

Board Paper

Date

2 December 2025

Title

England EIP 2024/5 progress assessment –request for approval

Report Author

Professor Cathy Maguire, Head of Assessments

Responsible Executive Director

Professor Robbie McDonald, Chief Insights Officer

Paper for decision

Open paper

Issue

1. The OEP is required to monitor, assess and report on government's progress in improving the natural environment in accordance with the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), goals and targets.
2. This paper details finalisation of the England EIP 2024/5 progress report and seeks Board approval for the complete report. It also provides an update on planned communication activities.

Recommendations

3. Board is recommended to approve the report in substantially the form at Annex A.
4. Board is recommended to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, ensuring that the final report has satisfactorily incorporated such amendments as the Board may direct during its meeting and other non-material amendments.
5. Board is recommended to provide feedback on planned communication activities.

Background

6. EIP progress reports are now an agenda item at Board meetings at three points in their development - approval of the scope, feedback on the draft report and approval of the final report. In order to ensure that the Board are kept informed, updates on development and any issues that Board should be aware of are provided through the CEO report, and if further detail is needed this is included as an annex to that report.
7. A draft of the analytical sections of the report was provided to Board for discussion at its meeting on 11 November. Feedback was provided to inform its further development and finalisation, particularly the Executive Summary and Foreword.

Analysis

Finalisation of the England EIP 2024/5 progress report

8. The development of the England EIP 2023/4 report has progressed as planned and in line with the agreed timetable. A complete draft of the report is presented for approval (Annex A). The draft reflects feedback provided by the Board.
9. The main changes from the previous draft include the development of the Foreword and Executive Summary as well as finalisation of Chapter 1 – Setting the scene and Chapter 14 – Taking stock. Specific comments provided by the Board on the analytical sections were considered when finalising the report.
10. The Foreword and Executive Summary will be circulated separately to the Board for feedback ahead of the Board meeting with a final version included in the complete draft report tabled for approval at the Board meeting on 10 December.
11. The EIP25 was published on 1 December. We have provided an initial analysis to inform an OEP response at the time of the launch. This will be further developed to provide a more detailed view at the launch of the England 2023/4 progress report which will form part of the keynote address by Dame Glenys.
12. **Board is recommended to approve the report in substantially the form at Annex A.**
13. **Board is recommended to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, ensuring that the final report has satisfactorily incorporated such amendments as the Board may direct during its meeting and other non-material amendments.**

Finance and Resource

14. Finance and resource allocations have been made in the current business plan for this activity. These include internal OEP resources and resources for externally commissioned projects. The current finance and resource allocation for England EIP is 6.5 FTE's predominately from the Insights Directorate, with development of the evidence base supported by approximately £290k from the non-pay project budget. The current allocation

for Northern Ireland is at a reduced scale with 3.6 FTE's and £5k from the non-pay budget reflecting the fact that we are not delivering the first report until the 2026-2027 financial year.

Impact Assessments

Risk Assessment

15. The main risks are associated with ensuring the availability of the resources needed to complete the assessment, including staff time and capacity as well as the evidence base. Detailed planning has mitigated these risks.

Risk Assessment (legal)

16. The Legal team has reviewed the draft EIP progress report and comments have been incorporated into the final draft of the report accompanying this paper. We consider that the report meets our legal obligations and does not go beyond our remit under s.28 Environment Act 2021 (Monitoring and reporting on EIPs and targets). *This section has been redacted as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.*
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Equality Analysis

18. No material equalities impacts have been identified.

Environmental Analysis

19. The EIP progress reports are one of the main mechanisms to support the OEP's principal objective to protect and improve the environment by holding government and other public authorities to account as government must respond to any recommendations laid in Parliament.

Implementation Timescale

20. The timetable for delivery and publication of the England EIP 2024/5 progress report is set out in Table 1 below. ExCo and Board will need to contribute to the development of the communication resources during December and January 2026.
21. Table 1: Timetable for delivery and publication of the England EIP 2024/5 progress report

Date	Activity
10/12/2025	Report presented to the Board for approval
02/01/2026	Final review of report proofs and return to HH Global
05/01/2026	Sign off for printing
12/01/2026	Embargoed media briefing and report laid in Parliament
13/01/2026	Report launched

16/01/2026

Online stakeholder event

Communications

22. The framework for communications and engagement is now in place. The overall approach is to get as much of the communication resources prepared in advance as possible. This comprises a launch event, media briefing and the development of digital resources and use of social media.
23. The England EIP 2024/25 progress report will be laid in Parliament on 12 January and launched on 13 January 2026. The launch venue has been confirmed (One Great George Street), and invites have been issued. The agenda will follow the same structure as previous years with a keynote presentation by Dame Glenys followed by presentation of the report, Q&A and a panel discussion with contributions from the Chief Executive, Chief Insights Officer and Head of Assessments. The exact details regarding who will do deliver which elements will depend on the content of the report and the narrative we wish to present.
24. A full communications and outreach plan is being developed in parallel with the drafting of the assessment. The programme of communications activity to support the publication of the report will include (1) a 'no surprises' briefing programme for Defra officials and Ministers; (2) press release issued to media on 12 January under embargo, with briefing pack of key messages and visual materials; (3) on-line media briefing on 12 January; (4) publication of report and supporting documents at 00:01 on 13 January; (5) video presentation of report findings for the website; (6) in-person launch event for key stakeholders; and (7) on-line stakeholder briefing event on 16 January.
25. The production of the England EIP 2024/5 progress report is being organised along with proposals for the launch and associated communication resources. A production timetable has been developed and is kept under review, with a number of key milestones already reached successfully.
26. We want to ensure that the England EIP 2024/5 progress report is a useful resource for staff and can inform business planning. We have planned some internal communication activities and we will also prepare a presentation that can be adapted for use by staff who will be encouraged to disseminate the report through events organised by external stakeholders rather than the OEP.
27. **Board is recommended to provide feedback on planned communication activities.**

External Stakeholders

28. External stakeholders have not been consulted in the development of this paper.

Paper to be published	Yes
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Publication date (if relevant)	
If it is proposed not to publish the paper or to not publish in full please outline the reasons why with reference to the exemptions available under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). Please include references to specific paragraphs in your paper	

ANNEXES LIST

Annex A – This section has been redacted as it contains information available elsewhere.