



WWF-UK

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WWF Parliamentary Briefing for Queen's Speech Debates

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Introduction

Transformative changes are needed to address the food and energy crises, build long-term resilience, deliver on net zero and restore nature. The Government must deliver the solutions to what WWF calls the 'triple challenge': tackling climate change, recovering nature and ensuring people prosper and have access to affordable, sustainable and nutritious food. The Government must use the agenda outlined in the Queen's Speech 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.

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.
- The upcoming [Financial Services and Markets Bill](#) presents an opportunity for the UK, as a global centre of finance, to harness the power of the financial system to help achieve our net zero and nature commitments. To future-proof financial services, regulators need a new statutory objective on climate and nature that will give them the clear legal mandate to take appropriate action.
- Government should adopt a **net zero test to all public spending and taxation decisions to ensure transparency and efficiency**.
- Food was conspicuous **by its absence in the Queen's Speech, the Government must now make clear how the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, and upcoming Food Strategy White Paper**, will rise to the current cost of living crisis and help communities across the UK transition towards, and prosper from, a net-zero and nature positive future

Key asks:

Agriculture and land use

1. WWF is calling on the UK Government to raise their ambition and deliver transformational agricultural subsidy reform that pays farmers fairly to deliver for nature and climate. This should include clear objectives, based on a new **agriculture and land use decarbonisation strategy**, as recommended by the Committee on Climate Change. As set out in our [Land of Plenty report](#), the strategy must be aligned with net-zero and nature positive, and should:
 - Reduce direct emissions from agriculture by at least 35% by 2030 on 2018 levels.
 - Reduce net land-related emissions so that UK land becomes a net carbon sink by 2040 at the latest.
 - Halt and reverse the loss of UK nature by 2030.



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- Cut UK farming's overseas carbon footprint particularly relating to soy feed and fertiliser inputs by at least 31% by 2030 and 57% by 2050 on 2018 levels.
- 2. Government must introduce a **set of core environmental standards for trade** to ensure all food sold in the UK, whether grown here or imported from overseas, meets the high standards UK consumers expect, and guarantee new trade deals do not lead to an offshoring of our environmental footprint.
- 3. Embed a **resilience action plan within the upcoming Food Strategy White Paper** that makes food a cross-government priority, setting us on a path to restore nature and cut emissions while supporting farmers.

Finance and fiscal policy

1. To achieve the **government's vision of a net zero financial centre**, climate and nature goals need to be **embedded throughout the system, including within the legislative and regulatory architecture**. The Financial Services and Markets Bill is a unique legislative moment to set the scene for the financial sector's priorities in years to come. Given the expected scale and impact of the climate and biodiversity crises, and the existing commitments by the UK government for the UK to become the world's first Net Zero Aligned Financial Centre, it would be important for the Bill to recognise the importance of aligning the financial sector with existing net zero commitments.
2. In order to achieve the governments' vision of a net zero financial sector, **Government should ensure that net zero is recognised as a priority in the new Financial Services and Markets Bill**, and that the new framework established by the Bill:
 - i. is **based on scientific evidence and underpinned by enhanced transparency and accountability**.
 - ii. recognises **climate and nature as deeply interconnected systemic risks** that need to be tackled together; and
 - iii. includes **duties and a statutory objective on climate and nature protection** to ensure that this is a priority.
3. Properly integrating climate and nature in the above framework, would empower financial regulators to facilitate the UK finance sector's alignment with net zero and the UK's obligations on nature. It would also help create the enabling environment to advance progress on the **implementation of private sector net zero transition plans** by clearly signalling the government's direction of travel to the private sector, and ensuring that what is proposed is **consistent, credible, and ambitious**. It would empower financial regulators to facilitate the UK finance sector's alignment with net zero and the UK's obligations on nature.
4. The **forthcoming Green Finance Strategy must put net-zero, nature positive transition planning at the heart of Government policymaking** and set best practice by incorporating and delivering its own transition to net zero. This should include **applying a net zero test to all public spending and taxation decisions** in Budgets and Spending Reviews to ensure the overall package puts us on track to meet our climate and nature goals.



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5. Finally, nature must be integrated into corporate, finance sector and Government net zero transition planning. Businesses and government must include provisions to protect and restore nature as well as cutting climate emissions, because without investing in nature-based solutions we will never achieve net zero.

Energy:

1. Prioritise **short-term cost-effective [renewable energy and energy efficiency measures](#)** in addition to long-term decarbonisation strategies. This will lower the cost of energy and provide business, new job, and training opportunities.

Speaking points for upcoming debates:

Power in the Communities

- If the Levelling up agenda is to truly address inequality and set in place the social and economic programme for the whole of government, it must address the **economic drivers of geographic inequalities, the food system in its totality, communities' resilience to climate change and peoples' ability to access nature on their doorsteps.**
- Globally, the food system is at the heart of nature's collapse **and the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world.** Failing to protect nature could [cost the UK economy £16billion a year](#), including costs such as increased food prices and the loss of pollinators. Making the changes needed across the whole of the UK on how we consume and produce food is essential to securing a net zero, nature positive future, to be a truly just transition, any changes in our food system must account for the growing pressures on weekly food costs for families.
- Land use is a critical factor in ensuring long-term resilience and food security. **In all, over 70% of our land is used for agriculture, and the way we farm and use the land is responsible for 12% of our territorial greenhouse gas emissions.**
- **It is therefore vital land is protected to ensure the well-being of British people.** WWF independent analysis commissioned has convinced us its possible and necessary to:
 - **Reduce UK direct agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 35% by 2030 and 51% by 2050** on 2018 levels, without offshoring those emissions.
 - Switch UK land from a net source of **GHG emissions to a net sink by 2040** at the very latest.
 - Use the opportunities created by a net zero future to create new jobs and allow the country to seize the opportunities that come from embracing a new way of working.



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- Power in the communities is **about giving people agency over landscapes to restore nature and tackle climate change**. Taking advantage of the opportunity of creating a more resilient food system to invest in communities.
- Government must work with communities, local authorities and landowners to develop **locally-driven land use frameworks and partnerships, allowing communities to shape the future of their landscapes**. Guided by national targets and evidence, such frameworks should bring together policies on nature, climate and food, aligning with local opportunities, priorities and needs in order to drive public and private investment towards specific actions on the ground
- We need to strive for a future **where the most sustainable food is also amongst the cheapest**. Yet too often both the true cost and value of our food is lost along the path from farm to fork, with a race to the bottom in terms of quality and price. This is not fair either to food producers or the public, while nature often takes the hit in between.
- Consumers, business, and farmers must be united in showing support for **affordable food for everyone without harming the planet**. Pride in one's town is engendered by valuing the well-being of its inhabitants, with access to abundant nature, affordable and good food as well as good, secure green jobs. The UK produces **globally renowned food including beef, lamb, and cheese, which deserves to be championed**. By bringing consumers and producers closer together through growing local market and supply chains we can **bring more variety into our supply chains and can help generate greater value** for those producing high quality, less intensive products.
- The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill must **embed natural capital and nature positive obligations and duties** to ensure commitments are met across rural and urban landscapes.

Making Britain the best place to grow up and grow old

- Access to nature is **empirically proven to have beneficial impacts on health, well-being and the economy**. Every £1 invested in restoring nature [provides £3 in public benefits](#) including recreation and improved health and wellbeing, while [the NHS could save over £2 billion a year](#) in treatment costs if everyone in England had access to good quality green space.
- Multiple studies have also found a link between [access to green space and a reduced risk of mental health](#) problems, improved mood, and increased life satisfaction.
- Have the UK Government put in place an agriculture and land use decarbonisation strategy by 2023, as recommended by the Committee on Climate Change. Such a plan must be embedded in the principles of the triple challenge using land for the benefit of nature, sequestering carbon, and growing affordable, healthy food. **Tackling the short term and long-term cost of living increases** and ensuring a just transition that accounts for the growing pressures on weekly food costs for families.
- **Prioritising energy efficiency is critical in tackling the cost-of-living crisis**. Recent research by E3G suggests **that by 2025, energy efficiency, clean heat and renewables alone could replace four times the gas we currently import from Russia**.



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- The Energy Bill could make-right the absences from the Energy Security Strategy, by **prioritising short-term cost-effective measures** such as [renewables and energy efficiency](#) measures, that offer a **win-win-win for consumers, business, and the environment**. **New onshore renewables are six times cheaper than the cost of running gas plants**, yet the government is missing the opportunity to invest in short-term actions that would make a tangible difference to people's livelihoods in the coming months.
- We are **yet to see a single piece of evidence that further licensing either in the North Sea or through fracking would increase UK energy security or lower bills**.
- **The Energy Bill should reform the power market** to decouple household energy prices from gas prices, unlock the power of the planning system and local energy markets to **support communities to build onshore wind and solar**, and ensure our ambition on offshore wind can be delivered through planning and by creating an effective, nature-positive marine grid.

Achieving economic growth

- **The Financial Services and Markets Bill is an opportunity for the UK to future-proof financial services, deliver on its climate and nature commitments and demonstrate global leadership**. The Government's proposal to deliver the Future Regulatory Framework (FRF) will determine how financial services regulation is developed in the UK outside of the EU. **Therefore, [the objectives parliament sets for the new regulatory architecture are critical](#)**. They will impact all future rules that structure and support UK financial services.
- **Regulators need a new statutory objective on climate and nature**, as part of the FRF, that will give them the clear legal mandate to take appropriate action to mitigate against the impacts of climate change and nature loss.
- A strong regulatory framework must be based **on scientific evidence and underpinned by enhanced transparency and accountability**. It must recognise climate and nature as deeply interconnected systemic risks that need to be tackled together. It will also be critical for this framework to include duties and a statutory objective on climate and nature protection to ensure that this is a priority.
- To realise its own ambition to become the **world's first net-zero financial centre** the government must strengthen the rules being developed for the financial sector and take a [whole of economy approach](#) ensuring its own **transition planning as well as that of the public and private sectors**.
- We believe a coherent plan to achieve a rapid, stable, coordinated transition to a low-carbon, nature-positive economy is needed. [Investment in low-carbon infrastructure can boost long-term productivity](#) and has high returns, as every pound spent on low-carbon investment options returns 3-8 times the initial investment.
- **Investing in net zero can also deliver thousands of high-quality green jobs**, many in areas experiencing high unemployment. It would grow **the UK's green exports from £5billion to £80billion per annum by 2050** and boost the UK's productivity.
- To meet the UK's world-leading targets, it is vital that the UK Government implements a "net zero test" to help **ensure that all budgets and spending reviews are compliant with reaching net zero**. This would ensure public money is spent on policies that protect the planet and match the ambition it's placing on the private sector.