



Office for  
**Environmental  
Protection**

Diversity in Nature

# **Parks Seminar 2024**

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## What we do



## We protect and improve the environment, holding government and other public authorities to account.

And our objectives set out what we aim to achieve, overall

### SUSTAINED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

Government is held to account for delivery of environment goals and targets, and its plans for environmental improvement

### BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL LAW, BETTER IMPLEMENTED

The environment is protected and improved, and people are protected from the effects of human activity on the natural environment, through better design and implementation of environmental laws

### IMPROVED COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Government and other public authorities abide by environmental law so it can protect and improve the environment as intended

### ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND INFLUENCE

We are effective and efficient, with the authority, relationships, expertise and voice to play our full part in national environmental governance

# Some of what we've been up to



## Scrutinising Environmental Improvement Plans (EIPs) and targets

We review and report on progress in delivering environmental improvement plans, goals, and targets.



## Scrutinising environmental law

We monitor and report on the implementation of environmental law.



## Advice

We advise government on proposed changes to environmental law and other matters related to the natural environment.



## Enforcement

We investigate suspected serious failures to comply with environmental law by public authorities and enforce compliance where needed.





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# Progress in improving the natural environment in England 2022/2023

# Government's ambition and vision

Government's ambition is to leave the natural environment in England in a better state than it found it.

The scale of the challenge means:

“ **changing the trajectory that the country has been on since the industrial revolution.** ”



*Prime Minister's introduction to the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023*

# The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023

The EIP23 states that it *'is a detailed delivery plan with policy actions allocated to different government departments, local government, and the private and third sector where appropriate'*

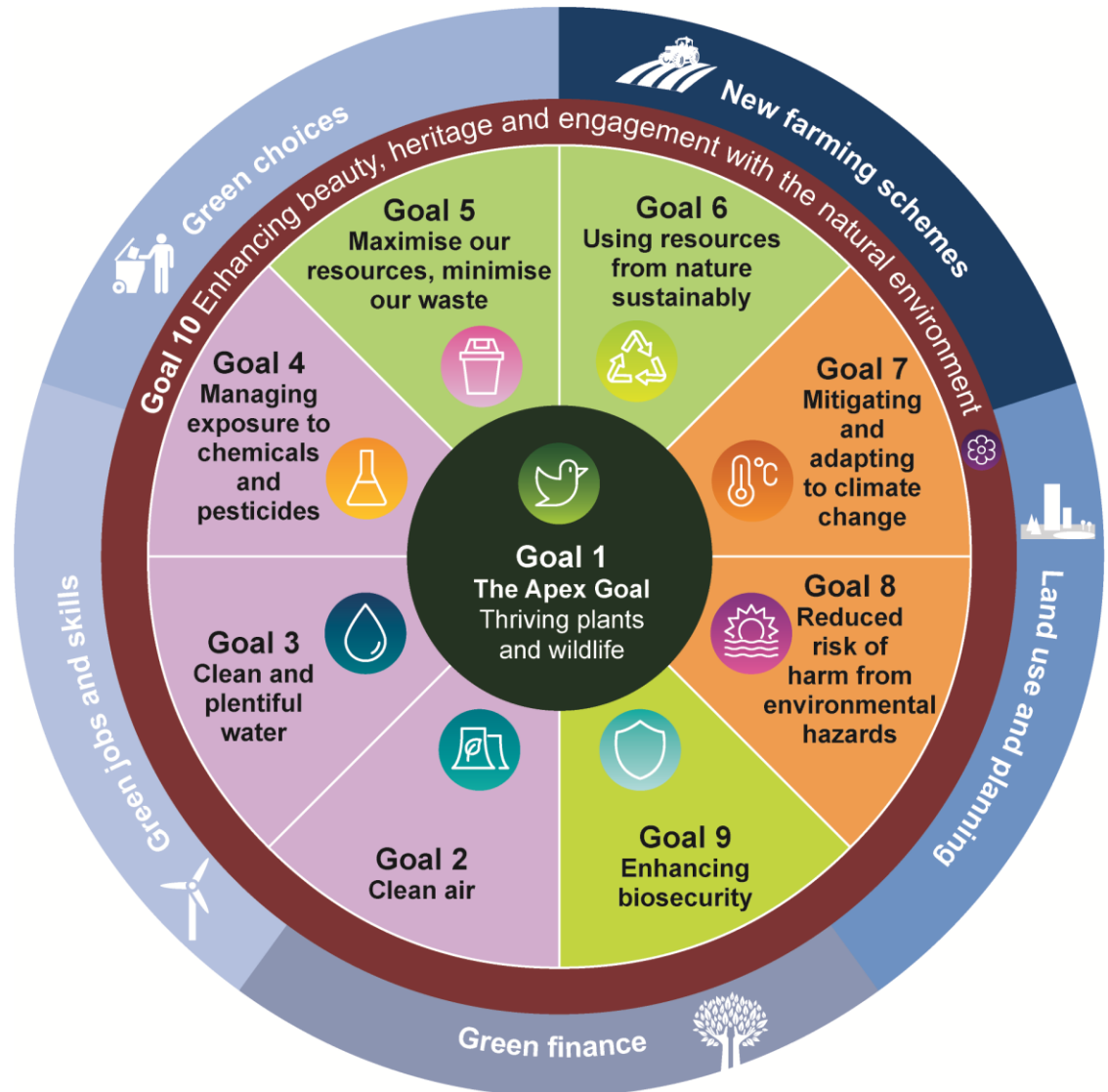


Figure 1.1. The Office for Environmental Protections representation of the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 goals and selected cross-cutting themes.

# The overall picture

- Some progress
- Substantial challenges remain
- Government is largely off track

Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 areas	Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 goals		Past trends	Progress	Overall prospects of meeting ambitions, targets and commitments
<b>The apex goal</b>	Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife				
<b>Improving environmental quality</b>	Goal 2: Clean air				
	Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water				
	Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides				
<b>Improving our use of resources</b>	Goal 5: Maximise our resources, minimise our waste				
	Goal 6: Using resources from nature sustainably				
<b>Improving our mitigation of climate change</b>	Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change	Mitigation			
		Adaptation			
	Goal 8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards				
<b>Improving our biosecurity</b>	Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity				
<b>Improving the beauty of nature</b>	Goal 10: Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment				
<b>Assessment rating</b>	<b>Past trends</b>		<b>Progress</b>		<b>Overall prospects</b>
	Improving trends dominate		Good progress		Largely on track
	Trends show a mixed picture		Mixed progress		Partially on track
	Deteriorating trends dominate		Limited progress		Largely off track
	Not assessed				

**Table 1. The Office for Environmental Protection assessment of past trends, progress and overall prospects if meeting ambitions, Environment Act targets and other commitments across the 10 goals of the EIP23.**



# Connecting people and the natural environment is essential to achieving EIP goals

In the EIP23, Thriving plants and wildlife is presented as the apex goal which all other goals help to achieve.

Improving people's connection with the environment and their understanding of the importance of the environment to the economy and society is fundamental to building societal support for actions to improve nature.

Therefore, this goal area should be seen as the foundation goal which supports the delivery of all the other goals.

The potential benefits of this are more likely to be realised with the addition of dedicated actions aimed at increasing buy-in and involvement from wider society.

Throughout our assessment of progress, the importance of enabling non-government stakeholders to play their part in protecting and improving the environment has been apparent. The specific actors and how they can contribute varies, but the necessity of their involvement is common across EIP23 goals.

***“We know that improved quality, access to and engagement with nature has positive impact on health and wellbeing”***

***“To conserve the natural environment it must be enjoyed, used and cared for by everyone”***

***“We are interested in the proportion of people that visit the natural environment, reporting benefits to physical and mental health”***

A greater focus on green choices, particularly building acceptability for change, presents opportunities to support progress across EIP23 goals. The establishment of new norms and behaviours can contribute to social tipping points whereby a sufficiently large minority can change societal norms. In future progress reports we will expand this analysis and address enabling green choices as a cross-cutting theme.

# Opportunities for Improvement

To enable better public engagement with the environment to help deliver EIP goals....

**“There needs to be more actions to increase public awareness of the importance of the environment for health & wellbeing – with progress stalled on key commitments such as green social prescribing.”**

Government has opportunity to improve outcomes by addressing environmental inequalities more broadly and strengthening monitoring and evaluation activities and evidence of nature benefits.



**QUESTIONS**



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