The one hundred and forty-seventh meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee held on 23 and 24 June 2026 in Belfast

Paper JNCC 26 29P: Report on Committee Working Objectives 2025/26

All available papers for the one hundred and forty-seventh meeting of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee can be found at: https://jncc.gov.uk/resources/637acc86-8f80-48e4-9f35-892b1c0adba3.

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To find out more about JNCC, go to: https://jncc.gov.uk/about-jncc/who-we-are/.

Report on Committee Working Objectives 2025/26
Lead Author: Lynn Heeley
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JNCC 26 29P

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Turning science into action for nature, people and the planet.

OFFICIAL

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Report on Committee Working Objectives 2025/26

Paper by Lynn Heeley

1. Action required

1.1 The Joint Committee is asked to:

i. **Discuss** and **agree** the report on completion of the working objectives for 2025 to 2026 in Annex 1 (based on the assessment from the feedback survey completed by Committee members May 2026).

ii. **Discuss** and **agree** the working objectives for 2026 to 2027 based on the draft in Annex 2, considering the organisational priorities listed in Annex 3.

2. Background

2.1 Working objectives are a key part of measuring progress and the performance of the Joint Committee. They help to define the role of the Committee collectively and its members individually. They serve as a useful checklist for collective Committee performance and for review or appraisal of individual member performance. They are set on an annual basis and reviewed twice per year.

2.2 The Committee member role and the completion of the previous set of working objectives for 2025 to 2026 is assessed in Annex 1.

2.3 A revised set of working objectives for 2026 to 2027 is contained in Annex 2.

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Annex 1

Committee member role

JNCC's Framework Document provides the legal, administrative and financial framework within which the Joint Committee operates and the specific functions of the Committee and the Chair. Together for Nature: Our Strategy to 2030, published in May 2023, outlines the areas of work that JNCC will undertake, focusing on its role in terrestrial and marine nature conservation and recovery, at the UK level, working with the UK Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies, and inputting evidence and advice to global nature issues. The Committee, under the leadership of the Chair, is responsible to the Defra Secretary of State for the leadership, direction, and effectiveness of JNCC in line with the JNCC strategy.

Independent members of the Joint Committee will:

- Contribute to the Committee's work in providing the UK Government and the Devolved Governments with robust and impactful evidence and advice on nature conservation and recovery across the UK, our Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, and internationally.
- Understand the natural environment and its vital importance to everyone, including its contribution to improving outcomes for society and the economy. This will include an understanding of natural capital and natural asset management.
- Promote a positive and constructive relationship with a wide range of stakeholders across the UK and internationally.
- Take a full and active role in the governance of JNCC, appropriate to a non-executive board. This involves providing support to the Chair of the JNCC in holding the executive to account for achieving work programmes agreed in annual business plans and delivering good value for money.
- Assist the Committee in overseeing the executive's delivery of Together for Nature.
- Provide a valuable source of expertise to ensure that the scientific methods and approaches underpinning JNCC's evidence and advice are robust and appropriate for the needs of customers.
- Take a longer-term strategic view to position the organisation to make optimal use of modern technological, computational and interdisciplinary scientific advances.
- Provide support and challenge to the CEO, including supporting their learning and development.

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Joint Committee working objectives for 2025-2026: Assessment of Completion

Committee Objectives	Tasks	Responsibility	Assessment of Completion	Tasks Specific to 2025/26	Responsibility	Assessment of Completion
1. Strategic Planning and Delivery	Input to the forward programme of business for the Committee, considering strategic priorities, governments' requirements, and JNCC's unique role.	Committee collectively	Completed	Oversee the implementation of Together for Nature and delivery of the 2025/26 business plan, advising on strategic resource requirements.	Committee collectively	Tasks specific to 25/26 completed
	Serve as an effective sounding board to the CEO by providing advice and challenge on strategic and operational issues as required.	Committee collectively	Ongoing task	Oversee the development and implementation of the Programme of Change for 2025-26, setting the future direction and oversee the rebalancing of the funding model		Tasks specific to 25/26 completed
2. Providing scientific direction and	Scrutinise and agree proposals provided by the executive on scientific matters.	Committee collectively	Completed	Agree a new set of terms of reference for the Chief Scientists Group and appoint a co-chair.		Completed

quality assurance	Evaluate whether the JNCC is delivering advice, research and evidence that is required by and adding value to the UK And Devolved Governments' priorities.	Committee collectively	Ongoing task	Agree new sub-group themes and establish new sub-groups based intended outcomes.		Completed except for marine
				Learn from past issues and undertake regular horizon scanning.		Ongoing task, to be further developed
3. People, Place and Culture	Oversee the strategy for and delivery of an affordable and stable workforce that is oriented and supported towards delivering Together for Nature.	Committee collectively	Ongoing task	Oversee the implementation of the People Strategy action plan.		Tasks specific to 25/26 completed
	As available and able, participate in staff engagement sessions associated with Joint Committee meetings and JNCC events to develop visibility and working relationships between JNCC's people and the Joint Committee.	Individual members	Ongoing task			

	As available and able, provide mentoring support to Board observers as agreed with the executive.	Individual members	Ongoing task			
	Actively promote and role model the JNCC values.	Committee individual and collectively	Ongoing task			
4. Risk Management	Agree and set an appropriate organisational risk appetite.	Committee collectively	Completed	Monitor the management of the significant risks by the Executive for 2025-26.		Completed
	Receive regular risk and opportunity updates through ARAC, with a particular focus on new and emerging risks and opportunities and on the organisation's resilience against the pressures of more than one risk arising at the same time.	Committee collectively	Ongoing task	Review the organisational risk appetite every 6 months.		Completed
	Share intelligence to identify risks and opportunities, including emerging agendas of government administrations,	Individual members	Ongoing task			

	other key stakeholders and political sensitivities.					
5. Delivery & Resource Management	Review corporate performance quarterly and assist the Executive in identifying and addressing delivery issues.	Committee collectively	Completed			
	Consider the implications of shifting resources on performance delivery and provide appropriate challenge whether value for money and the benefits are being achieved and oversee the development and implementation of a long term fiscal strategy to ensure medium and long term financial resilience.	Committee collectively	Ongoing task			
	Review the level of JNCC's reserves in March each year, prior to the year-end.	Committee collectively	Completed			
6. External relations	Draw on professional networks to communicate and raise the profile of JNCC to the UK and Devolved Governments and	Individual members	Ongoing task	Oversee the development of a strategic communications and engagement strategy, encompassing		Completed

	other relevant organisations and stakeholders.			a stakeholder mapping exercise.		
	Facilitate collaboration between JNCC, CNCBs and other key partners.	Individual members	Ongoing task			
	Undertake and report back on specific ambassadorial or representation roles agreed with the Executive.	Individual members	Ongoing task			
	Oversee an effective communications strategy for JNCC and its science.	Committee collectively	Ongoing task			
7. Governance	Participate in regular formal and informal governance effectiveness reviews and agree and oversee the implementation of any recommendations.	Committee collectively	Ongoing task	Implement the remaining actions from the 2024 effectiveness review.		Completed
	Participate appropriately in ARAC/People/Remuneration Committee meetings to ensure their effectiveness.	Selected individual members	Ongoing task			
8. Working Relationships	Promote good mutual understanding of the respective	Committee collectively	Ongoing task	Establish a cross-cutting issues chairs forum to		Partially completed

	and complementary roles and responsibilities of Joint Committee members and JNCC colleagues.			agree workplans, coverage, cross-pollinate and ensure no gaps. Membership to be chairs of all Committee sub-groups		(Chair and Subcommittee Chairs to meet at least twice per year altogether)
	Work in a cohesive and supportive manner with Committee colleagues, ensuring good, respectful relationships and that a culture of confidence and trust is maintained.	Committee collectively	Completed			
9. Sustainability	Ensure sustainability thinking and measures are incorporated into purpose, governance, strategy, decision-making, risk management and accountability frameworks, having regard to the UK Government's commitment of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.	Committee collectively	Ongoing task	Support the maintenance of ISO 14001:2015 certification by overseeing continual improvement of JNCC's environmental management system.	Committee collectively	Tasks specific to 25/26 completed

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Annex 2

Proposed Joint Committee Working Objectives for 2026-27

Committee Objectives	Tasks	Responsibility	Tasks Specific to 2026/27	Responsibility
1. Strategic Planning and Delivery	Input to the forward programme of business for the Committee, considering strategic priorities, governments' requirements, and JNCC's unique role.	Committee collectively	Oversee the implementation of Together for Nature and delivery of the 2026/27 business plan, advising on strategic resource requirements.	Committee collectively
	Serve as an effective sounding board to the CEO by providing advice and challenge on strategic and operational issues as required.	Committee collectively	Oversee the development and implementation of the Programme of Change for 2026/27, setting the future direction and oversee the rebalancing of the funding model.	Committee collectively
2. Providing scientific direction and quality assurance	Scrutinise and agree proposals provided by the executive on scientific matters.	Committee collectively	Oversee the implementation of the Science Impact Strategy.	Committee collectively
	Evaluate whether the JNCC is delivering advice, research and evidence that is required by and adding value to the UK And Devolved Governments' priorities.	Committee collectively	Develop adequate marine expertise.	Committee collectively

	Learn from past issues and undertake regular horizon scanning.	Committee collectively		
3. People, Place and Culture	Oversee the strategy for and delivery of an affordable and stable workforce that is oriented and supported towards delivering Together for Nature.	Committee collectively	Agree, at the earliest opportunity, a concise set of outcome measures drawn from the Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP), critical milestones (KPIs), the revised Engagement Action Plan (People Survey) success measures and the HR data dashboard and track them at every meeting so progress and the effect of the Committee's challenge can be judged year on year.	Committee collectively
			Oversee the establishment, application and improvement of SWP by year-end that plans are actively informing resourcing, succession (e.g. a ready successor per critical role) and budget decisions.	Committee collectively
			Establish how cultural change will be evidenced (including the approach embedding the Programme of Change and SWP) and review at year-end whether there is measurable movement against the Together for Nature values of inclusion, collaboration and innovation.	Committee Collectively

			Oversee plans to review and implement a more streamlined and effective recruitment process by year end.	
	As available and able, participate in staff engagement sessions associated with Joint Committee meetings and JNCC events to develop visibility and working relationships between JNCC's people and the Joint Committee.	Individual members		
	As available and able, provide mentoring support to Board observers as agreed with the executive.	Individual members		
	Actively promote and role model the JNCC values.	Individual members and Committee collectively		
4. Risk Management	Agree and set an appropriate organisational risk appetite.	Committee collectively	Monitor the management of the significant risks by the Executive for 2026-27.	Committee collectively
	Receive regular risk and opportunity updates through ARAC, with a particular focus on new and emerging risks and opportunities and on the organisation's resilience	Committee collectively	Establish SRR and risk appetites for 2027/8 before the end of Q4.	Committee collectively

	against the pressures of more than one risk arising at the same time.			
	Share intelligence to identify risks and opportunities, including emerging agendas of government administrations, other key stakeholders and political sensitivities.	Individual members		
5. Delivery & Resource Management	Review corporate performance quarterly and assist the Executive in identifying and addressing delivery issues.	Committee collectively	Discuss and provide directional steer on delivery challenges, priorities and outcomes as informed by the quarterly performance report at each main Joint Committee meeting in 26/27.	Committee collectively
	Consider the implications of shifting resources on performance delivery and provide appropriate challenge whether value for money and the benefits are being achieved and oversee and intervene as necessary to manage long-term financial risks and resilience.	Committee collectively	Approve the business plan for 26/27 and review resource management and prioritisation throughout the year as informed by ARAC.	Committee collectively
	Review the level of JNCC's reserves in the first quarter of each year to inform financial forecasting and adjustments to priorities.	Committee collectively		
6. External relations				Committee collectively

	Draw on professional networks to communicate and raise the profile of JNCC to the UK and Devolved Governments and other relevant organisations and stakeholders.	Individual members	Oversee the finalisation and implementation of a strategic communications and engagement strategy, encompassing a stakeholder mapping exercise.	
	Facilitate collaboration between JNCC, CNCBs and other key partners.	Committee collectively	Maintain regular communications among Chairs and CEOs and CNCBs and ensure follow up to annual meetings.	Committee collectively
	Undertake and report back on specific ambassadorial or representation roles agreed with the Executive.	Individual members		
	Oversee an effective communications strategy for JNCC and its science.	Committee collectively		
7. Governance	Participate in regular formal and informal governance effectiveness reviews and agree and oversee the implementation of any recommendations.	Committee collectively	Implement actions from the 2026 effectiveness review.	Committee collectively

	Participate appropriately in ARAC/People/Remuneration Committee meetings to ensure their effectiveness.	Selected individual members	Appoint a new ARAC chair from 1 January 2027	Committee collectively
			Identify skills gaps and training needs arising from members competency assessments.	Committee collectively
8. Working Relationships	Promote good mutual understanding of the respective and complementary roles and responsibilities of Joint Committee members and JNCC colleagues.	Committee collectively	Regular communications amongst Chair and Chairs of Subcommittee to ensure coordination 26/27.	Selected individual members
	Work in a cohesive and supportive manner with Committee colleagues, ensuring good, respectful relationships and that a culture of confidence and trust is maintained.	Committee collectively		
9. Sustainability	Ensure sustainability thinking and measures are incorporated into purpose, governance, strategy, decision-making, risk management and accountability frameworks, having regard to the UK Government's commitment of achieving net zero emissions by 2050, as well as supporting the	Committee collectively	Keep under review the sustainability implications of AI	Committee collectively

	maintenance of ISO 14001:2015 certification.			

Annex 3

JNCC Strategic Objectives

a. Use our scientific expertise to facilitate a collective response to the global biodiversity crisis.

b. 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.

c. Lead the discussion to align action for nature and climate change to deliver outcomes that tackle climate breakdown and accelerate nature recovery.

d. 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.

e. Work collaboratively to support the transition to sustainable blue/green economies, linking nature recovery to economic prosperity and societal wellbeing.

f. Seek opportunities to integrate the value of nature into decision-making by mainstreaming nature recovery into social and economic policy areas.

g. 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.