

The Church of England's lead bishop on the environment has said recent proposed Government environment initiatives mean this could prove to be a 'great week' for environmental policy in the UK.

The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam, was speaking as Theresa May set out plans potentially banning a number of single-use plastic products.

Earlier in the week Claire Perry, the minister for clean growth, also set out hopes for the UK to be the first major developed economy to reach the tighter ambition of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5C in the Paris Agreement.

Bishop Nicholas said: "I welcome these commendable ambitions by the Government, which if followed through with concrete actions make this potentially a great week for environmental policy in the UK. Climate change is one of the great moral challenges of our times, while our addiction to cheap plastic is simply indefensible when more sustainable alternatives are available.

"These steps send a strong message internationally, especially to our Commonwealth cousins as Britain is hosting leaders in London this week.

"As I meet fellow Anglican bishops, especially from Africa and the Pacific, it is clear that their countries are suffering now because of climate and reducing our emissions is the biggest single step we can take to ensuring a more fairly run world.

"The significance of Britain tightening climate targets to reflect the Paris Agreement's 1.5C goal is that the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world are those most exposed to climatic changes.

"Waste plastic is toxic to ecosystems, especially in the oceans. It is a 'no-brainer' to replace plastics with biodegradable alternatives in the many cases where they are easily available.

"We must hope and pray that British leadership on this issue therefore galvanises other countries in the Commonwealth and elsewhere to follow suit."

Notes to editors

The Rt Rev Nicholas Holtam is Bishop of Salisbury and Church of England lead bishop for the environment. He chairs the Church of England's environmental working group.

More information: [churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint](https://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint).

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