

ADEPT: Parliamentary monitoring May 2021

This document is tailored to provide a monthly overview of key activity, debates, questions, reports, PMQs, speeches and bills relevant to the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport.

Key dates

7 June 2021: House returns

22 July 2021: Summer recess

6 September 2021: House returns

Devolution deals

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
29/04/21	Written answers	HoL/MHCLG	<p>Devolution - UIN HL15269</p> <p>Lord Tyler: To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions ministers have had about establishing an English devolution taskforce, jointly led by Downing Street and local government.</p> <p>Lord Greenhalgh: The government regularly engages with a wide range of stakeholders in the local government sector and external experts as part of ongoing work to support local economic growth and devolution as we recover from Covid-19. Here</p>
29/04/21	Written answers	HoL/MHCLG	<p>Devolution - UIN HL15267</p> <p>Lord Tyler: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendations in the report by the Devolution All-Party Parliamentary Group Levelling-up Devo: the role of national government in making a success of devolution in England, published on 9 March.</p> <p>Lord Greenhalgh: We welcome this report and demonstrate our clear commitment to devolution through our ambitious programme of 9 devolution deals which include £7.49 billion worth of investment over 30-years. 37% of residents in England are now served by directly elected city region mayors - including almost 50% in the North (growing to 41% of England and 62% of the North following this Spring's mayoral election in the West Yorkshire Combined Authority). We will set out our plans for further devolution in a white paper in due course. Here</p>
20/05/21	Written questions	MHCLG	<p>Regional Planning and Development: Consultation Papers - UIN 2295</p> <p>Dan Jarvis, Barnsley Central (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what</p>

			<p>progress has been made on the English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper.</p> <p><u>Luke Hall, Thornbury and Yate (Con):</u> Levelling up all areas of the country remains at the centre of Government's agenda. Later this year we will publish a Levelling Up White Paper setting out how bold new policy interventions will improve livelihoods across the country as we recover from the pandemic. Our plans for strengthening local leadership will now be included in the Levelling Up White Paper.</p> <p><u>Here</u></p>

Digital – Broadband & mobile

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
18/05/21	Written statement	DCMS	<p>Government response to the public consultation on the National Data Strategy and the Data Sharing Code of Practice.</p> <p><u>Here</u></p>
27/05/21	Written answers	HM Treasury	<p>Broadband - UIN 3852</p> <p><u>Esther McVey, Tatton (Con):</u> To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Centre for Economics and Business Research report, how covid-driven digital change could transform the UK economy, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of exempting full fibre deployment from business rates tax to help meet the Government's 2025 target for fibre broadband.</p> <p><u>Jesse Norman, Hereford and South Herefordshire (Con):</u> The Government notes the CEBR report, commissioned by Openreach, which predicts a huge productivity boost from nationwide gigabit connectivity, suggesting a £59 billion boost to the UK's Gross Value Added (GVA) by 2025. On the report's suggestion that 270,000 people could move from urban to more rural areas as a result of changing attitudes towards home working, the Government recognises the importance of strong digital connectivity in rural areas. That is why it is investing £5bn to ensure those living in hard-to-reach areas get gigabit connectivity.</p> <p>The Government is providing 100 per cent business rates relief for new full-fibre infrastructure for a five-year period from 1</p>

			April 2017. Telecoms providers are also significant beneficiaries of the £3.6 billion transitional relief scheme. A fundamental review of business rates was announced by the Chancellor at last year's Budget. A call for evidence was published in July 2020 to seek stakeholders' views on all elements of the business rates system including reliefs, and the Government is currently considering its responses. The final report will be published in the Autumn. Here

Economic recovery & renewal

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
06/05/21	Report	Localis	A Plan for Local Growth. Here
08/05/21	Press release	PM's office	A new Queen's Speech to build back better from the pandemic. Here
11/05/21	Speech	PM's office	Queen's Speech 2021. Here
12/05/21	Press release	BEIS	BEIS in the Queen's Speech. Here
13/05/21	Evidence session	HCLG Select Committee	Supporting our high streets after COVID-19. Here
17/05/21	Written statement	BEIS	Use of the Industrial Development Act 1982 for Coronavirus related assistance. Here
25/05/21	Oral evidence	BEIS Select Committee	Oral evidence: Post-pandemic economic growth: Levelling up – local and regional structures and the delivery of economic growth, HC 115. Here
25/05/21	Oral answers	BEIS	<p>High Street Businesses - UIN 900522 Cat Smith, Lancaster and Fleetwood (Lab): What steps he is taking to support high street businesses.</p> <p>Amanda Solloway (The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy): Our comprehensive economic response to business is worth £385 billion, including grants, the furlough scheme, tax deferrals and business rates relief. We are providing a £56 million welcome back fund, helping councils to prepare for the safe reopening of our high streets and seaside resorts.</p> <p>Cat Smith: High street businesses on Lord Street in Fleetwood tell me that one of their biggest concerns is empty shop units that have fallen into disrepair. They are dangerous for people who are out shopping and make the high street very unattractive. What support can the Government give councils such as Wyre Council to ensure that these shops are made safe and, ideally, tenanted?</p> <p>Amanda Solloway: The Government are committed to unleashing enterprise and growth across all parts of the United</p>

			<p>Kingdom, and we will go even further with the publication of our levelling-up White Paper this autumn. The hon. Member will welcome the news that Lancaster and Fleetwood have been awarded funding under the high streets heritage action zones cultural programme. Our £4.8 billion levelling-up fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the United Kingdom. We have protected 14 million jobs through the comprehensive package we have put in place. Our plan for jobs is creating, supporting and protecting jobs, and our £2 billion kickstart scheme has helped 16,500 young people to start paid jobs. Here</p>
28/05/21	Written answers	BEIS	<p>Retail Trade: Coronavirus - UIN 3898 Colleen Fletcher, Coventry North East (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to support the recovery of the retail sector from the impact of the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.</p> <p>Paul Scully, Sutton and Cheam (Con): To support retailers and provide flexibility as they reopen, we have extended opening hours for retail, Monday through Saturday from 7am to 10pm until the 21st of June. We are providing Restart Grants of up to £6,000 for non-essential retailers, and it is expected that over 450,000 non-essential retail businesses across the UK will benefit. Overall, Coventry has been awarded £13,572,540 in Restart Grants.</p> <p>Government will continue to provide eligible retail properties in England with 100% business rates relief from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021. This will be followed by 66% business rates relief for the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, capped at £2 million per business for properties that were required to be closed on 5 January 2021, or £105,000 per business for other eligible properties. We have extended the moratorium on commercial landlords' right to forfeiture for the non-payment of rent to the end of June 2021.</p> <p>Local authorities have been allocated a further £425m in discretionary funding via the Additional Restrictions Grant to support businesses that are significantly impacted by the restrictions even though not required to close. For example, this could include</p>

			<p>businesses which supply the retail sector. This means more than £2bn has been made available to local authorities since November 2020.</p> <p>We are also providing a £56m Welcome Back Fund to help councils prepare for the safe and successful reopening of our high streets and seaside resorts. Councils can use the fund to not only improve the look and feel of their high streets, but to run publicity campaigns and hold events that will boost footfall and encourage people back into high streets, thereby supporting local businesses. Coventry has been awarded £334,308 from the Fund. Here</p>

Climate change – Air quality

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
29/04/21	Written questions	Defra	<p>Air Pollution - UIN 188162</p> <p><u>Ruth Jones, Newport West (Lab):</u> To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of financial support allocated to local authorities in England to help tackle toxic air.</p> <p><u>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con):</u> Local authorities receive grant in aid funding to carry out their statutory local air quality duties. Any new burdens placed on local authorities through the air quality measures in the Environment Bill will be funded by Defra as per the new burdens principle. In addition, Defra 's Air Quality Grant programme provides funding to local authorities for projects in local communities to tackle air pollution. The Government has awarded nearly £70 million in funding since the air quality grant started in 1997.</p> <p>To tackle local nitrogen dioxide exceedances, we are providing £880 million to help local authorities develop and implement local air quality plans and to support those impacted by these plans. We have supported the retrofit of over 3,000 buses with cleaner engines and recently oversaw the launch of the first clean air zone in Bath. We are committed to ensuring that local authorities have access to a wide range of options as they develop plans to address roadside pollution in a way that meets the needs of their communities.</p>

			A £2 billion package of funding for active travel, which is the largest amount of funding ever committed to increasing cycling and walking in this country, was announced by the Secretary of State for Transport on 9 May 2020. The first £250 million of the £2 billion was allocated in 2020/21 to "quick wins" including the Active Travel Fund and the Fix your Bike voucher scheme. Here
21/05/21	Debate	Hol/Defra	Air Quality (Legislative Functions) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 Moved by: Lord Goldsmith Of Richmond Park That the Grand Committee do consider the Air Quality (Legislative Functions) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. My Lords, before you today are the Air Quality (Legislative Functions) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which were laid before this House on 22 March. The Government are committed to continuing our high standards of industrial pollution reporting. All the changes introduced by this instrument are technical and are required to ensure that the United Kingdom 's industrial pollution reporting remains relevant and up to date, reflecting scientific, technical and international progress. More here

Climate change & net zero – Build back better/infrastructure

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes

Climate change & net zero - Housing

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
04/05/21	Press release	TCPA	Government must plan for zero-carbon new communities. Here
25/05/21	Written answers	BEIS	Green Homes Grant Scheme - UIN 2419 Emma Hardy, Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle (Lab) : To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the Green Homes Grant scheme until 31 March 2022. Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Berwick-upon-Tweed) : The Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme was designed to provide a short-term economic stimulus while tackling our contribution to climate change. However, it was not delivering at the rate and scale we

			had originally intended. The scheme closed on 31 March 2021 and will not reopen. We will refocus efforts and funding on alternative approaches which will maximise delivery of home retrofits for consumers who are most in need. The Government will be expanding its funding commitment for both the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund with £300million of new funding. Here
26/05/21	Report	HoC Library	Green Homes Grant report: Here
28/05/21	Press release	BEIS	£44 million cash boost to cut emissions from buildings and help households save on energy bills. Here

Climate change & net zero – Planning

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes

Climate change & net zero – Transport

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
29/04/21	Written answers	HoL/BEIS	<p>Aviation and Shipping: Carbon Budgets - UIN HL15027</p> <p>Baroness Worthington: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to include international aviation and shipping emissions in the Sixth Carbon Budget, as recommended by the Climate Change Committee in their report The Sixth Carbon Budget, published in December 2020.</p> <p>Lord Callanan: We have laid legislation for the UK's sixth carbon budget, proposing a world-leading target, which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This is in line with the latest science as the level recommended by our expert advisers at the Climate Change Committee (CCC). We have set the sixth carbon budget to include international aviation and shipping emissions, as recommended by our independent climate advisors, the Climate Change Committee. We remain fully committed to global action to tackle IAS emissions through international processes at the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and International Maritime Organisation (IMO). Here</p>
05/05/21	Press release	DfT	Green motoring milestone with half-a-million ultra low emission vehicles now on UK roads. Here

13/05/21	Press release	Highways England	Ambitious carbon project could transform the road marking sector. Here
19/05/21	Report	PAC	From 11% to 100% zero emission cars in 14 years: Government lacks plan for “huge challenge” of social and economic transition. Here
25/05/21	Written answers	BEIS	<p>Transport: Carbon Emissions - UIN 2498</p> <p>Alexander Stafford, Rother Valley (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on ensuring that the UK transport sector is on track to reach net zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Con): The Government recognises the urgency of stepping up the pace of progress, to ensure that the transport sector plays its part in supporting the delivery of the UK's emissions reduction targets.</p> <p>Ministerial discussions on climate and net zero are held primarily through the Climate Action Strategy Committee (CAS), which is chaired by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister and determines the UK's overarching climate strategy, and the Climate Action Implementation Committee (CAI), which supports the CAS to operationalise the UK's domestic and international climate strategy. The CAI considers matters relating to the delivery of COP26, net zero and building the UK's resilience to climate impacts and ensure the delivery of plans for addressing these areas, including the transport sector.</p> <p>Departmental officials are also working closely with officials from the Department of Transport. Part 1 of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan was published in March 2020, with Part 2, containing policies and proposals to be published as soon as possible. We will also publish a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy ahead of COP26, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy.</p> <p>Here</p>

Climate change & net zero – Misc.

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
29/04/21	Written answers	HoL/BEIS	<p>Carbon Budgets - UIN HL15024</p> <p>Baroness Worthington: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will set a statutory target for the removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere in the UK as part of legislation under the Sixth Carbon Budget.</p> <p>Lord Callanan: We have laid legislation for the UK's sixth carbon budget, proposing a world-leading target, which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This is in line with the latest science as the level recommended by our expert advisers at the Climate Change Committee (CCC).</p> <p>Analysis from the CCC shows that to achieve net zero Greenhouse Gas Removal (GGR) methods will be required to balance residual emissions from some of the most difficult to decarbonise sectors. Following the Government's response to the CCC's 2020 progress report to Parliament, BEIS and HM Treasury launched a Call for evidence on the role of GGRs in delivering net zero, inviting evidence on a range of GGR methods. The Call for Evidence closed on 26 February, and we will publish a summary of responses in due course. We will bring forward further policies and proposals to meet our carbon budgets in due course, which will consider the role that greenhouse gas removal technologies can play. Here</p>
29/04/21	Written answers	HoL/BEIS	<p>Small Businesses: Environment Protection - UIN HL15195</p> <p>Lord Taylor Of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support small businesses to become more environmentally friendly.</p> <p>Lord Callanan: Achieving our net zero goal requires all businesses to take action. In order to drive this forward, my Hon. Friend the Member for Arundel and South Downs has been appointed by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister to be the UK's Net Zero Business Champion ahead of COP26. My Hon. Friend's role is to encourage UK business to sign up to climate action via the Race to Zero science-based targets initiative, to champion the actions that UK businesses are already taking and to help UK businesses exploit the many</p>

			<p>opportunities of the transition to a low carbon economy.</p> <p>By November, the aim is for as many UK small businesses as possible to join the Race to Zero – a global effort to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases we all generate to zero by 2050. Taking action on climate change will help businesses to grow, seize new opportunities and adapt against the challenges of a changing planet. Reducing emissions can lower businesses' running costs, save them money, and attract new customers who want to shop sustainably. Here</p>
06/05/21	Speech	PM's office	PM remarks at the Petersberg Climate Dialogue. Here
09/05/21	Press release	Defra	44,000 trees to be planted as Urban Tree Challenge Fund reopens. Here
12/05/21	Press release	EA	Environment Agency launches new flooding Action Plan. Here
14/05/21	Press release	Cabinet Office	Ministers showcase the UK's green future ahead of COP26 climate change conference in Glasgow. Here
18/05/21	Speech	EA	Speech by Chair of the Environment Agency, Emma Howard Boyd, at the ClimateExpo. Here
18/05/21	Debate	BEIS/HoC	Vol 695 10-point Plan: Six Months On. Debate & statement from the Secretary of State Here
21/05/21	Written answers	BEIS	<p>Carbon Emissions - UIN 981</p> <p>John Spellar, Warley (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the UK's CO2 emissions were in (a) in total and (b) per capita in (i) 1990 and (ii) 2019.</p> <p>Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Con): Over the last three decades, the UK has achieved record clean growth and has met its world-leading climate change commitments. The UK's total greenhouse gas emissions were 809 million tonnes of CO2-equivalent (MtCO2e) in 1990 and decreased by 44% to 455Mt by 2019. Specifically for CO2, the figures were 608Mt in 1990 and 365Mt in 2019 – a 40% fall. At the same time, the UK's population grew by 16% between 1990 and 2019. This implies an approximate fall of over 50% in territorial greenhouse gas emissions per person, from 14.1tCO2e to 6.8tCO2e per person. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita fell from 10.6Mt per person to 5.5Mt. Here</p>
21/05/21	Written answers	BEIS	Solar Power - UIN 1155

			<p><u>Sarah Olney, Richmond Park (LD)</u>: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of installing solar panels on (a) government, (b) commercial and (c) industrial buildings.</p> <p><u>Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Con)</u>: The generation of renewable electricity from rooftop solar on commercial, industrial and public sector buildings reduces carbon emissions, helps save money on energy bills, protects against electricity price fluctuations and puts unused roof space to good use. Consuming most of the electricity generated on site can also reduce the amount of electricity lost in networks. Projects can be installed relatively quickly, creating new local jobs and contributing to green recovery. There is currently around 13.5GW of solar PV in the UK of which up to around 3GW is installed on non-domestic roofs[1]. We will need to see sustained increases in deployment of all types of solar, alongside other renewables, to meet our ambitious net zero targets.</p> <p>Those installing rooftop solar (and other small scale low carbon technologies) can receive payment for any surplus electricity that is exported to the grid through the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG). The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme launched in October 2020 provides grants to install low carbon energy efficiency and heating solutions, including rooftop solar panels, in government and public sector buildings. [1] Source: BEIS solar PV deployment statistics (April 2021) at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/solar-photovoltaics-deployment. Here</p>
24/05/21	Written answers	HM Treasury	<p>Climate Change Convention: Greenhouse Gas Emissions - UIN 3086</p> <p><u>Matthew Pennycook, Greenwich and Woolwich (Lab)</u>: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is Government policy for the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority to discharge their functions consistently with the goals of the (a) Paris Agreement and (b) global greenhouse gas emissions reductions required to meet those goals.</p> <p><u>John Glen, Salisbury (Con)</u>: The Chancellor sent letters of recommendations to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and</p>

			<p>Prudential Regulation Committee on 23 March 2021. These letters make recommendations about aspects of the government's economic policy that the two organisations should have regard to when considering how to advance their objectives and discharge their duties. For the first time, these letters specified that the regulators should have regard to the government's commitment to achieve a net-zero economy by 2050 under the Climate Change Act 2008 (Order 2019).</p> <p>However, it is important to note that both the FCA and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) are operationally independent, non-governmental bodies. Although the Treasury sets the legal framework for the regulation of financial services, it has strictly limited powers in relation to the FCA and PRA. In particular, the Treasury has no general power of direction over the FCA and PRA. Here</p>
25/05/21	Oral answers	BEIS	<p>Renewable Energy: Carbon Budget - UIN 900514</p> <p>Alexander Stafford, Rother Valley (Con): What assessment he has made of the extent of the renewable energy development required by 2030 to help deliver the Government's sixth carbon budget.</p> <p>Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Con): Renewable electricity will be key for the decarbonisation required for carbon budget 6. Therefore, we have set an ambitious target to deliver 40 GW of offshore wind by 2030 and announced our aim to up to double the capacity of this year's contracts for difference auction, as well as extending eligibility to a wider range of technologies.</p> <p>Alexander Stafford: The Minister will be aware of my long-standing interest in environmental, social and governance, as I chair the all-party parliamentary group on the matter. How will her Department ensure that the Government's sixth carbon budget is delivered with ESG at its heart, and what are the plans for engagement with Government Departments and corporations to ensure that all targets set out in the carbon budget are viewed through an ESG lens?</p> <p>Anne-Marie Trevelyan: My hon. Friend's passion for, and commitment to, this subject since he arrived in the House have</p>

			<p>been unstinting. I have been more than impressed by his determination to ensure that we do not, at any turn, miss the opportunity to raise it; he has been particularly determined to ensure that we look at the role of critical materials in renewables. They will continue to be an important part of how we are able to develop our renewables capacity. I hope that he is reassured that we continue to work across Departments to maximise those outcomes. Here</p>
27/05/21	Written answers	HM Treasury	<p>Net Zero Review - UIN 3830 Pat McFadden, Wolverhampton South East (Lab): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Treasury Committee report, Net Zero and the Future of Green Finance, published on 22 April 2021, what plans he has to ensure that there is a (a) clear timetable and (b) legislative pathway to deliver a UK taxonomy ahead of COP26 in November 2021.</p> <p>Kemi Badenoch, Saffron Walden (Con): In November 2020, the Chancellor announced that the UK would implement a Green Taxonomy to create a common understanding of which economic activities are environmentally sustainable, improving understanding of the impact of firms' activities and investments on the environment. The Government is required to make Technical Screening Criteria (TSC) via secondary legislation for climate change mitigation, and climate change adaptation no later than 1 January 2023. These TSC will be subject to appropriate, open consultation prior to making. Here</p>
27/05/21	Written answers	BEIS	<p>Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Research UIN 6387 Helen Hayes, Dulwich and West Norwood (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to encourage investment in the research and development of technologies which have the potential to contribute to achieving net zero.</p> <p>Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Con): The Net Zero Innovation Portfolio (NZIP) will spend £1bn over the next 4 years to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative low-carbon technologies, systems and business models in power, buildings and industry. It will focus on ten priority areas with the</p>

			potential to contribute to Net Zero, including: floating offshore wind, nuclear advanced modular reactors, energy storage and flexibility; bioenergy; hydrogen; homes; direct air capture and advanced CCUS; industrial fuel switching; and disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence for energy. Here
28/05/21	Press release	PM's office	Calling all small businesses to lead the charge to net zero. The Together for our Planet campaign encourages small businesses to pledge to cut their emissions to net zero by 2050 or sooner, while helping them grow, adapt and seize new opportunities. Here

25 year Environment Bill

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
11/05/21	Press release	Defra	New Environment Bill provisions to tackle storm overflows. Here
11/05/21	Ministerial Statement	Defra	Contingencies Fund Advance – Office for Environmental Protection. Here
18/05/21	Press release	Defra	Environment Secretary to set out plans to restore nature and build back greener from the pandemic. Here
18/05/21	Written statement	Defra	Plans to restore nature. Here
19/05/21	Written answers	Defra	<p>Insects: Environment Protection - UIN 350 Rachael Maskell, York Central (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring the gardens of publicly-owned buildings to be more environmentally friendly for bees and other insects.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): The Government works with public, private and voluntary sector partners to develop advice so that everyone can provide and manage nesting and feeding resources for bees and other insects, whether in gardens or the wider countryside.</p> <p>Our advice is based on clear evidence that by increasing habitat for insects, we support long-term population increases. As part of the National Pollinator Strategy, we promote this advice through the 'Bees' Needs' website and our annual 'Bees' Needs Week' campaign to celebrate and encourage nationwide action. All public bodies, including local authorities, have a legal duty under the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act to</p>

			<p>have regard to conserving biodiversity when exercising their functions. Our Environment Bill strengthens that duty to require public authorities to take steps to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.</p> <p>In addition, the Greening Government Commitments set out a number of environmental commitments across the estates and operations of central Government departments and their partner organisations, including the need to report publicly on the steps they are taking to address biodiversity and the natural environment. We aim to publish a new framework of commitments for 2021-25 in due course. This will ensure the central Government estate, and its operations, continues to reduce its environmental footprint, aligns with commitments in our 25 Year Environment Plan and will be consistent with a trajectory to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. As part of this, we are exploring a range of measures aimed at improving biodiversity and nature recovery across the central government estate. Here</p>
24/05/21	Written answers	Defra	<p>Rivers: Plastics - UIN 3208 Virginia Crosbie, Ynys Môn (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to reduce microplastic contamination in rivers arising from the discharge of untreated sewage and wastewater by water companies. Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): Although there has been research reporting the presence and impacts of microplastics in the marine environment, little is known about their sources, release and impact on rivers. Defra has published research to contribute to better understanding of these issues, and will use the outcomes from this and other studies to develop policy options to help mitigate the impact of microplastics in the environment.</p> <p>Defra is also working with the Environment Agency, academics and the UK water industry to understand the scale of the microplastic pollution problem and to establish detection methods to identify, characterise and quantify the types of microplastics entering wastewater treatment plants; evaluate the efficiency of</p>

			<p>treatment processes for the removal of microplastics from domestic wastewaters, and assess the fate and biological effects of microplastics in receiving rivers. With regards to discharges of untreated waste water, tackling the harm caused by sewer overflows is a top priority for this department.</p> <p>To achieve this, the new Storm Overflows Taskforce - bringing together Government, the water industry, regulators and environmental NGOs - has agreed to set a long-term goal to eliminate harm from storm overflows. The Taskforce is meeting regularly and working on plans to start making progress towards that goal, and they have commissioned research to gather evidence on the costs, benefits and feasibility of different options.</p> <p>We are also introducing new duties in the Environment Bill that will require the Government to publish a plan by September 2022 to reduce sewage discharges from storm overflows and to report progress to Parliament on implementing that plan. We are also introducing duties requiring water companies and the Environment Agency to publish data on storm overflow operations on an annual basis. These legally binding obligations on water companies and Government will help reduce pollution in rivers, including microplastic contamination, protecting wildlife and public health. Water companies are committed in the five-year business planning period (2020-25) to a significant programme of improvements to the monitoring and management of storm overflows at a cost of around £1.3 billion.</p> <p>Here</p>
26/05/21	Press release	Defra	<p>Environment Bill continues through Parliament. New amendments will include legally-binding 2030 species target and measures to reduce sewage discharges into rivers. Here</p>
26/05/21	Debate	HoC	<p>Environment bill debate summary. Here</p>

Environment – Waste

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
29/04/21	Written answers	HoL/Defra	<p>Litter: Tobacco - UIN HL15154 Baroness Hayman Of Ullock: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to establish regulatory mechanisms for imposing extended producer responsibility on the tobacco industry; and how any such plans will ensure the industry takes financial responsibility for the costs associated with discarded cigarette butts.</p> <p>Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: New research conducted by Eunomia for Defra and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) indicates that cleaning up littered cigarette butts currently costs litter authorities in the UK around £40 million per year, rising to £46 million when including those disposed of in public bins.</p> <p>We have recently announced our intention to explore regulatory options to ensure that the tobacco industry takes sufficient financial responsibility for the toxic litter created by its products. Supported by the Department of Health and Social Care, Defra is now actively exploring the suitability of regulatory options to reduce tobacco litter and we plan to conduct further research this year. This research will help inform next steps and we therefore cannot yet confirm a timescale. The Government will continue to work closely with stakeholders to address the issue. Government policy in this area must be developed in accordance with the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and its guidelines.</p> <p>The Environment Bill will allow us to legislate for extended producer responsibility schemes, which could include requiring cigarette producers to pay the full disposal costs of products or materials that they place on the market, including littered cigarette butts. Cigarette and tobacco product packaging will already be covered by the reforms to the packaging producer responsibility scheme, which are currently open for consultation. Here</p>
07/05/21	Press release	Defra	<p>10p plastic bag charge to come into force on 21 May. Here</p>
17/05/21	Written answers	Defra	<p>House of Commons written question – UIN138.</p>

			<p><u>Dame Diana Johnson, Kingston upon Hull North, Lab:</u> To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to (a) set targets for the reduction of plastic pollution, (b) publish a strategy and annual reports on plastic pollution reduction and (c) establish an advisory committee on plastic pollution.</p> <p><u>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con):</u> The Environment Bill requires the Government to set at least one long-term, legally binding target in four of the highest priority areas for environmental improvement, including Resource Efficiency and Waste Reduction. These targets will be set following a robust, evidence-led process that includes seeking independent expert advice, a role for stakeholders and the public, and approval from Parliament. We prefer to set a wider Resources and Waste target to ensure a holistic approach to all materials, not just plastics, to ensure we achieve the best environmental outcome.</p> <p>As to a strategy, annual reports and an advisory committee on plastic pollution reduction, the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. In December 2018 we published the Resources and Waste Strategy, which sets out how we want to achieve this and move towards a circular economy, effectively providing a strategy for plastic pollution reduction. The Environment Bill will enable us to significantly change the way that we manage our waste and take forward a number of the proposals from the Resources and Waste Strategy. The Bill contains powers to create extended producer responsibility schemes; introduce deposit return schemes; establish greater consistency in the recycling system; better control the export of plastic waste; and give us the power to set new charges for other single-use plastic items. All these measures will effectively contribute to reducing plastic pollution.</p> <p>The Government are currently consulting on policy proposals for extended producer responsibility for packaging, a deposit return scheme and more consistency in recycling collections. We also support the UK Plastics Pact (UKPP), which produces an annual</p>
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			<p>report on the progress to plastic waste reduction targets in 2025. The Pact is a collaborative initiative of over 120 business members, representing retail, manufacturing, hospitality, the plastic supply sector, plastic recycling and resource management. Here</p>
17/05/21	Written answers	Defra	<p>Incinerators - UIN 921</p> <p>Beth Winter, Cynon Valley (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the incineration of waste on the Government's climate objectives.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): Incineration of fossil derived waste is a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Total greenhouse gas emissions from waste incineration accounted for around 1.4% (6.47 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions in 2019. Of this, about 6.19 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent was emitted from Energy from Waste plants. It is clear that we will need to reduce that impact. That is why the Government continues to take action, including through our Environment Bill measures, to reduce, re-use and recycle more of our waste and to move to a circular economy.</p> <p>In assessing the effect of waste incineration on meeting climate objectives and deciding on what further action is needed, the Government is considering the recommendations of the independent Climate Change Committee. Defra is also seeking to strengthen its own evidence base around the environmental impacts of managing residual waste including incineration of municipal waste. This information will be taken into account in the Government's assessment of the future infrastructure needed for treating residual waste, to be published over coming months, and will inform direction setting to meet our climate goals. Here</p>
17/05/21	Early Day Motion	HoC	<p>Proposal to end the export of plastic waste - EDM (Early Day Motion) 49</p> <p>That this House notes the publication of Greenpeace's report entitled Trashed - how the UK is still dumping plastic waste on the rest of the world; further notes with concern that the UK generates more plastic waste per person than any country besides the US and, in 2020, exported 40 per cent of its</p>

			<p>plastic waste - 210,000 tonnes - to Turkey where investigations have found some of that waste to have been illegally dumped and burned; understands that the UK and EU member states have rules designed to prevent the export of plastic waste unless it is to be recycled; notes its concern that those rules appear to have been broken; joins Greenpeace's calls for the Government to take control over that problem in light of what it describes as the Government's reckless decision to send plastic waste to Turkey given that country lacks the infrastructure to cope with that waste; and calls on the Government to take urgent steps to reduce the volume of single use and mixed plastics, end the export of plastic waste and enact the Environment Bill as soon as possible. Here</p>
19/05/21	Written answers	Defra	<p>House of Commons written question 392 Chris Elmore, Ogmore (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the level of waste from single-use nappies.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): In line with the 25 Year Environment Plan, and our Resources and Waste Strategy, we are considering the best approach to minimise the environmental impact of a range of products, including nappies, taking on board the environmental and social impacts of the options available. Potential additional policy measures include standards, consumer information and encouraging voluntary action by business. We are seeking powers, through the Environment Bill, that will enable us to, where appropriate and subject to consultation, introduce ecodesign and consumer information requirements. This could include labelling schemes that provide accurate information to consumers, to drive the market towards more sustainable products.</p> <p>The decision on whether to support local reusable nappy schemes is one for local authorities. To help them better understand the merits of doing so, as well as for our understanding, we are funding an environmental assessment of disposable and washable absorbent hygiene products with the primary focus on nappies. This is looking at the waste and energy impacts of washable and disposable products, disposal to landfill or incineration, and recycling</p>

			options. Information is being gathered from industry to help with this. I have recently met representatives of the Nappy Alliance and will be meeting disposable nappy business representatives shortly. The research will be published in the summer, following peer review, and will help inform possible future action on nappies by the Government and industry. Here
19/05/21	Written answers	Defra	<p>House of Commons written question UIN201. Sajid Javid, Bromsgrove (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to work with rural communities to tackle fly-tipping.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): Fly-tipping is a crime which affects all of society, including rural communities and private landowners, and we are committed to tackling this unacceptable behaviour</p> <p>We appreciate the difficulty and cost that fly-tipping poses to landowners and we work with a wide range of interested parties through the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group (NFTPG), such as the National Farmers Union, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Countryside Alliance and the Countryside Landowners Association, to promote and disseminate good practice, including advice on how to prevent fly-tipping on private land which can be found at: NFTPGAdviceforLandowners.pdf (tacklingflytipping.com)</p> <p>We are also working with the NFTPG to develop a fly-tipping toolkit to help local authorities, landowners and others work in partnership to tackle this crime. We expect local authorities to investigate all incidents of fly-tipping, including those on private land; prosecuting fly-tippers when there is sufficient evidence and recovering investigation, enforcement and clearance costs where possible</p> <p>Budget 2020 allocated up to £2 million to support innovative solutions to tackle fly-tipping. In April 2021 we commissioned a research project considering the drivers, deterrents and impacts of fly-tipping tipping, which will include consideration of rural areas. This research project is due to be completed before the end of this year and will support informed policy making. We are exploring additional funding opportunities</p>

			<p>and priorities, including considering the role of digital solutions.</p> <p>We are taking forward the commitment in the Resources and Waste Strategy to develop proposals for the reform of the waste carrier, broker, and dealer regime. We are currently working with industry and the regulator and we intend to consult later this year. We also intend to consult on the introduction of mandatory electronic waste tracking. Digital records of waste movements will allow regulators to detect when waste does not reach the next stage, which may help to identify illegal activity including fly-tipping.</p> <p>The Environment Bill will help us to use our resources more efficiently and reduce the amount of waste we produce. It will enable us to fundamentally change the way we use resources, including increasing rates of recycling and making the products we use every day more durable and easier to recycle. Here</p>
21/05/21	Written answers	Defra	<p>Roads: Litter - UIN 799</p> <p>Rachael Maskell, York Central (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle (a) plastic litter and (b) other litter on UK roads.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): In the 2017 Litter Strategy, the Government set out a number of commitments to tackle litter, including that on our roads, through education, improved infrastructure and better enforcement. Since publishing the Strategy we have given councils new powers to hold the keeper of a vehicle responsible for litter thrown from it by issuing a civil penalty. We have also carried out a pilot survey of roadside cleanliness on those parts of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) which are litter-picked by local authorities and engaged over 100 of those authorities in research to explore associated issues, challenges and good practice. We expect to publish a report on our findings later this year.</p> <p>On those roads where Highways England are responsible for clearing litter, we have introduced a litter performance indicator (PI). Litter on these roads will be reported annually from the end of the 2020/21 financial year and will be published in</p>

			<p>Highways England 's Delivery Plan Update this summer. The PI measures what percentage of these roads are predominantly free of litter, or Grade B, in line with the Code</p> <p>We are taking steps to address packaging litter both at roadsides and elsewhere. Our recently published consultation on extended producer responsibility for packaging proposes that producers of commonly littered packaging items be made responsible for the costs that are directly attributable to their management, for both binned and ground litter. We also expect the introduction of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers to incentivise proper disposal, and we are currently consulting on these proposals. Here</p>

Industrial strategy & local industrial strategies

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes

Planning

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes

Transport – Sub-national Transport Boards (STBs) – (eg TfN, TfSE)

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
11/05/21	Press release	TfN	Transport for the North responds to Queen's Speech. Here
27/05/21	Press release	TfN	Government urged to publish multibillion-pound rail investment plan for the North. Here