

Passion for animal welfare and our environment, locally, nationally and globally is something very dear to me. Even more so since becoming a mother two years ago. For a long time I have pushed the Government to be bolder in their environmental agenda and I am really pleased with the recent work from Environment Secretary Michael Gove and his team of ministers.

He has announced a fantastic array of policies over the last year, from tackling plastic pollutants to puppy sales and this week he has committed the UK to introducing a new ban on ivory sales.

The UK has long been a global leader in the international fight against the illegal ivory trade. But over the last decade, the number of elephants has declined by almost a third and around 20,000 a year, 55 a week, are still being slaughtered due to the global demand.

This proposed ban will be the toughest in Europe and among the toughest in the world, fixing loopholes currently used in the sale of 'raw' ivory. Ending these problematic narrow exemptions will ensure that there is no value for modern day ivory and the tusks of recently poached elephants cannot enter the UK market.

I am proud that we are sending such a clear message to the world that the illegal wildlife trade will not be tolerated and every effort will be made to halt the shocking decline in Africa's elephant population. Hopefully this will inspire the world to follow suit!

This new complete and total ban will help protect African elephants for future generations and continue a much needed respect of our natural environment.