

# Press release: Government's vision for a greener future launched

A pledge to eliminate avoidable waste, introduce new safeguards for wildlife and connect more children with nature are among the ambitious plans for a greener future outlined by Prime Minister Theresa May and Environment Secretary Michael Gove today.

In a major speech today, the Prime Minister has launched the government's landmark 25 Year Environment Plan, setting out how we will improve the environment over a generation by creating richer habitats for wildlife, improving air and water quality and curbing the scourge of plastic in the world's oceans.

["A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment"](#) sets out how over the next quarter of a century the government will:

- Crackdown on plastics by eliminating all avoidable plastic waste through extending the 5p plastic bag charge to small retailers, removing consumer single use plastics from the government estate, supporting the water industry to significantly increase water fountains and working with retailers on introducing plastic-free supermarket aisles.
- Help wildlife thrive by creating 500,000 hectares of new habitat for endangered species, supporting farmers to turn fields into meadows and other habitats, replenishing depleted soils and providing £5.7 million to kick-start a [new Northern Forest](#).
- Be a world leader in environmental protection by investigating the feasibility of an anti-poaching taskforce to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, committing overseas aid to help developing nations combat plastic waste, and extending the UK's network of marine protected areas
- Deliver a Green Brexit by consulting on a [new environmental watchdog](#) to hold government to account for environmental standards, and setting out a new approach to agriculture and fisheries management
- Seek to embed a 'net environmental gain' principle so development delivers environmental improvements locally and nationally, enabling housing development without increasing overall burdens on developers
- Connect people with nature by creating 'nature friendly schools' and reviewing National Parks to see how they can improve and whether the network should be extended.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Respecting nature's intrinsic value and making sure we are wise stewards of our natural world is critical if we are to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it.

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.

Through this plan we will build on our reputation as a global leader in environmental protection, creating an environment everyone can enjoy and helping the next generation flourish.

In a world-first, the 25 Year Environment Plan also sets out how we will use a natural capital approach to help us see the additional benefits – whether that is improved health and wellbeing, or national prosperity – in every part of our environment, helping improve and direct decision making, and guiding new development.

The Plan sits alongside existing work. A [Call for Evidence](#) on reward and return schemes for drinks containers, including plastic bottles, has closed. Its findings are now being assessed by the Working Group, who will make recommendations to ministers this Spring.

As announced in the Budget, the Government will also launch a further Call for Evidence shortly on how changes to the tax system or charges on single-use plastics can play a role in reducing waste.

The plan sits alongside the Government's [Clean Growth Strategy](#), which sets out how the UK is leading the world in cutting carbon emissions to combat climate change and driving economic growth.

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## [Policy paper: 25 Year Environment Plan](#)

*Updated:* Annex 3 updated to correct an error in the introduction (missing word).

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. It sets out what we will be doing over the next 25 years.

The Plan sits alongside two other important government strategies: our

[Industrial Strategy](#) and our [Clean Growth strategy](#).

Alongside the plan, we've also published 3 detailed, technical annexes.

If you want to receive updates on our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment, please [register as a stakeholder](#).

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## **Notice: R and J M Place Limited : application made to abstract water**

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

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## **Notice: Dane Valley Community Energy Limited: application made to abstract water**

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
  - which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
  - when you need to comment by
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# News story: Prime Minister launches 25 Year Environment Plan

*Updated:* Added translation

Launching the 25 Year Environment Plan, the PM will set out the government's determination to leave our environment in a better state than we found it.

She will outline steps for a cleaner, greener Britain – with avoidable plastic waste eliminated by the end of 2042.

To help achieve this, the government will extend the 5p carrier bag charge to all retailers in England. To date, we have used nine billion fewer plastic bags as a direct consequence of introducing the charge.

The government will also work with supermarkets to encourage them to introduce plastic-free aisles in which all the food is loose.

This will give consumers the choice to make greener decisions and promote the use of less damaging plastic packaging.

To encourage industry to take more responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products and make them easier to recycle, the government will also look at how the tax system or charges could further reduce the amount of waste we create. A call for evidence on how to reduce the use of single-use plastics will begin next month.

In addition we will to inject new funding into plastics innovation through a bid into the government's £7 billion research and development pot.

It is estimated that 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since the 1950s.

Research indicates that without urgent action to cut demand this is likely to be 34 billion tonnes by 2050.

In the UK alone, during its recent Great British Beach Clean Up, the Marine Conservation Society found 718 pieces of litter for every 100 metre stretch of beach surveyed, and of this rubbish from food and drink made up at least one fifth.

In a speech, Theresa May is expected to say:

We look back in horror at some of the damage done to our environment in the past and wonder how anyone could have thought that, for example, dumping toxic chemicals, untreated, into rivers was ever the right thing to do.

In years to come, I think people will be shocked at how today we allow so much plastic to be produced needlessly.

In the UK alone, the amount of single-use plastic wasted every year would fill 1,000 Royal Albert Halls.

This plastic is ingested by dozens of species of marine mammals and over 100 species of sea birds, causing immense suffering to individual creatures and degrading vital habitats. 1 million birds, and over 100,000 other sea mammals and turtles die every year from eating and getting tangled in plastic waste. One in three fish caught in the English Channel contains pieces of plastic.

This truly is one of the great environmental scourges of our time.

Today I can confirm that the UK will demonstrate global leadership. We must reduce the demand for plastic, reduce the number of plastics in circulation and improve our recycling rates. To tackle it we will take action at every stage of the production and consumption of plastic.

Demonstrating global leadership the UK will also do more to help developing nations tackle pollution and reduce plastic waste, including through UK aid.

Mrs May is expected to add:

I want the Britain of the future to be a truly Global Britain, which is a force for good in the world. Steadfast in upholding our values – not least our fierce commitment to protecting the natural environment.

When we host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April we will put the sustainable development of our oceans firmly on the agenda.

We will work with our partners to create a Commonwealth Blue Charter and push for strong action to reduce plastic waste in the ocean.

We will direct our development spending to help developing nations reduce plastic waste, increase our own marine protected areas at home, and establish new Blue Belt protections in our Overseas Territories.

The Prime Minister will also announce plans to help more children engage with the environment. This will be delivered through £10m for school visits and a Nature Friendly Schools programme to create school grounds which allow young people to learn more about the natural world, targeting schools in disadvantaged areas first.