

Interim Office for Environmental Protection to be launched

News story

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The new environmental watchdog for England will be launched on an interim basis ahead of its formal establishment as part of the Environment Bill, under plans set out today.

From July, the new Interim Office for Environmental Protection will be set up in non-statutory form to provide independent oversight of the government's environmental progress and to accelerate the foundation of the full body.

The interim body will be steered the Chair, Dame Glenys Stacey, and Interim Chief Executive, Natalie Prosser, together with other non-executive directors to be appointed in the coming weeks. Following Royal Assent of the Environment Bill, this group will formally become the Board of the Office for Environmental Protection as an independent legal entity.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

The Environment Bill will establish the world-class Office for Environmental Protection. Protecting and improving our environment is an important priority and that is why we are taking immediate action to ensure that the body can start its vital work at the earliest possible opportunity.

Dame Glenys Stacey said:

I am delighted at this decision. It means we can make rapid progress now, in establishing the organisation. The sooner we are up and running, the sooner we can deliver as intended, and so begin

to make those tangible and positive differences to the environment that we so wish to see. It is excellent news.

The new Interim Office for Environmental Protection will be able to:

- Produce and publish an independent assessment of progress in relation to the implementation of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan
 - Develop the Office for Environmental Protection's strategy including its enforcement policy
 - Receive complaints from members of the public about failures of public authorities to comply with environmental law
 - Take decisions on operational matters such as staff recruitment, accommodation and facilities
 - Determine approaches for how the Office for Environment Protection will form and operate, establishing its character, ways of working and voice.

This is a move from the current interim environmental governance arrangements in place since the start of January and ahead of the Environment Bill creating the Office for Environmental Protection as a legal body.

The Government remains fully committed to the Environment Bill and The Office for Environmental Protection will be formally established shortly after Royal Assent of the Environment Bill which is now expected in the autumn.

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