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The **First Report** (Cmnd. 4585, SBN 10 145850 9) was published in February 1971. After reviewing the state of the physical environment in Britain at the beginning of the 1970s the Commission defined the key tasks for attacking pollution. From the outset the Commission recognised that the most serious problems of air pollution were of a global scale.

The Second Report **Three Issues in Industrial Pollution** (Cmnd. 4894, ISBN 0 10 148940 4) was published in March 1972. The Commission called for less secrecy about industrial effluents and wastes; for greater understanding of the environmental impact of new chemical products; and for greater control over the tipping of potentially dangerous wastes on land.

Pollution in some British Estuaries and Coastal Waters was the title of the Third Report (Cmnd. 5054, SBN 10 150540 X), published in September 1972. In the Commission's view British estuaries and coastal waters had been given too little protection by Parliament against gross pollution from industrial and domestic waste. The Commission prescribed urgent action to improve matters, both by the better use of the existing powers of pollution control authorities and through the already proposed legislation to set up new regional water authorities. A Minority Report recommended that pollution should be controlled by introducing a system of charges for disposal of wastes into rivers and tidal waters.

The Fourth Report **Pollution Control: Progress and Problems** (Cmnd. 5780, ISBN 0 10 157800 8) was published in December 1974. It presented a comprehensive review of environmental pollution and described the structure of pollution control in the United Kingdom. Despite improvements in some fields, the Commission was struck by the extent to which pollution of air and water, and dereliction of land, still existed in the major industrial areas.

The Department of the Environment's **Pollution Paper No 4**, published in March 1975, reviewed the action that the government had taken in response to the recommendations in these four Reports. Recommendations made in the Third Report relating to the control of pollution in estuaries had been implemented in the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

The concept of 'best practicable environmental option' (BPEO), designed to assist decision-taking in situations where controlling pollution in one environmental medium (for example, air) can lead to increased pollution in another (for example, water) was introduced in the Fifth Report **Air Pollution Control: an Integrated Approach** (Cmnd. 6371, ISBN 0 10 163710 1), published in January 1976. There were also far-reaching proposals for changes in the arrangements for controlling air pollution. The government's response was set out in **Pollution Paper No 18**, published in December 1982.

The Sixth Report **Nuclear Power and the Environment** (Cmnd. 6618, ISBN 0 10 166180 0), published in September 1976, had a major influence on the development of environmental safeguards for nuclear power. The Commission's recommendations covered issues such as discharges of radioactivity to the environment and the disposal of radioactive wastes. The government responded by way of a White Paper (Cmnd. 6820) in May 1977.

Agriculture and Pollution was the title of the Seventh Report (Cmnd. 7644, ISBN 0 10 176440 5), published in September 1979. It reviewed both pollution arising from agricultural practices (in particular from pesticides, nitrogenous fertilisers and farm wastes) and the effects of pollution on agriculture. **Pollution Paper No 21**, published in December 1983, set out the government's response.

The Eighth Report **Oil Pollution of the Sea** (Cmnd. 8358, ISBN 0 10 183580 9) was published in October 1981. It examined the effects on the marine environment of oil, both from routine discharges and from accidental spills. The government responded to the recommendations, aimed at preventing and combating marine oil pollution, in **Pollution Paper No 20**, published in December 1983.

The Ninth Report, entitled **Lead in the Environment** (Cmnd. 8852, ISBN 0 10 188520 2), was published in April 1983. The Commission concluded that there was an insufficient safety margin between lead concentrations in the blood of most people and the concentrations which were known to be harmful. Recommendations were made to reduce exposure to lead from water, food, paint, dust and air, including the introduction of unleaded petrol. The government responded to these recommendations in July 1983 in **Pollution Paper No 19**, having already announced, at the time of the Report's publication, its acceptance of the key recommendation on petrol.

The Tenth Report **Tackling Pollution - Experience and Prospects** (Cmnd. 9149, ISBN 0 10 191490 3), published in February 1984, contained a wide-ranging review of priorities for the

future and the action that was needed to combat new and growing forms of pollution. It made a number of recommendations, particularly about coastal and air pollution, public access to information and the development of environmental policy in the European Community. The government responded to the Report in *Pollution Paper No 22*, published in December 1984.

The Eleventh Report **Managing Waste: The Duty of Care** (Cmnd. 9675, ISBN 0 10 196750 0), published in December 1985, was concerned with the handling and disposal of waste (other than radioactive waste). Its principal recommendation was that all those who produce waste should have a 'duty of care' to ensure that their wastes were subsequently managed and disposed of without harm to the environment. The government's response to the Report was published as *Pollution Paper No 24* in September 1986. At the same time the Department of the Environment issued a consultation paper setting out in detail proposals for strengthening existing legal controls over the disposal of industrial and commercial waste.

The Twelfth Report **Best Practicable Environmental Option** (Cm 310, ISBN 0 10 103102 5), published in February 1988 was the Commission's contribution to the European Year of the Environment. Developing what was said about BPEO in the 5th, 10th and 11th Reports, it urged government and industry to develop pollution control measures that took account of risks to the whole environment. It set out a procedure for finding the BPEO for projects affecting the environment and emphasised the need for openness in the form of an audit trail. The government's response to the Report was published December 1992.

The Thirteenth Report **The Release of Genetically Engineered Organisms to the Environment** (Cm 720, ISBN 0 10 107202 3) was published in July 1989. It was the first attempt in the United Kingdom to look comprehensively at the risks to the environment involved in the release of genetically engineered organisms (GEOs), how they might be minimised and what form of statutory control was needed to ensure that necessary precautions were taken. The Report recommended that releases should be subject to licensing by the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Health and Safety Commission after an assessment of the risk posed in each case, and that those carrying out releases should be under a duty to take all reasonable steps for the protection of the environment. The government published its response to the Thirteenth Report in June 1993.

The Fourteenth Report was entitled **GENHAZ - A System for the Critical Appraisal of Proposals to Release Genetically Modified Organisms into the Environment** (Cm 1557, ISBN 0 10 115572 7) and was published in June 1991. It followed up proposals in the 13th Report for identifying hazards in releasing GMOs (the term now used in place of GEOs). The system is based on a procedure known as HAZOP which is used in the chemical industry and elsewhere to identify hazards, for example in chemical manufacturing plant. It helps those responsible to think imaginatively and carefully about unplanned events that might arise. The Commission adapted HAZOP to the genetic engineering context. The government's response to the Report was published in December 1994.

The Fifteenth Report **Emissions from Heavy Duty Diesel Vehicles** (Cm 1631, ISBN 0 10 116312 6) was published in September 1991. It looked at the impact of diesel emissions, considered the scope for further reductions beyond those agreed for new vehicles in the European Community and discussed ways in which emissions from vehicles in service might be reduced. It paid particular attention to emissions in urban areas because of the concentration of vehicles, people and buildings there. In December 1992, the government published its response to the Fifteenth Report.

The Sixteenth Report **Freshwater Quality** (Cm 1966, ISBN 9 10 119662 8) was published in June 1992. It looked at the quality of surface and groundwater in the UK, discussed the sources of pollution which affect these waters and how their quality might be improved. It considered the role of economic instruments and recommended a charging scheme for dischargers to freshwater. The government's response was published in February 1995.

The Seventeenth Report **Incineration of Waste** (Cm 2181, ISBN 0 10 121812 5) was published in May 1993. It called for a national strategy for waste management, which will give priority to creating less waste, recycling as much of it as possible, and recovering energy from what remains. It welcomed the considerable increase in the efforts devoted to waste minimisation and

the recycling of materials since the Commission published a comprehensive report on waste management in 1985. For the foreseeable future, however, there would continue to be large amounts of household waste requiring disposal. It concluded that incineration under carefully controlled conditions, followed by appropriate landfilling of the solid residues, was likely to represent the best practicable environmental option for such wastes. The government's response to the Incineration of Waste report was published in July 1994.

The Eighteenth Report **Transport and the Environment** (Cm 2674, ISBN 0 10 126742 8) was published in October 1994. It reviewed the environmental effects of transport systems, and highlighted the implications of rapid growth in road and air travel. It proposed 8 objectives and a number of quantified targets as the basis for a transport policy for the UK which will be sustainable well into the next century. It made wide-ranging recommendations about integrating transport policy and land use, increasing the use made of environmentally less damaging forms of transport for passengers and freight, and minimising the adverse impact of road and rail transport.

The Nineteenth Report **Sustainable Use of Soil** (Cm 3165, ISBN 0 10 131 652 6) was published in February 1996. It recommended that the government draw up and implement a soil protection policy for the UK. It made specific recommendations about the role of the Environment Agencies, and of central and local government; about controlling the impact on soils from spreading of sewage sludge and other forms of waste disposal; about the re-use of contaminated sites; and about conserving soils used for agriculture. In January 1997, the government published its response to the Nineteenth Report. In March 2002, a consultant prepared a [review of the Nineteenth Report](#) on behalf of the Commission.

In October 1996 the Commission announced that it was reviewing what had happened in the transport field since the Eighteenth Report. The Twentieth Report **Transport and the Environment - Developments since 1994** (Cm 3752, ISBN 0 10 1375220) was published in September 1997. It found few signs of changes in previous trends, emphasised the need for concerted effort and radical action to make transport more sustainable, and set out the requirements for an integrated transport systems. The government's response to the Twentieth Report was published in October 1998 (Cm 4066; ISBN 0 10 140662 2) and may be viewed via the DETR website (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/rcep/20/index.htm).

The Twenty-first Report **Setting Environmental Standards** (Cm 4053, ISBN 0 10 140532 4) was published in October 1998. It argued that there must be a more robust basis for setting environmental standards. It concluded that scientific assessments, and analyses of technology, economics, risk and implementation issues, must inform policy decisions but cannot pre-empt them. Setting a standard or target is a practical judgement which has to be made in the light of all relevant factors. People's values must be taken into account throughout, beginning at the stage of defining the problem and framing the questions that need to be addressed. In July 2000, the government published its response to the Twenty-first Report (Cm 4794; ISBN 0 10 147942 5) which may be viewed via the DETR website (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/rcep/21/index.htm).

The Twenty-second Report **Energy - The Changing Climate** (Cm 4794, ISBN 0 10 147492 X) was published in June 2000. The Report advocates a transformation in the use of energy in the UK to counter climate change. As a contribution to global efforts to prevent excessive climate change, the Royal Commission recommends that the UK should plan to reduce by 60% over the next 50 years the amount of carbon dioxide it produces by burning fossil fuels. Success would necessitate a reversal of the previous trend of growing energy use. The Report explores what this will mean for industry and households, and highlights how government policies need to change. [Click here for further details about the Energy Study](#), including accessing a copy of the full report and the summary document in .pdf format. The government published its response to the Twenty-second Report in February 2003 (Cm 5766; ISBN 0 10 157662 5). The response (52pp, 680Kb) may be accessed via the Defra website (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/rcep/pdf/rcep22_response.pdf). Other government energy documents can be viewed via the [DTI website](#) and the [Defra website](#).

The Twenty-third Report **Environmental Planning** (Cm 5459, ISBN 0-10-154592 4) was published on 21 March 2002. It recommends that there should be clearer policies and objectives

for the environment in each part of the UK, and statutory recognition of the central role of town and country planning in protecting and enhancing the environment. The report advocates rationalising the overall system for environmental planning by introducing integrated spatial strategies covering all aspects of sustainable development; and ensuring that such strategies cover all forms of land use, in particular agriculture and forestry, as the largest uses. It makes recommendations to improve considerably the availability of information about the environment; and proposes further steps to engage a wider range of people in decisions about setting and achieving environmental goals. [Click here for further details about the Environmental Planning Study](#), including accessing a copy of the full report and the summary document in .pdf format.

A Special Report **The Environmental Effects of Civil Aircraft in Flight** (ISBN 0-9544186-0-3) was published in November 2002. In the Special Report, the Commission expresses deep concern about the global impacts of the rapid growth in air travel. At present rates of increase in air traffic, aircraft emissions will become a major contributor to global warming. As short-haul passenger flights make a disproportionately large contribution to the global environmental impacts of air transport, a shift away from the use of air transport to rail could reap considerable environmental benefits. Instead of encouraging airport expansion and proliferation, the government should facilitate a modal shift from air to high-speed rail for short-haul journeys. The Commission recommends that action is taken to include international aviation emissions in the emissions trading scheme envisaged as one of the Kyoto Protocol's implementing mechanisms. [Click here for further details about the Aviation Study](#), including accessing a copy of the report in .pdf format. Please contact the Commission [Secretariat](#) if you wish to be sent a hard-copy of the Aviation Report.

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