



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2019/0105, 30 April 2019

# Climate change and the environment

This pack has been prepared ahead of the Opposition Day debate to be held in the Commons Chamber on Wednesday 1 May 2019.

The motion for the debate is:

### Environment and Climate Change

*That this House declares an environment and climate emergency following the finding of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change that to avoid more than 1.5°C rise in global warming, global emissions would need to fall by around 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero by around 2050; recognises the devastating impact that volatile and extreme weather will have on UK food production, water availability, public health and through flooding and wildfire damage; notes that the UK is currently missing almost all of its biodiversity targets, with an alarming trend in species decline, and that cuts of 50 per cent to the funding of Natural England are counterproductive to tackling those problems; calls on the Government to increase the ambition of the UK's climate change targets under the Climate Change Act 2008 to achieve net zero emissions before 2050, to increase support for and set ambitious, short-term targets for the roll-out of renewable and low carbon energy and transport, and to move swiftly to capture economic opportunities and green jobs in the low carbon economy while managing risks for workers and communities currently reliant on carbon intensive sectors; and further calls on the Government to lay before the House within the next six months urgent proposals to restore the UK's natural environment and to deliver a circular, zero waste economy.*

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

By Louise Smith  
Suzanna Hinson  
Elena Ares  
Nikki Sutherland

## Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Climate change and the environment</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	The motion	2
1.2	What is a climate change emergency?	2
1.3	Who has made a declaration?	3
1.4	Labour's statement on a "climate emergency"	4
1.5	Recent debate on declaring a climate change emergency	4
1.6	Overview of UK approach to climate change	7
1.7	Overview of UK approach to the environment	8
	Recent developments	9
	Draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill	10
1.8	Library and Parliamentary briefings on climate change and environmental issues	11
<b>2.</b>	<b>News items</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Press releases</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Parliamentary material</b>	<b>42</b>
	Statements and debates	42
	PQs	42
	Early Day Motions	46
	Committee reports	47

# 1. Climate change and the environment

## 1.1 The motion

The motion for the Opposition Day debate to be held on Thursday 2 May 2019 is

### *Environment and Climate Change*

That this House declares an environment and climate emergency following the finding of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change that to avoid more than 1.5°C rise in global warming, global emissions would need to fall by around 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero by around 2050; recognises the devastating impact that volatile and extreme weather will have on UK food production, water availability, public health and through flooding and wildfire damage; notes that the UK is currently missing almost all of its biodiversity targets, with an alarming trend in species decline, and that cuts of 50 percent to the funding of Natural England are counterproductive to tackling those problems; calls on the Government to increase the ambition of the UK's climate change targets under the Climate Change Act 2008 to achieve net zero emissions before 2050, to increase support for and set ambitious, short-term targets for the roll-out of renewable and low carbon energy and transport, and to move swiftly to capture economic opportunities and green jobs in the low carbon economy while managing risks for workers and communities currently reliant on carbon intensive sectors; and further calls on the Government to lay before the House within the next six months urgent proposals to restore the UK's natural environment and to deliver a circular, zero waste economy.

## 1.2 What is a climate change emergency?

There is no formal or statutory meaning of the term "climate emergency". Declaring one does not bring with it any formal duties to take action. It is however, a term being used increasingly by campaign groups who have encouraged its adoption by politicians, political parties, local and national governments. Many campaign groups view a climate emergency as a variation of a state of emergency where governments (should) have extra powers and funding to help resolve a "crisis".<sup>1</sup> Labour Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Sue Hayman, has used the term as follows:

'Climate Emergency' is an internationally recognised declaration being used around the world to publicly declare concern over the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) findings. The IPCC's recent Special Report, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise in global temperatures would cause.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See for example the [Council Action in the Climate Emergency website](#) [downloaded on 29 April 2019]

<sup>2</sup> Sue Hayman MP website, [Sue declares environment and climate emergency](#), 29 March 2019

There is no formal process for declaring a climate emergency. For example, the International Climate Emergency Forum provides a list on its website of:

...councils which have recognised or declared a climate emergency" based on the definition of a "councils that have recognised, acknowledged or declared, made a commitment on or taken action on a "climate emergency" by way of a formal resolution that explicitly mentions the "climate emergency" using a term that has this meaning in the official language of the jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.3 Who has made a declaration?

Globally a number of politicians and councils have made various forms of declaration. It is widely reported that the City of Darebin in Victoria, Australia, was the first to pass a declaration, in December 2016, officially recognising a "state of climate emergency that requires urgent action by all levels of government, including by local councils".<sup>4</sup> In the UK, Bristol City Council was thought to be the first to make such a declaration, in November 2018.<sup>5</sup> On 29 April 2019 the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in Wales.<sup>6</sup>

In the UK, the "[Declare a Climate Emergency Campaign](#)" website also provides a map and a list of councils in the UK that have made a "declaration". The website highlights that different councils have used different wordings for their declarations, to reflect local circumstances. To date (29 April 2019) this website lists 59 local authorities across the UK which have, in some way, "declared" a climate emergency.

#### Box 1: Recent UK Political Party "Climate Emergency" statements

##### Labour Party

On 28 March 2019 in the House of Commons, Shadow Secretary of State, Sue Hayman MP asked the Government to "join Labour in declaring a national environment and climate emergency".<sup>7</sup>

##### Liberal Democrats

On 17 March 2019, leader Vince Cable told the Party Spring conference, "There is now a climate emergency."<sup>8</sup>

##### Scottish National Party

On 28 April 2019 First Minister Nicola Sturgeon "declared" a "climate emergency" in her speech to the SNP conference.<sup>9</sup>

##### Green Party

<sup>3</sup> International Climate Emergency Forum website [downloaded on 29 April 2019]

<sup>4</sup> "Climate emergency! How frustrated councils are taking matters into their own hands" [ENDSReport](#), 25 April 2019 [subscription required]

<sup>5</sup> "Climate emergency! How frustrated councils are taking matters into their own hands" [ENDSReport](#), 25 April 2019 [subscription required]

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Government, [Welsh Government makes climate emergency declaration](#), 29 April 2019

<sup>7</sup> HC Deb 28 March 2019, [c534](#)

<sup>8</sup> Liberal Democrat website, [Read Vince Cable's speech to Spring Conference in full](#), 17 March 2019

<sup>9</sup> BBC News website, [Nicola Sturgeon declares 'climate emergency' at SNP conference](#), 28 April 2019

On 4 March 2019, Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas, wrote in the Guardian that, “Parliament must now declare a climate emergency.”<sup>10</sup>

**Plaid Cymru**

On 29 April 2019 the Plaid Cymru twitter feed stated “This Wednesday, Plaid Cymru will lead a debate calling on @WelshGovernment to declare #ClimateEmergency🌍”<sup>11</sup>

## 1.4 Labour’s statement on a “climate emergency”

Writing on the Labour List website, Shadow Secretary of State, Sue Hayman MP set out her rationale for “Why Labour wants the UK to declare a national climate emergency”:

Natural England, the body responsible for protecting and enhancing nature and implementing government policy on our natural environment, has had its budget cut by almost half since 2010. Prospect union’s deputy general secretary is right when he says that the Chancellor’s Spring Statement commitments on biodiversity are “worthless” without additional funding for Natural England. A leaked document from the organisation itself stated that it is too stretched to prevent “further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species”.

The Natural Capital Committee recently concluded that only half of our habitats currently meet minimum quality targets set by Natural England, with bees, butterflies, birds and bats continuing to decline. Currently the government is failing to meet 14 out of 19 biodiversity targets. This is not a small, marginal failing. These figures are cause for alarm and, more importantly, urgent action.

The government’s austerity programme has also hit our environment hard through unprecedented cuts to local councils of around 50% between 2010 and 2020. Many councils are voicing concerns over their ability to deliver even their legal minimum services, meaning that biodiversity loss and the protection of our green spaces are being pushed right down council agendas.

The dramatic increase in fly-tipping incidences, partly due to severe cut backs in proactive waste and recycling work from councils, is one of the most daily, visible signs of austerity. Instances of fly-tipping have risen by almost 40% between 2012 and 2017, 66% of which involves household waste. Councils are also being forced to sell-off public parks to fund basic services. In short, nature is being trashed, neglected and sold at the hands of the Tories.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.5 Recent debate on declaring a climate change emergency

On 23 April 2019, during an urgent question on [Climate Action and Extinction Rebellion](#), the Minister Claire Perry was asked a number of

<sup>10</sup> The Guardian, “[Parliament must declare a climate emergency – not ignore it](#)” 4 March 2019

<sup>11</sup> [Plaid Cymru Twitter](#) [on 29 April 2019]

<sup>12</sup> Labour List website, “[Why Labour wants the UK to declare a national climate emergency](#)” 28 April 2019

times if she would declare a climate change emergency. The Minister responded that she thought the focus should be on actions not words:

The right hon. Gentleman asked about the declaration of a climate emergency. The thing is, I do not know what that would entail. I could stand here and say, "I believe there is a climate emergency," and he could say that, too. Many of our local councils, including my own council in Wiltshire, have done that. The question is: what are we going to do about it? That is why we should be proud of the fact that we have the most detailed proposals for how we will hit our carbon budgets.<sup>13</sup>

[...]

I do not see the point of saying anything unless we take action to solve the problem. We are now realising that we have a massive, growing problem with our global emissions, affecting the balance of our economy. We in this country lead the world in trying to solve this problem. I accept that we need to go further and faster, but I want to focus on actions rather than simply standing here and saying, "I have said a few things—job done." Let us focus on actions, not words.<sup>14</sup>

Later the same day, during a statement on [Climate Change Policy](#), the Minister reiterated this view. In response, the Shadow Minister Barry Gardiner MP said:

The Minister said in her response to the urgent question that she does not see the value of declaring a climate emergency. The value is this: it tells the truth. On emissions reduction, the truth is that we are making some progress. I acknowledge and welcome that, but the full, honest truth is that we are not making progress fast enough. The Government's own statistics show that.<sup>15</sup>

As part of her statement on Climate Change Policy, the Minister summarised the Government policy on decarbonisation:

I was frequently asked this afternoon, "What are some of things you have done in the last six months?" so I thought I would focus on a few choice morsels to share with colleagues. Colleagues will, I am sure, be sick of me waving around the "Clean Growth Strategy" document that we published in November 2017. We will continue to do that, because it is one of the most comprehensive documents that any Government across the world have put out, detailing how we will take decarbonisation action across the economy. To date, we have acted on the vast majority of those actions. I will highlight some of them.

Only last month, I launched the offshore wind sector deal, including a £250 million growth partnership with investors to ensure that we will continue to invest in the North sea—the best place in the world for offshore wind. We will, crucially, drive up the UK content of that nascent industry to over 60%, and we will ensure that the industry employs at least 30% women by 2030. This industry is regenerating coastal communities right around the UK. It is one in which we lead the world, and we will continue to do so.

In the spring statement, the Chancellor introduced the future homes standard, which will require all new homes to have low-

<sup>13</sup> HC Deb, Climate Action and Extinction Rebellion, 23 April 2019, Vol 658, [C603](#)

<sup>14</sup> HC Deb, Climate Action and Extinction Rebellion, 23 April 2019, Vol 658, [C612](#)

<sup>15</sup> HC Deb, Climate Change Policy, 23 April 2019, Vol 658, [C674-5](#)

carbon heating systems and world-leading levels of energy efficiency by 2025. That will radically transform house building in constituencies such as mine, where most homes are not connected to the gas grid. He also announced that we will increase the proportion of green gas used in the grid, in a bid to drive down the carbon profile of the hard-to-decarbonise heating network.

Only this Easter weekend, we had the longest run ever in this country of no coal contributing to power generation on the grid. When many of us were elected to this House, coal contributed 40% of our electricity. Our unilateral policies, including a carbon tax and emissions targets, have led us to do something utterly transformational that other European countries have been unable so far to replicate. We also continue to contribute internationally. We are one of the largest donors of overseas development assistance, with more than £6 billion committed in this Parliament. In January, UK Climate Investments announced almost £30 million of investment in a dedicated African renewable energy company, to try to make projects marketable and investable in much of the developing world, so that those countries never have to go through a high-carbon stage in their growth cycle.

Action is being taken not just in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy but across Government. We have published the ambitious 25-year environment plan and kick-started the creation of a vast northern forest, which will see 50 million trees planted from Liverpool to Hull. Tree planting is one of the most cost-effective ways to sequester carbon and improve soil conditions, as colleagues will know. Our new resources and waste strategy outlines steps to reform the packaging producer responsibility system, introducing a deposit return scheme and food waste collection scheme.

We should celebrate those actions, not to imply that we are in any way complacent or do not need to go further much more rapidly, but to demonstrate that this is a win-win for both the planet and future generations' jobs and prosperity. As colleagues will know, last year we celebrated our first ever Green Great Britain Week, and I can announce that we will continue that process annually, for the second time on 4 November this year. We look forward to the celebrations and challenges around that.

We have not shied away from our responsibility. That is why, after the publication of the chilling Inter- governmental Panel on Climate Change 1.5° C report, we were the first industrial economy to ask our Committee on Climate Change for advice on our long-term targets, and particularly a net zero target. I look forward to receiving its advice on 2 May and will engage with colleagues across the House on our next steps in the light of that. It is worth pointing out that the last time we asked for this advice, the committee told us it was not feasible to do from either a technological or cost point of view, so it will be extremely interesting to see what has changed and how we can rise to that challenge.<sup>16</sup>

Although the Government's request to the CCC for advice on a net zero target was welcomed, some were critical of the Government's record. For example, Jonathon Reynolds MP said:

---

<sup>16</sup> HC Deb, Climate Change Policy, 23 April 2019, Vol 658, [C672-673](#)

Since 2010, zero-carbon homes have been needlessly scrapped by the coalition Government; now that is coming back. The energy company obligation solid-wall programme lasted less than a year after it was announced. Tidal lagoons have been flirted with, and have gone nowhere. The carbon capture fund money was put up and then taken away. Onshore wind was banned entirely. The Green Investment Bank was set up, and has already been sold off. That is fundamentally why green investment in the UK is falling. Where there has been certainty—mainly in offshore wind—progress has indeed been rapid. However, it is not just the protesters but those in the financial markets who are saying that while there has been some good progress, it is just not enough.<sup>17</sup>

## 1.6 Overview of UK approach to climate change

The UK is part of an international effort to combat climate change. The UK is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and as such has signed up to international climate change obligations, such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. Further information on the international efforts to combat climate change is set out in the Library briefing paper, [Climate change conference \(COP24\): Katowice, Poland](#) (9 January 2019).

As part of its contributions to international efforts, the UK also has domestic legislation and policies in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The *Climate Change Act 2008* established long term statutory targets for the UK to achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 against a 1990 baseline. Under the *Climate Change Act 2008*, the Government must set five-yearly carbon budgets, twelve years in advance, from 2008 to 2050. The Government is required to consider—but not follow—the advice of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC, also created under the 2008 Act) when setting these budgets. The [CCC's 2018 Progress report to Parliament](#) said that since 1990, the UK has cut greenhouse gas emissions by 43%, around halfway to the 2050 commitment. More information is available in the Library briefing paper on [UK Carbon Budgets \(20 February 2019\)](#).

Although the first three carbon budgets have been (or in the case of the third budget are projected to be) exceeded, the [latest Government report](#) on energy and emissions projections, published in April 2019, predicts a shortfall of 5.6 percent and 9.6 percent against the fourth and fifth budgets respectively. This shortfall has widened from the previous year's report which predicted a gap of 3.3 percent and 6.7 percent respectively. The reasons for this change are both an improvement in emissions modelling, but also that a number of policies are likely to deliver lower emissions savings than under previous projections.

Energy Minister Claire Perry wrote to the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) on 15 October 2018, to ask for updated advice on a date by which the UK should achieve a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target (including whether now is the right time for the UK to set such a

<sup>17</sup> HC Deb, Climate Change Policy, 23 April 2019, Vol 658, [C619](#)

target). This is discussed further in the Library Insight, [Net zero emissions: A new UK climate change target?](#) (19 October 2018). The Committee on Climate Change has committed to publishing its net zero advice on 2 May 2019. Ahead of the advice being published, the CEO of the Committee (Chris Stark) has shared his observations on the scale and feasibility of the net zero challenge<sup>18</sup> and the Committee has published the responses it received on its [call for evidence](#) to inform its advice.<sup>19</sup>

## 1.7 Overview of UK approach to the environment

The Government's approach to the environment is set out in its January 2018 publication, [A Green Future: Our 25-year plan to improve the environment](#). Launching the Plan, the [Prime Minister identified](#) the protection and enhancement of the natural environment as a "central priority" for the Government as part of delivering its [manifesto pledge](#) to "be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it". The Environment Secretary (Michael Gove) said:

Our Environment Plan sets out how over the next 25 years we will radically reduce the waste that is choking oceans and rivers, cleanse our air of toxic pollutants and create new habitats for our most precious wildlife to thrive.<sup>20</sup>

The executive summary commits the Government to championing sustainable development and further elaborates the broad aims of the Plan:

...to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. The Plan looks forward to delivering a Green Brexit – seizing this once-in-a-lifetime chance to reform our agriculture and fisheries management, how we restore nature, and how we care for our land, our rivers and our seas.<sup>21</sup>

The Plan sets out a number of 25-year goals and a combination of new and existing strategies, targets, mechanisms and commitments in order to meet its goals. Some of the key area policy areas and announcements in the plan include:

- Using a "**natural capital**" approach to protecting and enhancing the environment, by recognising its tangible and non-tangible economic benefits.
- The establishment of a **green business council** to advise government on "environmental entrepreneurialism". A natural

---

<sup>18</sup> Committee on Climate Change, [Chris Stark: Towards Net Zero](#), 19 March 2019

<sup>19</sup> Committee on Climate Change, [Building a zero carbon economy – Call for Evidence](#), 17 April 2019

<sup>20</sup> HM Government press release, [Government's vision for a greener future launched](#), 11 January 2018

<sup>21</sup> HM Government, [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#), January 2018

environment impact fund is being mooted to support this which would use natural capital valuations;

- Introducing a principle of “**environmental net gain**” into planning decisions where wider natural capital benefits will be assessed as part of the planning process;
- Achieving zero avoidable **plastic waste** by the end of 2042 through a number of initiatives;
- A commitment to reducing the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy from natural hazards including **flooding, drought and coastal erosion**.
- The aims for a post-Brexit **sustainable fisheries policy**, based on a natural capital approach;
- A new commitment to publishing an **overarching chemicals strategy** to set out the UK's approach as it leaves the EU;
- Initial proposals for a new **environmental land management system** (based on paying public money for public ‘goods’ such as environmental enhancement), which will be set out in a Command Paper later this spring - a pre-cursor to the Agriculture Bill which will set out post-Brexit support arrangements for farmers;
- A target of ensuring the **sustainable management of soil** by 2030 and establishing sufficient data to understand the current state of soil health;
- An aim to **increase woodland in England** in line with the aspiration of achieving 12% cover by 2060: this would involve planting 180,000 hectares by the end of 2042; and
- A goal to **mitigate and adapt to climate change** by doing “what is necessary to adapt to the effects of a changing climate”.

## Recent developments

Since the publication of this Plan the Government has published a [consultation](#) on a draft indicator framework to measure progress on meeting the Plan's policies.<sup>22</sup> More specific strategies on a number of the Plan's policies have also been published, including a [Resources and Waste Strategy](#), December 2018<sup>23</sup> and a [Clean Air Strategy](#), January 2019.<sup>24</sup>

Defra published a consultation on the designation of the [third tranche of Marine Conservation Zones](#) (MCZ) in June 2018. This sought views on proposals for a further 41 MCZ designations in 2019, and the addition of new features to 12 existing MCZs. No decision has yet been announced. Defra also published a Fisheries White Paper [Sustainable fisheries for future generations](#) in June 2018.

<sup>22</sup> HM Government, [25 year environment plan: measuring progress](#), December 2018

<sup>23</sup> HM Government, [Our waste, our resources: a strategy for England](#), December 2018

<sup>24</sup> HM Government, [Clean Air Strategy](#), January 2019

## Box 2: Biodiversity Loss

As part of [Biodiversity 2020](#), the UK's strategy for wildlife and ecosystem services, the Government reports on an annual basis on a number of biodiversity indicators for the UK, and separately for England. The latest annual report on [UK Biodiversity Indicators](#) was published in July 2018. Whilst this shows improvement in some areas there is still long-term decline in the number of key species such as birds and butterflies. Further information can be found in the [RSPB blog article](#), summarising the results and what they mean.<sup>25</sup>

The loss of UK biodiversity is part of a global picture of species loss which was highlighted by in a paper published by the US National Academy of Sciences in 2017 which concluded the rate of population loss in terrestrial vertebrates is extremely high even in "species of low concern." For example, it found that for the 177 mammals for which detailed data was available, all had lost 30% or more of their geographic ranges. More than 40% of the species had experienced a greater than 80% shrinkage in range. The authors concluded this amounted "a massive anthropogenic erosion of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services essential to civilization" which "underlines the seriousness for humanity of Earth's ongoing sixth mass extinction event".<sup>26</sup>

The [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) (IPBES) is expected to release the first [Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019. This follows on from [four regional reports](#) published in 2018 and a report on [Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production](#) published in 2016.

In December 2018, Defra published a consultation setting out the objectives of a [net gain policy for the environment, development and local communities](#). It also sought evidence on what aspects of natural capital should be considered and the options for developing an environmental net gain approach. In addition, the Office of National Statistics is working with DEFRA on a project to develop natural capital accounts for the UK by 2020. It published an interim review of its work on [natural capital accounting](#) in July 2018.

## Draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill

The Government has also set out its proposals for environmental principles and governance following Brexit in the [draft Environment \(Principles and Governance\) Bill](#) and a number of [related documents](#) on 19 December 2018. The draft Bill as it stands is broadly split into three key areas covering: environmental principles; establishing a new environmental governance body named the Office for Environmental Protection; and introducing a new legal requirement for the Government to publish Environmental Improvement Plans which it will monitor and report on annually. The first of these plans would be the existing 25-year environment plan.<sup>27</sup> The draft Bill has been subject to recent pre-legislative scrutiny inquiries and reports by both the

<sup>25</sup> RSPB, [The UK Biodiversity Indicators 2018 part 2: what does this year's indicator update tell us?](#) 9 August 2018

<sup>26</sup> [Population losses and the sixth mass extinction](#), Gerardo Ceballos, Paul R. Ehrlich, Rodolfo Dirzo, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Jul 2017, 114 (30) E6089-E6096; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1704949114

<sup>27</sup> See [Library Briefing Paper on the 25-year environment plan](#), 17 January 2018 for background information.

[Environmental Audit Committee](#) and the [Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee](#).

The draft clauses will form part of a wider Environment Bill which was announced by the Prime Minister in July 2018.<sup>28</sup> The wider Environment Bill is expected to be introduced in the next Parliamentary session and a Government press release commits to the broader Bill including legislative measures to address: air quality, protection and enhancement of landscapes, wildlife and habitats; more efficient handling of resources and waste; and better management of water.<sup>29</sup> Further information about the “wider ambition of the Bill” is set out in the [Environment Bill: Policy Paper](#) which was published alongside the draft Bill.

## 1.8 Library and Parliamentary briefings on climate change and environmental issues

The Labour Party motion cuts across a wide range of climate change and environmental policies. For further reading on these please see the following publications:

### Climate change

- POSTnote, [Climate Change and Vector-Borne Disease in Humans in the UK](#), 10 April 2019;
- Lords Library briefing pack, [Climate change emergency](#), 26 March 2019;
- POSTnote, [Limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C](#), 11 February 2019;
- Lords Library briefing, [Threats Presented by Climate Change](#), 17 January 2019;
- Library briefing paper, [Climate change conference \(COP24\): Katowice, Poland](#), 9 January 2019;
- Debate pack, [Extreme weather events related to climate change](#), 9 November 2018.
- Debate pack, [Debate on the UK's progress toward net zero carbon emissions](#), 21 February 2019;
- Library briefing paper, [Carbon Budgets](#), 20 February 2019;
- Library briefing paper, [Brexit: energy and climate change](#), 9 November 2018;
- Library Insight, [Net zero emissions: A new UK climate change target?](#) 19 October 2018.

### Environment: general

- Debate pack, [Interdependence of modern farming and the environment](#), 8 March 2019;
- Library briefing paper, [Environmental principles and governance: the draft Bill](#), 30 January 2019;

<sup>28</sup> House of Commons Liaison Committee, Oral evidence: The Prime Minister, [HC 1393](#), 18 July 2018

<sup>29</sup> Defra press release, [New environment protections set out in flagship bill](#), 19 December 2018 [accessed 14 January 2019]

- POSTnote, [EU Environmental Principles](#), 28 November 2018;
- Library briefing paper, [Brexit and the environment](#), 8 August 2018;
- Library briefing, [The 25-year Environment Plan](#), 17 January 2018.

#### **Waste**

- Library briefing paper, [Plastic waste](#), 3 April 2019;
- Lords Library briefing, [Plastic Pollution and Recycling](#), 8 November 2018;
- Library briefing, [Household recycling in the UK](#), 12 November 2018;
- Library briefing paper, [Fly-tipping - the illegal dumping of waste](#), 25 June 2018.

#### **Air quality**

- Library Insight, [Air quality: Cutting through the haze](#), 27 November 2018;
- Library briefing paper, [Brexit and air quality](#), 10 November 2018.

#### **Energy**

- Library insight, [Mind the gap: challenges for future UK energy policy](#), January 2019
- Library briefing paper, [Brexit: energy and climate change](#), November 2018;
- Library briefing paper, [Control for low carbon levies](#), December 2017
- Library briefing paper, [New Nuclear Power](#), January 2019
- Library briefing paper, [Tidal Lagoons](#), June 2018
- Library briefing paper, [Electricity grids](#), January 2019
- Library briefing paper, [Shale gas and fracking](#), November 2018
- Library briefing paper, [Q&A: solar panels](#), March 2019
- Library debate pack, [Fuel poverty](#), December 2018
- Library debate pack, [Potential for geothermal energy resources in the UK](#), June 2018
- POSTnote, [Carbon Capture and Usage](#), 2 November 2018

#### **Water**

- Library briefing paper, [Water Quality](#), July 2018 - covers water quality, bathing water, drinking water (policy and stats) and recent Govt actions including on abstraction reform and plans set out in the 25 year plan.
- Library briefing paper, [Flood risk management and funding](#), November 2017- covers management of flood risk, responsibilities, funding commitments, how funding works,

## 2. News items

BBC News Online

### **'Climate emergency' declared by Welsh Government**

29 April 2019

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-48093720>

BBC News Online

### **Nicola Sturgeon declares 'climate emergency' at SNP conference**

28 April 2019

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-48077802>

Guardian

### **Extinction Rebellion protesters to stand in European elections**

26 April 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/26/extinction-rebellion-protesters-to-stand-in-european-elections>

ENDS Report [subscription]

### **Climate emergency! How frustrated councils are taking matters into their own hands** 25 April 2019

<https://www.endsreport.com/article/1582908/climate-emergency-frustrated-councils-taking-matters-own-hands>

Guardian

### **'You did not act in time': Greta Thunberg's full speech to MPs**

23 April 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/23/greta-thunberg-full-speech-to-mps-you-did-not-act-in-time>

Farmers' Weekly

### **Environment groups resign from government's pesticides forum**

23 April 2019

<https://www.fwi.co.uk/news/environment/environment-groups-resign-from-governments-pesticides-forum>

Guardian

**Humanity is at a crossroads, Greta Thunberg tells Extinction Rebellion**

21 April 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/21/extinction-rebellion-london-protesters-offer-pause-climate-action>

Guardian

**Britain has lost half its wildlife. Now's the time to shout about it**

26 March 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/26/wildlife-modern-farming-insects-birds>

## 3. Press releases

### **House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee**

#### **New environmental watchdog needs greater independence and sharper teeth**

**30 April 2019**

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee's Scrutiny of the draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill report is calling on the Government to make significant revisions to the Bill before presenting it to Parliament.

[Read the conclusions and recommendations](#)

[Read the report summary](#)

[Read the full report](#)

The Committee launched its inquiry following the publication of the draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill in December 2018, which will form part of the wider Bill which is yet to be published.

The draft Bill sets out how the Government plans to maintain environmental standards as we leave the European Union. After receiving a range of evidence from a variety of witnesses, the Committee has concluded that the draft Bill's provisions do not match the current environmental protections provided by membership of the EU.

The Government has stated that "we will not only maintain our current protections, but surpass them, taking new steps to ensure our environment is even better protected in future". For the Government to meet its own ambition for the environment, the Report recommends that the current draft Bill needs significant revision.

The Committee seeks reassurance that any future legislation relating to environmental principles must, at a minimum, replicate the legal status and current levels of protection granted in European Law. The Report concludes that the provisions for a new policy statement on environmental principles in the Bill mark a significant regression on current standards as part of the EU.

The draft Bill also seeks to establish a new environmental watchdog body – the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) - to deliver functions currently undertaken by European institutions.

The Committee considers that, as currently drafted, the Bill would not allow the OEP to operate with sufficient independence from Government. The Report recommends that all decisions relating to board membership of the OEP should require the consent of the EFRA Committee and that the Government must commit to a multi-annual budgetary framework in the Bill. This is consistent with the

independence given to the respected Office for Budgetary Responsibility.

In addition, to strengthen the OEP's enforcement powers, the OEP must be provided with further compliance tools beyond the threat of judicial review, and must be empowered to issue emergency and interim measures in urgent cases of environmental harm.

The Report also addresses a possible gap in enforcing Climate Change law. Currently, all Climate Change legislation is enforced by the EU. However, Climate Change is excluded from the remit of the new watchdog.

The Report highlights that the draft Bill leads to a potential "governance gap" after we leave the EU, and recommends that the OEPOEP be provided with the necessary powers to avert this.

#### *Chair's comments*

Neil Parish MP, the Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, said:

Although the Government has made a real attempt to establish a robust framework for environmental governance, the draft Bill clearly fails to meet its own ambition to 'ensure the environment is even better protected in future' as we exit the EU. In some areas it actually marks a significant regression on current standards.

Given this unique opportunity to rethink how we protect the environment in the future, we cannot afford to see the standards we currently adhere to slip.

There is also little point in setting up an environmental watchdog if it is unable to fulfil its essential function of holding the government to account. The new watchdog must not solely be a creature of Government but needs real independence.

To achieve real independence there needs to be a role for Parliament in all decisions relating to the membership of the OEP's board. Funding for the OEP must also not be solely at the whim of Defra ministers, as is currently the proposal. Sustained cuts to arm's length bodies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England demonstrate the need for the OEP to have greater budgetary protection to guarantee genuine independence.

The watchdog will also need sharper enforcement teeth. The Government must explore appropriate ways to ensure greater personal accountability for Ministers and public servants if they fail to uphold environmental law before presenting this Bill to Parliament.

It is imperative to future generations that the Government does not squander its chance to get this right – it is unlikely they will get another any time soon.

## **Welsh Government**

### **Welsh Government makes climate emergency declaration**

Environment Minister Lesley Griffiths has today declared a climate emergency in Wales ahead of a meeting with UK and Scottish Ministers in Cardiff.

29 April 2019

The declaration sends a clear signal that the Welsh Government will not allow the process of leaving the EU to detract from the challenge of climate change, which threatens our health, economy, infrastructure and our natural environment.

As the UK, Scottish and Welsh ministers with responsibility for the environment meet in Cardiff today, the announcement draws attention to the magnitude and significance of the latest evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and highlights the recent climate protests across the UK.

The latest advice on from the Welsh Government's statutory advisory body the UK Committee on Climate Change on how meeting the goals in the Paris Agreement might affect Wales' long-term climate change legislative targets is due at the end of the week.

Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths, said:

I believe we have the determination and ingenuity in Wales to deliver a low carbon economy at the same time as making our society fairer and healthier.

We hope that the declaration by Welsh Government today can help to trigger a wave of action at home and internationally. From our own communities, businesses and organisations to parliaments and governments around the world.

Tackling climate change is not an issue which can be left to individuals or to the free market. It requires collective action and the government has a central role to making that collective action possible.

No nation in the world has yet fully grasped this challenge but just as Wales played a leading role in the first industrial revolution, I believe Wales can provide an example to others of what it means to achieve environmental growth.

Our sustainable development and environmental legislation is already recognised as world leading and now we must use that legislation to set a new pace of change.

The Welsh Government has committed to achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030 and to coordinating action to help other areas of the economy to make a decisive shift away from fossil fuels, involving academia, industry and the third sector. Last month, it published Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, which sets out 100 policies and proposals to meet the 2020 carbon emissions targets.

The plan for 2021-26 is already being prepared and will go further and faster. Welsh Government is also currently reviewing farmer support post Brexit with public goods element and updating its Nature Recovery Action Plan to drive urgent action to increase the resilience of our ecosystems in order to reverse the decline in habitats and species.

## House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee

### MPs call for urgent action to plug gaps in environmental protection

25 April 2019

The Environmental Audit Committee's pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Environment (Governance and Principles) Bill identifies serious concerns with proposed legislation to protect the environment if the UK leaves the European Union. The Report describes the bill as lacking coherence, with many Government Departments exempted from their environmental responsibilities.

[Read the report conclusions and recommendations](#)

[Read the report summary](#)

[Read the full report](#)

*Areas where MPs consider the Bill to be deficient:*

Environmental principles which guide European Union legislation and policy have been "severely downgraded".

There is no Government agency with responsibility to enforce climate change mitigation measures. MPs believe enforcement of climate change mitigation has been "purposefully excluded" from the scope of the Office of Environmental Protection (OEP).

Lack of environmental accountability for action by Government Departments.

MPs were concerned they had only seen sections on principles and governance and were unable to assess the full implications of the Bill for the environment.

Environmental Audit Committee Chair Mary Creagh MP said:

If we want to be a world-leader in environmental protection, we need a world-leading body to protect it. The Government promised to create a new body for governance that would go beyond standards set by the European Union. The Bill, so far, falls woefully short of this vision.

Far from creating a body which is independent, free to criticise the Government and hold it to account, this Bill would reduce action to meet environmental standards to a tick-box exercise, limit scrutiny, and pass the buck for environmental failings to local authorities.

It's shocking that enforcement to act on climate change has been deliberately left out of the remit of the OEP.

The draft Bill means that if we leave the EU we will have weaker environmental principles, less monitoring and weaker enforcement, and no threat of fines to force government action.

*Environmental principles 'downgraded':*

MPs found that environmental principles, used to guide current European Union legislation and policy, have been severely downgraded by the proposals in the Bill.

A principle that would set a legal requirement for policy and all public bodies to seek to ensure a high level of environmental protection and a presumption that environmental protection would not be reduced after leaving the EU has been left out of the list of principles in the Bill. Evidence to the Committee described this absence as “striking and surprising”.

The EAC had called for the Bill to require that “all public bodies to act in accordance with the principles” and consider it troubling that the Government has ignored this recommendation.

#### *Office for Environmental Protection (OEP)*

EAC’s recommendation in its 25 Year Plan report called for the new body to be accountable to Parliament with a statutory body of parliamentarians, modelled on the Public Accounts Commission, to set its budget, scrutinise its performance and oversee governance.

Evidence given to this inquiry supported a greater role for Parliament with many witnesses suggesting that an arm’s length body would not be independent enough to hold Government to account.

The Committee heard evidence from the National Audit Office warning of the risks to the OEP’s independence in practice or in perception because it was funded by Defra, and its Chair appointed by Defra’s Secretary of State.

The Report finds that the Government has failed to provide enough evidence that it will give the OEP the independence it needs.

The Committee stands by the previous recommendation that the OEP should report to Parliament.

MPs conclude that Parliament must be given a greater role in the appointments process with a Parliamentary Committee having a veto over the appointment of the OEP’s Chief Executive or Chair.

The Government should commit to a 5-year budget for the OEP, with an estimate negotiated directly with the Treasury and voted on by Parliament.

#### *Climate change ‘gap in enforcement’:*

MPs criticise the decision to exclude greenhouse gas emissions from the definition of environmental law. As a result, the OEP would have no enforcement function for climate change mitigation, creating an enforcement gap if we leave the EU as this function is undertaken by the European Commission and the Committee on Climate Change has no enforcement powers. The Report calls for the Government to ensure the OEP has climate change mitigation in its remit.

#### *Enforcement Powers:*

The OEP enforcement powers are limited to administrative compliance rather than achieving environmental standards, a departure from the

enforcement procedure of the European Commission. On failures by public authorities to comply with environmental law, the scope for enforcement action was "very tightly drawn" leaving the OEP with "little to get its teeth into". Under these provisions, the threshold for failure would be dominated by questions of procedural lawfulness.

Unlike the approach of the European Commission, the Bill shifts responsibility for failing to comply with environmental law to individual public authorities, rather than the whole of Government.

The whole of Government must be accountable for the achievement of environmental standards and targets, rather than individual public authorities, as is the case with the European Commission's infraction procedure. This would require different areas of Government (central, local and public bodies) to work together cooperatively to address and rectify an environmental problem.

*Exclusions 'absurd':*

MPs are also concerned that a policy statement on environmental principles would allow the Secretary of State to exclude policies considered "not relevant" or with "no significant environmental benefit". They also criticise further exclusions to policies relating to the armed forces, defence or national security, taxation, spending or the allocation of resources within Government, or "any other matter specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State".

The Environment Agency considered such exclusions would mean the principles would cease to have "a meaningful influence on the development and application of environmental policy and law after EU Exit" while an environmental Barrister described the exclusions as "absurd".

The Report calls for exclusions to the application of the principles to be 'very narrowly defined'. The Bill should specify that the Ministry of Defence as a landowner is not excluded, nor should general taxation or spending be excluded, since many environmental measures depend on changes to the tax system.

The Report calls for the environmental principles to be put on an unqualified legal basis in relation to environmental policy with all public bodies having a duty to apply them as is currently the case under EU law.

*Scope of bill 'disappointing' on Devolution:*

MPs describe the scope of the Bill, largely limited to England, as disappointing given that UK-wide cooperation would enable more efficient and coordinated action. They welcome that the oversight body would have jurisdiction in Northern Ireland.

The Government must now set out how it will practically achieve this and how oversight will be coordinated with equivalent arrangements in Scotland and Wales.

*Withdrawal Agreement:*

Should the Withdrawal Agreement be passed, the UK will conform to EU legislation on customs, taxation, the environment, labour law, state aid and competition. This includes a non-regression clause on the environment, meaning that environmental protection will not be weakened from current EU standards. The Government has confirmed that the Bill's proposals do not yet meet the non-regression clause and it will consider the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement before it publishes the final Bill.

The Report calls for a significant upgrading in the Bill to meet the non-regression requirements of the Northern Ireland protocol to the Withdrawal Agreement and would require cooperation with the other Devolved Administrations. MPs conclude that without implementing the recommendations already presented in this report, on independence, funding, the principles and enforcement, the Government will fail to meet its obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement.

*No-deal:*

In the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal, there will be not be a transition period and therefore there will be a gap between the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice ending and the OEP being set-up.

While the Government has said an interim secretariat would be established, its projected staffing of 16 would leave a significant governance gap.

The Committee calls for the Government to set out what functions the interim OEP would undertake and what retrospective powers it would have as soon as it is established to allow for active scrutiny. It calls for clarity on interim arrangements for Northern Ireland.

A full list of recommendations can be found in the report

## **Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs**

### **Blog Defra in the media**

#### **Greta Thunberg meets UK politicians**

**24 April 2019**

Yesterday Environment Secretary Michael Gove met influential climate change activist Greta Thunberg at an event chaired by Green MP Caroline Lucas. Thunberg's calls for urgent action to tackle climate change are covered widely in the media, including front page splashes in today's Guardian and Times.

Greta Thunberg rose to prominence when she started a school strike for the climate outside the Swedish Parliament, kick-starting the global youth climate change movement. Yesterday she stressed in a [speech to MPs](#) that more needs to be done to halt – or even slow – the climate and ecological breakdown and move to net zero emissions.

[The Times](#) leads by saying Thunberg has “inspired Britain to act on climate change”, noting the Environment Secretary has promised tougher action and recognised urgent change is required.

Responding to Thunberg’s speech yesterday, the Environment Secretary said that

thanks to the leadership of Greta and others, it has become inescapable that we have to act.

Greta, your voice has been heard and we are all responsible for making sure that we listen and we respond and that we change.

The UK is a global leader in tackling climate change, going further than any other G7 nation by cutting our emissions by 40% since 1990 whilst growing our economy by two-thirds. But we recognise we need to go further – and faster.

That’s why we’ve asked our independent climate experts for advice on a net zero emissions target and set out plans to transition to low emission vehicles and significantly reduce pollution through our Clean Air Strategy.

## **Oxford City Council**

### **Oxford City Council to establish UK’s first citizens assembly to address climate emergency**

**23rd April 2019**

Oxford City Council is to be the first UK local authority to establish a citizens assembly to help address the issue of climate change, and consider the measures that should be taken in Oxford.

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warned that the current global target of 80% cut in carbon emissions by 2050 is not enough to avert catastrophic temperature change. It said it’s essential that global temperature change is limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius and that rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society are required to ensure this.

Next week the UK’s independent Committee on Climate Change (CCC) will publish its advice to the UK Government on tightening Britain’s carbon reduction targets. This will lead to new minimum requirements for us all.

In January, Oxford City Council members unanimously declared a climate emergency and agreed to create a citizens assembly in Oxford to help consider new carbon targets and additional measures to reduce emissions.

The citizens assembly will involve a randomly-selected representative sample of Oxford residents and will meet in September. It will be the first citizens assembly in the UK created to consider climate change.

The City Council will be commissioning research to develop options and timescales for carbon reduction in areas such as housing and transport,

which will be put to the citizens assembly. In addition, it will hear from a range of independent contributors. The citizens assembly's recommendations will assist the City Council in its final decisions on adoption of carbon abatement measures and targets.

Last November a Manchester partnership, including Manchester City Council, commissioned its own climate change research and has recently announced its intention for Manchester to become carbon-neutral by 2038.

It is estimated that the City Council is responsible for just one per cent of total CO<sub>2</sub> to Oxford's air. The City Council is a member of Low Carbon Oxford, a network of 40 public/private organisations that aims to reduce citywide emissions by 40% of 2005 levels by 2020.

In the last month, the City Council has announced initiatives totalling over £80m to support the council on its goal to support reducing carbon emissions. This includes installing one of the world's largest batteries to support electric vehicle charging and low-carbon heat networking, and creating a new 'smart grid' to allow individuals and communities to become active participants in the energy systems of the future. The City Council has also secured additional funding to upgrade the city's buses to Euro 6 standard, and to support the arrival of the first zero emission capable taxi to the streets of Oxford.

The City Council is not working alone on the challenge of carbon reduction. The universities, and many local businesses and communities have also recognised the importance of action and are taking action both in partnership with Oxford City Council, and through their own initiatives.

In June, the City Council, along with partners, will be organising Oxford Green Week. The festival - which will begin on Saturday 8 June with Oxford's Big Green Day Out –celebrates sustainability and inspiring people to take action against climate change, with events and activities taking place every day until Sunday 16 June.

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive, Oxford City Council, said:

The urgency in the need to act on Oxford's carbon emissions was underlined by the City Council's unanimous vote this year which declared a climate emergency and called for the setting up of a citizens' assembly to help us consider additional measures and make recommendations for our city. Taking this forward is one of the Council's key priorities for 2019.

## **International Institute for Sustainable Development**

**First Work Programme of IPBES Will Culminate in the Release of the #GlobalAssessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**

**23 April 2019**

Since its inception in 2012, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has released seven assessment reports that have informed national and international decision-making for people and nature.

The Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services marks the completion of the Platform's first work programme.

Together with previous IPBES reports and other assessments, the Global Assessment will inform the assessment of the Aichi Biodiversity targets in 2020 as well as the discussions on the post 2020 biodiversity framework.

The seventh Plenary session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is expected to release the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the last deliverable of the first IPBES work programme.

#### *Some history*

IPBES was established in Panama in 2012 by more than 100 governments. The aim of the Platform, like its older "sibling," the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is to critically review available knowledge, and to provide this knowledge to policy-makers, to inform better decision-making and action for people and nature.

The focus of IPBES is on biodiversity and ecosystem services. In addition to the major expert assessments that IPBES undertakes, it also builds capacity, supports policy and catalyzes the generation of new knowledge on gaps identified in its reports.

The IPBES Fellowship programme, for instance, is one of the Platform's most successful capacity-building initiatives. It funds early career scientists from developing countries to participate as authors in the IPBES assessments, under the guidance of senior author mentors. Since the start of the programme, 74 Fellows have been appointed, from more than 1,000 applications.

IPBES adopted its first work programme, for the period 2014-2018, at the second session of its Plenary, in December 2013. There are now 132 Governments that are IPBES Members, and the Platform also engages with a wide range of non-governmental stakeholders, including conservation organisations, business and industry representatives, scientific organizations and many others.

IPBES released its first two Assessment Reports, on [Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production](#), and on [Scenarios and Models of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), at its [fourth Plenary session](#), in 2016. The Pollination Assessment provides good examples of the impact of IPBES Assessments. Its findings informed national legislation on pollinators, supported the adoption of a Plan of Action for the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable use of Pollinators by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and inspired the unanimous declaration by the UN General Assembly of 20 May every year as [World Bee Day](#).

In 2018, at its [sixth Plenary](#), IPBES released four [Regional Assessment Reports](#) on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (one each for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and Europe and Central Asia), as well as its Assessment Report on [Land Degradation and Restoration](#). All five assessments have seen significant policy uptake and impact.

#### *The science-policy context*

IPBES responds to the needs of governments, biodiversity-related conventions and other conventions, including the CBD, as well as to the needs of non-governmental stakeholders.

All seven of the already-published IPBES Assessments, and the soon-to-be-released IPBES Global Assessment Report, will contribute to the 5th Global Biodiversity Outlook of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and form the scientific basis for CBD COP 15, to be held in late 2020, to assess the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to consider the post-2020 framework for biodiversity. The Reports will also provide a vital knowledge-base for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainability.

#### *How do IPBES assessments work?*

IPBES assessment reports take, on average, about three years to produce. They are composed of two parts: a short (20-40 page) Summary for Policymakers (SPM), including a set of key messages and policy options; and a long document (several hundred pages), organized into chapters, containing the technical information to substantiate the messages in the SPM.

The reports are produced by scientists and other knowledge holders (e.g. holders of indigenous and local knowledge). These experts are proposed by their governments or by organizations, and are selected, based on their experience, by the IPBES Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP). The MEP is composed of scientists that are themselves elected by the Plenary of IPBES, in consultation with the Bureau. The experts contribute their time freely to IPBES. Each report involves three expert meetings, and two rounds of open review, first by peers and then, by governments and peers.

The time contributed voluntarily to IPBES by the more than 1,000 experts who have already been involved, is one of the key assets of the Platform. IPBES has estimated that, from 2014 to 2018, these collective in-kind contributions amounted to between 24 and 47 million US dollars.

#### *#IPBES7 about to begin in Paris*

About 800 participants, including representatives of more than 130 governments and of numerous organizations, will meet on Monday, 29 April 2019, in Paris at UNESCO, for the start of the [seventh Plenary](#) session of IPBES, in response to an invitation from the Government of France.

#### *#IPBES7 expected to approve the #GlobalAssessment on 4 May*

IPBES will release the [#GlobalAssessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), prepared over the past three years by 145 expert authors, with inputs from another 310 contributing authors, having critically reviewed about 15,000 scientific and government sources. The report formulates key messages related to the status and trends of biodiversity and nature's contributions to people, plausible futures for biodiversity, and, importantly, options for action. It will also form the scientific basis for CBD COP-15 to decide whether the Aichi Targets have been reached, and what to do next.

Following consideration by the IPBES Plenary, and a word-by-word approval of its Summary for Policymakers, the final version of the Summary, a product of the interactions between governments and the authors, will be publicly released at a media conference on Monday, 6 May, at 13:00 (CEST). This will represent the culmination of the first IPBES work programme.

*Other major items on the agenda of #IPBES7*

Other major issues on the agenda of #IPBES7 include a consideration of the outcome of the external review of IPBES, and of the next work programme for IPBES, up to 2030; as well as progress reports on all other areas of work of IPBES. [[IPBES Website](#)] [[SDG Hub Story on #GlobalAssessment](#)]

## **Greenpeace UK**

### **What Declaring a Climate Emergency Looks Like**

**Philip Evans 18th April 2019**

Students in Vienna went on the street to strike, demonstrate and demand politicians to act urgently in order to prevent further global warming and climate change. It is a part of the School strike for climate movement, also known as Fridays for Future. Strikes took place in more than 40 countries around the globe.

Our climate is breaking down. Rising seas and extreme weather events are putting tens of millions of people around the world at direct risk. And younger generations are being robbed of their future on a healthy, livable planet.

So we need the government to declare a Climate Emergency and take immediate radical action on climate change – because that's what's required for our survival.

There are plenty of things the government can do right now that will help prevent climate breakdown / the worst effects of climate change. Here's what we need them to do:

*Ban all new oil and gas production in the UK, including fracking*

Drilling for more oil and gas, and opening up a new fossil fuel frontier with fracking, is completely incompatible with the massive reduction in carbon emissions we need to avoid climate disaster.

*Triple renewable energy by 2030*

Our energy system can and should be run on 100% renewables. If the government set ambitious targets for solar and wind this would massively help the transition. See this great Greenpeace [report](#) for more info.

*Plant 700 million trees*

Trees both soak up carbon from the atmosphere and prevent flooding. To meet the climate emergency, the government needs to set an afforestation target of at least 70,000 hectares per year by 2023. This means planting around 100 million trees per year, ensuring species are suitable for local habitats and ecosystems

*Introduce a Frequent Flyer Tax*

The UK's emissions from flying are higher than anywhere in Europe, and equivalent to the whole country emissions of Croatia. A [Frequent Flyer Tax](#) would see those who fly more paying more, discouraging extra trips, and would put the cost on the richer in our society who fly the most.

*End the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars by 2030*

Transport is the UK's highest emitting sector. We need to see a rapid switch to electric vehicles with greater provision for walking and cycling. And the government needs to end the sale of all new diesel and petrol cars by 2030.

*Roll out free bus travel for young people and those on lower incomes*

As our society changes quickly, it is vital that vulnerable people are not left behind. People on lower incomes should be supported to change their lifestyles to cleaner greener ones which are more readily affordable to wealthier people.

*End carbon emissions from heavy industry like steel and cement*

Carbon emissions from heavy industry are huge. A range of new and developing technologies could make big cuts here, but they need government support to start happening.

*Create millions of jobs in a new green economy*

Government support is necessary to help workers transition their skills to the green economy. People working in offshore oil need support to switch to offshore wind, or likewise people working in car engine manufacturing need support to switch to the essential battery technology production for electric cars and power storage – for which there is a huge emerging market in Europe right now.

*Retrofit our homes to go zero carbon*

Homes account for around [15% of the UK's greenhouse gas](#). Making buildings more sustainable is probably one of the toughest sectors to crack because the solutions are so localised and connected to people's everyday lives, and because in some cases clear technical answers are still being worked out. Joined-up action between improving building

efficiency and heat supply is essential and can only be done effectively at a local level. In turn this means empowerment and support for local authorities as they develop, gain consent and deliver projects across their local populations

*Radically change the farming and food system to encourage a less meat-based diet*

We need a more sustainable, healthy and local food and farming model that encourages people to have a less meat-based diet. As part of that, we need to support our farming communities to shift to more sustainable production methods, and ensure that people on lower incomes or in more precarious circumstances have access to affordable healthier, more sustainable food.

*Stepping it up*

Greenpeace has been campaigning on climate change for decades. But now we're stepping up the ambition on our climate work because despite decades of campaigning along with many other people and organisations, the action taken so far by those in power has not been enough to prevent impending climate breakdown.

There is a real disconnect between the actions of politicians and what climate science says we need. In October 2018, world leading scientists said that we don't have long to transition our society if we want to have a chance of keeping the global climate below 1.5 degrees of warming, which is widely seen as a threshold beyond which the impacts of climate change become unacceptable. We need to stop putting more carbon emissions into our atmosphere and protect carbon sinks like oceans and forests, which soak up carbon dioxide. This means real and immediate action to reduce emissions from transport, heat, energy and food as well as binding international agreements to protect oceans and forests.

Radical action on climate change must be on the top of the political, business and public agenda. It can mean cheaper bills and better jobs – but only if the government makes the right investments, tax plans, and public support for a transition, now. [Sign the petition and call on the government to declare a Climate Emergency.](#)

## **Committee on Climate Change**

### **CCC launches Call for Evidence on UK risks and opportunities from climate change**

**15 April 2019**

The Committee on Climate Change has today launched a call for evidence to identify relevant published information about the risks and opportunities facing the UK from climate change. The evidence will help to inform the Government's third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, due to be published in 2022.

Every five years, the UK Government must carry out an assessment of current and future risks to the country from climate change. To inform the [2022 risk assessment](#), the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has asked the Committee on Climate Change to prepare an independent 'Evidence Report' by 2021.

The Committee published a [similar evidence report in 2016](#), which went on to inform the UK Government's second Climate Change Risk Assessment in 2017.

A consortium led by the University of Exeter has been contracted by the CCC to prepare the analysis and draft the technical chapters for the Evidence Report. The Call for Evidence is available [on their website](#).

The closing date for submissions is Friday 10th May.

## **Department for Education, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Natural England**

### **Gove kicks off Year of Green Action**

Environment Secretary Michael Gove calls on people across the country to join together to improve the natural world.

#### **31 January 2019**

- Year-long drive calls on young people to spearhead environmental action
- Government pledges £10million boost to connect children with nature
- Greener schools and more educational visits will be delivered through the funding

Environment Secretary Michael Gove will today call on people across the country to join together to protect the environment.

Speaking at [ZSL London Zoo](#) this evening, the Environment Secretary will launch the [Year of Green Action](#) – a year-long drive to get more people from all backgrounds involved in projects to improve the natural world.

He will also allocate £10 million to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds better access the natural environment, with grants awarded to projects that will create greener school grounds and increase the number of school visits to local parks, wildlife sites, care farms and National Parks.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove will say:

I am delighted to launch the Year of Green Action. Over the next 12 months we will work with businesses and communities to create ways for people from all backgrounds to connect with nature, protect our environment, and contribute to restoring our natural world.

As the future stewards of our planet, children and young people have a vital role to play in this. The £10million boost outlined today will help ensure there are no barriers for young people to access the benefits of the natural world and importantly enable them to play their part in environmental protection.

During his speech, the Environment Secretary will call on everyone to play their part and back the Year of Green Action – from businesses to gardeners and government itself.

It will provide a focal point for organisations, individuals, communities and businesses to learn more about their environmental impact and take action to reduce it.

It comes as figures show [one in 10 children do not regularly spend time outdoors](#). The £10 million programme allocated today will help schools and education providers with the highest proportions of disadvantaged pupils to design more outdoor-focused activities, boosting pupils' contact with nature and supporting their health and wellbeing.

The funding will also increase access to care farms, making it possible for 1.3million children and adults facing disadvantage or social exclusion to benefit from activities on a working farm.

A key pillar of the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) is to connect young people with nature and the projects announced today will be delivered by [Natural England](#) with a number of partners from spring 2019, with funding from the Department of Education.

As part of this programme, the National Centre for Social Research will also be carrying out research to understand how activities in nature impact pupils' mental health and engagement with school.

Commenting on the funding, Lord Blencathra, Natural England's Deputy Chair, said:

Connecting children with nature is one of the most important things we can do for them. It can boost their health, wellbeing and learning and give them a life-long love of the natural world that leads them to cherish and protect it forever.

I hope these projects will ensure that every child has the means of discovering the wonders of our wildlife.

The [#iwill4nature](#) initiative, charity [Step Up To Serve's](#) contribution to the Year of Green Action, will also launch today. The government-backed initiative is a nationwide campaign to grow environmental youth social action and support a series of activities for young people to connect with, protect and enhance nature. This includes appointing young ambassadors to drive environmental action in their communities and encourage environmental volunteering such as litter picking, planting pollinator-friendly flowers or fundraising to maintain or enhance green spaces.

20-year-old #iwill Ambassador Nayha Patel said:

Young people, like me, are pivotal in initiating the cycle of change to improve the environment for the future. The Year of Green Action and #iwill4nature together will connect, engage and challenge people, in particular children and young people,

throughout the country to ensure we make our natural world a better place. The views and energy of young people will be key to achieving this.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

We want every child to have the best possible start in life and grow up healthy and happy. This £10 million investment will ensure even more children can enjoy the many benefits of discovering nature, from improved mental wellbeing to better physical health.

It builds on our recently published 'passport' of enrichment activities, designed to inspire children to explore the outdoors and make the most of the world around them.

Notes:

The children and nature funding was first announced in the 25 Year Environment Plan and has been awarded to the following delivery partners:

- Resilience through Nature, a consortium of [The Wildlife Trusts](#), YoungMinds, [Groundwork](#), the Sensory Trust and Field Studies Council, have been appointed to the Nature Friendly Schools project which will help deliver greener grounds and pupil visits to green spaces for schools with the highest proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- [Social Farms and Gardens](#), working with Thrive, will deliver the Growing Care Farming project which aims to achieve a transformational change in the scale, scope and uptake of care farming services in England for children and adults with a defined health, education or social need particularly those from disadvantaged areas.
- Community Forests and Woodland Outreach project: to be awarded

## **Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy**

### **World-first carbon 'net-zero' hub of heavy industry to help UK seize global economic opportunities of clean growth**

At COP24 climate talks in Poland, UK government sets world-leading ambition for first 'net-zero carbon' cluster by 2040 to cut emissions, backed by up to £170 million funding.

#### **13 December 2018**

- At COP24 climate talks in Poland, UK government sets world-leading ambition for first "net-zero carbon" cluster by 2040 to cut emissions, backed by up to £170 million funding
- UK to seize global clean growth opportunities, exporting emissions-cutting expertise like carbon capture around the world – part of our modern Industrial Strategy

- £20 million boost for World Bank programme from UK government to help developing countries move away from coal power, with membership of the Powering Past Coal Alliance trebling since COP23

The UK could have the world's first 'net-zero carbon' cluster of heavy industry by 2040, thanks to up to £170 million of new funding announced at COP24 climate talks in Poland today (13 December).

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry today set the world-leading ambition alongside plans for at least one low-carbon cluster by 2030 at UN climate change talks (COP24) in Katowice, Poland. Using cutting-edge technologies like carbon capture and storage, the UK is aiming to become a world-leader in clean technology and services that will be needed as the world tackles climate change.

The UK's low carbon economy has the potential to deliver export sales of low carbon goods and services around the world, by 2030 annual exports could be worth up to £170 billion and could support up to 2 million 'green collar' jobs by 2030 – a key part of our modern [Industrial Strategy](#).

Currently, industry accounts for around 25% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, with more than two-thirds of these industrial emissions coming from energy intensive industries which are often located next to each other in clusters.

This new funding of up to £170 million, which is expected to be backed by industry, will help heavy industries like steel, ceramics, cement, chemicals, paper and glass to share expertise and innovative low-carbon solutions to clean up the air we breathe as we move to a greener, cleaner economy.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

Demonstrating climate action and growing the economy go hand in hand is key to building momentum behind global action on carbon. The UK is a leader in both, cutting our emissions by more than 40% while growing our economy by 2 thirds, but to sustain this track record we need to tackle emissions from energy intensive sectors and bring clean growth to our great industrial centres.

That's why today I'm launching a mission to create the world's first 'net-zero' carbon cluster by 2040 in the UK with up to £170 million of new government funding. This will help to develop the technologies of the future to transform industry around the world, ensuring the UK seizes the global economic opportunities of moving to greener, cleaner industry – a key part of our modern Industrial Strategy.

By investing in world-leading innovative technology, such as carbon capture usage and storage (CCUS), climate change can be tackled alongside creating highly skilled jobs and generating export opportunities. At the end of last month, Minister Claire Perry co-hosted a global summit in Edinburgh at which she [unveiled plans to enable the first UK carbon capture project from the mid-2020s](#).

Today's announcement comes as the UK-Canada led Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) celebrates one year of success, now with over 70 members. As part of this, the UK has committed £20 million for a World Bank programme (ESMAP) to help developing countries move away from coal power and embrace renewable energy. To make a real impact on the reduction of coal power, UK government has established the Utilities Taskforce to become influential advocates for the PPCA.

At international climate talks in Poland this year at COP24, the UK and Canada today will announce new members of the PPCA, committing to eradicating coal power while redirecting resources to renewables. Around 3.5 billion tons of coal are currently burnt globally for power every year, contributing to 45% of the world's emissions.

The UK government has put moving to a cleaner, greener economy at the heart of its Industrial Strategy. Through the Clean Growth Grand Challenge, the transformation in the clean energy sector has contributed to the whole of the UK cutting its emissions by more than 40% since 1990 while growing the economy by more than two-thirds – the best performance on a per person basis of any G7 nation.

But UK has always been clear that the move to a cleaner economy must be both public and private sector led, which is why the modern Industrial Strategy establishes clean growth as one of the greatest economic opportunities of our time – with heavy industry now set to also benefit from this new clean revolution and seize the vast global economic opportunity that comes with it.

Power stations are also set to benefit too from the move to a cleaner economy. To make a real impact on the reduction of coal power, UK government is working with investors to establish the Utilities Taskforce – a group comprising companies which supply electricity to UK homes – to become powerful and influential advocates for the alliance and encourage investors to commit funds into the thriving clean energy market instead of investing in coal projects.

#### *Notes to editors*

1. The UK's [modern Industrial Strategy set out 4 Grand Challenges](#) – the long-term trends shaping change in our world today that present enormous potential for the UK economy. As part of this, at her speech in May, the Prime Minister recognised clean growth as a vast economic opportunity. Today's new Clean Growth mission will focus on reducing emissions from these industrial clusters over the coming years and follows the mission to 'at least halve the energy use of all new buildings by 2030' launched by the Prime Minister in May.

2. Up to £170 million funding for industry will be provided through a competitive process for clusters to research, develop and demonstrate at scale the innovative solutions to lead the way to a decarbonised industrial future. Both the £170 million Decarbonising Industry and the £66 million Transforming Foundation Industry investment is subject to industry entering into partnership with government and providing significant co-investment to this challenge.

3. These energy intensive clusters include Grangemouth, South Wales, Merseyside, Teesside, Humberside and Southampton. They are recognised as key to the UK economy but also as significant contributors to the UK's emissions.
4. The government will also be supporting the transformation of our foundation industries (steel, glass, ceramics, chemicals) more broadly through providing up to £66 million through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to develop radical new technologies and establish innovation centres of excellence in these sectors.
5. In 2017 the government committed to phasing out unabated coal power by 2025 and launched the international Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) – a voluntary coalition of governments, businesses and other organisations committed to ending the use of dirty coal power.
6. Coal-fired power plants produce almost 40% of global electricity today, making carbon pollution from dirty coal a leading contributor to climate change.
7. Great Britain is on track to deliver less than 5% of its electricity from coal for the first time since the first Industrial Revolution.

## **Prime Minister's Office and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

### **Climate experts asked for advice on net zero target**

Climate experts will advise the government on whether the UK should set a date for a net zero emissions target.

#### **15 October 2018**

- Committee on Climate Change to advise on setting a date for net zero emissions target
- first-ever Green GB & NI Week launches – bringing society together to tackle climate change
- 'green collar' jobs could reach 2 million by 2030, generating up to £170 billion in annual exports for UK businesses

To mark the launch of this nationwide week, Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry today (Monday 15 October) wrote to the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) asking for advice on:

- setting a date for achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the economy, including from transport, industry and agriculture
- whether we need to review our 2050 target of cutting emissions by at least 80% relative to 1990 levels to meet international climate targets set out in Paris Agreement
- how emissions reductions might be achieved in industry, homes, transport and agriculture

- and the expected costs and benefits in comparison to current targets

This makes the UK one of the first in the G7 to formally explore setting an even more ambitious target than its current one. It follows a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), showing more rapid action is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid devastating risks of climate change to health and global prosperity.

The UK is already a world leader when it comes to tackling climate change. We led the world with our Climate Change Act, and since 1990 we have led the G7 in cutting emissions while growing our economy on a per person basis. In 2017 we saw renewable energy generation at record levels, and we are among the world's best in cutting our carbon intensity.

But the government is determined to do more and our first-ever Green GB & NI Week will celebrate the progress we have made while challenging governments, businesses and civil society to rise to the task.

[Find out about Green GB Week.](#)

During Green GB Week, Claire Perry will also highlight the economic opportunities of moving to an even greener, cleaner economy. There are already almost 400,000 jobs in the low carbon economy and this could quadruple to around 2 million, generating up to £170 billion of annual exports. This is why the government has put Clean Growth at the centre of its modern [Industrial Strategy](#).

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

On the global stage, the UK is driving forward action on climate change through our work at the UN and with our Commonwealth partners. To ensure that we continue to lead from the front, we are asking the experts to advise on targets for net zero emissions.

At home, we are growing an economy that is fit for the future. Over the last year, we've generated record levels of solar and offshore wind energy, and just last month I hosted the UK's first zero-emission vehicles summit. For our first Green GB Week, we are asking businesses and consumers to work with us to consider what more they can do to protect our environment.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

We're a world leader when it comes to tackling climate change and cutting carbon intensity, but the evidence is clear – governments, businesses and communities must take further action to confront one of the greatest global challenges we've ever faced.

That's why we're asking the independent climate experts of the CCC for advice on a roadmap to a net zero economy, including how emissions might be reduced and the expected costs and benefits of doing so.

The case for tackling climate change is more stark than ever before. This Green GB Week, we need everyone – the government, businesses and communities – to renew their efforts

to confront this global challenge head on while seizing one of the greatest industrial opportunities of our time.

Gareth Redmond-King, Head of Climate at WWF said:

Last week scientists from around the world said we had 12 years to tackle climate change. Governments can no longer shirk their responsibilities. It's time to act and, crucially, embrace the opportunities a green economy presents. Done right, this could be the biggest economic opportunity in history, driving innovation, job creation and better living standards.

To mark the start of Green GB Week the government today unveiled a package of measures to help transform energy infrastructure to make it cleaner and greener, including:

- proposals for new laws for smart energy appliances like washing machines and electric heating, laying the groundwork for a smart and clean electricity system of the future with the ambition of making all new buildings smart by 2030
- opening the £18 million [Heat Recovery Support Programme](#) to help businesses become more energy efficient, which could save industry up to £500 million on their energy bills while making manufacturing firms more competitive
- launching a [£320 million government fund in low-carbon heating for cities](#), appointing Triple Point Heat Networks Investment Management to it
- and in 2019 we will launch a competition to design the house of the future, more energy efficient, with quality affordable design and easily adaptable to help healthy ageing

Showing its leadership on the global stage, the government today also announced £106 million to encourage greener construction practices in developing countries to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions, creating opportunities for UK businesses to invest in new markets.

This comes just weeks after the government announced £160 million to help countries transition to cleaner, greener energy. This included £60 million to share the UK's world leading expertise on energy market reform, green finance and climate legislation to help developing countries seize the opportunities of clean growth.

The week will see more than 100 events hosted around the country designed to promote the opportunities that come from clean growth and raise awareness of how businesses and the public can contribute to tackling climate change.

Polling commissioned for Green GB Week revealed 60% of 18 to 24 year-olds are interested in 'green collar' jobs in the environmental sectors of the economy, the equivalent of more than 3 million young people in the UK. When asked why they wanted to pursue a career in the green economy, two-thirds said it was because they wanted to help tackle climate change while 70% of those surveyed underestimated the number of jobs which could be created in the sector.

To help grow the sector, the government is creating the right conditions to ensure businesses can seize those opportunities through our modern Industrial Strategy. Our world-leading [Clean Growth Strategy](#) sets out how we're investing more than £2.5 billion in low carbon innovation as part of the largest increase in public spending on science, research and innovation in over 3 decades.

The government has also earmarked more than half a billion pounds for emerging renewable technologies to give them the certainty developers need to invest while driving down costs for consumers.

*Notes to editors*

1. See [Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry's letter to the CCC](#).
2. Green GB & NI Week launched today, with a series of events planned around the country. [Find out about Green GB Week](#).
3. A 'net-zero' target means emissions of greenhouse gases driven by human activity are balanced by methods of removing emissions from the atmosphere.
4. Last week the IPCC published its [Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C](#) which found that to meet the goals set under the Paris Agreement – to limit global warming to 2°C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C – globally we must increase our efforts to tackle climate change.
5. Our current 2050 target, set out in the Climate Change Act 2008, is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% relative to 1990 levels.
6. The UK is already committed to working with other countries to achieve global net zero emissions in the second half of the century, as set out in the government's ambitious Clean Growth Strategy.
7. The government will today publish:
  - the response to the CCC's annual progress report to Parliament on reducing UK emissions
  - a response to a consultation on setting standards for smart appliances
8. Tomorrow we will be publishing an update on the Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan.
9. The £106 million Market Accelerator for Green Construction is a collaboration between the UK and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to drive the financing and construction of more energy efficient buildings in developing countries:
  - buildings account for around a fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions and improving building design and construction will play an important role in avoiding climate change and meeting our Paris Agreement goals

- funded through the UK's International Climate Finance – part of the UK aid budget - the Market Accelerator for Green Construction will mobilise up to \$2 billion in public and private investment into new green construction
- by helping to build new clean growth markets in emerging economies and opening up opportunities for UK industry's leadership, technical expertise and innovation, the Market Accelerator for Green Construction will create an international dimension to the Industrial Strategy Buildings Mission

## **Joint Nature Conservation Committee**

### **UK Biodiversity Indicators**

**Updated 19 July 2018**

#### [UK Biodiversity Indicators 2018](#)

Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants, and the natural systems that support them. Biodiversity matters because it supports the vital benefits we get from the natural environment. It contributes to our economy, our health and wellbeing, and it enriches our lives.

The UK is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and is committed to the biodiversity goals and targets ('the Aichi targets') agreed in 2010 and set out in the [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020](#).

We are also committed to developing and using a set of indicators to report on progress towards meeting these international goals and targets. There are related commitments on biodiversity made by the European Union, and the UK indicators may also be used to assess progress with these.

The UK indicators were comprehensively reviewed during 2011 and 2012 to ensure they continued to be based on the most robust and reliable available data; and remained relevant to the new international goals and targets<sup>1</sup>. Since then the indicators have been refined to improve their relevance/quality, and new indicators developed to fill gaps. In this version of the publication as many as possible of the indicators have been updated with new data. In some cases, however, development work is ongoing, and where this is the case, the work to develop them has been described briefly.

Indicators are useful tools for summarising and communicating broad trends. They are not intended to incorporate all the relevant information available in the UK. They are best seen, as their name suggests, as indicative of wider changes. The UK biodiversity indicators formed a major part of the [UK's 5th National Report](#) to the CBD in 2014, supplemented with other information relating to UK biodiversity and implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is expected that the indicators will be amongst the information used to

produce the 6<sup>th</sup> National Report to the CBD (due to be submitted in December 2018) In 2015, JNCC produced an updated mapping of the indicators against both [global and European biodiversity targets](#).

Biodiversity policy is a devolved responsibility in the UK; England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have each developed or are developing their own biodiversity or environment strategies. Indicators are being developed to track progress with the respective commitments in each country. The UK indicators have a specific purpose for international reporting and were selected following consultation and agreement between the administrations. The indicators provide a flexible framework and a common set of methodologies which in some cases can also be used for country reporting. The indicators may be subject to further review as necessary.

The UK Biodiversity Indicators are dependent on a wide variety of data, provided by Government, research bodies, and the voluntary sector – in total nearly 100 organisations are involved. As Official Statistics, the presentation and assessment of the indicators has been verified by the data providers, and the production and editing of the indicators has been overseen by Government statisticians.

Links to the full detail of each of the previous editions are provided on the website (stored on The National Archives website).

## RSPB blog

### The U Biodiversity Indicators 2018 part 2: what does this year's indicator update tell us?

9 Aug 2018

*The latest annual update of the [UK's official biodiversity indicators](#) were recently published. In the second of a three-part blog series, Mark Eaton, Principal Conservation Scientist, explains what this year's update tells us:*

In [the first blog post](#), I explained what the indicators are. Now, it's time to talk about what they show.

Overall, this report presents 43 measures of change over the long-term (over the definition of 'long-term' varies between measures), and 40 over the short-term. Each measured is assessed as improving, little or no overall change, or deteriorating, with a few said to have insufficient data to enable an assessment to be made.

It should be borne in mind that these are not targets, and an improving measure does not mean that all is well with the variable being measured.

For example, while the bat indicator ([C8](#)) shows a welcome increase over both the long-term (since 1999) and short-term (since 2011), there is evidence to suggest that this is a partial recovery from decades of bat

decline prior to the start of the indicator period, and bat numbers may still be below previous levels.

In all, 23 of the long-term measures are increasing, 10 deteriorating, and 16 of the short-term assessments are increasing and nine deteriorating. So, on the face of it, is this good news – more going up than down? To be honest, not really – a more nuanced approach is needed to understand what these indicators tell us.

### *The heart of the matter*

To my mind, the most important statistics are those found grouped under CBD strategic goal C, “Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity”. These state indicators tell us the fundamental details of how the UK’s biodiversity is faring. Regardless of what the other indicators measuring the pressures upon our biodiversity, and the responses being made to help that biodiversity, tell us, if the ‘state’ indicators are bad news then those pressures are too great, and those responses insufficient.

Whilst the aim is for there to ultimately be nine indicators for goal C, only seven are available at present, with those for habitat connectivity and plants of the wider countryside still under development. One of the existing seven indicators, C9: genetic resources for food and agriculture, actually has six measures, [five of which](#) are related to populations of livestock rare breeds, [the other](#) to the Millennium Seed Bank. If you consider that each C9 measure has both a long- and short-term assessment, which means that 12 of the total of 83 assessments published last week are from this indicator alone.

Of these, nine are increasing, which of course good news and speaks of good progress towards Aichi target 13, relating to the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed/domesticated animals. But there’ll be no dancing in the streets of Sandy for that, as trends in Toggenburg goats and Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs have no relation to what is happening to the UK’s nature.

This also highlights the irrelevance of the headline statistics of the overall proportion of the measures in the three (increasing/little or no change/deteriorating) categories, as the number of measures for each subject area varies considerably – there’s far too much prominence for livestock trends, in my opinion.

The nine increasing measures for indicator C9 represent nearly a quarter of all the positive assessments in this year’s report!

### *Birds*

Rather, if we focus on the key measures of how the UK’s nature is doing, we see that the [indicator for farmland birds](#) is less than half its 1970 starting value, and has continued to decline in the short term, the woodland bird indicator is down by 23% since 1970, although stable in the short-term, and although the seabird indicator was not updated or formally assessed in 2018 due to technical reasons, it is clearly in decline, down by 21% in 30 years.

Whilst the wintering waterbird indicator is still well above its 1975 start point courtesy of a fantastic rise through the 1970s, 80s and 90s, that too is now in a downward slide, reaching its lowest level for over 25 years. Only the indicator of breeding waterbirds has shown stability, and even that has a worrying hint of a downturn.

#### *Other species*

Other species groups are also struggling - the index of [habitat specialist butterflies](#) has fallen by a staggering 77% since 1976, and that for those of the wider countryside by 46% over the same period. An indicator of the status of priority species, which reports on trends in species identified as a conservation priority by the statutory conservation agencies of any of the UK's four nations, shows ongoing declines in [abundance](#) although the indicator showing trends in [occurrence](#) has remained stable.

## 4. Parliamentary material

### Statements and debates

#### **Commons Statement - Climate Change Policy**

**HC Deb 23 April 2019 | Vol 658 c671-**

<http://bit.ly/2VnaNck>

#### **Commons Urgent Question - Climate Action and Extinction Rebellion**

**HC Deb 23 April 2019 | Vol 658 c601-**

<http://bit.ly/2L8ivDs>

#### **Commons debate - World Health: 25-Year Environment Plan**

**HC Deb 09 April 2019 | Vol 658 c70WH-**

<http://bit.ly/2UJuLOl>

### **Climate**

Lords question for short debate on whether the Government intends to declare a climate emergency.

**HL Deb 02 April 2019 | Vol 797 cc16-31GC**

<http://bit.ly/2I9W1hV>

#### **Commons Backbench Business Committee debate - Net Zero Carbon Emissions: UK's Progress**

**HC Deb 28 February 2019 | Volume 655 c590-**

<http://bit.ly/2T6aXUZ>

#### **Commons debate - UN Climate Change Conference: Government Response**

**HL Deb 16 January 2019 | Volume 652 c439WH-**

<http://bit.ly/2Dejgoq>

### **PQs**

[Climate Change: Emergencies](#)

**Asked by: Grady, Patrick**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a response to [EDM 2177](#) on UK-wide climate emergency.

**Answering member: Claire Perry | Department: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

The Government recognises that climate change is one of the most urgent and pressing challenges we face today, which is why we have set out ambitious plans in our Clean Growth Strategy to reduce emissions through the 2020s.

The Strategy builds on the UK's impressive progress to date; between 1990 and 2017, the UK reduced its emissions by over 40 per cent while growing the economy by more than two thirds – the best performance in the G7 on a per person basis.

In addition to our ambitious policies and proposals in the Clean Growth Strategy, we have commissioned the Committee on Climate Change to provide advice on the implications of the Paris Agreement for the UK's long-term emissions reduction targets, including on setting a net zero target. This advice is due on the 2 May and we will consider it carefully when it is received.

**HC Deb 28 March 2019 | PQ 236453**

[Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#)**Asked by: Liz McInnes**

What assessment he has made of the UK's progress on meeting the Aichi biodiversity targets.

**Answered by: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Dr Thérèse Coffey)**

The Government's progress report was published this month, and of 19 targets assessed, five are on track and 14 show progress, but at an insufficient rate. The Aichi targets are multifaceted and global in scope, and they include a mixture of processes and outcomes, which are not always specific. Their assessment requires a degree of interpretation and judgment. Nevertheless, the report identifies progress, but there is more that we need to do.

**Liz McInnes**

I thank the Minister for that response. As she says, we are on track to miss 14 of the 20 targets. Given that they are meant to be achieved by 2020—next year—what talks has she had with the Treasury to achieve target 20, on mobilising financial resources? Will they be reflected in the forthcoming comprehensive spending review?

**Dr Coffey**

As my right hon. Friend the Minister of State just pointed out, one of the changes that will be coming as a result of our leaving the European

Union is that the UK—England, certainly—will have a new way of doing environmental land management, and the public services will be paid for by taxpayers. Many of the targets are quite nebulous—*[Interruption.]* Because they are not particularly specific and are open to interpretation and judgment. We are working carefully on that and have made excellent progress on marine conservation. We are doing global work to ensure that, when the next targets are agreed, which will happen next year for 2030, the UK will lead the way in ensuring that 30% of oceans are marine conservation areas.

**Sir Hugo Swire**

I recently took Neil Garrick-Maidment, the excellent CEO of the Seahorse Trust in Topsham in my constituency, of which I have just become patron, to see the Secretary of State to discuss the illegal trade in seahorses. He will remember that 150 million seahorses are traded illegally for the curio and medical trade. Following that meeting, will he commit the UK to playing a lead role in preserving seahorses around the world? What measures does he suggest we can take to police the online trade in seahorses better?

**Dr Coffey**

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State very much enjoyed that meeting and visit. He and I are committed to ensuring we do more to protect the wonderful species that are part of our natural habitat, including our marine habitat. We will work hard to do exactly what my right hon. Friend the Member for East Devon (Sir Hugo Swire) is seeking to achieve.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds**

Only about 4% of the world's oceans are protected. Although I hear what the Minister just said about the aim to increase that, what work can we do with our overseas territories to increase that far more quickly, not least to have an overall target of reducing plastic in the oceans?

**Dr Coffey**

The hon. Gentleman asks an important question. Once we designate the marine conservation zones, which I believe will happen in the next two months, the UK will have comfortably exceeded the 30% target that we have set ourselves for the rest of the world by 2030. One of the key things that I do at G7 Environment and in other forums is speak to other nations to see what more we can do to get more designations. The hon. Gentleman is also right about plastics. He will be aware that at the spring statement the Chancellor specifically referred to the overseas territories. Ascension Island will be moving its entire economic zone to fully protected status, and we will continue to work on the Blue Belt programme, which I think will be one of the greatest achievements of this Government.

**Sue Hayman**

We have heard that the UK is on track to meet only five of the 20 Aichi biodiversity targets. This is an environmental and climate emergency.

Does the Minister—and the Secretary of State—agree with the around 50 councils and thousands of young people who have declared an environment and climate emergency? Will they today commit to join Labour in declaring a national environment and climate emergency?

**Dr Coffey**

We are already ahead of the game, with a 25-year environment plan published last year, and the strategies and the work that are ongoing. We are making significant improvements in improving our natural environment, and I genuinely hope that the whole House comes together and gets behind the plan to ensure that we leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it.

**Sue Hayman**

The question was: will the Minister commit to join me in declaring a national environment and climate emergency? The answer, to be honest, was a bit of a fudge. Labour is going to bring this forward, with or without the Government's support. Will the Government think again and commit to announcing an environment and climate emergency, and will they commit to meeting the youth strike action for climate representatives?

**Dr Coffey**

DEFRA will account for more than half the achievements under the Paris agreements, so I can assure the hon. Lady that work is very much under way on improving the climate and also the environment. This is about actions rather than words. I pay particular tribute to those who joined the Great British spring clean this weekend and who will do so for the next few weeks. I am very happy to work with young people, as we are with our Year of Green Action 2019. We are already working with the Step Up To Serve brigade, which we will be doing with the National Citizen Service.

**HC Deb 28 March 2019 | Vol 657 c533-**

[Biodiversity](#)

**Asked by: Moran, Layla**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department spent on biodiversity conservation in (a) England and (b) the UK Overseas Territories in each of the last three financial years.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey**

**| Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Defra spend on biodiversity in England was £278m in 2015/16; and £258m in 2016/17. Figures for 2017/18 are still being compiled for publication, and should be available in July 2019 as part of our update of our Biodiversity Indicators.

These figures include a proportion of the total expenditure on agri-environment schemes (55% – the proportion that is assessed to directly contribute to biodiversity outcomes specifically). They also include expenditure by Natural England, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission on managing the public estate, advice, research and monitoring.

This is likely to be an underestimate as spend on biodiversity is integrated into a wide range of Departmental programmes that support multiple outcomes. For example, the figures do not include all spend on marine and fisheries. In 2018/19 £21m will be spent on activities that contribute to the conservation of marine biodiversity. In addition to this, much of the Department's work to improve the sustainability of our fisheries will also contribute to improving marine biodiversity.

The main source of Departmental funding for biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories (OTs) is through Darwin Plus, also known as "The Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund". Defra's contribution to Darwin Plus funding in the last three years is as follows: £1.85 million in 2015/16; £2 million in 2016/17; £2 million in 2017/18. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development also contribute.

Defra leads on a number of environmental protection projects under the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) but these are funded and administered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

**HC Deb 12 November 2018 | PQ 188902**

## Early Day Motions

### [UK-WIDE CLIMATE EMERGENCY](#)

That this House notes the stark warning from the world's scientific community that there are just 12 years left to prevent 1.5 degrees warming; further notes that warming beyond 1.5 degrees represents a threat to the future of humanity, and that even warming limited to that level will wreak havoc upon the livelihoods of countless people across the world; acknowledges that the world is now experiencing a climate emergency and that an urgent and rapid global response is now necessary; welcomes the fact that solutions to the climate crisis are widely available including renewable technology, sustainable transport options and zero-carbon buildings; supports the decisions by more than 40 local authorities to pass motions declaring a climate emergency and setting net zero carbon emissions targets for their local areas; and calls on the Government to declare a climate emergency and to release the necessary funding, including to local authorities, to enact a green new deal that would rapidly decarbonise the entire UK economy.

**13 March 2019 | Early day motion 2177 (session 2017-19)**

**Primary sponsor: Lucas, Caroline**

## [NATIONWIDE YOUTH STRIKES FOR CLIMATE ACTION](#)

That this House notes the voice and real concerns of young people on climate change and the future of the planet and of human-kind; recognises the latest warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the need for urgent radical action to minimise the catastrophic impacts of climate change; calls on the Government to increase the 2050 Greenhouse Gas emission reduction target in the Climate Change Act from 80 per cent to 100 per cent; asks the Government to meet representatives of the UK Student Climate Network and consider their demands for the Government to declare a climate emergency, to prioritise the protection of life on Earth, to take active steps to achieve climate justice, to reform the national curriculum to address the ecological crisis as an educational priority, to communicate the severity of the ecological crisis and the need to act now to the general public and to recognise that young people have the biggest stake in our future by incorporating youth views into policy making and by reducing the voting age to 16; congratulates young people on taking a strong stand on this issue; and further calls on the Government to respond to those demands and to present a plan of action to the House by 31 May 2019.

**25 February 2019 | Early day motion 2102 (session 2017-19)**

**Primary sponsor: Murray, Ian**

## Committee reports

### **House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee**

[Pre-legislative scrutiny of the Draft Environment \(Principles and Governance\) Bill](#)

HC1893 2017-19 published 30 April 2019

### **House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee**

[Scrutiny of the Draft Environment \(Principles and Governance\) Bill](#)

HC1951 2017-19 published 25 April 2019

[Heatwaves: adapting to climate change](#)

HC 826 2017-19 published 26 July 2018

[Government response](#) HC 1671 2017-19 published 24 October 2018

[The Government's 25 Year Plan for the Environment](#)

HC803 2017-19 published 24 July 2018

[Government response](#) HC 1672 2017-19 published 6 November 2018

[Improving air quality](#)

HC433 2017-19 published 15 March 2018

[Government response](#) HC1149 2017-19 published 20 June 2018

### About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email [papers@parliament.uk](mailto:papers@parliament.uk). Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email [hcinfo@parliament.uk](mailto:hcinfo@parliament.uk).

### Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).