

ADEPT: Parliamentary monitoring January 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

11 January: House returns
13 February: Recess
24 February: House returns
03 March: Budget
25 March: Easter recess
21 April: House returns

Devolution deals

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
11/01/21	Written question	MHCLG	<p>What progress his Department has made on the English devolution and local recovery White Paper. UIN - 910691</p> <p><u>Clive Lewis, Norwich South (Lab):</u> What progress his Department has made on the English devolution and local recovery White Paper.</p> <p><u>Luke Hall, Thornbury and Yate (Con):</u> The Government intends to bring forward the English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper in due course, detailing how the UK Government will partner with places across the UK to build a sustainable economic recovery. The Government is continuing progress on devolution and recently announced the West Yorkshire devolution deal which, subject to parliamentary approval, will give the newly elected Mayor control over an annual £38 million investment fund, as well as new powers over transport, education and housing and planning. Here</p>
14/01/21	Written question	MHCLG	<p>Devolution: England - UIN 133860</p> <p><u>Dan Jarvis, Barnsley Central (Lab):</u> To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12269 on Devolution: England, when he plans to publish the White Paper on English devolution.</p> <p><u>Luke Hall, Thornbury and Yate (Con):</u> The pandemic has rightly focused attention on tackling Covid-19. However, levelling up remains at the centre of Government's agenda. We want to give more power to local communities, providing an opportunity for all places to level up. The Government intends to bring forward the</p>

			Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper in due course. This will set out how the UK Government will partner with places across the UK to build a sustainable economic recovery and set out our plans for future devolution arrangements. Here
15/01/21	Written question	MHCLG	<p>Devolution: England - UIN 133276 Jonathan Gullis, Stoke-on-Trent North (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to increase devolution in England.</p> <p>Luke Hall, Thornbury and Yate (Con): We want to devolve and decentralise to give more power to local communities, providing an opportunity for all places to level up. We intend to bring forward the English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper in due course, detailing how the UK Government will partner with places across the UK to build a sustainable economic recovery, including our vision for expanding devolution across England. On 17 December 2020 the Order for the West Yorkshire devolution deal was laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary approval, the newly elected Mayor will have control over an annual £38 million investment fund as well as new powers over transport, education and housing and planning. Here</p>
20/01/21	Debate	HoC	Draft West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Election of Mayor and Functions) Order 2021. More here
21/01/21	Written answers	HM Treasury	<p>Non-domestic Rates - UIN 139074 Dr Rupa Huq, Ealing Central and Acton (Lab): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to announce the business rates for the period after the 1st April 2021.</p> <p>Jesse Norman, Hereford and South Herefordshire (Con): The Government is considering options for further COVID-19 related support through business rates reliefs. In order to ensure that any decisions best meet the evolving challenges presented by COVID-19, the Government will outline plans for 2021-22 reliefs in due course. In 2020, the Government launched the Fundamental Review of Business Rates, which sought views on the level of the business rates multiplier. A final report to be published in due course will set out the conclusions of the Review on this and other areas. Here</p>

Digital – Broadband & mobile

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes

Economic recovery & renewal

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
05/01/21	Press release	HM Treasury	£4.6 billion in new lockdown grants to support businesses and protect jobs. Here
06/01/21	Written statement	HM Treasury	Economy update – statement by chancellor of the Exchequer. Here
09/01/21	Press release	DCMS	UK Government announces major boost to coronavirus recovery through expansion of Dormant Assets Scheme. Here
11/01/21	Written question	HM Treasury	<p>Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus - UIN 131374</p> <p>Sarah Olney, Richmond Park (LD): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the 100 per cent business rates holiday into 2021-22 for the hospitality industry.</p> <p>Jesse Norman, Hereford and South Herefordshire (Con): This year the Government has provided an unprecedented business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties due to the direct adverse effects of COVID-19, worth over £10 billion. The Government has also provided Local Authorities with £1.1 billion across England via the Additional Restrictions Grant, for businesses which are not legally closed, but are nonetheless severely affected by local or national restrictions.</p> <p>In the 2020 Spending Review, the Government committed further support to businesses, including retail, hospitality and leisure, by freezing the business rates multiplier for 2021-22. In order to ensure that any decisions best meet the evolving challenges presented by COVID-19, the Government will outline plans for 2021-22 reliefs in the New Year. Here</p>
11/01/21	Oral answers	MHCLG	<p>High Street Regeneration UIN 910656, Vol 687</p> <p>James Sunderland, Bracknell (Con): What plans he has to support the regeneration of high streets.</p> <p>Also: Claire Coutinho, East Surrey (Con) 910665</p>

			<p><u>Mrs Flick Drummond, Meon Valley (Con)</u> 910673</p> <p><u>Robert Jenrick (The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government)</u>: The Government's priority throughout the pandemic has been to protect lives and livelihoods, with substantial support flowing to high street businesses through business grants, the paying of people's wages and tax deferrals. Just last week, the Chancellor announced an additional £4.6 billion in new lockdown grants to support businesses and protect jobs. I was pleased that on Boxing day we allocated £830 million from our future high streets fund to 72 areas to transform underused town centres into the vibrant places to live, work and visit that we all want to see after the pandemic. <u>More here</u></p>
11/02/21	Debate	HM Treasury	<p>Economic Update</p> <p><u>Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of Exchequer:</u> Before I begin, I am sure the whole House will join me in sending our very best wishes to my right hon. Friend James Brokenshire. I have been fortunate in having worked closely with him, and he is one of the nicest and most decent people in politics — a fantastic Minister and a tireless advocate for his constituents. We all look forward to his speedy recovery and to seeing him back in this place as soon as possible.</p> <p>Last week, the Prime Minister set out the actions that we must take to control the spread of coronavirus. With your permission, Mr Speaker, today I will update the House on the economic situation we currently face, the action we are taking to support the British people and businesses through the crisis, and the factors influencing our outlook. <u>More here</u></p>
18/01/21	Written statement	BEIS	<p>BEIS: Use of the Industrial Development Act 1982 for Coronavirus related assistance.</p> <p><u>Here</u></p>
18/01/21	Written question	HM Treasury	<p>Hospitality Industry and Retail Trade: Coronavirus - UIN 134579</p> <p><u>Lee Anderson, Ashfield (Con):</u> To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to encourage consumer spending in (a) non-essential retail and (b) the hospitality sector once covid-19 restrictions on those sectors are lifted.</p> <p><u>Kemi Badenoch, Saffron Walden (Con):</u> The Government understands that this is a very challenging time for the UK's retail and</p>

			<p>hospitality sector and recognises that these sectors have been significantly impacted by the pandemic. The Government will continue to monitor developments, engage with the sector and keep under review the case for further interventions, to support business growth and employment in the retail and hospitality sectors. The best way we can support consumers and businesses is by reopening businesses when it is safe to do so.</p> <p>The Government has already acted to deliver support to these sectors through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) which has been extended until April; and is protecting businesses with cash grants, Government backed finance through loan schemes, 'Pay as You Grow' long-term repayments options, a VAT cut, a VAT deferral for up to 12 months, a 12-month business rates holiday; and a moratorium on evictions to protect commercial tenants. Here</p>
18/01/21	Written question	BEIS	<p><u>Additional Restrictions Grant - UIN 138486</u> <u>Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, Slough (Lab):</u> To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of financial support available to businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak that are not eligible for an Additional Restrictions Grant.</p> <p><u>Paul Scully, Sutton and Cheam (Con):</u> The Government understands the considerable difficulties faced by UK businesses that have been adversely affected by a drop in business or closure due the coronavirus pandemic. In November, at the beginning of the second national lockdown, the Government made available £1.1bn in discretionary funding allocated to each local authority to support businesses via the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). This was topped up with a further £500m in January 2021. Local authorities have significant discretion in the businesses they support and the amount of grant funding per business based on local priorities.</p> <p>Since March 2020, we have made available a range of business support measures including loans, small business grants through local authorities, mortgage holidays and VAT deferral. We have also updated the support available to fit the</p>

			<p>restrictions necessary: we have increased the overall level of the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme grant to 80% of trading profits covering November to January for all parts of the UK. We have also extended the Bounce Back Loan Scheme application deadline to the end of March 2021, to further support eligible firms who need it during this ongoing period of difficulty.</p> <p>We would always encourage businesses that have not been able to access support, or who are unsure about what support is available, to contact their nearest Business Growth Hub for advice. Government has established a network of 38 of these hubs, one in each Local Enterprise Partnership area in England. Businesses of all sizes are able to access free, tailored guidance from expert advisers who make up the Hub teams. All contact details are online at www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts/. The free Business Support Helpline offers impartial advice to businesses across England (FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098) provides with free, impartial business support. Firms based in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales can access business support through their devolved Governments. Here</p>
20/01/21	Written question	HM Treasury	<p><u>Small Businesses: Coronavirus - UIN 138426 Barbara Keeley, Worsley and Eccles South (Lab)</u>: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support is available to owners of small businesses which are legally permitted to remain open during the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown but are closed due to staff health concerns.</p> <p><u>Kemi Badenoch, Saffron Walden (Con)</u>: Throughout this crisis, the government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK. To do this, the government has put in place an economic package of support which will provide businesses and individuals with certainty over the coming months, even as measures to prevent further spread of the virus change. The government has spent over £280 billion this year to provide this support.</p> <p>The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was introduced to help employers whose operations have been affected by</p>

			<p>COVID-19 retain their employees and protect the UK economy. All businesses across the UK can access the scheme, which will run until the end of April 2021, with employees receiving 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to £2,500 per month. The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will also run until the end of April. Local authorities will receive an additional £500 million, to a total of £1.6 billion, of discretionary funding through the Additional Restrictions Grant to allow them to support their local businesses, including businesses that are adversely impacted but not forced to close by COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Businesses have also received billions in loans, tax deferrals, Business Rates relief, and general and sector-specific grants. Individuals and families have benefited from increased welfare payments, enhanced Statutory Sick Pay, a stay on repossession proceedings and mortgage holidays. Here</p>
25/01/21	Written question	HM Treasury	<p>Small Businesses: Non-domestic Rates - UIN 140745</p> <p>Derek Twigg, Halton (Lab): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received from SMEs that have not received business rates support to help mitigate the effects of the covid-19 outbreak; and when he plans to make an announcement on future support for those businesses.</p> <p>Jesse Norman, Hereford and South Herefordshire (Con): The Government has put in place a substantial package of support for businesses worth over £280 billion, which includes loans, tax deferrals, and general and sector-specific grants. It continues to engage with businesses and representative groups, including SMEs, to ensure that the support provided is right for the affected areas and for the economy as a whole. On 5 January the Government announced one-off grants for businesses of up to £9,000. The Government will continue to ensure businesses are supported in the coming months, as measures to control the virus change, and it will keep all impacts and policies under review. The Chancellor will consider any further decisions on taxation as part of the Budget process. Here</p>
26/01/21	Oral Answers	HoL/BEIS	Covid-19: Night-time Economy

			<p>Baroness McIntosh Of Pickering: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the restrictions put in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic on (1) the income of businesses working in, and (2) jobs related to, the night-time economy; and what steps they are taking to address any such impact.</p> <p>Lord Callanan (The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy): The night-time economy includes businesses operating between 6 pm and 6 am and is therefore very broad. BEIS and DCMS sponsor the hospitality, entertainment, arts and culture sectors, all of which play a significant role in the night-time economy. Over the course of the pandemic, the Government have worked closely with businesses from across these sectors to understand their concerns, and have responded with £280 billion of funding to support businesses, retain jobs and provide support on backdated rents. More here</p>
26/01/21	Oral Answers	HM Treasury	<p>Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth - UIN 911357</p> <p>Andrew Griffith, Arundel and South Downs (Con): What steps he is taking to promote environmentally sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>Rishi Sunak (The Chancellor of the Exchequer): The Government are clear that we will drive growth by investing in infrastructure, innovation and skills. In doing so, we will build back better and greener as we recover from the economic impact of coronavirus, starting, of course, with the Prime Minister 's green 10-point plan. More here</p>
26/01/21	Oral Answers	HM Treasury	<p>Topical Questions – UIN 911409</p> <p>Tracy Brabin, Batley and Spen (Lab/Co-op): If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.</p> <p>Rishi Sunak (The Chancellor of the Exchequer): Throughout this crisis, our overriding economic priority has been to support people's jobs and businesses through a range of measures worth more than £280 billion, including the furlough scheme, tax cuts, tax deferrals, loans and grants. There will be a Budget on 3 March, when we will set out the next steps in our economic response to coronavirus.</p> <p>Tracy Brabin: Last week the Chancellor received a detailed and costed policy</p>

			proposal for a targeted income grant scheme, written by Rebecca Seeley Harris and supported by the gaps in support all-party parliamentary group. That scheme would be a vital first step in giving meaningful financial support to many of the millions who have been locked out of the current schemes and who are desperate, after nearly a year of the covid pandemic. Can the Chancellor tell us today whether he plans to progress with that proposal, or does he have another scheme in mind for the millions in need of support? More here
29/01/21	Press release	DfT	Government's multimillion-pound support scheme for airports opens today. Here

Energy projects – local authority

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes

Environment – 25 year environment plan/Bill

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
23/12/20	Press release	Defra	Dame Glenys Stacey appointed as chair of the Office for Environmental Protection. Here
11/01/21	Written question	Defra	Biodiversity - UIN 130822 Stephen Morgan, Portsmouth South (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help restore the UK's biodiversity; and if he will make a statement. Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): Domestic biodiversity policy is a devolved matter, and the information provided relates to England only. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan marked a step change in ambition for biodiversity and the natural environment in England. This Government is taking a wide range of steps to deliver on this ambition. Our landmark Environment Bill introduces a powerful package of policies and tools to support nature's recovery. Biodiversity net gain, local nature recovery strategies, conservation covenants and a strengthened biodiversity duty on public authorities will work together to drive local action on the ground that creates or restores wildlife-rich habitats. This action will be supported by a new framework for

			<p>setting long term legally binding targets, including on biodiversity, to make sure that our ambition is maintained.</p> <p>We have introduced new funding for nature, such as the Nature for Climate and the Green Recovery Challenge Funds. The first £40 million round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund has been extremely successful. The fund has received a high-level of interest and we have been able to fund 68 high quality projects across England. For example, The Woodland Trust is being awarded £3,860,200 to restore ancient woodlands and trees across England. Following this success, the Government doubled the Green Recovery Challenge Fund to £80 million, kick-starting a further pipeline of nature-based projects to restore nature, tackle climate change and connect people with the natural environment.</p> <p>We are developing a new Environmental Land Management scheme that will incentivise farmers and land managers to improve the environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions. The Prime Minister recently announced, as part of his 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, that over the next four years we will establish 10 Landscape Recovery projects to help us restore wilder landscapes. In English waters there are 178 Marine Protected Areas protecting 40% of our seas. We have now essentially completed building our comprehensive network of Marine Protected Areas and are focusing on making sure they are protected properly.</p> <p>Here</p>
13/01/21	Written question	Defra	<p>Environment Protection: EU Law - UIN 134389</p> <p>Mr Virendra Sharma, Ealing, Southall (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of UK environmental protections; and what assessment he has made of the areas in which protections need to be (a) more rigorous, (b) equally rigorous and (c) less rigorous than EU standards.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): The Government is committed to leaving the environment in a better state than we found it and has been clear that we will</p>

			<p>realise the benefits of leaving the EU, including implementing new ways of delivering better levels of environmental protection. The Government continuously looks for opportunities to improve the effectiveness of environmental protections and has already brought forward a number of measures to drive forward standards and to help assess the adequacy of environmental legislation in future.</p> <p>For example, the Environment Bill sets a new legal foundation for Government action to improve the environment and is part of the wider Government response to the clear and scientific case for a step-change in environmental protection and recovery. As part of the provisions in the Bill, the Government must have an Environmental Improvement Plan which sets out the steps it intends to take to improve the environment and review it at least every five years. The 25 Year Environment Plan will be adopted as the first statutory Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) in the Environment Bill.</p> <p>The Bill also establishes a new, independent statutory body - the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) - which will have a statutory duty to monitor and report on the Government's progress in improving the natural environment in accordance with the EIP. The OEP's annual report may provide recommendations on how to improve progress towards meeting targets or environmental improvement, to which Government must respond.</p> <p>In many cases, we will be going further than the EU. For example, the approach taken in the Environment Bill towards environmental principles goes further than the EU by ensuring that Ministers across Government are obliged to consider the principles in all policy development where it impacts the environment. Through the Bill's targets framework, we are seeking to develop a comprehensive suite of targets across the entire natural environment which is novel and not something developed at an EU level. The OEP's enforcement powers are different from those of the European Commission, as the OEP will be able to liaise directly with the public body in question to investigate and</p>
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			resolve alleged serious breaches of environmental law in a more targeted and timely manner. Here
15/01/21	Written question	Defra	<p>Office for Environmental Protection - UIN 133186</p> <p>Ruth Jones, Newport West (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to publish a summary of the business case for the Office for Environmental Protection.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): Yes, Defra intends to publish a summary of the business case for the Office for Environmental Protection following Royal Assent of the Environment Bill. Here</p>
15/01/21	Written question	Defra	<p>Office for Environmental Protection: Staff - UIN 133185</p> <p>Ruth Jones, Newport West (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the day one operating capability for the Office for Environmental Protection will be least 50 full-time equivalent staff.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): We are working with the newly appointed OEP chair-designate Dame Glenys Stacey who now has oversight of this work. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot confirm precisely the amount of staff the OEP will have from the day that it is established, but we are working to have up to 50 full-time equivalents in post in time for vesting. We are currently completing work to determine these initial key posts for the OEP to fulfil its duties as set out in the Environment Bill. We will ensure that the OEP will have all of its statutory powers and duties within three months following Royal Assent. Here</p>
15/01/21	Written question	Defra	<p>Environment Protection: Coronavirus - UIN 133175</p> <p>Ruth Jones, Newport West (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak aligns with the Government's long-term targets on climate and biodiversity.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): While the world is rightly focussed on tackling the immediate threat of coronavirus, other great global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss have not gone away. This government remains committed to being a world leader on</p>

			<p>tackling the environmental crises we face. The government's work to conserve and enhance the environment is guided by two overarching objectives; the urgent need to reverse biodiversity loss, and our legally binding objective to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2050. Our ambitious 25 Year Environment Plan sets the overarching and long-term framework for much of this work, showing how we will improve the environment over a generation; by creating richer habitats for wildlife, improving air and water quality, and curbing plastic in the world's oceans.</p> <p>New measures announced in the 10 point-plan for a Green Industrial Revolution will help us deliver on this ambition. We will safeguard our cherished landscapes through the creation of new National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; create the equivalent of well over 30,000 football pitches of wildlife rich habitat through 10 Landscape Recovery projects over the next four years, and run a £40 million second round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund to enable a range of nature conservation and restoration projects across England. Here</p>
25/01/21	Blog	Defra	Environment Bill – next steps. The Government has confirmed the Environment Bill will be carried over to the next parliamentary session. Here
28/01/21	Press release	Defra	Interim CEO appointed for Office for Environmental Protection. Here

Environment – Air quality

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
14/01/21	Written answers	HoL/Defra	<p>Urban Areas: Pollution Control - UIN HL11708</p> <p>Lord Truscott: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to accelerate plans (1) to improve air quality, and (2) to reduce pollution, in city centres.</p> <p>Lord Goldsmith Of Richmond Park: Our Clean Air Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollution from a wide range of sources in our towns and cities. We have also put in place a £3.8 billion plan to tackle roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. Our Environment Bill makes a clear commitment to set a legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter and enables</p>

			<p>greater local action by ensuring responsibility for tackling air pollution is shared across local government structures and with relevant public authorities. We are also strengthening the ability of local authorities to tackle smoke emissions from domestic solid fuel burning, which is a major source of fine particulate matter.</p> <p>Under the Local Air Quality Management Framework, local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality and to declare an Air Quality Management Area if monitoring indicates exceedance of local air quality standards and objectives, and are then required to develop an Air Quality Action Plan to address the exceedance. The UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations outlines how councils with the worst air pollution concentrations must take robust action to improve air quality. The plan requires local areas to produce their own plans to accelerate air quality improvement. These plans include Clean Air Zones (CAZs) which will deliver targeted action in air pollution hot spots. Bath & North East Somerset Council will introduce a CAZ on 15 March 2021 with Birmingham City Council following on 1 June 2021. We have committed a further £2.5 billion to support a number of cities improve their local transport systems through the Transforming Cities Fund - a number of these projects will help deliver air quality improvements. Here</p>
15/01/21	Written answers	HoL/DfT	<p>Motor Vehicles: Air Pollution - UIN HL11771 Baroness Ritchie Of Downpatrick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of air pollution from motor vehicles since the restrictions put in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic were eased in August 2020.</p> <p>Baroness Vere Of Norbiton: Despite increases in some areas as March lockdown measures eased, average roadside NO2 concentrations are below levels observed in the previous 3 years. We continue our ambitious plans to improve air quality with our Clean Air Strategy, tackling NO2 pollution and increasing active travel. Government continues working in partnership with local authorities to help them deliver Clean Air Zones. The Environment Bill will enable greater local action for tackling air pollution. Here</p>

19/01/21	Written question	Defra	<p>Air Pollution: Pollution Control - UIN 135818 Mr Barry Sheerman, Huddersfield (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps is he taking to ensure that local authorities are prioritising the elimination of air pollution.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): We are continuing to deliver our ambitious plans to improve air quality. To tackle local NO 2 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 agreed go live dates for clean air zones in Bath and Birmingham. 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> <p>In addition, through the Environment Bill we are improving cooperation within the Local Air Quality Management framework to widen the range of bodies that play a role in improving local air quality, including neighbouring local authorities and relevant public bodies, ensuring action is taken by all key players to tackle pollution sources and to improve air quality locally. Here</p>
25/01/21	Written answers	Defra	<p>Air Pollution and Environment Protection - UIN HL12005 Baroness Ritchie Of Downpatrick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans, if any, they have to reduce air pollution in addition to the measures in the Environment Bill.</p> <p>Lord Goldsmith Of Richmond Park: Our Clean Air Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources. We have also put in place a £3.8 billion plan to tackle roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. We have also implemented the Medium Combustion Plant Directive which will help to reduce air pollution by bringing in emission controls for plant used to generate heat and power for large buildings and industrial processes, as well as for power generation. Together these measures will significantly reduce the impact of emissions from pollution sources on the environment and public health. Here</p>

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Environment – climate change & net zero

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
08/01/21	Press release	Mett office	Atmospheric carbon dioxide to pass iconic threshold. Here
08/01/21	Press release	PM's office	Alok Sharma becomes full-time COP26 president and Kwasi Kwarteng is appointed as Secretary of State for Business. Here
11/01/21	Press release	PM's office	Prime Minister commits £3bn UK climate finance to supporting nature. Here
11/01/21	Speech	PM's office	Prime Minister's address to the One Planet Summit. Here
12/01/21	Written question	BEIS	Carbon Emissions - UIN 133138 Dan Carden, Liverpool, Walton (Lab) : To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the net zero strategy; and whether that strategy will include plans to meet the UK's 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution of reducing emissions by 68 per cent by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Con) : The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has indicated that it will not be possible to answer this question within the usual time period. An answer is being prepared and will be provided as soon as it is available. Here
12/01/21	Press release	Cabinet office	Sky to sponsor the COP26 summit in Glasgow. Here
12/01/21	Written question	HM Treasury	Climate Change - UIN 134136 Ruth Jones, Newport West (Lab) : To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to tackle climate change. Kemi Badenoch, Saffron Walden (Con) : The Chancellor's announcements at the Spending Review support the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution to help the UK achieve net zero by 2050. The Spending Review commits to spend £12 billion of public investment, kickstarting our transition to net zero and boosting the UK's global leadership on green infrastructure and technologies ahead of COP26 next year. The Ten Point Plan will support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs in the UK, and spur over three times as much private sector investment by 2030. The Government uses a range of levers to meet its environmental objectives. For example, the Chancellor has announced

			<p>the UK government's intention to issue its inaugural green gilt in 2021, subject to market conditions. The green gilt will help to finance projects that are critical to achieving the UK's ambitious environmental and climate goals, particularly its commitment to Net Zero by 2050. The Treasury has launched the Net Zero Review to explore how the transition to a net zero economy will be funded, and where the costs will fall. The Review will look at options for a balance of contributions between households, businesses and the taxpayer, and how to maximise economic growth opportunities from the transition.</p> <p>Here</p>
12/01/21	Written question	BEIS	<p>Carbon Emissions - UIN 133055 Martyn Day, Linlithgow and East Falkirk (SNP): To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the net zero strategy will be published; and whether that strategy will include reductions in emissions necessary for meeting the UK's 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution.</p> <p>Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Con): We will publish the Net Zero Strategy ahead of COP26. We will build on my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan and the Energy White Paper, as well as upcoming plans in key sectors such as the Transport Decarbonisation Plan and Heat and Buildings Strategy. The UK's Nationally Determined Contribution is ambitious and demonstrates our continued leadership in tackling climate change. Our Net Zero Strategy will be a comprehensive plan for decarbonising sectors across the economy, both to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and meet our interim targets, making the most of new growth and employment opportunities across the UK.</p> <p>We are building on the strong foundations we have established in decarbonising our economy; our ambitious manifesto commitments; and announcements from the Prime Minister and my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer of measures to cut emissions as we build back better in our economic recovery from COVID-19.</p> <p>Here</p>
12/01/21	Speech	Cabinet Office	<p>Speech by COP26 President, Alok Sharma, at the COP26 Clean Power Transition Virtual Roundtable (12 January 2021). Here</p>

13/01/21	Press release	UKGBC	<p>UKGBC shines a light on local leadership on zero carbon homes</p> <p>The UK Green Building Council has published two resources designed to support local authorities in tackling the climate emergency, by driving up the sustainability of new homes. Here</p>
13/01/21	Speech	EA	<p>Speech by James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, at the Westminster Energy and Environment Forum: The future for environmental regulation: Green growth not red tape. Here</p>
14/01/21	Letter	BEIS/EAC	<p>BEIS Secretary of State to the Chair concerning the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution, dated 17 December 2020. Here</p>
15/01/21	Written question	Defra	<p>Tree Planting - UIN 133178</p> <p>Ruth Jones, Newport West, (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of progress on meeting the target of 11 million trees planted in England by 2022.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane): The Forestry Commission produces Official Statistics on new planting of woodland. The previous government set a target to plant 11 million trees with central government support in England in the period from 2017 to 2022, and the latest interim report shows that 5,036 hectares of land, equating to about 8,286,000 trees, were newly planted in the 3.5 years from April 2017 to September 2020, on track to achieve that target. The statistics are available here: Government supported new planting of trees in England: Interim update for the half year April to September 2020</p> <p>The current government has committed to increase tree planting to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025, across the whole UK. This is in line with the rate recommended by the Climate Change Committee and reflects the role trees can play in combating climate change. Here</p>
18/01/21	Written question	HM Treasury	<p>Energy: VAT - UIN 134419</p> <p>Mr Steve Baker, Wycombe (Con): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reducing the VAT rate to zero for existing dwellings when making energy efficient improvements as part of any climate change strategy.</p> <p>Jesse Norman, Hereford and South Herefordshire (Con): The installation of</p>

			various environmentally friendly home improvement materials, such as insulation and draft stripping, is already eligible for relief from VAT, subject to certain conditions. Although the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are no plans to change the VAT treatment of home improvements at present. Here
18/01/21	Oral answers	HoL/DfT	Airports National Policy Statement – Vol 809 Lord Randall Of Uxbridge: To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Climate Change Committee Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK's path to Net Zero, published on 9 December 2020, what plans they have to review the Airports National Policy Statement. Baroness Vere Of Norbiton (The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport): My Lords, on 16 December 2020, the Supreme Court overturned the earlier Court of Appeal decision and declared: "The airports national policy statement is lawful". The Government are carefully considering the court's judgment. We take seriously our commitments on the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and we will consult on an aviation decarbonisation strategy in due course. More here
18/01/21	Press release	LEP Network	Humber LEP to lead on plan to cut industrial carbon emissions. More here
19/01/21	Speech	Cabinet office	COP26 President's keynote speech at the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week summit. More here
25/01/21	Press release	Ofgem	Ofgem recommends an independent body to help lead Britain's green transformation. More here
25/01/21	Report	Ofgem	Review of GB energy system operation. Here
25/01/21	Press release	DFCD	New Global Coalition launched to address impacts of Climate Change. Here
25/01/21	Debate	HoL/Defra	Trees - Volume 809 Lord Carrington: To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they are using to inform their plans to plant 30,000 hectares of trees per year. The Minister of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: My Lords, in our manifesto we committed to increasing the planting of trees across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025, and we are working with the devolved Administrations to achieve this. We have

			consulted on a new England tree strategy which will be published in the spring. Responses to the consultation and ongoing advice from the Forestry Commission, charities, sector experts and others are informing the development of an ambitious plan to deliver our commitments in England. More here
25/01/21	Speech	Cabinet office	Climate Adaptation Summit Talks - speech by COP26 President, Alok Sharma: launching the Race to Resilience. Here
28/01/21	Oral answers	DfT	<p>Transport Decarbonisation - UIN 911493</p> <p>Alan Brown, Kilmarnock and Loudoun (SNP): What plans his Department has to facilitate a green recovery from the covid-19 outbreak through transport decarbonisation.</p> <p>Grant Shapps (The Secretary of State for Transport): Transport decarbonisation through more active travel, electric vehicles, greener aviation and shipping, is at the heart of our green recovery. Mike Kane, Wythenshawe and Sale East (Lab): With our borders open and our schools closed and the Prime Minister introducing new quarantine measures, the recent aviation test and release announcement is now in tatters. We want to decarbonise and we want to give the industry confidence, but the Jet Zero Council, much lauded by the Prime Minister, has met only once and has no workstreams and the Government are dithering over financing the airspace modernisation programme. When will the Secretary of State step up?</p> <p>Grant Shapps: I am disappointed that the hon. Gentleman missed my speech yesterday at Davos where I addressed that subject in detail. In fact, I want to correct the record of the House: the Jet Zero Council has actually met on two occasions and—wait for the punchline—has sub-committees that have met on many occasions, because they are the work horses of the Jet Zero Council and they bring together academia, the sector itself, Government and international partners to deliver zero-carbon flight by 2020. I refer him to my speech of yesterday, which he can get to from my tweet at @grantshapps. More here</p>
28/01/21	Written question	HoL/BEIS	Greenhouse Gas Emissions - UIN HL12146 Lord Foster Of Bath : To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Committee on Climate Change Net Zero:

			<p>The UK's contribution to stopping global warming, published on 19 May 2019, what steps they are taking to ensure that their commitment for net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050 is "comprehensive, achieved without use of international credits" and covers international aviation and shipping.</p> <p>Lord Callanan: In 2019, the UK became the first major economy in the world to legislate to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. International aviation and shipping emissions are included within the scope of the 2050 net zero target, which was set on a whole economy basis. We fully intend to meet our net zero target through cutting our domestic carbon emissions.</p> <p>International credits can play an important role in cost-effective global emissions reduction, while creating development co-benefits. We retain our ability to use international credits if necessary, to achieve our commitments as we have said previously when setting Carbon Budgets and legislating for net zero. However, our intention is to meet our Nationally Determined Contribution and net zero commitment through domestic action.</p> <p>Ahead of COP26, we will set out ambitious plans across key sectors of the economy to meet our carbon budgets and net zero. We have already published the Energy White Paper and the first phase of our Transport Decarbonisation Plan, and will publish the Heat and Building Strategy in due course. We will also publish a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy. Here</p>
28/01/21	Written question	BEIS	<p>Carbon Emissions: EU Countries – UIN 143038</p> <p>Liz Saville Roberts, Dwyfor Meirionnydd (PC): To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a carbon border levy.</p> <p>Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Berwick-upon-Tweed (Con): As we deliver our 10 point plan, we recognise it is important to ensure that our ambitious policy interventions do not lead to increased emissions elsewhere. We are working across government to better understand this potential issue, known as carbon leakage, including the impact it could have on the UK. As set out</p>

			<p>in the interim report of the Net Zero Review published in December, a range of approaches could potentially help to address carbon leakage. The EU's proposed carbon border levy is one policy option, which we are monitoring closely. The UK will continue working closely with all our international partners to address climate change across the economy, using our G7 and COP26 Presidencies to ensure that we build back better following the coronavirus pandemic. Here</p>
29/01/21	Written question	MHCLG	<p>Housing: Renewable Energy – UIN 141569 Derek Thomas, St Ives (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to make (a) heat pumps, (b) solar and (c) other domestic renewables compulsory for all new housing. Christopher Pincher, Tamworth (Con): The Building Regulations are couched in performance terms and do not prescribe the technologies, materials or fuels to be used. This allows builders and homeowners the flexibility to innovate and select the most practical and cost-effective solutions appropriate in any development. For example, many roofs are not suitable for solar photovoltaic (PV) panels because of the visual amenity, strength, or direction of the building. We will need to move away from fossil fuel heating in order to meet our commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The future is likely to see a mix of low carbon technologies used for heating and it is unlikely that there will be a one-size-fits all solution, so multiple technologies will play a role. To make sure that homes built under the Future Buildings Standard are zero carbon ready, from 2025 we intend to set the performance standard at a level which means that new homes will not be built with fossil fuel heating. We expect heat pumps will become the primary heating technology for new homes under the Future Homes Standard and that heat networks will also have an important role to play. Here</p>
29/01/21	Speech	Cabinet Office	<p>Speech by COP26 President, Alok Sharma, at 'Mobilizing Climate Action for COP26': the Race to Zero Breakthroughs launch event and part of Davos Agenda Week. More here</p>
29/01/21	Press release	Defra	<p>England's 'national rainforests' to be protected by new rules. Here</p>

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Environment – Waste

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
12/01/21	Debate	HoCs	<p>Waste Incineration and Recycling Rates - Vol 687</p> <p>Colburn, Elliot, Carshalton and Wallington (Con): I beg to move, That this House has considered waste incineration and recycling rates.</p> <p>It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Ms McVey, and to see many familiar faces in today's debate. This is the third time we have debated incineration in this Chamber since the election and it was a pleasure to attend the two previous debates. It is also great to see the Minister in her place. She has been on the receiving end of my many frustrations when it comes to this topic, both here and in the main Chamber, and in the many conversations that we have had offline. I am grateful to her for being here to respond yet again to a debate on this topic. More here</p>
15/01/21	Written question	Defra	<p>Waste Disposal: Organised Crime - UIN 133179</p> <p>Ruth Jones, Newport West (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on the UK's ability to tackle organised waste crime.</p> <p>Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement delivers a comprehensive package of capabilities that will ensure we can work with counterparts across the EU to tackle serious crime. The Agreement ensures streamlined co-operation on law enforcement to continue to ensure we continue to effectively tackle serious organised crime, including serious crime associated with the illegitimate waste industry.</p> <p>Waste crime damages the environment, is a blight on local communities and the government is committed to tackling this criminal activity. Our primary objective is to protect human health and the environment. Permits and licences will still apply and the waste industry is expected to meet the high standards of protection</p>

			<p>for people and the environment and work to sound waste management practices. The Resources and Waste Strategy sets out an ambitious package of reforms to modernise the way waste is regulated, clamping down on illegal operators and improving performance across the sector. Some of these commitments are being taken forward in the Environment Bill, including measures to further strengthen regulator powers when dealing with criminal operators. Here</p>
18/01/21	Oral answers	HoL/Defra	<p>Circular Economy and Elimination of Waste – Vol 809 Baroness Boycott: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage (1) a circular economy, and (2) the elimination of waste. Lord Goldsmith Of Richmond Park (The Minister of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office): My Lords, in the 25-year environment plan, the Government pledged to leave the environment in a better condition for the next generation, committing to eliminating avoidable waste and doubling our resource productivity by 2050. Our resources and waste strategy sets out how we will meet that commitment, moving society away from the inefficient linear economic model of take, make, use, throw to a more circular economy, where resources are kept in circulation for longer. More here</p>
19/01/21	Written question	Defra	<p>Waste: Recycling - UIN 136052 Ruth Jones, Newport West (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the proportion of residual waste sent to landfill, incineration and transfer stations that could have been recycled in England in 2020. Rebecca Pow, Taunton Deane (Con): The proportion of residual waste sent to landfill, incineration and transfer stations that could have been recycled in England in 2020 is not available. Reporting of waste and recycling data for Local Authorities in England for the year 2020, while subject to delays due to Covid 19, will not be complete until later in 2021. However, it will not be possible to provide detailed information on the amount of waste in the residual waste stream that</p>

			<p>could be recycled as data on waste arisings are not structured around the material composition of waste streams.</p> <p>The Resources and Waste Strategy set out the government's intention to introduce three major waste reforms; consistency in recycling, extended producer responsibility and a deposit return scheme. These commitments will be delivered through the Environment Bill and will ensure that less recyclable waste will be sent to landfill or incineration in the future. In October 2020 as part of the Circular Economy Package we legislated to include a permit condition for landfill and incineration operators, meaning they cannot accept separately collected paper, metal, glass or plastic for landfill or incineration unless it has gone through some form of treatment process first and is the best environmental outcome. Here</p>

Industrial strategy & local industrial strategies

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes

Local government funding

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
06/01/21	Debate	HoL	Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. Debate here
11/01/21	Written question	MHCLG	<p>What recent discussions he has had with (a) devolved Administrations and (b) Cabinet colleagues on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - UIN 910671</p> <p>Peter Grant, Glenrothes (SNP): What recent discussions he has had with (a) devolved Administrations and (b) Cabinet colleagues on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>Luke Hall, Thornbury and Yate (Con): The Government has been clear we intend to continue to work in partnership with the devolved administrations and local communities. We have demonstrated this commitment by confirming that devolved administrations will have a place within the governance structures for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Ministers regularly speak to Cabinet colleagues on the UKSPF and my officials routinely engage with their devolved administration counterparts on their</p>

			<p>priorities. To date, we have conducted 25 engagement events across the UK, many of which were attended by the devolved administrations. We will continue this engagement as we develop the UKSPF investment framework and in advance of its publication. Here</p>
11/01/21	Oral answers	MHCLG	<p>Covid-19: Local Authority Income - UIN 910658</p> <p>Dr Ben Spencer, Runnymede and Weybridge (Con): What support the Government are providing to help local authorities experiencing a reduction in income as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.</p> <p>Luke Hall (The Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government): We are providing councils with comprehensive support for income lost due to the pandemic. We are extending the existing compensation scheme for lost sales, fees and charges income into 2021-22, and we have already paid councils £528 million under this scheme. We have introduced a local tax guarantee scheme for this financial year that provides 75% of irrecoverable losses in business rates and council tax, worth an estimated £800 million. We are also allowing councils to phase recovery of collection fund deficits over three years.</p> <p>Dr Spencer: I very much welcome the incredible financial support provided to local authorities, particularly through the national leisure recovery fund. Does my hon. Friend agree that supporting council provision of health and leisure centres is vital in helping us to keep healthy and to support our mental wellbeing? Will he look at the situation in my local authorities, Runnymede and Elmbridge borough councils, and their individual leisure operator contracts and according liabilities, where those are in excess of the support provided by the scheme?</p> <p>Luke Hall: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Leisure services play a vital role in helping people to be active, supporting physical and mental health, and bringing a wider range of community and wellbeing benefits. I can confirm that Runnymede and Elmbridge have each lodged an expression of interest as the first necessary step in the application</p>

			<p>process for the national leisure recovery fund; I believe that they will have submitted their completed applications before the deadline of 15 January. It is also worth noting that councils may be eligible for support from the sales, fees and charges scheme, which was recently extended into the first three months of 2021-22, but I am always more than happy to meet him to discuss this matter in more detail. Here</p>
13/01/21	Written question	HM Treasury	<p>Towns Fund - UIN 130704 Bridget Phillipson, Houghton and Sunderland South (Lab): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to update his Department's guidance, Managing public money, in response to the findings of the Public Accounts Committee on the Town Deals selection process in its report Selecting towns for the Towns Fund, published 11 November 2020. Kemi Badenoch, Saffron Walden (Con): The Government welcomes the Public Account Committee's report on this issue and will respond to the Committee's report in due course through a Treasury Minute. Managing Public Money and associated guidance is reviewed and updated as necessary. Here</p>
14/01/21	Written question	MHCLG	<p>Local Government Finance – UIN 134250 Nick Fletcher, Don Valley (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council 's unsuccessful application for funding from the £830 million Future High Street Fund, what support is available to help local authorities formulate innovative bids to help them to secure Government funding for projects. Kelly Tolhurst, Rochester and Strood (Con): My officials are providing bespoke feedback to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council on their unsuccessful Future High Streets Fund application to help with future funding. The Government is also providing support to local leadership through our High Streets Task Force, giving high streets and town centres expert advice to adapt and thrive. The Task Force is providing hands-on support to local areas to develop data-driven innovative strategies and connect local areas to relevant experts.</p>

			<p>The Task Force will be rolling out experts, training and data offers across the country in due course and has launched a range of online support.</p> <p>I am also pleased to see that both Doncaster and Stainforth Town Deal Boards will be submitting their Town Investment Plan proposals at the end of January 2021. These Town Deals have the potential to benefit the wider Doncaster area and I look forward to receiving these very soon. Beyond this, our new £4 billion Levelling Up Fund will be open to all local areas across the country, including £600 million available later this year. Here</p>
15/01/21	Written question	HM Treasury	<p>Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus - UIN 133214</p> <p>Bell Ribeiro-Addy, Streatham (Lab): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will reduce business rates for (a) local shops and (b) businesses during the covid-19 outbreak.</p> <p>Jesse Norman, Hereford and South Herefordshire (Con): This year the Government has provided an unprecedented business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties due to the direct adverse effects of COVID-19, worth about £10 billion. In the 2020 Spending Review, the Government committed further support to businesses, including in retail, hospitality and leisure, by freezing the business rates multiplier for 2021-22. In order to ensure that any decisions best meet the evolving challenges posed by COVID-19, the Government will outline plans for 2021-22 reliefs in due course. Here</p>
15/01/21	Written question	MHCLG	<p>Hospitality Industry and Retail Trade - UIN 133031</p> <p>Mr Marcus Fysh, Yeovil (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reforming funding for local government to help physical retail and hospitality businesses and high streets.</p> <p>Luke Hall, Thornbury and Yate (Con): The Chancellor has announced a review of business rates. The Government is currently considering responses to the review's call for evidence and has committed to publish a response in Spring 2021. Businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors have benefitted from</p>

			rates reliefs worth approximately £10 billion in the current financial year. Here
19/01/21	Written question	BEIS	<p>Additional Restrictions Grant and Local Restrictions Support Grant - UIN 138025 Matt Rodda, Reading East (Lab): To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to increase funding allocations for local authorities which have distributed their allocated funds from the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) and Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) but have an additional need for emergency support.</p> <p>Paul Scully, Sutton and Cheam (Con): The Government is committed to continuing to provide financial support via local authorities for business premises that are required to close due to restrictions that have been put in place to tackle Covid-19 and save lives. BEIS will provide Local Authorities with the full costs of providing funding to eligible businesses that are required to close through Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed). Where the initial allocation of this grant to Local Authorities is insufficient, it will be topped up.</p> <p>Discretionary grants – Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) and Additional Restrictions Grant - are formula based. With the announcement of a further period of national lockdown starting on 5th January a further £500m has been allocated to Local Authorities via the Additional Restrictions Grant to support businesses severely affected by the restrictions even though they are not required to close, including those falling outside the business rates system such as market traders. This comes on top of £1.1bn already allocated in November 2020. It is expected that local authorities use this additional resource quickly to support businesses in their area. Here</p>
20/01/21	Statistics	MHCLG	<p>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published statistics on the details of the national non-domestic rates collected by local authorities in the financial year 2019 to 2020. Here</p>
21/01/21	Written answers	HM Treasury	<p>Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus - UIN 139073 Dr Rupa Huq, Ealing Central and Acton (Lab): To ask the Chancellor of the</p>

			<p>Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) extending the current business rates holiday for 12 months after the 1st of April 2021, and (b) substantially reducing the 2022-23 business rates to at least 40 per cent of pre-covid-19 outbreak levels.</p> <p><u>Jesse Norman, Hereford and South Herefordshire (Con)</u>: The Government is considering options for further COVID-19 related support through business rates reliefs. In order to ensure that any decisions best meet the evolving challenges presented by COVID-19, the Government will outline plans for 2021-22 reliefs in due course. In 2020, the Government launched the Fundamental Review of Business Rates, which sought views on the level of the business rates multiplier. A final report to be published in due course will set out the conclusions of the Review on this and other areas. Here</p>
25/01/21	Debate	HoC	<p>Council Tax: Government's Proposed Increase -Session 2021-2022</p> <p><u>Steve Reed, Croydon North (Lab/Co-op)</u>: I beg to move, That this House calls on the Prime Minister to drop the Government's plans to force local councils to increase council tax in the middle of a pandemic by providing councils with funding to meet the Government's promise to do whatever is necessary to support councils in the fight against covid-19. More here</p>

Planning

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
21/01/21	Written answers	MHCLG	<p>Planning Permission: Forests - UIN 138853</p> <p><u>Ed Davey, Kingston and Surbiton (LD)</u>: To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to include provisions to protect woodland in his proposals for planning reform.</p> <p><u>Christopher Pincher, Tamworth (Con)</u>: In Planning for the Future we proposed a quicker and simpler framework for assessing environmental effects: one which does not compromise on environmental standards, and indeed encourages opportunities for environmental enhancements to be identified and pursued early in the development process. Proposals will leave an inheritance of environmental improvements with environmental assets</p>

			<p>protected, more green spaces provided, more sustainable development supported and new homes that are more energy efficient</p> <p>Though we are still considering the responses to the White Paper consultation, I can confirm that the protections for landscape, habitat and wildlife will remain in force, including ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees, and reforms will support the implementation of the proposals in the Environment Bill. Consultation on the White Paper closed on 29 October 2020. The Government will publish its response following consideration of all the feedback received. Here</p>

Transport – automated & electric vehicles, hydrogen

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
06/01/21	Press release	DfT	Coventry and Oxford set to be UK's first all-electric bus cities. Here

Transport – Investment strategy

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
13/01/21	Written answers	HoL/DfT	<p>Roads: Repairs and Maintenance - UIN HL11909</p> <p>Viscount Waverley: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to conduct additional road maintenance while there are restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Baroness Vere Of Norbiton: Responsibility for managing the highway network in England, including maintenance decisions, rests with the relevant highway authority. For the Strategic Road Network, motorways and major A roads, that is Highways England. The rest of the network is managed by local highway authorities. It is for local highway authorities to decide whether to carry out additional maintenance, based on local needs and priorities. In April 2020 I wrote to the local highways maintenance sector, with advice on continuing with their highways maintenance works and thanking them for their efforts. The Government's current policy is that construction activity should continue where it can be undertaken safely, in accordance with the Public</p>

			Health England and industry guidance. Here
23/01/21	Press release	DfT	Transport Secretary launches £794 million investment to boost rail links in north and south: Final round of Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund opens, inviting proposals to restore railway lines, services and stations that were closed to passengers in 1964. More here
25/01/21	Written question	DfT	Transport: Coronavirus - UIN 140325 Alexander Stafford, Rother Valley (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Urban Transport Group and (b) city region transport authorities on Government funding in response to the covid-19 outbreak. Rachel Maclean, Redditch (Con): Government officials and Ministers are in regular conversation with members of the Urban Transport Group and local transport authorities to understand the challenges faced by city region transport authorities in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. This engagement informs a range of Departmental policies, including the development and administration of Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) funding and Light Rail support funding. Here
21/01/21	Press release	BEIS	£84 million boost for technology to power a green aviation revolution. Here
28/01/21	Written answers	HoL/DfT	Transport: Capital Investment UIN HL12426 Lord Greaves: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to revise the algorithms used to assess the benefits of transport investment schemes in order to support their levelling-up agenda. Baroness Vere Of Norbiton: Transport business cases follow the HM Treasury five case business case model. Decisions are informed by the assessment of the scheme in relation to strategic fit, value for money, deliverability, commercial and financial considerations. The appraisal framework set out in the Department's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) is intended to support scheme promoters to capture the full range of impacts associated with transport investment (economic, social and environmental) as part of the economic case. The Department is planning to publish an initial response to the HM Treasury Green

			<p>Book Review this Spring as part of a wider update to business case guidance. This will set out work in progress to support the appraisal of schemes which meet Government's strategic priorities, and how we plan to implement other changes required by the Review. This includes ensuring that existing tools and flexibilities in current strategic and economic case guidance are used fully in making the case for investment which supports levelling up. The Department's Rebalancing Toolkit provides guidance to describe how a transport investment scheme fits with the objective of spreading growth across the UK and can be used to assess the impact and identify the benefits that a transport scheme may have on local and regional economic performance.</p> <p>The Green Book Review found that existing appraisal practice may lead to a focus on boosting benefit-cost ratios at the expense of analysis which illuminates the impacts of a proposed investment. The Department plans to review the existing culture and processes around the development of transport business cases to address behaviour and incentives which may be obstacles to supporting the delivery of Government's objectives. Here</p>
28/01/21	Oral answers	DfT	<p>Improving Roads in England - UIN 911510 Joy Morrissey, Beaconsfield (Con): What steps his Department is taking to improve roads in England.</p> <p>Rachel Maclean (The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport): The Department is committed to providing improvements for all road users. It is providing over £2.7 billion for the maintenance of England 's local highway network outside London over 2020-21 and 2021-22, and as part of road investment strategy 2, it is providing £4.1 billion for capital renewals on the strategic road network in England over the next five years.</p> <p>Joy Morrissey: Too many roads in Beaconsfield, Iver and Denham in my constituency are blighted with potholes. As my hon. Friend is well aware, we want to see our potholes mended. Can the Minister confirm that the Government are still on track and committed to investing</p>

			<p>£500 million every single year in tackling potholes, and will the Minister commit to meet me to discuss further how we can tackle potholes together?</p> <p>Rachel Maclean: I thank my hon. Friend so much for raising this issue. Every single Member in the Chamber is supportive of this question, because we all know how important this is to our constituents' daily lives. I can happily confirm to my hon. Friend that that is absolutely the case: Budget 2020 announced £2.5 billion in total for the pothole fund, providing £500 million this year to local highway authorities in England for tackling potholes and £500 million each year for the next four years. I am sure that my noble Friend in the other place who deals with this matter would be delighted to meet her to discuss the matters in Beaconsfield. Here</p>

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

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
07/01/21	Press release	TfN	'Fragmented under-funding of transport must end in order to boost Union connectivity' says Transport for the North. Here
08/01/21	Press release	TfN	Transport for the North works to protect rail services and shape a 'Roadmap to Recovery'. Here
08/01/21	Press release	TfN	North's Leaders to discuss rail reform. Here
14/01/21	Press release	TfN	Transport for the North supports consultation launched to improve Manchester's railways. Here
21/01/21	Press release	TfL	Transport for London gets the go-ahead for 852 new homes in Acton. More here
25/01/21	Press release	TfN	Search for influential Northern transport leader under way. Here

Brexit – BEIS, Defra, MHCLG, & committees

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes