



Dear Member

During the past few months Defra has been working with a wide variety of organisations and interest groups in developing a proposed 'national pollinator strategy' for bees and other pollinators in England. The BBKA has been very involved in its development.

The Government has now launched a public consultation on the proposed strategy.

The link page to the consultation is

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-pollinator-strategy-for-bees-and-other-pollinators-in-england>

The strategy sets out proposals to safeguard these important creatures given their role in pollinating many food crops and wild plants and their contribution to our food production and the diversity of our environment.

The overview to the strategy comments that bees and other pollinators face a wide range of environmental pressures and some species are threatened. Examples of pressures are: intensification of land-use and habitat loss both leading to the loss of their food sources and shelter; pests and diseases; invasive species; use of pesticides and, climate change. There are growing concerns that these pressures are leading to declines in the number, diversity and geographical range of individual species.

Available evidence on these concerns is set out in the independent report on the 'Status and value of pollinators and pollination services' ('the Status Report') which Defra commissioned in 2013 to help inform the development of the strategy. The Status Report is published with the consultant document.

Through the proposed strategy, the government's aim is to set a new direction to safeguard and support our pollinators, building on many current initiatives and drawing on the skills, experience and enthusiasm of all interested parties. The proposed strategy has three main elements:

- 1. Evidence-gathering on pollinator status and impacts of pressures.** The strategy proposes twelve evidence actions to provide a sound base for future policies to support pollinators, including developing and implementing a sustainable monitoring programme on pollinators.
- 2. Priority policy actions.** The strategy proposes eighteen priority actions for Government and others to implement from 2014. They reflect current evidence and in some cases build on and expand current initiatives to refocus on the essential needs of pollinators.





3. **A commitment to review and refresh the strategy's aims and actions as additional evidence becomes available.** From 2016, there will be new evidence from the monitoring programme and other evidence projects. In addition lessons will be learnt from the effectiveness of the policy actions from the partnerships and collaborations built during 2014 to 2016. Using this evidence, the Government will work with other interested parties to review the strategy's aims and to identify any necessary additional policy actions or ways of working to strengthen the government's response by 2019.

Beekeepers will be asked to play a crucial role in ensuring a healthy, thriving honey bee population able to contribute to the pollination requirements identified in the strategy.

The BBKA will, on your behalf, continue to fully and actively participate in the development and implementation of the strategy representing the interests of honey bees as well as helping other pollinators.

The BBKA will be formally responding to the strategy consultation document. However I urge you as an individual beekeeper and / or your association to download the documents and send in your responses to the questions asked. In this way government will obtain help and guidance as to the best ways forward to meet the variety of circumstances in which honey bees are managed in England.

The closing date for the consultation is the 2nd May 2014 and I would appreciate you telling me when you have sent in a response.

Yours faithfully

Dr David Aston NDB
Chair BBKA Technical and Environmental Committee

7th March 2014

