



WWF-UK

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WWF PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING FOR KING'S SPEECH DEBATES

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Introduction

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world and the most nature-depleted country in the G7 and the G20. Global wildlife populations have plummeted by an average of 69% since 1970 with a further quarter of UK mammals now at risk of extinction. From puffins to bluebells, bumblebees and mountain hares, UK wildlife is under threat from climate change, pollution, and habitat loss. Nature is our best ally in the fight against climate change, helping us to be more resilient to extreme weather events. Our global economy also relies on nature – without nature we have no supply chains, no products – and no food.

Transformative changes are needed across the whole economy to protect consumers facing rising energy prices and food insecurity, build long-term resilience to climate breakdown, deliver on net zero, and restore nature. The new Government must deliver the solutions to what WWF calls the 'triple challenge': tackling climate change, recovering nature and ensuring people have access to affordable, sustainable and nutritious food.

The agenda outlined in the King's Speech must be used to properly embed climate and nature within legislation, cement the rapid transition to net zero by 2050 and ultimately drive an ambitious, just transition across the food system and the whole economy. Action at home will be key to acting with credibility at the upcoming CBD COP16 in Colombia, UNFCCC COP29 in Azerbaijan, and COP30 in Brazil, if we are to stand a chance of meeting our international commitments to limit climate change to 1.5C and reverse the loss of nature by 2030.

Key points:

- Delivering **net zero and nature's recovery** can protect people and our planet from **short term shocks as well as build long term resilience**.
- Government must **fix the food and finance systems** to deliver for climate, nature and people.
- **Net zero is the economic opportunity of the 21st century**; seizing it can help **spread wealth and opportunity** to all nations and regions of the UK.
- A **coordinated approach across UK and devolved governments** is essential to deliver this shared ambition of all administrations in the UK.
- Government should adopt a **Net Zero Test on all public spending and taxation decisions** to ensure transparency and efficiency in delivering energy security and clean prosperity, as well as a **Net Zero Investment Plan to track and drive private investment flows**.
- Across the UK, governments should put in place the joined-up policy, regulation and investment to **drive a regenerative and just food transition**, one that puts **power back in the hands of farmers and consumers**, and **fairness back into the food system**.
- Farmers must be supported to build resilience, cut emissions and restore nature, **with the farming budget increasing** at least in line with inflation, **a plan to halve nitrogen waste** and a commitment to establish **legal minimum environmental standards for food imports**. The Government must implement **due diligence legislation to ensure UK businesses no longer import products that contribute to illegal deforestation**.
- In addition to the ambitious policy agenda needed to **deliver the Government's existing commitments in this area**, WWF recommends a new piece of groundbreaking legislation, a **[Living Planet Act](#)**, that would build the institutional accountability, evidence-base and scientific rigour applied to climate action by the Climate Change Committee into all decisions on land and sea use to achieve our climate, nature and nutritional needs.



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Key asks:

Environment, food, agriculture and land use

1. The Government should **increase the overall farming budget at least in line with inflation** to reflect and adequately resource the needs of farmers in each of the four nations of the UK. Government investment should be targeted at the most impactful outcomes for nature and climate, while private markets for nature and carbon should be designed and regulated to reward nature-friendly production.
2. **Food needs to be a cross-government priority**, setting us on a path to restore nature and cut emissions while supporting farmers. The **food supply chain needs to be regulated to return more value to food producers for nutritious and regeneratively produced food**.
3. **As part of the Global Biodiversity Framework, the UK has a commitment to halve by 2030 the amount of nutrients wasted by running off into our rivers and polluting our air**. Nitrogen waste is money down the drain for farmers as well as a cost to the taxpayer. **A cross-economy plan to halve nitrogen waste**, backed by new nitrogen budgets that operate in a similar way to carbon budgets, would save money, save nature and people's lives. It is crucial that the Government deliver on their commitment to halve nutrient waste by 2030 by **supporting farmers to cut agricultural pollution and regulating water companies**, not by weakening the rules around housebuilding.
4. The Government should establish **legal minimum environmental standards for food imports, in the same way as we have for food safety**, while supporting developing countries that export to the UK if they need to adapt to meet these standards. In this regard, we recommend the **development of a cross-departmental working group to explore the implementation of minimum environmental standards for agri-food imports**.
5. **In line with its commitment to deliver the Environment Act targets, the Government must urgently implement due diligence secondary legislation** to ensure businesses no longer import products contributing to illegal deforestation. **Going forward, the scope of due diligence legislation should be widened to cover legal as well as illegal deforestation, include a wider range forest-risk commodities and sectors such as financial services**, and end the UK's contribution to deforestation for good.
6. The government should urgently **review the Environmental Improvement Plan, Net Zero Strategy and Food Strategy** as well as **publish the promised Land Use Framework** to ensure policies add up to delivering the legally binding goals of the Climate Change and Environment Acts, and our international commitments under the Paris Agreement and Global Biodiversity Framework.
7. Such action at home will also be key to acting with **credibility at the upcoming CBD COP16 in Colombia, and UNFCCC COP30 in Brazil**, and if we are to stand a chance of meeting our international commitments to **limit climate change to 1.5C and reverse the loss of nature by 2030**.



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Key asks:

Economy, finance and fiscal policy

1. To ensure that the UK is building a thriving 21st century economy which creates jobs and slashes energy bills, the Government should commit to introducing a **Net Zero Test for each Budget and every Spending Review**, making sure taxpayers money/government spending is delivering energy security and clean prosperity, not worsening the climate crisis.
2. Alongside this, a commitment to a **Net Zero Investment Plan would crowd in private investment**. This should combine independent tracking of private and public financial flows towards net zero with financing roadmaps for each sector of the economy, setting out the policies and incentives government will put in place to crowd in the necessary private investment.
3. To align private capital, the Government should deliver on its commitment to ensuring that businesses play their part, by **mandating 1.5°C-aligned transition plans** for all **listed and large private companies**. Importantly, these plans should include climate *and* nature.
4. **We need a nature positive strategy for the UK**, similar to and ultimately integrated with the UK's existing net zero strategy, underpinned by specific sector-by-sector roadmaps for action. This would help to incorporate international commitments already made, like the Global Biodiversity Framework, into domestic policy as well as providing certainty for business on their role in the transition to a nature-positive economy.
5. Similarly, the Government should utilise the UK's strength as a global financial hub to commit to **building the world's first net zero and nature positive-aligned financial centre**, having positive impact both in the UK and abroad.
6. As part of the commitment to strengthen **the role of the OBR** in assessing tax and spending changes, the government should **give them a clear mandate to examine the extent to which climate change could undermine future public finances and whether government fiscal policy is reducing or increasing this risk** by supporting or hindering the net zero transition. **This scrutiny function should be given the same level of priority as the OBR's fiscal scrutiny function**. This would align with the commitment to give regulators who require it a net zero remit. It would also enable the OBR to assess the environmental implications of tax and spending policies announced at fiscal events and track financial flows towards net zero – providing critical, independent information to support the UK's economic sustainability and pathway to net zero.
7. The Government's **National Wealth Fund (NWF)** could be an important opportunity to **galvanise much needed investment and lay the foundations of a 21st century economy**. It is essential that funds are deployed strategically to **accelerate progress on clean power, decarbonise the most energy intensive sectors**, and ensure that the UK seizes the economic opportunities of the transition. By **derisking investments**, the NWF can **crowd in private finance for these priorities and ensure that communities, businesses and workers reap the benefits of the transition**. Government should introduce the aforementioned Net Zero Investment Plan alongside the NWF to ensure that investment choices are based on best-in-class data and leverage the maximum private investment.



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Key asks

Energy

1. Accelerating the **rollout of cheap, clean British energy** means lower energy bills and higher growth. Net zero is the economic opportunity of the 21st century; seizing it can help spread wealth and opportunity to all nations and regions of the UK.
2. The Government, including through the newly established GB Energy, must immediately prioritise **cost-effective renewable energy and energy efficiency measures** alongside **long-term strategic technologies to enable decarbonisation, particularly scaling up long-duration storage**. This should be deployed alongside, and complement, an **increased budget for the forthcoming Contracts for Difference round**.
3. We welcome **the Government's decision to lift the ban on onshore wind in England**.
4. **Home decarbonisation and improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings are crucial elements in achieving net zero**. As such, regarding the Renter's Reform Bill, we warmly welcome the Government's intention to require private landlords to **improve homes to a minimum EPC C standard by 2030**.
5. There now needs to be support from the Government for **implementation, monitoring and limits on landlords' ability to raise rents in improved homes**, particularly those receiving grant or other forms of support.