



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Environment
Agency



Creating a better place

Our ambition to 2020

June 2018

Our organisation

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment.

We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

This plan was initially launched in April 2016. This refreshed version includes our success measures for 2018 to 2019.

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Chair's foreword

The Environment Agency's work managing flood and coastal risk, advising government and regulating industry protects people, helps wildlife thrive and promotes economic prosperity.

The Secretary of State has set out his ambitions for making the most of the UK's natural capital in the 25 Year Environment Plan. We support it.

As the principal delivery body for the environment in England, we helped draft the plan, and it is directly through our work that many of its goals will be realised.

Working in partnership with others will also be essential. The Environment Agency is spread over the entire country. It is made up of committed public servants, living and working in villages, towns and cities, collaborating with everyone from anglers, community groups and local farmers, to global corporations, international agencies and foreign governments. It is by bringing all of our understanding together, by listening to different perspectives and focussing on outcomes that the Environment Agency will help to achieve a Green Brexit.

The biggest factor facing this work is climate change. Climate risks cut across all of our activities. Everyone needs to do more to build in resilience to future planning. In line with the Paris agreement, we should aim for a maximum 2 degree global temperature rise but also prepare our infrastructure for the floods and droughts of a 4 degree rise.

This means looking at the investment opportunities climate change presents as well as the risks, and understanding the potential for resilience measures to deliver technological innovation and skills, stronger infrastructure and enhanced landscapes. The Environment Agency's expertise and experience is helping this agenda across government departments.

As I travel the country, I am inspired by the talent, enthusiasm and inclusivity of my colleagues in the Environment Agency, the wider Defra group and the whole of government. Protecting people, wildlife and business is a big job, so we need to be ambitious. This document will help us chart the course.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emma Howard Boyd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Introduction from the Chief Executive

The Environment Agency was established in 1996. Our purpose, set out in the Environment Act, hasn't changed: to protect and enhance the environment and promote sustainable development.

But the context in which we operate has changed dramatically. Climate change, the single biggest factor affecting our environment, is now better understood and starting to bite.

Our country is more developed and more populous, putting greater pressure on the natural world. There is greater public awareness of the environment, and higher public expectation of us and the rest of the public sector.

The 2016 referendum has brought a new challenge: to ensure that the UK's exit from the European Union delivers a cleaner and greener country and a better environment. I am confident we can achieve those goals. The Environment Agency is helping design and deliver the arrangements that will.

Meanwhile the government's 25 Year Environment Plan, launched in January 2018, has laid out a comprehensive long term programme with an audacious and inspiring vision at its heart: that we will be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. The Environment Agency was closely involved in shaping the plan, and it is now one of our main responsibilities to deliver it.

How we do things in the Environment Agency is as important to me as what we do. We seek to be an open, outward looking, positive organisation. We believe none of us is as good as all of us: "embrace difference, include everyone" is part of our DNA. Just as we seek to enhance the lives of the people we serve, we want working for the Environment Agency itself to be life-enhancing. I am proud that this year we have once more been voted the leading employer in the country in Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index and that we again feature in Stonewall's top 100 LGBT-inclusive employers.

While much has changed since 1996, one thing hasn't: the commitment of all those who work for the Environment Agency to do the right thing for the environment, to create a better place for people and wildlife, and to go the extra mile for the communities we serve. It is an honour and a privilege to be their Chief Executive.

James Bevan, Chief Executive



Our vision

Create a better place for people and wildlife

Our purpose

Protect the environment and promote sustainable development

Our principles

How we will make choices

- Put people and wildlife first: our goal is to create a better place for them.
- 80/20: we will focus on the 20% that makes 80% of the difference.
- Support local priorities: every place and community has its own needs.



Our culture: how we do things

- Yes, if: we will take this approach in all that we do.
- Think big, act early, be visible.
- Seek partnership and show leadership.
- Focus on outcomes not processes.
- Embrace difference: include everyone.
- One team: support and trust each other to do the right thing.
- Stay safe and grow: we will invest in the wellbeing and development of all our staff.



The 25 Year Environment Plan

The government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out a comprehensive long term approach to protecting and enhancing the environment. The vision at the heart of the plan is that we will be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

The Environment Agency will play a central role in delivering the plan. We will work to deliver all 10 of the goals it lays out:

- Clean air
- Clean and plentiful water
- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Reducing risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently
- Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Minimising waste
- Managing exposure to chemicals
- Enhancing biosecurity

How we will know we are succeeding: our metrics for 2018 to 2019

Protecting and improving the environment.



2,000 kilometres of healthier rivers, lakes and coastal waters. 8,000 kilometres of enhancements by 2021.



410 hectares of new habitats. Since 2015 to 2016 we have created over 1,618 hectares of new habitat.



We have reduced the number of serious pollution incidents by 42% in the last 4 years. We aim to reduce this further.



By the end of March 2019 the number of high risk illegal waste sites will be 24% lower than in April 2017.



42,150 homes better protected from flood. 300,000 better protected by the end of 2021.



97.5% high risk flood and coastal risk management assets at or above the target condition.



6,500 staff ready and trained, through exercises and live events, to respond to incidents.



Influence 97% of planning decisions by local planning authorities. Increase in planning consents granted in line with our advice.

How we will do it: our corporate targets for 2018 to 2019

Outstanding organisation.



Fully and efficiently utilise our resources to protect and improve the environment and reduce flood risk.



Reduce carbon footprint to 32,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Since 2006 we have reduced our carbon emissions by around 43%.



Maintain a diverse workforce: target of 14% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), and 50% female executives.



Provide a safe place to work: no increase in lost time frequency rate from the 2017 to 2018 figure.



Our stories:

The Boston Barrier

The Boston Barrier is a priority scheme delivering tidal flood risk improvement to over 14,000 properties in Boston, Lincolnshire. The Barrier contributes to 5% of our 300,000 national target for homes better protected, in a borough where over 900 properties were flooded in the tidal surge of December 2013.

We worked in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council, Boston Borough Council and our Waterways team to ensure that the construction of the Barrier could facilitate the next phase of the Fens Waterways Link scheme.

Although some aspects of the original scheme were deferred in order to focus on the tidal flood defence components, the team remained focussed on doing the right thing for the community. They ensured that the project was future proofed through construction so that the deferred items could be incorporated at a later date after subsequent approvals and funding.

Phil Drury, Chief Executive of Boston Borough Council, said,

“The project has been a massive challenge over many years, yet your colleagues have tirelessly committed themselves to the complicated processes”

Phil Drury,
Chief Executive of Boston
Borough Council

“The project has been a massive challenge over many years, yet your colleagues have tirelessly committed themselves to the complicated processes of successive options, gateway reviews, studies, consultation, consents (not to mention the public inquiry) and the current tasks of actually constructing and commissioning the associated works.”



Our stories:

High Speed Two (HS2)

The High Speed Two (HS2) team consists of a network of colleagues in the 7 Areas along the route of this 330 mile, £60+ billion infrastructure investment.

The Environment Agency advised across the project to maximise environmental protection and enhancement. We adopted new permitting processes that will save the project millions of pounds and hundreds of hours of permitting time. Outcomes include:

- Improvements to tens of kilometres of watercourses in line with new HS2 standards.
- Provision of free surplus clay by HS2 for us to reuse and find efficiencies in our 6-year flood programme. HS2 will also help to complete other projects along the route.
- Unlocking legacy enhancement projects – opening up watercourses and enhancing waterbodies and habitats.
- Identifying overlaps between woodland planting and Natural Flood Management opportunities.

“Being able to discuss technical issues openly and working through things together is the only way this project could work”

Simon Dale-Lace,
High Speed Two project

Simon Dale-Lace, High Speed Two project, said,

“It’s been a pleasure working with you lot to make sure we get the best environmental outcome we can. Being able to discuss technical issues openly and working through things together is the only way this project could work. This was only possible with such a great team from the Environment Agency.”



Our stories:

Body worn cameras

The Environment Agency has successfully trialled and rolled out body worn cameras to waste enforcement officers.

The use of body cameras was first trialled by the Environment Agency in the north east. Footage captured on a bodycam was recently used to bring a conviction against an offender for the first time. The defendant was found guilty of wilfully obstructing the officers in the execution of their duty and using abusive behaviour towards 2 officers.

“The cameras will help to protect staff and bring obstructive individuals to justice”

Paul Whitehill,
Environment Agency
Waste Officer

The measures follow an extra £30 million of funding from the government in November 2017 to tackle waste crime – an issue that drives business away from legitimate operators, blights communities and endangers the environment.

In the financial year 2016 to 2017, the Environment Agency brought 138 prosecutions against businesses or individuals for waste crime offences, yielding more than £2 million in fines.

Paul Whitehill, Environment Agency Waste Officer, said,

“As a former police officer, I’ve seen routine visits rapidly escalate into threatening, or sometimes even violent, situations. Sadly the same risks apply to the Environment Agency’s officers. We want to get on with our jobs without the threat of violence and the cameras will help to protect staff and bring obstructive individuals to justice.”



Our people: 5 of our staff



Ebony Mitchell-Whyte
Senior Lawyer

I am a Senior Lawyer in the Enforcement and Prosecution team. My role is to provide legal advice to the area teams in the Midlands and to undertake the prosecution of individuals and companies where appropriate.

Since joining the Environment Agency I have enjoyed the breadth of issues that come under the enforcement umbrella. The team in Solihull are great to work with and make challenging days that much easier.

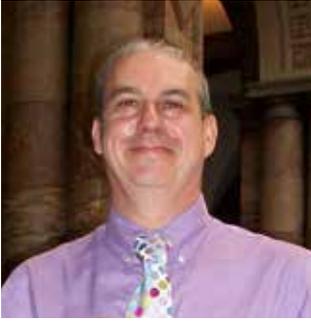


Samm Legg
Visual Impairment Network Lead

Environment Agency networks support people across the organisation. When I asked if there was a visual impairment network I could join I was told there wasn't but I could start one!

I wanted to find out if there were other people here who were living with sight loss and when I found I was not alone it was such a wonderful feeling.

We share stories and experiences as well as provide advice and guidance on projects and procedures to ensure they are accessible.



Richard Hadley

Waste Licensing Officer

My current substantive role is within the National Permitting Service as a technical specialist for the installation regime, but for the last 6 months I have been working as part of a small team helping to implement and embed the new charges scheme into our permitting processes.

The best thing about working for the Environment Agency is being able to work with such a good bunch of colleagues.



Hayley Bowman

Senior Specialist Flood and Coastal Risk Management

I work with our various teams, partners, industry and universities to provide the key evidence and guidance that underpins flood and coastal risk management at the Environment Agency.

The best part about working for the Environment Agency is seeing the difference we make to communities and the environment around us all.



Ben Fortune

Personal Assistant

I joined the Environment Agency in June of last year and am now PA to 2 Executive Managers within the Environment and Business Directorate.

Every day is different and every colleague I have contact with teaches me something, or inspires me in some way. Now... If only I knew what all the acronyms meant...



Our pledge

We are the Environment Agency.

We will go the extra mile for the people and places we serve.

www.gov.uk/environment-agency