

[Press release: Michael Gove announces new funding to protect bees](#)

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today (25 October) launched a £60,000 fund to develop and test pollinator habitat mapping – identifying where new habitats will provide the greatest benefit for bees and other pollinators.

This will help to boost the number of pollinator-friendly landscapes and protect the health of our bees, wasps, beetles, butterflies, moths and hoverflies, as set out in the [Government's 25 Year Environment Plan](#).

These species are critical to our countryside and the food industry through the work they do to pollinate plants and crops.

The project will involve partnering with organisations such as Natural England, Buglife, The Wildlife Trusts and other bodies working on habitat mapping and the conservation of pollinators.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Bees and other pollinators are vital contributors to the beauty of our landscapes, our economy and our £100 billion food industry.

Today's announcement to fund pollinator mapping shows our clear commitment to help these wonderful creatures to thrive by creating wildflower rich areas around our towns and countryside.

Ben Bradley MP has run a brilliant campaign to better protect our pollinators and to leave our environment in a better state for future generations. He deserves all our thanks.

The government is also announcing today investment in two projects to create pollinator-friendly landscapes:

- The Bumblebee Conservation Trust's "West Country Buzz" project in North Devon which seeks to grow a partnership of land managers, farmers and NGOs to improve and connect habitats for bees.
- The Martin Down farmer "Super Cluster" in Hampshire, led by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, farmers and landowners. This will provide training and advice to enable three farmer clusters to protect and enhance wildlife, including pollinators.

The value of the UK's 1,500 species of pollinators to crops is estimated to be £400 – 680 million per year due to improved productivity. Past losses of flower-rich habitats are known to have driven a loss of diversity in our pollinators, which is why this funding is vital to help protect their future.

Ben Bradley MP, who has been campaigning on pollinator habitat mapping, said:

I am pleased that the government is taking action to support pollinators and that they have incorporated ideas from my Pollinator Bill within their plans. Providing funding for pollinator mapping and supporting the creation of wildflower rich habitat will help protect our bees and other insects including butterflies and moths.

This announcement is great news for our environment, and it shows the Secretary of State's commitment to protecting our pollinators and the Government's commitment to a greener future.

Craig Macadam, Conservation Director at Buglife, said:

Buglife welcomes the funding promised by the Environment Secretary as a great first step towards securing the future of our precious pollinators.

Once mapping is completed more resource will clearly be needed to deliver the on-the-ground change that is needed. Coupled with the ban on neonicotinoids this is real affirmative action in the battle to arrest the decline of bees and other pollinators and preserve the buzz of life.

Joan Edwards, Director of Public Affairs at The Wildlife Trusts, says:

The investment in spatial planning to support our pollinators is a welcome start in the essential exercise of mapping the nature we have – and the nature we need. We need to see this approach scaled-up across the country and for all of our wildlife to give our natural world a chance to recover and to make sure that everyone benefits from a thriving environment.

In April 2018, the government voted in favour of further restrictions on the use of three neonicotinoids due to their harmful effects on bees and other pollinators. The measures will come into force at the end of the year.

[The National Pollinator Strategy](#) is a 10 year plan which sets out how government, beekeepers, conservation groups, farmers and researchers can work together to improve the status of the pollinating insects in England.

The government has also committed to bringing forward the first Environment Bill in over 20 years, set to be introduced in 2019.