

Press release: Government's vision for a greener future launched

A pledge to eliminate avoidable waste, introduce new safeguards for wildlife and connect more children with nature are among the ambitious plans for a greener future outlined by Prime Minister Theresa May and Environment Secretary Michael Gove today.

In a major speech today, the Prime Minister has launched the government's landmark 25 Year Environment Plan, setting out how we will improve the environment over a generation by creating richer habitats for wildlife, improving air and water quality and curbing the scourge of plastic in the world's oceans.

["A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment"](#) sets out how over the next quarter of a century the government will:

- Crackdown on plastics by eliminating all avoidable plastic waste through extending the 5p plastic bag charge to small retailers, removing consumer single use plastics from the government estate, supporting the water industry to significantly increase water fountains and working with retailers on introducing plastic-free supermarket aisles.
- Help wildlife thrive by creating 500,000 hectares of new habitat for endangered species, supporting farmers to turn fields into meadows and other habitats, replenishing depleted soils and providing £5.7 million to kick-start a [new Northern Forest](#).
- Be a world leader in environmental protection by investigating the feasibility of an anti-poaching taskforce to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, committing overseas aid to help developing nations combat plastic waste, and extending the UK's network of marine protected areas
- Deliver a Green Brexit by consulting on a [new environmental watchdog](#) to hold government to account for environmental standards, and setting out a new approach to agriculture and fisheries management
- Seek to embed a 'net environmental gain' principle so development delivers environmental improvements locally and nationally, enabling housing development without increasing overall burdens on developers
- Connect people with nature by creating 'nature friendly schools' and reviewing National Parks to see how they can improve and whether the network should be extended.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Respecting nature's intrinsic value and making sure we are wise stewards of our natural world is critical if we are to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it.

Our Environment Plan sets out how over the next 25 years we will radically reduce the waste that is choking oceans and rivers, cleanse our air of toxic pollutants and create new habitats for our most precious wildlife to thrive.

Through this plan we will build on our reputation as a global leader in environmental protection, creating an environment everyone can enjoy and helping the next generation flourish.

In a world-first, the 25 Year Environment Plan also sets out how we will use a natural capital approach to help us see the additional benefits – whether that is improved health and wellbeing, or national prosperity – in every part our environment, helping improve and direct decision making, and guiding new development.

The Plan sits alongside existing work. A [Call for Evidence](#) on reward and return schemes for drinks containers, including plastic bottles, has closed. Its findings are now being assessed by the Working Group, who will make recommendations to ministers this Spring.

As announced in the Budget, the Government will also launch a further Call for Evidence shortly on how changes to the tax system or charges on single-use plastics can play a role in reducing waste.

The plan sits alongside the Government's [Clean Growth Strategy](#), which sets out how the UK is leading the world in cutting carbon emissions to combat climate change and driving economic growth.