



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FORUM

c/o Society for the Environment
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The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

29 November 2023

Dear Mr Barclay

Firstly, may we congratulate you on your appointment as Environment Secretary.

We are writing to you collectively as the Environmental Policy Forum (EPF), a coalition of 13 professional bodies and learned societies representing around 70,000 environmental professionals across a variety of different disciplines. The views expressed in this letter are those of professionals, close to practice, duly qualified, and often working in industry, many running successful businesses. The EPF network strives to promote environmental sustainability and resilience for the public benefit.

A pivotal moment for the environment

We're sure you will agree that the coming years are integral to delivering on the government's commitment, to leave the environment in a better state than that in which we found it. This includes delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), our ambitious legally binding environmental targets and national commitment to reach net zero by 2050.

Achieving effective delivery

The commitments listed above (among others) are welcomed, but effective delivery of these commitments must now follow. To ensure the UK can meet its environmental targets, we urge you to prioritise the following during the coming year, and within the Conservative party manifesto for the upcoming general election:

1. **Invest in green skills:** green skills are essential to achieving our long-term environmental goals, stimulating economic growth, and fostering a more sustainable and resilient global workforce. We're pleased that the government has committed to deliver two million green jobs by 2030. Without investing in the underlying green skills required, however, these green jobs can't be performed effectively. Just two examples of which are: the skills needed by government departments and agencies to follow through on implementing our environmental targets; and, by local authorities to effectively deliver on government commitments, such as mandatory BNG.

Notably important in addressing the green skills challenge is investing in training provision, which starts in ensuring training is delivered by those who've benefited from regular quality training themselves. Ensuring quality CPD and access to professional registration opportunities are also vital.

2. **Adopt a consistent, joined-up approach:** in recent times incoherent and inconsistent policy across government has undermined the delivery of environmental commitments. Policy uncertainty undermines confidence, threatening the investment in the skills needed for the green jobs of now and the future. We feel strongly that unless a joined-up approach is taken across government policy, delivery of our environmental commitments cannot be achieved. This means ensuring strong links within Defra (e.g., between wild fisheries and the environment), and between Defra and other government departments, including DESNZ and DLUHC.
3. **Consult the experts:** environmental professionals are those with the knowledge and experience of delivering policy. Engaging with the views and concerns of the environmental professional community early on in policymaking means a higher chance of policy being effectively delivered, reducing the likelihood of unforeseen consequences.

Therefore, when it comes to recent Defra consultations, we have been concerned over increasingly limited scrutiny and consultation with experts. One notable example includes just a ten-day consultation window being given for the revised air quality strategy consultation. We ask that Defra refers to the government's [Code of Practice on Consultation](#) when shaping consultation processes and timelines.

We look forward to working together to deliver on the UK's environmental commitments and stand ready to facilitate consultation with our extensive network of competent environmental professionals.

Yours Sincerely and signed on behalf of the following organisations,

Dr Daniela Russi
Senior Policy Manager,
British Ecological Society



Louise Hosking, Executive Director of
Environmental Health,
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health



Lee Marshall
Policy and External Affairs Director,
Chartered Institution of Wastes Management



David Bunt
Chief Executive, Institute of Fisheries
Management



Joseph Lewis
Policy Lead, Institution of Environmental
Sciences



Robert Hughes
Acting CEO, Landscape Institute



Dr Emma Wilcox
Chief Executive, Society for the Environment



Notes:

1. The British Ecological Society (BES) is the largest scientific society for ecologists in Europe with a membership of 7,000 in over 120 countries around the world. We support the ecology community at all stages of their careers through our journals, meetings, grants, and education and policy work. The first ecology society to be established anywhere in the world, we have been the champion of ecology for more than a century. britishecologicalsociety.org
2. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) is the membership and awarding body for the environmental health sector. Our members work around the world, improving lives and demonstrating excellence across all areas of environmental health including food, public health, housing, environmental protection, and health and safety. cieh.org
3. The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) is the leading professional body for the waste management sector representing over 5,500 individuals in the UK. Established in 1898, CIWM is a non-profit making organisation, dedicated to the promotion of professional competence amongst waste managers. CIWM seeks to raise standards for those working in and with the sector by producing best practice guidance, developing educational and training initiatives, and providing information on key waste-related issues. ciwm.co.uk
4. The Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM) is an international organisation of people whose aim is to support and promote sustainable fisheries management for the benefit of our members, fisheries, wildlife and society. ifm.org.uk
5. The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) is a membership organisation representing professionals from fields as diverse as air quality, land contamination and education - wherever environmental work is underpinned by science. We promote and raise public awareness of environmental science by supporting professional scientists and academics and by standing up for the voice of science, scientists, and the natural world in policy. the-ies.org
6. The Landscape Institute (LI) is the chartered body for the landscape profession. It is an educational charity working to promote the art and science of landscape practice. The LI's aim, through the work of its members, is to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the public benefit. The Landscape Institute provides a professional home for all landscape practitioners including landscape scientists, landscape planners, landscape architects, landscape managers and urban designers. landscapeinstitute.org

7. The Society for the Environment (SocEnv) is comprised of 25 Licenced Bodies, with over 600,000 members between them. It received a Royal Charter in 2004, which empowers it to regulate the Chartered Environmentalist, Registered Environmental Practitioner and Registered Environmental Technician professional registrations globally. There are now over 8,000 environmental professionals currently registered who share a common vision of delivering sustainability through environmental professionalism. socenv.org.uk