The Environmental Audit Committee is required by the House of Commons to consider and scrutinise the Government’s contribution to environmental protection and sustainable development. Unlike most select committees, the committee’s remit cuts across government rather than focusing on the work of a particular department.
In addition to raising awareness of sustainable development goals, air quality risks and environmental protection the efforts of the committee have contributed to:

- the Bank of England’s Financial Policy Committee starting to monitor the risks of the ‘carbon bubble’ for potential instability in the financial markets
- revisions made to the Infrastructure Bill requiring the Committee on Climate Change to advise on the carbon budget impacts of shale gas extraction and increasing environmental safeguards for future extraction
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office publishing the first ‘Arctic strategy’ – *Adapting to Change – UK policy towards the Arctic*
- the promise of 2015 consultation to set guidance for local authorities on air quality responsibilities and good practice
- a European Commission ban on neonicotinoid pesticides
- a pause in government biodiversity offsetting proposals
- additional environmental consideration by the HS2 Bill Committee in their Hybrid Bill deliberations
- further embedding of sustainable development in government departments
- extending the remit of the Natural Capital Committee

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### 2010-15 FOCUS

Throughout the 2010-15 Parliament we have focused our attention on five key themes:

- Global sustainable development
- Responding to climate change
- Protecting the environment
- Transitioning to a green economy
- Embedding sustainable development in government

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### 2010-15 SUCCESSES
There is still more to do. Our work covering five broad themes has identified areas that require follow up and further scrutiny:

**Global sustainable development**
- securing and implementing ambitious and measurable Sustainable Development Goals
- promoting sustainability

**Responding to climate change**
- agreeing and achieving a global climate deal that limits warming
- adapting to climate change, future proofing the UK
- increasing the proportion of UK energy needs met by renewable energy

**Protecting the environment**
- tackling air quality
- promoting and protecting biodiversity

**Transitioning to a green economy**
- determining the UK’s path towards a green economy
- addressing the risks posed by the existence of a ‘carbon bubble’
- stimulating a circular economy

approach, with less waste and greater resource efficiency

**Embedding sustainable development in government**
- ensuring government leads by example, embedding sustainable development and well-being in government decision making

Our work has also identified issues which require further work and fundamental debate in the next Parliament:

- achieving an appropriate balance of sustainable development, preventing economic growth trumping environment and social well-being
- implementing the precautionary principle to avoid irreversible environmental damage
- engaging UK civil society and youth in policy development
- clarifying the environmental roles and responsibilities of central and local government
- valuing natural capital and using it to inform policy-making

**2015+ LOOKING AHEAD**
MEMBERSHIP
Joan Walley MP has chaired the committee throughout the 2010-15 Parliament, alongside 15 other Members of Parliament:

Peter Aldous
Neil Carmichael
Martin Caton
Katy Clark
Zac Goldsmith
Mike Kane
Mark Lazarowicz
Caroline Lucas
Caroline Nokes
Dr Matthew Offord
Maria Miller
Mr Jim McConnachie
Ms Jo Negrini
Mr Andrew Rosindell
Dr Alan Whitehead
Simon Wright

The following Members of Parliament were also members of the committee during the Parliament: Richard Benyon, Chris Evans, Ian Murray, Sheryll Murray and Paul Uppal.

CONTACT
Further information on the work of the Environmental Audit Committee and the full 2010-15 Progress Report can be found on the committee’s webpage www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee.