

ADEPT: Parliamentary monitoring March 2020

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

25 March – 21 April: Easter recess

6 – 11 May: May Day recess

21 May – 2 June: Whitsun recess

1 July: Deadline contained in Withdrawal Agreement for transition extension request

21 July – 8 September: Summer recess

17 September – 12 October: Party conferences

31 December: Extension period ends

Planning – Housing

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
27/02/20	Papers	HoC Library	<p>Housing and net zero This briefing considers the approach to housing, energy efficiency and net zero, providing an overview of Government policy and parliamentary comment on the issue. Jump to full report >></p>
27/02/20	Written Q&A	MHCLG	<p>Property Development: Floods: Written question - 18732</p> <p>Asked by Mrs Andrea Jenkyns To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will commission a review of the planning permission regime for areas at risk of flooding.</p> <p>Answered by: Christopher Pincher National planning policy on managing flood risk was last updated in 2018, and provides a robust framework for making decisions that take flood risk fully into account. It makes clear that inappropriate development in areas at current or future risk of flooding should be avoided and directs development towards areas at least risk. Where development is necessary in such areas, and where there are no suitable sites available in areas with a lower risk of flooding, it should be</p>

			made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and be appropriately flood resistant and resilient. It is primarily the responsibility of local planning authorities to determine applications for planning permission, having weighed up all the material planning considerations – including advice received from flood risk management bodies.
28/02/20	Oral answer	HoL	Housing: New Homes - Hansard Lord Young Of Cookham : To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in meeting their target of delivering 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s. Read answer here.
04/03/20	Debate	HoC	Housing and Planning: Sir Charles Walker (in the Chair) Colleagues, before I call Mr O'Brien to move the motion, I note that there are a lot of speakers. If you intend to speak, I advise you to be parsimonious with interventions, because it is possible that some speakers will be crowded out. Neil O'Brien I beg to move, That this House has considered housing and planning. It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Charles. It is good to see so many colleagues here and I particularly welcome our brilliant new Housing Minister. I will talk about the wider reforms needed in planning and housing, but I want to start with not the where or what of what we build, but some of the problems caused by the way in which the development industry behaves.... Read here.
05/03/20	Written Q&A	HM Treasury	Housing: Energy: Written question - 23422 Asked by Sarah Olney To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what funding he plans to make available for improving insulation and energy efficiency in domestic buildings.

			<p>Answered by: Steve Barclay</p> <p>Improving energy efficiency in homes has an important role to play in reducing fuel poverty and tackling climate change.</p> <p>The Government will continue to support home energy efficiency to 2028, at least at the level of funding of the current Energy Company Obligation scheme. This will drive more than £6 billion of investment in energy efficiency upgrades in homes. A Future Homes Standard, introduced by 2025, will require new build homes to be future proofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency.</p> <p>The Government will announce plans for spending on economic infrastructure, including decarbonisation, in due course.</p>
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Industrial Strategy & Local Industrial Strategies

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
02/03/20	Written Q&A	BEIS	<p>Renewable Energy: Investment: Written question - 18789</p> <p>Asked by Julian Knight</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to encourage private investment in the renewable energy sector.</p> <p>Answered by: Kwasi Kwarteng</p> <p>The Department has a number of policies to encourage private investment in the renewable energy sector.</p> <p>For example, the Contracts for Difference Scheme is the main mechanism of support for new renewable electricity deployment. The scheme provides long-term price stabilisation for new projects, making projects that have high upfront costs attractive to investors, while protecting consumers when electricity</p>

			<p>prices are high. Our support through the Contracts for Difference and other legacy schemes has helped to successfully unlock £94bn^[1] of private sector investment in clean energy since 2010 and has driven down the cost of renewables. For example, offshore wind costs have fallen 65% since 2015.</p> <p>In March 2019, the Government published the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, which aims to work in partnership with the industry to boost the UK supply chain, develop new technologies and increase the UK's export potential. As part of this Sector Deal, an Offshore Wind Growth Partnership was launched in June 2019, in which the private sector committed £100m towards a 10-year programme to support the growth of UK businesses looking to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the growth in offshore wind around the world.</p> <p>[1] https://about.bnef.com/clean-energy-investment/</p>
03/03/20	Press Release	BEIS	<p>Millions more homes to be powered by renewables</p> <p>Measures to promote new renewable electricity generation projects launched in boost for renewables supply chain. Read here.</p>
12/03/20	Press Release	WECA	<p>Budget 2020: Budget supports West of England Combined Authority's ambitious plans for region. Read here.</p>
19/04/20	Written Q&A	BEIS	<p>Renewable Energy: Written question - 901650</p> <p>Asked by Richard Graham</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on support for renewable sources of energy. Read here.</p>

NPPF – Land value capture

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
24/03/20	Written Q&A	MHCLG	<p>Wind Power: Planning Permission: Written question - HL2547</p> <p>Asked by Baroness Hayman To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement on 2 March that Contracts for Difference will in future be open to onshore wind projects, what plans they have to review the planning regime for onshore wind projects in England.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist Onshore wind has deployed successfully to date and is an important part of our energy mix. The Government currently has no plans to revisit national planning policy for onshore wind energy schemes. The National Planning Policy Framework confirms planning's important role in tackling climate change and making the transition to a low carbon economy, setting out that plans should provide a positive strategy for energy supply from renewable sources. In the case of wind energy, national planning policy sets out that planning permission for new wind energy projects should only be granted if the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a local or neighbourhood plan and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.</p>

Energy – Local authority projects

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
27/02/20	Written Q&A	BEIS	<p>Renewable Energy: North of England: Written question - 15084</p> <p>Asked by Alex Sobel To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy what steps his Department is taking to encourage the expansion of the renewable energy industry in the north of England.</p> <p>Answered by: Kwasi Kwarteng Through Government policies we have dramatically increased the deployment of renewable generation. Renewable electricity now makes up over a third of our generation and our renewable capacity has quadrupled since 2010. 24% of the UK's renewable capacity is located in the North of England. The Government's manifesto set out an ambition to further expand offshore wind to reach 40GW of capacity by 2030, and we will continue to work with the offshore wind industry to deliver the ambition for 60% UK content in offshore wind farms, as agreed in the Offshore Wind Sector Deal. New wind farms being built off the North East coast, such as the Dogger Bank and Sophia projects, will provide a huge economic opportunity for the north east of England, delivering 5GW of new renewable energy; enough to power over 5 million homes. UK companies such as Tekmar, JDR Cables and Seajacks, all based in the North of England, are not only supplying UK renewable projects, but winning export contracts abroad. We are also helping to develop renewable heat network infrastructure across the North. For example, on 3 February, the Coal Authority announced the construction of the UK's first heat network to take</p>

			renewable heat from mine water in County Durham.
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Digital – Broadband & mobile

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
			No updates

Economy – Fair funding review

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
04/03/20	Written Q&A	MHCLG	<p>Local Government Finance: Written question - 20589</p> <p>Asked by Jim McMahon To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Fair Funding Review formula.</p> <p>Answered by: Mr Simon Clarke The Government aims to implement the local authority Review of Relative Needs and Resources in 2021-22, and plans to publish a major consultation on this in the Spring. We will place a copy of the consultation in the Library at that time.</p>
06/03/20	Press Release	LGA	<p>Local services face almost £6.5 billion funding gap by 2025: New LGA analysis. Read here.</p>
12/03/20	Written Q&A	MHCLG	<p>Homelessness: Written question - 27041</p> <p>Asked by Catherine West To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure the Fair Funding Review takes into account the increased costs faced by councils as a result of their obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018.</p> <p>Answered by: Mr Simon Clarke The Government takes funding for homelessness very seriously. The Review of Relative Needs and Resources will take into account the relative needs and resources of all</p>

			<p>local authorities, as well as the different costs of delivering services in each area.</p> <p>The Review will result in a more robust funding formula for local authorities for services delivered through the annual local government finance settlement, reflecting current need and using the most up-to-date available data.</p>
12/03/20	Written Q&A	MHCLG	<p>Local Government Finance: Written question - 27043</p> <p>Asked by Catherine West To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether any local authority will receive a reduction in funding as a result of the Fair Funding Review.</p> <p>Answered by: Mr Simon Clarke This Government is committed to ensuring local government has the funding it needs. The sector has asked us for a simpler, up-to-date, evidence-based funding formula and that is what we are going to deliver. No decisions have been taken on any element of the review. We aim to consult on our proposals in the Spring</p>

Transport – Investment strategy

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
27/02/20	Speech	DfT	DfT: Speech by HS2 minister Andrew Stephenson on delivering HS2 and Northern Powerhouse (27 February 2020). Read here.
06/03/20	Press Release	LGA	LGA responds to Centre for Cities report on transport investment. Read here. The Centre for Cities report can be accessed here: http://bit.ly/39tOMfz
16/03/20	Press release	DfT	New transport tech to be tested in biggest shake-up of laws in a generation. Read here.

24/03/20	Oral answer	HM Treasury	Local Transport Infrastructure Damien Moore 3. What fiscal steps he is taking to improve local transport infrastructure. [901718] Read here.
26/03/20	Papers	DfT	Creating the transport decarbonisation plan Document stating the current challenges and steps to be taken when developing the transport decarbonisation plan. Read here.

Transport – Major road network

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
27/02/20	Written Q&A	DfT	Motorways: Written question - 19723 Asked by Damian Green To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what criteria is required to be met for him to grant permission for the building of a new motorway junction. Answered by: Kelly Tolhurst Paragraphs 37 to 44 of the Department's Circular 02/2013, <i>Strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development</i> , set out how proposals for the creation of new junctions or access to the strategic road network (including motorways) will be considered.
28/02/20	Press Release	DfT	Government to improve road journeys across the country with £93 million investment and cutting-edge transport tech Investment to target current pinch points on local roads. Read here.
09/03/20	Written Q&A	DfT	Roads: Construction: Written question - 25065 Asked by Caroline Lucas To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of road schemes on (a) congestion, (b) induced traffic and (c) modal shift between private

			<p>cars and public transport; if he will publish the details of any such studies; and if he will make a statement.</p> <p>Answered by: Kelly Tolhurst</p> <p>All strategic road schemes promoted by the Department go through detailed analysis as set out in its Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG). These business cases are underpinned by transport modelling that estimates changes in congestion, induced demand and modal shift when proportionate. A post-opening project evaluation (POPE) assesses whether the benefits set out in a road scheme's business case are on track to be realised through systematically evaluating metrics in relation to traffic flows, journey times, journey time reliability, safety and environmental impacts. All these are published on the Government website.</p> <p>Highways England's 2019 POPE summary analysis brings together the evaluations of around 85 major road schemes that opened between 2002-2014. This shows that around 73% of the schemes evaluated achieved the objective to 'improve journey times/reduce congestion and/or delay'. Highways England analysis of induced demand includes changes of mode, destination, trip frequency and new car trips. The POPE evidence suggests that 76% of schemes assessed did not lead to induced traffic.</p> <p>The forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan will consider the transport sector as a whole and the increased contribution that all modes need to make to achieve an economy-wide net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050. We are committed to levelling up public transport connections across the country and making public transport attractive for all, from investing a record £48 billion to modernise our railways, driving forward significant</p>
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			improvements in performance, punctuality and reliability; to the recently announced £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.
13/03/20	Oral answers	DfT	<p>Clive Efford 13. Whether he plans to make road network national policy statements compatible with the UK's commitments on climate change. [901503] We take our commitment to climate targets seriously. We have one of the world's most ambitious plans for reducing carbon emissions from our roads, and our infrastructure policy is entirely consistent with that.</p> <p>Clive Efford</p> <p>Does not the decision on Heathrow demonstrate that the Government need to upgrade their statements in the light of climate change, otherwise there is a danger that their massive expansion of road building will get bogged down in legal challenges? Rachel Maclean</p> <p>As the hon. Gentleman will know, the Court of Appeal judgment on Heathrow is a very complex issue. Our road policy contains many elements, including a plan for decarbonisation, funding to improve public transport and plans for road improvements. That balanced package is entirely consistent with reaching net zero, which is what the Government are committed to doing.</p>

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

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
06/03/20	Press Release	Sheffield City Region	<p>Businesses unite in support for mayor's transformative transport bid Business leaders across South Yorkshire are uniting with the Mayor of the Sheffield City Region, by calling on the Government to invest £220million in rail, public transport and</p>

			active travel schemes across South Yorkshire. Read here.
09/03/20	Press Release	TfN	“Empower us to deliver for our region” Northern leaders tell Chancellor ahead of Budget. Read here.
11/03/20	Written Q&A	DfT	Transport for the North: Finance: Written question - 25740 Asked by Scott Benton To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing a devolved budget for Transport for the North. Answered by: Kelly Tolhurst The Secretary of State keeps the performance and role of Transport for the North under regular review. The legislation which established Transport for the North as a statutory Sub-National Transport Body enables the organisation to bring forward proposals for additional functions to be devolved to them. To date, the Secretary of State has not received any such proposals.
12/03/20	Press Release	Sheffield City Region	Budget 2020: Mayor secures £166m transport investment for South Yorkshire. Read here.

Transport – Automated electric vehicle bill

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
			No updates

Transport – rail

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
27/02/20	Written Q&A	DfT	Railways: Freight: Written question - HL1641 Asked by Lord Greaves To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their target for the (1) number, and (2) percentage, of container loads and miles that will be moved from road to rail (a) within the next five years, and (b) on the opening of stage 1 of HS2.

			<p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton</p> <p>Government recognises the economic and environmental benefits of rail freight; the sector plays an essential part of the UK economy and rail is one of the greenest modes of transport. Rail freight removes around 7 million lorry journeys, equating to roughly 1.5 billion lorry kilometres, annually.</p> <p>Government does not set an explicit target for modal shift from road to rail. However, it takes significant steps to support modal shift, including in relation to container traffic. This includes providing freight grant schemes to support the carriage of freight by rail and water on routes where road haulage has a financial advantage. These schemes help to remove around 900,000 lorry journeys a year from Britain's roads. Overall, funding for this scheme has been increased to £20m for 2020/21, a rise of 28% from 2019/20. Government has also invested over £235m in the Strategic Freight Network between 2014-2019 to improve network capacity to enable more goods to move by rail.</p> <p>The Government is currently carrying out a detailed study of the potential for additional freight movement that could be accommodated on the conventional rail network from released capacity due to HS2. This study will be concluded by the end of March 2020. It will provide a quantification of the potential additional freight tonnes that could be moved from roads, and will also quantify the environmental benefits of this mode shift.</p>
27/02/20	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Network Rail: Finance: Written question - 18536</p> <p>Asked by Stephen Hammond To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much of the funding</p>

			<p>allocated to Network Rail for Control Period 6 is allocated to (a) maintenance of existing infrastructure, (b) renewal of existing infrastructure and (c) enhancements and new projects.</p> <p>Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris In Control Period 6, Network Rail plans to spend:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. £9bn on maintenance of existing infrastructure 2. £18.5bn on renewals of existing infrastructure 3. £11.4bn on enhancements and new projects <p>In addition to these areas of expenditure, funding is also allocated to the day to day operation of the network, business rates, industry costs and other business support costs.</p>
28/02/20	Press Release	DfT	<p>£20 million to connect communities across the country with new railway stations.</p> <p>New stations to improve links between communities and unlock economic growth. Read here.</p>
02/03/20	Press Release	DfT	<p>Northern franchise enters new future</p> <p>The government to rebuild passenger confidence as it takes over running services across the Northern rail network. Read here.</p>
02/03/20	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Railways: Midlands and North of England: Written question - 20507</p> <p>Asked by Judith Cummins To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North, announced on 21 February 2020, will include an assessment of the proposed route for Northern Powerhouse Rail.</p> <p>Answered by: Andrew Stephenson The Integrated Rail Plan will consider how best to integrate HS2 Phase 2b and wider transport plans in the North and Midlands, delivering benefits from investments more quickly. This will include a recommended way</p>

			forward on scoping, phasing and sequencing delivery of HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub and other proposed rail investments.
02/03/20	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Railways: Electrification: Written question - 20466</p> <p>Asked by Lilian Greenwood To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many single-track kilometres of rail electrification will be delivered in each year of Network Rail's Control Period 6.</p> <p>Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris Electrification can deliver benefits for rail users and will play a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. Since the beginning of Control Period 6 (CP6) in April 2019, we have delivered over 130 single track miles of electrification, with around 120 more single track miles planned by March 2021. Electrification for the remainder of CP6 will be committed as business cases for each scheme are approved. This is a standard feature of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, which ensures an affordable, deliverable programme of investment by assessing schemes continuously throughout the Control Period.</p>
03/0/20	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Railways: Exhaust Emissions: Written question - 21974</p> <p>Asked by Lilian Greenwood To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2020 to Question 7619 on Railways: Carbon Emissions, what the (a) terms of reference are for the Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy and (b) what criteria Network Rail will use to identify projects for inclusion within that strategy.</p> <p>Answered by: Rachel Maclean</p>

			<p>The remit of the Network Rail-led industry Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS) is to provide decarbonisation options for the Department and other funders by examining the suitability of different traction options for each part of the rail network, and the cost and timing of their possible deployment. Analysis conducted for TDNS will inform Government decisions about the scale and pace of rail decarbonisation between now and 2050 as part of our Transport Decarbonisation Plan. Individual schemes will be developed through the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline to deliver an affordable and deliverable programme of decarbonisation.</p>
09/03/20	Written Q&A	BEIS	<p>Trains: Hydrogen: Written question - 25168</p> <p>Asked by Liz Saville Roberts To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of hydrogen-powered trains on railways.</p> <p>Answered by: Kwasi Kwarteng The Government is committed to exploring the option of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier, alongside electricity and other decarbonised gases to support the UK's net zero target. We are investing up to £121m in hydrogen innovation across the value chain and have announced a £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund which will support deployment of low carbon hydrogen production facilities. Hydrogen could play a key role in decarbonising parts of the transport network that are currently hard to electrify, including on the rail network. The Government welcomes the development of viable hydrogen-powered rolling stock by Alstom</p>

			working with rolling stock owners Eversholt and Porterbrook Leasing with Birmingham University, and recognises the opportunity to build a distinctive UK capability.
09/03/20	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Railways: North of England: Written question - HL1717</p> <p>Asked by Lord Berkeley To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the (1) scope, and (2) timescale, of the assessment to be conducted by the National Infrastructure Commission on integrated rail services for the north of England; and whether that assessment will include consideration of HS2 phase 2A.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton As set out in the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North terms of reference, the National Infrastructure Commission will be looking at rail needs for the Midlands and North. As part of their assessment, the evidence base on what can be provided by Northern Powerhouse Rail, HS2 Phase 2b, Midlands Rail Hub and other major Network Rail projects will be examined. The Secretary of State for Transport intends to publish the Integrated Rail Plan, which will be informed by the NIC assessment, by the end of the year. Lessons learnt from Phase 1 and Phase 2a will be incorporated into the plan, but it will not reconsider Phase 2a.</p>
11/03/20	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Railways: Electrification: Written question - HL1918</p> <p>Asked by Lord Bradshaw To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the comparative risks posed to the public by (1) a limited amount of extension of third-rail electrification for which a commercial case exists, and (2) continuing with the existing</p>

			<p>alternative arrangements of using diesel trains or carrying heavy freight traffic by road.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton</p> <p>The Government is taking a holistic approach and our Transport Decarbonisation Plan will coordinate action across modes to deliver UK transport's contribution to net zero. We are also supporting work to understand and reduce the railway's contribution to air pollution. We will take an evidence-based approach to identifying solutions, including taking account of the efficacy of past interventions and of new technological developments. We are supporting work by the Rail Safety and Standards Board to report in 2021 that will consider both the risks of extending third-rail electrification and the risks of not doing so.</p>
11/03/20	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Railways: Electricity: Written question - HL1920</p> <p>Asked by Lord Bradshaw</p> <p>To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 25 February (HL1519), whether they plan to initiate a further upgrade of power supply to cater for any increase in the demand for rail freight or passenger services.</p> <p>Answered by: Baroness Vere of Norbiton</p> <p>The development of the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the north will identify whether further upgrades of the power supply, beyond those already planned within the £1.2 billion East Coast Main Line Enhancement Programme, are needed to support extra rail freight or passenger services on the route.</p>

19/03/20	Written Q&A	DfT	<p>Midland Main Railway Line: Electrification: Written question - 29270</p> <p>Asked by Alberto Costa To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to electrify the Midland Mainline from London to Leicester.</p> <p>Answered by: Chris Heaton-Harris We are currently investing in the biggest upgrade of the Midland Main Line since it was completed in 1870. From December 2020, there will be faster journeys in the peak and more seats, with a fleet of brand new bi-mode trains starting service in 2022. As part of the upgrade, electrification is currently planned to extend from London to Kettering in 2020, and subsequently Market Harborough, subject to design. Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy, currently being developed, will identify the other areas of the network likely to need electrification to decarbonise the railway.</p>
30/03/20	Press Release	DfT	<p>Critical rail services protected in new deals for GWR and Southeastern. Read here.</p>

Devolution deals

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
12/03/20	Written Q&A	MHCLG	<p>Local Government: Devolution: Written question - 27042</p> <p>Asked by Catherine West To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the White Paper on devolution will include an assessment of the potential merits of devolving greater fiscal powers to local government.</p> <p>Answered by: Mr Simon Clarke The Government is committed to devolving power to people and places across the country. The English Devolution White Paper will set out our</p>

			plans for full devolution across England, including an effective funding model for Mayoral Combined Authorities.
12/03/20	Written Q&A	MHCLG	<p>Local Government: Devolution: Written question - 27042</p> <p>Asked by Catherine West To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the White Paper on devolution will include an assessment of the potential merits of devolving greater fiscal powers to local government.</p> <p>Answered by: Mr Simon Clarke The Government is committed to devolving power to people and places across the country. The English Devolution White Paper will set out our plans for full devolution across England, including an effective funding model for Mayoral Combined Authorities.</p>
13/03/20	Press release	MHCLG	<p>West Yorkshire devolution deal (read here)</p> <p>Proposed agreement for a devolution deal between the government and the local authorities of West Yorkshire. The deal can be read here: http://bit.ly/2W8V40p</p>
18/03/20	Committee Summary	MHCLG	<p>Progress on devolution in England - Committee Summary</p> <p>Housing communities and local government committee Progress on devolution in England 16th March 2020. Watch here.</p>
26/03/20	Papers	HoC Library	<p>Devolution to local government in England</p> <p>This Commons Library briefing paper summarises the main developments regarding the process of devolution of powers to local government within England since 2014. Read here.</p>

Environment – 25 year environment plan

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
27/02/20	Written Q&A	DEFRA	<p>Local Government: Biodiversity: Written question - 18703</p> <p>Asked by Helen Hayes To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of local authorities' ability to implement the biodiversity net gain system in respect of their (a) resourcing and (b) technical staffing levels; and what plans his Department has to allocate additional funding to support local authorities to implement the biodiversity net gain system.</p> <p>Answered by: Rebecca Pow The Government's impact assessment of our biodiversity net gain policy indicates a total cost to Local Government during the two year transition period of £8.4 million and an annual cost of £8.4 million per year thereafter. Our impact assessment draws on the Government's 2018 consultation on mandating net gain for biodiversity and subsequent engagement with individual local planning authorities and sector bodies. Based on this, we estimate that an average of 1.3 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) hours (between 1-4FTE) of specialist ecologist advice will be required in any given year per upper tier local authority to implement a mandatory biodiversity net gain system.</p> <p>The Government has committed to fully fund all new burdens on local authorities arising from the Environment Bill. The Government has also committed to work in partnership with Local Government on the implementation of the measures in the Bill to identify and secure the capacity and skills needed.</p> <p>A full impact assessment of the biodiversity net gain policy, which includes our assessment of new</p>

			<p>burdens on local authorities, has been published alongside the Bill: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839610/net-gain-ia.pdf</p>
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Environment – Waste

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
28/02/20	Oral answers	HoL	<p>Single-use Plastics - Hansard Baroness Bennett Of Manor Castle: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to reduce substantially the use of single-use plastics. Read answer here.</p>
09/03/20	Written Q&A	DEFRA	<p>Waste: Exports: Written question - HL1789</p> <p>Asked by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (HL226), what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of sanctions as a means of discouraging the export of illegal waste shipments. Read answer here.</p>
11/03/20	Debate	HoC	<p>Electric Car Batteries: Disposal and Recycling. Read here.</p>
24/03/20	Written Q&A	DEFRA	<p>Recycling: Written question - 29902</p> <p>Asked by Dr Matthew Offord To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support circular economy approaches to reduce the demand of raw primary materials. Read here.</p>

Environment – Air Quality

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
02/03/20	Written Q&A	DoH&SC	<p>Lung Diseases: Air Pollution: Written question - 18874</p> <p>Asked by Zarah Sultana To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the</p>

			<p>Government is taking to tackle the effects poor air quality and pollution on lung health.</p> <p>Answered by: Jo Churchill</p> <p>The Government's Clean Air Strategy, published in January 2019, sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources including transport, industry, agriculture and domestic settings. These actions will reduce the impact of air pollution on human health. The Strategy sits alongside the 2017 UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations, which focuses on reducing emissions from road transport.</p> <p>The Government's proposed Environment Bill, reintroduced on 30 January, will deliver key aspects of the Strategy and includes a commitment to set a legally binding target for PM2.5, with the aim of driving action to reduce long-term exposure to fine particulate matter, which impacts on human health, including lung health.</p> <p>Public Health England works closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to provide alerts and advice during high air pollution episodes to ensure that key health messages are communicated to vulnerable groups, including those with existing lung conditions.</p>
13/03/20	Written Q&A	DEFRA	<p>Air Pollution and Volatile Organic Compounds: Written question - 25027</p> <p>Asked by Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to reduce the level of permitted (a) particulates emissions and (b) volatile organic compounds. [25027]</p> <p>Read here.</p>

13/03/20	Written Q&A	DEFRA	<p>Air Pollution: Standards: Written question - 26171</p> <p>Asked by Alex Sobel To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the UK meets World Health Organisation 2030 targets for levels of fine particulate matter.</p> <p>Answered by: Rebecca Pow Our Clean Air Strategy, published in January 2019, set out the comprehensive action required across all parts of Government to improve air quality and reduce public exposure to particulate matter pollution, alongside other pollutants. Our analysis, published in July 2019, concluded that while significant progress would be made towards the WHO guideline level for PM2.5 through the actions outlined in the Clean Air Strategy, additional action would be required in large urban areas such as London.</p> <p>The Environment Bill delivers key parts of the Clean Air Strategy and establishes a duty to set a legally-binding target for PM2.5. We are committed to following an evidence-based process to set this target, seeking advice from a range of experts, in addition to giving consideration to the WHO's air quality guidelines. We need to ensure that this target is based on realistic pathways, robust science and full economic analysis to ensure that it is both ambitious and achievable, focusing on how the greatest public health benefits can be achieved.</p>
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Brexit – BEIS, Defra, HCLG & committees

Date	Type	Organisation	Notes
19/03/20	Written Q&A	MHCLG	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Written question - 30061</p> <p>Asked by Stephen Kinnock To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it remains the Government's policy to undertake a public consultation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>Answered by: Mr Simon Clarke The Government has committed to create the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as the successor to EU structural funds. The fund will bind together the whole of the United Kingdom, tackling inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations. The Government recognises the importance of reassuring local areas on the future of local growth funding and of providing clarity on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Government officials have been working closely with interested parties and will continue to do so as we develop the fund. Officials have held 26 engagement events in total, including 25 across the UK and one in Gibraltar. These were attended by over five hundred representatives from a breadth of sectors and designed to aid the development of the fund. We will publish a Devolution White Paper setting out our strategy to unleash the potential of our regions, which will include plans for spending and local growth funding.</p>