help detect unusual activity within the network and ran our first National Cyber Security Centre security exercise with senior responsible individuals across JNCC.

We established a new People Committee, chaired by an independent Joint Committee member, to cover the full range of people issues. The Remuneration Committee has been reconstituted as a sub-group of the People Committee. The People Committee is overseeing our work on the People Survey action plan, which is focused on pay and benefits, workloads, wellbeing and health, learning and development, managing change, career progression and Joint Committee engagement.

Changes to JNCC's Executive Leadership Team included the retirement of our first Chief Scientist and recruitment of a successor, and recruitment of a new Head of Organisational Development. We also bid farewell to our Director of Economic Analysis and Advice, following completion of a successful secondment; and welcomed our new directors of international Evidence and Analysis, our first job-share directors.

As part of continuous review and improvement of our sustainability processes, our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee undertook a comprehensive review ('drill down') of our internal sustainability practices. The relevant documentation was reviewed and a series of virtual meetings with team members were held to explore the subject and discuss emerging findings, which culminated in a report. The review concluded with a set of recommendations for improvement and an action programme to deliver these over the next financial year has been set in place.

We also welcomed the report and recommendations of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's equality, diversity and inclusion drill down and were pleased that the report noted the change in energy, action and intent. The importance of expertise in human resources (HR) was emphasised in the drill down and we achieved major milestones in our HR policies with the new anti-bullying and harassment, and menopause policies. As members of the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (<https://www.enei.org.uk/>) JNCC received specialist feedback on our action plan and the baseline report from the Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) self-evaluation benchmarking tool. We hosted a panel event on International Women's Day panel on #EmbraceEquity. As part of the Male Allyship Network, we are actively seeking associate White Ribbon (<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/>) accreditation, in recognition of our commitment to end gender-based violence against women. We provided organisation-wide neurodiversity awareness training which provided an overview to improve awareness about dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism and Tourette's syndrome.

A key highlight of the year was our first ever all-staff conference in September, which provided staff with an opportunity to reconnect, focus on our collective mission for nature recovery, and celebrate our successes. The conference also included practical elements designed to empower our people to contribute to creating an inclusive culture.

The enthusiasm and commitment of all our staff, evident not only at the conference, but throughout the year, working together for nature, serve to make our roles all the more rewarding.

Professor Colin Galbraith
(Chair)

Dr Gemma Harper
(Chief Executive)

Facal-toisich a' Chathraiche agus an Àrd-oifigeir

Lean JNCC air le ar cuid amasan tron bhliadhna ionmhais eadar 2022 is 2023 is sinn aig teis-meadhan gleidheadh is slànachadh nàdair. Thog sinn ar n-àrd-amasan, chuir sinn an sàs a' chumhachd gairm againn, neartaich sinn ar cuid riaghlaidh, bhrosnaich sinn ar n-inbhe is chuir sinn creideas nar daoine airson fianais shaidheansail aig ìre eadar-nàiseanta is comhairle air èiginn bith-iomadachd na cruinne a chur an sàs.

Ghairm sinn Cathraichean is Àrd-oifigearan nam Buidhnean Glèidhteachais Reachdail san RA/*Chairs and Chief Executives of the UK Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies* (SNCB) airson dòigh-obrach aonaichte a chur an sàs is a cho-òrdanachadh ro aon de na còrdaidhean nàdair eadar-nàiseanta a bu chudromaiche fad deich bliadhna – an còigeamh coinneamh deug de Cho-labhairt nam Pàrtaidhean air Cunradh Bith-iomadachd/*Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD COP15). Thug JNCC seo gu crìch nuair a chùm sinn tachartas soirbheachail airson co-aithris air slànachadh nàdair fhoillseachadh ro COP15 (<https://jncc.gov.uk/nature-recovery-joint-statement/>). Bha e fìor fhollaiseach aig an tachartas gun robh daoine is buidhnean airson a thighinn còmhla ri chèile air a' chuspair is bha na dleastanasan gairm aig JNCC gan taisbeanadh. Bha eòlas saidheansail JNCC aig teis-meadhan buidheann COP15 na RA. Bha Frèam Bith-iomadachd Eadar-nàiseanta Kunming-Montreal cho cudromach do nàdar 's a bha Còrdadh Pharis don ghnàth-shìde agus bidh obair JNCC riatanach airson comhairle a chumail ris an RA, ceithir dùthchannan na RA, Tìrean na RA Thall Thairis agus Tìrean Eisimeileach a' Chrùin air coileanadh nan targaidean ùra eadar-nàiseanta.

Aig a' cheart àm, chruthaich sinn an ro-innleachd againn air slànachadh nàdair – *Together for Nature 2023 – 2030*, a thèid fhoillseachadh air Latha Eadar-nàiseanta nan Dùthchannan Aonaichte air Bith-iomadachd 2023. Tha *Together for Nature* a' cur na lèirsinn, a' mhòr-amais, nam prìomhachasan ro-innleachdail is nam beusan againn an cèill. Chaidh a chruthachadh leis an luchd-obrach is a' Cho-chomataidh againn agus tha *Together for Nature* mar an Reul-iùil againn – a' stiùireadh ar cuid neirt, dìchill is feabhais. Chaidh trì fo-bhuidheannan den Cho-chomataidh a stèidheachadh – Co-òrdanachaidh, na Mara is Eadar-nàiseanta – airson ar cuid riaghlaidh a neartachadh. Chaidh Bòrd Lìbhrigidh is Barantais ùr a stèidheachadh le JNCC cho math ri Bùird Prògram Co-òrdanachaidh, na Mara is Eadar-nàiseanta, airson planaichean lìbhrigidh *Together for Nature* a leasachadh is a bhrosnachadh.

Chaidh Buidheann Sponsair na RA aig JNCC, anns a bheil riochdairean bho Roinn na h-Àrainneachd, a' Bhidhe is Chùisean Dùthchail (Defra), Roinn an Àiteachais, na h-Àrainneachd is Chùisean Dùthchail an Èirinn a Tuath (DAERA), Riaghaltas na h-Alba is Riaghaltas na Cuimrigh, ath-stèidheachadh is dh'aontaicheadh ri Plana Gnìomh JNCC 2022 gu 2023. Chaidh teachd a-steach a bharrachd (a' mhòr-chuid bho buidhnean riaghaltais eile) a chur ris an tabhartas mar thaic a th' air a thoirt seachad le riaghaltasan nan ceithir dùthchannan san RA is riaghaltas na RA fhèin. Uile gu lèir, fhuair JNCC maoinachadh luach £19.4 millean sa bhliadhna. Chaidh am maoinachadh seo a chur an sàs airson prògram obrach riatanach a libhrigeadh san RA, ann an Tìrean Thall Thairis na RA, Tìrean Eisimeileach a' Chrùin agus gu h-eadar-nàiseanta airson gleidheadh is slànachadh nàdair. Fhuair eadhon iomlan de £3.1 millean mu choinneimh obair eile.

Chaidh sgrìobhainn frèama ùraichte le JNCC aontachadh eadar Defra, DAERA, Riaghaltas na h-Alba, Riaghaltas na Cuimrigh is JNCC, a rèir leabhar-làimh Roinn an Ionmhais, *Managing Public Money*, agus chaidh aontachadh le Roinn Ionmhais na RA. Tha an sgrìobhainn frèama a' cur an cèill frèam riaghlaidh farsaing anns a bheil JNCC ag obrachadh agus a' mìneachadh frèam riaghlaidh is cunntalachd a tha a' riaghladh JNCC agus ar luchd-maoineachaidh.

Chithear sna leanas cuid a phrìomh obair JNCC sa bhliadhna ionmhais 2022 gu 2023.

Co-òrdanachadh san RA

Tha co-obrachadh is aiseag-eòlais air feadh na RA ag adhbharachadh barrachd eòlais air atharrachaidhean ann an nàdar airson poileasaidhean is maoineachadh san àm ri teachd a neartachadh. Bidh e na thaic is sinn a' coileanadh dhleastanasan aithris eadar-nàiseanta na RA. Tha obair JNCC a' cur beum air gleidheadh sealladh cunbhalach air atharrachadh bith-iomadachd, a' toirt eòlas dhuinn air na tha a' stiùireadh an atharrachaidh is a' comhairleachadh air gnìomhan airson dèiligeadh riutha.

Chriochnaich JNCC an seachdamh Lèirmheas Còig Bliadhna air Clàran 5 is 8 de dh'Achd Fiadh-bheatha is Dhùthchail 1981 (QQR) agus chuir sinn ar molaidhean do na riaghaltasan. Tha fianais, a chaidh a chur mar phàirt den cho-chomhairle le luchd-ùidh, air a mhion-sgrùdadh is a thoirt an lùib sreath mholaidhean air leasachadh QQR san àm ri teachd. Tha molaidhean co-cheangailte ri gnèithean fa-leth na lùib a thaobh leudachadh, gleidheadh, ath-sheòrsachadh no cuidhteas nan gnèithean a tha air an liostadh agus, ma thèid gabhail riutha, dh'fhaodadh iad cur gu mòr ris an ìre de dhìon gnè a bheirear seachad san fharsaingeachd.

Rinn JNCC ath-sgrùdadh is ùrachadh air prìomh sgeamaichean sgrùdadh fad-ùine is sinn a' leantainn oirnn a' sgrùdadh eòin, ialtagan, dealanan-dè, lusan is ainmhidhean poileanachaidh na RA. Bidh na stòran-dàta fad-ùine a thig às na sgeamaichean sin a' cumail taic ri cho-dhùnaidhean poileasaidh, is a' tarraing còmhla raon measgaichte de dh'eòlaichean airson amasan rannsachaidh is leasachaidh aontachadh airson nan còig bliadhna ri teachd. Tro dhàta is aithrisean fad-ùine nan sgeamaichean, is urrainn dhuinn na ceanglaichean eadar àrainneachd is calpa nàdarra na RA – na seirbheisean eag-shiostam a tha buannachdail don chomann-shòisealta is don eaconamaidh a thaisbeanadh nas èifeachdaiche.

Dh'fhoillsich JNCC aithris ùraichte às leth Common Standards Monitoring Inter-Agency Working Group (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/0450edfd-a56b-4f65-aff6-3ef66187dc81>). Tha an Aithris ùraichte (2019, air ùrachadh a-rithist an 2022) a' mìneachadh nan ìrean coitcheann, a' cumail taic ri sgrùdadh làithreach, a' cumail geàrr-chunntas air na dòighean-obrach a th' ann air sgrùdadh raointean dìon is a' moladh cleachdadh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann airson Sgrùdadh Ìrean Coitcheann, agus aig a' cheart àm a' dearbhadh co-thaobhadh ri ìrean cumanta. Tha na h-ìrean sin cudromach airson cunbhalachd an lùib mheasaidhean air feadh na RA airson eòlas nas fheàrr air atharrachaidhean agus na tha gan stiùireadh.

Lean obair JNCC cuide ri ceithir dùthchannan na RA air mar a ghabhadh raointean dìon ath-sgrùdadh is ath-leasachadh. Mar thoradh air sin, chaidh Buidheann Eadar-buidhne Sgìrean Dìona ùr a stèidheachadh, a tha ag obair air co-aithris air prionnsapalan do sgìrean dìon, is a thèid fhoillseachadh ann an 2023. Tha e mar dhleastanas air a' bhuidhinn comharrachadh far a bheil feum air co-obrachadh is dèiligeadh ri feuman fianais airson taic a thoirt do lìonra raointean dìon na RA, agus dòighean sgrùdaidh a leasachadh airson lìonra a dh'fhaodadh a bhith air ath-dhealbhadh agus air a leudachadh.

Dh'obraich JNCC air uidheam pileat ùr (Seirbheis Measadh Truailleadh Adhair, air an robh UK AERIUS roimhe seo) airson an cunnart an lùib truailleadh èadhair air eag-shiostaman san RA a mheas airson eòlas a chur ri co-dhùnaidhean is riathanasan aithris reachdail. Bha an t-Seirbheis ri tuairmse gum biodh sàbhaladh ann do bhuidhnean is luchd-cleachdaidh na RA de co-dhiù £3.5 millean sa bhliadhna stèidhichte air sàbhalaidhean ùine airson measadh, co-dhùnaidhean is comhairle airson an àrainneachd a dhìon nas fheàrr ro bhuidhnean truailleadh èadhair. Bidh an t-uidheam seo ag adhbharachadh atharrachadh mòr air an dòigh anns a bheil tùsan sgaoilidhean air an dealbhadh mar aon agus leis an fhiosrachadh a tha ri fhaotainn airson measaidhean 'co-mheasgaichte' a dhèanamh.

Muir na Rìoghachd Aonaichte

Tha uallach air JNCC airson glèidhteachas ann an àrainneachd na mara far cladaich. Tha raon farsaing de dh'àrainnean is iomadh gnè cudthromach beò san àrainneachd seo, agus tha e riathanach airson iomadh taobh de shlàinte dhaonna, leithid biadh is cumhachd, agus airson gnàth-shìde na cruinne. Tha dleastanas mòr oirnn a' toirt taic don riaghaltas is do ghnìomhachas airson an àrainneachd aig muir a chleachdadh gu seasmhach, is sinn a' comharrachadh, a' sgrùdadh is a' cumail comhairle air raointean dìon, agus sinn a' toirt seachad comhairle air buaidh ghnìomhachasan aig muir.

Chùm JNCC taic ri stèidheachadh Ro-innleachd Tèarainteachd Cumhachd Bhreatainn tro fhianais is comhairle air gaoth is dealan-uisge aig muir. Fhreagair JNCC ri co-chomhairle Habitats Regulations Assessment airson a' chiad chuairt Ceadachd Stòradh Carbon Dà-ogsaid aig Muir san RA, agus an 33mh Cuairt Ceadachd Ola is Gas aig Muir. Chùm JNCC cuideachd ìrean seirbheis comhairle bith-iomadachd do Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED) (OPRED) aig Roinn a' Ghnìomhachais, Cumhachd is Ro-innleachd Gnìomhachais (BEIS) air obair-cùise ola is gas.

Rinn JNCC ath-sgrùdadh air molaidhean iasgaich ann an Raointean Dìon Mara na h-Alba (MPA), a tha a' cumail comhairle ri Marine Scotland air co-chòrdalachd nan ceumannan iasgaich a chaidh a mholadh a thaobh slànachadh feartan MPA. Cuiridh a' chomhairle seo ri co-dhùnaidhean air stiùireadh raointean iasgaich. Cuiridh seo, còmhla ri ceumannan ann am pàirtean eile den RA, ri gealltanas eadar-nàiseanta na RA 30by30 air Raointean Dìon Mara a th' air an deagh riaghladh.

Bha JNCC ag obair cuide ri Natural England airson comhairle a leasachadh air ciamar as urrainn do riaghladh iasgaich a bhith soirbheachail mu choinneimh Raointean Dìon is amasan Ìrean Àrainneachail Math nas fharsaing. Chaidh comhairle is taic theicnigeach a thoirt don riaghaltas a tha a' leasachadh

Phlanaichean Riaghlaidh Raointean-Iasgaich, ri linn phlanaichean a libhrigeas builean bith-iomadachd math. Fhreagair JNCC ri iarrtas comhairleachaidh bho Defra air buaidh eag-shiostamach a thaobh cuingealachadh iasgach shìolan ann an uisgeachan Shasainn.

Chuir JNCC, ann an co-bhann le NatureScot, crìoch air an dreach de stiùireadh taghaidh Raointean Àrd-Dìon Mara an Alba agus lean co-chomhairle neo-fhoirmeil le luchd-ùidh is sinn a' feitheamh ri foillseachadh a' cho-chomhairleachaidh phoblaich le Marine Scotland. Bidh seo mar bhunait de phròiseas ioma-bhliadhnail airson Raointean Àrd-Dìon Mara an Alba a shònrachadh is a bhuileachadh an com-pàirteachas le luchd-ùidh ann an Alba.

Stèidhich JNCC, cuide ri Riaghaltas na h-Alba, bùth-obrach dà latha air feadh na RA – *'Exploring an Integrated Approach towards a Sustainable Blue Economy'* – anns an robhar a' bruidhinn air cleachdadh seasmhach de stòrasan a' chuain, agus sùil ri dòighean ùra a shireadh airson co-obrachadh le àrainneachd na mara a tha ìosal a thaobh carban, ìosal a thaobh buaidh agus buadhmhor a thaobh nàdar. Bha a' bhùth-obrach a' toirt a-steach chuspairean leithid brosnachadh ionmhas prìobhaideach airson gluasad eaconamach a dh'ionnsaigh maoineachadh eaconamaidh mara sheasmhach, agus bha cothrom ann coimhead ri co-obrachadh is ùidhean co-roinnte air feadh na RA is air feadh an t-saoghail, a bharrachd air bruidhinn air com-pàirteachasan ùra.

Tìrean Thall Thairis na RA

Tha Tìrean thall thairis na RA beairteach a thaobh bith-iomadachd is geo-iomadachd, is iad a' cur gu mòr ri bith-iomadachd na cruinne, ach tha an iomadachd seo gu tric cugallach is so-leònte. Bidh JNCC a' toirt seachad taic theicnigeach airson taic a chumail ri bhith-iomadachd nan àiteachan agus ro-innleachdan riaghlaidh àrainneachd san fharsaingeachd. Bidh JNCC a' toirt seachad comhairle shaidheansail cuideachd do Riaghaltas na RA air grunn iomairtean poileasaidh is prògraman maoineachaidh co-cheangailte ris na Tìrean Thall Thairis.

Ann an 2022 gu 2023, chaidh JNCC is Defra, an lùib Gairm Fianais (<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/biodiversity-in-the-uk-overseas-territories/uk-overseas-territories-biodiversity-strategy/>) a thug cuireadh do dhaoine le ùidh sa chùis cuideachadh is iad a' dealbhadh ro-innleachd bith-iomadachd Thìrean Thar Thairis na RA a tha san amharc airson dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil i a' coileanadh feumalachdan an dà chuid, nàdar is muinntir nan tìrean; agus aig a' cheart àm, chùm sinn 7 bùithtean-obrach sònraichte le buidhnean neo-riaghaltais (NGO) nan tìrean is na h-àrainneachd.

Chùm JNCC taic ri 6 Tìrean Thall Thairis na RA is sinn a' co-obrachadh airson raointean corail a shlànachadh is a dhìon. Bha obair a' phròiseict seo a' toirt a-steach farsaingeachd de chom-pàirteachadh is conaltradh le luchd-ùidh, a' sònrachadh phrìomhachasan ro-innleachdail is a' cumail taic stiùireadh dàta thar nan sia Tìrean Thall Thairis. Bha an obair a' toirt a-steach sgrùdadh air sgeirean corail is a' làimhseachadh Galar Call Maothran Corail ann an 5 Tìrean Thall Thairis, agus a' leasachadh phlanaichean a fhreagradh ri galar is gealachadh ann an 3 Tìrean Thall Thairis.

Thug JNCC taic seachad do 7 Tìrean Thall Thairis na RA is sinn a' neartachadh an cuid fulangais ro mhòr-thubaistean nàdarra is atharrachadh na gnàth-shìde, mar eisimpleir tro fheuchainn is mapadh fhuasglaidhean nàdarra ann an 4 Tìrean Thall Thairis, a' leasachadh is a' sònrachadh chomharran àrainneachd is eaconamach, mhodailean thuiltean agus mapadh ùr ann an còig Tìrean Thall Thairis. Bha an obair a' toirt a-steach conaltradh farsaing le luchd-ùidh, conaltradh is gnìomhan stiùireadh dàta air feadh nan Tìrean Thall Thairis.

Chùm JNCC taic ri Defra is iad a' foillseachadh an sgeama tabhartais ùr Darwin Plus Local (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/>), airson bhuidhnean is dhaoine ann an Tìrean Thall Thairis na RA a-mhàin. Bidh an sgeama a' maoineachadh phròiseactan àrainneachail beaga airson comasachd a thogail anns na Tìrean agus cur ri eaconamaidhean ionadail. Anns a' chiad chuairt, fhuair an sgeama 61 tagradh is chaidh mu 75% dhiubh sin aontachadh. Bheir seo mu £1.5 millean seachad ann am maoineachadh do phròiseactan ùra anns a' bhliadhna ionmhais 2023 gu 2024 thar nan 13 Tìrean Thall Thairis a rinn tagradh.

Eadar-nàiseanta

'S e JNCC a' bhuidheann chomhairleachaidh glèidhteachais is slànachadh nàdair aig Riaghaltas na RA ann am fòraman eadar-nàiseanta. An cois nan dleastanasan sin, bidh sinn a' toirt comhairle seachad air ciamar a tha an RA a' cur an gnìomh ghnàthasan eadar-nàiseanta co-cheangailte ri bith-iomadachd, leithid a' Chùmhnaint air Bith-iomadachd, agus a' cur bheachdan bho na ceithir dùthchannan san RA ri leasachadh phoileasaidhean eadar-nàiseanta.

Thug JNCC taic shaidheansail luachmhor seachad don bhuidhinn-riochdachaidh fo stiùir Defra gu CITES COP19 (19mh coinneamh de Cho-labhairt nam Pàrtaidhean don Chunnradh air Malairt Eadar-nàiseanta nan Gnèithean ainmhidhean is lusan ann an cunnart). Chaidh gabhail ri 365 co-dhùnaidhean airson dìon a thoirt do ghnèithean fiadh-bheatha ann an cunnart agus aig an aon àm leigeil le malairt eadar-nàiseanta a dhol air adhart.

Bha luchd-obrach JNCC riatanach mar phàirt de phrìomh sgioba co-rèiteachaidh Defra is sinn a' gabhail ri Frèam Bith-iomadachd Cruinneil Kunming-Montreal (GBF) aig CBD COP 15. Chaidh dà chomharra a dhealbhaich JNCC (air èifeachdas riaghlaidh raointean dìon agus buaidh caitheimh air an àrainneachd (<https://commodityfootprints.earth/>) a chur an lùib an Fhrèama Sgrùdaidh airson Frèam Bith-iomadachd Cruinne Kunming-Montreal.

Tha JNCC a' libhrigeadh 10 pròiseactan airson sgudail cheimigeach a lùghdachadh ann an Afraga a Deas fon phròiseact Reducing Pollution through Partnership (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/reducing-pollution-through-partnership/>), a th' air a mhaoineachadh le Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) tro Defra. Bheir na pròiseactan fuasglaidhean gu buil a bhios a' làimhseachadh truailleadh ceimigeach cruaidh is uisgeach, a b' urrainnear leasachadh no a chur an sàs ann an dùthchannan eile le teachd-a-steach ìosal/meadhanach san àm ri teachd. Am measg obair a rinneadh an 2022 is 2023, bhathar a' stèidheachadh aontaidhean le com-pàirtichean san dùthaich, a' tadhal air làraichean airson eòlas a chur air dùbhlanan ionadail is gnìomhan cruinneachadh dàta airson gnìomhan buileachaidh adhbharachadh ann an 2023 gu 2024.

Bha JNCC a' co-obrachadh le dùthchannan com-pàirteach tro Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ocean-country-partnership-programme/>) airson buaidh fhaicsinneach is dhearbhadh a libhrigeadh do bheòshlaint choimhearsnachdan an cois na mara. Am measg na h-obrach sin, rinneadh sgrùdadh air riaghladh àrainneachd mara èifeachdach cuide ri riaghaltasan nan Eileanan Maladaibh is na Beilise, thugadh stiùireadh taic Riaghaltas na RA do Raoin Dìon Mara thar-chrìochan Transa Mara Tropaigeach an Ear (<https://jncc.gov.uk/news/jncc-leads-support-for-the-worlds-largest-trans-national-mpa-network/>), agus thug sinn eòlaichean a Phearù airson cuideachadh a thoirt seachad ri linn cùis èiginneach.

Creideas nar daoine

Ann am meadhan an Fhaoilich, dh'imrich an luchd-obrach stèidhichte ann am Peterborough bho Thaigh Monkstone gu Taigh a' Chidhe - togalach riaghaltais ùr-nodha a chaidh a dhealbhadh airson co-obrachadh. Stèidhich sinn cùmhnantan ri linn shiostaman corporra ùra a tha a' filleadh ghoireasan daonna, ionmhais is dealbhadh dàta airson taic a chumail ri ùrachadh. Lean sinn oirnn a' neartachadh tèarainteachd saidhbeir JNCC is sinn air poileasaidh facal-faire leasaichte a chur an sàs agus dearbhadh ioma-fhactar a stèidheachadh. Thug sinn air adhart stèidheachadh siostam a chuidicheas le bhith a' lorg ghnìomhan neo-àbhaisteach taobh a-staigh an lìonraidh agus chum sinn a' chiad eacarsaich tèarainteachd againn aig an Ionad Tèarainteachd Shaidhbeir Nàiseanta cuide ri daoine cunntachail aig ìre àrd thar JNCC.

Stèidhich sinn comataidh ùr, Comataidh nan Daoine, agus ball den Cho-chomataidh neo-eisimeileach sa chathair, airson dèiligeadh ri cùisean dhaoine gu lèir. Tha a' Chomataidh Thuarastal air ath-stèidheachadh mar fho-bhuidheann de Chomataidh nan Daoine. Tha Comataidh nan Daoine a' cumail sùil air ar cuid obrach air plana gnìomh Suirbhìdh nan Daoine, a tha stèidhichte air pàigheadh is sochairean, uallach obrach, sunnd is slàinte, ionnsachadh is leasachadh, stiùireadh atharrachaidh, adhartas dreuchdail is com-pàirteachadh le Co-chomataidhean.

Am measg atharrachaidhean air Sgioba Àrd-stiùirichean JNCC, leig a' chiad Phrìomh Neach-saidheans againn dhiubh an dreuchd is dh'fhastaich sinn neach airson an dreuchd a lìonadh, is chaidh Ceannard Leasachadh Buidhne ùr fhadth. Leig sinn soraidh slàn le ar Stiùiriche Sgrùdadh is Comhairle Eaconamach, an dèidh crìoch a chur air iomlaid shoirbheachail; is chuir sinn fàilte air na stiùirichean ùra againn air Fianais is Sgrùdadh Eadar-nàiseanta, a' chiad stiùirichean cho-roinnte againn.

Ghabh a' Chomataidh Sgrùdaidh is Measadh Cunnairt os làimh ath-sgrùdadh farsaing air na cleachdaidhean seasmhachd a-staigh againn, is sinn ri sgrùdadh is leasachadh leantainneach air ar pròiseasan seasmhachd. Chaidh ath-sgrùdadh a dhèanamh air na sgrìobhainnean iomchaidh is chaidh sreath de choinneamhan air-loidhne a chumail le buill sgioba airson an cuspair a sgrùdadh is beachdachadh air toraidhean a thàinig am bàrr, agus chaidh aithisg a stèidheachadh air. Thàinig an lèirmheas gu crìoch le caochladh mholaidhean airson leasachadh agus chaidh prògram gnìomh airson an libhrigeadh thar na h-ath bhliadhna ionmhais a stèidheachadh.

Chuir sinn fàilte air an aithisg is na molaidhean an lùib ath-sgrùdadh air co-ionannachd, iomadachd is in-ghabhaltas aig a' Chomataidh Sgrùdaidh is Dearbhadh Cunnairt agus bha sinn toilichte gun tug an aithisg fa-near don atharrachadh ann an cumhachd, gnìomh is rùn. Chaidh cuideam a chur air cho cudromach 's a tha eòlas air sgiobachd san sgrùdadh agus choilean sinn clachan-mìle mòra nar poileasaidhean sgiobachd leis na poileasaidhean ùra an-aghaidh burraidheachd is sàrachadh, agus poileasaidhean menopause. Mar bhuill de Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (<https://www.enei.org.uk>), fhuair JNCC ais-mholaidhean sònraichte mun phlana ghnìomh againn is an aithisg bhunasach bhon uidheam fhèin-luachaidh Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE). Chùm sinn tachartas pannail air Latha Eadar-nàiseanta nam Ban a thaobh #EmbraceEquity. Tha sinn a' sireadh creideas White Ribbon (<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/>), is sinn an lùib Male Allyship Network, mar chomharra air ar dealas airson stad a chur air fòirneart gnè an aghaidh bhoireannach. Thug sinn seachad trèanadh mothachaidh air iomadachd-inntinn air feadh na buidhne airson aire a thoirt air dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, ADHD, autism is Tourette's syndrome.

Bha a' chiad cho-labhairt againn don luchd-obrach gu lèir san t-Sultain air aon de na prìomh thachartasan againn, a thug cothrom do luchd-obrach ceangal às ùr a dhèanamh, beum a chur air ar n-amas coitcheann airson nàdar a shlànachadh, agus ar cuid soirbheachais a chomharrachadh. Bha eileamaidean prataigeach sa cho-labhairt a chaidh a dhealbhadh airson cumhachd a thoirt do ar daoine airson cur ri cruthachadh cultar com-pàirteach.

Tha na dreuchdan againn fhèin nas tlachdmhoire mar thoradh air dealas ar luchd-obrach gu lèir, a tha a cheart cho fìor taobh a-staigh co-labhairt 's a tha sa chòrr den bhliadhna, is sinn uile ag obair còmhla ri chèile airson nàdar.

An t-Oll. Colin Galbraith
(Cathraiche)

Dr. Gemma Harper
(Àrd-oifigear)

Rhagair y Cadeirydd a'r Prif Weithredwr

Yn ystod y flwyddyn ariannol 2022 i 2023, bu i JNCC barhau gyda'u nod o sicrhau bod cadwraeth ac adfer natur wrth wraidd eu gwaith. Bu inni fwrw iddi i godi ein huchelgais, rhoi ein grym cynnull ar waith, cryfhau ein trefn llywodraethu, hybu ein henw da a buddsoddi yn ein pobl er mwyn cynnig tystiolaeth a chyingor gwyddonol o safon i fynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng bioamrywiaeth fyd-eang.

Bu inni ddwyn Cadeiryddion a Phrif Weithredwyr Cyrff Cadwraeth Natur Statudol (SNCBs) y DU ynghyd i fynd rhagddi a chydlynu dull ar y cyd cyn y cytundeb natur fyd-eang fwyaf arwyddocaol mewn degawd – pymthegfed cyfarfod Cynhadledd y Partïon i'r Confensiwn ar Amrywiaeth Fiolegol (CBD COP15). Yn sgil hynny, fe aeth JNCC ati i gynnal digwyddiad llwyddiannus dros ben i lansio datganiad ar y cyd ynghylch adfer natur cyn COP15 (<https://jncc.gov.uk/nature-recovery-joint-statement/>). Roedd yr ymdeimlad o weithredu yn y digwyddiad yn anhygoel, gan daflu goleuni ar JNCC yn ein rôl gynnull. Roedd arbenigedd gwyddonol JNCC yn ganolog i ddirprwyaeth COP15 y DU. Bu i Fframwaith Bioamrywiaeth Fyd-eang Kunming-Montreal gynrychioli 'adeg Paris er natur' a bydd JNCC yn chwarae rhan annatod yn cynghori'r DU, pedair gwlad y DU, Tiriogaethau Tramor y DU a Thiriogaethau Dibynnol y Goron ynghylch mynd ati i gyflawni'r targedau byd-eang newydd.

Yn gyfystyr â hyn, aethom ati i lunio ein strategaeth adfer natur – *Gyda'n Gilydd er Lles Natur 2023 – 2030*, a gaiff ei lansio yn Niwrnod Rhyngwladol y Cenhedloedd Unedig (UN) ar gyfer Amrywiaeth Fiolegol 2023. Mae *Gyda'n Gilydd er Lles Natur* yn ymdrin â'n gweledigaeth, cenhadaeth, blaenoriaethau strategol a gwerthoedd newydd. Lluniwyd *Gyda'n Gilydd er Lles Natur* ar y cyd rhwng staff ac ein Cydbwyllgor ac mae'n cynrychioli ein hegwyddor arweiniol – gan arwain ein hynni, ymdrechion ac ein harbenigedd. Sefydlwyd tri is-grŵp Cydbwyllgor newydd - Cydlyniant y DU, Morol a Rhyngwladol er mwyn cryfhau ein trefn llywodraethu. At hyn, fe sefydlwyd Bwrdd Cyflawni a Sicrwydd JNCC newydd yn ogystal â Byrddau Rhaglenni Cydlyniant y DU, Morol a Rhyngwladol er mwyn datblygu a bwrw iddi gyda'r cynlluniau cyflawni sy'n ategu *Gyda'n Gilydd er Lles Natur*.

Cafodd Grŵp Noddi y DU JNCC, gyda chynrychiolwyr o Adran yr Amgylchedd, Bwyd a Materion Gwledig (Defra), Adran Gogledd Iwerddon dros Amaethyddiaeth, yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig (DAERA), Llywodraeth yr Alban a Llywodraeth Cymru, ei had-drefnu gan gytuno gyda Chynllun Busnes JNCC ar gyfer 2022 i 2023. Ategwyd ein cymorth grant, gan lywodraethau pedair gwlad y DU a Llywodraeth y DU, gan incwm ychwanegol (gan gyrff eraill y llywodraeth yn bennaf). Derbyniodd JNCC gyfanswm o £19.4 miliwn o gyllid ar gyfer y flwyddyn. Cafodd y cyllid hwnnw ei ddefnyddio er mwyn cyflawni rhaglen waith tyngedfennol yn y DU, Tiriogaethau Tramor y DU, Tiriogaethau Dibynnol y Goron ac yn rhyngwladol er mwyn amddiffyn ac adfer natur. Cyfanswm yr arian ychwanegol a dderbyniwyd am waith arall oedd £3.1 miliwn.

Cafodd dogfen fframwaith diwygiedig JNCC ei chytuno arni rhwng Defra, DAERA, Llywodraeth yr Alban, Llywodraeth Cymru a JNCC, yn unol â llawlyfr Trysorlys EM *Rheoli Arian Cyhoeddus* ac fe'i cymeradwywyd gan Drysorlys EM. Mae'r ddogfen fframwaith yn ymdrin â'r fframwaith llywodraethu eang y mae JNCC yn cydymffurfio

ag o ac mae'n disgrifio'r fframwaith llywodraethu ac atebolrwydd sy'n berthnasol i JNCC ac ein harianwyr.

Dyma'r uchafbwyntiau o ran gwaith JNCC yn ystod y flwyddyn ariannol 2022 i 2023.

Cydlyniant y DU

Mae cydlynu a chyfnewid ledled y DU yn caniatáu cipolwg mwy manwl o ran y newidiadau mewn natur i wella polisïau a buddsoddi yn y dyfodol. Mae hefyd yn help i symleiddio'r broses o fodloni rhwymedigaethau adrodd rhyngwladol y DU. Mae gwaith JNCC yn canolbwyntio ar gynnal darlun cyson o sut mae bioamrywiaeth yn newid, ategu ein dealltwriaeth o'r hynny sy'n ysgogi'r newidiadau a chynnig cyngor ar y camau gweithredu i fynd i'r afael â'r rhain.

Bu i JNCC gwblhau'r seithfed Adolygiad Pum Mlynedd o Atodlenni 5 ac 8 Deddf Bywyd Gwyllt a Chefn Gwlad 1981 (QQR) a chyflwyno'i argymhellion i'r llywodraethau. Mae'r dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd fel rhan o'r ymgynghoriad â rhanddeiliaid wedi'i dadansoddi erbyn hyn a'i hymgorffori mewn cyfres o argymhellion o ran gwella Adolygiadau Pum Mlynedd (QQRs) yn y dyfodol. Mae'r rhain yn ymwneud ag argymhellion ynghylch rhywogaethau unigol mewn perthynas ag ychwanegu, cadw, ailraddio neu gael gwared ar y rhywogaethau sydd wedi'u rhestru, ac, os caiff ei fabwysiadu, gallai gyfrannu'n sylweddol tuag at y lefel o waith amddiffyn rhywogaethau gaiff ei gyflawni yn gyffredinol.

Bu i JNCC adolygu ac adnewyddu cynlluniau monitro a gwyliadwriaeth hirdymor blaenllaw er mwyn parhau i fonitro adar, ystlumod, glöynnod byw, planhigion a pheiliaid y DU. Mae'r setiau data hirdymor sy'n deillio o'r cynlluniau hyn yn cefnogi gwneud penderfyniadau o ran polisïau a dwyn ystod amrywiol o arbenigwyr ynghyd i gytuno ar amcanion ymchwil a datblygu ar gyfer y pum mlynedd nesaf. Drwy fanteisio ar y data a'r gwaith adrodd hirdymor sydd ynghlwm â'r cynlluniau, gallwn ddangos y cysylltiadau rhwng amgylchedd naturiol y DU ac ein cyfalaf naturiol yn well – y gwasanaethau ecosystem lle mae'r gymdeithas a'r economi yn elwa.

Cyhoeddodd JNCC ddatganiad Monitro Safonau Cyffredin diwygiedig ar ran y Gweithgor Rhyng-Asiantaeth Monitro Safonau Cyffredin (<https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/0450edfd-a56b-4f65-aff6-3ef66187dc81>). Mae'r Datganiad diwygiedig (2019, a ddiweddarwyd yn ddiweddarach yn 2022) yn diffinio'r safonau cyffredin, yn cefnogi gwaith monitro cyffredol, yn crynhoi'r dulliau cyffredol tuag at fonitro ardaloedd gwarchoddedig ac yn awgrymu gweithdrefnau dichonol ar gyfer Monitro Safonau Cyffredinol, gan sicrhau hefyd eu bod yn cydymffurfio gyda set o safonau cyffredin. Mae'r safonau hyn yn hollbwysig er mwyn sicrhau cysondeb mewn asesiadau ledled y DU i ddeall y newidiadau'n well ynghyd â'r hynny sy'n eu hysgogi.

Bu i JNCC barhau i gydweithio gyda phedair gwlad y DU er mwyn pennu sut byddai modd mynd ati i adolygu a diwygio ardaloedd gwarchoddedig. O ganlyniad, fe ffurfiwyd Grŵp Rhyng-Asiantaeth Ardaloedd Gwarchoddedig newydd ac maen nhw wrthi'n gweithio ar ddatganiad ar y cyd, a gaiff ei gyhoeddi yn 2023, ynghylch egwyddorion ar gyfer ardaloedd gwarchoddedig. Mae'r grŵp hefyd yn gyfrifol am nodi lle mae angen cydweithio er mwyn adnabod a mynd i'r afael gyda gofynion tystiolaeth ar y cyd i ategu rhwydwaith addasol yn y DU o ardaloedd gwarchoddedig,

a datblygu dulliau monitro ar gyfer rhwydwaith a allai fod wedi'i ail-bwrpasu a'i ehangu.

Aeth JNCC ati i weithio ar adnodd prawf newydd (Gwasanaeth Asesu Llygredd Aer, neu UK AERIUS gynt) ar gyfer asesu risg effeithiau llygredd aer ar ecosystemau yn y DU er mwyn llywio penderfyniadau a gofynion adrodd statudol. Unwaith y bydd y Gwasanaeth Asesu Llygredd Aer ar waith, mae'n amcangyfrif yn geidwadol y bydd yn arbed o leiaf £3.5 miliwn y flwyddyn i asiantaethau a defnyddwyr y DU yn seiliedig ar arbedion amser ar gyfer asesu, gwneud penderfyniadau a chynghor i amddiffyn yr amgylchedd yn well rhag effeithiau llygredd aer. Bydd yr adnodd yn fodd o sicrhau newid sylweddol yn y modd caiff ffynonellau tarthiadau eu modelu'n fwyfwy a'r wybodaeth sydd ar gael i gynnal asesiadau 'ar y cyd'.

Morol y DU

Mae JNCC yn gyfrifol dros gadwraeth natur yn yr amgylchedd morol alltraeth. Mae'r amgylchedd yn gartref i ystod amrywiol o gynefinoedd, a nifer o rywogaethau pwysig. At hynny, mae'n annatod i sawl agwedd o lesiant pobl, megis cyflenwi bwyd ac ynni, a rheoleiddio'r hinsawdd fyd-eang. Rydym yn chwarae rhan allweddol yn cefnogi'r llywodraeth a'r diwydiant i ddefnyddio'r amgylchedd alltraeth yn gynaliadwy, gan gynnwys drwy adnabod, monitro a chynghori ynghylch ardaloedd gwarchoddedig, a drwy gynnig cynghor ynghylch effeithiau diwydiannau alltraeth.

Bu i JNCC ategu gweithredu'r Strategaeth Diogelu Ynni'r DU drwy eu gwaith tystiolaeth a chynghor ar wynt alltraeth a hydrocarbonau. Ymatebodd JNCC i'r ymgynghoriad Asesiad Rheoliadau Cynefinoedd ar gyfer Rownd Trwyddedu Storio Deuocsid Carbon cyntaf y DU a'r 33ain Rownd Trwyddedu Olew a Nwy Alltraeth. Bu i JNCC hefyd gynnal ei safonau gwasanaeth cynghor bioamrywiaeth ar gyfer Rheoleiddiwr Petrolewm Alltraeth ar gyfer yr Amgylchedd a Datgomisiynu (OPRED) yr Adran Busnes, Ynni a Strategaeth Ddiwydiannol (BEIS) mewn perthynas â gwaith achos olew a nwy.

Cynhaliodd JNCC adolygiad ar gynigion pysgodfeydd Ardaloedd Gwarchoddedig Morol yr Alban (MPA), sy'n cynnig cynghor i Scotland Marine ynghylch cydnawsedd mesurau pysgodfeydd arfaethedig ag adfer nodweddion MPA. Bydd y cynghor hwn yn hwyluso penderfyniadau ynghylch ymyriadau rheoli pysgodfeydd. Gan ddwyn y rhain i ystyriaeth ar y cyd â'r mesurau mewn rhannau eraill yn y DU, bydd y rhain yn cyfrannu tuag at ymrwymiad rhyngwladol 30erbyn30 y DU ynghylch Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig sydd wedi'u rheoli'n effeithiol.

Aeth JNCC ati i gydweithio gyda Natural England i bennu cynghor ynghylch sut gallai rheoli pysgodfeydd ategu amcanion MPA a Statws Amgylcheddol Da ehangach. Cynigwyd cynghor a chymorth technegol i'r llywodraeth gyda datblygu Cynlluniau Rheoli Pysgodfeydd, gyda'r nod o lunio cynlluniau sy'n cyflawni deilliannau bioamrywiaeth cadarnhaol. Ymatebodd JNCC hefyd i gais cynghor yn ystod y flwyddyn gan Defra ynghylch effeithiau ar yr ecosystem yn sgil cyfyngu pysgodfeydd sandeel yn nyfroedd Lloegr.

Fe gwblhaodd JNCC ddrafft o ganllawiau dewis Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig lawn i'r Alban ar y cyd â Nature Scot. At hynny bu i JNCC barhau gydag ymgynghoriad anffurfiol gyda rhanddeiliaid wrth inni aros i Marine Scotland lansio'r

ymgyngoriad cyhoeddus. Bydd hyn yn sail i broses aml-flynyddol i nodi a dynodi Ardaloedd Morol Gwarchoddedig lawn yn yr Alban gyda chymorth gan randdeiliaid o'r Alban.

Aeth JNCC rhagddi i gynnal gweithdy deuddydd ledled y DU ar y cyd â Llywodraeth yr Alban – ‘Archwilio Dull Integredig tuag at Economi Las Cynaliadwy’ – a fu'n ymdrin â'r defnydd cynaliadwy o adnoddau morol, gyda'r nod o geisio ffyrdd newydd o weithio gyda'r amgylchedd morol sy'n garbon isel, yn isel ei effaith ac sydd â chyfoeth o natur. Bu'r gweithdy yn ymwneud â phynciau ar gymell buddsoddiad preifat i ariannu gwaith pontio i greu economi morol cynaliadwy, a chynnig cyfle i fwrw golwg ar synergeddau a buddion ar y cyd ledled y DU ac yn rhyngwladol, ynghyd ag er mwyn trafod partneriaethau a chyfleoedd cydweithio newydd.

Tiriogaethau Tramor y DU

Mae gan Dirioogaethau Tramor y DU gyfoeth o fioamrywiaeth a geoamrywiaeth, gan gyfrannu'n sylweddol tuag at fioamrywiaeth fyd-eang. Fodd bynnag, mae'r amrywiaeth hwn hefyd yn fregus ac yn agored i niwed. Mae JNCC yn cynnig cymorth technegol i gefnogi bioamrywiaeth y Tiriogaethau a strategaethau rheoli amgylcheddol ehangach. At hyn, mae JNCC yn cynnig cyngor gwyddonol i Lywodraeth y DU ar amryw o fentrau polisïau a rhaglenni ariannu sy'n gysylltiedig â'r Tiriogaethau Tramor.

Yn ystod 2022 hyd at 2023, fy gyflawnodd JNCC Alwad am Dystiolaeth ar y cyd â Defra, (<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/biodiversity-in-the-uk-overseas-territories/uk-overseas-territories-biodiversity-strategy/>) gan estyn gwahoddiad i'r holl bartïon sydd â diddordeb i helpu llywio'r strategaeth bioamrywiaeth newydd i Dirioogaethau Tramor y DU sydd ar y gweill er mwyn sicrhau ei fod yn diwallu anghenion natur a phreswylwyr y Tiriogaethau; ac yn gyfochr â hynny bu iddyn nhw gynnal 7 gweithdy pwrpasol gyda thiriogaethau a Chyrrff Anllywodraethol (NGOs) Amgylcheddol.

Cefnogodd JNCC 6 o Dirioogaethau Tramor y DU er mwyn cyflawni dull cydweithredol i adfer a diogelu riffiau cwrel. Roedd gwaith ynghlwm â'r prosiect hwn yn ymwneud ag ymgysylltu a chyfathrebu helaeth gyda rhanddeiliaid, blaenoriaethu strategol a chymorth rheoli data ledled y chwe Thiriogaeth Tramor. Roedd hefyd yn ymwneud â monitro riffiau cwrel a thrin Clefyd Colli Meinwe Cwrel Caregog mewn 5 Tiriogaeth Tramor, a datblygu cynlluniau ymateb i glefydau a channu gyda 3 Tiriogaeth Tramor.

Fe wnaeth JNCC gynnig cymorth i 7 o Dirioogaethau Tramor y DU gyda chryfhau eu gwydnwch yn erbyn trychinebau naturiol a newid mewn hinsawdd, gan gynnwys treialu a mapio atebion sy'n seiliedig ar natur mewn 4 Tiriogaeth Tramor, datblygu a mireinio dangosyddion amgylcheddol ac economeg, modelau llifogydd a mapio pridd mewn pum Tiriogaeth Tramor. Fel rhan o'r gwaith roedd angen ymwneud yn helaeth gyda rhanddeiliaid, cyfathrebu a gweithgareddau rheoli data ledled y Tiriogaethau Tramor.

Fe gefnogodd JNCC lansiad Defra o'r cynllun grant newydd Darwin Plus Local (<https://darwinplus.org.uk/>), sy'n arbennig ar gyfer mudiadau ac unigolion yn Nhiriogaethau Tramor y DU. Mae'r cynllun yn ariannu prosiectau amgylcheddol graddfa fach i gynyddu eu capasiti yn y Tiriogaethau a chyfrannu tuag at economïau lleol. Yn y rownd gyntaf, fe dderbyniodd y cynllun 61 o geisiadau ac fe gafodd

oddeutu 75% eu cymeradwyo. Bydd hyn yn darparu bron i £1.5 miliwn o gyllid tuag at brosiectau newydd yn ystod y flwyddyn ariannol o 2023 i 2024 ledled y 13 o Dirioogaethau Tramor y DU a wnaeth ymgeisio.

Rhyngwladol

Mae JNCC yn gynghorydd statudol cadwraeth ac adfer natur statudol ar ran Llywodraeth y DU mewn fforymau rhyngwladol. Fel rhan o'r rôl honno, rydym yn cynghori ar waith y DU i weithredu confensiynau rhyngwladol sy'n ymwneud â bioamrywiaeth, megis y Gynhadledd ar Fioamrywiaeth Fiolegol, ac yn bwrw ymlaen â safbwyntiau'r pedair gwlad yn y DU i lywio gwaith datblygu polisiau rhyngwladol.

Fe ddarparodd JNCC gymorth gwyddonol gwerth chweil i'r ddirprwyaeth dan ofal Defra ar gyfer CITES COP19 (19eg cyfarfod Cynhadledd y Partïon i'r Confensiwn ar Fasnach Ryngwladol mewn Rhywogaethau ffawna a fflora sydd Mewn Perygl). Cafodd swm sylweddol o 365 o benderfyniadau eu mabwysiadu er mwyn diogelu rhywogaethau bywyd gwyllt dan fygythiad gan ganiatáu masnach ryngwladol ar yr un pryd.

Bu i JNCC chwarae rhan allweddol, fel rhan o dîm trin a thrafod craidd Defra, wrth fabwysiadu Fframwaith Bioamrywiaeth Byd-eang Kunming-Montreal yn y Confensiwn ar Amrywiaeth Biolegol Cynhadledd y Partïon (CBD COP 15). Cafodd dau ddangosydd oedd wedi'u datblygu gan JNCC (ar effeithiolrwydd rheoli ardaloedd gwarchoddedig ac effeithiau defnydd ar yr amgylchedd (<https://commodityfootprints.earth/>) eu cynnwys fel rhan o'r Fframwaith Monitro ar gyfer Fframwaith Bioamrywiaeth Fyd-eang Kunming-Montreal.

Mae JNCC yn cyflawni 10 prosiect lliniaru gwastraff cemegol yn Ne Affrica ynghlwm â'r prosiect Lleihau Llygredd drwy Gydweithio (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/reducing-pollution-through-partnership/>), sydd wedi'i ariannu gan Cymorth Datblygu Tramor (ODA) drwy Defra. Bydd y prosiectau'n cynnig datrysiadau graddadwy i reoli halogiad cemegol solet a dŵr y gellir ei ddatblygu ymhellach neu ei roi ar waith mewn gwledydd incwm isel i ganolig eraill yn y dyfodol. Fel rhan o'r gwaith a gyflawnwyd yn 2022 i 2023, cafodd cytundebau eu llunio gyda phartneriaid o'r wlad, cynhaliwyd ymweliadau safle i ddeall yr heriau lleol ac fe gyflawnwyd gweithgareddau casglu data er mwyn cynnal gweithgareddau gweithredu yn ystod 2023 i 2024.

Bu i JNCC gydweithio gyda gwledydd partner drwy'r Rhaglen Bartneriaeth Ocean Country (OCPP: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ocean-country-partnership-programme/>) er mwyn cyflawni effeithiau diriaethol a chadarnhaol ar fywoliaeth cymunedau arfordirol. Fel rhan o'r gwaith bu iddyn nhw archwilio rheolaeth amgylcheddol morol effeithiol gyda llywodraethau'r Maldives a Belize, arwain cefnogaeth Llywodraeth y DU i Ardal Warchoddedig Morol trawsffiniol Coridor Morol Trofannol y Dwyrain (<https://jncc.gov.uk/news/jncc-leads-support-for-the-worlds-largest-trans-national-mpa-network/>), a darparu arbenigwyr i gynorthwyo Peru yn ystod argyfwng.

Buddsoddi yn ein pobl

Yng nghanol mis Ionawr, bu ein staff oedd yn gweithio yn Peterborough symud o Monkstone House i Quay House – adeilad llywodraeth modern sydd wedi'i dylunio ar gyfer cydweithio. I ategu'r gwaith moderneiddio, bu inni fabwysiadu systemau corfforedig newydd sy'n integreiddio adnoddau dynol a data, prosesau ac adrodd ariannol a chynllunio. Bu inni barhau i gryfhau seiberddiogelwch JNCC drwy gyflawni polisi cyfrinair uwch a gweithredu proses ddilysu aml-ffactor. Bu inni fwrw iddi gyda rhoi system ar waith a fyddai'n helpu datgelu gweithgarwch anarferol yn y rhwydwaith. At hyn, bu inni gynnal ein hymarfer diogelwch Canolfan Seiberddiogelwch Cenedlaethol cyntaf un gydag uwch unigolion cyfrifol o bob adran JNCC.

Bu inni sefydlu Pwyllgor Pobl newydd, wedi'i gadeirio gan aelod Cydbwyllgor annibynnol, er mwyn ymdrin â'r ystod gyflawn o faterion sy'n ymwneud â phobl. Fe ailgyfansoddwyd y Pwyllgor Cydnabyddiaeth Ariannol fel is-grŵp o'r Pwyllgor Pobl. Mae'r Pwyllgor Pobl yn gyfrifol am oruchwylio ein gwaith ar y cynllun gweithredu Arolwg Pobl, sy'n canolbwyntio ar dâl a buddion, llwyth gwaith, lles ac iechyd, dysgu a datblygu, rheoli newid, cynnydd mewn gyrfa ac ymwneud gyda'r Cydbwyllgor.

Bu newidiadau i'r Tîm Arwain Gweithredol ac ymysg y rheiny oedd ymddeoliad ein Prif Wyddonydd cyntaf a recriwtio olynnydd, a recriwtio Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol newydd. Bu inni hefyd ffarwelio gydag ein Cyfarwyddwr Dadansoddi Economaidd, yn dilyn secondiad llwyddiannus; at hyn bu inni groesawu ein cyfarwyddwyr Tystiolaeth a Dadansoddi rhyngwladol newydd, ein cyfarwyddwyr cyntaf i rannu swydd.

Fel rhan o'n gwaith parhaus i adolygu a gwella ein prosesau cynladwyedd, aeth ein Pwyllgor Archwilio a Sicrwydd Risg ati i gyflawni adolygiad cynhwysfawr (trylwyr) o'n harferion cynladwyedd mewnol. Cafodd y dogfennau perthnasol eu hadolygu ac fe gynhaliwyd cyfres o gyfarfodydd rhithiol gydag aelodau'r tîm i archwilio'r pwnc a thrafod y canfyddiadau cychwynnol er mwyn llunio adroddiad yn y pen draw. Daeth yr adolygiad i gasgliad gyda chyfres o argymhellion ar gyfer gwella ac mae rhaglen gweithredu wedi'i roi ar waith er mwyn cyflawni'r rhain yn ystod y flwyddyn ariannol nesaf.

Bu inni hefyd groesawu adroddiad ac argymhellion ymgyrch cydraddoldeb, amrywioldeb a chynhwysiant y Pwyllgor Archwilio a Sicrwydd Risg ac roedd yn bleser gennym ni weld y newid mewn ynni, gweithrediadau a bwriad yn yr adroddiad. Pwysleisiwyd pwysigrwydd meddu ar arbenigedd mewn adnoddau dynol (AD) yn ystod yr ymgyrch ac fe wnaethon ni lwyddo i gyflawni cerrig milltir sylweddol yn ein polisiâu AD gyda'r polisiâu gwrth-fwlio ac aflonyddu a darfyddiad mislif newydd. Fel aelodau o'r Rhwydwaith Cyflogwyr ar gyfer Cydraddoldeb a Chynhwysiant (<https://www.enei.org.uk/>) derbyniodd JNCC adborth arbenigol ynghylch ein cynllun gweithredu a'r adroddiad sylfaenol gan yr adnodd meincnodi hunanwerthuso Cynhwysiant Talent a Gwerthuso Amrywiaeth (TIDE). Bu inni gynnal digwyddiad panel ar Ddiwrnod Rhyngwladol y Merched ar #EmbraceEquity. Fel rhan o'r Rhwydwaith Cynghreiriaid Dynion, rydym yn ymdrechu i ennill achrediad Rhuban Wen cysylltiedig (<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/>), i gydnabod ein hymrwymiad i roi diwedd i drais ar sail rhywedd yn erbyn merched. Bu inni gynnis hyfforddiant ymwybyddiaeth o niwroamrywiaeth i'r mudiad cyfan a oedd yn cynnis trosolwg er

mwyn gwella ymwybyddiaeth am dyslecsia, dyspracsia, dyscalculia, camysgrifennu (dysgraphia), anhwylder diffyg canolbwyntio a gorfywiogrwydd (ADHD), awtistiaeth a syndrom Tourette's.

Un o brif uchafbwyntiau'r flwyddyn oedd ein cynhadledd staff cyntaf erioed ym mis Medi, lle'r oedd cyfle i staff ailgysylltu, canolbwyntio ar ein nod ar y cyd ar gyfer adfer natur a dathlu ein llwyddiannau. Roedd agweddau ymarferol ynghlwm â'r gynhadledd hefyd oedd â'r diben o rymuso ein pobl i gyfrannu tuag at greu diwylliant hollgynhwysol.

Mae brwdfrydedd ac ymrwymiad ein holl staff, a oedd yn amlwg nid yn unig yn y gynhadledd ond drwy gydol y flwyddyn hefyd, gan gydweithio er lles natur, yn sicrhau bod ein rolau'n fwy buddiol fyth.

Yr Athro Colin Galbraith
(Cadeirydd)

Dr Gemma Harper
(Prif Weithredwr)

**Directors' Report
For the year ended 31 March 2023**

JNCC Support Co Company number: 05380206 (England and Wales)

Peterborough office and registered office

Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Quay House, 2 East Station Road, Peterborough, PE2 8YY
Tel: +44 (0) 1733 562626

Aberdeen office

Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Inverdee House, Baxter Street, Aberdeen, AB11 9QA
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 266564

Email: feedback@jncc.gov.uk

Web: <https://jncc.gov.uk>

Senior staff in 2022 to 2023

Chief Executive	Dr G Harper
Director of Finance and Resources	Mr D Collins
Chief Scientist	Professor CA Maggs (retired 30 November 2022) Mr D Stone (appointed 1 March 2023)
Director of Marine Evidence and Advice	Dr JC Goold
Director of Ecosystem Evidence and Advice	Dr S Wilkinson
Directors of International Evidence and Advice	Ms B Stoker and Mrs N Askew (appointed 3 October 2022)
Director of Economics	Dr M Konar (resigned 17 February 2023)

Company directors in 2022 to 2023

Professor MCV Austen
Mr CER Banner
Rt Hon Lord Blencathra
Mr DP Collins (appointed 7 November 2022)
Ms CS Denholm
Professor CA Galbraith
Dr GC Harper
Professor RS Hails (appointed 04 April 2022, resigned 19 April 2022)
Sir DG Henshaw
Professor P Higgins (appointed 6 November 2022)
Dr AH Kirkpatrick (resigned 28 February 2023)
Ms AA Martin
Professor TR Meagher (appointed 4 April 2022)
Dr JD Orford

Professor SJ Ormerod
Professor EM Scott (resigned 1 June 2022)
Professor DM Winter (resigned 1 August 2022)

Company secretary
Mr David Collins

Donations

There were no political or charitable donations made in the financial year ending 31 March 2023 (year ended 31 March 2022 - £nil).

Data security

In the year to 31 March 2023, there were no data breaches reportable to the ICO and hence there were no resultant penalties or financial impacts. Further information regarding information management has been included in Section 12 of the Governance report.

There were no incidences of fraud or attempted fraud identified or reported in the year.

Results and dividends

The Company has no share capital and consequently the question of the payment of a dividend does not arise. Any surplus at the year-end is transferred to the forthcoming year and applied to meet the objectives of the company.

Directors' interests

As the company has no share capital, directors have no rights to subscribe for additional shares or debentures.

The Articles of Association do not require any of the directors to retire by rotation. However, directors must retire if they are no longer members of the company. A member will cease to be a member of the company if they cease to be a member of the Joint Committee.

A register of the interests of all Company Board members is held by the Company Secretary and may be viewed by request to cosec@jncc.gov.uk.

Pension liabilities

Full details of pension liabilities and their accounting treatment are given in the accounting policies note.

Auditors

Following the passing of the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 (Audit of Non-profit-making Companies) Order 2009 the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) is empowered to audit JNCC Support Co's financial statements. The C&AG's certificate and report (Auditors' Report) commence on **page 84**. The audit fee charged in the Profit and Loss Account was £29.5k (2022: £24.5k) which reflects the NAO fee for the external audit for the financial year. The auditor received no fees for non-audit services. The GIAA Internal audit fees for the year were £35.8k (2022: £23.0k).

The Directors confirm that:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the auditor is unaware; and
- They have taken all the steps they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that JNCC's auditor is aware of that information.

Dr G Harper
Chief Executive
On behalf of the board of directors
Date

Strategic Report

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2023. This report should be read in conjunction with the Governance Statement commencing on page 49 and the Directors' report commencing on page 21.

JNCC Support Co

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) is the statutory adviser to the UK Government and devolved administrations on UK and international nature conservation.

JNCC, originally established under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, was reconstituted by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. JNCC Support Co is a company limited by guarantee established in 2005 whose principal activity is the provision of support to JNCC.

The Joint Committee comprises 14 members: a Chair and five independent members appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; the Chair of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (Northern Ireland); the Chair or Deputy Chair of Natural Resources Wales, Natural England and NatureScot; and one other member from each of these bodies. The term of appointments for the Chair and independent members is initially for three years. Members from the UK Country nature conservation bodies may continue as members of the Committee as long as they retain their membership of the Councils or Boards of their respective bodies.

Support is provided to the Joint Committee by the JNCC Support Co, a Company limited by guarantee. The Company Board consists of the Joint Committee members and the Chief Executive. The Committee has adopted the Guidance on Codes of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies issued by the Cabinet Office, for the purposes of corporate governance.

JNCC Support Co is funded primarily by grant in aid, with additional monies received for other work related to non-core activities.

The total budget for JNCC's core activities is set each year by Ministers of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) after consultation and in agreement with their Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish counterparts. Additionally, the Committee agrees longer-term financial plans related to its non-core activity.

JNCC exists because, while UK environmental policy is devolved, ecological systems do not respect geographical or political boundaries. As an impartial scientific authority JNCC will continue to work with the UK's country nature conservation bodies (the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (Northern Ireland), Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and NatureScot) to advise governments across the UK on nature conservation and recovery. On the international stage, the UK needs to be able to assess the state and change of nature at a UK level in a consistent and scientifically robust way for effective international negotiations and credible global leadership. JNCC will continue to have a leading role in this.

JNCC delivers the UK and international responsibilities of the UK's country nature conservation bodies.

Over the last year we have been developing a new strategy for nature recovery– 'Together for Nature 2023 – 2030'. This new strategy was launched in May 2023 but we have been

transitioning our planned activities and outputs over the last year towards this new approach while continuing to support the four themes covered in our previous strategy:

- Assessing environmental status in the UK
- Supporting better decisions (for decision makers within the UK, in the UK's Overseas Territories and internationally).
- Influencing international action
- Advising on offshore management

The strategic priorities of our renewed strategy are to:

- Use our scientific expertise to facilitate a collective response to the global biodiversity crisis.
- Use our trusted expertise and judgement to evaluate effectiveness of existing policies and advise on the design of new policies and action to progress nature recovery.
- Lead the discussion to align action for nature and climate change to deliver outcomes that tackle climate breakdown and accelerate nature recovery.
- Continue to innovate and advance our learning on nature recovery so that science, technology and new digital knowledge are applied to drive positive environmental outcomes.
- Work collaboratively to support the transition to sustainable blue/green economies, linking nature recovery to economic prosperity and societal wellbeing.
- Seek opportunities to integrate the value of nature into decision-making by mainstreaming nature recovery into social and economic policy areas.
- Invest in our people and culture to ensure an inclusive, collaborative and innovative learning organisation, where staff wellbeing is prioritised and our partners are engaged and respected.

Budget

The budget for 2022 to 2023 comprised two parts:

Core activities

Grant in aid for JNCC's core activities is from four sources:

- UK co-ordination work funded through Natural England, NatureScot and Natural Resources Wales (the GB conservation bodies) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, for work which applies across the UK including UK marine waters, for example development of common guidelines, standards and tools and UK-level co-ordination;
- Funding provided by Defra for work relating to territories outside of the UK and work in support of, or on behalf of, UK Government in contributing to international, European or regional bodies;
- Funding provided by Defra for operational work in offshore waters (beyond 12 nautical miles); and
- Governance and corporate services, funded by all funding bodies, in proportion to their contributions to the other three funding streams.

Under the provisions of the Government's alignment process, all JNCC's grant in aid, including that funded by devolved administrations through the UK conservation bodies, is

channelled through Defra and therefore counts towards Defra's Departmental Expenditure Limit. Internal organisation structures and governance arrangements reflect these 4 sources of funding while retaining flexibility to deploy resources to respond effectively to priority outcomes.

Non-core activities

Non-core activities are funded from a range of sources, including from EU grants and royalties and fees. Financial plans and risks related to such activities are reported on a quarterly basis.

Funding, which is usually linked to specific projects, is detailed in the accounts.

Risks

Overall responsibility for risk lies with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee with the support and advice of its sub-committees. Principally the **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee** (ARAC) monitors JNCC's corporate governance and control systems and advises the Joint Committee on internal and external audit matters, risk, and governance in JNCC. In 2022 ARAC revised its terms of reference to include additional responsibilities in providing the Joint Committee with assurances on JNCC's financial management and resilience. Over this period the establishment of a new People Committee allowed for the transfer of most people related risks to the new committee.

Responsibility for the effective management of risk within JNCC rests with the Executive Leadership Team, with leadership of the risk management process provided by the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. Effective risk management and governance is critical to the ability of JNCC to achieve its objectives and manage the risks it faces. Any significant risks identified by management considered likely to affect the performance of the business have been reported as part of the Governance Statement commencing on [page 49](#) of this report.

Review of business

During the financial year ending 31 March 2023, the company made a significant contribution to nature conservation on both the national and international stages through an extensive and varied programme of work. 19 of the 25 success measures relating to priority objectives set in our annual business plan were fully achieved, and substantial progress was made on the 6 remaining objectives with completion anticipated during 2023/24. Further details of our performance against our planned outputs are given on [pages 30 to 35](#).

This consistent and sustained level of performance and the wide recognition of JNCC's unique perspective and technical capability has resulted in a further increase in revenue over the course of this year. Overall revenue has increased to £22.5m (from £20.1m in 2022). While [Note 7](#) to the accounts shows that the average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff increased from 239 in 2022 to 264 in 2023, demand for services continues to outstrip the pace at which we have been able to increase workforce capacity. The launch of the new strategy along with plans to improve prioritisation and workforce planning will aim to address workforce pressures over the medium term. In the meantime, staff have continued to report levels of pressure and stress beyond tolerable levels. Added to this staff have expressed increasing concerns about levels of pay and other benefits amid an extended period of elevated inflation levels in the wider economy. While we have taken action to provide additional support where possible, management concerns about staff morale and wellbeing have increased over the year. Over the final quarter of the year Trade Unions representing staff at all levels across JNCC balloted for and carried out a single day of strike action and action short of a strike over an extended period.

JNCC manages both its core and non-core activities closely, evaluating the extent to which value for money has been achieved and costing, where practicable, its activities according to its strategic outcomes.

JNCC plans to operate on a break-even basis, recovering all costs in line with Managing Public Money, for activities related to its statutory responsibilities and core functions in supporting UK Governments. Cash-flow forecasting largely mirrors its budgeted funding profile. Activities supported by income from wider markets including commercial entities are planned on the basis of a fair commercial rate providing opportunities to pump-prime future activity and to enhance JNCC's financial resilience and ability to withstand, to an extent, decreases in grant in aid funding.

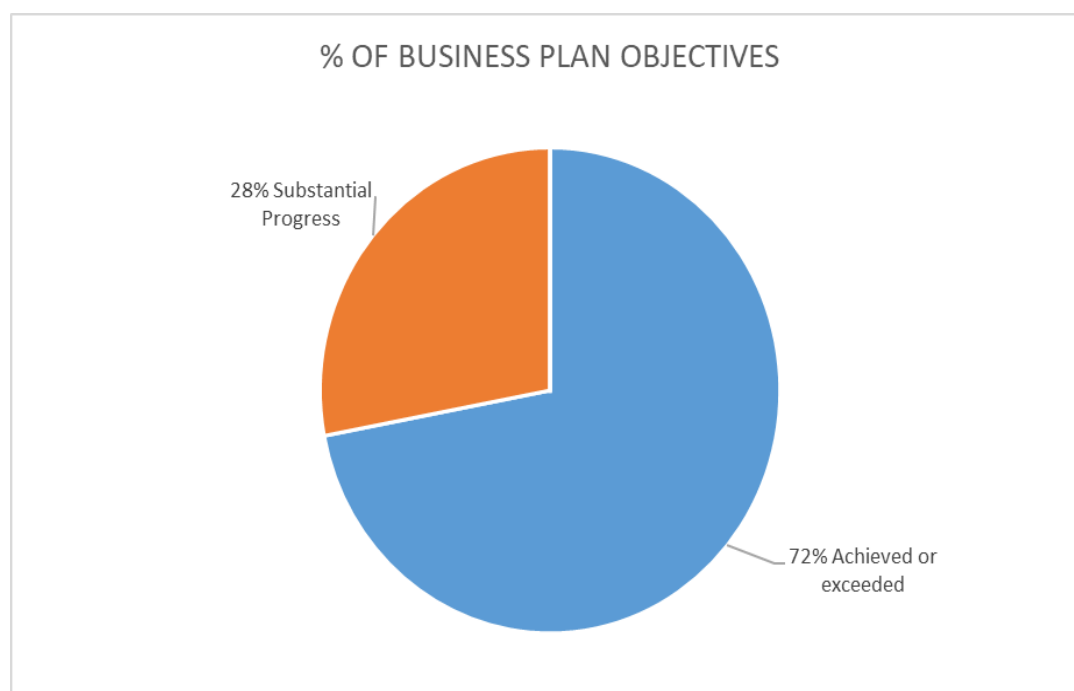
JNCC works closely with Defra's financial control and management processes to provide updated income and expenditure forecasts throughout the year. Through the second half of the year analysis from projects and programmes across JNCC indicated a potential underspend of up to £1,000k. In order to manage this forecast underspend to reasonable level JNCC management took the decision in the final quarter of the year to utilise the flexibility of Defra's forecasting tool to reduce its year-end Grant-in-aid requirements by around the value of the forecast underspend. In preparing its final accounts JNCC identified a late movement in forecast salary costs resulting from an underestimate in the calculation of holiday pay accruals. As a result of these movements for the year-ending 31 March 2023 the company made a deficit on ordinary activities of £325k (compared to a surplus on ordinary activities of £1,035k in 2022). This has reduced the reserves balance to £2,565k as at 31 March 2023 (£2,890k as at 31 March 2022). The deficit recorded this year is not a structural gap in JNCC's ability to cover its costs and so is not expected to recur in future years. However JNCC is taking steps to review and improve its financial management capability through a renewed focus on planning, budget setting and forecasting accuracy with project managers and budget holders assigned new and additional dedicated finance business partners from the start of 2023/24.

Performance Report - Summary

Business Plan Objectives 2022/2023

Business Plan Objective Ratings	Description	Number of performance measures reporting in this category at end of year
Green	Achieved or exceeded	19
Amber	Substantial progress made with full achievement anticipated early in 2023/2024	6
Red	Limited progress	0
Black	Deferred or dropped	0

JNCC summary



Performance Report - Detail

This section gives further details of our performance against our planned outputs on a programme-by-programme basis.

Programme: UK co-ordination

Business Plan Objectives

[i] Plan for delivering UK nature recovery with metrics for assessing progress
[ii] Refreshed indicators of biodiversity (state and change) at UK and country scales available to evaluate emerging environmental policies
[iii] JNCC's relevance and interaction with the four countries are strengthened, developing key areas where JNCC's expertise and resources can be applied

[iv] Contractual arrangements for species surveillance schemes are maintained and a set of updated metrics providing status and trends for a broad range of species are published
[v] Recommendations from the Quinquennial Review of Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 delivered as advice to Defra, Welsh Government and Scottish Government
[vi] International commitments regarding protected areas are met by working with countries; understanding of management of protected area networks has evolved within climate change and land use strategies
[vii] UK partners' improved evidence base for assessing and managing the impacts of air pollution on biodiversity enables streamlining of decision-making
[viii] Key evidence gaps to enable more sustainable use of the marine environment are identified through engagement with marine industry leads and CNCBs (Marine Industries Groups)
[ix] Evidence and modelling approaches are developed to help countries deliver biodiversity and multiple environmental priorities through land use change
[x] Assessment of the potential to combine public and private finance to fund the recovery of biodiversity including recommendations on how JNCC could better support blended finance

Key deliverables

BPO number	Key deliverables	Year end rating
i	UKBF published (Q2). UK Implementation Plan (Q4). Establishment of and set of deliverables from SNCB NR 2030 group to be added. Carrying out a review and delivering a set of recommendations for how Earth Observation (EO) can be used for reporting on 30 x 30. Reporting on a subset of marine biodiversity indicators.	Amber
ii	UK biodiversity indicators: Produce interim report in December 2022 on review of indicators for post 2020 targets and strategies for conclusion in 2023/24 (delay of CBD CoP means this part of the review is no longer possible on the initially planned timescale). Propose by end March 2023 a revised set of UK biodiversity indicators to report against the new global biodiversity framework. Publish by end December 2022 a reduced set of existing UK biodiversity indicators to be completed.	Green
iii	Support JNCC's collaborative work, spot new opportunities, build relationships and identify priorities for UK Co-ordination work planning and opportunities for bilateral work by engaging at least 3 times per year with country liaison groups, through the secretariat function for Chief Scientist Group. Maintain and update summaries of environmental legislation & policy quarterly; share country news & updates with JNCC staff and build JNCC's relationship with the environmental governance bodies. Build capability across the UK in the area of chemicals and air pollution.	Green
iv	All negotiations from 2021/22 finalised (end Q2); All negotiations from 2022/23 finalised (end Q4); All official statistics published according to schedule (throughout year).	Green
v	QQR report and recommendations to Government (complete); Consultation report published (complete); QQR lessons learned and project wrap up (Q2); Follow on work on widespread decliners and engagement with NGOs.	Green

vi	Publish JNCC response to UK Government Nature Recovery Green Paper (Q1 complete). Hold a CSG workshop to showcase country approaches to protected areas review and reform (Q2 complete). Publish revised Common Standards Monitoring statement (Q3 complete). Run cross UK workshops on 30 X 30 to facilitate the sharing of experience and identify areas for joint UK work. Establish inter-agency work to inform protected areas reform. Complete and publish updates to remaining of chapters of SSSI guidelines.	Amber
vii	Assist UK agencies with applying the Decision Making Thresholds evidence report for air pollution to encourage alignment and streamlining through case studies and non-technical materials and training (Q4). Complete testing of the UK AERIUS Pilot tool and advance on-boarding as a Government Digital Service to Stage Gate 3/ alpha assessment (Q4). Scope a UK Inter-agency Chemicals Group and develop a set of priority activity to inform 5-year work plan (Q4); consulting agencies (Q3) and set terms of reference.	Amber
viii	Marine Industries Groups (MIG) General - delivery of a workshop on Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit and Compensation (Q2). Collision risk model advice note being progressed (MIG Birds). JNCC to organise and chair quarterly meetings of each of the Marine Industry Groups. MIG General to produce position paper on the use of marine litter removal as compensation. MIG Mammals to update the Unexploded Ordinance position statement.	Green
ix	To produce revised methodologies for future updates of UKBI A4 (the global environmental impacts of UK consumption) by end March 2023, based on continuing development work; To produce three time-limited literature reviews (one by end October 2022, the other two by end March 2023) synthesising areas relating to sustainable consumption that were identified as priority evidence gaps by the four UK countries in a series of workshops; Produce end-to-end demonstration of spatial prioritisation workflow by end August 2022.	Green
x	JNCC commissioned a review of saltmarsh and seagrass ecosystem markets. Consultant submitted their report, results from which are being incorporated in JNCC report on state of UK blue finance and opportunities. Working with Scottish Government to set up UK-wide blue economy workshop in autumn, which will cover topic on 'incentivising private investment to finance transition to a sustainable ocean economy'.	Amber

Programme: Marine

Business Plan Objectives

[xi] JNCC evidence, advice and services facilitate marine habitat and species protection in the context of ambitious offshore wind energy deployment
[xii] Advice to competent authorities and industry enables effective regulation of offshore industry activities
[xiii] Advice and technical support is provided to governments to enable the identification and designation of new Marine Protected Areas

[xiv] Support and advice provided to governments and regulators on the implementation of fisheries management measures and the broader ecosystem approach to fisheries
[xv] Marine Protected Areas and the wider seabed in UK offshore waters are monitored with partners
[xvi] The UK's MPA and benthic habitat datasets are enhanced, with better access and improved maps for offshore marine protected areas

Key deliverables

BPO number	Key deliverables	Year end rating
xi	Submit stage 1 bid on shearwaters and petrels to OWEC main call by mid-October (Q3). Submit stage 2 bid on shearwater and petrels to OWEC main call by end January, subject to invitation from stage 1 bid review. Delivery of OWEER v4 by end of Jan 2023. Significant progress made on Phase 2 of the UK Marine Noise Registry (MNR) upgrade. Support Government and wider initiatives in relation to offshore wind derogation cases and accompanying workstreams. Programme of work for the final stage of OWSMRF completed, including KG4 review (Q2) and final scopes of work.	Green
xii	Cables industry guidance published (Q2). 95% industry consultations responded to within agreed deadlines. Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) requests responded to within agreed deadlines. Support Government response, preparedness and provide advice to offshore pollution events.	Green
xiii	Provide post-consultation advice to Defra on HPMAs in English waters by November 2022 (Q3). Support Marine Scotland to develop a framework for the identification of HPMAs in Scottish waters by end Q4. Prepare formal pre-consultation advice and support the public consultation on Marine Conservation Zones to address shortfalls in the Welsh MPA network by end Q4. Complete four marine SPA conservation objectives packages, including Irish Sea Front.	Green
xiv	Support consultation for Stage 2 sites of MMO bye law process due in Q3. Draft joint advice with NE and Cefas to Defra for management of sandeel in English waters in October 2022. Provide fisheries impacts advice for six front runner Defra Fisheries Management Plans in Q3. Complete review of Scottish SEA of MPA measures Q3 2022 Support call for evidence for Stage 3 sites of MMO bye law process due in Q3-Q4.	Green
xv	Offshore MPA survey: Undertake English offshore MPA survey in Q1 (postponed). Offshore MPA survey: Undertake Scottish offshore MPA survey in Q2. mNCEA: Full proposals for 2-3 JNCC-led Year 2 (2023-24) projects submitted to Defra by end of Q3. mNCEA: deliver a benthic monitoring and a bird monitoring programme, and further develop asset-service-condition evidence by the deadlines in the project PIDs. MPA Monitoring Reports: Publish 6 MPA monitoring reports by Q4. Big Picture: Deliver the biennial Imagery Workshop and improvements in enumeration and classification systems for annotating benthic organisms in marine imagery.	Amber
xvi	Production of assessment of GES using MPA and wider benthic data, including the review of thresholds and targets. Integration of	Green

	benthic indicators for GES in climate-smart marine spatial plans and other relevant climate change and ocean acidification tasks as part of UK Forums.	
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Programme: International

Business Plan Objectives

[xvii] Negotiations for international environmental agreements and their implementation in the UK, particularly Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Ramsar and The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), are supported scientifically
[xviii] Policy and operational advice on CITES and illegal wildlife trade ensure continued compliance following EU Exit, reduced pressure from illegal & unsustainable trade and support for CoP19
[xix] Through the Ocean Country Partnership Programme, provide demand-led technical assistance in marine science to partner countries, supporting them to overcome challenges that threaten marine environments and the livelihoods that depend on them
[xx] Scientific products for the OSPAR Quality Status Report will contribute to implementation of the North-east Atlantic Ecosystem Strategy 2030
[xxi] Support sustainable development through international investment to integrate the natural environment into decision-making, whilst meeting international commitments

Key deliverables

FPO number	Key deliverables	Year end rating
xvii	Contribute to UK preparations and negotiations for a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be adopted at CBD CoP15 (December 22). Contribute to UK preparations for, and the UK delegations to, Ramsar CoP14 (November 2022), IPBES 9 (June '22), AEWA MoP8 (September '22). Support the UK delegation in preparing for and contributing to AEWA MoP8 (September '22). Support UK input to IPBES9 and the adoption of key thematic assessments.	Green
xviii	Provide support to Defra and participate in UK delegation to CITES CoP19 (Panama, November 2022). Provide advice to APHA F19on c.25,000 CITES licence applications with agreed service standards.	Green
xix	Range of key operational and reporting milestones across existing and new partnerships supported by the OCCP. JNCC work plan for budget and milestones for Year 3 of the programme to be submitted to Defra in Q4.	Green
xx	Final Thematic assessments for marine birds and benthic habitats, and the final integration of mammals indicators submitted by end of October to intersessional working group, and to Biodiversity Committee by December.	Green
xxi	Participate in Part II and Part III of the UK delegation to 27th Session of the International Seabed Authority, advising Defra on environmental issues relating to deep sea mining. Deliver case studies to demonstrate how condition of MPAs can be measured cost-efficiently to support national OT policy and international commitments (25YEP).	Green

Programme: Cross cutting and corporate

Business Plan Objectives

[xxii] The refreshed Strategy for JNCC 2030 is launched, setting out our vision, outcomes and objectives for nature recovery
[xxiii] Proactive internal and external communications support, including staff engagement and promoting JNCC's involvement and impact across key UK and international nature conservation and recovery activities, including at the CBD CoP15 this year
[xxiv] Our exceptional financial management, corporate governance, risk management and internal control processes are maintained while a medium-term financial plan is developed to support the sustainable delivery of our revised strategy
[xxv] A modern, flexible, secure working environment prioritises staff wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, providing policies and support to make the most of hybrid working models, while ensuring the effective delivery of JNCC's objectives

Key deliverables

FPO number	Key deliverables	Year end rating
xxii	The refreshed Strategy for JNCC 2030 is launched, setting out our vision, outcomes and objectives for nature recovery (Q4).	Green
xxiii	Develop and deliver a programme of external communications activity that showcases JNCC involvement and impact across key UK and international nature conservation recovery. Support the delivery and communication of an event that will promote a key moment (a joint statement) from the UK statutory nature conservation bodies prior to COP15. Delivery of a post-event video and communications campaign that showcases the UK working together for nature recovery. Develop and deliver an ongoing programme of internal communications activity that aligns with the needs of the business and addresses challenges faced by staff. Priority campaigns will include the move to Fletton Quays, wellbeing, the cost of living crisis and launch of the new strategy.	Green
xiv	Develop a medium-term financial plan to support sustainable delivery of our revised strategy. Use medium-term financial plan and improved MI and business planning processes to support stakeholders to make optimal decisions re recruitment/projects. Develop and deliver a plan for effective interim and year end accounts preparation, addressing issues highlighted in previous year external audit report. A resilient and skilled procurement function that provides flexible and responsive services to enable delivery. Deliver the Finance related elements of the new Unit 4 corporate system project to transform planning, reporting and assurance.	Amber
xv	Framework Document, Drugs and Alcohol policy, new People Committee to be introduced, draft People Strategy, Travel guidance updated, Overseas working guidance, recruitment approval process to be revamped, provider for new Corporate System to be selected and implementation project commenced. Lease break for MH to be completed. Opening Aberdeen office fully. Covid risk assessment revised for MH. MHFA schedule of articles/posts for Teams channel and specific events (e.g. May).	Green

Future developments

Our business plan for 2023/24 is the first to be developed in line with our new Strategy and provides the starting point for the detailed activities that will connect our work in the year ahead to the outputs and outcomes we are seeking over the next decade. Our strategic priorities over this period will be to:

- Use our scientific expertise to facilitate a collective response to the global biodiversity crisis.
- Use our trusted expertise and judgement to evaluate effectiveness of existing policies and advise on the design of new policies and action to progress nature recovery.
- Lead the discussion to align action for nature and climate change to deliver outcomes that tackle climate breakdown and accelerate nature recovery.
- Continue to innovate and advance our learning on nature recovery so that science, technology and new digital knowledge are applied to drive positive environmental outcomes.
- Work collaboratively to support the transition to sustainable blue/green economies, linking nature recovery to economic prosperity and societal wellbeing.
- Seek opportunities to integrate the value of nature into decision-making by mainstreaming nature recovery into social and economic policy areas.
- Invest in our people and culture to ensure an inclusive, collaborative and innovative learning organisation, where staff wellbeing is prioritised and our partners are engaged and respected.

To support delivery of these priorities and our strategy as a whole we will develop more detailed multi-year plans covering our three delivery programmes - Marine, International and UK co-ordination. We will develop refreshed plans to sustain service improvements across all of our corporate and cross-cutting services including the roll out of a new corporate finance and HR system and a move towards a common business partnering approach to support, advise and challenge delivery teams throughout the year.

In 2023 to 2024, our performance will be measured primarily in terms of delivering outputs of advice, evidence and services, described in terms of critical milestones set out in our business plan. Over the course of the year, we will further develop our performance management capability with increased use of dashboards and other management information highlighting business critical data at team, programme and organisation wide levels. We will aim to develop outcome focused KPIs to further support monitoring of progress towards delivery of our new strategy.

The work described in the business plan for 2023 to 2024 will contribute to the achievement of the national and international obligations of the UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

Going concern

The balance sheet at 31 March 2023 shows the reserves of the company as £2,565k (£2,890k at 31 March 2022). The future financing of JNCC is to be met by grant in aid from Defra and the devolved administrations. Grant in aid for the year ending 31 March 2024, taking into account the amounts required to meet JNCC's liabilities falling due in that year, has already been included in Defra's and the devolved administrations' estimates for the year.

Due to parliamentary control processes, Defra does not have authority to commit to providing grant in aid to JNCC beyond March 2024. However, JNCC's funding is guaranteed by

legislation. The Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006, schedule 4, paragraph 14.1 states that the funding bodies must provide the Joint Committee with such financial resources as the appropriate authorities consider are needed for the proper discharge of the functions conferred by Part 2.

Defra has provided indicative baseline budgets for 2024 to 2025 (the final year of the period covered Comprehensive Spending Review 2021) which would continue to sustain JNCC's core operations and, along with expected additional non-core funding from UK governments and other sources, provides a sustainable medium term funding formula.

Consequently, it is considered appropriate to adopt the going concern basis for the preparation of these financial statements.

The directors are not aware of any significant risks which may have an impact on the ability of the company to continue to operate at the current level of activity.

Sustainability Report for JNCC Operations

As the provider of science and evidence advice on biodiversity and nature conservation at the UK and international level to governments across the UK, JNCC plays a key role as a leader in tackling the twin threats of climate change and biodiversity loss. Embedding sustainability into all aspects of our operations demonstrates to all stakeholders, including our staff and local communities, our commitment to this mission. This report summarises the environmental sustainability of JNCC's operations in Peterborough and Aberdeen for the 2022 to 2023 financial year.

For most of the year, our Peterborough office has been in Monkstone House, a leased building, where JNCC has solely occupied two floors totalling 1,325 square metres. In February 2023, JNCC moved our headquarters to the newly constructed Quay House in Peterborough. Quay House showcases best building practice, scoring a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method) excellent rating of 79.25%, which puts it in the top 10% of new, non-domestic buildings in the UK in terms of its environmental credentials. Facilities and office space are shared with Natural England, Defra, Environment Agency, and HM Passport Office. Utilities usage information for Quay House is currently analysed for the building as a whole so JNCC are unable to quantify our usage. This report therefore summarises the environmental information for Monkstone House. We are looking into ways of quantifying an estimate for our utility usage at Quay House in the future.

Our Aberdeen office (294 square metres) at Inverdee House is in a BREEAM excellent rated building, where facilities and office space are shared with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and NatureScot. The utilities usage information is currently analysed for the building as a whole but we are looking into ways of quantifying an estimate in the future.

Many of our staff continue to utilise the flexibility of hybrid working. Although we are currently unable to account for consumption in individual home settings, we aim to consider ways of quantifying the environmental impact of our hybrid working over the next year. This will be part of our work to achieve the ISO 14001:2015 standard for environmental management as part of continuous review and improvement of our sustainability processes. A Sustainability Manager has been recruited to provide dedicated business resource, thus indicating our commitment.

As part of the Defra group, representatives from JNCC have continued to be part of an established cross-organisation sustainability leadership group, working collaboratively on our

sustainability ambition, and making best use of our collective expertise and resources to develop sustainable solutions in all areas of our operations.

This is our first year of reporting independently of the Defra Group against the Greening Government Commitments. As such, there are some aspects that we have been unable to quantify and have provided estimates in place, with the aim of improving measurement moving forward. In such cases, the base comparison year will be set to 2022 to 2023 to track future progress.

Internal sustainability review

As part of continuous review and improvement of our sustainability processes, our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee have performed a comprehensive review (“drilldown”) of our internal sustainability practices. The relevant documentation was reviewed and a series of virtual meetings with senior team members were held to explore the subject and discuss emerging findings, which culminated in a report with recommendations. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Chief Executive, Chair and Director of Finance and Resources, and relevant senior team members have reviewed and agreed with the considerations raised in the report, committing to improvement in all actions highlighted over the next financial year.

Greenhouse Gas Emission Analysis

Scope 1 (Direct)

Air conditioning

We have been unable to confirm the figures for air conditioning consumption at our site in Inverdee House and will work with SEPA and Defra on how this can be quantified moving forward. Inverdee House has exposed concrete soffits within the primary spaces which provide thermal mass reducing the need for air conditioning, saving energy and decreasing running costs and maintenance expenditure associated with air conditioning systems and suspended ceilings.

Car hire

JNCC do not operate a car fleet but we do use hire cars supplied by a third party when required. This year, we are recorded to have hired cars six times, travelling 3,563km with a CO₂ emissions total of 469kg. Comparisons with previous years are unavailable as this information has not previously been tracked. None of the cars hired were ultra-low or zero emission vehicles, and we will be looking at how we can encourage use of these car types in our hires moving forward. The expenditure on hire car has been £940.16.

Scope 2 (Energy indirect)

Figure 1 shows the combined electricity usage for financial year 2022 to 2023 at Monkstone House, excluding March 2023 as JNCC had vacated the premises by then and our electricity consumption for Quay House cannot currently be estimated. Overall, 67,631 kWh of electricity has been used this year from a mixed-fuel source, correlating to an estimated 13 tonnes of CO₂ emission. Emissions are not available for previous years as this was not required for reporting, however the trend for these can be interpreted through the electricity usage.

There has been around a 40% decrease in electricity usage since 2017 to 2018, correlating with the decline in office use during the pandemic and with the continuation of hybrid working. There is a decrease of around 10% in electricity usage since the previous financial year, though part of this will be the fact that the March 2023 figure is not recorded. In Quarter 2, we were able to delay the switch-on of office heating by three weeks as the weather remained milder than average, which will have contributed to this usage reduction.

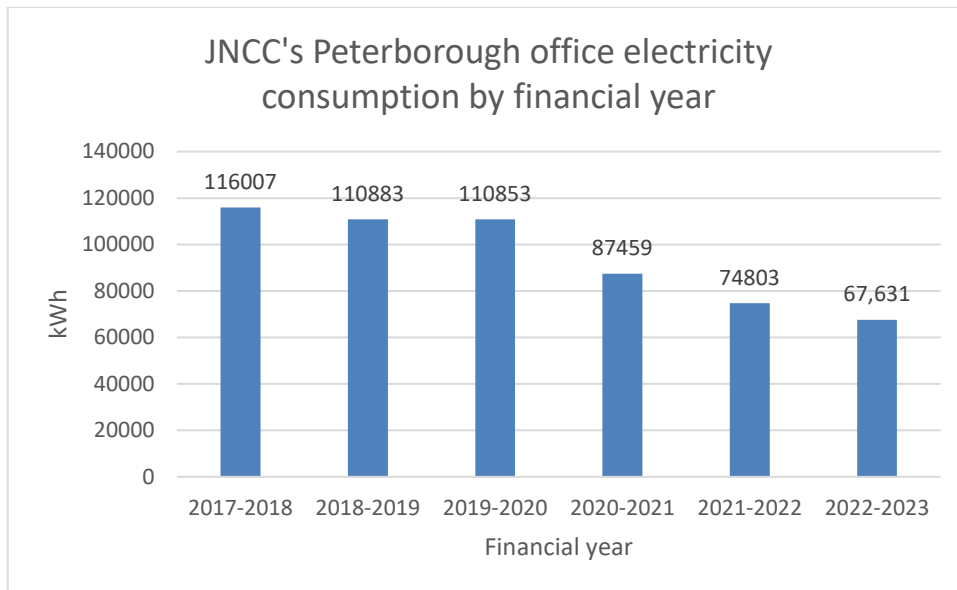


Figure 1. JNCC Peterborough office (Monkstone House), total electricity usage per financial year.

We have been billed £37,565 this year for our electricity usage in our Monkstone House Peterborough office. An issue with the one of the floor meters has meant that final invoices for this floor are outstanding from October 2022, and we are working with the supplier to settle these.

Quay House has a PIR (Passive Infrared) system installed throughout the building where lights will switch off if there is no movement in the area. The air flow throughout the building is controlled by a BMS (Building Management System) based on the movement of people, meaning areas not in use are not necessarily heated. We hope that both of these capacity-based systems will decrease JNCC's power usage moving forward.

Scope 3 (Official business travel)

JNCC's commuting and wider travel policy supports the most sustainable and cost-effective travel option where possible - walking, cycling and the use of public transport are the preferred options. Following a staff travel survey, more cycle racks have been installed at Quay House to encourage more staff to cycle to work.

Employees are encouraged to scrutinise the need for any business travel and use virtual meeting alternatives. Measures are in place to assist staff in the reduction of non-sustainable travel and we will be looking at offsetting options over the next year for where travel is unavoidable.

Flights

Figure 2 shows the number of flights taken by the organisation this financial year compared with last year and the 2017 to 2018 baseline year. There has been a change in calculation methodology compared with previous reports to give a more accurate analysis for flight numbers, affecting the figures for baseline year 2017 to 2018 and 2021 to 2022. These were previously reported as around 160 domestic flights and 210 international flights for 2017 to 2018, and 10 domestic flights and 45 international flights for 2021 to 2022. The change does not affect the overall trends.

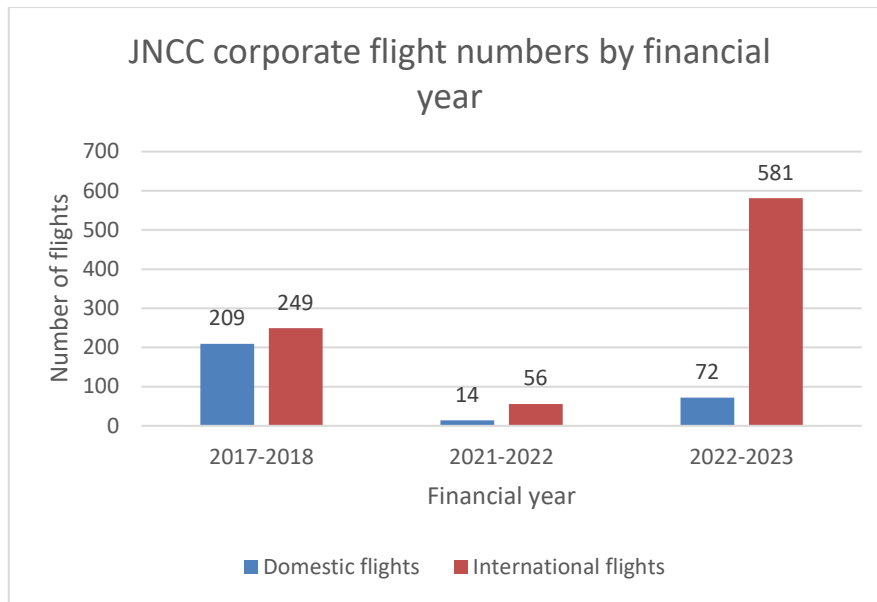


Figure 2. JNCC’s corporate flight numbers for the previous financial year and the 2017 to 2018 financial year baseline.

The number of domestic flights (within the UK) in 2022 to 2023 has increased since 2021 to 2022 but remains significantly below the 2017 to 2018 baseline. The reason for the increase since 2021 to 2022 is an increase in in-person attendance at business meetings and conferences post-pandemic.

The number of international flights in 2022 to 2023 has more than doubled since the 2017 to 2018 baseline year. The increase here is due to several reasons, including an increase in funded project work with the [Ocean Country Partnership Programme](#) (OCP) which has necessitated on-the-ground support across 15 countries. There has also been a resumption and increase of work with project partners in the UK overseas territories, where delivery of projects had been hampered due to an inability to travel in the pandemic. Whilst we are working to keep travel to a minimum here, it remains necessary for efficient completion of projects, training, information gathering and implementation. Finally, JNCC played a key role in negotiations at COP15 in Canada in November 2022, with a team of experts in attendance as part of the Defra-led UK delegation.

JNCC will be looking at a comprehensive review of our flights moving forward, including detailed multi-leg flight analysis, so that we can most accurately understand our flying emissions and ensure consistent reporting in future. We will also review our travel policy to see where we can make improvements in reducing flights and optimising travel routes to minimise emissions.

The total CO₂ emissions, taking into account radiative forcing¹, for 2022 to 2023 are approximately 473,941kg. This is higher than the 2017 to 2018 emissions, which were 196,246kg, and are due to the increase in international flight numbers this year. The emissions for 2021 to 2022 were lower, at 29,268kg, correlating with the lower overall flight numbers for that year. Emissions for additional financial years are not currently available but

¹ Radiative forcing emissions take into account the height of the plane during flight; the higher the plane altitude, the higher the global warming potential from the emissions released.

we will be looking at calculating these as part of our above-mentioned comprehensive flight review.

Rail

Figure 3 shows the CO₂ emissions from international and national rail travel by JNCC this financial year compared with previous years.

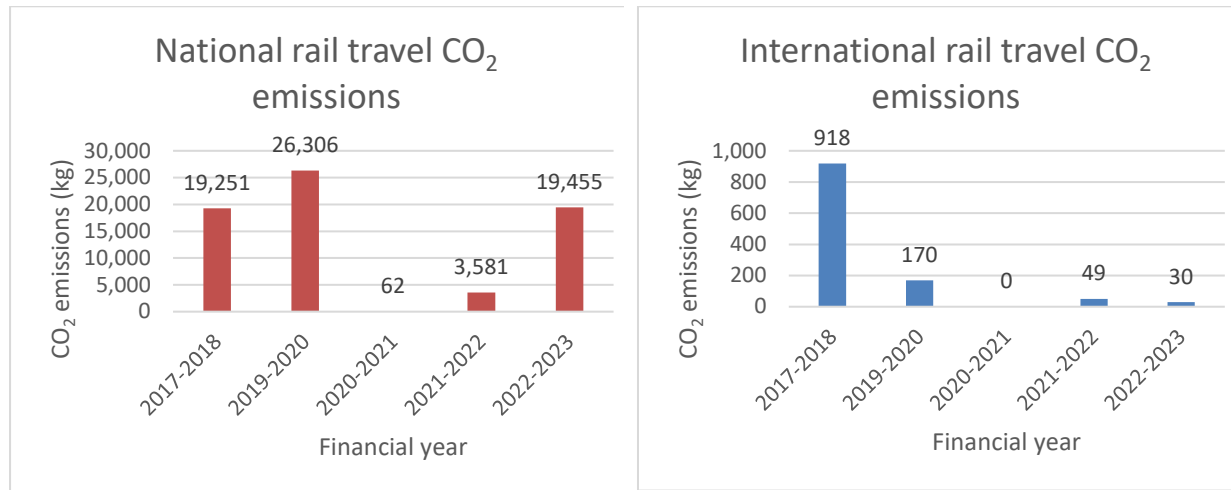


Figure 3. JNCC's corporate rail travel emissions for the previous financial year and the 2017 to 2018 financial year baseline.

Our national rail travel emissions this year have remained at a similar level to the 2017 to 2018 baseline year (19,455kg vs. 19,251kg). However, there has been an over 500% increase in emissions compared with 2021 to 2022. This is because of lower-than-usual emissions in 2021 to 2022 due to a continued decrease in travel from the Covid-19 pandemic, and an increase in travel in 2022 to 2023 due to our first post-pandemic, face-to-face, all-staff conference taking place in Newcastle this year. We will be more closely monitoring rail travel trends in 2023 to 2024 to understand staff need for rail travel and encouraging virtual alternatives where possible to decrease emissions from the baseline 2017 to 2018 year.

Our international rail travel emissions have continued to decrease by almost 97% since the 2017 to 2018 base year (with the exception of pandemic year 2020 to 2021, where there was no international train travel).

Total expenditure on all official business travel for this year has been £417,047, excluding accommodation and subsistence. This is higher than the 2021 to 2022 figure of £68,054, which is understandable due to the decreased travel during that year. This year's travel expenditure figure is also nearly 30% higher than the 2017 to 2018 figure of approximately £298,680. This is also to be expected due to the increase in air travel and similar domestic rail travel numbers this year, an increase in our international flights which are more expensive, and the general global increase in energy costs heightening travel operator prices.

Waste minimisation and management

Our total quantifiable waste for this year (excluding ICT and Digital waste) has come to 81.2 tonnes, with £2,535 spent on waste disposal. This is broken down below. Due to the nature of our office space management arrangements, we are unable to provide measurements for food waste.

Figure 4 shows the mixed municipal (landfill) and mixed recyclable waste for Monkstone House up until the office move to Quay House. Comparisons are shown with the last financial

year and the baseline 2017 to 2018 financial year. Exact waste weight is unavailable, so the 2022 to 2023 figures are estimated based on the theoretical average bin weights measured in 2017 to 2018. Expenditure for office mixed recyclable waste (excluding ICT and digital) this year was £1,423 and £1,017 for office mixed municipal waste.

Overall, 2022 to 2023 has seen an increase in the combined office municipal and recycle waste of over 12 tonnes compared with the 2017 to 2018 baseline year. The increase in waste had been expected with the office move to Quay House. The proportion of waste that is sent to landfill vs being recycled has also increased in 2022 to 2023 (55% landfill) compared with 2017 to 2018 (40% landfill) though is lower when compared with 2021 to 2022 (60% landfill).

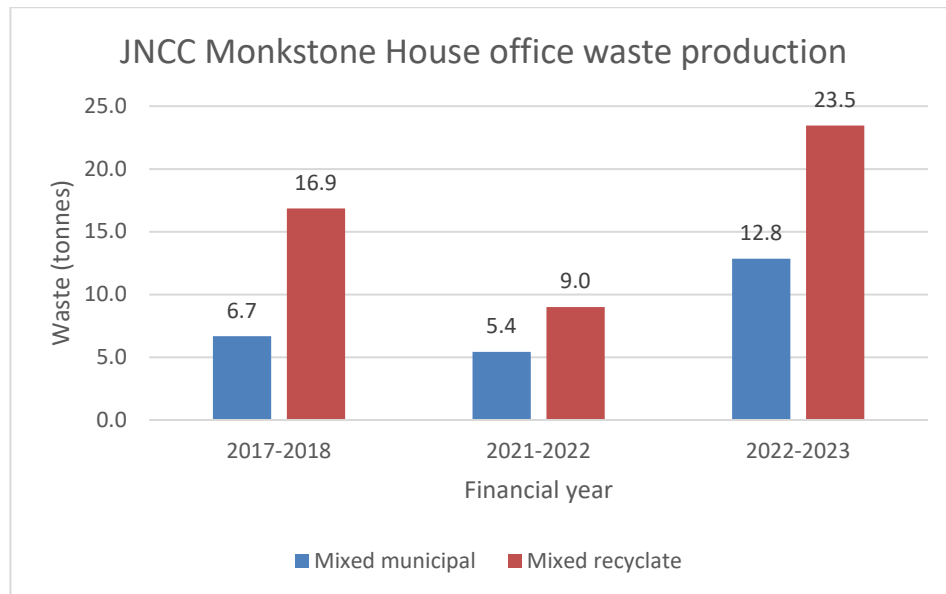


Figure 4. JNCC Peterborough office (Monkstone House) waste production in tonnes.

Whilst sharing with other organisations at both Quay House and Inverdee House means that it will not be possible to measure JNCC’s waste specifically, we will be working with our building colleagues on how this can be estimated. To reduce landfill waste, will also ensure clarity with respect to what can be recycled at our office sites, and work to install food composting at Inverdee House. At Quay House, there are recycling services available throughout the building for recyclables and food waste.

Figure 5 shows the other waste generated by JNCC over this year and previous financial years. Due to our move to Quay House, the furniture waste generated this year has been noticeably higher than previous years. Any unneeded office furniture was donated to staff for personal reuse, other Defra properties and local charities, in the first instance. The remaining 44.9 tonnes was collected for recycling, the expenditure for which was covered by Defra as part of the overall office move.

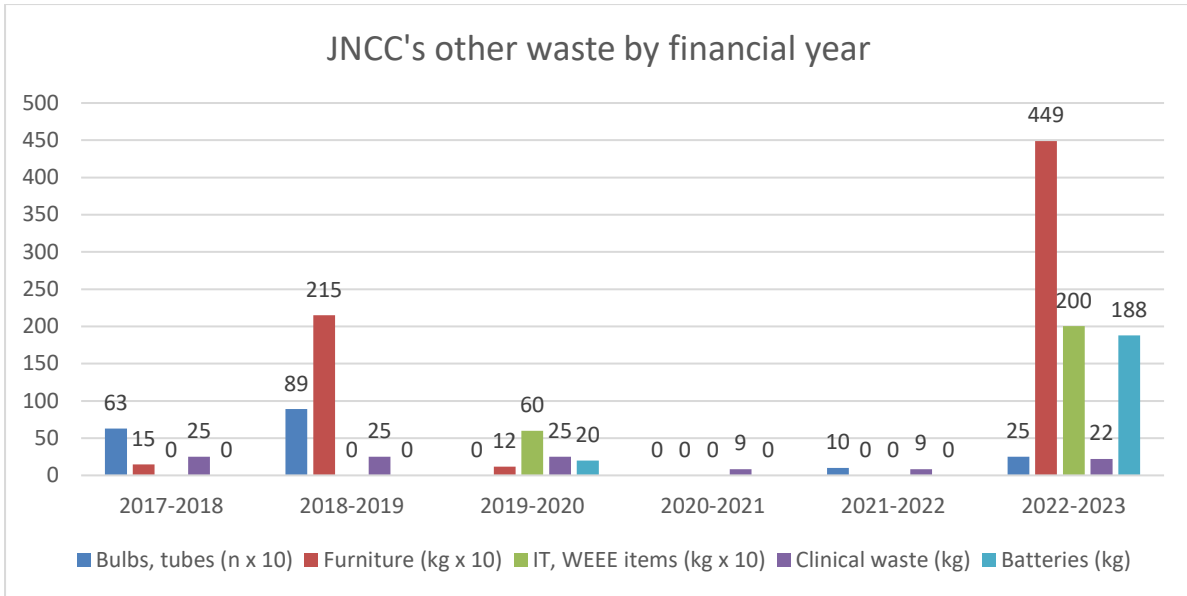


Figure 5. JNCC's other waste, including electronic waste, by financial year.

Clinical sanitary wastes at Monkstone House were collected monthly under a service contract. In 2022 to 2023, it is estimated that 22kg of waste was collected. This estimate is based on the sanitary waste bin size and number of collections made, with the assumption of a full bin at each collection. The actual amount of waste is likely lower than estimated given lower occupancy levels at Monkstone House this year however cannot be exactly quantified due to unavailability of precise occupancy data. The expenditure for sanitary collection for this year has been £95.

We are unable to quantify the number of consumer single use plastics used this year however, we will be looking into how we can track this moving forward. Within our catering, we aim to minimise the use of single-use plastics where possible, choosing recyclable materials like cardboard for food presentation. In our Quay House office, glass-bottled milk is used, and tea/coffees are provided in free form.

Reducing environmental impacts from ICT and Digital

All waste, including electronic waste, is stored safely until there is enough accumulated to permit economic collection and disposal; therefore, collection is periodic.

The move to Quay House has meant an increase in ICT and Digital waste including existing computers, servers, etc, which were no longer required. As shown in Figure 4, an estimated 188kg of batteries were collected during this year, with the majority of the weight coming from UPS batteries². Of the 2,192kg of recorded ICT and battery waste, all was re-used / recycled with the exception of 910kg which was incinerated with energy recovery. The recorded expenditure for IT waste removal was £3,050.

Redundant fluorescent tubes and other bulbs are disposed of through the landlord's building service contractor, with 25 being collected and disposed of during this reporting year. Again, the amount collected is higher than the previous years due to the move to Quay House which has meant that more items in general and previously safely stored items (awaiting the next periodic disposal) have been disposed of.

² UPS stands for 'Uninterruptible Power Supply'. These batteries ensure our systems and servers continue to function in the first few minutes following a mains power cut, whilst the backup power source loads up.

Paper use

This financial year, across all our offices, we have purchased 14 A4 reams of paper. Figures are not accurately available for previous years, however we will measure and record this more thoroughly moving forward to be able to track our paper usage.

Finite resource consumption: Water usage

The landlord for Monkstone House has not been able to provide the water usage data this year. Given similar occupancy levels to 2021 to 2022, we would estimate that overall water usage will have remained comparative at 84 cubic metres. The water bills were included in the service charges for Monkstone House; we were not directly billed from the water company and therefore cannot provide the expenditure figures for this. Moving forward, we will investigate how we can estimate the quantity of water consumed in both our co-share building offices.

Grey water recycling is installed in Quay House, with all water used from sinks in the building recycled and used to flush toilets. Approximately 60% of the building water requirements in Inverdee House are met by harvesting rainwater. Further water savings are made through the incorporation of water efficient WCs, urinals and showers and sensor control taps to reduce unnecessary water wastage.

Sustainable procurement

As a public sector body, we adhere to the Public Contracts Regulations. Within our sustainable procurement guidance, we aim to comply with all relevant environmental legislative and regulatory requirements. We aim to source from local suppliers and ensure minimal packaging and biodegradable / recyclable packaging where possible.

We are continually reviewing our JNCC office supplier-base to examine each supplier's 'Greening Credentials'. Where possible, we expect our preferred suppliers to be accredited to ISO 14001:2015 or equivalent and/or have an implemented environmental policy and/or a sustainability policy and/or a social responsibility policy.

JNCC has made 150 supplier agreements this year, up from 118 last year. These are comprised of 95 contracted suppliers and 55 contracts through the Business Associates Framework. The latter is a framework which provides us with a wide network of trusted individuals who can assist us in providing specialist expertise to our customers in a flexible way without taking on long term staff resources.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of JNCC supplier agreements which met JNCC Greening Credentials. Overall, of our total number of 150 contractors and business associate agreements, 83 had an implemented environmental policy within their organisation and therefore met the JNCC Greening Credentials. This represents 55%, a decrease of 10% on reporting year 2021 to 2022. We will be carrying out a refresh in staff training on the importance of sustainable procurement to ensure as many new supplier agreements as possible meet JNCC Greening Credentials in 2023 to 2024. We will also work with Defra to improve the sustainability of our IT and office products, in particular. On a positive note, as shown in Figure 7, we have seen an increase in the percentage of total supplier agreements with ISO 14001:2015 certification from 8% in 2021 to 2022, to 15% this year.

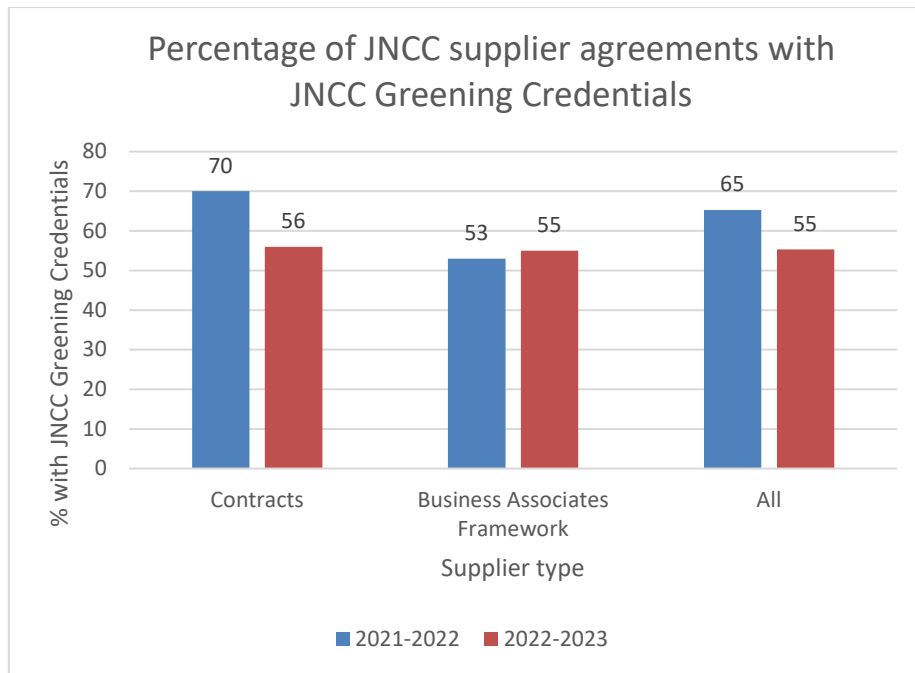


Figure 6. Percentage of JNCC supplier agreements with Greening Credentials by financial year.

Of the 95 contractor agreements, 53 (56%) had an implemented environmental policy within their organisation and therefore met the JNCC Greening Credentials. This is a decrease from 70% in reporting year 2021 to 2022. However, a total of 16 (17%) contract supplier agreements held ISO 14001:2015 certification, up from 9%, in 2021 to 2022. We will continue to engage with contracted suppliers to improve their performance and to consider the green credentials of suppliers when tendering.

Of the 55 associates from the Business Associates Framework, 55% had an environmental policy implemented and therefore met the JNCC Greening Credentials. This represents an increase of 15% from 40% in reporting year 2021 to 2022. Furthermore, a total of 6 (11%) Business Associates Framework agreements held ISO 14001:2015 certification, up from 6%, in 2021 to 2022. Many of these associates are sole traders and so often do not have the resource to implement environmental practices.

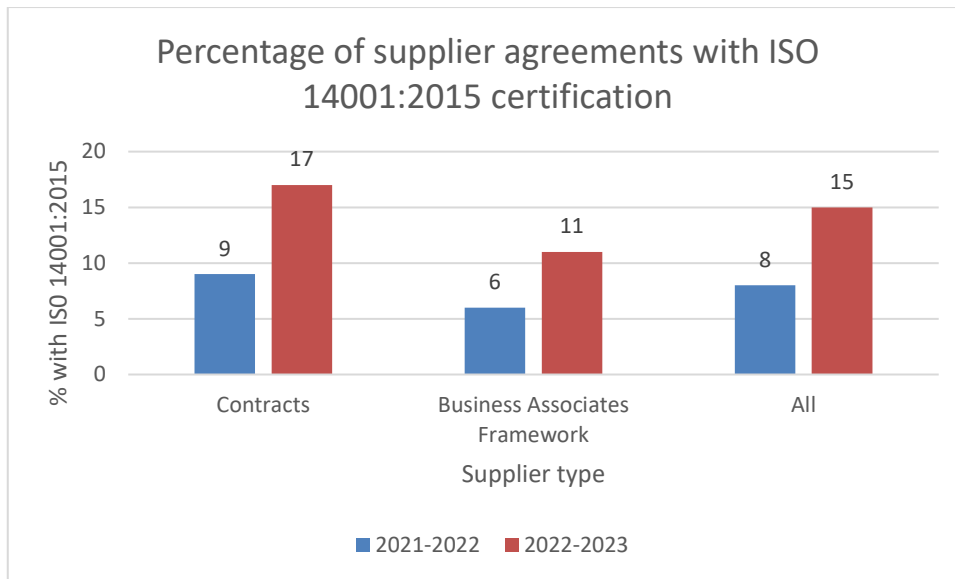


Figure 7. Percentage of JNCC supplier agreements with ISO 14001:2015 certification by financial year.

There has been a change in calculation methodology for sustainable procurement this year compared with previous reports, to give a more holistic representation of sustainability in the proportion of services we have required from our external partners. We have calculated using total number of agreements made, rather than number of suppliers used, as some suppliers are used for multiple agreements. This, as well as some inaccuracies found in reporting, have changed the below numbers from those reported in 2021 to 2022:

- The total number of supplier agreements has changed from 114 to 118. This has changed the total percentage meeting JNCC Greening Credentials from 67.5% to 65%.
- The number of Business Associated Framework agreements has changed from 27 to 32. This has changed the total percentage meeting JNCC Greening Credentials from 40% to 53%.

In future, we will aim to create and optimise a more systematic way of recording our procurement practices to ensure all parts of the Government Buying Standards are adhered to.

Nature recovery and biodiversity action planning

We do not hold significant natural capital or landholdings so do not have a nature recovery plan. However, a key function of JNCC's work is to improve biodiversity and we are looking at how we can do this more in our office buildings, creating a biodiversity action plan. We have been working closely with the Government Property Agency (GPA) and Defra Group Property services to develop appropriate metrics and to promote opportunities to create green areas to support biodiversity and nature recovery in and around JNCC occupied buildings and across the broader Government Estate.

So far, 10,000 plants have been planted on our new Quay House site in Peterborough, all of which have been carefully selected to be native to the area and encouraging for wildlife. Furthermore, the attenuation pond on site not only supports management of high-water levels but has been planted up and is already a great habitat for birds and insects.

Climate change adaptation

We do not currently have a climate change adaptation strategy but aim to start to develop one over the next year.

Sustainable construction

This year, we moved to our new headquarters at Quay House; this is a new building which showcases best building practice, scoring a BREEAM excellent rating of 79.25%. In the construction of Quay House, all the suppliers were BS ISO 14001:2015 certified for environmental management systems. All materials used (concrete, reinforcement) were BES 6001 certified for responsible sourcing, and the timber was FSC certified. The concrete, internal partitions and timber are all 100% recyclable.

Staff culture

We are working with colleagues in our new office at Quay House in Peterborough (Natural England, Defra, Environment Agency and HM Passport Office) to build a green community hub, initiate sustainable and climate friendly activities and practices and collectively work with the Defra Group Property Agency on environmental issues. Similarly, we are working with colleagues at Inverdee House to continue to embed sustainability practices within the building. We will be refreshing and re-instating a staff Sustainability Group, with membership from all teams, to ensure that sustainability improvement is actively discussed in all parts of the organisation.

Dr G Harper
Chief Executive
On behalf of the board of directors

DATE

Annual Governance Statement for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee for the year ending 31 March 2023

1. Introduction

This statement sets out how JNCC (Joint Committee and JNCC Support Co.) has managed and controlled its resources during the year. It provides assurance on how JNCC has carried out its corporate governance responsibilities, managed organisational risks and addressed control issues. As the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer I am responsible for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the policies, aims and objectives of JNCC, whilst safeguarding public funds and the assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in *Managing Public Money*. I am required to provide assurances of operating sound systems of internal control and to set out how these duties have been discharged.

As Chief Executive, I am responsible for all executive matters carried out by the JNCC Support Co. In delivering this role, I am supported and challenged by the Joint Committee who provide strategic leadership for JNCC within a framework of prudent and effective controls, which enables risk to be assessed and managed. In my Accounting Officer role, I have responsibilities (and associated powers) to advise the Joint Committee and to take action if I feel that the Committee makes any decisions that would infringe their governance or statutory responsibilities.

Overall, I am pleased to report that there are no significant control weaknesses and the effectiveness of the overall governance and risk frameworks has been maintained to a high standard over the past 12 months. A comprehensive risk management process and systems of internal control have been in place in JNCC for the year ended 31 March 2023, up to the approval of the Annual Report and Accounts and accords with HM Treasury guidance.

2. Governance arrangements

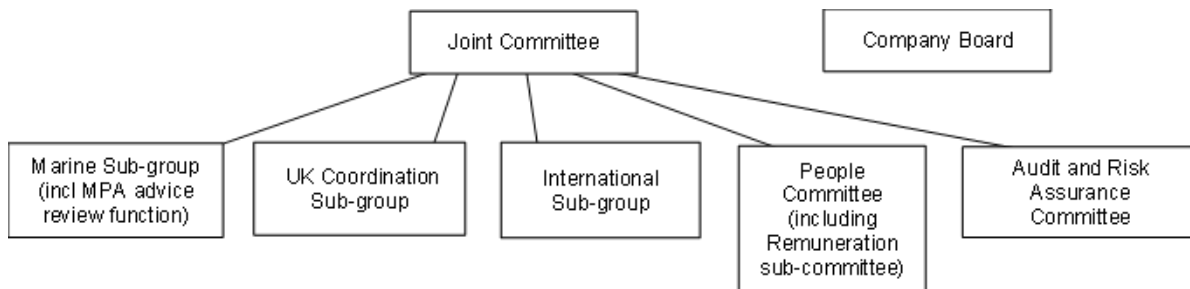
The governance framework

JNCC is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored jointly by Defra and the devolved administrations. It carries out its UK and international functions with technical expertise, impartiality, and transparency, and at arm's length from its sponsors.

JNCC is led by the Joint Committee, which brings together members from the nature conservation bodies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and independent members appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under an independent Chair.

Governance arrangements for JNCC, and the relationship between JNCC, UK government departments, devolved administrations, and the country nature conservation bodies, are described in a Governance Framework document which was revised and published in May 2022. This is available at <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/d2c546d0-5eda-466a-b598-e609a5e51dd5/jncc-framework-document-2022.pdf>. The revised Framework Document has been drafted in compliance with the new HM Treasury template for non-executive NDPBs, published in May 2021. In addition to the revisions set out in the HM Treasury template, the revised Framework Document further clarifies the role of the JNCC Support Company, sets out a schedule of performance reviews to ensure accountability to the Sponsor Department (Defra), and where appropriate, outlines the role of the devolved administrations in JNCC's governance.

A diagram of the governance structure as at 31 March 2023 is presented below.



JNCC operates to a Corporate Governance Framework that is based on the seven core principles ('the Nolan Principles') of good governance for public services. Through this Framework, JNCC complies with the Principles of Good Governance in Executive NDPBs as they apply to JNCC.

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control and this is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the senior executives responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

3. Joint Committee and its sub-committees

The Joint Committee has overall responsibility for fulfilling the statutory functions of JNCC, maintaining an effective framework of corporate governance, and promoting the efficient and effective use of resources. The Joint Committee is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation, for ensuring that JNCC has appropriate policies and procedures in place to fulfil its statutory and administrative obligations with regard to the use of public funds, and for challenging and supporting organisational performance. The Joint Committee has four main meetings and four intersessional meetings per year.

The membership of the Joint Committee is defined in Schedule 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and in total comprises 14 non-executive members and is chaired by Professor Colin Galbraith. Membership provides an appropriate balance of skills, experience, independence, and knowledge to discharge duties effectively. The Joint Committee welcomes a diverse range of members and considers diversity to be a key strength. Differences in ideas, backgrounds, patterns of thinking and approaches to work generate value for the organisation and its stakeholders.

Conflicts of interest declared by Joint Committee members are managed by the Chair to ensure any necessary separation of the topic and the individual. During the year, no conflicts of interest were reported. JNCC maintains a register of interests for all Joint Committee members and publishes the register on the JNCC website <https://jncc.gov.uk/about-jncc/who-we-are/joint-committee/register-of-interests/>.

Standing agenda items for the Joint Committee include a report from the Chief Executive on topical issues, a report on discussions held at meetings of the inter-agency Chief Scientists' Group, the Committee's forward programme, reports from the Joint Committee's sub-committees, and strategic updates from independent and country nature conservation body members.

In 2022 to 2023 key items of business included:

- Overseeing delivery of the 2022 to 2023 business plan through the scrutiny of quarterly performance reports and discussing preparation of a business plan for 2023 to 2024.
- Developing and approving the JNCC strategy refresh “Together for Nature.”
- Approved the advice to governments on the 7th Quinquennial Review of species on Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- Considered JNCC’s draft response to Defra’s Nature Recovery Green Paper.
- Discussed the longer-term role and profile for the Joint Committee within the context of UK nature recovery and how success in UK nature recovery could be defined alongside the indices to support the envisaged role.
- Launch of the UK Nature Recovery Statement and preparations for CBD CoP15.
- Approved formal post-consultation scientific advice on candidate pilot Highly Protected Marine Areas in English offshore waters.
- Reports and updates on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Wild Birds.
- A review of JNCC’s current approach to convening across the UK.
- Global nature: context and implications for the UK.
- Approved the Peterborough office move to Fletton Quays.
- Reviewed the status of JNCC’s communications and engagement capability and the engagement and communications plan 2023 to 2025.
- An update on the organisational development plan.
- A report on members contributions to the Joint Committee working objectives.
- A report on the Joint Committee effectiveness review.
- Approving the revised JNCC Framework Document.
- Undertaking a quarterly review of significant risks and an annual review of risk management in JNCC, including approval of the risk appetite statement.

The Joint Committee undertakes assessments of its performance every two years in line with biennial performance assessments undertaken by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The last assessment took place in August 2022. The findings concluded that the Joint Committee is an effective Committee. The survey identified five areas for action to enhance the Committee’s reach: -

- making decisions based on value for money information.
- members setting the overarching culture and tone of the organisation.
- active succession planning processes.
- taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to stakeholders.
- taking an active and planned approach to relations with sponsors and stakeholders with regular and open communication.

An action plan has been developed and will be implemented through 2023.

Annually, the Joint Committee agrees a small number of work objectives that are aligned with JNCC’s strategy, to identify where non-executive members can add significant value and help to deliver the organisation’s strategic objectives. The objectives are revisited each year to ensure they remain fit for purpose. At the March 2022 meeting, members discussed the work objectives for 2022 to 2023 in light of an anticipated refresh of JNCC’s strategy and at the same time reflected on the past 12 month’s objectives. A mid-year review in September, afforded an opportunity to reflect on progress at the half-year point. The objectives form the basis for discussion with independent members of the Joint Committee at their annual appraisal with the JNCC Chair.

In January 2023, JNCC signed up to the Boardroom Apprentice Programme and was assigned a Board apprentice. The purpose of the programme is to provide practical experience, training and support to individuals who wish to become board members within the public and third sectors. Through 2023, the Joint Committee will facilitate the placement of the board apprentice who will function as a board-level observer for a twelve-month placement, attending all Joint Committee meetings and some sub-group meetings other as required. The Deputy Chair of JNCC will act as a “Board Buddy and mentor to the Board apprentice.

In 2022 to 2023, the Joint Committee was supported by five sub-committees or sub-groups: Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, People Committee (including Remuneration as a sub-committee), Marine Sub-Group (including marine protected areas), International Reporting Sub-Group and UK Coordination Sub-Group. All of the sub-committees or sub-groups were reconstituted in 2022 to reflect the emerging JNCC strategy and to strengthen governance in the organisation. All had new terms of reference agreed. In June 2022, the Financial Resilience sub-group was dissolved with the sub-group’s oversight of financial matters moved to the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). To allow ARAC to take on this new responsibility, it was agreed that people issues, formerly considered by ARAC should be moved to the newly formed People Committee.

A schedule of delegations is in place which is revised and updated as necessary to reflect the responsibilities of the Joint Committee, Company Board, and sub-committees detailed in the JNCC Framework Document.

ARAC

The **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee** (ARAC) meets four times a year and meets interessionally as required. Its meetings are attended by JNCC’s internal audit providers (Government Internal Audit Agency) and the National Audit Office.

During 2022 to 2023, ARAC was chaired by Mr Charles Banner KC. ARAC’s membership consisted of two Joint Committee members and two independent external members. ARAC monitors JNCC’s corporate governance and control systems and advises on internal and external audit matters, risk, and governance in JNCC. Key topics during the year included delivery of the annual internal audit programme, reviewing the financial statements and annual report, external audit strategy, a review of accounting policies, oversight of financial resilience, seeking assurance on information risks and cyber security, risk drill-down reports on divergent approaches across the UK and sustainability, the Peterborough office move, and monitoring the adequacy and efficacy of JNCC’s approach to corporate risk management.

In 2022, ARAC revised its terms of reference to take on some of the responsibilities formerly held by the Financial Resilience Sub-Group of the Joint Committee. The new responsibilities are focussed on risk and assurance and the governance and operations around financial resilience. Specific additional responsibilities are: -

- assurances relating to the risks and opportunities in respect of JNCC's financial management, development, and resilience and
- periodical assurance reports around financial resilience.

The Joint Committee continues to retain ultimate responsibility for making decisions on JNCC’s priorities and funding, within the policy and resources framework determined by Defra and the Devolved Administrations.

Over time, the ARAC agenda had accumulated a number of “people” topics and the formation of the People Committee has allowed the transfer of these items to a more appropriate body and provided time on agendas to cover financial resilience issues and risks.

In 2022 to 2023 ARAC undertook a self-assessment. The results of this exercise indicated that ARAC is an effective committee which provides an appropriate level of challenge and oversight, ensuring that sufficient and relevant assurance is provided to the Joint Committee and to me as Accounting Officer. Areas identified to further enhance ARAC’s reach included cyber security training refreshers every two years, keeping up to date with changes to the Cabinet Office’s Counter-Fraud Standards and keeping an appropriate balance of in-person/online meetings. The next survey in 2024 will be revised to focus on five critical areas with a maximum of 25 questions.

People Committee

In November 2022, the People Committee was formed. This new Committee will support the Executive in developing a JNCC People Strategy, in line with Priority 7 of the new JNCC strategy. The Committee is chaired by Ms Cath Denholm, an independent member of the Joint Committee. The Committee will meet four times a year and will be run on an annual schedule of thematic areas, covering the full range of people issues, including the effectiveness of JNCC’s people and transformation strategies; health, wellbeing and engagement of staff, fair and consistent management and reward; capability and capacity and quality and effectiveness of workspaces and policies.

The People Committee benefits from having amongst its membership an ARAC member, Ms Karen Balmer. This creates a valuable governance link with the work of ARAC.

Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee was reconstituted as a sub-group of the People Committee and had its terms of reference reaffirmed and membership agreed. The Remuneration Committee is chaired by Professor Galbraith and meets twice a year. This sub-group sets the overall pay remit for staff employed by the company on the Joint Committee’s behalf (with the approval of Defra and Treasury as required) and sets and reviews the terms and conditions and performance objectives for the Chief Executive.

International, Marine and UK Coordination sub-groups

The three thematic sub-groups were formed in 2022 to support the implementation of JNCC’s new strategy. Each sub-group was tasked with the same four objectives: -

- Produce a statement of what JNCC is trying to achieve in their respective spaces.
- Identify the top five work areas to develop over the next two spending rounds.
- Identify specific areas of work where JNCC should reduce activity.
- Consider the barriers to achieving such a change and refocus.

Each sub-group is overseeing the development of the thematic roadmaps by Programme Boards, which sit underneath the overarching strategy and support the delivery of the policies and programmes across JNCC in their respective areas.

Chief Scientists Group

The Chief Scientists’ Group (CSG) is a director-level group of the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, NatureScot, the Northern

Ireland Environment Agency and JNCC). Each member of CSG is accountable to their own Chief Executive Officer with the delegated authority to take decisions and commit resources on behalf of their employing organisation. Its scope is terrestrial and marine nature conservation in its broadest sense, focussed on the United Kingdom but covering wider concerns as appropriate. The goals are to share best practice and to discuss, develop and jointly resource solutions for common nature conservation issues. It exchanges information among the five organisations, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and identifying opportunities for further collaborative working.

The CSG is advisory to the Joint Committee and is open to its requests. CSG operates at the strategic level, devolving detailed business to well-defined and regulated Interagency Working Groups. It oversees these groups and has responsibility for approving processes and outputs such as the Guidelines for SSSI Designation, Common Standards Monitoring, and the Quinquennial Reviews (QQR) of Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, some of which are formally signed off by the Joint Committee.

CSG meets in person three times a year on a rotational basis, each of the five member organisations acting as host and chairing the meetings. JNCC acts as the Secretariat and hosts monthly intersessional teleconferences. The meetings consist of a workshop and a formal meeting. One or two representatives from each organisation attend meetings and other members are regularly involved to represent the full breadth of work of the organisation. Workshops include presentations by the host organisation and guests, as well as the SNCBs.

4. Company Board

Support is provided to the Joint Committee by a company limited by guarantee, JNCC Support Co, which was incorporated on 2 March 2005. The Joint Committee has delegated the operational delivery of JNCC's functions and duties to the company through me as Chief Executive. The Company Board comprises Joint Committee members and me as Chief Executive.

The Company Board meets annually in June to approve the Annual Report and Accounts.

In January 2023, JNCC Support Co. changed its official address at Companies House and on all official documents to Quay House, 2 East Station Road, Fletton Quays, Peterborough, PE2 8YY.

5. Attendance at meetings

Attendance by members at meetings of the Joint Committee, its standing sub-committees, and the Company Board during 2022 to 2023 is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Attendance at meetings in 2022 to 2023¹

Member	Joint Committee		JNCC Support Co Board		ARAC		Remuneration Committee		People Committee	
	Meetings	Att	Meetings	Att	Meetings	Att	Meetings	Att	Meetings	Att
Professor Melanie Austen	4	4	1	1	4	4	N/A		N/A	
Mr Charles Banner	4	4	1	1	4	4	2	2	N/A	
Lord Blencathra	4	3	1	1	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Ms Cath Denholm	4	3.5	1	0	2	1	2	1	2	2
Professor Clare Fitzsimmons ²	3	3	0	0	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Professor Colin Galbraith	4	4	1	1	N/A		2	2	N/A	
Sir David Henshaw	4	0	1	0	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Professor Pete Higgins ³	2	2	0	0	2	2	N/A		N/A	
Dr Hilary ⁵ Kirkpatrick	3	3	1	1	N/A		1	1	2	2
Ms Aoife Martin	4	3	1	1	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Professor Tom Meagher	4	4	1	1	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Professor Julian Orford	4	4	1	0	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Professor Steve Ormerod	4	4	1	1	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Professor Michael Winter ⁴	1	1	1	1	N/A		N/A		N/A	
Dr Gemma Harper	4	4	1	1	4	4	N/A		N/A	
ARAC independent external members (not members of the Joint Committee)										
Mr Nigel Reader	N/A		N/A		4	4	N/A		N/A	
Ms Karen Balmer	N/A		N/A		4	4	N/A		2	2

¹ Meetings occurring from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Meetings take place over two days, where a committee member does not attend all of the sessions the number of meetings reflected in the table may be expressed as a multiple of 0.5.

² Professor Clare Fitzsimons' term commenced on 1st September 2022.

³ Professor Pete Higgins' term commenced on 6th October 2022.

⁴ Professor Michael Winter's term ended on 31st August 2022.

⁵ Dr Hilary Kirkpatrick's term ended on 28th February 2023.

6. Executive governance

Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is a corporate decision-making group. It decides issues pertaining to the management of JNCC, in relation to the authority delegated by the Company Board and supports me in my role as Accounting Officer.

During 2022 to 2023, membership of ELT consisted of:

- Dr Gemma Harper, Chief Executive.
- Mr David Collins, Director of Finance and Resources.
- Professor Christine Maggs, Chief Scientist (1 April to 30 November 2022).
- Dr John Goold, Director of Marine Evidence and Advice.
- Dr Steve Wilkinson, Director of Ecosystem Evidence and Advice.
- Ms Manaswita Konar, Director of Economic Analysis and Evidence (1 April 2022 to 17 February 2023).
- Ms Beth Stoker, Director of International Evidence & Advice (From 3 October 2022).
- Ms Natalie Askew, Director of International Evidence & Advice (From 3 October 2022).

The chairing of ELT meetings rotates around the group.

During 2022 to 2023, ELT:

- held formal business meetings every four weeks to oversee corporate performance, agree policies and approaches, and undertake forward planning. Attendance at meetings was excellent.
- held weekly meetings to allow members to keep abreast of 'live' issues and make timely decisions when required.
- Held weekly Monday bird table meetings to update members on issues for the coming week.

Delivery & Assurance Board

In 2022, a new ELT Delivery & Assurance Board was established which consists of all ELT members, chaired by Dr Gemma Harper. The role of the Board is to identify and respond to issues, challenges and risks raised by the Director-led Programme Boards, by providing clear advice and decisions. The Board ensures a consistent and accountable approach to governance and management of work priorities in line with the organisational strategy across JNCC's directorates. The Board meets quarterly.

Management Board

ELT is supported by a Management Board, which is chaired by Mr David Collins and includes the Chief Scientist, JNCC Directors and Team Leaders.

This new Board was established in September 2022 and replaces the Science Management and Resource and Planning Boards. The Board provides senior leaders with a forum for discussion and collective problem solving of topics that are of concern to all staff.

The Management Board was established to optimise the efficient delivery of JNCC's work by enabling cross organisational topics to be addressed collectively and efficiently in a single forum. Cross organisational issues identified at Programme Boards are brought to the

Management Board for discussion and resolution. The Board provides advice and information to the Executive Leadership Team and Joint Committee.

Programme Boards

Programme Boards manage delivery of the strategic objectives and the resources required to ensure delivery. Programme Boards support the Delivery & Assurance Board to help them provide clear advice and decisions on issues, challenges and risks raised by the Director-led Programme Boards. This helps to ensure a consistent and accountable approach to governance and management of work priorities in line with the organisational strategy across the directorates.

Programme Boards were established in 2022, based on the four thematic themes, UK Coordination, Marine, International and Corporate Services. These Boards support the Director in leading the strategic thematic work area within JNCC for the life cycle of the new JNCC strategy until 2030. All four Boards work together to ensure consistency in approach to monitoring and managing work priorities in line with the organisational strategy, identifying and managing risk and effective reporting whilst creating space for learning and placing wellbeing of people at the heart of what JNCC achieves.

Programme Boards are responsible for developing and maintaining strategy for their work areas including:

- Maintaining an overview of customer needs covering the development and implementation of policy.
- Assessing the existing / potential role for JNCC in addressing these and the strength of this role relative to other organisations.
- Maintaining and developing a road map for the implementation of the strategy.
- Making recommendations to ELT on opportunities to enable a development of a cohesive organisational approach across other areas of the business.

Programme Boards meet monthly and consist of Team Leaders responsible for work in their respective areas. Team Leaders are supported at each meeting by business partner representatives from Communications, HR, Finance and Digital & Data Solutions Teams.

JNCC UK Sponsor Group

The JNCC UK Sponsor Group brings together senior officials from JNCC, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Devolved Administrations (DAs) to provide strategic policy direction and promote increasing collaboration between JNCC and its sponsors.

The Group meets on a twice-yearly basis to share information and to allow Defra and the DAs to agree shared priorities for JNCC, given that resources are finite, and economies of scale are necessary. The formal remit of the UK Sponsor Group is to sign off contributions to JNCC's Grant-in-Aid (GiA) settlement and direct business planning for a given financial year, based on shared sponsor priorities.

The Group is chaired by me as JNCC CEO, with membership from all four UK countries at Director level, with parity across Defra and the DAs. The number of representatives from Defra, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is balanced, but with consideration to the varying policy footprints.

7. Financial management and control

JNCC's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of administration procedures including the segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. Financial management is supported through monthly management accounts and quarterly financial reporting to the Delivery & Assurance Board and Joint Committee. Financial information is made available monthly to all budget holders so that they can monitor performance against budgets closely through the year.

8. Internal control framework

The internal audit function is independent of management and is overseen by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). It provides assurance that financial and operational risks are being managed appropriately and the internal control framework is operating effectively. In 2022 to 2023, internal audit of JNCC and JNCC Support Co was carried out by the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA). The Head of Internal Audit (HIA) role was undertaken by a staff member of the GIAA.

The Internal Audit service provides regular reports to the Chief Executive and ARAC, on its programme, recommendations, and their implementation. During the year, ARAC received regular reports from internal audit in accordance with the requirements of Government Internal Audit Standards. Internal audit activity is targeted at assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal control and governance in the areas reviewed. The areas for review were determined by reference to JNCC's risk registers and through discussion with directors, senior managers, and members of ARAC.

The Internal Audit Strategy and Plan are approved by ARAC, and the auditors provide ARAC with regular updates on progress against the annual operational plan. Any changes to the internal plan require authorisation by ARAC and ELT.

JNCC shares the audit strategy, periodic audit plans, all final audit reports and annual audit report, including JNCC's Head of Internal Audit opinion on risk management, control and governance with Defra. The Internal Audit service has direct access to the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer and to the members of the Joint Committee, through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. There are arrangements in place for the Joint Committee and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to have direct access to the Head of Internal Audit to raise any concerns.

Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion

For 2022 to 2023, the annual opinion of the Head of Internal Audit was to give a moderate assurance rating over the framework of governance, risk management and control. The opinion is based on the following information:

- outcomes of the engagements on the 2022 to 2023 internal audit plan.
- cumulative knowledge gained from attendance at ARAC meetings, access to risk registers, and discussions with management.

All internal audit work is completed in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Government Functional Standards

Cabinet Office and HM Treasury launched the full suite of Government Functional Standards during 2021 to 2022 to create a coherent, effective and mutually understood way of doing

business within government organisations and across organisational boundaries, and to provide a stable basis for assurance, risk management and capability improvement. JNCC is required to review each functional standard and, where necessary, prepare plans to address any gaps in compliance.

JNCC has completed a review of the [Government Functional Standards](#). During 2022 to 2023 work continued with plans developed to address priority areas for development to ensure compliance and to embed the use of the standards into JNCC's operations, including through the development of our annual business plan. Progress against the standards will be referenced in the annual report and accounts for future years and in relevant internal audit reports where evidence of implementation of actions to ensure compliance will be sought.

JNCC receives Property services from the Core department. As part of this model, the Core Department Head of Property ensures that a compliance assessment for the Property Functional Standards is in place. This is used to assess future development areas. Assessment shows that the current compliance rating for the Property Functional Standard is "Developing". The focus in 2023/24 will remain on improving compliance levels.

External audit of JNCC

The external audit of the financial statements is undertaken by the National Audit Office (NAO). The NAO's audit certificate has been included in this document.

9. ARAC assurance statement

ARAC assurance statement

The Joint Committee has provided ARAC with a mandate to review the internal control and risk environment established by the executive which has been in operation during the financial year 2022-23. The Joint Committee therefore looks to ARAC for a statement of assurance with respect to this mandate. This Assurance Statement informs the Joint Committee on ARAC's collective view on the adequacy of internal control and risk management in JNCC.

ARAC's remit extends beyond traditional financial stewardship and oversight of the audit process and incorporates all aspects of JNCC's systems of internal control and the overall governance framework. ARAC offers objective advice on issues concerning the risk, control and governance of the organisation and associated assurances provided by internal and external audit, constructively challenging, where and when appropriate, executive decisions to ensure that these are the best possible and achieve value for money in the light of the available evidence. ARAC adds value by helping the Accounting Officer ensure good judgment has been exercised. In 2022-23, ARAC also undertook to look at the assurances relating to the risks and opportunities in respect of JNCC's financial resilience, previously considered by the Financial Resilience Joint Committee sub-group.

The work of ARAC provides assurance to the Joint Committee in relation to a wide range of governance issues, including risk management and potential internal control weaknesses. This is supported by a risk based internal audit annual operational plan, targeted to the highest risk areas to ensure that audit activity is focussed on key areas and is sufficient in order to provide an appropriate level of assurance. ARAC has received the results of the work of internal and external audit during the year 2022-23 and has considered the annual opinion of JNCC's Head of Internal Audit. The annual opinion states that internal controls were generally satisfactory with some improvements required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control. The satisfactory

assurance level reflects the good controls in place and the work being done to enhance this framework. Internal audits carried out this year have highlighted good controls in finance, commercial and data security. They also highlighted areas for improvements, or where improvements are planned, in particular in training and support from finance business partners, which is crucial to the efficient and effective running of JNCC.

Financial management in JNCC has continued to be applied robustly and the executive largely achieved a balanced budget. Reliance can therefore be placed on the financial statements and disclosures presented in JNCC's Annual Report and Accounts. The Executive remained responsive to challenges throughout the year and delivery of strategic objectives was strong.

During 2022-23 all risk management activities have been discussed with ARAC and subsequently reported to the Joint Committee through quarterly performance reports and an annual discussion paper on risk assessment and management. JNCC has a robust risk management process which has been subject to review in 2022-23 to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Assurance has also been taken from ARAC's own drilldowns into aspects of the risk register and from the resulting actions taken by management. The significant risk register has undergone notable changes following a collaborative workshop with ARAC members and the executive over the summer. The addition of a risk narrative to explain the context of each risk to a wider audience is a notable enhancement.

In conclusion, ARAC has agreed that the Governance Statement, provided in the Annual Report & Accounts, is an accurate reflection of the risk management, control, and governance arrangements in place. ARAC is satisfied that these arrangements were adequate and effective during 2022-2023.

10. Risk management

Overall responsibility for risk lies with the Joint Committee. Responsibility for the effective management of risk within JNCC rests with ELT, with leadership of the risk management process provided by me as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. Effective risk management and governance is critical to the ability of JNCC to achieve its objectives and manage the risks it faces.

JNCC ensures that the risks that it faces are dealt with in an appropriate manner, in accordance with relevant aspects of best practice in corporate governance, and adopting the principles contained within the Treasury guidance Management of Risk: Principles and Concepts (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/orange_book.htm).

The risk management system in JNCC, is based on a hierarchical structure, with risk escalation processes in place up to corporate levels. This structure allows and promotes the escalation of risks that cannot be controlled at lower levels, or which may have an impact on teams or the organisation as a whole. JNCC's risk management process comprises:

- A high-level corporate risk register, which includes the principal long-term risks affecting JNCC.
- An annual significant risk register capturing a small number of significant risks which are 'live' and require active management during the year.
- A comprehensive risk appetite statement.
- Quarterly reporting on significant risks to ELT, the Joint Committee, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Defra.
- Risk drill-downs undertaken by non-executives to evidence and challenge the mitigation measures in place and propose additional action where required.

In addition to quarterly risk reporting on the annual significant risks register, regular consideration and reporting of new or fast-evolving risks is undertaken by ELT, ARAC and the Joint Committee.

The corporate risks register provides a profile of the entirety of the risks the organisation faces and forms an integral part of the internal audit process in informing the internal audit operational plan and in conjunction with the significant risks register helps to focus audit effort on key risk areas. A review of the corporate risk register is undertaken annually by ELT, ARAC and the Joint Committee.

Risk appetite

The risk appetite in JNCC has been designed to specify the amount of risk the organisation is willing to accept in the pursuit of its strategic outcomes and the implementation of its strategy. It also indicates the parameters within which staff should conduct their activities.

We focus management effort each year on addressing the significant risks which could affect the ability of the organisation to achieve its success measures as set out in the annual business plan and to meet longer-term strategic goals. There is however an acceptance that exposure to some risk is necessary to enable the effective delivery of strategic priorities, to innovate and in the pursuit of new opportunities and additional funding sources.

Financial pressures drive the need to reassess priorities and how they are delivered, and we have an ambitious target each year for income generation. During the year, the risk appetite is reviewed by ELT, ARAC and the Joint Committee, who consider the risk landscape and then propose changes to reflect the current risk picture, in light of previous risk discussions and taking into account, new and emerging risk. The appetite is increased where necessary to realise potential opportunities to generate income and enhance the reach and utility of our work. Where greater risk exposure is necessary, senior managers ensure that decisions are taken with a full and clear understanding of the risks involved.

Our risk appetite reflects those risks that the organisation actively wishes to engage with to achieve its strategic objectives. The risks we can afford to take, or our capacity for risk, determine the controls put in place to manage risk. Controls directly affect how reassured we feel about risks. The matrix below sets out the risk categories and details our willingness to take risk.

JNCC risk appetite matrix

	<i>Lower willingness to take risks</i>					<i>Higher willingness to take risks</i>					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Science quality		x	x	x	x						Dependent on the type of evidence product and the context in which it is being used. Should be proportionate, as the risk in this area is about communicating uncertainty in the right way.

Innovation					x	x	x	x			Subject to potential benefits and risks being understood and documented, decision-making being taken at an appropriate level, and measures to monitor and manage risks being in place.
Relationships and reputation	x	x	x								In order to carry out its role effectively, JNCC needs to build relationships and partnerships with a range of government and non-government bodies. Whilst building new relationships and partnerships, JNCC needs to maintain its reputation with key stakeholders and the wider public.
Governance/ compliance	x	x									Maintaining high levels of governance is expected with no appetite for breaches in respect of legislation, regulation, government framework requirements and bribery/fraud.
Financial	x	x									There is a low appetite for risk for all financial activities, but limited additional risk is acceptable in the areas of recruiting for income projects; time investment in exploring and bidding for new funding opportunities; and income projects where they do not fully meet costs but progress JNCC's strategy.
Income diversification activities			x	x	x						A cautious approach to exploring new avenues of external funding should be adopted. However, a higher degree of risk to realise opportunities is required so proportionate risks that are appraised on a

											case-by-case basis are acceptable within a risk-based approvals process.
Strategic change			x	x	x	x					Subject to strategic changes being managed according to good practice in change management and a prioritised, properly resourced, and realistic programme of change being in place.
People	x	x									Full compliance with policies is expected.
Organisational culture and values			x	x	x						In order to implement culture change, a greater degree of risk exposure is needed in order to align culture with the delivery of strategic objectives.
Information accessibility and security	x	x									Full compliance with information management policies and good standards of data management practice to facilitate delivery of JNCC's functions is expected.
Data Management	x	x									Good standards of data management practice to facilitate delivery of our functions I expected. All staff use personal data and have a responsibility to be diligent when collecting and using it, protecting it in line with our policies, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation.

Significant risks managed during 2022-23

JNCC's significant risks in 2022 to 2023 can be found in Table 2 below. Implementation of key mitigation is monitored and reported through the year to ARAC. Any mitigations not fully implemented during the year are part of wider initiatives and rolled forward into mitigation for the following year where relevant.

Table 2

Significant Risk	Key mitigation	Analysis
<p>Risk 1 JNCC's ambition for nature conservation and recovery is impeded by an inability to make JNCC an attractive place to work and attract talented staff to deliver its mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the overall reward and benefits package available to staff, with greater use of existing flexibilities in pay and reward and plans to develop a longer-term reward strategy. • Develop plans to realise the ambition of becoming a learning organisation. • Review our approach to hybrid working following removal of formal Covid restrictions to maximise the benefits of remote working and greater opportunities to collaborate. • Address chronic high workloads through more effective business planning to prioritise outputs, improvements in workforce planning and resource allocation and enhanced accountability at Director level through new Governance arrangements. • Identify business critical posts through strategic workforce planning and corporate memory maintained through better knowledge management processes. 	<p>This risk increased through the year as the cost-of-living pressures increased and will play out over the next two years as disparity between pay and cost of living widens. We are already seeing this impacting on staff wellbeing, morale and motivation. Inability to match market rates and staff expectations is reflected in high turnover and recruitment difficulties. This risk is largely affected by external influences outside the control of the Executive; however, the organisation will continue to be flexible with hybrid working, providing staff in Peterborough with new modern office space and</p>

		invest significantly in learning and development.
<p>Risk 2 Progress of devolution, and the increased divergence this enables, reduces the opportunity for consistency of approach across the UK which could limit JNCC's UK role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and frequent bilateral and Country Liaison Group Meetings group meetings with Devolved Administrations (DAs) to review priorities. • Work in a more divergent way and consider the role and structure of JNCC to minimise the impact of divergent approaches. • Assess whether JNCC is adequately resourced to make judgments as to when and how to step more prominently into the public arena on high profile issues with a UK nature conservation dimension. 	<p>This risk goes beyond the 12-month window and has a high degree of uncertainty which heightens the risk. In the next two years, JNCC will plan to reduce the impact of divergent approaches on the organisation by framing a narrative in the new strategy and consider the structure of the organisation.</p>
<p>Risk 3 Poor political/social/cultural understanding of the external environment and/or poor science quality damages JNCC's reputation, undermines the fiscal strategy and increases the legal risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular assessment of the Comms grid at ELT to assess handling risks of public communications/announcements/publications. • CEO and director regular engagement with UK governments and Defra sponsorship team. • Implementation of the Evidence Strategy and evidence quality assessment process led by the Chief Scientist. • Communicating uncertainty in our science. • Working towards greening government commitments to reduce the organisation's environmental footprint. 	<p>This risk is stable and well managed. JNCC's excellent reputation and high regard in the environmental arena is important to protect. This risk is significantly reduced through positive and constructive CEO and Director engagement with UK governments</p>

		and Defra sponsorship and policy teams. Robust assessment of the risks around JNCC comms and keeping in touch with political thinking reduces this risk further.
<p>Risk 4 Relationships with key sponsors, funders and partners are damaged due to a failure to articulate clearly JNCC's mission, impact, and value for money across the UK and internationally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual SNCB CEOs meetings and SNCB Chairs and CEOs meetings, and quarterly Chief Scientist and Country Liaison Group meetings. • Biannual JNCC UK Sponsor Group with representatives of the four governments – ongoing. • Joint Committee engagement and CEO Bilaterals with SNCB CEOs, Defra ALB CEOs and eNGO's CEOs. • Implementation of the 'JNCC Story' and development of the JNCC 2030 Strategy. • Regular Defra Ministerial meetings and proactive participation with other Defra ALBs. 	<p>This risk is being mitigated through greater partnership working through SNCB CEO/Chair meetings, reinvigorating the UK JNCC Sponsor Group, and implementing the JNCC Story.</p>
<p>Risk 5 Failure to achieve a balanced budget or portfolio prevents effective delivery and work-life balance because JNCC's ambitions are not matched to available resources/capabilities, risk appetite, rising costs or securing additional investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a medium-term financial plan to support stable and longer-term resource allocation decisions linked to strategic priorities. • Rigorously applying agreed criteria to ensure any additional income secured is supported by the capacity to deliver and that work is aligned to our strategic priorities. • Annual business planning which allows for transparency and flexibility of strategic decision making supported by reliable data and effective and efficient business processes. • Revised governance arrangements which provide clearer accountability for planning, assurance, performance management and use of resources. • A new integrated corporate system (HR and finance) implemented which will provide enhanced and targeted management 	<p>This risk is stable and well managed. Looking ahead, over the next two years the risk horizon continues to be unsettled due to uncertainties over medium term funding and further rises in inflation.</p>

	information to support planning and critical corporate decision making.	
<p>Risk 6 Reduced ability of the organisation to operate and/or loss of JNCC data assets as a result of inadvertent staff behaviour or malicious intrusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a new password policy and deployment of the recommendations throughout JNCC. • Deploying multifactor authentication through the organisation to protect user identity for Office 365. • Specifying and deployment of a centralised security information and event management (SIEM) system to identify and monitor network and system vulnerability. • Run National Cyber Security Centre security exercises to identify gaps in policies and procedures. • Raise awareness of cyber security threats through on-line training for all staff. • Review backup up polices and prioritise information assets. 	<p>This risk is the highest on the register and reflects the rise in the severity and sophistication of threats. The cyber security arena has changed rapidly over the past two years with the pandemic a catalyst for cybercriminals looking to take opportunities to profit from ransomware attacks. This risk is long term and JNCC's response to the risk covers a two year period of implementing an IT security change programme to bolster JNCC's defences against cybercrime.</p>

Risk drill-downs by members of ARAC provide detailed scrutiny of JNCC's significant risks and are a useful exercise in gaining assurance on mitigation activity and identifying any gaps that need to be filled. At the start of each financial year, ARAC agrees a robust programme of drill downs based on the significant risks. The programme is agreed by the Joint Committee. Non-executives are selected to undertake drill downs based on their expertise and knowledge. A documented procedure is followed to ensure consistency of approach.

During 2022 to 2023 two risk drill-downs were undertaken in the following areas:

- i. Divergent approaches across the UK
- ii. Sustainability of JNCC's own conduct and operations

The ARAC Chair refers to the Joint Committee all issues that pose a major risk to the business integrity of JNCC and those that in his judgement require disclosure to the full Committee or need immediate action. In addition, the Chair of ARAC informs the Joint Committee of any fraud, misappropriation, or malpractice immediately that it is discovered or suspected.

Russia – exposure of investments

This does not apply to JNCC.

Management of fraud risk

JNCC has zero tolerance towards fraud, bribery and corruption, and all staff are required to undertake mandatory 'Responsible for Information' training which includes content relating to fraud, bribery, and corruption.

JNCC continued to contribute to Government counter-fraud initiatives and activities through collaboration with the Defra Fraud and Error Board where best practice is shared between Defra and its arm's-length bodies.

Regular training and internal communications with staff continue to provide an effective way of maintaining awareness of obligations and reporting arrangements for dealing with potential fraud, bribery, information security and whistleblowing matters.

11. Assurance reporting

Throughout 2022 to 2023, JNCC had quarterly assurance reporting in place. Quarterly reporting assists in identifying gaps in assurance and strengthens accountability and ownership of control and risk issues within JNCC teams. Returns from teams are collated and an average organisational rating is calculated for each of seven assurance areas. Action plans are devised to address any weaknesses with the Governance Team offering support where required. Outputs from reporting are shared with team leaders, ARAC and the Joint Committee. JNCC executive directors use outputs from assurance reporting to provide evidence to support their annual Director Assurance Statements.

12. Information management and cyber security

The information management threat from cyber-attack, in particular the continued and escalating threat from ransomware and data exfiltration remains high. The National Cyber Security Centre considers the UK is in an extended period of heightened threat in part due to the invasion of Ukraine and government organisations should maintain a strengthened cyber posture in a sustainable and efficient way. In 2022, ELT agreed a 2-year IT Security Change Plan to improve JNCC's defences against a cyber-attack and increase organisational resilience to respond and recover from an attack and has made some significant improvements to JNCC's position. JNCC has set out a low appetite for information management risk.

In 2022 to 2023, JNCC held data that is classified (under the standard classification system) as:

- OFFICIAL
- OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE

JNCC does not hold any data of a higher standard classification. All previous systems requiring special handling have been discontinued.

JNCC records the number of Incidents and Near Misses that occur in each financial year with respect to information management. This is divided up into the industry standard severity levels (severe incident, incident and near miss)

Table 3

Severity FY 22/23		IT	Data Protection
<i>Severe Incident</i>		0	0
<i>Incident</i>		0	3
<i>Near Miss</i>		2	6

IT related and Data Protection incidents and near misses can now both be reported due to improved recording. The three data breaches were all low risk and impact; only one was reported to the Data Protection Officer (DPO) at Defra for information only.

JNCC's Data Protection Manager (DPM) post was vacant for 12 months prior to July 2022, due to difficulties in recruitment. The new DPM has had a very positive impact on the quality and timeliness of data protection / GDPR advice to the organisation and on data protection reporting and compliance. In Q3 the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) assessed JNCC progress in compliance with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) data protection Accountability Framework, as part of a wider assessment of Defra. The GIAA internal audit achieved a 'substantial' rating, noting strong governance arrangements had been defined.

13. Organisational Performance management

JNCC maintains a comprehensive organisational performance management system. A dashboard style quarterly reporting format is used to provide information in a concise and accessible form, enabling executives and non-executives to quickly review important information.

Outputs are set annually through JNCC's business planning process and are endorsed by the Joint Committee and the UK and devolved governments. The outputs are used to assess performance in-year. During the year, ELT and the Joint Committee undertook quarterly reviews of JNCC's performance against its success measures and its financial position.

JNCC performed well in 2022 to 2023, out of a total of 25 business plan objectives, 19 were fully achieved and 6 reported substantial progress with full achievement anticipated early in 2023-24.

The JNCC Chair and I have a ministerial performance review meeting every six months with the Defra minister responsible for JNCC. Due to political upheaval in Autumn 2022, only one ministerial performance review took place with Minister Harrison in February 2023. These meetings are a formal accountability moment and an opportunity for reflection on all aspects of JNCC's work in light of the Minister's priorities for the organisation and to review JNCC's contribution to the policy objectives set out in the Defra group outcome framework.

During the year, quarterly meetings between myself, supported by Directors, take place with the Defra Director responsible for JNCC. These are formal accountability moments, which punctuates the narrative of the relationship between JNCC and Defra. These meetings discuss JNCC's performance against agreed priorities, risks, and key achievements over the quarter.

In 2023 to 2024, new quarterly ministerial delivery meetings with the minister responsible for JNCC will be established. These meetings will be regular discussions on delivery, current performance and trends as well as topical matters.

14. Compliance with the Corporate Governance Code

In 2022 to 2023 JNCC complied with all appropriate revisions to sections of Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/corporate-governance-code-for-central-government-departments>, with the following exceptions.

- i. JNCC does not currently undertake an annual evaluation of Joint Committee performance. The Joint Committee evaluates its performance every two years; this is commensurate with the size of the Committee and number of meetings each year. The Chair undertakes a comprehensive annual performance review for each of the independent members of the Joint Committee.
- ii. JNCC monitors performance in handling Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests and reports this information quarterly on the JNCC website: <https://jncc.gov.uk/about-jncc/corporate-information/access-to-information/>. Significant resources would be required to develop and implement systems to monitor and report on other correspondence, and there are currently no plans to do this. JNCC has a complaints procedure documented on its website which explains who is responsible for investigating and adjudicating on any complaints: <https://jncc.gov.uk/about-jncc/corporate-information/complaints/>. All correspondence is handled on a need-to-know basis and held in a confidential file with restricted access.

15. Evidence quality

JNCC has robust evidence quality assurance processes in place to maintain its reputation for scientific excellence. Policies and associated guidance notes provide a standard for JNCC staff to follow to ensure that the quality of JNCC scientific advice and evidence is fit for purpose. A key principle is that quality assurance should be proportionate to the intended use of the advice or evidence. JNCC's policy is compliant with *The Government Chief Scientific Adviser's Guidelines on the Use of Scientific and Engineering Advice in Policy Making* (2010).

In 2022 to 2023, a series of in-house audits was conducted on projects subject to the evidence quality assurance process. These audits assessed whether processes had been followed and relevant documentation produced. Recommendations were raised to address any perceived weaknesses and ensure consistency across projects. Best practice was shared with project managers.

JNCC does not own any business-critical models.

16. Ministerial directions

In 2022 to 2023 JNCC received no ministerial directions.

17. Whistleblowing

JNCC has a Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistleblower's Charter) in place. The policy promotes openness in dealing responsibly with wrongdoing in the workplace and if staff have concerns, they can raise them as a 'qualifying disclosure'. Compliance with the policy is monitored and reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee each quarter. In 2022 to 2023, there were no instances of whistleblowing reported.

18. Plans and challenges for future years

During 2023 to 2024, we will deliver a refreshed JNCC strategy with priorities for nature recovery to 2030 and an ambitious and diverse programme of work in support of Defra and the devolved administrations.

The key risks facing JNCC in 2023 to 2024 are considered to be:

Table 4

<p><u>Risk 1</u></p> <p>PEOPLE & PLACE (Internal/External)</p> <p>JNCC's ambition for nature conservation and recovery is impeded by an inability to make JNCC an attractive place to work and attract and retain talented staff to deliver its mission.</p>
<p><u>Risk 2</u></p> <p>CYBER AND INFORMATION SECURITY (External)</p> <p>Reduced ability of the organisation to operate and recover /or loss of JNCC data assets as a result of inadvertent staff behaviour or malicious intrusion.</p>
<p><u>Risk 3</u></p> <p>FUNDING & OPERATIONS STRATEGY (Internal)</p> <p>Failure to achieve a balanced budget or portfolio prevents effective delivery and work-life balance because JNCC's ambitions are not matched to available resources/capabilities, risk appetite, rising costs or securing additional investment.</p>
<p><u>Risk 4</u></p> <p>IMPACT (Internal/External)</p> <p>4a RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>Relationships with key sponsors, funders and partners are damaged due to a failure to articulate clearly JNCC's vision, mission, strategic priorities, impact and value for money across the UK, the UK Overseas Territories and internationally.</p> <p>4b REPUTATION</p>

Poor political/social/cultural understanding of the external environment and/or poor science quality damages JNCC's reputation, undermines the fiscal strategy and increases the legal risk.

4c NATURE RECOVERY

Lack of a scientifically based UK overview results in a failure to provide advice to inform decision-making to deliver nature conservation and recovery across the UK.

4d ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

Lack of visibility and profile across the UK and internationally results in JNCC not optimising its convening role, leading to dispensability and negative funding implications.

4e DIVERGENT NATURE CONSERVATION PRACTICES ACROSS THE UK

Progress of devolution, and the increased divergence this enables, reduces the opportunity for consistency of approach across the UK which could limit JNCC's UK role.

The extent to which these risks are successfully managed will be kept under review during 2023 to 2024 by the Joint Committee, ARAC and ELT. A programme of risk drill-downs for 2023 to 2024 has been devised and will focus on fiscal strategy, building a learning organisation and communications strategy.

19. Conclusion

During 2022 to 2023, JNCC fulfilled its role as the UK's scientific authority on nature conservation and recovery by delivering a wide-ranging programme of work on behalf of government and other stakeholders across the UK and internationally. Governance arrangements were strengthened by the creation of new Programme Boards, a Delivery & Assurance Board, a new Management Board and refreshed Committee sub-committees and sub-groups. All of these groups supported JNCC's aims as evidenced through scientific capability, sustainable finances, engaged staff and stakeholder satisfaction. In forming my opinion of the governance arrangements, I have taken into account the various sources of assurance available to me, which include the Head of Internal Audit's opinion and the ARAC assurance statement.

Over the next 12 months and beyond, JNCC will use its scientific expertise to facilitate a collective response to the global biodiversity crisis, using trusted expertise and judgement, to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies, and advise on the design of new policies and action, to progress nature recovery. JNCC will lead the discussion to align action for nature and climate change, to deliver outcomes that tackle climate breakdown and accelerate nature recovery and continue to innovate and advance our learning on nature recovery, so that science, technology, and new digital knowledge are applied to drive positive environmental outcomes.

JNCC will continue to work collaboratively to support the transition to a sustainable blue/green economy, linking nature recovery to societal prosperity and wellbeing, seeking opportunities to integrate the value of nature into decision-making, mainstreaming nature recovery into social and economic policy areas. JNCC will continue to invest in our people and culture to ensure an inclusive, collaborative, and innovative learning organisation, where staff wellbeing is prioritised, and our partners are engaged and respected.

In doing all of this, JNCC will continue to face a number of significant risks especially in relation to the complex and uncertain environment in which it operates. These risks are detailed in section 18 of this Governance Statement.

Dr Gemma Harper OBE
Chief Executive
DATE

JNCC Support Co Remuneration and Staff Report

Remuneration policy

The remuneration for the JNCC Chair and independent Committee members is set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

JNCC is advised of the salaries of the Chair and independent Committee members by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Members appointed by the country nature conservation bodies are remunerated directly by those bodies. This information is subject to audit.

The remuneration of the Chief Executive is reviewed regularly against the advice issued by the Review Body on Senior Salaries. Any proposed changes are then subject to the approval of Defra.

All pay awards for staff other than the Chief Executive have to conform to the annual Civil Service Pay Guidance document issued by Treasury. This guidance document forms part of the pay remit process and is intended to ensure that pay awards are affordable, offer value for money, and meet the needs of individual businesses. As part of this process JNCC has to submit its recommended pay award to Defra, who have delegated authority to approve pay remits that conform to Treasury guidance. Pay remits that do not conform to the guidance require Treasury approval.

The JNCC applies a number of reward principles which aim to:

- meet business needs of the organisation;
- be affordable for the organisation in the short- and long-term;
- provide a pay structure which is sustainable in the longer term;
- reward, retain and motivate staff;
- support equal pay;
- be fair and transparent;
- ensure that appropriately skilled and experienced staff can be recruited;
- recognise and reward good performance;
- offer comparable salary levels with other relative workforce groups;
- aim to maintain the total staff remuneration package at a level which is appropriate given the financial environment and reflects competitiveness in the appropriate market.

Contracts of employment

The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Recruitment Principles published by the Civil Service Commission specify the circumstances when appointments may be made otherwise. Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at <http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk>.

Unless otherwise stated below, the directors and other staff covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme. Independent members of the Committee, who are appointed by Defra under an instrument of appointment, would not be eligible for compensation under the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

The periods of appointment for independent Committee members are detailed below.

Table 1: Independent Committee member appointment periods

Independent Committee Member	Term (Years)	Commencement Date
Professor CA Galbraith (reappointed)	3	25 January 2021
Professor MCV Austen (reappointed for a further 3 years)	3	15 December 2020
Mr CER Banner (reappointed for a further 3 years)	3	15 December 2020
Professor EM Scott (reappointed for a further 3 years, however, resigned 1 June 2022)	3	15 December 2020
Ms CS Denholm	3	4 April 2023
Prof TR Meagher	3	4 April 2023

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements (subject to audit)

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior JNCC staff, and those of the Chair and independent members of the Committee.

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary and any allowances, such as recruitment and retention allowances, to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation. This report is based on payments made by JNCC Support Co and thus recorded in these accounts.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HMRC as a taxable emolument. At the present time, no senior member of staff of JNCC Support Co is in receipt of taxable benefits.

Bonuses

Bonuses are based on performance levels and are made as part of the formal staff appraisal process. The Remuneration Committee are responsible for approval of performance bonuses for the Chief Executive and other Senior Civil Service (SCS) posts. For all other staff, performance levels are established through the line management chain, with overall oversight of eligibility and approval for bonus payments at ELT.

The final bonus payment relating to performance in 2022-23 will be paid during 2023-24, has been accrued and is included in the relevant remuneration table on an accruals basis.

Single total figure of remuneration (subject to audit)

Table 2: Joint Committee member remuneration

Members	Period of appointment	Days service 2023	Salary (£'000)	
			2023	2022
Prof CA Galbraith (Chair)	25 January 2021 to 24 January 2024	104	40-45	40-45
Prof MCV Austen	15 December 2017 to 31 March 2023	30	10-15	5-10
Mr CER Banner	15 December 2017 to 14 December 2023	43	15-20	10-15
Prof EM Scott	15 December 2017 to 1 June 2022	30	0-5	5-10
Ms CS Denholm	4 April 2022 to 3 April 2025	30	10-15	-
Prof TR Meagher	4 April 2022 to 3 April 2025	30	10-15	-

No Joint Committee members received bonus payments or pension benefits in either the current or prior year. Included in the above figures are re-imbursed expenses treated as a taxable Benefit-in-Kind. The gross refund values, rounded to the nearest £1, are: Prof CA Galbraith: £4,370 (2022: £nil); Prof MCV Austen: £1,760 (2022: £34); Mr CER Banner: £1,306 (2022: £nil); Ms CS Denholm: £1,223 (2022: £nil); Prof TR Meagher: £1,711 (2022: £nil). No expenses were re-imbursed to Prof EM Scott in the current or prior year.

SNCB members of the Joint Committee do not receive remuneration from JNCC Support Co.

Table 3: ARAC member remuneration

ARAC members who are not also members of the Committee	Period of appointment	Days service 2023	Salary (£'000)	
			2023	2022
Mr NF Reader	1 September 2016 to 31 August 2025	12.5	0-5	0-5
Ms K Balmer	2 September 2019 to 1 September 2024	9.5	0-5	0-5

Table 4: Senior Staff Remuneration

Senior staff	Salary (£'000)		Bonus payments (£'000)		Pension benefits (£'000) ¹		Total (£'000)	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
Dr Gemma Harper (Chief Exec)	100-105	100-105	-	-	41	39	140-145	135-140
Executive directors								
Dr JC Goold	60-65	60-65	0-5	0-5	24	24	85-90	85-90
Professor C Maggs ²	30-35	60-65	0-5	0-5	14	24	45-50	85-90
Dr SB Wilkinson	55-60	55-60	0-5	0-5	-3	14	55-60	70-75

Mr CM Brooks ³	-	30-35	-	-	-	10	-	40-45
Mr DP Collins ⁴	70-75	50-55	-	-	9	12	80-85	60-65
Dr M Konar ⁵	45-50	25-30	-	-	20	16	65-70	40-45
Mrs N Askew ⁶	15-20	-	0-5	-	8	-	25-30	-
Ms B Stoker ⁷	15-20	-	0-5	-	10	-	25-30	-
Mr D Stone ⁸	5-10	-	-	-	11	-	15-20	-

¹ The value of benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increase excludes increase due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

² Professor C Maggs retired as an executive director on 30 November 2022. Her salary for 2022-23 expressed as a full-time and full-year equivalent remained unchanged from the prior year at £60,000 - £65,000. For the majority of 2022-23, actual salary was based on a 0.8 FTE working pattern at £45,000 - £50,000.

³ Mr CM Brooks resigned as an executive director on 30 July 2021. His salary for 2021-22 expressed as a full-year equivalent falls into the band £70,000-£75,000

⁴ Mr DP Collins was appointed as an executive director on 12 July 2021. His salary for 2021-22 expressed as a full-year equivalent falls into the band £70,000-£75,000

⁵ Dr M Konar was appointed as an executive director on 23 August 2021. From 23 August 2021 to 6 February 2022 at an FTE of 0.6 and from 7 February 2022 to 16 February 2023 at an FTE of 0.9. Her salary expressed as a full-time and full-year equivalent falls into the band £60,000-£65,000 (2021-22: £60,000-£65,000).

⁶ Mrs N Askew was appointed as an executive director on 3 October 2022. Her salary expressed as a full-year equivalent falls into the band £30,000 - £35,000. This has not been grossed up to be stated as a full time equivalent, Mrs N Askew has worked at 0.6 FTE since appointment.

⁷ Ms B Stoker was appointed as an executive director on 3 October 2022. Her salary expressed as a full-year equivalent falls into the band £30,000 - £35,000. This has not been grossed up to be stated as a full time equivalent, Ms B Stoker has worked at 0.6 FTE since appointment.

⁸ Mr D Stone was appointed as an executive director on 1 March 2023. His salary expressed as a full-year equivalent falls into the band £70,000 - £75,000.

Pay multiples (subject to audit)

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the 25th, 50th (median) and 75th percentiles remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in JNCC Support Co for the financial year was £100-105k (2022: £100-105k). Table 5 shows the ratio of this to the percentiles as

above. The decrease in the median pay year on year is due to changes in the blend of grades employed in the organisation as the headcount has grown, offset by pay rises between years. The change in blend can be clearly seen in [Note 7](#), with the 10% increase in FTE year on year arising from an increase in staff below team leader level.

Tables 15 and 16 contain disclosures of the percentage changes in the highest paid director's salaries and bonuses and of the average salary and average bonus of the organisation (excluding the highest paid director) which are also required as part of the fair pay disclosure.

Table 5 Fair pay disclosure percentile comparisons

	25th percentile pay ratio		Median pay ratio		75th percentile pay ratio	
	2023 £	2022 £	2023 £	2022 £	2023 £	2022 £
Total Pay and Benefits	28,958	28,390	31,963	35,277	37,780	37,913
Salary component of total pay and benefits	28,804	28,390	30,149	31,138	36,564	36,345
Ratio on Total Pay and Benefits	3.54	3.61	3.21	2.91	2.71	2.70

Table 6: Percentage changes in pay and bonuses

Highest Paid Director Total Salary and Allowances		% Change	Highest Paid Director Bonus		% Change
2023	2022		2023	2022	
£	£		£	£	
102,500	102,500	-	-	-	-

Table 7: Percentage changes in average pay and bonuses of the organisation (excluding the highest paid director)

Average Salary and Allowances		% Change	Average Bonus		% Change
2023	2022		2023	2022	
£	£		£	£	
35,012	33,416	4.8%	442	367	20.4%

The average percentage change in salary and allowances from the previous financial year for all JNCC employees (excluding the highest paid individual) is calculated based on the average salary of all staff (including temporary staff) in post at the year-end compared with the average salary of those in post at the prior year-end.

No employees received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director in either 2023 or 2022. Remuneration in the organisation, excluding pension benefits and including the highest paid director, ranged from £15,000-£20,000 to £100,000-£105,000 (2022: £10,000-£15,000 to £100,000-£105,000).

The median pay ratio is consistent with the application of JNCC's pay remit which is developed annually in line with the Cabinet Office pay guidelines in effect at the time. The pay remit document forms the basis of the pay policy for each year and is agreed by the Remuneration Committee, on behalf of the Joint Committee.

Pension benefits (subject to audit)

Table 8: Pension Benefits

Senior Staff:	Total accrued pension at pension age at 31 March 2023 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31 March 2023 £'000	CETV at 31 March 2022 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000
Dr Gemma Harper (Chief Executive) ¹	35-40	0-2.5	577	495	24
Dr JC Goold ¹	20-25	0-2.5	305	271	15
Professor C Maggs ¹	5-10	0-2.5	152	135	12
Dr SB Wilkinson ²	20-25 plus lump sum of 35-40	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0-2.5	397	365	-10
Mr DP Collins	25-30 plus lump sum of 40-45	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0	393	369	5
Dr M Konar ¹	15-20	0-2.5	175	158	6
Mrs N Askew	5-10	0-2.5	83	77	3
Ms B Stoker	15-20	0-2.5	178	163	5
Mr D Stone	25-30 plus lump sum of 60-65	0-2.5 plus lump sum of 0-2.5	579	564	11
Mr CM Brooks ¹	-	-	-	76	-

¹ Dr G Harper, Mr JC Goold, Professor C Maggs, Dr M Konar, Mrs N Askew, Ms B Stoker and Mr CM Brooks are members of pension schemes that do not include a lump sum payment.

² Taking account of inflation, the CETV funded by the employer has decreased in real terms.

Civil Service Pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or **alpha**, which provides benefits on a career average basis with a normal pension age equal to the member's State Pension Age (or 65 if higher). From that date all newly appointed civil servants and the majority of those already in service joined **alpha**. Prior to that date, civil servants participated in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS has four sections: 3 providing benefits on a final salary basis (**classic**, **premium** or **classic plus**) with a normal pension age of 60; and one providing benefits on a whole career basis (**nuvos**) with a normal pension age of 65.

These statutory arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under **classic**, **premium**, **classic plus**, **nuvos** and **alpha** are increased annually in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Existing members of the PCSPS who were within 10 years of their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 remained in the PCSPS after 1 April 2015. Those who were between 10 years and 13 years and 5 months

from their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 switch into **alpha** sometime between 1 June 2015 and 1 February 2022. Because the Government plans to remove discrimination identified by the courts in the way that the 2015 pension reforms were introduced for some members, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period (and this may affect the Cash Equivalent Transfer Values shown in this report – see below). All members who switch to **alpha** have their PCSPS benefits 'banked', with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave **alpha**. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or **alpha** – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and **alpha** the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes.) Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a defined contribution (money purchase) pension with an employer contribution (**partnership** pension account).

Employee contributions are salary-related and range between 4.6% and 8.05% for members of **classic**, **premium**, **classic plus**, **nuvos** and **alpha**. Benefits in **classic** accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years initial pension is payable on retirement. For **premium**, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike **classic**, there is no automatic lump sum. **classic plus** is essentially a hybrid with benefits for service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per **classic** and benefits for service from October 2002 worked out as in **premium**. In **nuvos** a member builds up a pension based on his pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March) the member's earned pension account is credited with 2.3% of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Benefits in **alpha** build up in a similar way to **nuvos**, except that the accrual rate is 2.32%. In all cases members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The **partnership** pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal & General Mastertrust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute, but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium** and **classic plus**, 65 for members of **nuvos**, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of **alpha**. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or **alpha** – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and **alpha** the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes, but note that part of that pension may be payable from different ages.)

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure

pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

CETV figures are calculated using the guidance on discount rates for calculating unfunded public service pension contribution rates that was extant at 31 March 2023. HM Treasury published updated guidance on 27 April 2023; this guidance will be used in the calculation of 2023-24 CETV figures.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period

Staff Report

During the year ending 31 March 2023 JNCC Support Co employed, on average, 264 full-time equivalent staff, based primarily in offices in Peterborough and Aberdeen. Our staff bring together scientific and technical expertise, extensive knowledge of policy at global, European and national levels, and skills in working with other organisations.

Appointments are made in line with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, which requires appointment to be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. We promote equality of opportunity for all staff, irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, religion or belief. Conditions of employment, policies and procedures are available on the JNCC website, www.jncc.gov.uk. A performance management system was in operation throughout the year ending 31 March 2023. To maximise effectiveness, increase performance and develop staff for the future JNCC has an ambition to be a 'learning organisation'. This means providing learning and development opportunities for all staff alongside a culture of continual improvement in the development and deployment of our systems, structures and processes.

We set out to be a socially responsible organisation, providing flexibility to enable our staff to combine work with home responsibilities and to contribute to the communities in which they live. During 2022 to 2023 established staff led groups on EDI and Neurodiversity continued their work alongside HR colleagues to prepare and review policies to support all staff. A new staff group was established to develop an action plan to secure associate White Ribbon accreditation, in recognition of our commitment to end gender-based violence against women.

JNCC is a Disability Confident Leader, the highest level possible in the Government's Disability Confident scheme. The scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed

by employers and disabled people’s representatives. Being a Disability Confident Leader, we demonstrate our commitment to ensure disabled people are treated fairly and have access to the same opportunities as non-disabled people.

JNCC employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). Details of the scheme and the company’s liabilities in this regard can be found in the remuneration report and account policies note.

The breakdown of staffing by gender at the year-end was as follows:

Table 9: Breakdown of staff by gender

Staff by gender	Number of staff			Percentage of total	
	Male	Female	Total	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Directors of the company (Joint Committee members and Chief Executive)	4	4	8	3	3
Executive directors	5	2	7	2	2
Other staff	79	203	282	95	95
Total	88	209	297	100	100

Table 10: Number of Senior Civil Service Staff by Band

	2023 Annualised Headcount	2022 Annualised Headcount
SCS 2	1	1
SCS 1	1	1
Total	2	2

Sickness absence

In 2022 to 2023 the average sickness absence per full-time employee was 6.0 days (4.1 days in 2021 to 2022).

Health and safety

JNCC is committed to complying with all legal obligations for health and safety and is proactive in anticipating and assessing problems to remove or reduce any risks to staff. The table below details the number of health and safety incidents recorded at JNCC for the past two years.

Table 11: Recorded health and safety incidents for the past two years

	2023	2022
Minor Accidents	4	2
Near Miss Incidents	1	1
Lost Time	-	-

Reporting of Civil Service and Other Compensation Schemes – Exit Packages (subject to audit)

There were no Redundancy or other departure costs paid in 2022/23 in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Trade Union Facility Time (subject to audit)

Under the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017, JNCC is required to disclose information relating to paid Trade Union activities undertaken by relevant union officials.

Table 12: Relevant union officials

	2023	2022
Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	10.0	8.0
Full-time equivalents (FTEs)	9.7	7.5

Table 13: Percentage of working time spent on facility time by union officials

Percentage of time	Number of TU officials 2023
0%	4
1% – 50%	6
51% – 99%	-
100%	-

Table 14: Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Total cost of facility time	£5,186
Total pay bill	£13.1m
Percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time	0.04%

There were no paid TU activities during 2022-23

Off-Payroll Appointments

Information on off-payroll engagements is set out in the following tables. Off-payroll means anyone who is working for JNCC but is not paying PAYE (Pay As You Earn) or National Insurance via the payroll.

Table 14: Highly paid off-payroll worker engagements as at 31 March 2023, earning £245 per day or greater

Number of existing engagements as at 31 March 2023	0
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Table 15: All highly paid off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2023, earning £245 per day or greater

Number of off-payroll workers engaged during the year ended 31 March 2023	11
Of which:	
Not subject to off-payroll legislation	8
Subject to off-payroll legislation and determined as out-of-scope of IR35	3
Number of engagements reassessed for compliance or assurance purposes during the year	0

Table 16: For any off-payroll engagements of board members, and/or, senior officials with significant financial responsibility, between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023

Number of off-payroll engagements of board members, and/or, senior officials with significant financial responsibility, during the financial year (Senior Officials with significant financial responsibility are defined as all board level executives, non-executive directors and finance directors)	0
Total number of individuals on payroll and off payroll that have been deemed "board members, and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility", during the financial year (this figure includes both on-payroll and off-payroll engagements)	13

Consultancy and Temporary Staff Expenditure (subject to audit)

Spend on temporary staff was £248k in the year, up from £108k in the previous year. This increase is due to longer vacancies being temporarily filled than in the previous year, including project management roles. During the year, consultancy expenditure remained at a level consistent with previous years at £69k (£79k in 2021-22).

Parliamentary Accountability and Audit Report

The Parliamentary Accountability and Audit Report details required disclosures regarding the regularity of expenditure, so that Parliament can be assured that funds have been expended in the manner intended. This meets the key accountability requirements to Parliament.

Losses, Special payments and Gifts (audited)

JNCC reported two losses totalling £1.3k and no special payments during the year to 31 March 2023 (2022: no losses and no special payments). Thirty-one fruitless payments were recorded in the year to 31 March 2023 with a total value of £18.6k (2022: four fruitless payments totalling £0.6k). The large increase year on year has been driven by increased travel activity and increased travel disruption.

There were no losses, special payments or gifts incurred which exceeded the limits proscribed in Managing Public Money.

Remote contingent liabilities (audited)

We have carefully considered possible future liabilities relating to past events and have concluded that there are no remote contingent liabilities to be disclosed in the Annual Report and Accounts.

Regularity of Expenditure (audited)

There have been no instances of irregularities of expenditure during the year.

Statement of Directors' and Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

The Directors and Accounting Officer are responsible for ensuring that the Annual Report and Accounts are prepared in accordance with applicable law and regulations, including that accounts are prepared which give a true and fair view of the company's assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss.

In preparing the accounts, the Directors and Accounting Officer are required to comply with the requirements of the Companies Act and – as required in the company's Framework Document – HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual, where this does not conflict with the Act. In particular, the Directors and Accounting Officer are required to:

- observe relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Directors and Accounting Officer are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Accounting Officer of Defra has designated the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer for the company. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the company's assets, are set out in Managing Public Money published by the HM Treasury.

As required by the Companies Act, information on disclosure of information to auditors is given in the Directors' Report.

Fair, balanced and understandable confirmation

The Accounting Officer confirms that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and that she takes personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

Dr G Harper
Chief Executive

DATE

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE MEMBERS OF JNCC SUPPORT CO, THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of JNCC Support Co for the year ended 31 March 2023 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

The financial statements comprise JNCC Support Co's:

- Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Equity, Cash Flow Statement; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the JNCC Support Co's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and its loss for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), applicable law and Practice Note 10 *Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (2022)*. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's *Revised Ethical Standard 2019*. I am independent of the JNCC Support Co in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the JNCC Support Co's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the JNCC Support Co's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's certificate thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Annual Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the JNCC Support Co and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Annual Report.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of director's remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the directors and accounting officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' and Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the directors and accounting officer are responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within JNCC Support Co from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- preparing financial statements, which give a true and fair view, in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and with the directions made by the Secretary of State;

- ensuring such internal controls are in place as directors determine are necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- preparing the Annual Report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and with directions made by the Secretary of State; and
- assessing the JNCC Support Co's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intends to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations including fraud

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.

Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, I:

- considered the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of the JNCC Support Co's accounting policies, key performance indicators and performance incentives;
- inquired of management, the JNCC Support Co's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the JNCC Support Co's policies and procedures on
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations,
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud, and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including the JNCC Support Co's controls relating to the JNCC Support Co's compliance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Companies Act 2006, Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and Managing Public Money;
- inquired of management, the JNCC Support Co's head of internal audit and those charged with governance whether
 - they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations, or
 - they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud; and
- discussed with the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the JNCC Support Co for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals, complex transactions and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of the JNCC Support Co's framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which the JNCC Support Co operates. I focused on those laws and regulations

that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the JNCC Support Co. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Companies Act 2006, Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000, Managing Public Money, employment law, pensions legislation and tax legislation.

Audit response to identified risk

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- I reviewed the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;
- I enquired of management and the Audit and Risk Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board and internal audit reports; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, I tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments, assessed whether the judgements on estimates are indicative of a potential bias, and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them. I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control I identify during my audit.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies

[Date]

Comptroller and Auditor General

National Audit Office

157-197 Buckingham Palace Road

Victoria

London

SW1W 9SP

**Statement of Comprehensive Income
(including the profit and loss account)
For the year ended 31 March 2023**

	Note	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Turnover	2	22,465	20,105
Cost of activities	2	(19,700)	(16,914)
Gross profit		2,765	3,191
Administrative expenditure	3	(3,090)	(2,156)
Operating (loss)/profit	2	(325)	1,035
Other interest receivable and similar income	2	-	-
(Loss)/Profit for the financial year		(325)	1,035
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income		(325)	1,035

The notes commencing on page 93 form part of these accounts.

**Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 31 March 2023**

	Profit and loss account £'000	Total Equity £'000
	£000s	£000s
As at 1 April 2021	1,855	1,855
Profit/(Loss) for the year	1,035	1,035
Other comprehensive income	-	-
As at 31 March 2022	2,890	2,890
Loss/(Profit) for the year	(325)	(325)
Other comprehensive income	-	-
As at 31 March 2023	2,565	2,565

The notes commencing on page 93 form part of these accounts.

Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2023

	Note	As at 31 March 2023 £000s	As at 31 March 2022 £000s
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets	8	226	2
Tangible assets	9	164	106
		390	108
Current assets			
Cash at bank and in hand	10	3,479	4,002
Debtors	11	2,173	2,141
		5,652	6,143
Creditors			
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(2,839)	(2,715)
Net current assets		2,813	3,428
Total assets less current liabilities		3,203	3,536
Provisions for liabilities	13	(638)	(646)
Net assets		2,565	2,890
Capital and reserves			
Profit and loss account		2,565	2,890
Total reserves		2,565	2,890

These accounts have been audited under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and are therefore exempt from the requirements of section 475 of the Companies Act 2006. The Financial Statements on pages 89 to 107 were approved by the board of directors on 14th June 2022 and signed on its behalf.

Dr Gemma Harper
 Chief Executive

Company Number 05380206 (England and Wales)
 The notes commencing on page 93 form part of these accounts.

Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Gain/(loss) on ordinary activities before interest	2	(325)	1,035
Adjustments for:			
Amortisation of intangible assets	8	-	3
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	9	51	43
Loss on disposal of assets	9	3	-
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	11	(32)	(961)
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	13	(8)	160
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	12	124	368
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash (used in)/generated from operational activities		(187)	648
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	9	(112)	(18)
Purchase of intangible assets	8	(224)	-
Interest received	2	-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(336)	(18)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	10	(523)	630
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	10	4,002	3,372
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	10	3,479	4,002
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The company is funded entirely through its operational income and grant in aid from Defra, and so has no borrowings. There are therefore no movements in net debt other than those disclosed in this statement of cash flows.

The notes commencing on [page 93](#) form part of these accounts.

JNCC Support Co Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

Statement of accounting policies

The financial statements are intended, without limiting the information given, to conform to the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102. Where the requirements of the HM Treasury's Financial reporting manual do not conflict with the Companies Act, they have been adhered to.

Where the requirements of the Companies Act or the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be more appropriate to the particular circumstances of the JNCC Support Co, for the purpose of giving a true and fair view, has been selected. The accounting policies set out below have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the accounts.

Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis under the historical cost convention.

Turnover

The principal form of income is grant in aid received from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This is treated as income in the accounts as it is provided to enable JNCC Support Co to provide the services necessary to support the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in the delivery of its objectives.

The bulk of the remaining turnover is in the form of contributions to project work, plus further income comprising grants from European Union sources, income for the provision of advice, and royalties.

Income is received by JNCC for undertaking specific projects, these projects in some instances may span financial years and as such JNCC accrues or defers income as appropriate based on the stage or percentage completion of the contract. The stage of completion of a project is estimated using the most reliable of the following two methods:

- the proportion that costs incurred for work performed to date bear to the estimated total costs
- completion of a physical proportion of the contract work or the completion of a proportion of the service contract.

All income is stated net of VAT and trade discounts.

Going concern

Grant in aid for the next financial year, taking into account the amounts required to meet JNCC Support Co's budgeted liabilities for 2023 to 2024, has already been included in Defra's and the devolved administrations' estimates for the coming year. Due to parliamentary control processes, Defra do not have authority to commit to providing grant in aid to JNCC beyond March 2024, however JNCC's funding is guaranteed by legislation. The Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006, schedule 4, paragraph 14.1 states that the funding bodies must provide the Joint Committee with such financial resources as the

appropriate authorities consider are needed for the proper discharge of the functions conferred by Part 2.

The directors have considered and discussed funding for the following financial year and the twelve months from the date of the approval of the accounts and as such are content that the anticipated funding is sufficient. It is therefore considered appropriate that these financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis. Accrued expenditure is recognised when it is assessed that there is an unconditional obligation to pay suppliers and is based on agreed amounts, contractually, or by another form of mutual agreement.

As a non-trading public sector organisation JNCC is only able to reclaim a fraction of the VAT paid on expenditure incurred as part of its normal business. The value of VAT reclaimed in the year is detailed as a separate line within Other Administration Costs (**note 3**). All other expenditure is therefore stated gross of VAT.

Fixed assets

The 2022-23 FReM requires assets to be valued at current value in existing use, or fair value. JNCC has elected to value fixed assets at depreciated historic cost as a proxy for fair value on the basis that the assets are low value and/or have short useful economic lives. This approach is permitted under paragraph 10.1.14 of the 2022-23 FReM and paragraph 17.15 of FRS 102.

Individual assets costing £2,000 or more including VAT are capitalised as tangible or intangible assets, assuming they are intended to be used on a continuing basis. These assets are valued at depreciated historical cost. Assets costing less than £2,000 are charged to the profit and loss account in the year of purchase.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on all tangible and intangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost evenly over its expected useful life. Standard write-off periods, shown below, are normally used, although alternative lives may be used where relevant information is available to ascribe a more accurate expected useful life:

Leasehold premises and fixtures	over the period of individual leases
Computer equipment	5 years
Other equipment	5 to 10 years
Software licences	5 years

Research and development

The company writes off all expenditure on research and development in the year it occurs.

Cash and cash equivalents

All cash and cash equivalents held throughout the year were held in a commercial bank or cash in hand.

Foreign exchange

Assets and liabilities in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the rates of exchange ruling at the balance sheet date. Receipts received in foreign currencies are

normally converted to sterling on the day of receipt unless JNCC will be making payments to third parties in the currency received.

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the rate ruling at the date of the transaction. Exchange differences are recognised in the profit and loss account.

Leases

Rental costs arising in respect of operating leases are charged to the profit and loss account over the life of each lease. JNCC Support Co has no finance leases.

Accrued holiday pay

In accordance with paragraph 28.6 of FRS 102, JNCC accrues for all short-term compensated absences as holiday entitlement earned, but not taken at the date of the statement of financial position.

Pension costs

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements, full details of which are described within the remuneration report.

Although the Civil Service pension arrangements include defined benefit schemes (the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and Alpha), entities such as JNCC Support Co covered by these multi-employer schemes are unable to reliably identify their share of the underlying assets and liabilities, and so recognise the costs on a systematic basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services, by payment to the PCSPS and Alpha, of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS and Alpha.

Note 6 provides details of JNCC Support Co's pension costs.

Previous JNCC Chairs were entitled to accrue pension benefits but were not eligible to join the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). Individual "by analogy to the PCSPS" schemes were therefore established to provide pensions for the Chairs, with any ongoing liability arising from these arrangements being borne by JNCC Support Co. The future cumulative cost of these pensions was calculated and based on this valuation a provision was taken for the liability, in line with the requirements of Section 21 of FRS 102 (Provisions and Contingencies). The estimated liability is reviewed each year and the current value of this provision is disclosed in **note 13** to these accounts.

Remuneration for the post of JNCC Chair no longer includes entitlement to membership of a pension scheme.

Grants received

Grant in aid received of a revenue nature is credited to income for the year to which it relates and is recognised on a cash basis. Grants received from sources other than Government grants, including from European Union sources, are matched to the corresponding project expenditure in the year in which it is incurred.

In respect of European Union funding, where JNCC Support Co was acting as the lead partner in respect of joint projects and where income for this work has been channelled to the individual partners through the lead partner, only income and expenditure related to JNCC's own work is shown in the financial statements. Any cash received by JNCC Support Co, but not distributed to the partners as at the date of the balance sheet, is shown as a third-party asset in the balance sheet.

Financial instruments

A financial instrument is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Financial assets and financial liabilities would be recognised in the balance sheet if JNCC became a party to the contractual provisions of an instrument.

JNCC has no borrowings and relies primarily on grant in aid from Defra and the devolved administrations for its cash requirements and is therefore not exposed to liquidity risks. All material assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling so it is not exposed to significant currency risk.

Taxation

Corporation Tax

JNCC Support Co's Corporation Tax liability is limited to that arising from Case III investment income and capital gains. In 2022 to 2023 there is no Corporation Tax charge for the year (2021 to 2022 £nil).

Value Added Tax

Most of the activities of JNCC Support Co. are outside the scope of VAT so in general output tax does not apply and input tax on purchases is not recoverable. Expenditure is therefore charged gross to the relevant expense category or included in the capitalised purchase cost of non-current assets. Where output tax is charged, the amounts are stated net of VAT. JNCC uses an agreed formula to enable the quarterly calculation of the amount of reclaimable input tax, which is credited to the profit and loss account.

The amount of reclaimable input tax is small and is therefore shown as a credit to the profit and loss account. During 2023 the amount of reclaimed input tax was £64k (£63k in 2022).

JNCC Support Co receives grant in aid from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the devolved administrations, and this is treated as non-business income for the purposes of VAT.

Estimation

In the preparation of the financial statements the JNCC Support Co is required to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and the reported amount of income and expenditure, such as in the calculation of the dilapidations provision (Note 13) and the amounts of income deferred (Note 12) and accrued (Note 11). Where applicable, income recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the contract activity at the balance sheet date. In accordance with paragraph 2.9 of FRS 102, the Executive Leadership Team is satisfied that an appropriate degree of prudence has been applied in the exercise of any judgments needed where estimation of the value of assets or liabilities has been required in the production of these accounts.

Provisions

In accordance with section 21 of FRS 102, JNCC provides for obligations arising from past events where it is probable that it will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate of it can be made. Future costs are not discounted unless this would significantly affect the valuation of an obligation.

2. Detailed trading profit and loss account for the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Turnover		
JNCC grant in aid	19,431	17,199
Secondment income	138	250
European Union funding	575	360
Royalties	6	5
Scientific advice and information	2,315	2,291
	22,465	20,105
Cost of activities		
Conservation support	6,645	5,689
Publicity and information	217	224
Direct staff costs	12,838	11,001
	19,700	16,914
Gross profit	2,765	3,191
Administrative expenditure		
Directors' remuneration	254	212
Other administrative costs	2,836	1,944
	3,090	2,156
Operating (loss)/profit	(325)	1,035

The operating (loss)/profit above is stated after charging the following items

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Operating lease rentals	375	349

3. Schedule of overhead expenses for the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Directors' remuneration		
Directors' remuneration	215	182
Contribution to directors' pensions	39	30
	254	212
Other administration costs		
Cash items		
Rental costs under operating leases	375	349
Accommodation costs	310	258
Information technology	682	557
Human resources	349	221
Travel and subsistence	791	145
Printing, postage, stationery and subscriptions	90	69
Other expenses	100	26
Less reclaimed VAT	(64)	(63)
Legal and professional fees	64	82
Consultancy	64	79
Bank charges	11	3
Exchange rate losses	13	5
	2,785	1,731
Non-cash items		
Depreciation and amortisation for the year	51	46
Additions to provisions	-	167
	51	213
Administrative expenses	3,090	2,156

The fees payable to the National Audit Office for the audit of the annual accounts for the year were £29.5k (2022: £24.5k).

4. Directors' remuneration

The number of directors for whom retirement benefits are accruing under defined benefit schemes amounted to 2 (2022: 1).

This note reports on Company Directors only. It does not refer to the team of Executive Directors, details of which can be found in Table 8 of the Remuneration Report. The prior year figures have been represented.

The remuneration of the highest paid director is disclosed in the Remuneration Report.

5. Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s
Wages and salaries	9,801	8,248
Movement in holiday pay accrual	26	34
Social security costs	828	778
Apprenticeship Levy	31	26
Other pension costs	2,406	2,127
	13,092	11,213

Total holiday pay accrued at 31 March 2023 was £516K (£490k at 31 March 2022).

6. Pension costs

JNCC's defined benefit pension schemes (the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and Other Pension Scheme (CSOPS) are unfunded multi-employer schemes for which JNCC is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The scheme actuary valued the scheme as at 31 March 2016. Details can be found in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation <https://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/about-us/resource-accounts>.

For 2022 to 2023, employers' contributions of £2,396k were payable to the PCSPS (£2,114k in 2021 to 2022) at one of four rates in the range 26.6% to 30.3% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The same rates are to apply for 2023/24 and JNCC's total employers' contributions are expected to be consistent with the current year.

The scheme's actuary reviews employer contributions usually every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2022 to 2023 to be paid when the member retires and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £10k (£13k in 2021 to 2022) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and ranged between 8% and 14.75%.

Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable pay. In addition, employer contributions of £0.4k were payable to the PCSPS to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees (£0.6k in 2022), this representing 0.01% of pensionable pay.

Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the balance sheet date were £1k (£1k at 31 March 2022). There were no prepaid contributions at this date.

7. Staff numbers

The average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) persons employed by the company, including directors, during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
	FTEs	FTEs
Chief Executive and executive directors	7	6
Chair and non-executive directors	1	1
Team Leaders	31	26
Other staff	225	206
	264	239

8. Intangible fixed assets

2023	
	£000s
Cost	
At 1 April 2022	200
Additions during year	224
Disposals	-
At 31 March 2023	<u>424</u>
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2022	198
Charge for the year	-
Amortisation on disposals	-
At 31 March 2023	<u>198</u>
Net Book Value	
At 1 April 2022	<u>2</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>226</u>
2022	
	£000s
Cost	
At 1 April 2021	200
Additions during year	-
Disposals	-
At 31 March 2022	<u>200</u>
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2021	195
Charge for the year	3
Amortisation on disposals	-
At 31 March 2022	<u>198</u>
Net Book Value	
At 1 April 2021	<u>5</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>2</u>

Intangible assets represent the value of the software licences held. Intangible assets are disposed of when no longer used or when superseded by an upgrade, in which case a new asset is created, reflecting the cost of the upgrade.

9. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment	Other equipment	Total
Cost	£000s	£000s	£000s
At 1 April 2022	448	118	566
Additions during year	112	-	112
Disposals	(191)	(106)	(297)
At 31 March 2023	<u>369</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>381</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2022	352	108	460
Charge for the year	48	3	51
Depreciation on disposals	(191)	(103)	(294)
At 31 March 2023	<u>209</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>217</u>
Net Book Value			
At 1 April 2022	<u>96</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>106</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>160</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>164</u>

	Computer equipment	Other equipment	Total
Cost	£000s	£000s	£000s
At 1 April 2021 (opening balance)	443	118	561
Additions during year	18	-	18
Disposals	(13)	-	(13)
At 31 March 2022 (closing balance)	<u>448</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>566</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2021 (opening balance)	325	105	430
Charge for the year	40	3	43
Depreciation on disposals	(13)	-	(13)
At 31 March 2022 (closing balance)	<u>352</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>460</u>
Net Book Value			
At 1 April 2021 (opening balance)	<u>118</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>131</u>
At 31 March 2022 (closing balance)	<u>96</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>106</u>

10. Cash at bank and in hand

	1 April 2022 £000s	Cash flows £000s	31 March 2023 £000s
Analysis of changes in net funds			
Cash at bank	4,001	(522)	3,479
Cash in hand	1	(1)	-
Total cash	4,002	(523)	3,479

The cash at bank balance is held in a commercial bank. No amounts are held with the Government Banking Service.

11. Debtors – amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Trade debtors	822	1,208
Other debtors	46	51
Prepayments	556	268
Accrued income	749	614
	2,173	2,141

All balances were reviewed, and it was not considered necessary to make provision for any bad debts. (2022: no bad debt provision).

12. Creditors – amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £000s	2022 £000s
Trade creditors	54	387
Other creditors	325	230
Taxation and social security	556	316
Accruals	1,448	1,394
Deferred income	456	388
	2,839	2,715

13. Provisions for liabilities

	Pensions and similar obligations £000s	Other provisions £000s	Total provisions £000s
2023			
Balance at 1 April 2022	77	569	646
Provision for year	-	-	-
Utilised	(8)	-	(8)
Balance at 31 March 2023	69	569	638

2022	Pensions and similar obligations £000s	Other provisions £000s	Total provisions £000s
Balance at 1 April 2021	68	418	486
Provision for year	16	237	253
Utilised	(7)	(86)	(93)
Balance at 31 March 2022	77	569	646

Other provisions of £569k represents the expected cost of dilapidations on JNCC's exit from Monkstone House, Peterborough. This amount is unchanged from the provision in 2022, which in turn was calculated to reflect a review carried out in January 2022. Negotiations are currently ongoing with the Monkstone House landlord as to the settlement figure. The provision accurately reflects the estimated liability as negotiations continue.

The pensions and similar obligations figure of £77k represents the remaining balance of a provision established in 2013 to 2014 to reflect the estimated cost of future pension payments to retired JNCC Chairs entitled to a pension "by analogy to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme". The provision unwinds as amounts are paid. This provision was revalued in the previous year. The closing balance as at 31 March 2023 has been reviewed and confirmed by management as being fairly stated.

14. Leasing commitments

	Land and buildings 2023 £000s	Land and buildings 2022 £000s
Operating leases which expire:		
Within one year	-	150
Within 2 to 5 years	-	-
Total	-	150

The operating lease disclosed in 2022 represented the rent payable on the lease of Monkstone House, Peterborough. During 2023 the six-month break clause in the lease was activated and as such, the lease expired during the year. The rent and associated service charges relating to JNCC's new premises in Fletton Quay, Peterborough are to be recharged from DEFRA. This recharging starts from 1 April 2023. No lease commitment exists for JNCC for the new premises.

JNCC also occupies Inverdee House in Aberdeen. Similar to Fletton Quays, the rent and service charges are recharged from DEFRA; JNCC does not recognise a lease commitment under this arrangement.

15. Legal status

The company is limited by guarantee. In the event of a liquidation, the liability of each member does not exceed £1 if they are a member at the date of the liquidation, or if they cease to be a member within one year of the date of the liquidation. As at 31 March 2023 the members were:

Professor Colin Galbraith
Mr Charles Banner KC
Ms Cath Denholm
Professor Thomas Meagher
Professor Melanie Austen
Professor Pete Higgins
Ms Aoife Martin
Professor Julian Orford
Lord Blencathra
Sir David Henshaw
Professor Steve Ormerod
Dr Gemma Harper
Mr David Collins

16. Contingent liability

There are no contingent liabilities to declare for either the current or prior year.

17. Ultimate controlling party

Eleven out of the thirteen directors in post at 31 March 2023 are members of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. The Committee sets the overall direction and priorities for the work of the support company. For these reasons the directors consider the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to be the ultimate controlling party.

18. Related party transactions

In order to ensure accuracy in the consolidation of Whole of Government Accounts, the Clear Line of Sight Initiative requires that Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) such as JNCC receive their grant in aid funding from a single source. As a result, from 1 April 2011 the JNCC Support Co received its grant in aid funding solely via the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), whereas prior to this date, grant in aid was received from the GB conservation bodies, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and Defra. The GB Conservation bodies are regarded as Non-Departmental Public Bodies sponsored individually by Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. Because the grant in aid now received from Defra still originates from the GB conservation bodies, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and Defra, these remain considered to be related parties. During the year, the Company has carried out a number of material transactions with these bodies in the normal course of business.

The quantum of the transactions between the Company and these bodies was as follows:

	Grant in aid		Specific project funding		Services purchased by the company	
	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Natural England	-	-	16	-	-	-
Defra	19,431	17,199	344	708	328	136
NatureScot	-	-	9	6	29	50
Natural Resources Wales	-	-	25	10	56	-
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	-	-	46	192	-	-
Northern Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	19,431	17,199	440	916	413	186

Balances outstanding at the year-end were as follows:

	Debtors and prepayments		Creditors and accrued expenditure	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Natural England	-	-	-	4
Defra	-	696	106	115
NatureScot	-	-	-	14
Natural Resources Wales	-	-	15	9
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	-	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	-	43	-	-
Total	-	739	121	142

All the above balances are unsecured, will be settled in full by bank payment. No guarantees were given or received. No provision has been made for bad debts at 31 March 2023 for the above receivables, nor any expense recognised in the year for related party bad or doubtful debts.

The company discloses information for individual directors which relates to contracts in excess of £25,000. Any contract for a lesser sum is not considered to be material in the context of these financial statements.

The Remuneration and Staff report provides further information on Committee members and executive directors.

The directors consider a financial interest to be the ability to influence the company in placing a contract with a party with whom they have a position of influence, or the ability to influence the performance of that contract by the contractor.

There were no contracts or financial interests which met these criteria during the current or previous year.

19. Events after the reporting date

No adjusting or non-adjusting events have occurred after the balance sheet date that materially affect the contents of these financial statements.

Date of authorisation for issue

JNCC Support Co's financial statements are laid before the Houses of Parliament by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Section 32.9 of FRS102 requires disclosure of the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue. The authorised for issue date is the date of the Comptroller and Auditor General's audit certificate on pages 84 to 88.