

SOCIETY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONDING TO THE CHANGES ARISING FROM BREXIT
AND ACTIONS FOR THE SOCIETY

The Society has created an initial framework of six outline principles, which we suggest should guide 'Team Environment GB and NI' in moving forward. It has shared these thoughts with the Secretaries of State for EFRA and BEIS. This framework will guide our actions and contributions. It will be developed over the coming months with contributions from many sources. The principles are detailed below together with the Society's planned actions.

OUTLINE PRINCIPLE 1

The Society recognises that our Nations face a challenge in moving forward with our new future. We have made significant progress with the quality and quantity of our natural resources over the last 40 years whilst we were members of the European Union and we wish to protect that progress and indeed to maintain and enhance it in the future. This includes the threats from climate change and the ways in which we deal with mitigation and adaptation. May we use a quote made during previous debates about investment in our environment, 'don't let the gains go down the drain'.

ACTION

- *The Society will seek to meet with government departments at the earliest opportunity to ensure Ministers and Officials are aware of the level and breadth of expertise available to them through the Society for the Environment.*

OUTLINE PRINCIPLE 2

The Society recognises that one of the issues which vexes both those people who voted to leave and those who voted to stay in the European Union, was the bureaucracy associated with regulation. Excessive bureaucracy can be inimical to the objectives of legislation. So we would be pleased to work with the Government in finding ways and means of transposing national legislation made in pursuit of European Union legislation into purely UK driven legislation, which sustain the objectives but which are at the same time efficient and effective. It is essential that this wisdom is applied to new legislation in future. This will add additional impetus to current efforts for better regulation and the work of the BRDO. However, we urge the Government not to deregulate essential environmental and natural resources management.

ACTION

- The Society will create publication 'a vision of post Brexit Environmental Policy' detailing where bureaucracy can be reduced whilst standards are maintained.

OUTLINE PRINCIPLE 3

Threats to our natural resources do not recognise national boundaries and for the last 40 years we have shared our wisdom with Continental colleagues. We will maintain our European contacts and we urge the Governments of the UK to do the same. Because of the international nature of environmental and natural resources management, we have believed that it must be a key component of Pan European Policy. This is our description of the Policy which recognises that the UK is part of the Great European Project, but as an independent Nation and not part of the EU. The objectives shared with the EU and other components of Europe must be in pursuit of the highest principles of individual and environmental welling which transcends the needs of a common trading agreement. The Society will continue to pursue our European partnerships on that basis and we would be pleased to assist the Government.

ACTIONS

- *The Society will continue to nurture its European connections, in particular as the largest partner of the European Network of Environmental Professionals (ENEP).*
- *The Society will continue with its World Environment Day initiative on integration of water and forest management with the European Commission in conjunction with the European Water and State Forest Associations.*

OUTLINE PRINCIPLE 4

The relationship of the UK with the EU has been a Reserved Matter which has restricted the flexibility of developed administrations to implement appropriate national legislation. So devolution of environmental and natural resources legislation will be a key component of the way forward.

ACTION

- *The Society will engage with Government across the UK detailing the challenges caused by the current approach and the opportunity presented by increased flexibilities.*

OUTLINE PRINCIPLE 5

We recognise that the result of the EU referendum highlighted a need to re-engage with communities in decision making, in order to replenish their trust in governments and decision making bodies. The wellbeing of society is paramount to a thriving economy and, with this in mind, we would welcome an opportunity to discuss potential models for doing so, such as the Welsh

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, and how that might be adapted to strengthen community resilience across the UK as an essential part of future environmental strategy.

ACTION

- *The Society will work in partnership with relevant bodies continue to demonstrate the importance of environmental management of wellbeing sharing examples of best practice in action.*

OUTLINE PRINCIPLE 6

Our preferred structure for political leadership of confronting climate change is that there should be a distinct position within the Cabinet, but we can see opportunities for the new Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) in embedding climate change awareness and action for adaptation and mitigation at the highest levels in business. There are number of Corporate and Director codes on governance; we would like to see these revised to ensure that those in high office wherever and whatever that might be will act in the best interests of our future on sustainability, including climate change. The creation of a link between climate change and business must be beneficial and DBEIS is well placed to properly embed climate change policy within the UK 's Industrial Strategy and to help develop a sustainable circular economy. We call upon DBEIS to honour the commitments made by the former Department Energy and Climate Change.

ACTION

- *The Society will study Corporate and Director Governance Codes and make recommendations by the end of 2016 for modifications which reflect the need for business to take more account of sustainability, and in particular, climate change.*
- *The Society will co-host a summit on the sustainability and director responsibility at Clarence House in February 2017*