

Dorset CAN Briefing 27/9/2022

The UK Government's deregulation plans



1. Defra: ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme) & Subsidies

- ELMS (the planned UK replacement for the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and which would have rewarded landowners/farmers for their environmental work) is being reviewed.
- Although there have been assurances from Defra (w/c 26/9/22) that ELMS will not be scrapped altogether, the current review of ELMS increases uncertainty, threatens to water down the scheme and delays a vital aspect of plans to regenerate wildlife and the countryside.
- Any watering-down of ELMS would be a damaging move away from the principle of public money paid for environmental good.

[More info about ELMS: Environmental Land Management schemes: overview - GOV.UK](#)

2. Government to scrap EU nature protection legislation

- **The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill** would drop/amend retained EU laws and introduce deregulated investment zones. The Bill would scrap:
 - ***Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*** (which protect hundreds of wildlife sites from unsustainable development) and safeguard threatened species from destruction.
 - ***Water Environment Regulations 2017***: which guard against river pollution.
 - ***Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010***: imposing limits on toxic air pollution.
 - ***The Marine Strategy Regulations 2010***: protection for our seas and sea life.
- Rewriting or ditching these laws will make it harder for the Government to meet its own targets on climate and nature & sustain its global environmental leadership role.

[More info on plans to drop retained EU laws for protecting the environment](#)

Response to Government plans:

Three major Conservation Groups have come out **against** the Government plans:

1. Wildlife Trusts

Craig Bennett, chief executive of the Wildlife Trusts (860,000 members), said: "They have no democratic mandate to do this, it was in the election manifesto. What you've seen in the space of the last week is Liz Truss's government basically trashing all the environmental commitments that were in the 2019 manifesto."

2. National Trust

Hilary McGrady, Director General of the National Trust, said: "Rather than ramp up action to support our environment, this Government appears however to be heading in the opposite direction.... The new Investment Zones represent a free-for-all for nature and heritage, yet we know that green spaces and beauty are vital to attract investment and for a good quality of life. Likewise a rumoured return to EU-style land subsidies will squander one of the biggest Brexit opportunities for nature, fatally undermining improvements to the nature, soil and water upon which sustainable food production depends." ([National Trust Statement](#))

3. RSPB

The RSPB see this as an attack on nature: "Make no mistake, we are angry. The Government has launched an unprecedented attack on nature and the laws that protect it. We need to defend our vulnerable and vital wild places, now. Don't let this happen in your name." ([RSPB Statement](#))

However, the farmers' union, the NFU, supports Government plans to scrap ELMS :

Minette Batters, the NFU president, welcomed the departure from Elms and says that private money should be used to pay farmers for wildlife recovery, rather than public funds.