



UKELA

UKELA Strategic Vision and Plan 2020-2025

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Foreword from Lord Carnwath of Notting Hill CVO



I am very pleased to welcome the 2020-2025 strategy document for the UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA). Written during the course of 2020, it sets out the association's vision for the next 5 years and beyond. It was written during a time of unprecedented challenges for the world, for the environment and for humankind. We all have shared interest in finding new and effective ways to overcome them, so as to leave our precious environment in a better state than we found it. The law has a central role to play. UKELA has always been at the forefront of efforts to develop and improve the content and enforcement of environmental law. Those efforts are of particular importance as this country leaves the European Union. We have a special responsibility to ensure that there is no backsliding in the government's commitment to maintaining environmental standards. This strategy document points the way to how UKELA can focus its energies and skills over the coming years.

My thanks go to the trustees of UKELA who have given so much of their time and skills to create this document; to our members who contributed their thoughts and ideas; and particularly to Alison Boyd and her staff team who have guided the Association through this exceptionally difficult period, and who work so energetically to advance its mission.

Robert Carnwath
Honorary President

Introduction and Executive Summary

UKELA is a registered charity (299498), established in 1988. It comprises 1500 members made up of lawyers, consultants, academics, students, government lawyers, scientists and a range of others with a passion to 'make better law for the environment'. UKELA is the independent, trusted voice in environmental law. Our interventions matter, our members' views are respected and our contribution to the evolving picture in environmental law in the next 10 years is vital.

Our charitable objects commit us to:

Promote for the benefit of the public generally the enhancement and conservation of the environment in the United Kingdom and in particular to advance the education of the public in all matters relating to the development, teaching, application and practice of law relating to the environment.

UKELA's trustees have chosen to focus our next strategy period on 'the decade of change', with our aims addressing, in particular, the period 2020-2025, but with an eye on the medium term to 2030.

2020 has proved to be the year where many challenges have emerged for the world and its environment, through the Black Lives Matter movement and Covid-19; whilst here in the UK we are also moving into a future outside the European Union.

The strategy 2020-2025 will address 6 key aims:

- EFFECTIVE UK-WIDE INFLUENCE
- CLEAR AND ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION
- SMART AND EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION
- PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP
- COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
- SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION

The following pages look at those aims in more detail.

Vision and Mission

UKELA's Mission

Empowering and enabling UKELA's members and the wider public to influence the law to deliver on our vision and strategic aims.

UKELA's 2025 Vision

An environmental law regime that supports and underpins environmental protection, improvement and restoration to ensure the economy undergoes a green recovery and is on track to becoming regenerative, sustainable and net zero.

UKELA's 2030 Vision

A UK legal framework and institutional architecture that promotes and respects a healthy environment and a regenerative, sustainable and net zero economy.



2020 Contextual Backdrop

EU TRANSITION: Through our Governance and Devolution Group we will continue to press for a strengthened environmental law regime in the UK and engage with the newly established Office for Environmental Protection, Environmental Standards Scotland and other new governance bodies across the UK.

COVID-19: Through our communications and influencing channels, we will continue to advocate for a green recovery and investment in environmental health and the net zero transition. Our focus will be on building back greener rather than a return to business as usual.

DIGITAL: We will continue to deliver online webinars, events and UKELA's annual conference. We will move back to 'in person' events only in line with government guidelines. Our overriding concern is to ensure that no undue risks to health and wellbeing are taken. As such, we will continue to invest in an up to date and reputable digital infrastructure, which will also support our longer term aims of better accessibility to all.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: We will promote greater inclusion throughout the environmental law field, aiming for diverse speaker line-ups across our events portfolio; and continue to promote a diverse and inclusive board, voluntary and staff team.

We continue to live and work in a time of great change. As the bigger picture develops, so this strategy will adapt and adjust.

UKELA's Strategic Aims

- EFFECTIVE UK-WIDE INFLUENCE
- CLEAR AND ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION
- SMART AND EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION
- PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP
- COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
- SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION



Effective UK-wide Influence

UKELA influences the UK legal regime by empowering and creating strategic opportunities for our members to use their expertise and make impactful interventions. The current context (2020) makes this a time of great legal and regulatory reform, so we now need to act decisively, effectively, and swiftly.

- Support and promote Working Parties, Regional Groups, and Devolved Administrations to make relevant and impactful legal interventions
- Enable members to engage with decision-makers advocating in the interests of UKELA's mission and vision
- Provide platforms for presentation of information and knowledge sharing through events and conferences; ensuring the greatest accessibility for all members
- Promote influential publications and enhance messaging through UKELA's myriad channels



Clear and Accessible Information

UKELA's activities and information will be accessible to all. It will be a leading information hub for both members and the wider public. It will enable and facilitate valuable information exchange and knowledge sharing; and promote the advancement of understanding of environmental law.

- Continue to develop multiple responsive channels of communications with UKELA members and audiences
- Promote pioneering and innovative thinking by inviting a variety of contributions to newsletter and online content
- Enhance and develop the UKELA and Law & Your Environment websites to ensure information hubs are kept up to date and relevant
- Use UKELA's credible and trusted voice to communicate to the public the importance of strong environmental laws



Smart and Effective Collaboration

UKELA recognises the strength there is in smart and effective collaboration both within its membership base and beyond. We will foster collaboration and build partnerships with like-minded and aligned organisations to enhance collective impact and scale up change. Engagement with other stakeholders and different audiences will also inform UKELA's collaboration with others.

- Support collaboration across the countries and regions of the UK to expand knowledge and influence in different contexts
- Foster collaborations with international groups to inform understanding of international environmental law
- Build partnerships across the environmental, health and planning sectors to strengthen UKELA's ability to influence
- Continue to invest in virtual and digital means of collaboration to ensure wide-ranging participation



Proactive Engagement of Membership

UKELA's work and activities are driven by its membership; and to ensure UKELA remains responsive to its membership needs it will proactively and regularly engage to understand and deliver on its membership needs.

- Regularly engage with members to ensure UKELA retains relevance to current members and attracts new members
- Proactively seek to broaden our membership base to expand multi-sector engagement and underpin commitment to diversity
- Respond to evolving needs of an increasingly diversified membership and empower members to take on initiatives
- Generate useful and innovative content for and with members to enhance membership experience



Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

UKELA is committed to creating an inclusive environment where its membership can thrive through diversity. UKELA recognises it has a role to play in supporting legal professionals from all backgrounds, gender, and ethnicities to participate in its activities.

- Increase representation of those from underrepresented groups; as well as building partnerships with different organisations to support this
- Ensure that diversity and inclusion are integral to UKELA's activities
- Promote and support the active participation of members from a range of backgrounds and provide a platform for diversity of issues
- Increase diversity of UKELA's Council and Executive bodies

'It's good to be part of an environmental organisation that is committed to becoming an equality, diversity and inclusion ally.'

Maria Adebowale-Schwarte, Patron



Supporting the Next Generation

The next generation of lawyers will play an essential role in delivering our vision now and into the future. UKELA is committed to supporting their careers and building their capacity to become agents of impactful change.

- Continue to deliver Young UKELA events and activities to engage the younger members of the profession
- Develop and enhance careers programme and mentoring schemes to support intergenerational learning
- Enhance the offer for younger members of the profession by investing in tech and digital capabilities
- Provide a platform for younger members of the profession to engage with UKELA's audiences



Message from Kirsty Schneeberger MBE



It certainly has been a very interesting year for UKELA to undergo a strategic review and develop its new Five-Year Strategy. Navigating its way through the turbulent and uncharted territory of COVID-19, the organisation has demonstrated its ability to be nimble, agile, responsive, and creative in the face of seismic changes to the external context in which it operates.

Not ones to 'let a crisis go to waste' UKELA has ploughed back into this Five-Year Strategy its learnings not just of this COVID-19 year; but of the preceding four years since the referendum on the UK's place in the European Union, a.k.a. Brexit and the most recent Five-Year Strategy. We learnt then that the future is impossible to predict and trying to do so as part of a strategic review would be somewhat missing the point.

Consequently, we approached this exercise not to produce a detailed plan that would cover all foreseeable eventualities; but one that would offer a high-level strategic vision comprising six key areas of focus (Aims). There is some detail in the ambitions and intentions for how UKELA will achieve the six Aims, but not in such a way as to be restrictive and to enable enough flexibility for the organisation to adapt and evolve according to changing external contexts and the needs of the membership.

Each year the UKELA staff team and Council will produce a detailed operational plan that will serve as a more detailed outline for how the Aims will be met. Splitting out these two components of the Plan is a new approach for UKELA, and I am confident that it will prove to be successful; providing visibility on the strategic vision whilst empowering the team and Council to plan on an annual basis.

Overall, I hope you will find this Five-Year Strategy to be bold in both its ambitions for achieving environmental law impacts as well as supporting its membership, which is after all the heart and soul of the organisation. We hope that in reading the Strategy you are inspired to participate more in UKELA's activities; and that in your professions you feel emboldened to live by the values we have tried to articulate.

Leaving 2020 behind and looking ahead to 2021 and beyond, I am struck by just how momentous this time is for all of us: the world as we know it after COVID-19 and Brexit will never be the same again. The [2020 Living Planet Report](#) makes for grim reading with figures showing an average 68% fall in species since 1970. Sir David Attenborough's [A Life on Our Planet](#) illustrates just how much damage to nature we have caused in his lifetime. Now until 2030 is our chance to make right the wrongs and restore and regenerate nature to ensure we shift our trajectory away from that of an unliveable planet, to one in which we can thrive and flourish.

No mean feat, that is for sure. But with boldness, creativity, courage, and tenacity, I have no doubt that UKELA, and all its members, will strive to make a difference in all the ways they can. I am proud of what we have all achieved so far. I am undaunted by the challenges ahead, knowing as I do how much talent and determination lies in our ranks. I look forward to our continued work together and continuing to achieve great things. I look forward to looking back on this moment in time and recognising it as the pivot, the volta that made all the difference.

Kirsty Schneeberger
Chair