



Chapter one: A new Mission for Sustainable Wellbeing



Priority actions for the UK Government: Sustainability



1 A new Mission...

Transform the UK through a new Mission for Sustainable Wellbeing. Begin the transition from years of crisis towards a sustainable society where people and nature thrive.



2 led by the evidence...

Across government, recognise the role of evidence-informed policy design and delivery, embracing the full range of scientific insights, whether or not they are politically convenient.



3 assured by governance...

Develop a robust, independent, and coherent system of environmental governance across all levels of the UK, with the power to act where needed to secure outcomes for people and the planet.



4 ...to empower future generations.

Put people at the heart of the sustainability transition by empowering communities and giving future generations the skills and tools they need to engage in decision making.

“We need an approach that cuts across government and everything it does.”

Years of crisis linked to climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution have prevented us realising the fundamental promise that the future should always be brighter than it is today.

Our environment is a core resource that shapes each aspect of human society and influences every government department, so we should avoid approaches that isolate the solutions to these challenges. We need an approach that cuts across government and everything it does.

Our ambition should be for a country with thriving people, a healthy economy, and a flourishing environment. Each is crucial to creating a better country and all three could be realised together through a new Mission for Sustainable Wellbeing across the UK.

Those ambitions come from strong and enduring public expectations: people want their country to be better than it was in the past, rather than seeing rivers, forests, and green spaces decline around them.

The UK has a clear leadership role to play on the environment, and we can see our actions amplified if we lead by example on

the global stage. Sustainable wellbeing is essential for achieving social and environmental outcomes. It also sets the base conditions for economic security and productivity in the future.

Addressing environmental challenges in a meaningful and coherent way requires a transformative and systems approach: we need to do things differently and we need to use all the tools at our disposal to transform the world around us.

Evidence-informed decision making ensures policies achieve their intended consequences. Good governance ensures that targets and aspirations are realised in practice. Community participation ensures that a just transition to sustainability exists to serve people, as it cannot happen without them.

Together, we can accelerate towards sustainability, putting behind us the years of crisis that have prevented the UK realising a better future.

Together, we can solve environmental challenges and create a sustainable society where people and nature thrive.

1. Transform the UK through a new Mission for Sustainable Wellbeing. Begin the transition from years of crisis towards a sustainable society where people and nature thrive.

- i. Develop a cross-government Sustainable Wellbeing Framework for England and connect it to the Welsh Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Scotland's National Performance Framework through a new Mission for Sustainable Wellbeing, creating a vision for Britain transformed for the good of people, the economy, and the environment.
- ii. Take a transformative approach to environmental challenges, without compromising on the specific actions needed to create positive change across the environment.
- iii. Commit to leaving UK nature and the wider environment in a better state than it was at the start of the 2020s, recognising that the current trend of environmental decline means that 'do no harm' is an insufficient approach to preventing long-term damage.

This is the easiest and most coherent way to meet the Government's **manifesto commitment** to **"ensure the institutional framework for policy making reflects our commitments to reach net zero and meet our carbon budgets."**

A cross-government approach will help meet the Government's **manifesto commitments** that **"economic growth, energy security, lower bills, and addressing climate change can be complementary"** and to **"work with the Scottish and Welsh Governments, and the Northern Ireland Executive, to drive growth."**

This will deliver on the **Environment Secretary's comment** that **"Nature will be central to each of the missions that will define Keir Starmer's Labour government ... Nature underpins everything, but we stand at a moment in history when nature needs us to defend it."**

2. Across government, recognise the role of evidence-informed policy design and delivery, embracing the full range of scientific insights, whether or not they are politically convenient.

- i. Develop a systematic understanding of which policies work through ‘integrated assessment approaches’ to measuring progress on environmental objectives, using a combination of data sources to take account of dynamic natural systems.
- ii. Work with scientists and business to establish partnerships which increase public access to evidence, increasing understanding of different approaches to addressing environmental challenges and how they can be achieved.
- iii. Ensure there is sufficient expert advice to assess emerging evidence of the effects of environmental issues, filling gaps such as the need for an expert advisory group on noise pollution, as recommended by the [House of Lords Science & Technology Committee](#).

This is essential to meeting all Government objectives, but particularly those on **economic security and long-term success**, which rely on policies producing expected results.

3. Develop a robust, independent, and coherent system of environmental governance across all levels of the UK, with the power to act where needed to secure outcomes for people and the planet.

- i. Empower **good governance** in practice by ensuring regulatory bodies, such as the OEP and the Environment Agency, have adequate resources and powers, clear and coherent responsibilities, and shared approaches across the devolved administrations and local government.
- ii. Address the gaps in the Environment Act's legally-binding target framework by raising ambitions beyond what can already be achieved by existing policies, filling gaps around soil health and resource efficiency. Refresh the **Outcome Indicator Framework** so that indicators actually measure progress towards the goals of environmental improvement and sustainable wellbeing.
- iii. Enable local authorities to deliver for the environment by clarifying their responsibilities, increasing their powers and resources and reforming the planning system.

By delivering on each element of governance that underpins the environmental improvement plan, this will realise the **commentary by the last Environment Secretary** that the Government will **“ensure the existing environmental improvement plan is fit for purpose.”**

In the context of the environment, this will realise the Government's **manifesto commitment** to **“provide capacity and support to councils ... so taxpayers get better value for money.”**

4. Put people at the heart of the sustainability transition by empowering communities and giving future generations the skills and tools they need to engage in decision making.

- i. Work with the education sector to deliver skills for the sustainability transition.
- ii. Work with industry to produce sector-specific skills audits and transition plans aligned with a sustainable future.
- iii. Work with professional bodies to develop and review competency frameworks to reflect the skills mix needed in each sector.
- iv. Work with local communities to give people control over the country's pathway towards sustainability. Facilitate engagement by supporting widespread access to resources on critical scientific topics, including systems thinking, sustainable futures, **Carbon Literacy** and process literacy.
- v. Build a science-policy interface which is **credible, legitimate, relevant and actionable**, helping decision makers and the public become comfortable with discussing uncertainty.

This will be essential to delivering the **Government's Mission** to **'Make Britain a Clean Energy Superpower'** in a way that leaves no community behind.

This supports the Government's **manifesto commitment** to **"transfer power out of Westminster, and into our communities"**, in the context of sustainability.

**“Our environment is
a core resource that
shapes each aspect of
human society.”**

