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2 October 2025

Edward Barker
Director, Natural Environment, Trees and
Landscapes
Defra

By email only

Dear Edward,

Re: Forthcoming Government responses to OEP reports

Thank you for your letter of 29 September informing me of delays to the Secretary of State laying responses to two OEP reports, relating to Local Nature Recovery Strategies¹ and Environmental Inspections.² Responses to these were due to be laid before Parliament on 19 September and 10 October respectively.

As you acknowledge, our reports were published in accordance with section 29 of the Environment Act 2021 and the same section sets out the requirement that the Secretary of State must respond to our report, and lay that response before Parliament no later than three months after the report is laid.

Whilst I appreciate recent Ministerial changes have resulted in some practical challenges this provision of the Act, and the timings it imposes, are important. It is intended to ensure that our reports and Government's responses are readily available to inform Parliament and others, to enable scrutiny and holding Government to account.

The matters our reports address are also timely. Our LNRS report and recommendations are pertinent to Government's ambitions for economic growth alongside nature's recovery, whilst our report on inspections regimes is relevant to Government's consideration of environmental regulations, in light of the Corry review.

¹ [Local nature recovery has an important part to play in helping government deliver its 'win-win' for the environment and economic growth, says OEP report | Office for Environmental Protection](#)

² [Environmental Inspections in England - Case studies on selected laws and their implementation | Office for Environmental Protection](#)

I therefore welcome your commitment to address this as soon as Parliament returns, and look forward to your considered responses.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Prosser
Chief Executive of the Office for Environmental Protection



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Cc

Mr Toby Perkins MP, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee
Rt Hon Alastair Carmichael MP, Chair of the Efra Committee