

The Economics of Biodiversity: Exchequer Secretary's speech

In May, the UN released a report on the state of biodiversity on Earth showing that species of all kinds – mammals, birds, insects, plants, fish – are disappearing at an alarming rate.

One million species are at risk of extinction, including 40 percent of all amphibian species, 33 percent of reef-forming corals, and around 10 percent of insects.

Unfortunately, it's our species that is to blame:

- we've cleared 100 million hectares of tropical forest between 1980 and 2000
- we've brought a third of fish stocks to biologically unsustainable levels
- and every year, we dump 3–400 million tons of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge and other wastes from industrial facilities into the world's waters

The death of any one species is a special tragedy, and a haunting loss.

But the loss of a million would be a threat to our entire existence.

Because, as you all know, biodiversity is not mere window dressing. Nature truly provides:

- it gives us the basics of food, fibres and clean water
- forests and wetlands capture carbon and retain rain water
- what's more, approximately half of synthetic drugs have a natural origin, including many of our cancer drugs, and ten of the 25 highest selling drugs in the USA

The need for an economic framework

So we can see the scale of the problem in front of us.

We have scraped and scoured our environment to the bone.

But, like the state of climate science before the Stern review, we don't yet have the economic tools to shape the policies required to heal it.

We might know that the UK's 1,500 species of pollinators deliver an estimated £680 million annual value to the UK economy.

But that's just one part of the picture. We need to be able to quantify what is at stake, and we need to be able to do so on the broadest possible canvas.

There's an urgent need to better understand the intricate relationship between human wealth and welfare, and the environment's biodiversity and ecosystems.

At the moment, not all that is very useful commands high value.

And not everything that has high value is very useful – as Adam Smith once observed, water is a fair bit cheaper than diamonds.

The situation demands we think more deeply.

We need to get to grips with the nature of value, and the value of nature.

Above all, we need to understand that you cannot manage what you do not measure.

And that to forge a sustainable economy in harmony with nature – to keep it clean, use it wisely and share it fairly...

...we have to better understand the links between ecosystems, biodiversity and human well-being...

...And to come up with creative and transformative solutions to help secure it all.

This is an ambitious goal which can only be achieved through the concerted efforts and combined strength of all sections of society.

We need national and international alliances between policy makers, science, the public and the business community.

And that's why I'm proud that Britain is playing a leading role.

Earlier this year, the previous Chancellor announced an independent global review on the Economics of Biodiversity – the first on the topic to be led by an Economics and Finance Ministry.

We were all thrilled when Professor Dasgupta agreed to lead the review. With his global intellectual standing, I can think of no one better.

I am also delighted that leading lights from academia, public policy and the private sector have agreed to take part in an Advisory Panel to provide expert advice to Professor Dasgupta and his team with their work.

As a humble politician, seeking sensible options for change, I would warmly

welcome your thoughts not just on how we establish the economic framework... but also on the policy choices that may flow from this.

It's great to see so many of you here today, with an opportunity to contribute your ideas and engage on this critical issue.

I look forward to hearing all about your day and will retain a keen interest throughout the year ahead.

Thank you.

[Highways England weighs in with one tonne donation for food banks](#)

Almost 1,000kg of items was collected by the teams taking care of motorways and main A roads across the East Midlands, while workers carrying out the widening of the A500 in Staffordshire delivered 37kg of goods to help people in need and are continuing to collect.

From tinned goods to pasta and rice, to tea bags and toilet rolls, a shopping list of foods desperately needed by food banks for the emergency parcels was collected.

The donations came as the Trussell Trust, the UK's largest food bank provider, revealed a 20 per cent increase in the number of food parcels going to children over the summer holidays last year.

Recent figures from the trust showed that 87,496 food parcels went to children in the UK during the summer break in 2018, 20 per cent up on the same period in 2017.

And the Trussell Trust expects demand this year to be as high as families who are entitled to free school meals during term time feel the extra financial pressure over the summer break.

To help those in local communities who risk going hungry this summer, staff from Highways England and the East Midlands Asset Delivery (EMAD) partnership organised collections at offices across the region – covering Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

The huge collection weighing almost one tonne included 156 tins of baked beans, 170 tins of tuna, 90 bags of pasta, 139 jars of cooking sauces, 155 tins of vegetables, 40 boxes of tea bags, 79 toilet rolls and over 300 nappies. The collections were divided up to go to three food banks in the region.

Highways England Assistant Contract Collaboration Manager Nicola Tomlinson

said:

This fantastic contribution from all of our suppliers really does take working collaboratively to the next level. I'm astounded by the generosity of the workforces and hope our donation will make a big difference to families in communities across our region.

Kay Fleming, Framework Manager for nmcn, said:

I've never seen so many tins of beans and I used to work in a shop! I'm so proud of the East Midlands' Customer and People team who promoted this worthwhile cause.

Meanwhile in Staffordshire, members of the Highways England and Osborne A500 Etruria Widening Team recently dropped off a delivery of food to the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank, part of the Trussell Trust network.

At the first delivery are John Bennett, warehouse coordinator for the Stoke food bank, Lee Brook, Osborne general foreperson; Kimberley Wild, Osborne performance manager; and Humzah Mir, Highways England project manager.

The A500 is being widened from two to three lanes in both directions between Porthill (A5271) and Wolstanton (A527) as part of a £17.5 million upgrade.

A collection box has been set up at the site office for food donations and the first delivery was made just before the schools broke up for summer. Collections will now continue over the duration of the scheme, due to finish autumn 2020.

Kimberley Wild, Osborne Performance Manager, said:

We continue to try to find opportunities to engage and help local communities where possible, particularly when we are effectively part of the community for a period of time, through our work. We hope that the food bank will be successful and help support the community.

Nigel Webster, from the Bulwell and Bestwood Foodbank in Nottingham, thanked EMAD for their donation and told how stocks were running low this time of year while Gareth Duffield, the Trussell Trust's Area Manager for Birmingham and Northern Counties, added:

We're so glad food banks in our network could benefit from the collection organised by Highways England to help support people facing crisis. We have seen a record demand in food bank use in the

past decade, with more and more people struggling to afford the basics. This isn't right.

We're continually blown away by people's support to provide emergency help, and ultimately work towards a future without hunger and poverty.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

New technologies for manufacturing drugs: apply for funding

New drugs and therapies that meet the needs of individual patients have the potential to revolutionise healthcare in the UK. Manufacturing these new drugs and getting them to the patient at the right time is a significant challenge for UK businesses.

The UK Government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) Leading-edge Healthcare Challenge is investing £181 million to speed up the development of these new medicines and get them to patients.

A large part of this investment is in facilities to improve the UK's ability to manufacture new drugs and treatments. Innovate UK, as part of UK Research and Innovation, has up to £3.7 million from the fund to invest in projects developing new technologies that will support the commercial manufacture of new drugs.

Projects must focus on advanced therapies

Projects must focus on gene therapy, engineered tissue or cell therapy and work with standards bodies such as [National Physical Laboratory](#), the [LGC Group](#) (formerly Laboratory of the Government Chemist), [BSI](#) (British Standards Institution).

They should use external technology to look at ways of improving process mechanisation that will support the commercial manufacture of the new drugs and therapies they have developed.

Projects must show how they will increase productivity, competitiveness, capability or growth for at least one of the UK businesses involved.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 27 August 2019, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 25 September 2019
 - businesses of any size may apply
 - we expect projects to range in size between £1 million and £2 million
 - a briefing event will be held on 3 September 2019
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Probate work moves to courts and tribunals service centre

- User satisfaction for online service at 92%
- All digital probate work now to be managed at service centre
- Birmingham Probate Registry to close on 31 August 2019

Following the launch of the digital probate service in July 2018, more than 20,000 applications have been received with user satisfaction at 92%.

The Birmingham Courts and Tribunal Service Centre will now process all online applications, while new paper applications received by post will be redirected to the Newcastle Registry Office.

The existing probate registry based at the Priory Courts in Birmingham will close on 31st August 2019 and all affected staff have been redeployed within HM Courts and Tribunals Service.

Service centres are being set up as part of a £1 billion reform programme delivered by HMCTS. These bring trained expertise together under one roof and use technology to solve queries more efficiently.

New paper cases can now be sent to Newcastle District Probate Registry, No 1 Waterloo Square, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE1 4DR. People wishing to hand-deliver paper copies or documents in Birmingham will still be able to do this at the old Birmingham registry, at The Priory Courts, 33 Bull Street, B4 6DU.

ESFA Update: 14 August 2019

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Latest information and actions from the Education and Skills Funding Agency for academies, schools, colleges, local authorities and further education providers.