



## **COUNCIL FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND THE COUNTRYSIDE**

### **BACKGROUND STATEMENT**

#### **1. Constitution of the Council**

The Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (the Council) was established in 1989 under the provisions of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.

Appointments to the Council, which consists of a Chair, Deputy Chair and not more than 18 Members, are subject to the approval of the Minister of the Environment for Northern Ireland. The term of appointment is for a period of three years.

The Council is serviced by a Secretariat and operates from Waterman House, 5-33 Hill Street, Belfast, BT1 2LA.

#### **2. The Role of the Council**

The Department of the Environment (DOE) is obliged to consult with the Council on a range of matters affecting the countryside and on nature conservation issues. The Council's specific functions are set out in the 1989 Order; in short, these are:

- to advise DOE on the establishment and management of national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, areas of special scientific interest and nature reserves;
- to advise DOE on the protection of wildlife species;
- to advise DOE on the management of land acquired for conservation or amenity purposes, and
- to advise on payment of grants to voluntary conservation bodies and on promotional and educational activities.

In practice this includes advising on current policy issues, responding to consultations e.g. on Planning Policy Statements or the implementation of European Directives, and discussing with the Northern Ireland Environment

Agency the designation and management of protected sites and areas, and wildlife protection.

### **3. Council Business**

The council normally meets bi-monthly with additional ad hoc meetings to consider specific policy issues.

In addition to the Council's business meetings, there are a number of working groups to consider and develop specific environmental advice.

From time to time, the three Statutory Advisory Councils to the Department of the Environment i.e. the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC), the Historic Buildings Council (HBC) and the Historic Monuments Council (HMC) have joint meetings to consider areas of mutual interest.