Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Mary Creagh CBE MP
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Dame Helen Ghosh
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16 July 2026

Dear Dame Ghosh,

PUBLICATION OF GOVERNMENT'S 2025/26 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

I am writing to inform you that today we have published our annual assessment of progress in delivering the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) over the reporting period April 2025 to March 2026. This is the eighth annual progress report and the first since the revised EIP was published in December 2025. Over the reporting period, we have progressed a broad and ambitious programme of reform, investment and delivery across the EIP. Considerable work remains but we are taking positive steps and strengthening our evidence base to support long-term environmental improvement.

The revised EIP, and target delivery plans, set us on a clearer path to deliver our long-term environmental goals and Environment Act targets. This report provides an assessment of progress against each commitment and statutory Environment Act target, including, where available, the latest data on key metrics used to measure progress and a summary of progress against supporting actions. It sets out latest trends in the natural environment for each EIP goal and summarises the status and findings of recent evaluation activity related to goal delivery.

Alongside this report, we have also published the government's response to the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) annual assessment of progress for 2024 to 2025. In line with the commitment made in the revised EIP, we have published this well ahead of the statutory deadline in January 2027 to streamline EIP reporting and support the important role the OEP plays in monitoring and reporting progress. Considering the recommendations of the OEP is an important part of the annual reporting cycle. The government has carefully considered the recommendations of the OEP and agrees with the majority of the recommendations in the OEP's report, either fully or in part. Our response addresses each of the 54 recommendations, including both standing recommendations from the 2023/24 and new recommendations for 2024/25.

We have also laid a revised statement that explains the government's approach to monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the condition of the natural environment, in line with the requirements of section 16 of the Environment Act.

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Together, these reports better enable external scrutiny and transparency of our progress and ensure delivery planning is informed by monitoring and evaluation learning. I am grateful to the OEP whose scrutiny helps shape our approach. Recognising your statutory duties in monitoring and reporting on environmental improvement plans and targets under the Environment Act 2021, I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Creagh CBE MP
Minister for Nature

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