

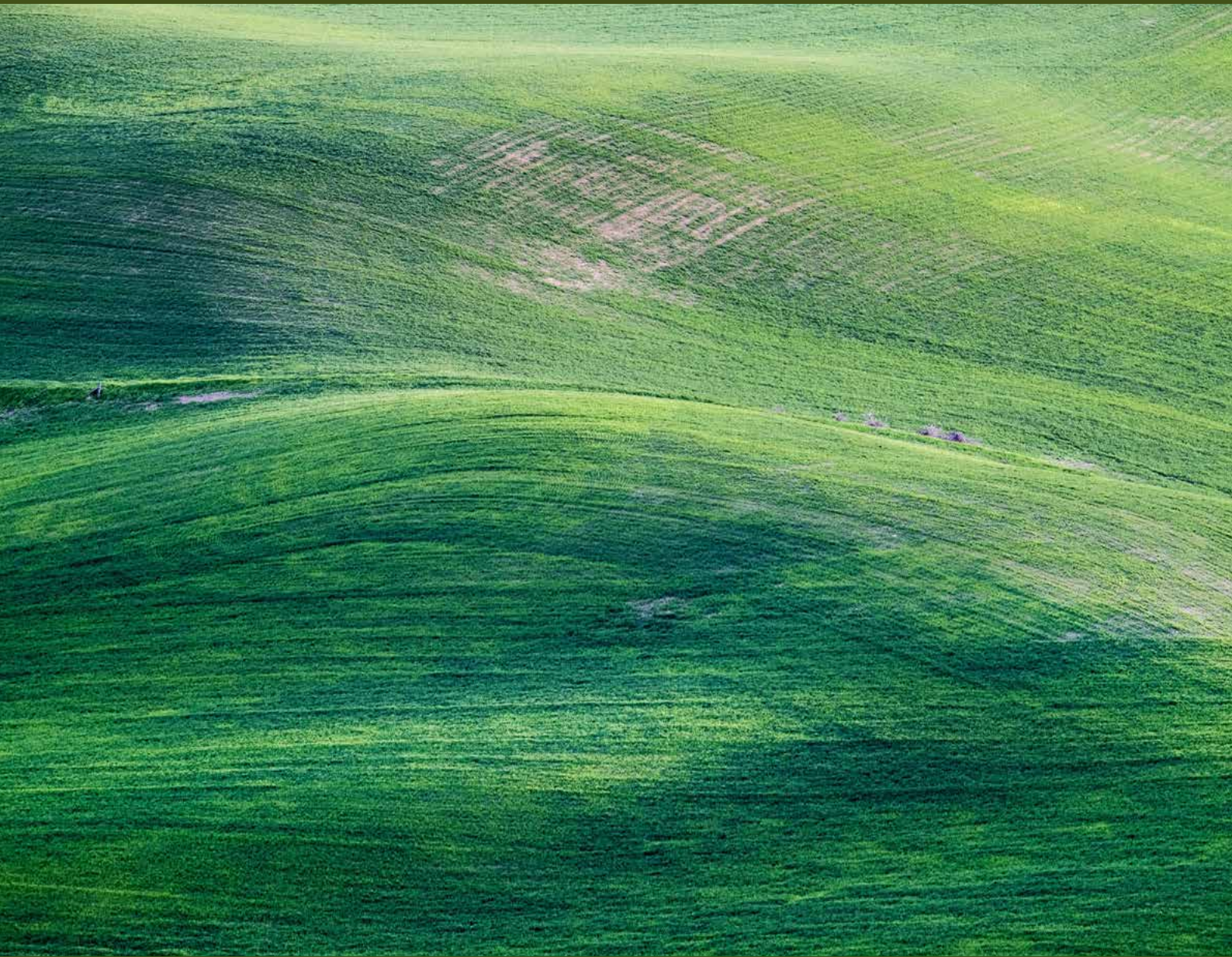


Environmental Policy
Forward View



Environmental Improvement Plan

What's coming up in your specialism?



June 2023

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Environmental Improvement Plan

Upcoming policy developments in your specialism, June 2023

This briefing outlines the broad implications of the EIP for each specialism of the environmental sciences, as well as the policy decisions that IES members can expect to be influencing their work as a result. This briefing has been released as a pre-released chapter of an upcoming IES policy report: 'Progressing or regressing: the future of environmental science under new UK governance'.

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Background

In January 2023, the UK Government published its [Environmental Improvement Plan](#) (EIP) as the first update to its [25 Year Environment Plan](#). The Plan covers 10 high-level goals, most of which interact directly or indirectly with natural systems, environmental outcomes, and other policy mechanisms with the potential for significant co-benefits.

Representing the most substantial statement of intent on environmental policy by the Government since the publication of the 25 Year Environment Plan, the EIP will have substantial effects across specialisms of the environmental sciences, even in areas which are not the direct subject of the Plan's high-level goals or cross-cutting themes.

Acoustics

Acoustics, sound, and noise pollution are not explicitly addressed in the EIP, nor are any of the 10 high-level goals aimed at addressing acoustics. However, the significant potential for co-benefits arises from several areas of the plan which may have positive (or detrimental) consequences for the sound environment, depending on their implementation.

Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Air quality](#): measures to address air pollution, the causes of which may substantially overlap with the causes of noise pollution;
- [Built environment](#): proposals for the planning system, which may significantly influence soundscapes in proximity to new developments and urban areas;
- [Conservation and ecology](#): plans to address biodiversity and ecosystems which are likely to intersect with the influence of acoustics on nature;
- [Transport](#): further details of the Government's plans for the future of transport systems, including their decarbonisation, which may have either positive or negative effects on soundscapes.

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Air Quality

Primarily, the UK Government's action on air quality is focused on meeting specific [legal targets](#) and not exceeding specified [limit values](#). The EIP outlines several key delivery mechanisms in support of reaching the legally-binding targets. Those measures include:

- Measures to address, but not ban, domestic burning of solid fuels and promote a shift from more-polluting appliances, in conjunction with limits on sulphur content and smoke emissions from domestic burning in [Smoke Control Areas](#);
- Reviewing the communication of air quality information and running targeted campaigns to promote best practice for stoves, fireplaces, and domestic burning;
- Assessing the efforts of Local Authorities to improve air quality, re-aligning air quality zones with local government boundaries, and providing supporting guidance and funding (though the EIP makes no commitment to 'new' funding);
- Committing to a new [Air Quality Strategy](#) (which has now been published following a brief consultation) and Local Transport Plan guidance to provide Local Authorities with more support in making decisions;
- Consulting on improvements to the mechanisms for developing industrial process standards so that they better reflect environmental goals, particularly for smaller industry (where petrol stations, metals processing, and quarrying are specifically mentioned) based on the [Best Available Techniques](#) (BAT) approach;
- Measures to address nutrient use in agriculture, including through the [Sustainable Farming Incentive](#), a consultation on extending environmental permitting to dairy and intensive beef farms, and new funding for infrastructure and technology – with a view to addressing ammonia emissions, inorganic fertilisers, and emissions from increased anaerobic digestion;
- Increasing the rollout of [Clean Air Zones](#);
- Commissioning a review of regulations governing air quality on the rail network, in conjunction with a [Stations Air Quality Monitoring Network](#) supported by £4.5million of funding;
- Seeking co-benefits for air from the refreshed [Clean Maritime Plan](#) and other measures to address the environmental impact of the domestic maritime sector.

Naturally, there are also many other areas of the EIP which may directly or indirectly influence air, with the potential for both risks as well as significant co-benefits in the delivery of the Plan. Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Built environment](#): planning and other consenting processes affecting air quality;
- [Climatology and carbon management](#): climate mitigation and adaptation, which may produce trade-offs or co-benefits for air quality;
- [Energy](#): measures to address energy systems, which may produce co-benefits or risks for air quality;
- [Impact Assessment](#): the reform of Environmental Impact Assessment, including its consequences for air quality;
- [Transport](#): measures to address transport systems including the transition to 'zero emissions vehicles', which may produce co-benefits or risks for air quality.

Archaeology

One of the 10 high-level goals in the EIP is 'Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment', which raises several issues related to archaeology, mostly indirectly through support for heritage and engagement with nature:

- A reiterated commitment to deliver a new [Natural History GCSE](#) by 2025, which may contribute towards improving the skills pipeline for environmental professionals working in archaeology;
- Continued support for [UNESCO Global Geoparks](#), [Biosphere Reserves](#) and [World Heritage Sites](#), as well as the implication of ongoing support for the [Historic Building Restoration](#) project to fund the restoration of historical buildings in [National Parks](#);
- A commitment to include marine heritage in future marine plans, including through the [marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment programme](#)'s review of evidence on the cultural value of UK fisheries;
- More information about proposals for [Conservation Covenants](#) and their role in the conservation of natural or heritage features, which extends to protection of heritage features, such as archaeological sites.

The next section on the [built environment](#) outlines proposals for the planning system and buildings, which may also be relevant to environmental scientists working in the archaeological specialism, while subsection sections on conservation and ecology and water have information on measures addressing specific iconic landscapes such as national parks or chalk streams.

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Built Environment

As part of the transition following the UK's exit from the European Union, the Levelling-Up & Regeneration Bill will make significant changes to processes affecting the built environment, particularly through the planning system, where [Environmental Impact Assessments](#) and [Strategic Environmental Assessments](#) are expected to be replaced with [Environmental Outcomes Reports](#) (EORs).

A similar scale of change is taking place in Scotland with the release of its [Fourth National Planning Framework](#) (NPF4) and in the other devolved administrations.

Changes to the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF), were subject to consultation at the start of 2023, providing some expectations about how those processes will interact with air quality in the future.

For more information about the interactions between the [Levelling-Up & Regeneration Bill](#) and the built environment, read the [latest briefing paper from the IES](#).

The EIP also highlights several other policy changes which are likely to affect the built environment:

- The introduction of a [Land Use Framework](#) in 2023, which will set out an approach to how land is used across multiple objectives;
- A new [Nutrient Mitigation Scheme](#) to balance the creation of thousands of new homes while also creating wetland habitat, supported by up to £30million of investment;
- A promise to deliver existing commitments to build more parks and incorporate green infrastructure in towns and cities;
- Ongoing measures for heat adaptation, including the newly introduced requirement to address [overheating in the Building Regulations](#) and the inclusion of the importance of Local Plans considering the long-term implications of climate change in [the NPPF](#).

There are also several other areas of the EIP which are likely to influence the built environment. Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Air quality](#): Building Regulations, ventilation requirements, and indoor air;
- [Climatology and carbon management](#): climate resilience, particularly to flood risk and other impacts of climate change;
- [Conservation and ecology](#): habitats and the effects that conservation measures may have on planning and the built environment;

- [Water](#): Building Regulations and their implications for water efficiency.

Climatology and Carbon Management

Primarily, the Government's policy on climate change is set out in its [Net Zero Strategy](#), though the EIP's seventh goal, 'Mitigating and adapting to climate change', consolidates and supplements the Government's approach to the climate. The EIP highlights the following commitments:

- A reiteration of the Government's intention to publish the third [National Adaptation Programme](#) by the end of 2023 (when the second programme is due to end);
- Measures to support climate adaptation, including a £10million [Water Management Grant Scheme](#) and an increase in the scope of adaptation reporting on climate readiness for UK business and infrastructure;
- Funding for 35,000 hectares of peatland restoration to take place by 2025 via the [Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme](#), alongside the launch of a £6.6million programme for lowland peat research and development and the other commitments in the [England Peat Action Plan](#);
- Government responses to ongoing calls for evidence on methane suppressing feed products for livestock farming systems and the [UK Emissions Trading Scheme](#);
- A reiteration of plans to deliver on the commitment to spend £11.6billion in international climate finance over the period 2021-2026, at least £3billion of which will be devoted to climate solutions which protect and restore nature (the latter of which is expected to align with nature-based solutions in many instances);
- Ongoing leadership globally to address climate action, biodiversity loss, and land degradation, including support for developing countries.

Within the EIP, direct commitments on new climate funding are broadly limited to those which have already been promised, so in many ways, the role of the EIP is to consolidate existing commitments on climate change, rather than to announce new measures.

To that end, the EIP highlights the role of other key policies, such as farming incentives and the forthcoming [Land Use Framework](#), in the overall effort to address climate change.

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Outside of the EIP, there have been several additional developments on UK climate policy. On 18th July 2022, the High Court ruled that the UK's [Net Zero Strategy](#) was unlawful.

The [High Court determined](#) that further details were required to meet the UK's obligations under the [Climate Change Act](#), as the Strategy lacked sufficient evidence of the measures which would limit UK emissions to the levels set out in the UK's [Sixth Carbon Budget](#).

In addition, a 5% shortfall was identified in the Strategy's reductions, so the Court also required the Government to give an explanation of the policies which would fill that gap.

These gaps had previously been identified in March 2022 [by the IES](#) and in June 2022 by the [UK Climate Change Committee](#). The Government was ordered to provide further plans by April 2023. Meanwhile, an independent '[Net Zero Review](#)' was commissioned with a specific mandate to determine whether the Government's approach to net zero is sufficiently pro-growth and pro-business.

The Review [reported back](#) in January 2023, identifying net zero as "the economic opportunity of the 21st century". It set out 10 long-term missions to be completed by 2035 and 25 immediate actions to be completed by 2025, with a view to creating infrastructure and facilitating action by businesses and local government. Many of these recommendations are reflected in the Government's [updated climate commitments](#).

An [update to the Strategy](#) has now been produced by the Government, somewhat addressing the requirements of the Sixth Carbon Budget but [not completely filling the gap](#). Further measures are expected, but these are not likely to come before the next general election. New announcements include:

- [Carbon Budget Delivery Plan](#) (quantifying expectations for delivery against the carbon budgets as a result of specific decarbonisation measures, as well as risks and timescales for delivery; the quantifications are based on a significant number of assumptions, including around the confidence of delivery in certain sectors, and do not amount to the full reductions required to meet the Sixth Carbon Budget);
- [Strategic Framework for International Climate and Nature Action](#) (identifying the need to address climate change and nature together and outlining the Government's existing measures and commitments);
- Finance Strategies for [International Climate Finance](#) and [Green Finance](#), as well as a framework for [scaling up private investment](#) on nature and sustainable farming;
- [Powering Up Britain](#) (details of which are covered under [Energy](#));
- [Energy Security Plan](#) (details of which are covered under [Energy](#));



- [Net Zero Growth Plan](#) (providing responses to the [Net Zero Review](#) and the [Climate Change Committee's Progress Report](#), outlining other policy measures, and highlighting the economic opportunities associated with the transition to net zero);
- [UK Net Zero Research & Innovation Framework Delivery Plan](#) (setting out the Government's rationale for funding, along with priorities for funding areas);
- Responses to [the Net Zero Review](#), the consultation on [sustainable aviation fuel](#) (ahead of a newly-published second consultation), the consultation on the [Energy Company Obligation](#), the consultation on [power Bio-Energy with Carbon Capture and Storage](#), and the consultation on [consumer experience at public charge-points](#);
- Consultations on [regulations for new cars and vans](#), [carbon leakage](#), [clean heat standards](#), [hydrogen production & industrial carbon capture](#), [emissions from aviation fuel](#) (following the first consultation in 2021), [the regulatory regime for ESG ratings providers](#), and [community benefits for Electricity Network Transmission Infrastructure](#);
- Other specific policy instruments as indicated in the announcements above.

For more information on the Government's Net Zero Strategy and climate policy in the UK, read the IES's [Manifesto for Transformative Change](#) and [Gap Analysis](#) on the 2021 version of the Strategy.

Due to the complex interactions between climate change and other natural systems, many of the other areas of the EIP are also likely to influence climate change. In particular, read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Conservation and ecology](#): habitats and the potential co-benefits that conservation measures may have for climate change;
- [Energy](#): measures addressing energy supply and its effects on climate change;
- [Forestry and landscaping](#): trees, tree planting, and other landscape-scale measures in the EIP;
- [Marine and coastal](#): ocean-based solutions to climate change and other marine policy measures.

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Conservation and Ecology

Several of the EIP's goals address issues affecting conservation, including 'Thriving plants and wildlife', 'Clean and plentiful water', 'Using resources from nature sustainably', 'Enhancing biosecurity', and 'Enhancing beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment'.

Many of the Government's commitments on nature and ecology are covered by international commitments such as the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (and the recently-agreed [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)) or through [legally-binding targets](#).

However the EIP also outlines several key delivery mechanisms in support of achieving its goals for nature. These include:

- Reiteration of the Government's commitment to [protecting 30% of land](#) by 2030, supported by a map of progress by the end of 2023, 19 new nature recovery projects in England by 2025, and 25 new [National Nature Reserves](#) by 2027;
- Ongoing support for [Landscape Recovery projects](#), including a second round of projects in 2023, as well as a commitment to implement the measures agreed in the Government's response to the [Glover Review on Landscapes](#), updated [Protected Landscape management plan guidance](#), and new guidance for public authorities on the [strengthened biodiversity duty](#);
- Expansion of mandatory [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) to most developments by November 2023 and continued rollout of [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) throughout 2023;
- Establishment of a UK Wetland Inventory to support the mapping of wetlands and further measures to protect habitats;
- Delivery of existing commitments on [sustainable agriculture](#), [countryside stewardship](#), and other forms of land management, including [peatland](#) and [biodiverse woodland restoration](#);
- Measures to restore protected sites, including updating evidence on site condition, new [Protected Sites Strategies](#) by 2025, and the continued use of existing measures such as the [Conservation and Enhancement Scheme](#) for SSSIs;
- Ongoing support for species protection through measures such as [Species Conservation Strategies](#), the [Species Recovery Programme](#), the [National Pollinator Strategy & Action Plan](#), and action plans to address non-native invasive species led by the [Non-Native Species Inspectorate](#);
- An updated [Green Finance Strategy](#) (which has subsequently been supplemented with a framework for [scaling up private investment](#) on nature and sustainable farming and

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a [Strategic Framework for International Climate and Nature Action](#)), as part of a commitment across England to raise at least £500 million a year in private finance for nature recovery by 2027, rising to over £1billion by 2030;

- Support for nature protection and restoration abroad, including through a [UK Overseas Territories Biodiversity Strategy](#) and the expanded and restructured £90million [Darwin Initiative](#) to address biodiversity challenges and support poverty reduction in developing countries, as well as £30million additional funding to tackle the [illegal wildlife trade](#) between 2022 and 2025;
- More information on the Government's plans for implementing the [2023 Plant Biosecurity Strategy](#), along with a commitment to revise the [Tree Health Resilience Strategy](#);
- Measures to support woodland creation and agro-forestry (for more information see [Forestry & Landscaping](#));
- Measures to support marine biodiversity (for more information see [Marine & Coastal](#));
- Measures to support the sustainable use of natural resources (for more information see [Sustainability](#));
- Measures to support the quality of freshwater resources, with potential benefits for freshwater biodiversity (for more information see [Water](#)).

Within the EIP, direct commitments on new funding for nature are broadly limited to those which have already been promised.

To that end, the EIP highlights the role of other key policies in supporting biodiversity and nature, such as farming incentives, the various components of the [Nature Recovery Network](#), and the forthcoming [Land Use Framework](#).

There are also several other areas of the EIP which are likely to influence conservation, ecology, and nature. Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Archaeology](#): measures to improve access to nature and cultural heritage, including co-benefits and risks for conservation sites and habitats;
- [Built environment](#): planning and other consenting processes affecting conservation and habitats;
- [Climatology and carbon management](#): climate mitigation and adaptation, including their co-benefits and risks for biodiversity;
- [Forestry and landscaping](#): measures to support woodland creation and agro-forestry, with potential co-benefits and risks for nature;
- [Land condition](#): measures addressing soil health;

- [Marine & coastal](#): measures to support marine biodiversity;
- [Sustainability](#): the Government's plans for the sustainable use of natural resources, with potential co-benefits and risks for nature;
- [Water](#): other measures to address water, many of which may have effects on nature, particularly for freshwater biodiversity.

Education and Training

While the Department for Education's (DfE) [Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy](#) is the UK's primary policy instrument on environmental education and for addressing the relationship between education and the environment, the Environmental Improvement Plan has some significant measures which relate to education and training, particularly in the context of the desire to create additional green jobs, which is a 'cross-cutting' theme of the EIP.

Specific measures in the EIP relating to education and training include:

- Opportunities associated with the forestry sector, particularly for apprenticeships, T-Levels, and technical training routes, as well as for the resolution of barriers associated with provision;
- Cross-departmental work with the Department for Education, including exploration of ways to connect schools with nature-based careers and scoping options for a digital skills hub to collate resources on forestry education and careers (though details are not provided on the extent to which additional resources can be expected to support these activities);
- Measures to integrate sustainability into different forms of education, including new occupational standards for FE teachers to build sustainability into learning, a '[National Education Nature Park](#)' approach to school land, and the ongoing development of a pilot for the [Climate Action Award](#);
- Ongoing actions to connect children with nature through school, including research into the best ways to deliver outdoor learning, following the [Children and Nature Programme](#);
- A reiteration of the commitment for a new [Natural History GCSE](#) by 2025.

Specific policy commitments in the EIP may also have consequences for education and the delivery of technical training. For more information, read about changes in other specialisms or [CEDHE and the IES's response](#) to the [DfE's Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy](#).

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Energy

While energy is not directly associated with any of the EIP's 10 goals, it is heavily linked to Goal 7 on mitigating and adapting to climate change, particularly as the Government's approach to reaching net zero expects to substantially influence the country's approach to energy.

It also has a significant relationship with several of the other goals, particularly on buildings, agriculture, land use, and the circular economy.

Primarily, the EIP consolidates existing commitments relating to energy, such as the implementation of the [British Energy Security Strategy](#), removal of unabated coal from the UK energy mix by 2024, integration of [energy efficiency and retrofit plans](#), and measures to address [heat adaptation for new buildings](#).

The EIP also outlined the Government's intention to produce an [Energy Security Plan](#), which has now been published. The Energy Security Plan includes:

- The announcement of a future update on gas storage and other measures to improve gas security, as well as a commitment to outline an approach on the re-balancing of relative gas prices against electricity, in line with the recommendations of the [Net Zero Review](#);
- The creation of [Great British Nuclear](#) to lead on delivery of a new nuclear programme, as well as the announcement of competitive bidding processes on small modular reactors;
- Ongoing commitments to the [Net Zero Hydrogen Fund](#) and a new [competition window for funding](#), as well as a second competition round on electrolytic hydrogen production;
- A new £160million [Floating Offshore Wind Manufacturing Investment Scheme](#);
- Plans to set up processes for [new CCUS clusters](#);
- The commitment to a consultation later in 2023 on consumer protection for energy markets, which will determine the future of the [Energy Price Cap](#) on default tariffs;
- Measures to address energy efficiency through extensions of boiler upgrade and insulation schemes to 2028;
- The commitment to publish action plans on the development time for transmission network projects and accelerating electricity network connections;
- A new consultation on [National Policy Statements on energy infrastructure](#).

The Energy Security Plan was published alongside "[Powering Up Britain](#)", a delivery plan for Government policies on energy security and net zero, including commitments to deliver on

CCUS, hydrogen, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. The plan broadly serves as an overview to the other announcements on energy security included in the [Energy Security Plan](#) and the Government's new climate commitments announced in March.

Following the announcements in March, a further consultation has been announced on a [Strategy and Policy Statement for energy policy in Great Britain](#) to inform the work of energy regulators, including Ofgem.

Several other areas of the EIP are also likely to influence energy systems. Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Built environment](#): building regulations and other changes to the built environment which may affect domestic energy and energy efficiency measures;
- [Climatology and carbon management](#): climate change mitigation, the measures announced in the March update to the Government's climate commitments, and related policies, all of which are likely to have significant effects on the energy sector;
- [Waste management](#): measures to address resource use and efficiency, which are likely to affect the current approach to energy recovery from waste and similar policies.

Environmental Management

As a whole, the EIP serves as a policy document addressing the Government's plans for the management of the environment, so the entire Plan has direct implications for environmental management.

Many professionals working in environmental management will be working across disciplines with systems and resources across the environmental sciences. Read about changes in each of those specialisms for more information about:

- [Air quality](#): the Government's [Air Quality Strategy](#) and the management of air quality;
- [Built environment](#): changes to the planning system and rules surrounding developments;
- [Climatology and carbon management](#): the Government's [Net Zero Strategy](#) and its implications for carbon management and corporate governance;
- [Conservation and ecology](#): implementation of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and the management of ecosystems and biodiversity;

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- [Energy](#): measures to address the sustainability of the energy system, as well as to promote energy efficiency within buildings;
- [Impact Assessment](#): reform of [Environmental Impact Assessment](#) and plans for [Environmental Outcomes Reports](#);
- [Land condition](#): measures to address the use of land, including soil health and the management of soil resources;
- [Marine and coastal](#): plans to address the marine environment, including the management of marine and coastal resources;
- [Sustainability](#): sustainable management of economic resources, including global supply chains, the food system, and natural resources;
- [Waste management](#): the circular economy, resource use, and the management of waste, including requirements for packaging, labelling, and products.

Forestry and Landscaping

Sustainable forestry plays a significant role in a number of the EIP's objectives, particularly for Goal 1: 'Thriving plants and wildlife' and Goal 6: 'Using resources from nature sustainably'.

The Plan recognises that there are likely to be landscape-level consequences of many of the other measures across the EIP, particularly through changes to agricultural payments, though there are also a number of measures specifically addressing forestry.

Those measures include:

- Implementation of the [England Trees Action Plan](#), the [England Woodland Creation Offer](#), the Government's [Keepers of Time Policy](#) on ancient and native woodlands, and the expansion of England's [Community Forest network](#) through the [England Woodland Creation Partnership](#);



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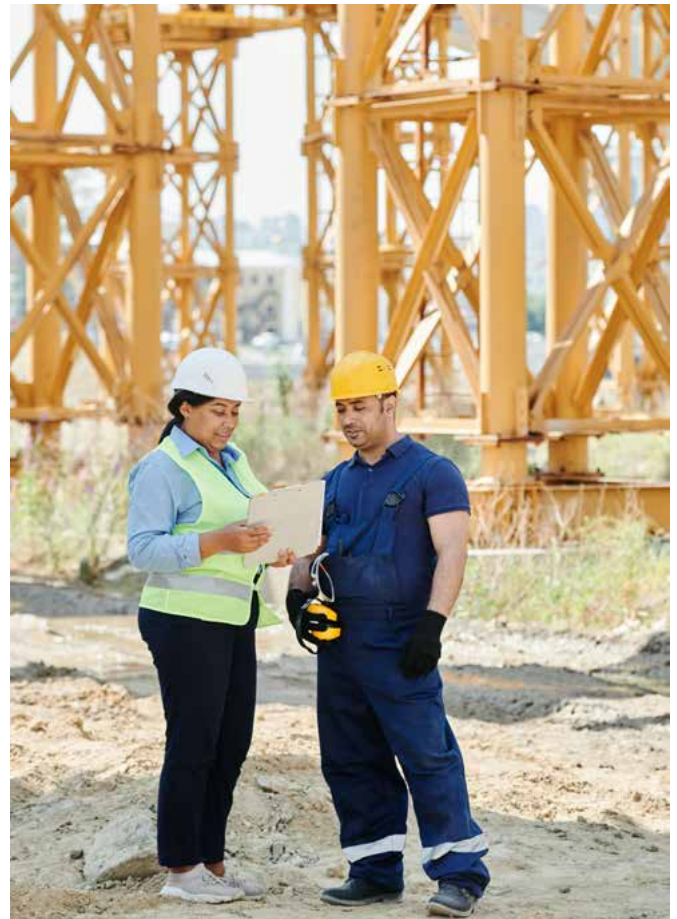
- Review the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) to ensure protections on ancient and native woodlands, introduce a new legal duty on Local Planning Authorities to consult which the [Secretary of State](#) before granting permission to plans affecting ancient woodlands, and to consult on new protections for long-establishment woodland;
- Direct support for agroforestry through the rollout of the agroforestry standard for the [Sustainable Farming Incentive](#) by 2024, further development of [Countryside Stewardship](#), grants for forestry equipment through the [Farming Equipment and Technology Fund](#), and further pilot schemes to support agroforestry;
- Guidance, funding, and updated regulatory processes for multi-functional woodland creation, developed in partnership with commercial forestry, as well as the publication of the [Timber in Construction Policy Roadmap](#);
- Measures to remove barriers to tree planting, including through voluntary carbon markets, skills development and capacity building, reviewing tax guidance, reducing approval timeframes, the use of public land, and potentially through the [UK Emissions Trading Scheme](#) and the development of a voluntary [Woodland Water Code](#);
- Support for the forestry skills pipeline, including the [Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds](#), a new [Forestry Training Fund](#), expansion of the [Professional Forester](#) scheme, and other measures to support apprenticeships, T-Levels, and technical education, including the potential for a digital skills hub;
- Revising the [Tree Health Resilience Strategy](#), while reducing pressures on tree health through the [Deer Management Strategy](#) and [Grey Squirrel Action Plan](#);
- The publication of a [practice guide](#) on riparian woodland creation for the [UK Forestry Standard](#), alongside ongoing support for the [Woodlands for Water](#) programme.

There are also several other areas of the EIP which are likely to influence forestry, woodlands, and landscapes.

Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Built environment](#): planning and other consenting processes affecting forestry and landscapes;
- [Climatology and carbon management](#): climate mitigation and adaptation, including their co-benefits and risks for woodlands;
- [Conservation and ecology](#): measures to support nature and biodiversity, with potential co-benefits and risks for landscapes, land use, and woodland creation;

- [Sustainability](#): the Government's plans for the sustainable use of natural resources, with potential consequences for forestry and landscaping.



Impact Assessment

Primarily, Government reforms of Impact Assessment (covering both [Environmental Impact Assessments](#) (EIA) and [Strategic Environmental Assessments](#) (SEA)) are being pursued through the [Levelling-Up & Regeneration Bill](#) and the [Retained EU Law Bill](#), as well as the associated consultations on the [Levelling-Up Bill](#), [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF), and [Environmental Outcomes Reports](#) (EORs).

See the section on the [Built Environment](#) for more information.

To that end, the EIP has limited direct consequences for specialists in Impact Assessment beyond the ongoing reforms. Specific policy commitments in the EIP may have consequences for Impact Assessment and individual developments.

For more information, read about changes in other specialisms or [catch up with the latest analysis from the IES](#).

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Land Condition

While the EIP references a number of areas of policy affecting land systems and land condition, significant areas of policy relating to contaminated land, brownfield land, and many other topics linked to the land condition sector are not directly addressed in the Plan.

These are instead expected to be addressed through other policy documents, including the forthcoming [Land Use Framework](#).

Despite this, the EIP raised several important considerations for the land condition context.

In particular, the EIP contains several measures relating to soils, [in lieu of a Soil Health Action Plan for England](#), including plans to publish a baseline map of soil health for England by 2028, publish a soil health indicator through the [Outcome Indicator Framework](#), bring 40% of England's agricultural soil into [sustainable management](#) by 2028, and improve guidance and best practice for farmers and for consistent data collection.

In the land condition context, measures include revisions to the [Code of Practice for the sustainable use of soil on construction sites](#) and the development of a [Soil Re-Use and Storage Depot scheme](#) to help prevent soil going to landfill, with pilots due in 2026.

The Government has also committed to supporting the development of markets for ecosystem services, including [soil carbon codes](#), though it acknowledges that this work is likely to be led by the wider sector.

The Plan also indirectly addresses a number of topics which are likely to influence land condition. Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Built environment](#): planning and other consenting processes affecting land and land condition;
- [Climatology and carbon management](#): climate mitigation and adaptation, including their co-benefits and risks for land;
- [Conservation and ecology](#): habitats and the effects that conservation measures may have on planning and the built environment;
- [Waste management](#): measures to address resource use and efficiency, including those which may affect the approach to emerging contaminants and land condition.

Marine and Coastal

Although marine and coastal environments are not explicitly mentioned in any of the EIP's 10 Goals, those environments are key factors in three of the Goals: Goal 1 'Thriving plants and wildlife', which addresses marine biodiversity; Goal 6 'Using resources from nature sustainably', which addresses fisheries management and marine resources; and Goal 7 'Mitigating and adapting to climate change', which acknowledges the role of the marine environment in addressing climate change.

Measures on marine biodiversity are constructed to support the delivery of the Government's [legally-binding target on marine biodiversity](#) (and linked interim target), including:

- Implementation of the [UK Marine Strategy](#), the [North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy](#), and the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), including protection of 30% of our sea through the [Nature Recovery Network](#) and ongoing negotiations to secure an implementing Agreement under the [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea](#) for marine protected areas in [Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction](#);
- Development of [Marine Net Gain](#) as an equivalent to terrestrial Biodiversity Net Gain for infrastructure developments at sea;
- Designation of [Highly Protected Marine Areas](#) (the first of which have [now been designated](#)) and strengthened protections for marine areas by 2024;
- Ongoing support for the [ReMeMaRe \(Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef\)](#) initiative, with a goal to restore 15% of priority habitats along the English coast by 2043;
- Reiterated commitments to increase marine conservation funding, including £20 million through [competitive ocean grants](#) and £17 million through the World Bank's [PROBLUE programme](#);
- Further measures to address chemical and plastic pollution to the marine and coastal environment (for more information see the section on [waste management](#)).



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Measures on marine resources include:

- Implementation of the [Joint Fisheries Statement](#) and the delivery of [Fisheries Management Plans](#) starting in 2023, alongside continued monitoring and implementation of marine plans and the development of sustainable ocean plans with the support of the [High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#);
- A new commitment to publish transparent assessments of the sustainability outcomes of annual fisheries negotiations;
- Measures to address bycatch of cetaceans and seal species, including ongoing support for the [Bycatch Mitigation Initiative](#) and trials to explore existing gear;
- Continued support for the [Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment Programme](#) to provide an evidence base on ecological, societal, and economic information about marine resources;
- Optimisation of marine space through the [Marine Spatial Prioritisation](#) cross-governmental programme;
- Ongoing support for the [IUU Fishing Action Alliance](#) established at the [Lisbon Ocean Conference](#), including support for developing countries to sustainably management resources through the [Blue Planet Fund](#) and support for data collection and enforcement through [Ocean Partnerships](#).

Measures on the marine environment and climate change include:

- Supporting the [UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership](#) and the [Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment](#) to build data and evidence on blue carbon ecosystems and services;
- Delivering on commitments to reduce maritime emissions through the [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#), the [Clean Maritime Plan](#), and [Maritime 2050 Roadmap](#);
- Further measures through the Government's [Energy Security Strategy](#) and its plans for offshore wind (for more information see the section on [energy](#)).

Odour

Odour, nuisance smells, and other scent-related consequences of pollutants are not explicitly addressed in the EIP, nor are any of the 10 high-level goals aimed at addressing odour specifically.

However, the significant potential for co-benefits arises from several areas of the plan which may have positive (or detrimental) consequences for odour management, depending

on their implementation.

Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Air quality](#): measures to address air pollution, the causes of which may substantially overlap with the pollutants affecting odour;
- [Built environment](#): proposals for the planning system, which may significantly influence odour in proximity to new developments and urban areas;
- [Conservation and ecology](#): plans to address biodiversity and ecosystems, some of which are likely to be related to the influence of odour on the natural environment;
- [Transport](#): further details of the Government's plans for the future of transport systems, including their decarbonisation, which may have either positive or negative effects on odour environments.



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Sustainability

One of the EIP's high-level goals is 'Using resources from nature sustainably' (Goal 6), which directly addresses many of the Government's commitments on sustainability. Throughout the EIP, the other goals also cover measures which are relevant to the specialism of sustainability and the sustainable use and management of resources. These measures are addressed in the context of their associated specialisms.

Under Goal 6, the EIP outlines measures to address the sustainability of global supply chains, including the implementation of commitments under the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), the [Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use](#), the [Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade Dialogue](#) (FACT), and the [Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership](#).

The primary mechanisms of action are [Voluntary Partnership Agreements](#), where [Indonesia](#), [Ghana](#), and Vietnam are the initial priority partners, and through collaboration with commodity producers, consumer countries, and the private sector, supported by [Overseas Development Aid](#). Given the inherently bilateral and multilateral nature of trade agreements, most of the EIP's commitments are about negotiating objectives, rather than specific policy announcements.

The EIP also sets out measures to support the transition to a sustainable food system, in line with the recommendations set out in the [National Food Strategy](#). These measures are intended to work alongside the [Land Use Framework](#), due to be published in 2023.

Measures include a new food data partnership, mandatory methodology for eco-labels, new funding in partnership with [UK Research & Innovation](#) (UKRI) for research into agri-food innovation across the supply chain, and a revised approach to the sustainability of approach to public sector food and catering. Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Built environment](#): measures to address the sustainability of buildings and new developments;
- [Energy](#): measures to address the sustainability of the energy system, as well as to promote energy efficiency within buildings;
- [Forestry and landscaping](#): measures to address the sustainable management of forestry and timber, as well as the use of land more generally;
- [Land condition](#): measures to address the sustainable use of land, including soil health and other measures to promote the sustainability of soil resources;

- [Marine and coastal](#): measures to address the sustainable management of marine resources, including sustainable fisheries management;
- [Waste management](#): measures to address the sustainable and circular use of resources and the management of waste, including requirements for packaging, labelling, and products.

Transport

Most of the Government's environmental commitments relating to transport are already covered by the [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#), the [Net Zero Strategy](#), and sector-by-sector transition plans, such as the [Clean Maritime Plan](#). To that end, the EIP primarily consolidates and supplements the Government's approach to transport.

The EIP highlights the following commitments:

- Measures to support the transition to 'zero emission vehicles' and the [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#), including the [Zero Emission Vehicle mandate](#), research into mitigation options for brake and tyre wear, and the early exploration of a single regulatory framework for all road vehicles;
- Delivery of the [Rail Environment Policy Statement](#), including commissioning a review of regulations governing air quality on the rail network, in conjunction with a [Stations Air Quality Monitoring Network](#) supported by £4.5million of funding;
- Reiterated support for active travel through the creation of [Active Travel England](#), funding of the [Sustrans National Cycle Network](#), and the commitment to build thousands of miles of cycling routes;
- Delivering the [Clean Maritime Plan](#) and [Maritime 2050 Roadmap](#) to support the transition of the maritime sector, as well as committing to an updated Clean Maritime Plan and a consultation on extending the [North Sea Emission Control Area](#) to cover the Irish Sea.

Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Air quality](#): measures on air quality, including new guidance for Local Transport Plans and other measures addressing transport-related emissions;
- [Climatology and carbon management](#): measures to address the mitigation of transport-related emissions, as well as those to support increased resilience for transport infrastructure;
- [Marine and coastal](#): measures to address the sustainability of maritime transport.

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Waste Management

Goal 4 of the EIP is ‘Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides’ and Goal 5 is ‘Maximise our resources, minimise our waste’, both of which deal directly with resource use, waste, and pollution. Goal 6 addresses ‘Using resources from nature sustainably’, which also has ramifications for resource use.

Many of the measures in the EIP addressing waste and resources exist to support the delivery of the Government’s [legally-binding targets on waste](#) (and linked interim targets which address specific types and origins of waste).

The measures in the EIP are also supported by other strategic policy documents, such as the [Resources and Waste Strategy](#). Those measures include:

- Reiteration of the Government’s commitment to publishing a new Chemicals Strategy in 2023, as well as a revised UK national action plan for the sustainable use of pesticides (drawing on [Integrated Pest Management](#) approaches), the former of which will take a risk-based approach, explicitly outlining the Government’s plans to address emerging chemicals of concern such as [Per- and Poly-fluorinated Substances](#) (PFAS) and [Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals](#) (EDCs);
- Continued implementation of the [Litter Strategy for England](#) including further publication of the [fly-tipping toolkit](#), a review of the [Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse](#), and £800,000 new funding for councils to address ‘fly-tipping’;
- Continued implementation of [UK REACH](#) and the [UK REACH Work Programme](#), including the development of a [UK REACH Alternative Transitional Registration model](#);
- Plans to work with stakeholders and industry to address key chemical pollutants, including [Persistent Organic Pollutants](#) (POPs), [Polychlorinated Biphenyls](#) (PCBs), and mercury;
- Measures to increase recycling rates, including a [Deposit Return Scheme](#) for plastic and metal drinks containers from October 2025, mandatory recycling labelling for most packaged products by March 2026 and all packaged products by March 2027, and ongoing support for [WRAP](#) and the [RecycleNow](#) campaign;
- Measures to address the circularity of products from the supply side, such as the implementation of packaging [Extended Producer Responsibility](#) from 2024 and a ban on the supply of single-use plastics from October 2023;

- Measures to reform and modernise waste management through a [mandatory digital waste tracking service](#) and updates to waste exemptions and the waste carriers, brokers and dealers regime, as well as ongoing implementation of the [Antimicrobial Resistance National Action Plan](#);

- A commitment to developing a plan to minimise the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill from 2028, as well as measures to address soil being sent to landfill (for more information see [Land Condition](#));

- Ongoing support for international action on chemical pollution, including £6 million of [Official Development Assistance](#) investment to support capacity building in middle and lower income countries, £330 million through the [Global Environment Facility](#) to address the most toxic and harmful chemicals,

- The establishment of up to 25 plastic partnerships with countries through the [Global Plastic Action Partnership](#) (GPAP) by 2025, as well as ongoing work to support the creation of a [Science Policy Panel for pollution](#) as an equivalent to the [IPCC](#) and [IPBES](#);

- Further regulation of UK waste exports, including a ban on exporting plastic waste outside the [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (OECD) and the requirement of consent from countries importing waste electrical and electronic equipment.

Further announcements are expected later in 2023, particularly the announcement of the Government’s Chemicals Strategy and the ongoing work of the [UK Chemicals Stakeholder Forum](#).

Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- [Conservation and ecology](#): the implementation of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) and its implications for environmental pollution;

- [Land condition](#): measures to address soil health and to prevent soils being classified as waste or sent to landfill;

- [Sustainability](#): measures to address the sustainable use of natural resources, including through international supply chains and the [National Food Strategy](#);

- [Water](#): measures to address water pollution from agriculture, chemicals, metals, and wastewater, which may have repercussions on chemicals and waste management.

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Water

Goal 3 of the EIP is 'Clean and plentiful water' and several other areas of the Plan also reference considerable co-benefits for water systems, particularly in the context of biodiversity, pollution, and the use of natural resources.

Many of the measures in the EIP addressing water exist to support the delivery of the Government's [legally-binding targets on water](#) (and linked interim targets). Those measures include:

- Reiterating the commitment to deliver on the [Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan](#), as well as to utilise the fines and measures set out in legislation to drive action by water companies, supported by an increase in the water company enforcement budget of £2.2 million per year;
- Measures to reduce nutrient pollution from wastewater, including requiring the production of [Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans](#), as well as upgrades to 160 wastewater treatment works by 2028 and a further 400 by 2038, including for anaerobic digestion;
- Measures to reduce nutrient pollution from agriculture, including through [Catchment Sensitive Farming](#), the [Sustainable Farming Incentive](#), and [Diffuse Water Pollution Plans](#);
- Expanding the [Water and Abandoned Metal Mines programme](#) with 40 new schemes by 2038;
- Supporting the [Chalk Stream Strategy](#) launched by the [Catchment-Based Approach Chalk Stream Restoration Group](#);
- Delivery of the [Integrated Water Plan](#) and Roadmap for Water Efficiency, including reviewing water efficiency options in planning, [building regulations](#) and non-household buildings (the latter through voluntary schemes), as well as work with regulators and water companies to put in place Water Resource Management Plans and Drought Plans, reduce consumption, and deliver a 50% reduction in leakage by 2050;
- Designation of the [National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure](#) to support new infrastructure for water supply;
- Measures to encourage innovative water efficiency approaches in buildings, including technologies and approaches to funding and maintenance, while also considering [fittings-based approaches to water efficiency](#), and new efficiency standards for homes in areas of serious water stress;
- Changes to planning and building regulations, including mandatory [Sustainable Drainage Schemes](#) in new

developments, as well as a review of the [Building Regulations 2010](#) and the associated [water efficiency, water reuse and drainage standards](#);

- Measures to address abstraction, including use of the [Water Resources Licensing Digital Service](#) to restrict abstraction during low flow levels and modernisation of the regime through the [Environmental Permitting Regulations](#);
- Support for delivery capacity, including catchment officers in each area, nutrient advisers in the [Planning Advisory Service](#), and supported capacity for [Natural England](#).

Read about changes in other specialisms for more information about:

- **Built environment:** planning and other consenting processes affecting the water environment;
- **Climatology and carbon management:** nature-based solutions to climate change, including climate resilience to flood risk and other measures which may affect the water environment and run-off pollution to watercourses;
- **Conservation and ecology:** measures to address biodiversity, including freshwater ecology;
- **Waste management:** measures to address chemical and plastic pollution, as well as issues such as antimicrobial resistance, and their consequences for the water environment.

Find out more

Our member briefing note: '[Influencing the UK Parliament](#)', first published in 2011 and most recently re-issued in 2022, provides an overview of some of the ways that environmental professionals can influence Parliament and legislation.

The IES also runs training to help environmental professionals learn more about policy, how it affects them, and how they can influence policy decisions. Regular training sessions are available for sign-ups [on the IES website](#).

In the UK, many issues of environmental policy are devolved to national administrations. If you live in Scotland, you can contact your [Member of Scottish Parliament](#) or [learn more](#) about influencing Scottish legislation. If you live in Wales, you can [contact your Member of Senedd Cymru](#) or learn more about the [business of the Senedd](#). If you live in Northern Ireland, you can [contact your local Member of the Legislative Assembly](#) or learn more about the [Assembly's work](#).

Is there a policy-related topic which you would like to see covered by the IES? Get in touch at joseph@the-ies.org to let us know your thoughts on potential topics for future briefings, or with your suggestions for other content.



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