

## Open consultation: Environment: developing environmental principles and accountability

We want to know what you think about plans to create a new independent environmental watchdog. What functions and powers should the watchdog have to oversee environmental law and policy?

We're also seeking views on what environmental principles we should apply in England to guide and shape environmental law and policy making.

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## News story: New environment law to deliver a Green Brexit

A new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure environmental protections will not be weakened as we leave the EU, the government has confirmed.

A [consultation has started today](#) on the contents of the Environmental Principles and Governance Bill, which will establish a world-leading body to hold government to account for environmental outcomes.

The body will support our commitment to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than that in which we inherited it. It will provide scrutiny and advice as we protect and enhance our precious landscapes, wildlife and natural assets and would be able to hold government to account on environmental legislation.

Subject to consultation, the new body could specifically be responsible for:

- providing independent scrutiny and advice on existing and future government environmental law and policy;
- responding to complaints about government's delivery of environmental law; and
- holding government to account publicly over its delivery of environmental law and exercising enforcement powers where necessary.

The Government is also consulting on its intention to require ministers to produce – and then have regard to – a statutory and comprehensive policy statement setting out how they will apply core environmental principles as they develop policy and discharge their responsibilities. Currently environmental decisions made in the UK – from improving air and water quality

to protecting endangered species – are overseen by the European Commission and underpinned by a number of these principles, such as the precautionary principle, sustainable development and the ‘polluter pays’ principle.

While these principles are already central to government environmental policy, they are not set out in one place besides the EU treaties. The new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure governments continue to have regard to important environmental principles through the policy statement, which would be scrutinised by Parliament. The consultation seeks views on whether or not the principles to be contained in the policy statement should be listed in primary legislation.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

As the Prime Minister has made clear, we will not weaken environmental protections when we leave the EU. A new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure core environmental principles remain central to government policy and decision-making. This will help us to deliver a Green Brexit and the vision set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan.

But we will only achieve our aims by also creating a strong and objective voice that champions and enforces environmental standards. That’s why our Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will also create an independent and statutory watchdog. This will hold governments to account for delivering their commitments to the natural world.

The consultation, which will run for 12 weeks, seeks views on the most effective way for the new body to hold government to account, which would include, as a minimum, the power to issue advisory notices. The consultation asks what further enforcement mechanisms may be necessary.

The Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will be published in draft in the autumn. Public consultation on the environmental principles policy statement will follow in due course. The Bill will be introduced early in the second session of this Parliament, ensuring these measures are introduced in time for the end of the implementation period in December 2020. EU environmental governance structures will continue to apply during the implementation period.

The consultation is concerned with environmental governance in England and reserved matters throughout the UK, for which the UK government has responsibility. However, we are exploring with the devolved administrations whether they wish to take a similar approach. We would welcome the opportunity to co-design proposals with them to ensure they work across the whole UK, taking account of the different government and legal systems in the individual nations.

## Background

1. You can respond to our consultation on the [Citizen Space website](#)
  2. Read [‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’](#)
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# Scotland’s sustainable businesses leading the UK at European Awards

10 May 2018

Scotland’s sustainable businesses will be leading the way for the UK on the European stage later this year with 10 out of the 11 UK businesses shortlisted for the 2018 European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE) from Scotland.

Some of Scotland’s most progressive and innovative companies from a wide range of sectors including food and drink, hospitality, transport, recycling and security sectors will represent the UK at the prestigious awards to be held in Autumn this year.

Each company has been selected following their success at the Scottish Government and Scottish Environment Protection Agency backed VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards, and include; EC-OG, Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC), Farne Salmon and Trout Ltd, Guala Closures UK, Glenuig Inn, Jaw Brew, John Lawrie (Aberdeen) Limited, Marlin Industries Scotland Ltd, Paterson Arran and Veracity UK Limited.

The award-winning companies showcase the example Scotland’s businesses are setting when it comes to tackling the effects of climate change. This include Jaw Brew’s circular, restorative approach to managing resources by using surplus morning rolls to produce its Hardtack beer whilst Farne Salmon’s innovative approach has seen them invest in a recycling plant that enabled them to turn a cost into a new income stream.

In total 11 UK companies were put forward by The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce (RSA) Environment Awards Forum to represent the UK in the EBAE which are open to 28 member states. EnTrade joins the list of nominees.

Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Roseanna Cunningham said: “Congratulations to these businesses who are using their creativity to come up with ways of reducing emissions and helping to show Scotland’s leadership on climate change.

“The Scottish Government has a clear vision for a low carbon Scotland. We want to build a country which trains, attracts and retains the businesses and

the innovators who will shape the low carbon transition. I hope these businesses will encourage others to think innovatively about how we can create a cleaner, greener, climate-ready Scotland.”

Terry A’Hearn, CEO of SEPA, said: “The scale of environmental challenge facing humanity is enormous, with a real urgency to act. Scotland is a global leader in its commitment to tackling climate change, in protecting and enhancing our environment, in strengthening our international reputation for sustainable growth and in supporting a transition to low-carbon economy. Scottish businesses have recognised the economic opportunity, reflected in the fact over 90% of the UK delegation are from Scotland and the SEPA backed VIBES programme.

“I would like to congratulate all of the nominated companies for their success in reaching this stage of the EBAEs and wish them every success in the competition.”

The EBAE recognises outstanding, new or innovative contributions to sustainable development and the UK finalists will compete against winners from 28 other countries.

Each member state can put forward a maximum of 12 entries to the awards with UK entrants selected from the winners and runners up of RSA Accredited award schemes, including Scotland’s VIBES Awards which is the only Scottish based RSA Accredited Awards.

For further details about the Awards visit:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/awards/about\\_ebae.html](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/awards/about_ebae.html)

For further details about the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards, please visit: <http://www.vibes.org.uk/>

**Ends –**

**Notes to editors:**

A complete list of the 11 companies representing the UK as finalists in the European Business Awards for the Environment is as follows:

<b>Company</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Paterson Arran	Management	VIBES entry
Glenuig Inn	Management (micro)	VIBES entry
Farne Salmon and Trout Ltd	Management (large)	VIBES entry
EICC Edinburgh International Conference Centre	Management (small)	VIBES entry
Guala Closures UK	Process	VIBES entry
Jaw Brew	Process	VIBES entry
John Lawrie (Aberdeen) Limited	Process	VIBES entry
EnTrade	Product	Faversham House entry
EC-0G	Product	VIBES entry

Veracity UK Limited	Product	VIBES	entry
Marlin Industries	Product	VIBES	entry
Scotland Ltd			

Issued on behalf of VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards by The BIG Partnership

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## **[Consultation outcome: Open access restriction at Lymington Yacht Haven \(marina\): consultation outcome](#)**

*Updated:* Link to consultation outcome added.

Natural England is seeking views on proposals that will restrict public access to open access land at this site.

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## **[Transforming SRUC – Reaching our new strategic goals](#)**

SRUC is changing. Our new Strategic Plan has established an ambitious target of transforming our organisation to become a University.