

Is UK environmental policy on track?

Recommendations to the UK Government
2024-2029: Gap Analysis

October 2026



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The Institution
of Environmental
Sciences

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About the Institution of Environmental Sciences

The Institution of Environmental Sciences (the IES) is at the forefront of uniting the environmental sciences around a shared goal: to work with speed, vision and expertise to solve the world's most pressing environmental challenges, together.

As the global professional membership body for environmental scientists, we support a diverse network of professionals all over the world – and at every stage of their education and careers – to connect, develop, progress and inspire.

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Introduction

The environment is complex, made up of systems that are intertwined and hard to sum up in simple terms.

As a result, it can be hard to know where we are making progress, where we are regressing, and where things are not moving quickly enough.

As an Institution, the IES makes recommendations across the full complexity of the environment, so we need to keep track of whether we are making a difference.

We are nearly half way through the current term of the UK Parliament, with all the prospects of another election soon now that a new Prime Minister has taken over. Whatever comes next, it is an ideal time to take stock.

This is our 'mid-term review', an analysis of how much progress has been made against the **priorities we set out** for policy makers at the time of the last election, and exactly what the new Prime Minister has inherited.

We made more than 200 recommendations, split across eleven themes. They bring the most important issues down to a level of detail where specific actions can be taken.

Each chapter looks at one of those themes, setting out our recommendations, what has happened over the last two and a half years, and what action is still required.

To keep things simple, we also have a key evaluation that shows how much progress is being made across the board.

Our evaluations

While each of these policy areas is deeply nuanced, we have used a simple system of evaluations to describe the state of progress towards each recommendation:

- **Unclear:** Means that an effective evaluation of progress is not possible within the two-year timeframe since 2024.
- **Unmet:** Means that a recommendation has not been met and that there has not been meaningful progress towards meeting it.
- **Partial progress (Partial progr.):** Means that a recommendation has been partly met, with a degree of progress towards the desired outcome, but significant further action required.

- **Substantial progress (Subst. progr.):** Means that a recommendation has been partly met, with substantial progress towards the desired outcome.
- **Mixed:** Means that a recommendation has been met in some contexts but not in others, or that positive progress has happened alongside negative changes.
- **On track:** Means that a recommendation has not yet been met but needs no further intervention, usually because sufficient action is underway but will depend on effective implementation.
- **Met:** Means that a recommendation has been met and requires no further action.

What next?

This gap analysis is just one part of our work to help deliver environmental outcomes through policy.

Our **Environmental Policy Implementation Community** (EPIC) works with local authorities and environmental experts to deliver policy in practice. It has nearly 1000 members connected with a purpose: getting things done.

The IES also recently took stock of the reasons why environmental targets fail to

deliver outcomes in practice, leading to the publication of our report on '**The Golden Thread of Governance**', which provides a model for how to reconnect environmental targets with credible outcomes.

Over the coming months, **our policy team** will continue to engage with policy makers to share evidence and speak up for the voice of science, scientists, and the natural world.

As we do, we will use this gap analysis as a map to get the UK back on track.

Even where action has slowed down or where not enough is being done to meet the urgency of the challenges facing the world, there is reason to be optimistic.

A strong public consensus has endured for ambitious environmental action, as long as it is fair, sensible, and effective.

Through these recommendations, a renewed focus on delivery, and a commitment to a transformative approach, it is still possible to achieve a country with thriving people, a healthy economy, and a flourishing environment.

With the help of our members, the IES is ready to lead the way, accelerating towards a more sustainable society.

“We are nearly half way through the current Parliament ... it is still possible to achieve a country with thriving people, a healthy economy, and a flourishing environment.”

Figure 1 shows the overall state of progress against our recommendations, and overwhelmingly they are either unmet or there has only been partial progress towards meeting them.

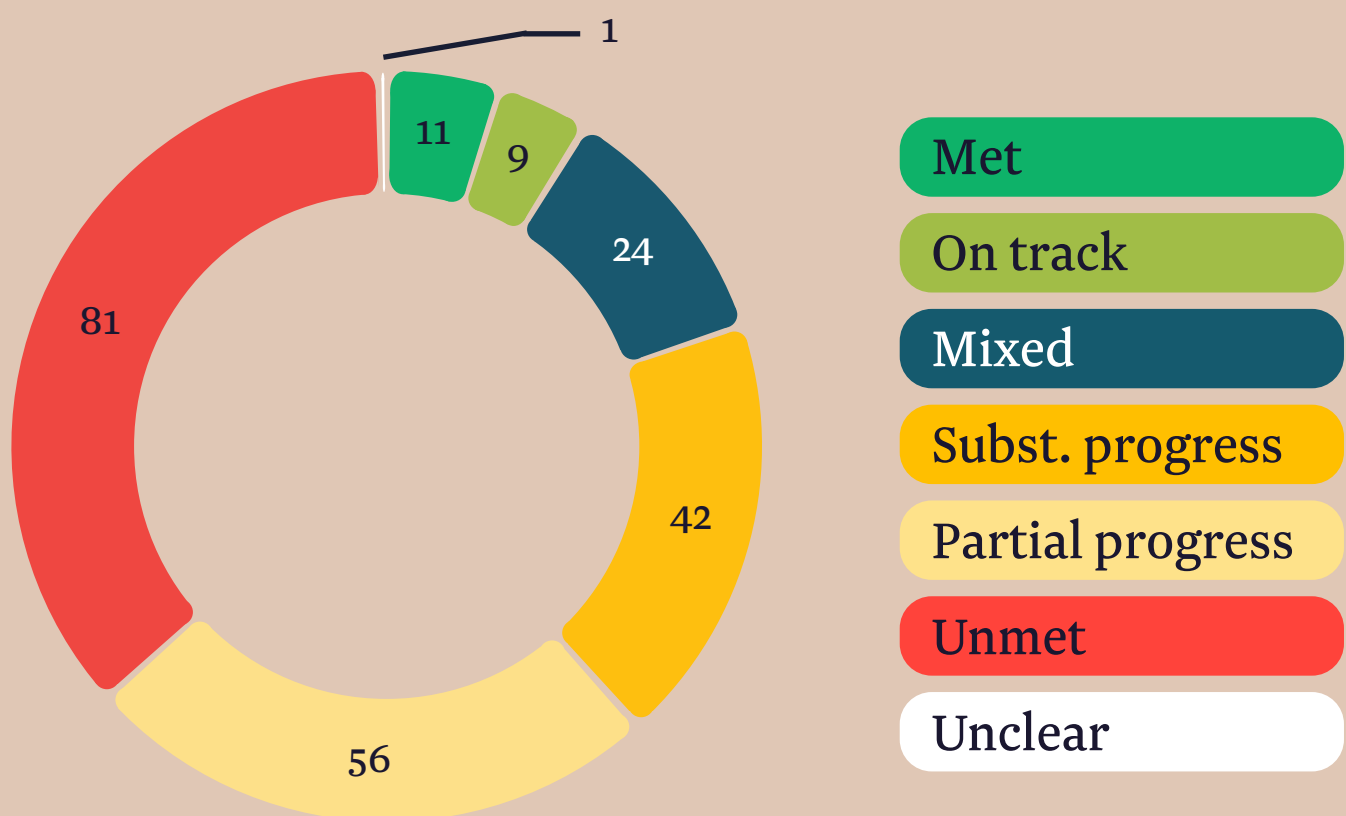


Figure 1. Recommendations given each evaluation grade (Unclear, unmet, partial progress, substantial progress, mixed, on track, met).

Figure 2 shows which areas of the environment are making progress, and which are lagging behind. More progress has been made on issues around land and water, in line with planning and water reforms. Progress on the Circular Economy remains slow and off track due to delayed plans.

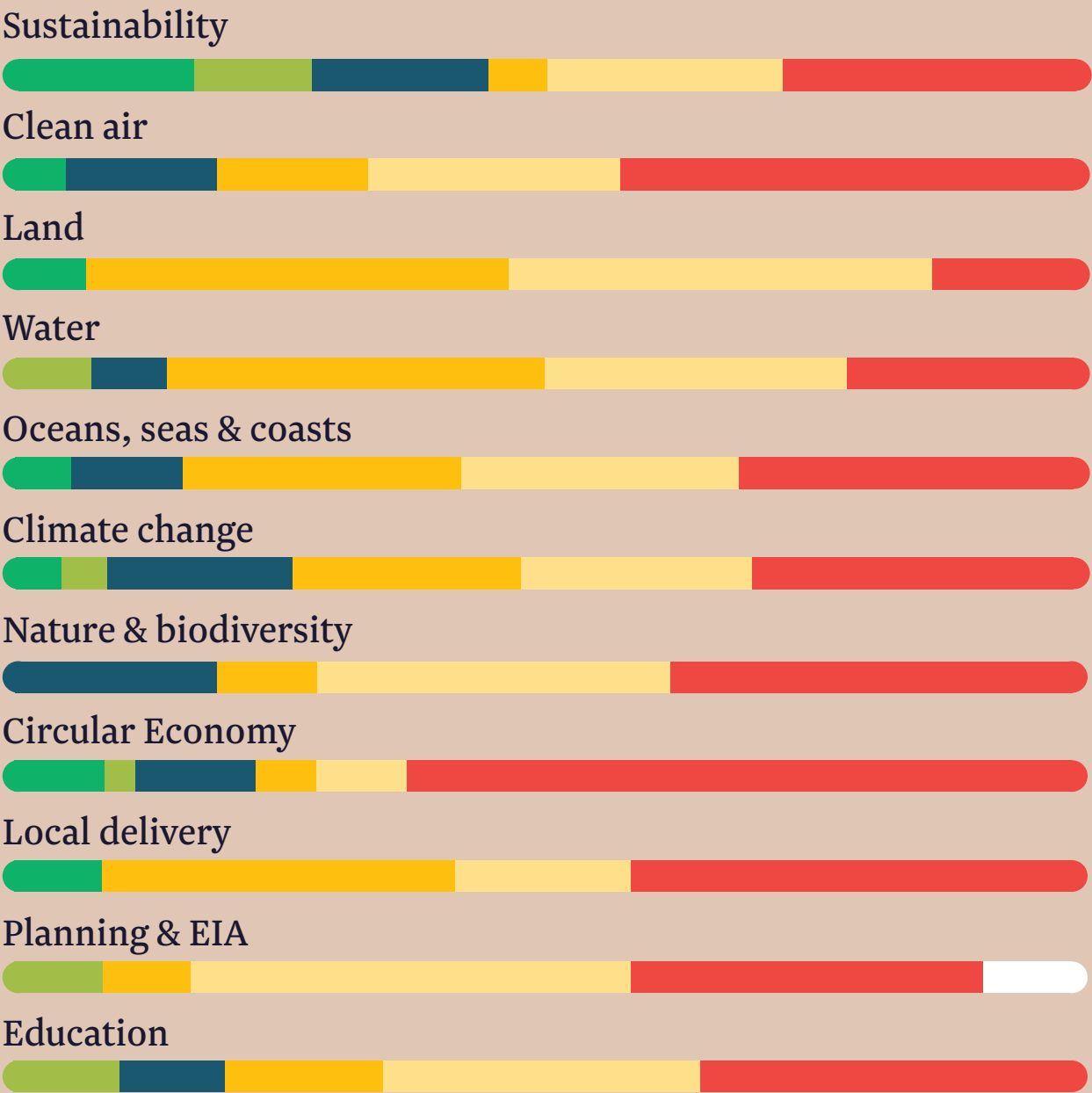


Figure 2. Recommendations at each evaluation grade sorted by thematic chapter.

Chapter 1: A new Mission for Sustainable Wellbeing

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
1.1.0	Sustainability 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.	While the EIP recognises that “Nature is the foundation of our wellbeing, our economy and our communities”, it does not sufficiently embed these goals as a strategic priority across government.	Unmet	Introduce a Mission for Sustainable Wellbeing or otherwise embed a vision for sustainability at the heart of government policy.
1.1.1	Sustainability Framework	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.	As above, while the EIP recognises these objectives, it does not provide a sufficient framework vision for thriving people, a healthy economy, and a flourishing environment.	Unmet	Introduce a Sustainable Wellbeing Framework for England.

1.1.2	Transformative change	Take a transformative approach to environmental challenges, without compromising on the specific actions needed to create positive change across the environment.	The EIP does not take a transformative approach across policy areas, though some policy proposals are being developed that could contribute towards a transformative approach. The EIP includes network diagrams and other reflections on system connections, but these links between subject areas are not consistently reflected in the policies that emerge from government. Policies like the Water White Paper and Clean Power 2030 outline core features of a transformative approach within their subject area, yet do not deliver the necessary links between issues.	Mixed	Upscale ambitions for a transformative approach across environmental issues. Ensure the Water Transition Plan makes the most of the opportunity of a long-term approach to water.
1.1.3	Environmental improvement	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.	The EIP makes many commitments to improve the state of nature but does not make this long-term commitment. The EIP includes a biodiversity target to “increase species abundance so that by 2042 it is greater than in 2022 and at least 10% greater than in 2030”.	Partial progr.	Ensure that targets for nature represent a commitment to actual improvement in practice.
1.2.0	Evidence-informed government	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.	While several sources of evidence appear in the EIP, the Government continues to make statements about nature that do not align with science.	Unmet	Take an evidence-informed approach across government, even when it is not politically convenient.

1.2.1	Integrated assessments	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.	Development of the new EIP has been informed by integrated assessment approaches, albeit predominantly in response to those carried out by the Office for Environmental Protection. The Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (NCEA) mirrors some processes from an integrated assessment approach.	Met	Continue to use integrated assessments from the OEP to inform policy choices. Build capacity within government to develop parallel approaches.
1.2.2	Access to evidence	Work with scientists and business to establish partnerships which increase public access to evidence, understanding of approaches to addressing environmental issues, and how they can be achieved.	The EIP commits to “helping the public to make informed sustainable choices ... work[ing] with partners to help provide clear, evidence-based information highlighting impactful actions and best practice”.	Met	Produce actionable outcomes from these partnerships.
1.2.3	Expert advisory groups	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.	New expert advisory groups have been created by the Government, including the Circular Economy Taskforce and Independent Water Commission's Expert Advisory Group - though these are time-limited, do not represent a systemic commitment to evidence-informed policy, and questions remain about how they have been used to support policy making.	Partial progr.	Establish an expert advisory group on noise pollution and adopt a stronger commitment to using expert groups to support evidence-informed policy.
1.3.0	Environmental 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.	Th UK has a robust system of governance. Bodies such as the OEP have had demonstrable impact in England and Northern Ireland. Questions remain, particularly around ongoing water reforms and the extent to which governance filters down to every level of the UK.	Met	Ensure governance remains strong and that it leads to outcomes in practice through a Golden Thread approach. Deliver effective governance at every level of the UK.

1.3.1	Well-resourced regulators	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.	The EIP includes some project funding for some of these bodies. Overwhelmingly, regulators remain underfunded for their purposes, while responsibilities continue to increase .	Unmet	Provide adequate funding, capacity, and partnerships across the regulatory landscape.
1.3.2	Environmental targets & indicators	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 (OIF) so that indicators actually measure progress towards the goals of environmental improvement and sustainable wellbeing.	The revised EIP includes new interim targets, which make progress to increasing the ambition of environmental targets, albeit not significantly. Legal targets for soil health and resource efficiency have still not been delivered, despite new commitments in the EIP. The OIF has effectively been revised into the Environmental Indicator Framework, with constant updates and more explicit consideration of how progress towards indicators delivers environmental outcomes.	Subst. progr.	Introduce legal targets on soil health and resource efficiency.
1.3.3	Local authority powers	Enable local authorities to deliver for the environment by clarifying their responsibilities, increasing their powers and resources and reforming the planning system	The Devolution Act clarifies responsibilities and expectations. The Planning Act also allows local planning authorities to set their own planning fees. However, these changes have not produced consistently positive changes for implementation and they reduce local powers in practice. This is likely to be compounded by the recent changes to the NPPF.	Mixed	Provide sufficient funding and resources to empower local authorities and increase their environmental powers.

1.4.0	Skills	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.	The EIP contains significant measures to address future green skills needs and encourage sustainable behaviour. The Devolution Act makes a step towards empowering communities, yet more action is required. In particular, many tools to empower communities, like Local Nature Recovery Strategies, must be delivered to be lead to desirable outcomes for communities.	Partial progr.	Support the delivery of skills in line with further actions against 1.4.3 - 1.4.5.
1.4.1	Skills pipeline	Work with the education sector to deliver skills for the sustainability transition.	The EIP commits to "support opportunities for children to connect with nature because ... a strong understanding of our environment and environmental decision-making skills are essential for the future". However, implementation actions are still unclear.	On track	Ensure these commitments contribute to a full and ambitious skills pipeline.
1.4.2	Skills audit	Work with industry to produce sector-specific skills audits and transition plans aligned with a sustainable future.	Skills audits and transition plans have been developed for key Industrial Strategy sectors and action has been taken through Skills England's Sectoral Skills Needs Assessments. Some sectors still require audits and transition plans, though action is on track.	On track	Deliver skills audits and transition plans for sectors not yet covered by the Industrial Strategy.

1.4.3	Competency frameworks	Work with professional bodies to develop and review competency frameworks to reflect the skills mix needed in each sector.	The EIP highlights partnerships around the Forestry Sector Skills Plan 2025. More generally, Skills England has adopted an explicit system for developing and updating occupational standards, and included a case study on embedding green skills in occupational standards in the Annual Skills Report . However, more specific competency frameworks have not been sufficiently supported beyond the forestry sector.	Partial progr.	Take a more comprehensive approach to developing competency frameworks across the sector.
1.4.4	Scientific literacy	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.	There is no mention of Carbon Literacy in the EIP or the Carbon Budget (and Growth) Delivery Plan. Systems thinking is not mentioned in the EIP but is supported by parts of government in practice. There is not sufficient engagement between government and local communities on these issues.	Unmet	Facilitate further engagement with systems literacy, Carbon Literacy, and other priority resources.
1.4.5	Science-policy interface	Build a science-policy interface which is credible, legitimate, relevant and actionable , helping decision makers and the public become comfortable with discussing uncertainty.	Government uses a range of tools to engage with science, some of which are successful and some of which aren't. The relationship between government and environmental science is currently mixed and has not yet led to a position where decision makers and the public are effectively able to discuss uncertainty and the nuances of environmental issues.	Mixed	Improve the current relationship between government and science, treating science as a useful tool rather than a partisan issue.

“Deliver effective governance at every level of the UK with a Golden Thread approach.”



Chapter 2: World leading governance for clean air

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
2.1.0	Air governance	Secure a world-leading governance framework for air quality, raising the ambition of existing strategies and targets, and addressing governance gaps.	While both the Environmental Improvement Plan and 10 Year Plan for the NHS acknowledge the importance of clean air, there have not been significant steps to bring governance for air in line with international standards. Most measures continue to focus on delivering against existing levels of ambition.	Unmet	Raise ambitions for cleaner air, supported by governance that reflects international evidence. Adopt a Golden Thread model to deliver clean air in practice.
2.1.1	Air quality targets	Raise the ambition of the UK's air quality targets, setting out a credible plan for achieving World Health Organization (WHO) 2021 Air Quality Guidelines as soon as possible, including meeting an interim 2030 target of an annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms per cubic metre for PM2.5.	Although the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 renewed and updated air quality targets, they are still not reflective of international standards. While the EIP introduced an interim target for 2030, steps have not been taken to set out a credible plan for achieving WHO Guidelines where possible.	Partial progr.	Set out a plan for reaching cleaner air faster, taking a more ambitious approach to targets.
2.1.2	Right to clean air	Introduce a right to clean air into UK law.	No right to clean air has been introduced. The Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill that would introduce such a right (Ella's Law) returned to Parliament in 2026, but has not yet been given a second reading.	Unmet	Make time in the Parliamentary agenda for MPs to debate Ella's Law , or pursue another way of embedding a right to clean air in law.

2.1.3	Review of Air Quality Strategy	Commit to a regular review of the Air Quality Strategy, to take place at least every three years with a consultation period of at least two months.	While the 10 Year Plan for the NHS commits to "refresh the government's ambition on air quality through a review of the air quality strategy", this has not yet taken place, and the Air Quality Strategy is not expected to be updated until mid-2028, so plans for periodic review remain lethargic.	Subst. progr.	Commit to a specific and regular review of the Air Quality Strategy (and/or the Clean Air Strategy), with clear opportunities to consult widely with appropriate expertise.
2.1.4	Local Authority air strategies	Introduce a statutory requirement for local authorities to produce local air quality strategies for all key pollutants, and to consider PM2.5 in annual status reports.	No new requirements have been introduced for local authorities, many of which are scaling down clean air policies as they reach compliance with historic limit levels.	Unmet	Give more authority and powers to local authorities, encouraging them to pursue clean air proactively, beyond a "compliance only" approach required by limited resources.
2.1.5	Oversight for air delivery plans	Put in place oversight mechanisms to ensure air quality delivery plans are reviewed and consulted upon when national limits are exceeded, as called for by the OEP.	In its response to the latest OEP progress report, the Government committed to publish measures under development, assess their abatement potential, and explain how limits will be achieved where an emission target has been missed. Despite the commitment, oversight mechanisms remain limited.	Subst. progr.	Introduce a stronger oversight framework for air quality delivery plans, in line with the OEP's recommendations.
2.2.0	Local authority air powers	Back local authorities to deliver on clean air, through increased powers, funding and clear guidance.	Generally speaking, local government reorganisation has not delivered new funding, guidance, or powers for local authorities on clean air. There has been some new guidance since 2024, mainly from outside government, yet progress has not been substantial enough to help local authorities deliver on clean air.	Partial progr.	Deliver the commitment to devolve power back to communities by giving them the powers and funding to clean up their air. Seize the opportunity of the new Prime Minister's commitment to devolution to provide the tools for real change in every postcode.

2.2.1	Local clean air enforcement	Clarify and strengthen the powers and enforcement abilities of all types of local authorities to tackle air pollution, including from vehicle idling and wood burning, and by enabling public transport and active travel.	While the EIP includes some measures to support public and active travel, there has not been a systemic approach to empowering or clarifying the enforcement abilities of local authorities. Local government reorganisation has introduced some further uncertainties which are yet to be resolved.	Unmet	Take the opportunity of local government reorganisation to give local authorities clear and strong powers to regulate and enforce on the sources of air pollution, and to enable public transport and active travel.
2.2.2	Guidance on air quality interventions	Prioritise clear guidance and unambiguous political support for an evidence-informed community-led dialogue on air quality interventions, such as clean air zones and low traffic neighbourhoods.	Political support for air quality interventions remains ambiguous at best, though the new Prime Minister presents an opportunity to present a clear and unifying approach.	Unmet	Urgently clarify guidance and support for appropriate air quality interventions.
2.2.3	Long-term local clean air funding	Deliver long-term non-competitive funding to local authorities for air quality management, including and going beyond filling the gap left by the scrapping of the air quality grant scheme.	Funding for environmental schemes is not yet being provided with sufficient certainty, including in the context of clean air.	Unmet	Clarify the future of local air quality managements and provide a more certain funding landscape for local environmental schemes.
2.3.0	Indoor air quality	Raise the profile of indoor air quality in the UK's approach to public health and take immediate action to tackle the sources of poor indoor air quality.	Neither the Environmental Improvement Plan nor the 10 Year Plan for the NHS mentions indoor air quality.	Unmet	Transform the Government's ambition for healthier air into more direct commitments for indoor air quality.
2.3.1	Air evidence gaps	Close the gaps for evidence and monitoring identified by the Air Quality Expert Group's 2022 Indoor Air Quality report.	While the monitoring landscape for indoor air has continued to develop, the evidence gaps identified by AQEG have not been fully filled, as recognised in COMEAP's 2025 response .	Partial progr.	Continue to work with experts on indoor air quality to fill evidence and monitoring gaps.

2.3.2	Indoor air roadmap	Set out a road map for tackling indoor air quality, including an action plan for phasing out non-essential solid fuel burning in homes.	The Government held a consultation in early 2026 on solid fuel burning but has not yet reported on its outcomes. While there have been positive steps, there is not yet a road map in place for tackling indoor air quality as a whole.	Partial progr.	Come to a conclusion on phasing out non-essential solid fuel burning, and take additional steps to develop a full plan for tackling indoor air quality.
2.3.3	Solid fuel burning health campaign	Deliver a clear and unified national public health campaign to raise awareness of the health impacts of solid fuel burning in the home, building on the work of the London Wood Burning Project.	There has been no public health campaign on solid fuel burning.	Unmet	Work with experts to raise awareness for the public on the health impacts of solid fuel burning.
2.4.0	Novel contaminants	Produce ambitious strategies for highly polluting industries and novel contaminants.	The Government has taken some steps to address the most polluting industries and unaddressed contaminants, including through its PFAS Plan and commitments around the Clean Maritime Plan, yet not all areas have been addressed on a strategic level.	Mixed	Fill strategic gaps on the most polluting industries and unaddressed contaminants, including through agriculture and chemicals.

2.4.1	Agricultural emissions	Tackle agricultural emissions by publishing a strategy to reduce ammonia, identifying the organisations responsible for delivering improvements, and setting strict targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050.	The EIP introduces several measures to support action on ammonia, yet the consequences of agricultural emissions are not yet being fully addressed.	Partial progr.	Clarify the Government's approach to agricultural emissions with long-term funding and guidance, supported by a strategic approach to key emissions including ammonia, and building on the recommendations of the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee's Inquiry on Nitrogen .
2.4.2	Port and maritime clean air	Publish the updated Clean Maritime Plan, which was due to be published in 2022, with explicit policies to tackle air pollution in ports, as set out by Transport & Environment's 2024 report.	The Government has published an updated Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy, which explicitly addresses air pollution in ports.	Met	Ensure the commitments in the Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy are delivered in practice.
2.4.3	Chemicals Strategy	Publish the long-awaited Chemicals Strategy, explicitly including plans to regulate on indoor chemical products, novel contaminants, and 'forever chemicals' such as PFAS.	The Government has abandoned its commitment to publish a Chemicals Strategy, but has published a PFAS Plan to address its strategic approach to these contaminants specifically. The PFAS Plan's only actions on air are to "Consider adding further PFAS to the UK Pollutant Release and Transfer Register" and to work towards developing further standards, so no substantive commitments have filled the gap.	Unmet	Reverse the shortsighted decision to scrap the Chemicals Strategy, with a particular view to non-PFAS pollutants.

2.5.0	Air quality monitoring	Expand air quality monitoring and alert networks, facilitating the use of high-quality equipment and best practice to provide robust data that informs decision making.	The Government carried out a review of Air Quality Information System (AQIS) and committed in the EIP to a "new air quality alert system" as part of efforts to increase the communication of air quality information. Monitoring data has not received the same level of support. While there has been progress in some areas, some air quality monitoring, particularly through local authorities, is becoming more challenging as compliance with limit levels reduces the political capital for further action.	Mixed	Ensure that air quality monitoring receives sufficient support that it can operate regardless of levels of compliance. Take a more strategic approach to monitoring in line with the Golden Thread model of governance.
2.5.1	Monitoring and alerts network	Expand and join up the air quality monitoring and alerts network, including increased monitoring of black carbon and ultra fine particulate matter.	While there have been positive developments for the communication of air quality information, including for alerts, there are still gaps in the air quality monitoring network. Further support is needed for the monitoring of black carbon and ultra fine particulate matter.	Mixed	Build on and expand the air quality monitoring and alerts network.
2.5.2	Standard setting for air monitoring	Work with the scientific community to set standards, ensuring that monitoring equipment, especially new low-cost sensors, are robust and appropriately used, including by citizen scientists.	The scientific community has continued to advance standards and guidance in line with new developments, particularly around AI, though there is not currently sufficient government support to make these insights widely effective.	Subst. progr.	Continue to support experts to deliver standards and guidance for air quality monitoring and evaluation.



“Raise ambitions for clean air... We deserve a world-leading governance framework to reconnect targets with better health outcomes.”

Chapter 3: Land use and reuse for sustainable development

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
3.1.0	Holistic land use	Take a holistic approach to the use of land across the UK to secure multiple benefits for communities and our natural world.	The Land Use Framework for England was published in early 2026. It takes significant steps towards a more holistic approach but lacks the authority to ensure it is reflected in all decision making, so its success will depend on how it is implemented.	Subst. progr.	Connect the Land Use Framework to strategic approaches beyond England, including the Scottish Land Use Strategy. Provide delivery plans for all these Frameworks to ensure effective delivery across objectives.
3.1.1	Land Use Framework	Reach a cross-governmental consensus on the use of land, supported by a Land Use Framework that coordinates social, economic, and environmental objectives, and manages their trade-offs, including the Environmental Improvement Plan (and equivalent policies in the devolved administrations), food security, public health, and addressing the linked crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution.	The Land Use Framework has now been published, though it is yet to be seen whether this effects approaches across departments. The Framework addresses some of, but not all of, these objectives and does not fully manage trade-offs between them.	Subst. progr.	Work across departments to ensure the Land Use Framework supports a cross-governmental consensus on land, across all relevant objectives.

3.1.2	Brownfield first	Prioritise brownfield land for new developments whenever suitable for use, taking a ‘common sense’ approach to building homes, developing infrastructure and protecting our green spaces.	The latest updates to the NPPF have strengthened the commitment to a brownfield first approach, and the Government has committed to producing brownfield passports. Risks remain in the implementation of planning policy, particularly where strong incentives for house building may act as a barrier to brownfield first. Limited support for remediation of contaminated land means that some potentially viable brownfield sites are being ignored.	Subst. progr.	Take the opportunity of recent revisions to the NPPF to embed brownfield first in practice
3.2.0	Soils	Promote a sustainable, healthy, and resilient approach to soils across Government policy by coordinating governance, monitoring, and practice.	The EIP and Land Use Framework recognise the importance of soils and include commitments around agricultural soils and soil data, but there are still substantial gaps around governance and practice-based management.	Partial progr.	Bring governance of soils onto a level playing field and embed soil health and reuse in planning decisions through good practice
3.2.1	Legislate for soils	Place soil health on the same legislative framework as other key environmental outcomes, introducing a statutory target for soil health and improving soil monitoring data.	Soil health does not have the same legislative basis in the EIP as other issues. There is no legally-binding target for soil health. Some progress has been made towards improving soil monitoring data, including the publication of the indicator of soil health in England and the open-access national soil data portal for England and Wales.	Partial progr.	Introduce a legally-binding target for soil health and produce an action plan or strategy for meeting it.

3.2.2	Waste rules for soils	Improve waste rules for soils by introducing a regulatory framework for the re-use, recovery, and recycling of soil. Include soil in the Circular Economy Regulations as a resource where safe re-use is encouraged. Expedite the development and rollout of the Soil Re-Use and Storage Depot scheme.	Some progress has been made on these issues, particularly through DoWCoP developments. However, the revised EIP no longer mentions the SRUSD Scheme, leaving uncertainty around the Government's strategic commitments on waste rules for soils.	Unmet	Clarify the Government's commitment to soil reuse and recovery in the Circular Economy Strategy and expedite other actions around waste rules.
3.3.0	Brownfield use and reuse	Realise the safe use, re-use, and redevelopment of brownfield land in line with sustainable development.	The Government has promoted the use of brownfield land but has not yet taken full advantage of opportunities for the use of brownfield land	Subst. progr.	Take full advantage of the actions listed against 3.3.1-3.3.4
3.3.1	Environmental consenting	Consolidate consenting processes to minimise duplication, delivering NPPF guidance that planning issues should not be unnecessarily revisited through permitting regimes. Avoid double regulation with formal agreements between departments and regulators, clarifying which process will encompass which actions and activities.	Recent changes to the NPPF seek to address duplication through policy DM7. The Government has also begun the process of reviewing and consolidating the regulatory landscape, though the full outcomes of these changes are not yet in effect.	Partial progr.	Further action could be taken through formal agreements and a clearer streaming of consenting processes.

3.3.2	Incentives for brownfield development	Use regulatory incentives to actively encourage brownfield development. Explore higher scrutiny processes for greenfield development which should be 'by exception only'. Showcase the positives of brownfield development and the multiple benefits which can be achieved for communities and developers.	The Government's golden rules make a contribution towards disincentivising greenfield development and recent changes to the NPPF contribute to a brownfield first approach, including the introduction of brownfield passports.	Subst. progr.	Further action could be taken by showcasing opportunities of brownfield development, and by embedding brownfield first through the NPPF by better accounting for risk management approaches to contaminated land that could open up more opportunities for brownfield development.
3.3.3	Planning frameworks	Align governance and consenting processes across local and national policy, through frameworks such as the NPPF and NPF4. National environmental objectives and outcomes should be linked to local delivery as explicit considerations in Local Plans.	Recent changes to the NPPF have strengthened the relationship between Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the planning system. The link to Local Plans has also been strengthened by a "new and more structured plan-making process" which requires plan-makers to demonstrate how an LNRS was taken into account before the Plan can be finalised. Ongoing reforms to local authorities continue to pose a question about how well-aligned policy will remain over the longer term.	Partial progr.	Ensure coherent alignment across local authorities by giving them the resources they need, include native environmental expertise.

3.3.4	Land designations	Improve designations for land to better reflect its complexity. Recognise that brownfield land can have more ecological diversity than some greenfield land. Ensure definitions do not lead to absurdities such as the intentional degradation of land to facilitate technical compliance with BNG.	The Government has not closed loopholes around technical compliance and has introduced new challenges, including a 0.2 hectare threshold and the de minimis exemption, both of which cause issues in practice. Absurdities around the intentional degradation of land have not been fully addressed.	Unmet	Address the issues that arise from flaws in designations and exemptions.
3.4.0	Competency for land	Work with the environment sector and local government to deliver competency and best practice in the transition towards a more holistic approach to land.	The Government has not committed to improving competency and practice around land. In practice, work towards this has been taking place anyway, but there are not sufficient links with the environment sector and local authorities to assure the delivery of the right standards in practice.	Partial progr.	Build stronger links with the sector and local authorities to deliver competency and best practice.
3.4.1	Partnerships for standards	Support industry, professional bodies, and communities of practice to promote key competency standards (such as NQMS, SiLC, and CEnv). Hold regular reviews to ensure standards are fit for purpose, working with local government on a needs-based approach to competency, and delivering training on new technologies, data, and digital development.	Updated guidance on land contamination risk management (LCRM) supports the promotion of competency standards to some extent. There is not sufficient work with local authorities to identify needs-based competency requirements. The IES, our Land Condition Community, and the National Contaminated Land Officers Group (NCLOG) have begun to fill these gaps, even in the absence of action from government.	Subst. progr.	Work with the sector to develop a comprehensive assessment of needs around competency, particularly on key issues like PFAS. The recent NPPF changes provide an avenue to accomplish this.

3.4.2	Best practice in land	Facilitate universal best practice through guidance for local authorities and delivery organisations, supported by sufficient resources and by evaluating the success of the Planning Skills Delivery Fund.	While the Planning Skills Delivery Fund has not been directly evaluated, the Local Authority Planning Capacity and Capability Survey 2025 provides an assessment of capacity and capability around planning. The NPPF consultation committed to guidance on land contamination.	Met	Deliver guidance for local authorities and delivery organisations following changes to the NPPF.
3.4.3	National Audit Office report on Biodiversity Net Gain	Deliver on the recommendations of the NAO's Implementing Statutory BNG Report, including monitoring local authority enforcement of BNG and overall impact to ensure environmental gain in practice.	Many key actions from the NAO's report, particularly around compliance and enforcement, remain unaddressed. Some impact reporting is available for on-site BNG, though not to the extent recommended by the NAO. The monitoring landscape around the impact and enforcement of BNG remains incomplete.	Partial progr.	Fully deliver the recommendations of the NAO report.

“The Land Use Framework recognises the importance of soils, but there are still substantial gaps.”



Chapter 4: A long-term approach to clean and sustainable water

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
4.1.0	Long-term approach to water	Adopt a long-term approach to water that acknowledges humans as part of the water system, prioritising strategic network solutions that work with nature.	The Water White Paper makes a commitment to a long-term approach, supported by changes to forward planning. Full details are anticipated in a Transition Plan by the end of 2026, which will determine whether strategic network solutions have been prioritised.	On track	Implement the commitments of the Water White Paper in a way that prioritises the type of solutions needed to adopt a long-term approach.
4.1.1	Systemic water management	Deliver the commitments in Defra's Integrated Water Plan (IWP) to review the implementation of the WER 2017 and transform management of the whole water system, embedding a strategic approach to the multiple causes of poor water quality and water stress.	While the Integrated Water Plan no longer represents the current Government's approach to water, there are equivalent commitments in the Water White Paper on transforming management of the whole water system. Details of the approach to some causes of poor water quality are limited, so the Transition Plan will need to provide a sufficiently embedded approach.	On track	Implement the commitments of the Water White Paper by providing an embedded and transformative approach to water management that sufficiently addresses highway run-off, wastewater, agricultural run-off, and all forms of poor water quality and water stress.

4.1.2	Sustainable water roadmap	Work with the water industry to create a roadmap to sustainable water resource management, in line with the IWP. Tackle the sector's skills gaps to support sustainable water management across industry.	While the Integrated Water Plan no longer represents the current Government's approach to water, there are equivalent commitments in the Water White Paper on how the Transition Plan will work with industry on Water Resources Management Plans.	Subst. progr.	Implement the commitments of the Water White Paper with a clear roadmap to sustainable water resource management in the Transition Plan. Further action is required to identify and address skills gaps across the sector.
4.1.3	Systemic approach to water quality	Address highway runoff, sewage overflows, and runoff from agriculture and food production as distinct parts of a combined challenge, aligning with ELMS. Unblock barriers to resource recovery and re-use to prevent treated sludge being applied to agriculture.	While the Water White Paper identifies all three of these sources of water pollution, commitments will rely on implementation and action has not yet taken place at a systemic level. Proposals to address highway runoff and agriculture have limited details and do not currently add up to a systemic approach to addressing the challenge of water quality.	Partial progr.	Clarify and deepen commitments on run-off from agriculture and highways. Treat all three as part of a combined challenge and take a systems approach to solving it.
4.1.4	Water regulator transformation	Overhaul the Environment Agency and Ofwat to make water system transformation a core principle of their long-term strategies. Ensure that both organisations have sufficient access to expertise in science and engineering, as well as the resources to take a robust approach to enforcement and regulatory oversight.	The relevant functions of these bodies are moving to a new combined regulator, so it is unclear whether the new regulator will embody this principle. The Water White Paper identifies some opportunities to provide access to science and engineering.	Partial progr.	Make water system transformation a core principle of the new combined regulator's long-term strategy.

4.1.5	Water risk management	Deliver comprehensive risk assessment and management, identifying high risk areas and developing joint emergency response plans with delivery organisations and the water industry. In parallel, increase public understanding of the risks associated with water use, including for drinking water, PFAS and PFOS contamination, and water stress.	The Water White Paper promises a risk-based approach to regulation, though there has not yet been a clear comprehensive risk assessment process with a sufficient spatial component. As regional water planning increases, this approach to risk may develop in a more diffuse manner. The PFAS Plan includes some commitments on sharing information and risks around PFAS specifically.	Subst. progr.	Either centrally deliver risk assessment or support comprehensive risk assessment as part of the regional water planning process.
4.2.0	Water quality	End the crisis for water quality by tackling all sources of pollution, providing healthy rivers and bodies of water for communities and the natural environment.	The Water White Paper identifies clean rivers as a key objective, though specific actions on highway run-off and agriculture are currently not sufficient to deliver the necessary change for water quality.	Partial progr.	Clarify and deepen commitments on run-off from agriculture and highways. Ensure clear accountability is in place for delivering objectives on healthy rivers.
4.2.1	River status	Ensure that all UK rivers have a plan in place by the end of the current Parliament for how they will reach good ecological and chemical status.	The revised EIP and Water White Paper seek to address the status of rivers by addressing pollution sources. Therefore, there is currently no commitment around planning for specific rivers, though this may emerge from a strengthened regional planning process.	Unmet	Support the delivery of plans for all UK rivers to reach good status.

4.2.2	Access to rivers	Work to make healthy rivers accessible to everyone, implementing a target that everyone should live within 50 miles of an inland or coastal bathing water in good or excellent quality.	While there has been some expansion of designated bathing waters, there is no such target in the revised EIP or Water White Paper.	Unmet	Commit to a target on access to healthy rivers.
4.2.3	Freshwater conservation	Fully deliver existing targets and policies on freshwater conservation, ecological status, and water quality, committing to no further delays or reversals of commitments. Carry out periodic reviews of the IWP, identifying opportunities to scale up ambitions for water quality.	The timeline for targets has not yet arrived, yet none are on track for delivery. The Integrated Water Plan no longer represents government policy but the Water White Paper is effectively a review on existing strategic water policy. Some commitments have changed around the delivery of targets, but none reverse or delay the existing targets.	Partial progr.	Carry out periodic reviews of the Water White Paper and ensure no delays or reversals to commitments when the Transition Plan sets specific actions for delivery.
4.2.4	Water enforcement	Give Ofwat and other delivery organisations clear guidance and resources to consistently and robustly enforce the regulations we already have.	Ofwat's enforcement powers were strengthened by the Water (Special Measures) Act. Additionally, the Water White Paper commits to providing regulatory guidance and improving enforcement, including resolving the Environment Agency's enforcement backlog before the transition begins. The long-term future of enforcement will depend on the role of the new regulator, including whether it retains Ofwat's new enforcement powers and gains additional powers and resources.	Subst. progr.	Ensure the new regulator and other delivery organisations that retain enforcement responsibilities are properly resourced to enforce effectively.

4.2.5	Sustainable wastewater	Make a long-term commitment to the sustainability of wastewater and its effects on the environment, supporting the UK's strategic approach with a new Chief Scientist for Wastewater.	The Water White Paper does not explicitly commit to the sustainability of wastewater but commits to several measures to address its impacts. It also commits to a Chief Engineer in the new regulator, who would support some of the same objectives as a Chief Scientist of Wastewater.	Subst. progr.	Make a commitment on the sustainability of wastewater and ensure that the promises in the Water White Paper deliver that outcome through the Transition Plan.
4.3.0	Water and climate	Integrate the UK's approaches to water and climate change, providing water security and flood resilience, while maximising benefits for communities and our natural world.	Cross-references between the Water White Paper, Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan, and EIP are limited. The White Paper addresses water security and flooding but does not present a systemic or joined-up plan. Under these proposals, planning will become less integrated, with flood risk management remaining with the Environment Agency, split from the new regulator.	Unmet	Integrate these policies to ensure a coherent and systemic approach.
4.3.1	Water security	Support strategic planning for water stress and insecurity at a catchment level, including joined-up planning for responsible authorities that embeds climate resilience as well as mitigation.	The Water White Paper commits to working at the catchment level across some elements of regional system planning. This includes climate resilience though not all elements of water insecurity. The National Framework for Water Resources acknowledges the links between climate change and water security, though more needs to be done to ensure planning for water stress in practice.	Subst. progr.	Ensure strategic regional planning is sufficiently able to plan for water stress at the catchment scale by taking an integrated response during the implementation of the Transition Plan.

4.3.2	Water storage	Commit to a strategic programme of reservoir building which identifies opportunities to work with the water cycle. Unlock water storage through ELMS, SuDS and nature-based solutions.	The Government has committed to 10 new reservoirs, to be treated as strategic infrastructure (and reiterated this commitment in the EIP, Water White Paper, and Framework for Water Resources), with a significant degree of financial investment. The role of water storage in farming schemes is currently not certain and mandatory SuDS has not yet been fully delivered, though the Water White Paper confirms the Government's commitment to promoting SuDS.	Mixed	Implement mandatory SuDS and give water storage a strong role in farming payments (such as ELMS and the SFI). Support a much stronger Sustainable Farming Incentive to support agricultural water storage.
4.3.3	Surface water flooding	Work with environmental scientists to produce a coherent long-term plan on surface water flooding, implementing the recommendations of Defra's review and rolling out SuDS with support for planning and delivery organisations.	The Environment Agency has updated guidance on Surface Water Flooding and published the Surface Water Investment Model , though there is no long-term cross-governmental plan. The White Paper approaches flood risk in an integrated way, but does not sufficiently recognise the role of surface water flooding within that approach.	Partial progr.	Produce a long-term plan on surface water flooding across government and implement the review recommendations.
4.3.4	Water for climate action	Adopt opportunities for co-benefits between water management and climate action, such as the potential role of wastewater in enabling a transition to shared networks for heating buildings.	The White Paper acknowledges the need for links between climate plans and water management, identifying some opportunities for co-benefits, though it does not propose a fully integrated approach.	Subst. progr.	Continue to identify opportunities for co-benefits, including on the potential role of wastewater in enabling a heat transition.

4.3.5	Water security market	Explore market and behavioural mechanisms to urgently accelerate action on water security, while delivering existing commitments on leakage and per capita consumption.	The EIP and White Paper retain the Government's commitment to existing targets. The White Paper includes several market mechanisms to promote action in line with the plan, including for the benefit of water security. Behavioural mechanisms are limited (given the scope of the White Paper).	Partial progr.	Explore further opportunities to address water security and per capita consumption through public engagement and behavioural interventions.
4.4.0	Data for water	Modernise the Government's approach to evidence through purpose-built standards and indicators for water, supported by clear guidance for Ministers and delivery organisations.	The Water White Paper acknowledges the need to improve data, with final plans expecting in the Transition Plan. The White Paper commits to guidance for regulators but not Ministers.	Subst. progr.	Provide guidance for Ministers and implement the recommendations of FWR's report on delivering the White Paper .
4.4.1	Water standards and indicators	Assess water quality standards, indicators, and targets to ensure they are robust, relevant to the context of often-degraded natural environments, appropriate for the purposes for which they are used, and deliverable in practice.	The White Paper commits to "consolidate the existing regulatory framework into a single set of stronger and clearer national standard", with exact details to come in the Transition Plan.	Subst. progr.	Ensure that the new standard reflects all relevant evidence and context.
4.4.2	Use of water evidence	Work with the OEP and regulators to deliver a joined-up approach to the use of evidence from governance through to implementation, supporting standards on 'what works'. Ensure the OEP and regulators have appropriate support, funding and powers to carry out their functions.	The White Paper commits to partnerships for the use of evidence, but does not fully commit to a single joined-up approach to evidence. Questions remain about whether the new regulatory proposals will represent sufficient power for the new water regulator.	Mixed	Give the new water regulator, and other delivery organisations, the support, functions, and powers to operate successfully.

4.4.3	Guidance for using evidence	Adopt a cross-government approach to the use of evidence in decision making, supported by guidance for Ministers and civil servants on how evidence should be used, as well as primers on water quality data and its environmental implications for those working with water systems.	There has been no explicit change in the Government's approach to how it uses evidence in decisions about the water environment.	Unmet	Adopt a cross-government approach to the use of evidence in decision making, or publish details on the current approach.
4.4.4	Water system modelling	Support the delivery of a systems approach to water with models of the integrated water system, aligned with the UK's implementation of the Water Framework Directive.	The White Paper acknowledges the need for an "improved water planning model" and the role of economic modelling. The Framework for Water Resources included some modelling on scenarios and supply pressures, but there has been no committed approach to modelling whole water systems.	Unmet	Implement the recommendations of FWR's report on delivering the White Paper .
4.4.5	Citizen science framework	Work with the environment sector to develop a national standardised framework for citizen science projects to support standards for how projects are delivered and managed, providing quality assurance for data collection.	The Government has not worked to develop a standardised framework for citizen science, which is not mentioned in the Water White Paper.	Unmet	Work towards developing this framework.
4.5.0	Catchment scale management	Deliver sustainable water resource management at the catchment scale, developing necessary infrastructure with transparent, reasonable and actionable plans for implementation.	The Water White Paper acknowledges the importance of the catchment scale, alludes to a role for catchments in regional planning, and commits to doubling funding for catchment partnerships. Final details on regional planning are expected in the Transition Plan.	Subst. progr.	Ensure that the Transition Plan reflects the recommendations of the FWR's report on delivering the White Paper , which provide specific insights on regional planning.

4.5.1	Regional resources for water	Provide sufficient resources and skills to deliver sustainable water management at the catchment scale across regions. Facilitate local decision making about sustainable water management and provide investment to guarantee everyone has access to a local catchment partnership.	The Water White Paper commits to increasing resources for catchment partnerships. Final details on regional planning are expected in the Transition Plan.	Subst. progr.	Ensure that resources and skills offered through the Transition Plan are sufficient to deliver sustainable water management in practice.
4.5.2	Local water delivery	Work with the water industry and delivery organisations to implement sustainable water management at a catchment scale, supporting local delivery of nature-based solutions, engineering works, and pipeline solutions as appropriate for the context of the local catchment.	The Water White Paper commits to implementing water management at a regional scale and acknowledges the importance of nature-based solutions. The Transition Plan is expected to clarify the extent to which this will represent sustainable water management at a catchment scale.	Partial progr.	Confirm a sustainable water management approach at the catchment scale through the Transition Plan.
4.5.3	Evidence gaps for water	Work with academia to support key priorities for research and innovation, such as wastewater-based epidemiology and novel contaminants of concern.	Research continues to develop in these areas, including with government funding support, but evidence gaps remain.	Partial progr.	Continue to work with academia to fill research gaps.



**“The FWR's report
on delivering 'A new
vision for water'
has insights on
regional planning
that will help water
systems serve the
public good.”**

Chapter 5: Strong leadership for a sustainable ocean

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
5.1.0	Ocean leadership	Strengthen leadership and governance on the marine and coastal environment, informed by systems thinking for a sustainable ocean.	The UK has supported steps towards stronger leadership of the marine environment, including by ratifying the BBNJ Agreement, but more needs to be done to embed a systems-informed approach to governance.	Partial progr.	Continue to strengthen the UK's ocean leadership, taking a systems approach .
5.1.1	Ocean governance	Fill the governance gap on UK oceans with new ministerial leadership and review the extent of joint efforts across departments, including the work of COAST (the Coast and Ocean Applied Systems Thinking Committee).	There has been ministerial responsibility for oceans since the 2024 general election, with the current responsibility for 'Marine and fisheries' held by Stephen Morgan MP . More action is needed to coordinate joint efforts across departments.	Subst. progr.	Take a joint approach to oceans across departments, using the Golden Thread model to fill the governance gap.
5.1.2	Marine system guidance	Produce transparent guidance for Ministers and public bodies, including GB Energy and the Crown Estate, on decisions affecting the marine and coastal environment informed by marine spatial mapping and systems thinking.	The Government published guidance for UK stakeholders to support the delivery of the BBNJ Agreement specifically.	Mixed	Expand guidance on oceans to other areas of marine systems, beyond the scope of the BBNJ Agreement.

5.1.3	Marine conservation leadership	Take a leadership position on marine conservation and restoration in global forums and negotiations, including the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance. Share technology, tools and implementation methods, and champion a fair approach to oceans, recognising the needs of Small Island Developing States.	The UK has continued to engage internationally on the subject of oceans, including in efforts around the BBNJ Agreement, though more action is needed to support a just and fair approach to sustainable oceans. In 2026, the Government announced £13.9million through the Blue Planet Fund for international programmes supporting coastal resilience, blue economy and plastic pollution.	Partial progr.	Continue ocean leadership internationally to support a just transition towards a sustainable ocean.
5.2.0	Marine conservation	Urgently deliver marine conservation and restoration to increase coastal resilience and meet the UK's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature.	The UK has not significantly expanded plans for the delivery of marine conservation and restoration since 2024.	Unmet	Accelerate the delivery of marine conservation and restoration in practice by putting clear and ambitious plans in place.
5.2.1	Marine 30x30	Produce the promised strategy for achieving the UK's 30x30 commitment, with an implementation plan in place by the end of 2025 that clarifies responsibilities for marine conservation and restoration initiatives.	The UK's Delivery Plan for 30x30 deals with land specifically. It states that strategic deliver on 30x30 at sea will primarily be achieved through existing commitments around Marine Protected Areas.	Unmet	Produce a more specific plan on implementing 30x30 at sea.

5.2.2	Marine pollution	Tackle the biggest sources of marine pollution, including by delivering commitments on deposit return schemes, banning plastic wet wipes, and through the UK Chemicals Strategy. Ban bottom trawling in Marine Protected Areas.	Regulations for DRS are coming into place across the UK, and the UK has scheduled a ban on plastic wet wipes. However, the Chemicals Strategy was withdrawn, limiting the potential for a strategic approach to the biggest sources of pollution. Though there is still no ban on bottom trawling, some MPAs have placed restrictions on the practice.	Mixed	Ban bottom trawling across Marine Protected Areas and adopt a strategic approach to the biggest sources of marine pollution, through a new Chemicals Strategy or otherwise.
5.2.3	Local marine strategies	Support relevant local authorities to co-produce strategies for marine conservation and adaptation with coastal communities.	The Coastal Adaptation Pilots programme has been created to support local authority and community capacity on coastal adaptation, yet there are still no significant coordinated efforts to support local marine conservation strategies.	Partial progr.	Take a strategic approach to supporting local strategies for marine conservation and adaptation in coastal communities.
5.3.0	Blue economy investment	Scale up public and private investment in the sustainable Blue Economy to create economic growth, blue jobs, and food security.	The Government has continued to invest in the Blue Economy and marine environment, including £13.9 million new investment in coastal communities, yet levels of investment are still far away from the scale needed to take full advantage of opportunities for sustainable growth.	Partial progr.	Continue to increase investment in the Blue Economy to support growth, jobs, and food security.
5.3.1	Blue economy plans	Produce ambitious, just, and sustainable Blue Economy plans that take a regenerative approach to the ocean's natural assets, similarly to those developed in Scotland and Portugal.	The UK does not have a single ambitious plan for creating a Blue Economy.	Unmet	Learn from Scotland and other countries that have produced Blue Economy plans, so that the UK can take a sustainable and regenerative approach to its marine assets.

5.3.2	Blue carbon evidence base	Work with environmental scientists to close the gaps in the blue carbon evidence base identified by the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership. Facilitate private investment in blue carbon solutions, including through clarifying and expanding the definition of blue carbon to include important habitats such as kelp forests, oyster beds and biogenic sediments.	Research has continued to develop in these areas, including new research on Saltmarsh, Kelp, and Seabed Carbon under the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership, though evidence gaps still remain.	Subst. progr.	Continue to work with scientists to fill research gaps and facilitate an increase in private investment to drive action.
5.3.3	Blue carbon investment	Explore pilot schemes for public and private investment mechanisms to limit delays and barriers to new blue carbon projects.	Some schemes have begun to explore investment mechanisms in blue carbon, including through the Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership. Barriers still remain, so further mechanisms may be needed to promote investment.	Subst. progr.	Scale up opportunities to explore investment mechanisms for blue carbon projects.
5.4.0	Marine science	Work with environmental scientists to unlock the potential of marine science and ocean mapping, as called for by the UN Decade of Ocean Science.	Ocean mapping has continued to develop, including through JNCC's work on the UK Atlas of Seabed Habitats. While there is still potential for further growth in marine science, progress has been sufficiently supported since 2024.	Met	Continue to support marine science and identify further opportunities to unlock the potential of science and ocean mapping.

5.4.1	Seabed mapping and monitoring	Support innovative seabed mapping and ocean monitoring technologies to improve UK marine data, including through the development of autonomous and remote sensing technology.	The Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) established new data-collection methods including remote sensing and autonomous underwater vehicles. More could be done to improve marine data and support opportunities for remote sensing, mapping, and monitoring.	Subst. progr.	Continue to support innovative mapping and monitoring technologies, as well as remote sensing technology.
5.4.2	Accessible marine data	Promote the work of the Marine Environmental Data & Information Network (MEDIN) to make UK marine data accessible and interoperable. Embrace international data sharing and advocate for a standardised global marine reporting framework and data platform.	Accessibility of MEDIN data has increased and it is now accessible through the UN Ocean Decade's digital infrastructure. mNCEA outputs will also be made available through MEDIN. Despite support for international data sharing in principle, challenges remain for the accessibility and interoperability of data.	Subst. progr.	Support international data sharing and transparency through a standardised reporting framework and support for information networks like MEDIN.
5.4.3	Marine net gain	Ensure that the introduction of the marine net gain metric reflects the full value of marine habitats, including carbon sequestration, improved biodiversity, natural value, and environmental resilience (such as coastal flood defence).	There have not been significant further developments on marine net gain since the Government's 2023 consultation response.	Unmet	Take action to get marine net gain back on track, in a way that fully reflects the value of marine habitats.

5.5.0	Oceans as a solution	Raise the profile of oceans, seas, and coasts in the UK's approach to tackling environmental challenges, from global negotiations to local delivery.	While the EIP recognises that "the health of the world's ocean is directly linked to the prosperity of the UK's coastal ecosystems, communities and economies", oceans, seas, and coasts are not yet being fully utilised in the UK's approach to environmental challenges.	Partial progr.	Take a more strategic approach to raising the profile of oceans, seas, and coasts in responses to challenges like climate change, food security, and biodiversity loss.
5.5.1	Marine public engagement	Urgently produce a public engagement strategy on climate change that recognises the importance of coastal communities and the interactions between oceans and climate change.	There has been no specific public engagement strategy on climate change.	Unmet	Deliver a strategic approach to engaging the public on climate change, recognising the link between oceans and climate in the process.
5.5.2	Marine citizenship	Develop marine and coastal citizenship by incorporating ocean literacy into the national curriculum, promoting understanding of the ocean as a complex, interconnected system with the ability to offer multiple ecosystem benefits.	Ocean literacy has not been incorporated into the national curriculum. The final report of the Curriculum and Assessment Review does not acknowledge oceans in the context of its wider commentary on climate citizenship.	Unmet	Support scientific knowledge about oceans and coasts, particularly through the national curriculum.



**“The UK should
continue to strengthen
leadership for our
oceans and coasts.”**

Chapter 6: Transformative action on climate change

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
6.1.0	Transformative climate action	Commit to a 'transformative change' approach to reshaping unsustainable systems, addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution together.	The UK has not committed to a transformative change approach.	Unmet	Take the opportunity of COP31 or the next Carbon Budget Delivery Plan to upgrade the UK's approach.
6.1.1	Climate prioritisation	Make climate a strategic priority across government, ensuring that policy makers understand the connections between climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental pollution, and the social and economic drivers of those crises.	Outside the context of energy, the UK has not made climate a strategic priority across government, though the Foreign Secretary has acknowledged that it represents a "national security emergency".	Unmet	Make climate a strategic priority across government.
6.1.2	Multiple benefits	Embed an approach to decision making that seeks to secure multiple benefits from solutions to climate change, even where it costs more in the short-term to avoid increased costs in the long-term.	The framing of the Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan acknowledges the potential for co-benefits, yet an approach that secures these benefits is not yet consistently embedded.	Partial progr.	Set up decision making to secure co-benefits from the start.

6.1.3	Climate leadership	Return the UK to a position of climate leadership ahead of COP30, working with international partners to adapt to climate change and drive global emissions reductions.	The UK did not take a position of leadership at or ahead of COP30.	Unmet	Return the UK to a position of climate leadership at COP31.
6.2.0	Integrated adaption	Take an integrated approach to climate adaptation alongside climate mitigation, bringing resilience funding and support in line with the scale of the UK's adaptation challenge.	Adaptation is not yet integrated into the UK's approach to climate change. The CCC's report on a well-adapted UK found "little progress on preparing ourselves for the changing climate". The Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan does not sufficiently identify how mitigation can support adaptation.	Unmet	Integrate adaptation into the next Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan and scale up resilience funding and support.
6.2.1	Climate resilience planning	Embed climate resilience across decision making: make adaptation, resilience, and co-benefits explicit considerations during the design, planning, and consenting of new housing and infrastructure. Support resilience for the rest of the world through the Global Goal on Adaptation.	The UK has reiterated its support for global adaptation and the revised NPPF introduces a dedicated decision-making policy on climate adaptation (CC3). However, climate resilience is not yet systemically embedded in decisions across consenting processes.	Partial progr.	Take urgent action to represent the Government's ambitions for adaptation through the decisions that influence our resilience.
6.2.2	Nature-based approaches	Coordinate nature-based approaches to climate mitigation to maximise the ecosystem services provided. Deliver a consistent approach to Environmental Land Management Schemes, soil health, and the Land Use Framework, informed by scientific insights.	The Land Use Framework acknowledges the role of nature-based solutions, in line with the Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan. Uncertainty around ELMS presents challenges for a consistent long-term approach.	Mixed	Restore certainty around ELMS and the role it can play in long-term delivery of nature-based solutions.

6.2.3	Climate and oceans	Integrate oceans and seas into the UK's approach to climate change, recognising the vital role of oceans as carbon sinks and improving resilience for UK coasts, saltmarshes and seas through Ocean Literacy and Integrated Coastal Zone Management.	The UK is taking some steps towards Integrated Coastal Zone Management, but overall oceans and seas are not fully integrated into the UK's approach, or embedded through the Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan.	Unmet	Integrate oceans and seas into the next Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan and increase support for Ocean Literacy.
6.3.0	Climate mitigation	Deliver ambitious action to mitigate UK emissions, closing the gap between current commitments and a plan aligned with 1.5°C, with explicit implementation plans.	The UK has accepted the CCC's recommended 7th Carbon Budget, narrowing but not closing the gap to a plan aligned with 1.5°C. The Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan provides an explicit plan for the first stage towards those commitments.	Partial progr.	Fully close the gap in the next Carbon Budget, and produce explicit delivery plans for the full transition.
6.3.1	Emissions gap	Close the emissions gap ahead of COP30 to bring the UK in line with a pathway that provides the best chance to limit temperature rises to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, making explicit revisions to the Net Zero Strategy and Carbon Budget Delivery Plan. Commit to no further delays or reversals of climate commitments.	The emissions gap was narrowed but not closed ahead of COP30.	Subst. progr.	Fully close the gap ahead of COP31 and make a public commitment to no further delays or reversals.

6.3.2	Energy transition	Complete the transition to a green energy system by increasing energy storage and grid connectivity, and by removing barriers to community energy generation. Commit to an urgent and complete 'phase out' of fossil fuels in the UK.	Significant progress has been made. The latest CCC progress report notes that "Important steps have been taken to remove planning barriers and reform the grid connections process." The Local Power Plan commits up to £1billion of funding and support for local and community-owned clean energy across the UK. At Labour Party Conference 2026, the Prime Minister announced the creation of GB Grid, a public entity that will support invest and delivery for grid connectivity. Despite these steps, action depends on implementation and the UK has not committed to a full 'phase out' of fossil fuels.	On track	Continue the current trajectory, ruling out new fossil fuels and committing to phase their use out entirely.
6.3.3	Net Zero delivery	Set out delivery plans to reach net zero emissions across the most unsustainable systems, including land management, agriculture and food, the built environment, waste, and transport.	The Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan sets out delivery plans across these key sectors.	Met	As plans become more ambitious and fill in more details on the pathway to net zero, continue to provide detailed delivery plans.
6.3.4	Local climate action	Clarify and capitalise on the role of local authorities in the net zero transition. Recognise that climate action plans represent 'Locally Determined Contributions' as part of the UK's overall net zero objectives, as called for by the CCC.	The Government has recognised the importance of partnership with local authorities, including through the Local Power Plan but has not sufficiently supported their role beyond the context of energy.	Partial progr.	Provide more substantive plans for local climate action beyond the context of energy and recognise local climate plans as Locally Determined Contributions.

6.3.5	Science-led climate action	Take a science-led approach to climate action wherever possible, building stronger links between interdisciplinary climate science and Government departments to fill evidence gaps and identify challenges for delivery.	Science has played a visible role in the Government's energy plans, and evidence was used to support the Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan.	Subst. progr.	Continue to work with academia to fill evidence gaps and use science to improve the ambition of climate plans.
6.4.0	Just transition	Work with communities and NGOs on a 'just transition' away from fossil fuels which fairly distributes costs and benefits so that no communities are left behind.	There are several positive signs to indicate that the Government is prioritising a just transition, particularly for energy, including the North Sea Future Plan and Energy Skills Passport.	Mixed	Continue to ensure a just transition is at the heart of the Government's approach.
6.4.1	Resources for just transition	Commit to a just transition towards a sustainable society. Where necessary, provide support and funding to facilitate the transition for those who are unable to afford necessary actions. Learn from case studies such as the Alberta Just Transition Taskforce and Scotland's Just Transition Commission.	Support has been provided in specific contexts, including the North Sea Future Plan, Clean Energy Jobs Plan, and Energy Skills Passport.	Mixed	Provide broader support for a just transition, especially beyond the context of energy.
6.4.2	Loss and damage	Support funding for loss and damage to ensure that the UK's pledge of £60million for the Loss and Damage Fund is new and additional money, supported by further investment where necessary to deliver a global just transition.	There has not been significant progress of Loss and Damage funding since 2024.	Unmet	Support efforts to increase Loss and Damage funding internationally.

6.4.3	Local just transitions	Where appropriate, co-create climate solutions with delivery organisations and communities, supporting the implementation process and allowing people to pursue their own vision for a sustainable future. Support widespread access to Carbon Literacy and climate assemblies.	Some of the UK's climate plans have been developed with local communities, though more could be done to develop local visions for climate action. Carbon Literacy and climate assemblies do not play a significant role in the UK's approach.	Partial progr.	Pursue wider Carbon Literacy and climate assemblies to help communities pursue a local vision for a sustainable future.
6.5.0	Private climate finance	Work with businesses to unlock private finance and drive corporate sustainability that supports a nature-positive future.	Significant efforts have been made to increase public and private finance, particularly through the National Wealth Fund. There are still significant gaps for private finance, especially beyond climate mitigation.	Subst. progr.	Continue to drive private finance and corporate sustainability.
6.5.1	Taxonomies	Work with international partners, businesses and NGOs to align taxonomies and definitions for green finance, responsible investments, and net zero commitments, creating a certain and stable market for investment.	The UK has announced that it is no longer pursuing a Green Taxonomy. Efforts to align definitions and commitments have stalled.	Unmet	Reverse the decision to abandon the Green Taxonomy, or work with international partners towards clear definitions and commitments.
6.5.2	Barriers to climate investment	Remove barriers to investment and make the upfront public investments needed to attract private capital and grow the market for sustainable innovation.	The National Wealth Fund has been used as a vehicle to provide public investment that attracts private capital. Some efforts are being made to grow carbon markets domestically and internationally.	Subst. progr.	Continue to grow markets and facilitate private finance.

6.5.3	Climate accounting and reporting	Tighten rules around climate accounting, reporting, and certification. Drive compliance with TCFD and TNFD recommendations through sustainability regulations, reporting frameworks, and guidance on best practice for corporate compliance, aligned from the board room down to the shop floor.	The CCC's latest progress report describes developments on transparency and reporting as "positive, if delayed", particularly UK Sustainability Reporting Standards. Compliance with TCFD and TNFD has not been increased through regulation and reporting rules.	Subst. progr.	Accelerate the pace of action to improve transparency and reporting.
6.5.4	Climate skills	Work with the environment sector to lead a skills audit for climate-relevant careers, driving professionalism by endorsing competency frameworks, skills strategies, and sector-by-sector transition pathways. Facilitate the development of the deep expertise needed in carbon reporting and climate risk management.	The Clean Energy Jobs Plan is a significant step towards a strategic approach to skills in the context of energy. Other areas have seen less strategic focus on transition skills.	Mixed	Expand the approach to strategic planning for skills beyond the context of energy.



“Ambitious climate action must become a strategic priority across government.”

Chapter 7: Changing the narrative on nature

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
7.1.0	Value of nature	Change the narrative on nature. From the highest levels of government, make sure we are thinking about and engaging with nature in a way that reflects its value.	There has not been a significant change to the Government's narrative on nature. The new Prime Minister has an opportunity to set a new message about the value of nature.	Unmet	Seize the opportunity of the new administration to change the narrative on nature.
7.1.1	Nature communication	Set standards for government communication with the public: no claims without facts and stop asserting that nature is a blocker, a nuisance, or a victim.	While the Cabinet Office's Government Communications team publishes standards for government communications, there are not specific standards around rhetoric on nature, and rules are not consistently followed. The new Prime Minister's approach to communicating about nature is not yet fully tested.	Partial progr.	Set a clear and consistent approach to communicating on the environment from the highest levels, without calling nature a blocker, a nuisance, or a victim.
7.1.2	Nature literacy	Make nature literacy training available for all MPs and a requirement for new Ministers.	Nature literacy is not a requirement for Ministers.	Unmet	Take a more active role in promoting a better understanding of nature at a ministerial level.

7.1.3	Nature finance	Fill the finance gap for UK nature by doubling the target to raising at least £1 billion a year in private finance by 2027, and assign responsibility for delivering the target to HM Treasury.	While action has continued to narrow the UK nature finance gap, particularly through actions to implement the Kunming-Montreal Framework, there is still a substantial delivery gap for private finance in nature. Though the target is set to increase to £1 billion a year in 2030, there has been no change to existing targets and the Treasury has not taken on additional responsibility for delivering it.	Partial progr.	Continue to work to fill the private finance gap, increasing ambitions and taking a more strategic approach to investment, led from the Treasury.
7.1.4	Incentives for nature	Put the value of nature at the heart of economic decision making by providing financial and tax incentives for adopting nature based solutions	Some progress has been made towards incentivising nature-based solutions, including through water company reform and a large grant to the Ecosystems Knowledge Network and Green Finance Institute to support commercial readiness of nature-based solutions, yet as the EIP acknowledges, "we need to do more to incentivise businesses to invest".	Partial progr.	Continue actions in line with the EIP to increase the adoption of nature-based solutions.
7.1.5	Nature citizen science	Develop a national standardised framework for citizen science projects to monitor biodiversity, and endorse and encourage the use of citizen science by government departments, armslength bodies and others.	The Government has not worked to develop a standardised framework for citizen science, but acknowledges the importance of bringing citizen science into a common framework in its 30x30 delivery plan.	Unmet	Work towards developing this framework.

7.2.0	Data-driven planning	Unleash a modern and data driven planning system that delivers high-quality development together with meaningful nature recovery.	The latest changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, proposals to introduce EORs, and other planning policy reforms have made significant steps towards improving access to data in the planning system. They have also continued to put development at odds with meaningful nature recovery, with significant concerns raised about the state of flagship policies like BNG, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and Environmental Delivery Plans.	Mixed	Capitalise on progress around planning data by consolidating data and making it easily accessible. Work to remove unnecessary conflicts between development and nature in the planning system.
7.2.1	Non-regression	Ensure the Planning and Infrastructure Bill does not erode common-sense and vital protections for nature in practice, following the advice set out by the OEP.	Parts of the Planning and Infrastructure Act continue to increase risks for the delivery of nature protections in practice, especially on the implementation of Environmental Delivery Plans which have caused experts to raise concerns that vital common sense protections for nature are being eroded. Despite this, some significant steps were taken to compromise on the most damaging parts of the Bill. More action is needed to ensure that the implementation of the Act leads to high standards for nature, rather than regression.	Mixed	Deliver the Planning and Infrastructure Act without compromising on vital protections for nature.

7.2.2	Biodiversity Net Gain	Implement the findings of the IES & ALGE's BNG in Practice Report, including establishing a BNG regulator to regulate the biodiversity market and enforce penalties on landowners who fail to deliver promised gains.	There has not been substantial progress towards addressing the barrier's to BNG's implementation, and the introduction of new exemptions has produced uncertainty around the potential for outcomes.	Unmet	Take a coherent approach to delivering BNG in practice, implementing the findings of the BNG in practice report .
7.2.3	Habitat data	Utilise the Transformation Fund to invest in innovative habitat monitoring techniques, such as remote sensing, and ensure that habitat data at all stages of the planning process is made easily accessible in a centralised, digital format.	Habitat monitoring techniques are being adopted in some instances, though more could be done to improve habitat data and support opportunities for remote sensing, mapping, and monitoring.	Partial progr.	Support a better planning process through centralised and digital habitat data, providing support where needed to promote innovative approaches to monitoring.
7.2.4	Environmental Net Gain	Over the long-term, transition Biodiversity Net Gain into a broader Environmental Net Gain standard that captures the full value of nature.	There has not been significant progress towards a broader standard of environmental net gain.	Unmet	Build on the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain and early work on Marine Net Gain to develop a broader standard of Environmental Net Gain, which should be embedded in the UK's environmental policy approach.
7.3.0	Strategic nature recovery	Make the Nature Recovery Network a reality, creating a strategic, connected and accessible network of nature-rich spaces.	The Nature Recovery network is not yet a reality, and the framing has been dropped from the EIP and 30x30 delivery plan.	Unmet	Return to a commitment on a strategic, connected, and accessible network of nature-rich spaces, delivering it in practice through joined-up approaches to policy.

7.3.1	Connected spatial policies	Connect policies to connect spaces: the Land Use Framework, LNRSs and Environmental Delivery Plans must work together to join up nature across the country, supporting ecosystems and wildlife, and increasing resilience to climate impacts.	While several key policies are now in place, it is yet to be seen whether the Land Use Framework and LNRS will work effectively together to join up decisions about nature and other benefits of land use. Concerns remain around the implementation of Environmental Delivery Plans, which must be strategic, rather than becoming an excuse to sidestep the mitigation hierarchy.	Subst. progr.	Ensure that the Land Use Framework and Environmental Delivery Plans are delivered strategically to connect policies across places, rather than breaking down decisions or allowing an incoherent approach to developments that avoids the mitigation hierarchy.
7.3.2	Local nature recovery	Implement the recommendations of the OEP's LNRS Report, fund a central coordination point to join up LNRS, and commit to funding LNRS for the next 10 years, increasing confidence in their delivery.	Some progress has been made to improve the delivery of LNRS, including the commitment to publish a national LNRS map, yet strategic links between LNRS remain weak and there is still uncertainty about long-term funding.	Subst. progr.	Commit to the future of LNRS with clear funding and expectations, and facilitate their delivery through central coordination, guidance, and support.
7.3.3	Access to nature	Take action to ensure everyone can access and enjoy nature-rich spaces, by introducing an Access to Nature Bill.	The Environmental Improvement plan commits to "publicly consult on the Access to Nature Green Paper", recognising the importance of allowing access to nature-rich spaces.	Partial progr.	Deliver the EIP's commitment to an Access to Nature Green Paper and ensure it paves the way for legislation that gives everyone access to nature-rich spaces.

7.3.4	Ecosystem approach	Take an ecosystem approach to nature recovery, informed by how actions can support whole ecosystems, rather than disconnected or contextually inappropriate interventions.	While systems thinking has informed some aspects of environmental policy, the UK is not yet taking an ecosystem level approach to nature recovery. Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs) offer a route to a more strategic approach, reflecting a shift from site-by-site conservation to large-scale recovery, but early commentary indicates that they may lead to a less strategic approach in practice.	Mixed	Deliver a strategic, systemic approach to nature recovery in practice, intervening to support ecosystems as a whole, rather than tweaking mitigations around the edges of policy. Ensure EDPs represent an actual ecosystem approach in practice.
7.3.5	Nature recovery innovation	Pilot ‘nature recovery innovation zones’, as pioneered by the Dutch government, that would encourage novel approaches to nature recovery, such as cutting edge monitoring methods and stacking environmental payments.	The UK has not undertaken any pilots of nature recovery innovation zones. Some innovative action is coming from partnership work, such as the Rebuilding Nature initiative, supported by National Highways.	Unmet	Seize on initiatives like Rebuilding Nature to pilot more innovative approaches to nature recovery.
7.4.0	Nature restoration	Urgently deliver the UK’s existing commitments to protect and restore nature by the end of this decade.	Some progress has been made towards delivering the UK's nature commitments, but significant gaps still remain between the ambition of the Kunming-Montreal Framework and the reality of the UK's delivery.	Partial progr.	Continue to deliver existing plans and use a Golden Thread model to work towards the effective implementation of nature targets.

7.4.1	30x30 on land	Enshrine the commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 into UK law, and urgently produce the promised delivery strategy, which must include how sites will be maintained in the long-term.	The Government has published a 30x30 delivery plan for land, though only some tiers of sites (Gold, and in some cases Silver) will require clear plans for long-term management. The delivery plan is more of a framework of actions than an actual strategic plan for delivery.	Partial progr.	Build on the 30x30 strategy to create a genuine delivery plan , including how 30x30 will be maintained in perpetuity.
7.4.2	Threats to nature	Protect biodiversity from the most destructive threats to nature, including by reducing pesticide use and minimising the impact of invasive species (such as American mink) in line with the Kunming-Montreal Framework.	The EIP renews the Government's existing commitments on biosecurity and commits to "update the England Wildlife Health Strategy, ... implement the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway, and publish a new Trees Action Plan". The Pesticides National Action Plan 2025 takes significant steps towards a strategic approach to pesticides, while specific Countryside Stewardship actions have been outlined for invasive species such as American mink.	Mixed	Take the opportunity of delivering the Pesticides National Action Plan to close the gap on pesticides and take strategic action to significantly improve the consistency and adoption of nature-friendly farming.
7.4.3	Nature-friendly farming	Get nature-friendly farming right for farmers and the environment and for farmers, by delivering on the recommendations of the NAO's Farming & Countryside Programme Report, and by encouraging the adoption of the most effective nature recovery schemes, such as Countryside Stewardship.	There are still significant barriers to the adoption of nature-friendly farming schemes, primarily due to uncertainty around long-term funding.	Unmet	Revitalise nature-friendly farming with a long-term commitment to Environmental Land Management Schemes and the Sustainable Farming Incentive. Funding rounds should be large enough to actually allow widespread uptake of schemes by farmers.

“The new Prime Minister has a chance to speak clearly about the value of nature.”



Chapter 8: Embedding the circular economy in decisions

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
8.1.0	Culture of re-use	Promote a culture of re-use and repair across the UK, embedding the circular economy in decision making and engaging the public on the practical steps everyone can take.	The unpublished Circular Economy Growth Plan should have taken steps towards embedding the Circular Economy in decisions, but progress has stalled in its absence.	Unmet	Publish the Circular Economy Growth Plan and ensure it embeds cultural change.
8.1.1	Resource hierarchy	Embed the full hierarchy of resource use across government, with explicit support from senior leadership, making reducing resource use the default.	The resource use hierarchy could have been a feature of the Circular Economy Growth Plan, which has not yet been published.	Unmet	Publish the Circular Economy Growth Plan and ensure it reflects the full resource use hierarchy.
8.1.2	Circularity by design	Regulate for an assumption of 'circularity by design' to give people the realistic option to repair products instead of buying new ones. Give consumers an assumed right to repair where doing so is appropriate and practical, like fixing furniture or handling leaky taps and radiators. Work with manufacturers to build-in options for repair.	Some product specific progress has been made, such as requirements on repairability information for household tumble dryers, but there is still no general right or requirement to allow repair. The UK has now fallen behind the EU, which has progressed action through the Right to Repair Directive and Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation.	Mixed	Implement measures that increase the circularity of products. Introduce an assumed right to repair.

8.1.3	Guidance for circularity	Work with industry to produce governmentbacked circularity standards and guidance and potential incentives for innovation. Explore requiring durability and repairability ratings on relevant products.	The Government worked with industry through its Circular Economy Taskforce, though specific outcomes have not yet emerged. Tumble dryer regulations are an example of standards that could inform the development of future actions.	Mixed	Publish the Circular Economy Growth Plan and support its delivery through guidance and standards.
8.1.4	Public engagement on re-use	Run a public engagement campaign in partnership with local authorities and industry so that people know how to repair common products and where they can find local facilities for re-use.	No significant public engagement campaign on re-use has been organised.	Unmet	Work with local authorities to engage with the public.
8.1.5	Skills for re-use	Support the development of ‘hands on’ skills for a generation equipped to repair, embedding re-use and repair in the curriculum and adding basic repair skills to GCSE Design Technology.	No further action has been taken to embed re-use and repair in the curriculum.	Unmet	Take action to embed re-use and repair in the curriculum.
8.1.6	Recycling in schools	Expand how recycling is taught in schools to include options around re-use and repair from a young age, allowing people to make informed choices.	No further action has been taken to embed recycling in early education.	Unmet	Take action to embed recycling in education.
8.2.0	Implementing waste policy	Urgently deliver existing commitments on waste and resources to provide the certainty needed for private investment.	Many of the existing commitments on waste and resources are being delivered, yet certainty for private investment has been significantly impeded by delays to the Circular Economy Growth Plan.	Partial progr.	Publish the Circular Economy Growth Plan and ensure it provides certainty on the trajectory of existing waste and resources commitments.

8.2.1 EPR	Roll out Extended Producer Responsibility and ensure adequate enforcement through effective regulation and by resolving the technical barriers to compliance.	The rollout of EPR has continued and revised packaging EPR begin in 2025. Several technical barriers have been addressed, including around closed loop recycling and the Recycling Assessment Methodology 2027. Concerns have been raised, particularly by the glass industry, about potential barriers to implementation, yet these have not prevented rollout thus far.	Met	Continue to keep the rollout of EPR on track.
8.2.2 DPS	Accelerate the delivery of Deposit Return Schemes across the UK, following the appointment for the Deposit Management Organisation in May 2025.	Regulations for DRS are coming into place across the UK. Wales has not yet appointed an equivalent DMO to the UK DMO, but regulations are in place. The UK has excluded glass from DRS, but Wales will include glass in its DRS. The Local Government Association has raised concerns that the introduction of DRS could have significant implications for local authority budgets, which may impact on delivering other local outcomes.	On track	Continue to work to manage inconsistencies in DRS delivery across the UK, with a view to regulatory harmony where possible. Ensure that any impact on local authority budgets is addressed.
8.2.3 Chemicals strategy	Publish the long-awaited Chemicals Strategy and link it to other key policy instruments, including the revised Environmental Improvement Plan for England and the strategic approach to chemicals across the devolved administrations.	The Government has abandoned its commitment to publish a Chemicals Strategy. Despite claims by the Government that the EIP or other documents replace the need for a standalone strategy, the OEP has continued to call for a Chemicals Strategy.	Unmet	Reverse the shortsighted decision to scrap the Chemicals Strategy.

8.2.4	UK REACH	Deliver the promise of UK REACH with no further delays to registration with the UK Health & Safety Executive and a clearer roadmap to increase certainty around the future regulation of chemicals.	UK REACH has continued to face delays over the last two years.	Unmet	Get UK REACH back on track and accelerate the registration timeline.
8.2.5	Digital waste tracking	Maintain delivery of the digital waste tracking service in line with the current timeline, becoming mandatory for receiving site operators by October 2026, with an expanded service in April 2027.	This expected timeline for digital waste tracking has remained on track, following previous changes.	Met	Maintain delivery against the timeline for digital waste tracking.
8.2.6	Waste crime	Improve enforcement on waste crime, cracking down on illegal waste management and the estimated 38.2 million tonnes of illegally-handled waste identified in the National waste crime survey 2025.	The Waste Crime Action Plan was published in March 2026, with a range of actions to improve enforcement.	Met	Ensure that the Waste Crime Action Plan is delivered and leads to better enforcement in practice.
8.2.7	Waste exemptions	Improve the scrutiny and enforcement of waste exemptions on registered sites to increase accountability and minimise abuse of the waste exemptions system. Consider expanding exemption charges to better fund enforcement against waste crime.	The Waste Crime Action Plan removed or tightened conditions on 10 exemptions. Further scrutiny has been enabled with new powers for the Environment Agency.	Subst. progr.	Ensure that changes to exemptions lead to better outcomes on sites, and consider long-term improvements to how waste crime enforcement is funded.

8.2.8	Evidence gaps on waste	Commission research to fill evidence gaps on the economic, health and social costs of landfill and waste incineration and the implications of products and resources for water and energy cycles.	Research continues to develop in these areas, including with government funding support, but evidence gaps remain.	Partial progr.	Continue to work with academia to fill research gaps.
8.2.9	Local circular economy	Empower local authorities and other regulators to deliver the circular economy at a local level, including by implementing the recommendations on funding and powers suggested by Friends of the Earth.	Some guidance has been issued for mayoral strategic authorities , albeit without the powers and funding needed to consistently act. While the outcomes of Local Government Reorganisation are yet to be finalised, most local authorities have not seen an increase to their funding and powers.	Unmet	Empower local authorities to deliver the circular economy in practice.
8.3.0	Resource efficiency objectives	Set clear government objectives for resource efficiency, supporting a transition towards a circular economy by 2050.	The unpublished Circular Economy Growth Plan should have set a clearer objective for resource efficiency.	Unmet	Publish the Circular Economy Growth Plan and ensure it sets clear objectives for resource efficiency.
8.3.1	Resource efficiency target	Use the Environment Act 2021 to set a longterm, legally-binding target for resource efficiency.	No long-term legally-binding target has been set for resource efficiency.	Unmet	Set a target for resource efficiency.
8.3.2	CE Taskforce	Utilise the work of the Circular Economy Taskforce to achieve a clear vision for a UK circular economy, treating waste management and the circular economy as part of the same issue across government, as well as investable conditions for private sector action.	The unpublished Circular Economy Growth Plan should have set a vision for a UK circular economy.	Unmet	Publish the Circular Economy Growth Plan, ensure it includes a vision for a UK circular economy, and deliver that vision.

8.3.3	Delivering circular economy	Publish clear delivery plans and sectoral pathways to achieve a transition towards a circular economy. Consider the Fabian Society's recommendations for delivering a Circular Economy in England.	Without the Circular Economy Growth Plan, there are not yet any delivery plans towards achieving its vision.	Unmet	Once the Circular Economy Growth Plan has been published, publish clear delivery plans and sectoral pathways to support it.
8.3.4	Waste infrastructure	Expand waste and recycling infrastructure and integrate infrastructure planning into wider planning and community infrastructure processes.	There has not been a strategic level of increase in infrastructure for waste and recycling, though infrastructure development in general has not increased substantially.	Unmet	Expand waste and recycling infrastructure as the planning system delivers the Government's housebuilding objectives.
8.3.5	Waste regulations	Embed circular economy into the waste regulations to avoid unintended consequences, adopting clear definitions and expectations around resource use, resource efficiency, and the circular economy.	There has been no significant change to the role of the circular economy in the waste regulations.	Unmet	Clarify definitions and expectations in the waste regulations to strengthen action towards a circular economy.
8.3.6	Resource risk management	Recognise resource inefficiency in the National Risk Register as a driver of chronic risk, alongside other economic dependencies like global supply chain reliance.	Resource inefficiency has not been recognised in the National Risk Register.	Unmet	Take action to recognise the chronic risk associated with resource inefficiency.
8.4.0	Key resource use sectors	Improve the sustainability of resource use for the most challenging sectors, including construction and critical materials.	While some sectors have seen progress towards more sustainable resource use, there has been insufficient progress for the most challenging sectors.	Mixed	Take coordinated action to improve the sustainability of resource use in the most challenging sectors.

8.4.1	Circular built environment	Apply a circular economy approach across the built environment, including through building regulations, the National Model Design Code, and government-backed guidance for the construction industry.	Recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and associated proposals for the built environment, do not adequately represent a circular economy approach. While there were useful proposals in the Construction Products Reform Green Paper 2025 , action has remained limited.	Unmet	Ensure that the National Model Design Code, building regulations, and planning policy reflect a circular economy approach across the built environment.
8.4.2	Critical raw materials	Develop a circular economy for critical raw materials, in line with the recommendations from Green Alliance.	The Critical Minerals Strategy acknowledges the link between critical mineral security and circular economy considerations, yet action across the economy has remained limited and overall progress has not been sufficient.	Partial progr.	Ensure the Circular Economy Growth Plan supports a circular economy for critical raw materials, learning lessons from the EU's critical raw materials strategy.
8.4.3	Soil re-use and recovery	Convene a formal partnership between industry, professionals and regulators to develop and deliver pragmatic solutions to the safe and sustainable re-use, recovery, and recycling of soil, including through a regulatory framework.	While the Environmental Improvement Plan recognises the importance of soil health, most of its measures focus on agricultural soils. The EIP commits to publishing principles of sustainable soil management, yet it is not clear whether these will include the context of re-use and recovery.	Unmet	Take action from the Government level to convene a formal partnership to deliver the safe and sustainable use and re-use of soil.
8.4.4	Fast fashion	Adopt measures to address the impact of UK fashion and textiles consumption, assessing the viability of aligning with France's 2025 legislation on 'fast fashion' as well as the recommendations outlined in the Fashion Declares White Paper.	There has been no significant shift in policy to address fast fashion in the UK.	Unmet	Ensure the Circular Economy Growth Plan includes action to address the impact of UK fashion and textiles consumption.

8.5.0	Resource use leadership	Support international leadership on sustainable resource use, working closely and agreeing a joint approach with the devolved administrations and international partners like the European Union.	The UK has not taken an international position of leadership on resource use.	Unmet	Support international leadership on resource use, particularly as the UK strengthens its relationship with the EU.
8.5.1	International resource use	Push for ambitious international agreements on resource use, including by aligning international approaches to banning single use plastics and working to overcome negotiating barriers for the Global Plastics Treaty.	Barriers to the Global Plastics Treaty remain. The UK has not pushed for ambitious international agreements.	Unmet	Take a leadership position in promoting international ambition on resource use, including accelerating action on the Global Plastics Treaty.
8.5.2	Plastic waste exports	Fully implement the commitment to banning plastic waste exports to non-OECD countries and expand to all waste exports by 2040.	The commitment to banning plastic waste exports to non-OECD countries has not yet been fully implemented. Waste exports in OECD countries like Turkey have been linked to significant environmental pollution.	Unmet	Close the loophole on plastic waste exports to non-OECD countries by implementing the commitment to ban them.
8.5.3	Supply chain reporting	Implement clear supply chain reporting on resource use and waste, including by amending the Trade Strategy to reflect its commitment to ‘transitioning to a global circular economy’.	While the Government has issued some new guidance on supply chain reporting, it does not address the circular economy.	Unmet	Produce supply chain reporting guidance on sustainability and update commitments in the Trade Strategy.
8.5.4	Digital monitoring	Strengthen monitoring requirements around the digital tracking of waste, including giving producers responsibility for starting the tracking process and leaving a clear waste trail.	While there has been some progress on digital waste tracking, producers have not yet been given responsibility for starting the trail of evidence.	Subst. progr.	Commit to a stronger set of monitoring requirements in digital waste tracking, making producers responsible for leaving clear evidence behind.

8.5.5

Harmonised waste regulations

Work with the devolved administrations to harmonise waste regulations and recycling requirements across all four nations of the UK, such as for waste separation requirements and rules around waste tracking.

In some areas, waste regulations have become more harmonised, including the move to a single UK DMO for Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England. Other areas have become more fragmented.

Mixed

Where recent changes to waste regulations make harmonisation across the UK countries difficult, find ways to clarify different requirements and provide certainty to stakeholders.



“The Government should reverse the shortsighted decision to scrap the Chemicals Strategy.”

Chapter 9: Championing local authorities to deliver for the environment

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
9.1.0	Local leadership	Champion local authorities to deliver for the environment by clarifying their responsibilities and increasing their powers and resources.	The responsibilities, powers, and resources of local authorities remain unclear in light of local government reorganisation. Positive signals have emerged in recent months, including the effective devolution of the Warm Homes Plan and a general trend towards empowering local communities through devolution policy, though these are only first steps towards clarifying the powers and responsibilities of local authorities, not the substantive change required.	Unmet	Resolve local government reorganisation urgently, in a way that champions local authorities to deliver for the environment.
9.1.1	Consistent approach to policy delivery	Adopt consistent and coherent governance for implementation, including clear responsibilities for local authorities and delivery organisations on their roles in policy design and evaluation.	While some areas have seen limited progress, such as the clarification of the role of local authorities in delivering LNRS, the Government is still failing to deliver many environmental outcomes in practice.	Unmet	Set up governance to deliver credible outcomes with a Golden Thread model and by endorsing guidance that helps local authorities to implement policies in practice.

9.1.2	Devolved powers	Devolve powers to communities and local authorities for sustainable & active transport, air quality management & wood burning, and nature, with the capacity and resources needed to use them.	Local Government Reorganisation and devolution settlements have focused on providing strategic powers, rather than devolving the powers and resources to regulate many of these pressures directly. The future of reorganisation remains uncertain.	Unmet	Use the opportunity of local government reorganisation to give local authorities more direct powers to regulate and manage pressures on the environment.
			The Government explicitly chose not to transfer statutory environmental or climate-related functions to Strategic Authorities through the Devolution Act.		
9.1.3	Local access to guidance	Work with environmental scientists to provide local authorities with access to expertise through training, guidance, and information sharing, as well as support to work together on cross boundary issues.	Guidance has been produced to support local authorities with implementation, and some support has been provided for delivering LNRS and BNG, particularly by the Planning Advisory Service and Natural England.	Subst. progr.	Support existing guidance on implementation by endorsing or helping to disseminate it.
9.1.4	Non-competitive funding	Provide long-term non-competitive funding for environmental schemes, allowing local authorities to operate under greater certainty. Commit to funding Local Nature Recovery Strategies for the next 10 years, increasing confidence in their delivery.	Despite the Government providing the first multi-year Local Government Finance Settlement in a decade, funding for environmental schemes is not yet being provided with sufficient certainty, including in the context of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.	Unmet	Clarify the future of LNRS and provide a more certain funding landscape for local environmental schemes.

9.2.0	EIP delivery	Accelerate the delivery of England's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP).	The new Environmental Improvement Plan makes significant improvements to its deliverability, with clearer details on implementation. However, environmental objectives are still disconnected from their desired outcomes.	Partial progr.	Deliver against the new EIP and take a Golden Thread approach to securing delivery.
9.2.1	Delivery plans	Develop and implement transparent, coherent and detailed delivery plans for England's EIP, based on the recommendations of the OEP.	Many of the OEP's recommendations for the EIP have been adopted in the process of creating the Environmental Improvement Plan 2025. The OEP has issued commentary on the format of the new plan, with more details recommendations on delivery expected in the next 6 months.	Subst. progr.	Implement the OEP's latest recommendations when it provides its first full progress report on the new EIP.
9.2.2	Delivering co-benefits	Design delivery plans to achieve multiple co-benefits, communicate implementation risks and allow for a flexible approach to interim targets which enables innovation.	The new EIP includes a more flexible approach to risks and interim targets, and some delivery plans, such as the Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan, account for delivery risks, yet these approaches are not yet universal.	Subst. progr.	Adopt the Golden Thread model for a more consistent approach to delivery plans.
9.3.0	Monitoring policy delivery	Make monitoring, evaluation and response an essential part of the design and implementation of policy.	The Government's EIP Monitoring Plan has a clear approach to monitoring against the delivery of the EIP.	Met	Continue to embed monitoring and ensure that feedback loops lead to adaptation in implementation.

9.3.1	Resources for evaluation	Provide sufficient resources for ongoing policy evaluations and continuous learning and review, so that it is clear whether policies are working as intended. Conduct an urgent assessment of the delivery of statutory Biodiversity Net Gain, as recommended by the NAO.	There has not been a delivery assessment of BNG. Impact assessments of BNG exemptions have been insufficient, and resources have not consistently been provided for an effective process of learning and review.	Unmet	Scale up policy evaluation, with specific attention on the delivery of BNG in practice.
9.3.2	Framework for success	Work with environmental scientists to produce a robust framework for prospective analysis of environmental policies, going beyond monitoring and evaluation to understand the drivers and barriers to successful delivery.	Work towards prospective analysis of policies has begun, principally within the OEP through its Environmental Foresight Review and subsequent work. More work in this area is needed.	Partial progr.	Continue the work towards a robust prospective analysis framework for environmental policy.
9.3.3	Outcome Indicator Framework	Work with environmental scientists to ensure that the Outcome Indicator Framework contains indicators and metrics which are appropriate for evaluating the success of policies.	The Government has continued to work on the Outcome Indicator Framework, although there are still barriers to the full appropriateness of the Framework, and it does not represent a holistic measure of the success of environmental policies.	Subst. progr.	Continue to improve the Outcome Indicator Framework and work towards an appropriate set of indicators for measuring the success of environmental policies as a whole.

“We should champion local authorities to deliver for the environment.”



Chapter 10: Modern impact assessment in a sustainable planning system

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
10.1.0	Consenting processes	Create a less adversarial approach to planning and environmental consenting, developing processes which are coherent, flexible, and accessible.	The Government's rhetoric around nature since 2024 has made planning and consenting more adversarial.	Unmet	Reverse the rhetoric on nature as a 'blocker' and work towards a system where planning is more cooperative with more coherent and proportionate processes.
10.1.1	Planning system	Update the planning system to deliver for the environment, aligning local plans with the Environmental Improvement Plan and rolling out Air Quality Neutral guidance across the UK to disincentivise developments with poor public transport links, wood burning stoves, or other high-emitting features.	The latest changes to the National Planning Policy Framework will align local plans more closely with national objectives like the EIP. However, guidance and resources have not been rolled out to support this, and some of the changes will make it harder to achieve positive environmental outcomes, such as removing the flexibility to pursue more ambitious local approaches.	Partial progr.	Deliver the latest NPPF changes in a way that supports environmental outcomes in practice, including by allowing more ambitious approaches that support progress towards the Government's goals.

10.1.2	Cooperative planning	Reform planning processes to build a system which brings together developers, planning authorities, environmental experts, and the public early in the process through the shared objective of sustainable development.	Current proposals for the planning system do not bring stakeholders together any earlier in the process, while rhetoric around the system has become increasingly confrontational.	Unmet	Reverse the rhetoric on nature as a 'blocker' and encourage earlier engagement in the process.
10.1.3	Access to evidence for planning	Improve accessibility of evidence for decision makers and the public by centralising monitoring data and information on what works in practice, making consenting decisions more transparent to all parties without over-simplifying them or focusing on 'ticking boxes'.	The EIP acknowledges the need for centralised evidence in some contexts, such as peatland restoration and protecting the historic environment, but not yet in all cases. The Water White Paper also acknowledges the importance of centralised data.	Partial progr.	Scale up efforts to consolidate data and improve accessibility in the most important contexts, including to support decision making in the planning process.
10.1.4	Planning for sustainability	Embed climate, biodiversity, soil health, and sustainable development as explicit environmental outcomes in impact assessment, retaining a proportional approach by offering greater routes for differentiation between nationally-significant and small project scales.	While the full details of the Environmental Outcomes Reports regime are yet to be finalised, climate and biodiversity are both expected to be embedded as outcomes, marking a change of policy from the initial consultation. An outcome on soils is expected in some form. Details on how sustainable development will be acknowledged are not yet clear.	Partial progr.	During the transition to EORs, explicitly include soil health and sustainable development. Ensure the approach accounts for proportionality in practice.
10.2.0	Joined-up environmental goals	Take a joined-up approach to achieving environmental objectives throughout national development policy, especially for major infrastructure developments.	Some steps have been taken towards a more coherent approach to environmental policy, including through the Land Use Framework for England, but there is not yet a sufficiently joined-up approach across policy.	Subst. progr.	Ensure a holistic approach to achieving environmental objectives, particularly through development and planning policy.

10.2.1	Long-term planning policy	Make development deliver for the environment through consistent long-term policies for investment in significant infrastructure and housebuilding projects that align with environmental objectives.	The revised NPPF and Planning & Infrastructure Act have made steps towards a more joined-up approach to environmental planning, yet it is unclear that environmental outcomes will emerge from that approach and there are substantial risks that it could make outcomes worse for the environment. Significant uncertainties remain, particularly around the future of planning processes and the EORs regime. Ultimately, it is difficult to assess the consistency of long-term policy objectives over a two-year period, so there is not enough information to evaluate this.	Unclear	Urgently clarify the future of EORs and work towards a planning system that secures a long-term consistent approach.
10.2.2	Needs-based development	Promote a ‘needs-based’ approach to development, considering alternative locations and proposals alongside the potential to mitigate impacts. Increase the statutory role of the ‘feasibility’ and ‘options appraisal’ stages of the development process to encourage genuine consideration of alternatives.	There has not been significant progress towards a needs-based approach.	Unmet	Promote a more flexible, needs-based approach to development that considers alternatives beyond minimal mitigations.
10.3.0	EORs	Work with environmental scientists and planning officers to ensure that the transition to Environmental Outcome Reports (EORs) delivers a modern, digital and data-driven system.	Despite the new EORs Roadmap and early details of what to expect, the transition to EORs still presents a significant degree of uncertainty.	Partial progr.	Finalise plans for the future of impact assessment and continue working with the sector to facilitate a smooth transition.

10.3.1	Digital EORs	Speed up the development process by urgently investing in a transition to digital EORs, allowing for a quicker, more accessible and more interactive experience.	The latest information on EORs proposes significant steps towards digital EORs. The full details will depend on implementation in practice.	On track	Ensure that current commitments to digital EIA through EORs are delivered in practice.
10.3.2	Local access to expertise	Give local authorities access to environmental expertise, either through the resources to hire experts like ecologists directly or through improved access to pooled expert networks. Support retraining of planning staff to ensure that EORs can be properly assessed.	Insufficient steps have been taken to embed broad environmental expertise in local authorities. While the Planning and Infrastructure Act introduced measures to improve planning capacity in Local Planning Authorities, truly environmental expertise is still harder to embed. The prospect of Local Government Reorganisation poses new risks for the erosion of existing environmental expertise in practice.	Unmet	Ensure Local Government Reorganisation has a positive, rather than negative, effect on the availability of environmental expertise to local authorities
10.3.3	EOR data hub	Work with businesses to provide a centralised, accessible and open EOR data hub, supporting evidence-informed decisions and reducing duplicate assessments.	The Government's response to the EORs consultation acknowledges the need for more accessible EOR data and commits to making data re-usable. While not explicitly committing to a data hub, the Government has made an equivalent commitment to providing the relevant data, subject to implementation.	Partial progr.	Deliver the proposed accessibility of EORs data in practice.



“We need a modern system where planning is more coherent and proportionate.”

Chapter 11: Embedding Education for Sustainable Development

No.	Summary	Recommendation	Action so far	Met?	Action required
11.1.0	ESD	Embed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across all types of education and at all levels, from primary school through to the workforce, with a focus on solutions.	The mainstreaming of some elements of ESD has increased, but it is not yet embedded across education.	Partial progr.	Continue to embed the principles underpinning ESD where possible and appropriate.
11.1.1	Guidance for ESD	Include an element of ESD in all education pathways and routes into the workforce, endorsing toolkits and guidance to help educators translate it into practical steps and teaching resources.	The Curriculum and Assessment Review has created some opportunities to include elements of ESD in a range of education pathways, including T and V levels. The Government has not taken further steps to endorse toolkits and guidance explicitly.	Partial progr.	Work with the sector to produce guidance and toolkits that help to deliver ESD in practice.
11.1.2	DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy	Deliver, increase, and amplify commitments in the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, including taking more proactive steps to align climate education with ESD.	Delivery of the DfE SCCS is ongoing, yet none of its commitments have been increased since 2024.	Partial progr.	Continue delivering the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and proactively pursue opportunities to increase its ambition.

11.1.3	Climate citizenship	Update the secondary curriculum to better engage young people with value-based climate citizenship, empowering them to become change agents in their communities and in their future careers.	The Curriculum and Assessment Review explicitly acknowledged the role of climate education in citizenship, and the Government's response committed to ensuring the secondary curriculum reflects climate education within citizenship education.	On track	Deliver the commitment to climate citizenship in practice.
11.2.0	Green skills	Fill the UK's green skills gap to produce a knowledgeable, skilled and motivated green workforce.	Progress on green skills has continued, with Skills England playing an increasingly strategic role in coordinating action.	On track	Ensure that the work of Skills England delivers the rollout of green skills in practice.
11.2.1	Carbon and science literacy	Develop a strategy for achieving an environmentally-literate workforce with widespread access to resources on critical scientific topics, including systems thinking, sustainable futures, Carbon Literacy and process literacy, with unambiguous support for accurate climate science.	The Government has not produced a strategy or plan to develop wider literacy on environmental issues.	Unmet	Work strategically to support the workforce with the skills and literacies needed to engage with environmental issues.
11.2.2	Skills audits	Support key sectors to produce skills audits and transition plans, outlining how they will deliver technical skills, deep climate skills, digital skills, and enabling skills such as communication and public engagement, and setting out how these skills will align with the current and future green jobs market.	The Industrial Strategy identified several key sectors for the UK, with specific Sector Plans set out against them, including how skills can be developed. The 2026 Sectoral Skills Needs Assessments and Clean Energy Jobs Plan have also supported planning for some sectors. Due to the focus on industrial sectors, there are still gaps in transition skills planning, particularly around agriculture.	Mixed	Use the Farming Roadmap and Industrial Strategy as a blueprint for an agricultural sector skills plan. Deliver the other sector plans in practice.

11.2.3	Green jobs	Deliver the UK's ambition for two million green jobs by 2030 through increased investment in careers in environmental science, the circular economy, water resource management, land management, and environmental research.	There have been no significant further steps towards the delivery of two million green jobs by 2030.	Unmet	Deliver the necessary investment to secure the ambition for two million green jobs.
11.3.0	Education across disciplines	Develop an interdisciplinary and joined-up education system without compromising on specialist education.	In some areas, steps have been taken towards interdisciplinary education, while others have seen restricted budgets due to wider pressures on the education system.	Mixed	Take a more coordinated approach to creating a joined-up education system.
11.3.1	Connecting departments	Facilitate links across disciplines by encouraging increased connections and removing barriers between departments and institutions in higher education, including between STEM, SHAPE, and other relevant disciplines.	While there are some examples of increasing links between departments across disciplines, the Government's involvement in facilitating them has been limited.	Unmet	Take more direct action to facilitate links across departments, working to remove barriers where possible.
11.3.2	Sustainable curricula	Work with the HE sector to redesign curricula with sustainability in mind, retaining the beneficial ways that courses and programmes can drive specialisation, while promoting opportunities for multidisciplinary learning.	The Curriculum and Assessment Review takes some steps towards increasing the role of sustainability in curricula, particularly in the context of climate education, yet has not sufficiently driven a redesign of curricula overall.	Partial progr.	Continue working with the HE sector to reform curricula in a way that embeds sustainability.
11.4.0	Access to green jobs	Work with the environment sector to increase access to green jobs and wider awareness of different pathways into the sector.	Progress on promoting green jobs has not moved on substantially since 2024.	Unmet	Take more proactive steps to increase access to green jobs.

11.4.1	Whole system education	Take a 'whole education system' approach to helping people access green jobs, including support for the development of modern competency frameworks and technical pathways.	The Curriculum and Assessment Review took some steps towards promoting green skills across technical pathways, as did the Skills England Annual Skills Report 2026. These will support progress towards enabling access to green jobs yet do not provide a whole system approach.	Subst. progr.	Pursue a 'whole education system' approach to helping people access green jobs, rather than an incremental one.
11.4.2	ED&I in workforce	Support efforts by the private and voluntary sectors to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion in the environmental workforce, using the Government's power to convene partners and address specific structural barriers to inclusion through policy.	Equity, diversity, and inclusion in the environmental workforce has steadily improved, including through support by Skills England, but significant further steps are still needed. Action is being led from outside government.	Partial progr.	Take a leading role in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in the environmental workforce.
11.4.3	Engaging with green jobs	Facilitate engagement with green jobs from primary school onwards, increasing awareness of sustainable careers and specific routes into the sector.	There have not been significant further steps towards increasing awareness of sustainable careers and pathways to green jobs.	Unmet	Take a more proactive approach to facilitating engagement with green jobs from a young age.
11.5.0	Situated learning	Use the DfE's own sustainability actions to teach by example, driving 'situated learning' about the environment.	Situated learning is happening on a case-by-case basis but is not yet standard.	Unmet	Use situated learning to more directly link the DfE's own sustainability actions with teaching about the environment.

11.5.1	Net zero education	Take a more ambitious approach to reaching net zero in the education system earlier than 2050: address efficiency of the education estate by 2030, take a whole value chain approach to sustainable procurement, and prioritise adapting existing building stock rather than new construction.	There has not been a significant change to the level of ambition set out in the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. Action to implement the strategy has been positive, including the 2026 Education Estates Strategy, which committed to a 10-year programme of decarbonisation, including £710m Renewal and Retrofit Programme.	Partial progr.	Seek opportunities to progressively increase ambition in the education system's work towards net zero.
11.5.2	Teaching by example	Support situated learning in schools to teach sustainability by example. Promote access to good quality, biodiverse nature within school grounds and local areas, including by delivering on the original ambition of the National Education Nature Park. Urgently introduce the promised Natural History GCSE and support its uptake in all schools.	Steps have been taken towards the Natural History GCSE, with a consultation on content, including scope for teaching sustainability by example. Progress has also been made towards the current level of ambition for the National Education Nature Park.	Subst. progr.	Deliver the Natural History GCSE in a way that teaches by example and delivers on early ambitions.
11.5.3	School climate plans	Review climate action plans for every education setting to ensure they are clear and accountable, with full details on how sustainability commitments will be delivered, referencing explicit targets and science-based actions.	Climate action plans for education settings have not been universally reviewed.	Unmet	Conduct a strategic review of climate action plans in education settings.

11.5.4

Education reporting standards

Issue government guidance and use the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy to lay the foundations for common reporting standards across the education sector, working with providers to encourage adoption.

Following commitments in its Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, the DfE has issued some supporting guidance for new climate action plans and sustainability leads. The guidance explicitly recognises that it does not provide a template approach, so further action is still needed.

Subst.
progr.

Build on guidance and support for sustainability leads by working towards common reporting standards across the education sector.

