Environment Bill

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Environment Bill
Setting out our high-level approach

To “put sustainability at the heart of our economic model” the Environment Bill needs to provide a framework that:

- gives strategic predictability on what is required in total
- assigns responsibility for who needs to do what, early and consistently
- ensures ‘doing the right thing’ is consistently simpler and more rewarding, with all policy pulling in the same direction coherently
- where solutions require collaboration, enables plans to be developed at the right scales, collaboratively
- ensures a shared and adequate information base to inform action
- holds government and other account for meeting their responsibilities

………in effect developing a “Constitution for the Environment”
Environment Bill

Government developed Bill in 2 stages – combined into a single Bill

1) Draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill published 19th December 2018

2) Environment Bill – greater ambition (2nd Parliamentary session...) 15th October 2019

Available here
Environment Bill

- Published 15th October 2019
- 8 Parts
- 20 Schedules
- 232 pages.....it’s BIG
- Passed second reading on 28th October 2019 unopposed

Dissolution of Parliament 6th November 2019....goodbye?
Key Governance Provisions

1. Process for setting legally-binding principles
2. Environmental Improvement Plans – policies and measures to effect change
3. Environmental Principles – policy statement
4. Office for Environmental Protection – advice, reporting, enforcement of public authorities’ environmental law obligations
Potential Amendments

1. Objectives to give direction to target setting, EIPs, principles and OEP
2. Criteria to consider in setting targets
3. Provisions requiring SoS to make sure that plans and policies are sufficient to support targets, including through the reporting, review and advice functions
4. A requirement to seek advice from those action will be required
Coherence - Objectives

Concern that the three governance pillars of the Bill (target setting process, environmental principles, and the OEP) each have different core objectives:

i. The objectives of the environmental targets are, in combination, to “significantly improve the natural environment” s6(3)

ii. The objectives of the environmental principles are to contribute to the improvement of environmental protection and sustainable development s16(4)

iii. The principal objective of the OEP is to contribute to the protection of the natural environment and the improvement of the natural environment s20(1)
Objectives – our proposal

Within the framework of sustainable development, the environmental objectives are to achieve and maintain:

i. A healthy, resilient and biodiverse natural environment

ii. An environment that supports human health and wellbeing for all

iii. Sustainable use of natural and physical resources
Other Potential Governance Amendments

1. Linking local delivery to support the chapter 1 framework
2. Duties on public authorities to cooperate in achieving the targets
3. Creating the market for natural capital investment
4. Requirement to introduce a duty of environmental responsibility on business
5. Provisions to join up the Climate Change Act and Environment Bill
6. Independence of the OEP
7. UK wide co-operation
Timetable....?
General Election 12th December
Manifestos?
Bill Re-introduced?
.....[shrug shoulders and sigh]
Non-regression
Non-regression roller-coaster!

1. Initial text of UK/EU Withdrawal Agreement (14th November 2018)
3. Boris Johnson letter to Donald Tusk dated 19th August 2019
4. UK/EU Political Declaration (17th October 2019)
5. Environment Bill Second Reading 28th October 2019
Non-regression

How best to frame non-regression and secure in law!

• “environmental outcomes”?
• “level of environmental protection afforded by existing laws, regulations etc”
• “no deterioration of existing environmental conditions”?
Thanks!

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THE GREENHOUSE GAS MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY

AVOID
- Within all major business decisions investigate options to eliminate GHG emissions
- Potential exists when organisations change, expand, rationalise or move business
- May lead to new business model, alternative operation or new product/service

REDUCE
- Efficient use of energy, vehicles, staff (e.g., energy and fleet management)
- Increased resource efficiency per unit
- Reduced costs and lower total/net energy demand

SUBSTITUTE
- Adopt renewables/low carbon technologies (on site or through vehicle fleet)
- Reduce carbon (GHG) intensity of energy use
- Through suppliers, purchase goods and services with lower embodied emissions

COMPENSATE
- Investigate ‘green energy’ tariffs and high quality carbon offsets
- Develop a strategy to compensate on residual or ‘unavoidable’ emissions
- Consider supporting community products (i.e., both carbon and CSR benefit)