



Office for
**Environmental
Protection**

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What is the OEP?



The Environment Act established the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) as a **new public body**.

The role of the OEP will be to **protect and improve the environment** by holding government and public authorities to account against their commitments and environmental law.

Remit to cover **England**, potentially Northern Ireland and **reserved matters**

Central to a **new system of environmental governance** in the Environment Act - alongside environmental improvement plans, targets and principles

The OEP's current legal formation is in transition to **full independence** when Parliament takes the steps needed for establishment of our full functions and powers, expected early 2022

What will the OEP do?



The Environment Act enables a range of functions

Advice

Advise Ministers, regarding proposed changes to 'environmental law' and matters relating to the 'natural environment'

Monitoring Environmental Law

Monitor and report on matters related to the implementation of environmental law

Monitoring EIP and environmental targets

Monitor and report on government progress in implementing environmental improvement plans and targets

Complaints & enforcement

Receive complaints about alleged failures of public authorities to comply with environmental law, investigate serious cases, issue information and decision notices and take public authorities to court by means of environmental review or judicial review

Complaints

A person may make a complaint to the OEP if the person believes that a **public authority** has failed to comply with **environmental law**

Complaints and Enforcement



Office for
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OEP



Public



Complaint about
an alleged failure

Complaint
validated

OEP current
functions

Something else
suggests a
possible failure

OEP determines if
the matter is serious
and a priority

OEP investigates

OEP may serve
Information notice

OEP may serve
Decision notice

Environmental
Review

Urgent
cases can go to
Judicial Review

Courts



Monitoring environmental law and advice

OEP must

- **monitor** the implementation of environmental law
- **advise Ministers**, on request, regarding proposed changes to environmental law and matters relating to the natural environment

OEP may

- **report** on matters concerned with the implementation of environmental law
- **advise Ministers** on its own initiative about proposed changes to environmental law

Monitoring of the EIP



The **25 Year Environment Plan** (25 YEP) was the first of the government's Environmental Improvement Plans (EIP), to be refreshed in 2023.

The OEP has a role to **monitor government's progress against the EIPs.**



We expect the OEP's **first report to be published early next year**

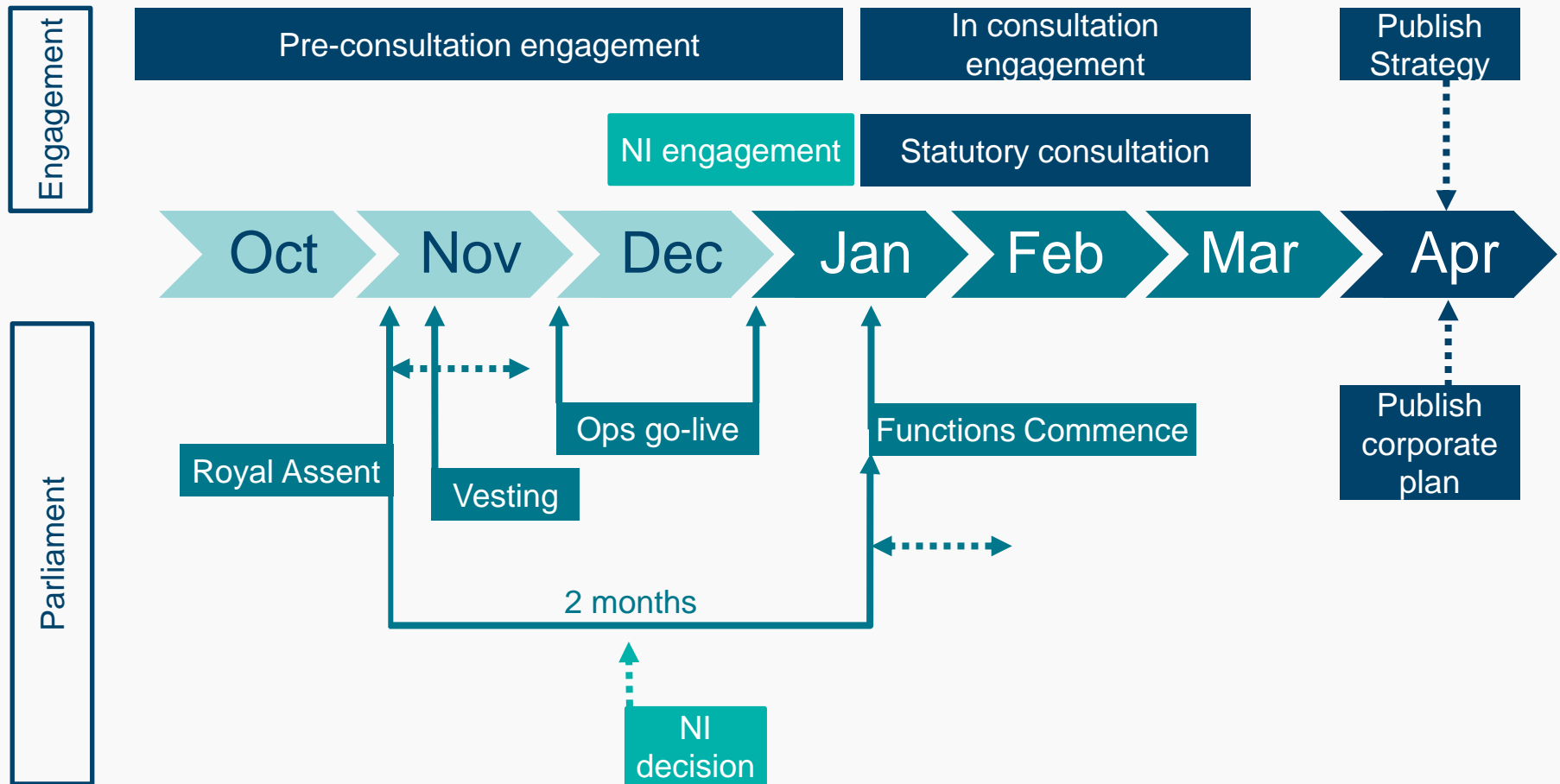
Developing the OEP Strategy



The Environment Act requires the OEP to **develop and consult on a strategy** for how it intends to exercise its functions including:

- How it will **further its principal objective** – *“to contribute to environmental protection and the improvement of the natural environment”*
- How it will **act objectively and impartially**
- How it will have regard to the need to **act proportionately and transparently**
- Its **enforcement policy**
- How it intends to **avoid any overlaps** with other organisations as appropriate

Timeline



Three key steps

Vesting

17 November

- Legal creation
- No new functional powers

Operational
Go Live

1 December to
1 January

- Operational independence
- IT, finance, people, media &c

Commencement
of Functions

24 January

- Functions and powers enabled
- Strategy set out for consultation

Building a new public body



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Want to find out more?



<https://www.theoep.org.uk/>

