

These notes refer to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (c.16) which received Royal Assent on 30 March 2006

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 2: Nature Conservation in the UK

Joint Nature Conservation Committee etc.

Section 31: Joint Nature Conservation Committee

103. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee, referred to as “the joint committee”, was established under Part 7 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (“the 1990 Act”). The Act re-enacts, with changes, the provisions of the 1990 Act that relate to the joint committee. The main change is that under the Act the joint committee has a UK-wide remit (covering England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), rather than merely a Great Britain remit (covering England, Wales and Scotland). This is reflected in Schedule 4, which reconstitutes the joint committee. The Schedule includes provision for Northern Ireland to have voting members.
104. [Schedule 4](#) also reproduces the effect of the changes made to the 1990 Act by the [Regulatory Reform \(Joint Nature Conservation Committee\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/634\)](#). This will, amongst other things, provide the joint committee with the ability to employ its own staff and pay its chairman and independent members. It will also enable the Secretary of State to pay money directly to the joint committee.
105. Those powers are supplemented by provisions which provide that the conservation bodies for England, Wales and Scotland and the relevant Northern Ireland department must together contribute sufficient financial resources to the joint committee to enable it to discharge its functions. The level of contribution from each of the four bodies is decided by agreement by the relevant Ministers and Assembly members in Great Britain and the Northern Ireland department, following consultation with the bodies.

Section 32: UK conservation bodies

106. This section defines the terms “UK conservation bodies” and “GB conservation bodies”. Some of the joint functions to be discharged by the joint committee are UK-wide; others are GB-wide.

Section 33: Purpose of functions under this Part

107. The joint committee is given functions for the purpose of nature conservation and fostering the understanding of nature conservation. In discharging their functions under this Part, the UK conservation bodies and the joint committee are required to have regard to actual or possible ecological changes and the desirability of contributing to sustainable development.