



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Overview of the Policy Environment

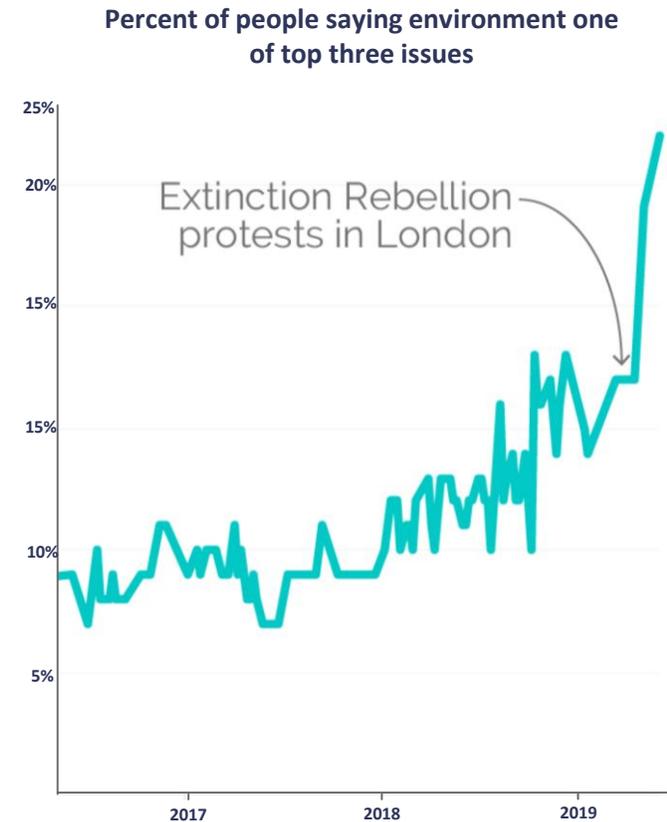
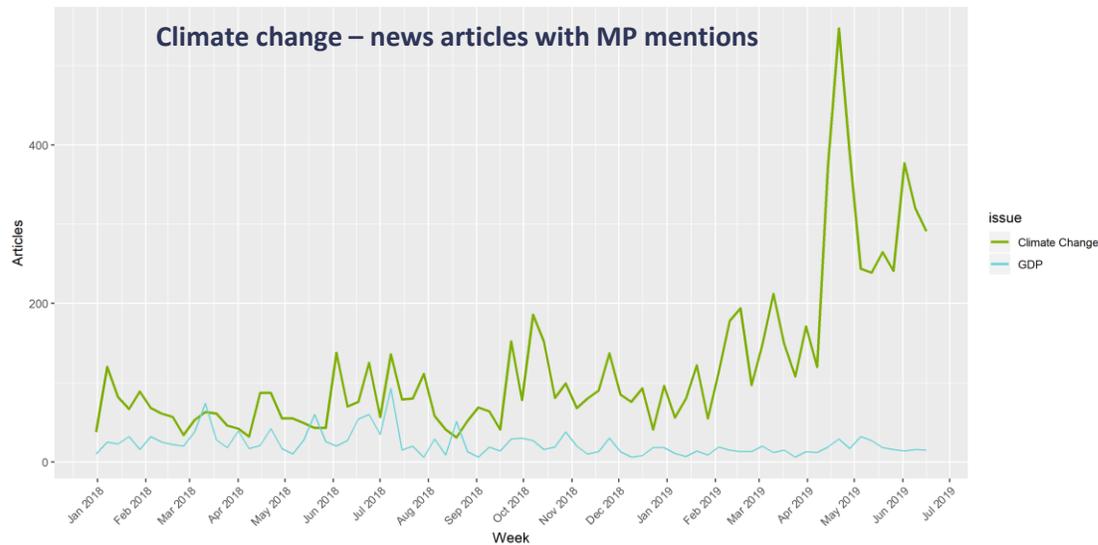
Alastair Johnson

Head of Natural Environment Economics, Defra

Valuing Nature Programme - Business Impact Conference

21st February 2020

There is growing public awareness and concern on environment and climate change



Source: YouGov

Scale of the challenge is significant

		25 YEP ambition	Current situation
	Improving air quality	Meeting legally binding targets to reduce emissions of five damaging air pollutants	Emissions have fallen, but many in towns and cities are still exposed; 62% of sensitive habitat exposed to damaging N levels
	Improving water quality	Improve at least 75% of our waters to be close to their natural state as soon as practicable	16% in a high or good status, and declining
	Waste and resources	No avoidable single-use plastic No food waste entering landfill by 2030	1.9m tonnes per year, worth £3.7 bn and generating the equivalent of 1.2 m tonnes of CO ₂
	Increasing woodland cover	Increase tree planting rates to reach 12% woodland cover in England by 2050	10% Planting rates need to increase to around 10,000 ha each year, compared to 1,400 currently
	Wildlife and biodiversity	Restore 75% of protected sites to favourable condition Create 500,000 ha of new wildlife rich habitat	39%, an increase of only 2.2% since 2013

The 25 Year Environment Plan – a landmark achievement



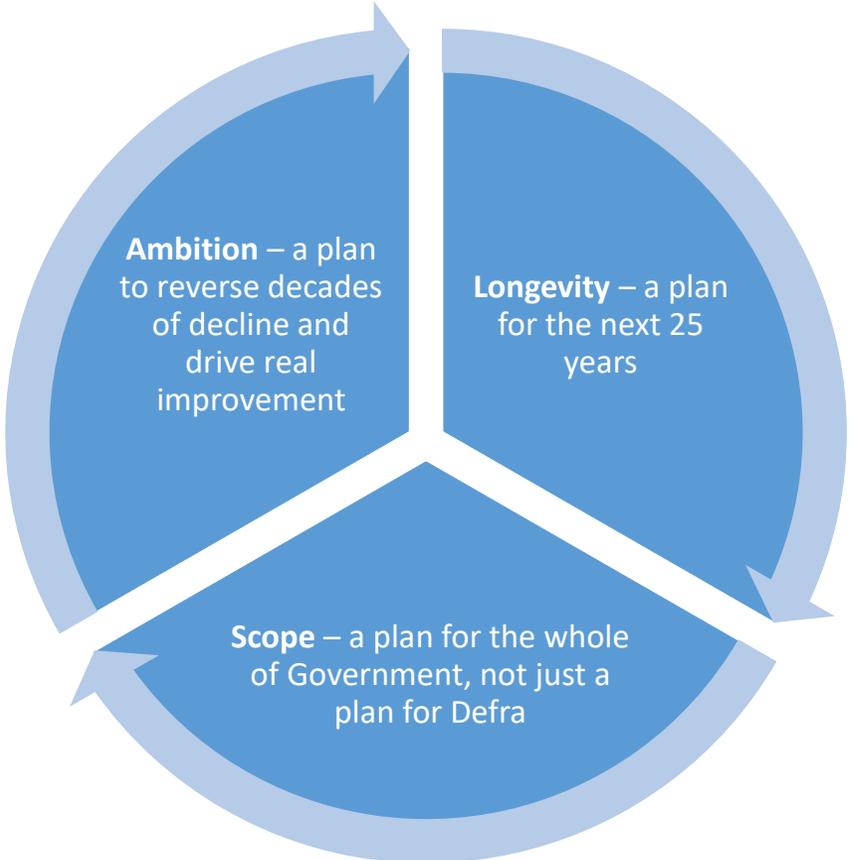
The plan is world-leading in its ambition to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it



The plan was launched by the Prime Minister, as a plan for government, not just Defra

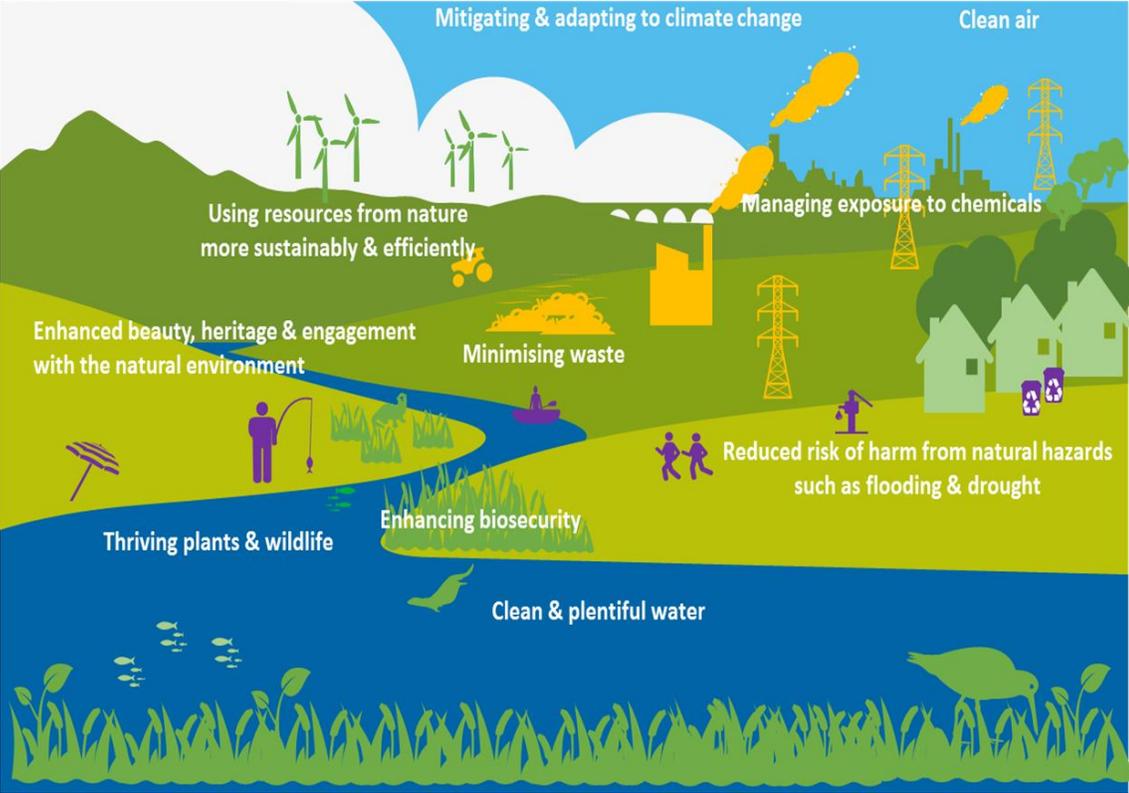


The plan paved the way for policies to transform the way we monitor, manage, protect and enhance our environment



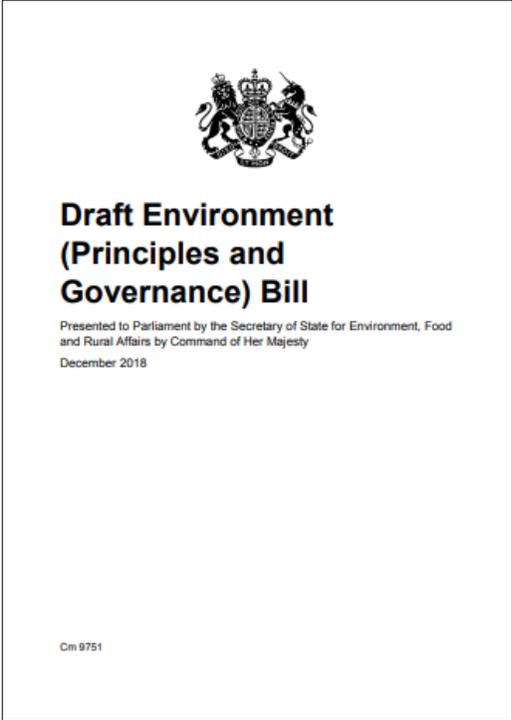
The 25 Year Environment Plan progress – 1: building blocks for transformational change

The **Environment Bill** was re-introduced to Parliament on 30 January 2020 and acts as one of the key vehicles for delivering the bold vision set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, bringing about urgent and meaningful action to deal with the environmental and climate crisis we are facing.



It will take direct action to ensure that environmental ambition is at the heart of government.

It will improve air quality so that our children live longer, restore habitats and increase biodiversity, strive towards a resource efficient economy, and ensure we can manage our precious water resources in a changing climate.



The 25 Year Environment Plan progress – 2: pollution and waste

Clean Air Strategy sets out plans to cut air pollution through a more coherent regulatory framework and stronger powers for local authorities to control major sources of air pollution.

Resources and Waste Strategy provides a blueprint for eliminating all avoidable waste and doubling resource productivity.

Action to reduce plastic waste, including microbeads ban.

Plans to:

- Ban plastic straws, cotton buds and stirrers.
- Extend the 5 pence plastic bag charge
- Introduce a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content.



The 25 Year Environment Plan progress – 3: nature in the sea and on land

- **Blue belt expansion** through the creation of 41 new marine conservation zones, expanding the blue belt by 32,000 km², protecting an area nearly twice the size of England in the most significant expansion to date.
- 150,000 square mile fully protected ‘no-take’ Marine Protected Area planned around Ascension Island.
- The first **Fisheries Bill** in over 40 years published alongside a Fisheries White Paper.



- **Woodland Carbon Guarantee** backed with £50 million of funding to stimulate domestic carbon offsetting and incentivise new tree planting.
- **Revised National Planning Policy Framework** strengthens protections for ancient woodlands, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats.
- **An additional £13 million** to support urban parks and green infrastructure.

The 25 Year Environment Plan progress – 4: Connecting People with the Environment

- **Partnered with Step Up To Serve** on #iwill4nature to encourage greater participation of young people from all backgrounds in environmental social action projects.
- **Building on learnings from the Youth Steering Group**, exploring approaches to incorporate youth voice to the development of environment policy.
- **Working across Defra group** and with other government departments on developing an environmental policy youth offer.



- Begun delivery of the **Children and Nature Programme** to provide children from disadvantaged backgrounds with better access to natural environments to support their mental health and wellbeing and engagement with school.
- **Health and Wellbeing.** Launched a “green social prescribing for good mental health and wellbeing” demonstrator project to identify how government and others can help scale up green social prescribing to support good mental health.

Key opportunities – 1: Environment Bill

We need to act now to tackle the biggest environmental priorities of our age. The Bill will take direct action to ensure that environmental ambition and accountability remain at the heart of government after EU Exit, improve air quality so that our children live longer, restore and recover environmental biodiversity, strive towards a circular economy, and ensure we can manage our precious water resources in a changing climate.

A once in a generation chance to deliver on the 25 YEP by embedding the environment at the heart of government decision-making, including through the creation of the **Office for Environmental Protection**.

It should deliver fundamental reform of environmental principles and governance post EU Exit.

A key priority will be placing the flagship **25 Year Environment plan on a statutory footing**.

It will address key policy areas including waste, water, air and nature, and mandating biodiversity net gain for new developments.



Key opportunities – 2. Reforming the Common Agricultural Policy



Farmland covers over **70%** of our land in England, our farmers are **vital stewards of our land** but **intensive agricultural practices** are **harming our environment** – vivid illustration is the **54% reduction** in **farmland birds** we have witnessed since the 1970s



Improving the health of our environment is a **critical imperative** of the government, set out in the **25 Year Environment Plan** and **2050 net zero carbon commitment**

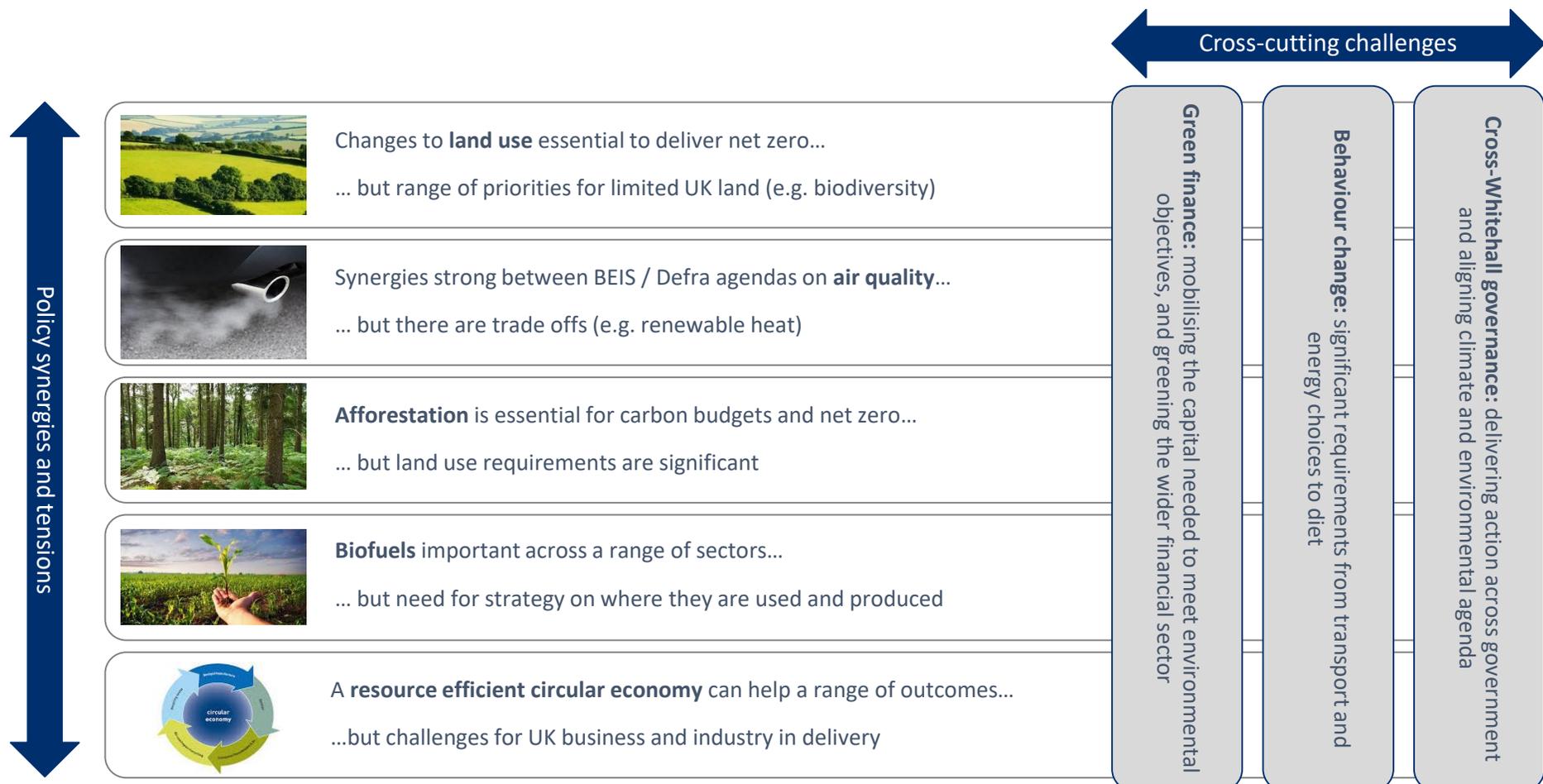


Our new **Environmental Land Management Scheme** (ELM) is intended to be the **cornerstone** of our new English agricultural policy after we leave the EU



ELM will **pay land managers** for **delivering environmental outcomes** on their land and is intended to be a **powerful vehicle** for helping us meet the **goals of the 25YEP** and **net zero commitment**

Key opportunities – 3. Climate change and biodiversity loss are inextricably linked



Natural climate solutions, such as forest protection and restoration, could provide up to 37% of mitigation required by 2030 if we are to limit global warming to 2 degrees.

Green Finance

The public funding will continue to play a role, but unlocking private finance at scale is essential to deliver investment at the required scale, for example, reversing biodiversity loss and aligning financial flows with environmental ambitions.

Greening Finance: Delivering a financial system fit to help deliver the Clean Growth Strategy, 25 Year Environment Plan and Net Zero;

Financing Green: The policy frameworks that Defra, BEIS and OGDs are putting in place to drive increased private sector investment to help deliver 25 YEP and CGS goals; and

Capturing the Opportunity: Positioning the UK as global leader on green finance.



Purpose and Membership of Defra joint Government/Industry groups

Global Resources Initiative

Consider actions the UK can take to green its international supply chains and leave a lighter footprint on the global environment.

Membership – Chair Sir Ian Cheshire with leaders from business and environmental organisations

Defra eSustainability Alliance

To develop guidance to help businesses create a greener more sustainable future through IT.

Membership - leaders from businesses across the IT sector.

Food and Drink Sector Council

Create a more productive and sustainable food and drink sector
Membership – senior industry individuals across the food chain from farming to retail and hospitality.

Civil Society Partnership

Maximise the benefits of civil society input to Defra's policy making.
Membership – drawn from society's eminent leaders – non-business.

Agri-Food Technology Leadership Council

Provide insight and leadership to improve food and agriculture sectors.

Membership – Chair BEIS and Defra Ministers and Director of Sainsbury's Brand with senior figures across industry and academia.

Council for Sustainable Business

Advising on how businesses can help achieve the aims of the 25 Year Environment Plan and government can help businesses meet the goals

Membership - Chair CEO Severn Trent Liv Garfield with leaders and innovators in UK sustainable business

Natural Capital Committee

Independent advise on the sustainable use of natural capital in implementing the 25 YEP
Membership – Chair Professor Dieter Helm with other academic experts.

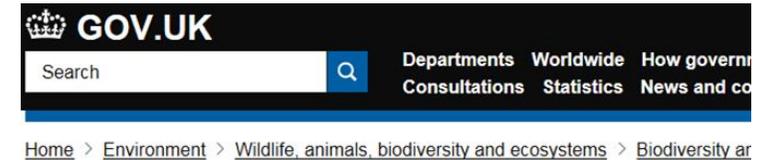
Enabling a Natural Capital Approach (ENCA)

ENCA brings together and makes accessible a wide range of selected guidance, tools, data and case studies to enable decision-makers and appraisers to better value and account for natural capital in the UK.

What will ENCA Achieve?

- Strengthen the credibility of natural capital within decision making
- Genuine mainstreaming of natural capital understanding – raise the bar for everyone
- Contribute towards the development of the evidence base by highlighting the gaps

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/enabling-a-natural-capital-approach-enca>



Guidance

Enabling a Natural Capital Approach (ENCA)

Guidance for policy and decision makers to help them consider the value of a natural capital approach.

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From: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)

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