

Dr Thérèse Coffey (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment)

We are committed to being the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

Friday 11 January, marks the first anniversary of the publication of the 25 Year Environment Plan. Over the last 12 months, we have reduced **plastic waste** by introducing one of the world's strongest microbead bans, setting out plans to ban plastic straws, cotton buds and stirrers and extending the 5p plastic bag charge, and overhauling our waste system with a **comprehensive Resources and Waste Strategy**.

We have laid our landmark **Agriculture Bill** before Parliament, transforming our farming system for the first time in 50 years to reward farmers for protecting and enhancing the environment. We have committed to a **Green Brexit** with plans for the **first Environment Bill in 20 years** and a new environmental watchdog to hold government to account. On the international stage the UK is at the forefront of combatting the illegal wildlife trade. Our **landmark Ivory Act** put one of the world's toughest bans on the sale of ivory into law and hosting the fourth and largest illegal wildlife trade conference in London in October has led to UK and 64 other countries declaring significant political and practical commitments to tackle the illegal wildlife trade.

The Plan also announced a Year of Green Action in 2019 to draw together targeted actions to make it easier for people to get involved in improving the natural world and spread the word about environmental issues. It will provide a focal point for organisations, individuals, communities and businesses to learn more about their environmental impact and take action to reduce it.

The Year of Green Action is an opportunity for everyone to get involved and enthused about restoring nature, from gardeners to major transport network providers. With individuals, voluntary organisations and businesses all having a part to play; we would like to see industry leading the way in raising environmental standards as well.

The focus for activities in the Year of Green Action will be on connecting with, protecting and enhancing nature. We will be promoting environmental action through partners, a dedicated website for showcasing Partner activity, social media, and events throughout the year.

The 25 year plan puts children and young people at the heart of the Year of Green Action and we want to see them playing an active part in decision making for their future. We are partnering with the charity Step Up To Serve, to help encourage environmental youth social action through their #iwill4nature campaign.

Civil Servants will be encouraged to use some of their dedicated volunteering time for taking Green Action working with Partners on environmental projects.

Parliamentarians can play their part in the Year of Green Action by promoting the messages of environmental sustainability.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2019-01-11/HLWS1210>