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Policy paper

At a glance: summary of targets in our 25 year environment plan

Updated 1 February 2018

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We want to improve the UK's air and water quality and protect our many threatened plants, trees and wildlife species.

Our environment plan sets out our goals for improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it. It details how we in government will work with communities and businesses to do this.

This page summarises the goals and targets for each of the environmental benefits and pressures we have identified.

Clean air

We will achieve clean air by:

- meeting legally binding targets to reduce emissions of five damaging air pollutants; this should halve the effects of air pollution on health by 2030
- ending the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040
- maintaining the continuous improvement in industrial emissions by building on existing good practice and the successful regulatory framework

Clean and plentiful water

We will achieve clean and plentiful water by improving at least three quarters of our waters to be close to their natural state as soon as is practicable by:

- reducing the damaging abstraction of water from rivers and groundwater, ensuring that by 2021 the proportion of water bodies with enough water to support environmental standards increases from 82% to 90% for surface water bodies and from 72% to 77% for groundwater bodies
- reaching or exceeding objectives for rivers, lakes, coastal and ground waters that are specially protected, whether for biodiversity or drinking water as per our River Basin Management Plans
- supporting OFWAT's ambitions on leakage, minimising the amount of water lost through leakage year on year, with water companies expected to reduce leakage by at least an average of 15% by 2025
- minimising by 2030 the harmful bacteria in our designated bathing waters and continuing to improve the cleanliness of our waters; we will make sure that potential bathers are warned of any short-term pollution risks

Thriving plants and wildlife

We will achieve a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife.

At sea, we will do this by:

- reversing the loss of marine biodiversity and, where practicable, restoring it
- increasing the proportion of protected and well-managed seas, and better managing existing protected sites
- making sure populations of key species are sustainable with appropriate age structures
- ensuring seafloor habitats are productive and sufficiently extensive to support healthy, sustainable ecosystems

On land and in freshwaters, we will do this by:

- restoring 75% of our one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition, securing their wildlife value for the long term
- creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network, focusing on priority habitats as part of a wider set of land management changes providing extensive benefits
- taking action to recover threatened, iconic or economically important species of animals, plants and fungi, and where possible to prevent human induced extinction or loss of known threatened species in England and the Overseas Territories
- increasing woodland in England in line with our aspiration of 12% cover by 2060: this would involve planting 180,000 hectares by end of 2042

Reducing the risks of harm from environmental hazards

We will reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy from natural hazards including flooding, drought and coastal erosion by:

- making sure everyone is able to access the information they need to assess any risks to their

- lives and livelihoods, health and prosperity posed by flooding and coastal erosion
- bringing the public, private and third sectors together to work with communities and individuals to reduce the risk of harm
- making sure that decisions on land use, including development, reflect the level of current and future flood risk
- ensuring interruptions to water supplies are minimised during prolonged dry weather and drought
- boosting the long-term resilience of our homes, businesses and infrastructure

Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently

We will ensure that resources from nature, such as food, fish and timber, are used more sustainably and efficiently. We will do this by:

- maximising the value and benefits we get from our resources, doubling resource productivity by 2050
- improving our approach to soil management: by 2030 we want all of England's soils to be managed sustainably, and we will use natural capital thinking to develop appropriate soil metrics and management approaches
- increasing timber supplies
- ensuring that all fish stocks are recovered to and maintained at levels that can produce their maximum sustainable yield
- ensuring that food is produced sustainably and profitably

Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

We will conserve and enhance the beauty of our natural environment, and make sure it can be enjoyed, used by and cared for by everyone. We will do this by:

- safeguarding and enhancing the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage.
- making sure that there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, and encouraging more people to spend time in them to benefit their health and wellbeing
- focusing on increasing action to improve the environment from all sectors of society

Mitigating and adapting to climate change

We will take all possible action to mitigate climate change, while adapting to reduce its impact. We will do this by:

- continuing to cut greenhouse gas emissions including from land use, land use change, the agriculture and waste sectors and the use of fluorinated gases
- making sure that all policies, programmes and investment decisions take into account the

possible extent of climate change this century

- implementing a sustainable and effective second National Adaptation Programme

Minimising waste

We will minimise waste, reuse materials as much as we can and manage materials at the end of their life to minimise the impact on the environment. We will do this by:

- working towards our ambition of zero avoidable waste by 2050
- working to a target of eliminating avoidable plastic waste by end of 2042
- meeting all existing waste targets – including those on landfill, reuse and recycling – and developing ambitious new future targets and milestones
- seeking to eliminate waste crime and illegal waste sites over the lifetime of this Plan, prioritising those of highest risk. Delivering a substantial reduction in litter and littering behaviour.
- significantly reducing and where possible preventing all kinds of marine plastic pollution – in particular material that came originally from land

Managing exposure to chemicals

We will make sure that chemicals are safely used and managed, and that the levels of harmful chemicals entering the environment (including through agriculture) are significantly reduced. We will do this by:

- seeking in particular to eliminate the use of Polychlorinated Biphenyls by 2025, in line with our commitments under the Stockholm Convention
- reducing land-based emissions of mercury to air and water by 50% by 2030
- substantially increasing the amount of Persistent Organic Pollutants material being destroyed or irreversibly transformed by 2030, to make sure there are negligible emissions to the environment
- fulfilling our commitments under the Stockholm Convention as outlined in the UK's most recent National Implementation Plan

Enhancing biosecurity

We will enhance biosecurity to protect our wildlife and livestock, and boost the resilience of plants and trees. We will do this by:

- managing and reducing the impact of existing plant and animal diseases; lowering the risk of new ones and tackling invasive non-native species
- reaching the detailed goals to be set out in the Tree Health Resilience Plan of 2018
- ensuring strong biosecurity protection at our borders, drawing on the opportunities leaving the EU provides
- working with industry to reduce the impact of endemic disease