



Environment & Animal Welfare

Dear Colleagues,

2020-4 Environment & Animal Welfare

We continue to live through peculiar times. Even if we ourselves remain healthy, most of us will know people who have had coronavirus—including CPF Group Coordinators and members—and, sadly, many of us know people who would otherwise almost certainly have still been alive today, were it not for the direct and indirect effects of the pandemic and the public lockdown.

Thank you to everybody who participated in our consultation on COVID-19. Given how swiftly events were changing, whereas we usually collate your submissions to CPF discussions into a single report after the deadline has passed, we submitted weekly reports throughout the lockdown to policymakers in the Party and the Government. Your input was very much appreciated and, as so often, helped us to raise awareness of issues before they became wider public or media concerns.

Back in January, we began this parliamentary session by considering the Government's programme for legislation, as presented in the Queen's Speech. This consultation paper explores one of its major sections—namely, the environment and animal welfare.

These are issues that are of **particular interest to younger citizens**. So, if your CPF group tends mainly to attract older members, please use the opportunity to engage a more diverse range of voters this time: your discussions will be all the more informed and interesting for it.

If your local CPF Group hasn't yet tried **meeting online** via video-conference software, like Zoom, let other groups' experience encourage you to give it a try:

*"Zoom forums actually work – much to everyone's surprise!"
(Shrewsbury & Atcham CPF)*

"This was our first meeting on Zoom (we usually meet in a side room of a convivial local pub). It went very well – better than we expected. Everyone spoke up and our discussion was lively." (Bexhill & Battle CPF)

Please send your responses to the questions to CPF.Papers@conservatives.com, using the associated response form published alongside this paper on the CPF website. The deadline for submitting your response is 12th July. We aim to publish our next discussion paper on 13th July, on infrastructure, investment and devolution.

A summary of responses to this discussion paper will be sent to the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, Party Chairman and CPF Chairman within a month of the closing date for submissions. We look forward to hearing your ideas as, together, we continue to unleash the country's potential.

Please stay safe, everybody, and keep heeding all the latest government advice. Together, we will come through this challenging season.

The CPF Team

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The Big Picture

"In the UK, we have built a very special market for food based on provenance with particular attention to food safety and animal welfare standards and we will not jeopardise that through trade deals in the future." (Secretary of State for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, The Rt Hon George Eustice MP)¹

Now that we have left the European Union, we can take full responsibility for how we protect our environment and deliver on our commitment to leave it in a better state than we found it. As we embark on our future as a sovereign, independent nation, we will not only protect but enhance environmental standards, protecting it for generations to come and cementing our status as a world leader on the environment.

In order to maximise benefits and value for money, we have identified six key areas around which action will be focused:

- using and managing land sustainably;
- recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;
- connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing;
- increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste;
- securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and
- protecting and improving the global environment.²

The coronavirus pandemic will inevitably accelerate change in many ways throughout society. There will be a period of rapid reappraisal of legislative and fiscal frameworks, supply chains and consumer preferences. This potentially enables us to be even more radical, both domestically and internationally, in how we reimagine environmental and animal protection.

Questions for discussion

1. After the coronavirus pandemic, in what ways might we seek new international agreements on environmental standards to prevent the transmission of disease from animals to humans in foreign food chains—e.g. "wet markets", animals living close to humans, and illegal wildlife trade—and on the habitat loss that forces humans and wildlife into closer proximity?
2. Where and how should we diverge from our currently-embedded EU environmental and animal welfare standards to achieve a "green Brexit"?
3. Should we use our new independent trade policy to drive or require improvements in environmental and animal husbandry standards from foreign suppliers in our imports (e.g. by offering lower tariffs for those who achieve higher standards) or is this either modern imperialism or trade protectionism in disguise?
4. As we re-open the economy after the lockdown, how might we build on the recent collaboration between UK companies and charities on projects in the national interest? How might we preserve environmental improvements (such as the better air quality that resulted from reduced transport use) and tackle other threats (such as environmental degradation and air pollution) in a way that doesn't constrain economic growth?
5. What steps should the Government be taking, potentially as part of the post-pandemic economic recovery, to make our economy more resilient to the effects of changes in the climate and to other environmental shocks? How might we move to a more seasonal food supply and promote British producers more effectively?
6. What should we aim to achieve from hosting COP26 in Glasgow next year?
7. Is there any other observation you would like to make?

Recent government action

- Launched in January 2018, our **25 Year Environment Plan** sets 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 our oceans.²
- Our landmark **Environment Bill** will tackle plastic pollution, protect nature, improve air and water quality and leave our planet in a better condition for future generations. We will establish an independent Office for Environmental Protection to hold politicians accountable and ensure we truly cement our position as a world leader on the environment – with new legally binding targets on air quality, environmental biodiversity and plastics reduction.³
- Our landmark **Agriculture Bill** will enable a balance between food production and the environment, safeguarding our countryside and farming communities for the future. Replacing the EU's deeply flawed Common Agricultural Policy system, our new **Environmental Land Management** system will be based on paying "public money for public goods". It will reward farmers not for the amount of land owned but for environmental stewardship, including air and water quality, soil health, animal welfare, public access to the countryside, action to reduce flood risks and other measures to address climate change and its effects.⁴
- There will now be a legal obligation on the Government to produce an assessment of our **food security** every five years.¹
- Managing our waters carefully and sustainably. Our **Fisheries Bill** will help us meet our 25-year Environment Plan commitment to build an even more sustainable industry for future generations, and to care for the marine environment that is so crucial to the nation's health and prosperity.⁵
- Establishing a £500 million Blue Planet Fund to **protect our oceans** and support the people whose livelihoods rely on the seas. The fund will strengthen governance to protect marine environments, strengthen science, research and innovation to help other countries protect oceans and engage the private sector, experts and local communities to encourage more sustainable fishing.⁶
- Boosting **recycling** and reducing **plastic pollution** with a new plastic packaging tax. The tax will incentivise the use of recycled plastic and help reduce the scourge of plastic waste from April 2022. Our Resources and Waste Strategy will end confusion over recycling and tackle problem packaging by making polluters pay. We are banning the export of plastic waste to non-OECD countries, plastic straws, drink stirrers and cotton buds, and have banned microbeads in cosmetic and personal care products. Our 5p charge for single use plastic carrier bags has reduced bag sales by 90 per cent.⁷
- Cleaning up the air we breathe with a £3.5 billion **Clean Air Strategy**. This details the action all parts of government are required to take to improve air quality and it has been praised by the WHO as an 'example for the rest of the world to follow'. We will use the tax system to move away from polluting red diesel and are providing a total of £880 million to local councils to reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions.⁸
- Increasing **tree planting** rates with a Nature for Climate Fund which will invest £640 million in tree planting and peatland restoration. Our plans will see the rate of tree planting increase by over 600 per cent. The Budget also announced the Nature Recovery Network Fund to partner with businesses and local communities to restore wildlife.⁹
- Increasing **protections for animals** in homes, farms and in the wild: banning pet primates, extending cat microchipping, working to ban live exports for slaughter or fattening, controlling the trade in hunting trophies and banning ivory sales to protect elephants. This builds on our move to mandate CCTV in slaughterhouses, to ensure the highest possible animal welfare standards are upheld.¹⁰

Endnotes

- ¹ *Plans for future greener farming*, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 26 February 2020, [link](#)
- ² *A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*, DEFRA, 11 January 2018, [link](#)
- ³ *30 January 2020: Environment Bill 2020 policy statement*, DEFRA, updated 13 March 2020, [link](#)
- ⁴ *Agriculture Bill to boost environment and food production*, DEFRA, 16 January 2020, [link](#); *Eustice unveils plans for future greener farming*, DEFRA, 25 February 2020, [link](#)
- ⁵ *Profitable and sustainable future for UK fishing industry*, DEFRA, 11 February 2020, [link](#)
- ⁶ *Minister Pow committed to deliver Seabird Conservation Strategy*, DEFRA, 16 January 2020, [link](#)
- ⁷ *Budget 2020*, HMT, 11 March 2020, [link](#); *Resources and waste strategy for England*, DEFRA, 18 December 2018, [link](#); *Gove takes action to ban plastic straws, stirrers, and cotton buds*, DEFRA, 22 May 2019, [link](#); *Plastic bag sales down 90% since introduction of 5p charge*, DEFRA, 31 July 2019, [link](#)
- ⁸ *Clean Air Strategy*, DEFRA, 14 January 2019, [link](#)
- ⁹ *Budget 2020: What you need to know*, HM Treasury, 11 March 2020, [link](#)
- ¹⁰ *Animal welfare: CCTV in slaughterhouses*, DEFRA, 12 November 2017, [link](#); *New measures protect animal welfare and increase woodland cover*, DEFRA, 1 October 2019, [link](#); *Government confirms UK ban on ivory sales*, DEFRA, 3 April 2018, [link](#)