Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

Land use consultation

Summary of responses

March 2026

We are responsible for improving and protecting the environment. We aim to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. We also support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries.

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Contents

Introduction and context

This document provides a summary of responses to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) public consultation on land use in England, which ran from 31 January to 25 April 2025.

The UK government has responded to consultation feedback through its preparation of the Land Use Framework for England, which is published alongside this summary of responses.

The land use consultation comprised several forms of engagement, including:

- an online consultation, hosted on Citizen Space over a 12-week consultation period
- 6 pairs of stakeholder workshops and public focus groups held in different regions of England, run by Ipsos on behalf of Defra
- 7 additional regional workshops run by external organisations
- 3 ministerial roundtables
- 8 workshops focused on specific aspects of policy
- attendance of Defra officials at a range of wider meetings, conferences and discussions with sector groups

This summary of responses principally reports findings from the online consultation, to which responses were received via the Citizen Space online form, email and post. Where the Ipsos-led or external workshops provided additional insights which were not heard in responses to the online consultation, these have also been reported within specific theme headings. This report draws from the reports produced by Ipsos and directly from consultation response data.

The consultation sought views and evidence on:

- the scale and type of land use changes required to meet targets and objectives for environment, climate, housing and infrastructure while maintaining food production
- proposed principles to support strategic spatial planning and the targeting of land use incentives
- proposed policy interventions to address land use challenges under four themes - aligned incentives, joined-up decisions, accessible and high-quality data, and skills
- next steps for government land use policy

Defra and Ipsos would like to thank the stakeholders and members of the public who took part in the consultation and whose contributions helped shape this report.

Methodology

How we refer to participants in this report

Where we refer to ‘responses to the consultation’, we are referring to those who responded to the online consultation. Respondents could provide their feedback via an online consultation platform (Citizen Space), by email, or post. Responses received by email or post were digitalised and formatted to match the format of the online response form in so far as possible.

Where we refer to ‘stakeholders’ we are referring to those who attended the stakeholder workshops. Where we refer to ‘public participants’ or ‘members of the public’ we are referring to those who attended the focus groups.

Where we refer to what ‘respondents stated’ within each question, this reflects primarily findings from the public consultation, with any additional comments from stakeholders included.

Workshops and focus groups

Ipsos-led workshops and focus groups

Ipsos delivered workshops attended by a range of stakeholders, and focus groups attended by members of the public, at 6 locations across the country. Locations were selected to include a variety of different landscapes and areas where Defra modelling suggests the change in land use may be significant. These were:

- Leicestershire – selected to explore multifunctional land use opportunities and potential tensions in mixed farming or enclosed pasture areas and areas of intensive grassland
- Greater Manchester – selected to explore urban, peri-urban and local agricultural land use challenges and opportunities
- Somerset – selected to explore the need for significant restoration and sustainable management of lowland peat in agricultural areas
- East Anglia – selected to explore multifunctional land use opportunities and potential tensions in landscape-scale arable areas, such as significant opportunities for silvoarable systems
- Cumbria – selected to explore the need for significant upland peat restoration in least favourable area (LFA) livestock farming regions
- Surrey – selected to explore land use in an area with high levels of protected landscapes and ancient woodlands, diverse lowland agriculture, high land prices, and peri-urban landscapes

Stakeholders were identified and invited to the workshops using a mixed approach, which included drawing on Defra's existing network of stakeholders and desk research to identify suitable membership organisations and local stakeholder networks.

Public participants were recruited via Ipsos's recruitment partner Central Fieldwork. The screener ensured a mix of demographics, such as age, gender, ethnicity and income, as well as a mix of rural and urban members of the public.

Stakeholders and the general public were engaged separately to be able to better tailor the content and structure for different levels of engagement, interest and experience in the topic, and to maximise attendance and accessibility, with sessions outside working hours for members of the public, and during working hours for stakeholders. Insights from the focus groups were shared with stakeholders at the workshops the following day.

Workshops

These were all-day workshops with stakeholders, guided by facilitators. Workshops began with an introduction to the land use consultation, a question and answer session, and an overview of the key themes from the focus group held the previous evening. Through the workshop, stakeholders discussed both the type and scale of national level change, and the priorities and opportunities for land use change in the area. This was followed by a discussion on policy challenges and proposed interventions, and finally the proposed land use framework principles, focusing on suggested alterations and what their application would look like. The session finished with a look ahead at what success would look like for land use change in England.

Focus groups

Focus groups were designed to elicit in-depth discussion about land use in England with members of the public. The sessions provided an overview of current land use in England, and the potential type and scale of change over the next 25 years. Public participants then discussed the local area, including land use change opportunities in their area and principles they believed should underpin any changes in land use.

Additional regional engagement

The 7 additional regional workshops run by external organisations and attended by Defra officials were:

- UK Farmer Discussion Network event in Shropshire (run by Exeter University)
- Cambridgeshire Fens workshop (run by Fenland SOIL and National Farmers' Union)
- workshops held in Cumbria, Northumberland, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire and Devon (run by the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission)
- Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission stakeholder discussions

Analysis

Consultation

All consultation responses were compiled into a main database, including online and postal responses. Responses provided by email or post were digitalised, and where possible were formatted to match the format of the online response form. Analysis of consultation responses involved coding and analysis of responses and themes by Ipsos.

This summary of responses draws on the Ipsos reports alongside direct review of all responses by Defra. As consultation response data is not statistically representative, the report does not indicate how common each view was (that is, how many participants held each view) in open questions. We have aimed to reflect the full diversity of views in each question.

For closed questions, the percentage of respondents (split into organisations, individuals, and overall) who completed the questionnaire and selected each option is indicated in a table. For the multiple choice questions (those within questions 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23 and 24), some postal and email responses did not follow the format of the online consultation and so were not clearly matchable to the multiple-choice options available. In these cases, the data tables only display the multiple choice selections from those providing responses on Citizen Space. For these questions, views from postal and email responses were captured fully in the corresponding open-text section of the question.

Workshops and focus groups

Ipsos summarised transcripts from the 6 focus groups and notes from the 6 stakeholder workshops and used these for analysis alongside raw data in the transcripts and notes where necessary. Analysis took a thematic approach, involving identifying the range of views as well as recurring themes and patterns.

Limitations

Workshops and focus groups ran from January to June 2025, with some of the workshops falling within the pre-election period for local elections on 1 May 2025. This limited the locations where the workshops and focus groups could be held.

Although the consultation was open to everyone, responses cannot be considered representative of the population as a whole. While efforts were made to represent different sectors and backgrounds, the stakeholders and public participants that participated in workshops and focus groups represented only a sample of those who may have views on this topic, and the nature of the group discussions may have limited the diversity of opinions expressed.

This is a summary of responses and so is unable to capture the full diversity and depth of every individual response.

Overview of consultation respondents and participants in workshops and focus groups

Consultation respondents

A total of 7,429 responses were received at the close of the consultation. This was reduced to 7,381 valid responses after quality and verification checks were completed.

The final total of valid responses includes:

- 1,065 responses received via the online response form (Citizen Space)
- 218 individual responses received by email
- 6,095 organised campaign responses from Rewilding Britain, received by email
- 3 responses received by post

Overall, the consultation received 6,817 responses from individuals (including the organised campaign responses from Rewilding Britain), and 562 responses on behalf of organisations. Two respondents submitting a response via the online consultation platform did not state if they were responding on behalf of an organisation or as an individual. This explains why, in several questions, the total number of respondents exceeds the sum of individual and organisation respondents to these questions.

The breakdown of organisational responses by category of stakeholder is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Organisational responses by stakeholder category

Category	Number of responses
Local government and local public bodies	97
Environmental NGOs, charities and community groups	86
Academic, research and data	79
Agriculture and horticulture	71
Non-environmental NGOs, charities and community groups	62

Category	Number of responses
Food and drink industry	31
Infrastructure development and management and utility provision	28
Forestry and other land-reliant industries	21
Other membership organisations	16
Other landowner	14
Financial and corporate services, business consultancy and investment	13
National public bodies	12
Planning, construction, housing development and property management	10
Tourism and recreation, access and heritage	9
Education	5
Other organisations	8
Total	**562**

Ipsos-led workshop and focus group participants

A total of 147 stakeholders attended the 6 workshops, with between 23 and 26 attendees per workshop, across the following categories:

- academia, research and data
- agriculture and horticulture
- education
- environmental NGOs, charities and community groups
- food and drink industry
- forestry and other land-reliant industries

- infrastructure development and management and utility provision
- landowner (other)
- local government and local public bodies
- national public bodies
- other NGOs, charities and community groups
- planning, construction, housing development and property management

A total of 38 members of the public attended the 6 focus groups and were considered as an additional stakeholder group. The engagement with the public was conducted in the form of focus groups, with a maximum of 7 participants in each.

Summary of responses to consultation questions

Question structure

For multiple-choice questions, the percentage of respondents (split into organisations, individuals, and overall) who completed the questionnaire and selected each option is shown in a table.

For some questions, the number of positive and negative comments is given. Each respondent can make both positive and negative comments within one response, which explains why, in some cases, the number of positive plus negative comments adds up to more than the number of respondents who made comments.

For open questions (or parts of questions), the ‘Summary of key themes’ section presents key themes or ideas identified through analysis of the responses received to the online consultation (via all channels). The following sections provide a more detailed summary of responses from the consultation (via all channels), workshops and focus groups. We do not provide the frequency of mentions for each suggestion or comment.

A long-term view of land use change

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our assessment of the scale and type of land use change needed, as set out in this consultation and the Analytical Annex? Please explain your response, including your views on the potential scale of change and the type of change needed, including any specific types of change.

For the closed part of this question we received 1,017 responses, from 683 individuals and 333 organisations. Results are shown as a percentage of respondents (%).

Table 2: Responses to question 1

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Strongly agree	9	5	8
Agree	22	33	25
Neither agree nor disagree	15	23	18
Disagree	24	24	24
Strongly disagree	28	12	23
I don't know	3	3	3

For the open part of this question ('please explain your response'), we received 1,178 responses, from 664 individuals and 513 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The majority of respondents disagreed with our assessment of the scale and type of land of land use change needed. Disagreements were for a range of different reasons – for example, some respondents thought the assessment underestimated the scale of change needed whilst others thought the scale of change was overestimated. Table 3 outlines the main themes of reasoning for disagreeing with the assessment. The total number of mentions exceed the number of negative comments received, as each negative comment could mention multiple reasons.

Table 3. Table illustrating the main reasons for disagreeing with our assessment of the scale and type of land use change needed.

Reasons for disagreement	Number of mentions	Percentage (%)
Concerns about reducing agricultural land	258	24.1
Concerns about land being used for new housing	154	14.4
Concerns that land use change estimates have been poorly thought through	141	13.1
Concerns about impacts on food production	136	12.7

Reasons for disagreement	Number of mentions	Percentage (%)
Concerns about reducing green spaces, the green belt, and other rural land	124	11.6
Concern on land being used for solar farms	124	11.6
General disagreement	135	12.6
Total	1072	100

There was a consensus on the need to balance food production with environmental goals. Many respondents emphasised the importance of environmental restoration and biodiversity, including targeted interventions such as wildlife corridors. Within responses that disagreed with the assessment there was some suggestion that the scale of land use change needed has been underestimated if we are to address environment and climate objectives, and that a broader scope of land areas across England should be designated for change, particularly for habitat restoration and enhancing biodiversity. On the other hand, some respondents cited concern around potential impacts to farmland and agriculture, and the implications this could have for food production. There was support for multifunctional land use to maximise land potential and co-benefits. We received 760 comments expressing agreement with the assessment and 778 comments expressing disagreement or concerns.

Food security and sustainable agriculture

Within this theme, respondents stated that:

- balancing food production with environmental goals will support efficient and sustainable land use, for example integrating biodiversity into farming to benefit food production and reduce costs
- innovative and regenerative farming methods are important to improve agricultural sustainability without sacrificing food production (such as agroforestry).
- we need to reduce environmentally harmful practices, such as pesticide application
- measures are needed to decrease food waste and encourage dietary shifts, (including consuming less meat); food system reform must be integrated with land use policy
- change should be targeted to grassland rather than arable land to preserve best agricultural land, or alternatively, well-managed permanent pasture and species-rich grasslands could be safeguarded for biodiversity and climate
- resilience is important, both in the sense of food security but also energy and under climate change
- a proposed reduction in agricultural land, and its impact on domestic production and reliance on food imports creates food security concerns

- efficiency improvements may not deliver maintenance of food production levels on less land, due to reducing fertiliser use and climate change impacts
- a more evidence-based approach is needed to achieve food production targets

Development and infrastructure

Within this theme, respondents stated that:

- existing infrastructure may not be enough to support increased urban development
- development must not damage rural landscapes, for example by prioritising brownfield development and integrating green spaces into urban areas
- clearer safeguards and oversight are needed to protect greenbelt, alongside recognition of the cumulative impacts of land use change for housing
- prime agricultural land should be spared from renewable energy projects, instead prioritising delivery of these on rooftops, brownfield land and non-agricultural areas
- there is a lack of clarity and data on the area of agricultural land required for energy production, including for wind and solar farms and bioenergy crops
- financial opportunities for renewable energy exist but require a strategic approach to scaling up

Environmental restoration and biodiversity

Within this theme, respondents stated that:

- environmental and biodiversity restoration is crucial, but current proposals are not sufficiently ambitious to address objectives such as 30by30 or meet the scale and urgency of required change
- targeted interventions, enhancing connectivity through wildlife corridors between ecosystems and considering biodiversity holistically will be key to meeting environmental objectives
- a broader scope of land areas should be considered for change, such as brownfield land, and there is not enough focus on habitats of high ecological value such as wetlands
- focusing on specific environmental projects might inadvertently harm existing habitats (for example tree planting on species-rich grassland)
- there is need for considered tree planting that accommodates factors like species suitability, and for protecting and nurturing existing ancient woodland
- a patchwork landscape approach would promote biodiversity
- to restore degraded ecosystems, actions should include peatland restoration, tree planting and supporting rewilding

Climate change

Within this theme, respondents stated that:

- land use change is highly important to address climate mitigation and support resilience to climate change through nature-based solutions

- climate adaptation should be integrated into land use planning and the anticipated impacts of climate change are not given enough prominence in analysis (for example, it is unclear whether farmland which is ‘best and most versatile’ now will continue to be so in the future – such as that on lowland peat soils)
- land use change may not aid climate mitigation to the extent needed globally and could lead to economic disadvantages
- more clarity is needed on how different outcomes will be balanced (for example, woodland creation for biodiversity, timber production or carbon sequestration)
- the conflict between peat restoration and the use of high-grade agricultural land needs careful consideration

Implementation of land use change

Within this theme, respondents stated that:

- more inclusive and transparent consultation and bottom-up decision-making processes are needed, with better join-up between government departments
- greater consideration of cultural and farming heritage and local values is needed, and of environmental impacts on rural communities, to avoid job losses and damage rural economies
- a national land use commission could be established to oversee and coordinate implementation, and updated data and maps developed
- greater provision of financial assistance, training and resources would help farmers and landowners
- it might be preferable to focus on single-use land in some instances, rather than prioritising multifunctional land use
- a lack of trust exists towards those leading delivery (for example, local and central government), and in some of the supporting data (for example, on climate change)

Scope and approach

Within this theme, respondents stated that:

- there is a lack of clarity and evidence on targets and definitions - all land should be in scope of change to avoid missed opportunities, with some notable land uses not mentioned (for example, viticulture, bioenergy crops)
- the framework should clarify measures to protect land for alcohol production (such as orchards) considering the value of drinks industry to UK economy
- greater consideration of land use impacts on air and water quality is needed, as well as public access, health, wellbeing and the historic environment
- multifunctional landscapes are the best way to leverage the potential of land, though there are challenges in truly delivering multifunctionality
- land use change progress has been too slow and England has fallen behind on delivering statutory targets, but fast implementation could create risks, so a flexible, transparent approach could be best

- tenant farmers should be included in decision-making and considered more strongly in policy
- a longer-term approach (for example, to 2100) could be useful

Other factors

Within this theme, respondents stated that population growth is significant to land use change, and immigration may also put pressure on developed areas.

Principles: taking a spatial approach

Question 2: Do you agree or disagree with the land use principles proposed? Please provide any reasons for your response, including any changes you believe should be made.

For the multiple choice part of this question, we received 1,020 responses, from 680 individuals and 340 organisations.

Table 4. Responses to question 2

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Strongly agree	12	9	11
Agree	35	55	42
Neither agree nor disagree	18	17	17
Disagree	15	11	14
Strongly disagree	18	7	14
I don’t know	2	1	2

For the free text part of this question (‘please provide any reasons for your response’), we received 950 responses, from 476 individuals and 474 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Overall, most respondents agreed with the principles set out. Higher percentages of agreement were expressed for the principles of multifunctional land use and co-design than others. Responses in agreement with the principles highlighted them as offering a balanced approach and aligning with broader strategic goals such as climate change mitigation, biodiversity, and public health. However, there was some mistrust of

motivations, with perceptions that principles were politically driven rather than based on scientific evidence. Responses indicated concerns about whether processes would be genuinely co-designed and inclusive, with others worried about impacts to agricultural land or the environment. A common theme was the need to demonstrate the principles in practice and ensure they are followed through.

“Co-design” principle

On this principle, respondents stated:

- co-design is important to provide opportunity for local knowledge to shape land use strategies, and to integrate data and evidence to ensure robust decisions
- processes risk being too top-down, favouring larger landowners or industrial interests, or being tokenistic in their engagement with communities
- there should be clarity on who has the final say in decisions, and there is a need for different levels of co-design (for example, local versus regional)
- skills gaps and time constraints could hinder farmer engagement, and inclusive engagement methods are needed to ensure accessibility for all communities
- funding is needed to make participation feasible, including practical methods such as citizen juries, town halls, and voting
- transparency is essential for building trust

“Multifunctional land” principle

On this principle, respondents stated:

- multifunctionality is crucial to address competing demands and deliver benefits
- combining solar panels with grazing, or the multiple benefits of woodlands, are good examples of this principle
- not all land uses are compatible and that land must sometimes be set aside solely for nature or environmental benefit to avoid land becoming overloaded
- there is a risk of negative ecological impacts, such as habitat fragmentation from housing developments, and potential tensions between core farming business and using land for multiple functions, which must be considered
- multifunctionality could include urban green infrastructure such as green roofs and rain gardens, and food production in allotments
- climate resilience should be explicitly included in this principle

“Playing to the strength of the land” principle

On this principle, respondents stated:

- land should be prioritised according to its inherent qualities, promoting efficiency and minimising trade-offs
- high-quality agricultural land should be prioritised for food production, though concerns exist around depending too much on Agricultural Land Classification

maps for field-scale decisions because they do not reflect important aspects such as infrastructure investment
- unclear guidance and rigid classifications could be detrimental to the implementation of this principle
- tailoring decisions to local attributes and maintaining ecological connectivity is important to avoid fragmentation
- this principle should be closely linked to preserving local heritage and prioritising brownfield sites for development

“Decisions fit for the long term” principle

On this principle, respondents stated:

- this will bring focus on climate resilience, particularly ensuring land remains productive for agricultural use
- there is a need for clearer definitions (for example, ‘long-term’) in order to account for climate risk assessment and adaptation appropriately, for example around flood risk
- monitoring, evaluation and dynamic review of decisions is key to inform ongoing delivery

“Responsible by design” principle

On this principle, respondents stated:

- flexibility is essential for adapting to new data, opportunities, and pressures
- mechanisms for continuous refinement and stakeholder feedback would help keep policies relevant and evidence based
- responsiveness should not undermine a stable, long-term vision for land use

Other

Within this, respondents stated:

- piloting and iterating the principles at regional/local levels could be useful
- the principles are useful but need to be more specific in order to be useful
- other principles could include transparent community engagement, avoiding harm to habitats and species, and promoting connectivity across landscapes
- other principles could reflect ecological integrity and ecosystem limits, innovation, urgency, fairness and justice
- principles should guide policy integration across government strategies
- the importance of healthy diets and access to food could be included in the principles
- the principles should be considered, and will work best, together, for example combining multifunctionality with playing to the strengths of the land
- principles should be backed by scientific evidence demonstrating their benefits

- adhering to these principles may have strong financial and cultural implications for farmers, particularly in farming-heavy regions such as Leicestershire, Rutland or Cumbria
- the principles could better reflect urban areas, which may be more focused on housing pressures, green belt protection, and integrating green infrastructure into development

Question 3: Beyond government departments in England, which other decision makers do you think would benefit from applying these principles?

For the closed part of this question, we received 884 responses from 594 individuals and 289 organisations.

Table 5. Responses to question 3

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Combined and local authorities (including local planning authorities)	82	89	84
Landowners and land managers (including environmental and heritage groups)	85	81	83
Others	47	60	51

For the open part of this question ('please provide additional detail') we received 933 responses, from 505 individuals and 427 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Most respondents agreed that the principles should be applied by local and combined authorities, and in there being opportunities to integrate and apply the principles at a local scale. Many also believed landowners and land managers should apply the principles, particularly those who own or have influence over large areas of land. Other decision makers that respondents thought should apply the principles included local communities, as well as environmental non-governmental organisations and industry representative organisations, given their roles in advocating for land use outcomes and in engaging with and educating the public.

Combined and local authorities

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- local authorities should apply the principles
- excessive bureaucracy and siloed working are big concerns, and greater autonomy and flexibility at local level would be helpful
- devolving to authorities could be an important mechanism for applying place-based strategies and integrating principles
- improved access to data and tools is essential
- the protection of agricultural land and local environment should be prioritised, while fostering partnerships between public and private organisations

Landowners and land managers

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- landowners and managers should implement principles on the ground and should be empowered to balance food productivity with environmental benefits
- major landowners (such as the Ministry of Defence, Crown Estate and Church of England) will likely be highly influential, as will utility and infrastructure providers
- National Parks and National Landscapes could see large opportunities through applying the principles in their decision making
- using existing systems and organisations with strong relationships – such as farm cluster groups – would be a good mechanism for involving the right people

Heritage and cultural organisations

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the responsibilities of organisations in safeguarding historic environments and cultural identity should include environmental objectives
- including heritage bodies as statutory consultees would create inclusive approaches that respect both ecological and cultural priorities

Other individuals and organisations

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- involving a wide range of stakeholders through transparent processes is essential
- environmental charities and agricultural representatives such as the National Farmers Union should also apply the principles
- those responsible for developments and infrastructure, including housing associations, private companies and highway authorities, as well as large organisations like energy companies and supermarkets, should consider the principles
- the principles are broadly relevant for all decision-makers involved in land use

Making the best of land use: aligned incentives

Question 4: What are the policies, incentives and other changes that are needed to support decision makers in the agricultural sector to deliver this scale of land use change, while considering the importance of food production?

We received 1,023 responses to this question, from 575 individuals and 448 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The most common suggestion was to improve the funding landscape. For many, this centred around developing funding streams that were long-term and co-ordinated. Some called for spatial targeting and prioritisation of incentives to drive the right change in the right places. There was also recognition of the need to improve guidance and support for implementation, and to overcome challenges around integrating private finance alongside public funding schemes. Respondents called for strategic policy development that was joined up across sectors (including housing, infrastructure and environment) and aligned to local plans. There were widespread calls for policy to remain consistent over long periods to provide security and maximise outcomes, and some respondents highlighted the need for targeted support for farming if we are to produce more food with less land. More broadly, collaboration and education were commonly identified as key factors needed to deliver this scale of land use change, particularly in engaging and upskilling younger audiences or new entrants, and sharing knowledge, data and best practice.

Financial incentives

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- incentivising sustainable practices should be done through financial mechanisms (such as subsidies, bursaries, grants), and these could be spatially targeted, tailored to place-specific needs, and simplified to maximise outcomes
- incentives should drive actions such as reducing artificial fertilisers, enhancing soil health, promoting farm income diversification, agroforestry, and organic farming
- grants for equipment and training apprentices, as well as support for monitoring and gathering data, would be useful
- current incentives are inadequate, short-term, and not encouraging sustainable farming practices
- flexible incentives with simple application processes would receive more uptake than funding which is overly prescriptive or strict
- commitment to initiatives such as Landscape Recovery should be long-term
- greater integration and access to private finance is necessary to make change less dependent on government funding
- schemes such as Biodiversity Net Gain and nutrient neutrality require further work and will need to be complemented by other funding to achieve desired environmental outcomes across England

- the tax system has a role in influencing land use decisions (deterring or incentivising), and more broadly, land manager and farmer support for delivery
- schemes should be co-designed and communicated in a way that resonates with farmers' values and identities of strong attachment to the land
- where appropriate, funding for environmental delivery needs to be competitive compared to agriculture to provide a reliable and predictable source of income
- at present, incentives do not adequately reduce trade-offs between outcomes or address inefficient existing land uses – productive land should be farmed, and less productive land focused more on environmental outcomes
- payments need to demonstrate respect for farmers, with reframing of farming subsidies as service payments and ensuring a fair distribution of resources, burdens, and benefits
- legal and financial risks, administrative burdens and potential penalties from incentives are creating barriers to entry, in particular, early adopters of change express concerns about being penalised or excluded from some incentives

Strategic policy

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- environmental considerations should be integrated into agricultural policy, particularly regenerative agriculture and biodiversity enhancement
- simplified and streamlined processes, particularly around planning, would be helpful
- policy should be clear and not siloed, with joined-up strategies and sectoral pathways to delivery
- the ability to plan long-term is important as this builds trust, stability and predictability, allowing sustainable planning and delivery
- policy direction should not fluctuate with political changes or short-term government agendas
- long-term commitments need balancing with managing changing circumstances, for example by including break clauses in long-term agreements
- locally specific policies, as opposed to broad-brush national strategies, would help target land use change more effectively and at landscape-scale

Supporting food production

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- high-quality agricultural land should be protected for food production, with some suggesting legal and regulatory frameworks to do this
- incentives should not be provided for the production of energy crops on productive farmland
- strong market and trade policies are needed to protect local agriculture from being undercut by imports produced to lower standards
- robust governance over the food system, including supply chains, growers and retailers, is needed

- greater protections and fair payments are needed for tenant farmers

Collaboration and support

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- co-design of policies can ensure they are practical and tailored
- engagement and cooperation between farmers, government bodies and other stakeholders need to be improved
- improvements in agricultural education are needed, as well as better access to well-trained advisors and clear guidance to support land management choices
- establishment of peer-to-peer learning networks improves knowledge sharing

Public awareness and education

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- access to information should be improved, including through increasing digital literacy skills
- increasing public awareness of sustainable farming and local businesses could increase demand for sustainably produced food
- change of diet should be encouraged to align with changing land use policy, highlighting connections between food production, diet and health (these changes may impact government health and welfare budgets)
- more can be done to raise the profile of farming and nature in schools, including through more practical learning, land-based apprenticeships and curriculum changes to raise awareness, address skills gaps and encourage young entrants

Data and technology

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- greater integration of technology and support for innovation could drive agricultural transition, for example digital tools for precision agriculture
- mapping should be conducted to identify land use opportunities overlaps between key factors (for example, social and environmental risks)
- distributional impacts of land use require further study to mitigate risks that incentives disproportionately target different groups or regions
- more analytical tools would help, supported by expert support and guidance from specialists (for example, around climate risks)

Regulation

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- regulatory options may be useful in some situations, for example to enforce sustainable practices or deter against non-compliance
- regulation should be clear, consistent and fit for purpose

- providing funding to deliver outcomes is a more positive approach than regulating organisations to deliver outcomes
- the Environment Agency, Natural England and other bodies require greater organisational capacity to carry out their regulatory and delivery roles effectively
- any regulation introduced should be based on evidence, enforceable and be informed by consultation

Question 5: How could government support more land managers to implement multifunctional land uses that deliver a wider range of benefits, such as agroforestry systems with trees within pasture or arable fields?

We received 975 responses to this question, from 558 individuals and 417 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents emphasised that successfully expanding multifunctional land uses such as agroforestry depended on trusted, practical and region-specific advice, supported by clear guidance and opportunities for training. Many highlighted the importance of long term, stable policy and funding, noting that short agreements weaken confidence to adopt systems that require sustained investment. Respondents also stressed the need for robust data and evidence to inform decisions and target actions effectively. They also pointed to regulatory barriers, calling for clearer rules that support for multifunctional land use change.

Financial support

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- direct government grants, tax incentives and the provision of capital could cover the initial costs of transitioning to more sustainable practices
- a land value taxation could be used as a strategic measure to promote these practices, such as by lowering or removing taxes on land that is being used in socially or environmentally beneficial ways
- increasing taxes on development that is not being delivered or used in socially or environmentally beneficial ways could deter such developments and encourage use of existing brownfield sites
- short-term or frequently changing grants undermine confidence; there is a need for long-term and predictable financial support
- upfront capital costs and de-risking measures would ensure income security and make multifunctional land use changes financially attractive to land managers
- the barriers to stacking or combining payments from different sources need to be reduced, and there should be guidance on additional rules around stacking payments

Advice, guidance and training

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- land managers should be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge through advisory services and peer networks
- there needs to be trusted, consistent and place-based advice with practical guidance on multifunctional land use design, implementation and management
- training could include peer-to-peer learning and demonstrations, knowledge-exchange networks and mentoring – sharing resources and best practices could lead to a more resilient and sustainable agricultural landscape
- there is a need for demonstration sites showing multifunctional systems in practice that are region-specific and long-term
- investing in skills and training for advisors and tenants would build capacity for multifunctional approaches and land use changes
- a hub should be created for guidance on multifunctional land use change, which could contain spatially relevant case studies, and signpost to local advisors and open data or maps to support decision-making

Long-term policies and plans

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- long-term and consistent policy is needed to provide certainty and ensure successful delivery of multifunctional land use change, and should be aligned across Defra agencies and other departments
- barriers to planting trees include when tenure is short, or when planting triggers permanent land use change that might bind land managers into managing trees in agricultural landscapes indefinitely
- for practices such as agroforestry, where the system can take a decade to implement, incentives need to be long-term and supported through the transition of possible early yield reductions and tenure-related risks

Other comments

Respondents also stated:

- the collaboration between government, land managers and local communities is important to ensure land use change is effective
- there is a strong need for data, evidence and decision-support tools to guide where multifunctional land use practices can deliver the greatest environmental benefit
- high quality ecological data and opportunity mapping are essential for helping land managers make evidence-based decisions and for supporting targeted incentives
- investment in new research and development, such as focusing on applied research to optimise land use combinations, would advance practices such as agroforestry
- there is a need for improved environmental governance

- a merger of the Environment Agency and Natural England could help improve environmental governance
- there needs to be robust engagement with planning applications, for example, projects that do not comply with enhanced environmental laws should be ruled out before they reach planning committees
- legal and regulatory frameworks need to be reformed to accommodate multifunctional uses more flexibly and reduce administrative burdens
- there is a need for streamlined processes and a coherent regulatory framework, such as reforms on payment stacking and tenant-friendly rules to encourage long-term environmental action

Question 6: What should the government consider in identifying suitable locations for spatially targeted incentives?

We received 866 responses to this question, from 474 individuals and 392 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The main considerations that respondents and attendees raised involved the integration of robust and up-to-date data and evidence, and knowledge and perspectives from local communities and land managers. Many highlighted that incentives should strongly consider biodiversity and habitat, whilst others stated beliefs that the most productive agricultural land should also be strongly factored in. At the same time, suggestions to consider the impacts of climate change, as well as interactions with local priorities and plans, also came across strongly. In particular, many highlighted the roles of local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) in guiding spatially targeted incentives, whilst others also highlighted the need to take a nationwide approach to target-setting, as well as facilitating multifunctionality at landscape scale through supporting collaboration and catchment partnerships.

Environment and nature

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- National Parks and National Landscapes are key areas for delivering nature benefits and environmental quality, with some arguing funding should be directed towards these areas to maximise delivery opportunities
- incentives should be focused through LNRSs, or target specific themes (such as flood mitigation, biodiversity, access) to maximise outcomes
- directing funding through spatial targeting of incentives could also drive private finance investments through identifying areas for greatest benefit
- delivering 30by30 through spatially targeting incentives should account for areas of particular importance to biodiversity and ecosystem function, including areas where significant gains can be made through restoration

Climate

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- current and future impacts of climate change, particularly impacts of extreme weather events, should be considered
- spatially targeted incentives should be future proofed and take a long-term view of the changing environment – for example, should lowland peat areas continue to deplete, more frequently flood or be targeted for restoration, greater consideration of high-quality mineral soils for food production should occur

Food production

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- incentives should be guided by potential agricultural productivity of land, with some highlighting that potential ecosystem services and risks need to be considered
- incentives should generally avoid driving significant land use change on the most productive agricultural areas (for example, being aligned to Agricultural Land Classification) but also consider future impacts (such as ongoing soil depletion)

Community

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- drawing on deep local knowledge is key to ensuring interventions address local concerns, and diverse perspectives are considered
- there should be equitable access to green space and assurance that all communities will benefit from environmental improvements
- preserving legal protections and historical land use patterns can help to maintain culturally significant sites
- consideration of socio-economic impacts of spatial targeting needs to be shown, including considering where incentives can drive local economic growth, investment and jobs through land management

Data

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- integration of data and mapping (such as the National Soil Map) is key to underpin design of spatial incentives
- Green Infrastructure Standards could guide incentives in urban areas
- land or land managers with the greatest opportunity to deliver benefit should be identified and supported
- spatially targeted incentives should learn from existing schemes and good practices (such as catchment-based approaches), as well as looking at good examples overseas, like those in the Netherlands

- using regional productivity data could help target incentives to sustain productivity on the best farmland, but risks and opportunities should be considered holistically at national level to identify most appropriate spatial targeting approaches
- decision making should be accompanied by greater access to data, as well as improved advice to enable delivery of spatially targeted actions

Other factors

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- pest and disease should be considered, and the impact these could have in different regions of the country
- any incentives should align across spatial plans and be effectively communicated to be coherent with the whole funding landscape
- historic features are important to the design of spatially targeted incentives, as they could impact deliverability or suitability of land management actions, as could hydrology and geology
- funding should be open for all to ensure all land managers can contribute to environmental delivery (such as soil health management), with spatial targeting to increase outcomes beyond this where particular benefits can be had (such as natural flood management)
- outcomes could be achieved through clustering within landscapes to deliver one or two specific outcomes, with multifunctionality achieved across the landscape
- incentives should consider Environmental Improvement Plan targets, demand on resources (such as water), climate change risk assessments and national planning policy
- incentives should build in robustly enforced regulation, delivering additional benefit beyond preventing harm
- spatially targeted incentives may work better for some outcomes (such as biodiversity) than others (such as renewable energy)
- the land use principles, particularly playing to the strengths of the land and planning for the future, would be useful when designing incentives

Question 7: What approach(es) could most effectively support land managers and the agricultural sector to steer land use changes to where they can deliver greater potential benefits and lower trade-offs?

We received 780 responses to this question, from 429 individuals and 351 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The most common idea cited by respondents to support land managers was financial support, such as directing funding to where it increases environmental and socioeconomic outcomes. This was followed by providing land managers with advice, guidance and support. Other ideas discussed having a holistic, joined up approach and collaboration.

Several responses cited the importance of listening to land managers, consulting with local people, communities, farmers and landowners.

Food production and use of productive land

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- environmental action is widely supported as long as the most productive land remains focused on food, with incentives targeted to low-trade-off areas
- farmers should not be put in a position where environmental actions mean sacrificing viable food production - instead, schemes should promote co-benefits (such as agroforestry, regenerative methods, buffer strips in marginal areas) which is especially important in the context of increasing extreme weather under climate change, such as drought followed by flooding each year
- the definition of ‘maintaining food production’ needs refining - this should be defined not by gross output, but by the share of domestic consumption supplied by UK agriculture, allowing flexibility as diets change
- reducing consumption of land-intensive products (such as livestock) could ease pressure on land without harming food security
- reversibility of non-permanent land uses needs to be made clear (solar farms do not equate to permanent loss of agricultural land and can complement farming, improve soils, and be removed later)
- there is a need for guidance that identifies where food-vs-nature trade-offs are low (such as upland grazing areas with lower contribution to national food output)

Incentives, funding and market mechanisms (public and private)

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- land use change should be spatially targeted using robust evidence, shared datasets and consistent cross-government signals
- long-term, aligned public-private funding is needed, including a recalibration of the existing Environmental Land Management (ELM) offer and reopening of Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Landscape Recovery with adequate budgets
- ELM funding and payment structures should prioritise high-value actions (peat, woodland) with clearer eligibility and premium or dynamic rates
- public-private finance must be stackable, supported by supply-chain incentives and long-term nature-based contracts
- incentives require income stability for upland and other low-margin farms, alongside fair farmgate prices and stronger supply-chain regulation

Spatial targeting, mapping and evidence-based prioritisation

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- land use change should be spatially targeted, rather than expecting all areas to deliver all outcomes

- local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) could act as the main vehicle for identifying priority areas
- multi-layer mapping is needed, integrating productivity, biodiversity opportunity, peat, flood risk, water quality, carbon, connectivity and climate risk
- marginal land should be prioritised, especially former arable areas suited to nature recovery and riparian reconnection
- catchment-scale approaches are important for floodplains, peatlands and water quality
- habitat patches should be linked using tools such as EcoservR and other opportunity-mapping systems
- heat-map style prioritisation, with ‘must’, ‘should’, ‘could’, ‘can’t’ options, could guide choices
- national monitoring is needed to check whether spatial targeting is delivering results
- agricultural land classification should be updated to support better decisions

Advice, skills, capacity and engagement

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- advisory capacity is a major bottleneck; farmers face complexity, information overload and uncertainty, so advice is as important as incentives
- trusted, independent, locally tailored support is essential
- respondents strongly backed advisory hubs, a national advisory service, demonstration farms, catchment-scale models, and peer-to-peer networks to help interpret data and tools
- more ecologists, soil specialists and digital-mapping experts are needed, supported by clearer professional standards
- government must improve communication and rebuild trust through consistent messaging and early engagement

Governance, planning and regulation

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- coherent governance, consistent regulation and credible enforcement are needed - incentives alone will not deliver outcomes
- respondents called for a single, joined-up government voice across Defra, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Environment Agency, Natural England and others
- a stronger regulatory baseline is required, with better enforcement of water, soil and peat rules and gradually raised standards
- bringing agriculture and forestry into the planning system can be useful however streamlined processes for priority projects and recognition of agricultural infrastructure needs are also important
- clearer local ambition (such as catchment-specific targets), fair dispute resolution and national monitoring is needed

- Community Right to Buy and diversified ownership models to support locally rooted decisions are needed

Question 8: In addition to promoting multifunctional land uses and spatially targeting land use change incentives, what more could be done by government or others to reduce the risk that we displace more food production and environmental impacts abroad? Please give details for your answer.

For the closed part of this question, we received 829 responses, from 574 individuals and 255 organisations.

Table 6. Responses to question 8

Activities suggested in the consultation	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Protecting the best agricultural land from permanent land use changes	81	70	78
Monitoring land use change or production on agricultural land	75	75	75
Accounting for displaced food production impacts in project appraisals	60	59	60
Other	41	56	45

For the open part of this question (“provide details for your answer”), we received 847 responses from 494 individuals and 353 organisations.

Summary of themes

Respondents prioritised protecting the best agricultural land from permanent land use change, with widespread support for robust legislative safeguards, clearer definitions and improved mapping and caution about economic incentives undermining long term food production. There was strong backing for comprehensive monitoring of land use change, using transparent and accessible data to track impacts on biodiversity, soil health, productivity and socio-economic outcomes, potentially supported by emerging technologies. Many respondents emphasised the need to account for displaced food production in project appraisals, alongside wider calls to strengthen domestic food system resilience through sustainable farming practices, innovation, fair supply chain regulation, demand side measures, and greater integration of food production into urban planning, all within a context of climate and water security.

Protecting the best agricultural land from permanent land use changes

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there needs to be robust legislative measures to safeguard high-quality agricultural land from being converted, especially into non-agricultural uses such as solar farms and housing developments
- there need to be clearer definitions and more accurate mapping to guide which land should be protected - there were suggestions that a comprehensive framework should be developed for this, integrating stakeholder engagement and modern technological assessments, and accounting for climate change
- there is a lot of support for multifunctional land uses integrating food production with environmental benefits and climate adaptation interventions, although some stakeholders called to protect all agricultural land and to prioritise food
- there are fears about economic incentives potentially driving landowners to favour short-term gains over long-term agricultural viability
- improvements to biodiversity and soil health would contribute to a more resilient domestic food system (to support this, there should be greater support of sustainable agricultural practices, such as crop rotation, organic farming, precision agriculture, agroforestry and permaculture)

Monitoring land use change or production on agricultural land

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- using detailed planning records will facilitate comprehensive land use monitoring
- transparency and accessible data are crucial for informed policy and public awareness
- monitoring should cover biodiversity, soil health, agricultural output, and socio-economic effects - this could make use of artificial intelligence, remote sensing, and satellite imagery for real-time assessments of land productivity and environmental impact

Accounting for displaced food production impacts in project appraisals

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- a comprehensive approach to project appraisals would be beneficial, and could incorporate the broader implications of land use changes, such as dietary shifts, sustainability goals, and the climate vulnerability of production in other countries
- there is a need for clear metrics and standards that reflect the environmental, economic, and social repercussions of displacing food production

Markets and supply chain regulation

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- policies should support the UK's high food production standards, including by preventing trade agreements from undermining UK environmental standards and undercutting UK producers
- there should be regulations and policies aimed at preventing environmentally destructive practices abroad, such as deforestation for agriculture
- there need to be lifecycle assessments across supply chains
- supermarkets should be regulated to ensure that their pricing reflects the true cost of production (they should be mandated to stock UK produce, and to reduce their influence over the market)
- financial support for food producers would be beneficial, such as incentives to produce for the UK market, and support for scaling of UK agro-ecological horticulture

Consumption pattern

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- increased consumption of local and seasonal food would reduce reliance on imports
- targets should be set to encourage a transition to a more plant-based diet and reduce food waste
- public behavioural and educational campaigns, improved labelling, and minimum requirements for sourcing more sustainably produced UK produce could all represent potential interventions

Knowledge sharing, skills and innovation

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there is a role for demonstrator sites or knowledge networks to showcase multifunctional and resilient food production techniques
- international collaboration would be valuable to share and develop sustainable practices and technologies and support sustainable global food systems
- investment in agricultural technology and innovations is needed to increase productivity while minimising environmental impacts

Question 9: What should government consider in increasing private investment towards appropriate land use changes?

We received 906 responses to this question, from 518 individuals and 387 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The most common topic was ensuring government appropriately considers the environment and nature while increasing private investment. This was followed by considering regulation, fiscal incentives, stability and a long-term approach, and considering public funding alongside private.

More specifically, respondents stated:

- government should consider clear guidelines for private investment to ensure integrity, including guidance for measurable environmental benefits from investments
- there needs to be a robust regulatory framework with stringent monitoring, potentially using new monitoring technologies
- guidelines and standards should be employed to ensure farmers do not enter into unfair agreements, and these may be paired with education and training for landowners and managers to capitalise on investment opportunities
- providing accreditation based on standards would increase buyer confidence in private markets
- investment in land use changes should be long-term and confidence and clarity in the stability and consistency of markets is important
- the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures and other voluntary initiatives can help to mainstream biodiversity into decision making
- risks include double counting, fraud, lack of additionality in delivering outcomes, and uncertain policy, which undermines trust and market growth
- better clarity with defined value propositions is needed for private investors
- a range of alternative ownership and funding models could be used, such as community ownership and collective private ownership to ensure local interests and fair distribution of benefits, and community natural capital funds
- local community involvement and collaborative planning is important
- more work is needed to grow the potential of compliance markets as a source of revenue, including carbon and biodiversity net gain markets in England
- private investment might inflate land prices and concentrate ownership
- as well as private finance for nature and climate actions, there will be a need for funding or financing of farm infrastructure upgrades, such as upgrading land drainage, to help food production adapt to climate change and reduce farming emissions

Respondents also stated financial mechanisms could include the following:

- tax relief as a tool to motivate private sector investment (including reductions in capital gains tax and inheritance tax for farmers)
- government bonds tailored for environmental activities
- blended finance models and other partnership-based approaches to pool resources, share risks and drive otherwise unviable projects
- subsidies for small-scale farmers
- matched funding offers to stimulate private investment

Question 10: What changes are needed to accelerate 30by30 delivery, including by enabling Protected Landscapes to contribute more? Please provide any specific suggestions.

For the closed part of this question we received 826 responses, from 564 individuals and 260 organisations.

Table 7. Responses to question 10

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Strengthened protected landscapes legislation (around governance and regulations or duties on key actors) with a greater focus on nature	72	73	72
Resources: such as funding or guidance for those managing protected landscapes for nature	72	72	72
Tools: such as greater alignment of existing Defra schemes with the 30by30 criteria	48	62	52
Other	37	51	41

For the open part of this question (‘please provide any specific suggestions’) we received 829 responses, from 444 individuals and 384 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The most common type of change mentioned was strengthened Protected Landscapes legislation, with a greater focus on nature. This was followed by improvement in resources, including funding and guidance for those managing Protected Landscapes, and greater alignment of existing Defra schemes with the 30by30 criteria.

Strengthened legislation, powers and governance

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- strengthened Protected Landscapes legislation and governance is needed to enable Protected Landscapes to do more for nature, for example through updating their statutory purposes
- the government should consider impacts of climate change, ensure increased focus on nature is not at the expense of protecting cultural heritage and farming, and consider new enforcement powers
- the government should make management plans legally binding to contribute towards Environment Act targets
- providing clarity is necessary on legal responsibilities for delivery at national, regional and local levels, including clarity on how public authorities and Protected Landscape organisations will coordinate
- there needs to be more National Landscape Conservation Boards in addition to the Cotswolds and Chiltern Boards to ensure collaboration
- involvement of local communities and landowners in management, and rebalanced Protected Landscape board membership that reflects local and national expertise, is needed (citizen juries, town halls and regional forums can help build trust and legitimacy, especially in rural areas)
- National Parks should adopt the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) definition
- permitted development rights in Protected Landscapes should be reviewed
- Protected Landscapes should be given the ability to acquire land in poor condition and transfer land to environmental non-governmental organisations for future management
- there should be a requirement for all large landowners to report on the condition of their land and how they are delivering 30by30
- the consideration of the best use of land within these protected landscapes should be included within national land use planning, with stronger protection measures and powers to deliver wildlife habitats (this could include granting statutory controls on land use allowed within the current Drinking Water Protection Areas, which currently have no controls and rely on positive engagement for protection

Improvement in resources – funding, data and guidance

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the government should invest in accessible, high-quality spatial data and mapping tools which are interoperable
- spatial data should be used to guide targets and spatial development strategies (SDSs), ensuring nature recovery efforts are focused where the greatest needs are
- simplified guidance, technical support and consistent ecological metrics should be provided to land managers and farmers, including climate resilience indicators and biodiversity outcomes (data for these metrics should make use of new technology)
- resources should reflect regional differences and be tailored to local contexts
- data should allow users to track progress, adapt to emerging challenges, and should ensure accountability
- government should ensure multiyear financial commitments and avoid short-term shifts in direction
- enforcement of existing regulations should be properly funded
- regional funding mechanisms should attract both public and private capital
- National Parks should be enabled to generate more income through diversification of land use
- sustainable practices should be incentivised such as agroforestry to maintain food production
- greater public engagement and education is needed to increase local community involvement in nature conservation

Controls and nature recovery

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- visitor numbers to National Parks should be limited to minimise impact on nature and biodiversity
- systematic conservation planning should guide nature recovery within Protected Landscapes and across wider landscapes
- the number of Protected Landscapes across England should be increased
- National Parks should be given the same status as listed buildings and national monuments
- extending Protected Landscape duty to private landowners should be considered.
- livestock farming and other agricultural practices on certain sensitive areas should be limited
- an improved understanding of soils and wider natural capital to inform spatial planning is needed, to ensure land use decisions enhance ecological resilience
- increasing focus on improving nature in coastal areas is needed
- increasing focus on eradicating non-native invasive species is needed

Alignment of existing Defra schemes

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- Protected Landscape delivery should align with existing strategies (such as net zero, 30by30, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)) to avoid duplication and conflicting incentives
- management plans should include local nature recovery strategy opportunities, Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) catchment plans, landscape scale peat partnerships, and county woodland partnerships
- schemes with conservation and public access goals should be integrated
- the government should implement all outstanding recommendations from the Glover review
- programmes like Farming in Protected Landscapes and other agri-environment schemes could be expanded to reward farmers for managing more land for nature

Question 11: What approaches could cost-effectively support nature and food production in urban landscapes and on land managed for recreation?

We received 848 responses to this question, from 483 individuals and 365 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Responses broadly supported stronger actions in urban areas and those managed for recreation, recognising the significant area of land they occupy, the potential health and wellbeing benefits and the need to adapt to climate change. Some respondents challenged the scope for food production at significant scales in urban areas, while others cited successful farming and food growing in the urban and peri-urban area. One respondent, and others in engagement, discussed the importance of urban areas adopting changes for nature and climate to reduce land use change pressures on rural areas.

Planning

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the under-provision of allotments and community orchards in many areas should be addressed, such as by providing support through planning policy to include these in new housing developments
- funding and incentives are needed for the above, in addition to peri-urban growing (this could include taxes on food miles or road pricing, audits of allotment waiting times, and targets under Allotments Act 1908)
- integration of multifunctional land and surfaces into the built environment through green walls and roofs, rainwater gardens and other sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) during planning are needed
- nature should be integrated during regeneration of urban centres and other redevelopment

- the green belt should be protected, prioritising redevelopment and brownfield sites over greenfield sites
- timber should be used as a building material more often than concrete
- higher levels of biodiversity net gain (BNG) in urban areas should be encouraged - for existing BNG sites (on-site habitats or urban habitat banks), legal security or stronger requirements for (community) management is needed
- mandatory requirements for planning authorities would help to apply the Green Infrastructure Framework
- local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) should be joined up with spatial development strategies (SDS) and incorporate urban biodiversity

Management of existing spaces

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- existing green spaces and underused areas should be better managed for community gardening or biodiversity
- citizens should make more room for nature in their gardens given the significant area of gardens in England with potential to support wildlife
- mowing should be reduced, particularly in the public estate such as verges, roundabouts and public transport interchanges, and cuttings should be removed to be used for energy generation or local seed sources
- native plants and local-provenance seed should be incorporated, as well as trees which provide a range of benefits (such as urban cooling, water management, biodiversity, equity benefits according to the Woodland Trust Tree Equity score)
- more ‘wild corners’ and hedgerows should be introduced, and areas of monoculture grass reduced
- guidance for local authorities is needed on selecting plant and tree species based on their suitability and multifunctional benefits, and for managing semi-natural habitats in green spaces
- light pollution needs to be considered for its effects on health and wildlife
- households should be encouraged to adopt grass driveways, window-box gardens and trees, and reduce use of plastic grass
- biodiverse school estates should be used to educate children on food production and biodiversity conservation
- chemical, pesticide and herbicide use should be reduced in public spaces and by local authorities, and a ban or increased regulation on sale of pesticides and herbicides for domestic use should be implemented
- local authorities could be mandated to audit potential areas for food growing or biodiversity conservation, expanding on the Right to Grow initiative
- better management of roads, including addressing run-off pollution, habitat fragmentation, and wildlife roadkill is needed

Management of recreational land

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- multifunctionality should be encouraged for wildlife and food production in golf courses, shooting grounds, equestrian land, campsites and sports fields – native trees, shrubs and orchards could be introduced in these areas, as well as establishing new codes of practice, awards, and league tables with these industries to encourage best practice
- taxes or restrictions for golf courses could be introduced in areas of water stress
- there could be prohibition of driven grouse moors and pheasant imports, and introduction of licensing for shoots as well as providing best practice guidance for management of woodland and hedgerow extent for wildlife on moors
- licensing of gamebird shoots, or restrictions on shooting and bird release, would help tackle wildlife crime, disease risk and land management, as well as wider ecological impacts
- local authorities could gradually acquire equestrian paddocks for food production or biodiversity conservation
- hedgerow regulations could be extended to non-agricultural hedgerows which currently have inadequate protection
- growing the supply chain for venison meat could help make use of culled animals
- legislative and government support is essential to protect or enhance recreational green spaces

Financial support mechanisms

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- grants or subsidies for urban agriculture and non-agricultural parcels could be managed through, for example, parish councils
- levies on developers to fund green infrastructure could be introduced
- a range of tax breaks for landowners, developers, and residents could be introduced for those who integrate food production or biodiversity enhancement measures, including in gardens
- funding is needed to enhance active travel routes and connect green spaces

Community involvement

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- local residents should be allowed to manage unused lands for food or nature, aligned with the Right to Grow campaign, including through community funds and Right to Buy for biodiversity conservation or food production
- communities should have agency over their local areas and places that matter to them, when they see opportunities for benefiting nature and wellbeing
- parish councils should be supported to manage green spaces

- educational programmes could be developed on nature and food production, both within schools and the community
- guidance on how to support wildlife and food production within gardens and allotments could be helpful
- more is needed to address the impact of pests, including nesting season disturbance and flea treatment effects
- environmental equity should be added to the Index of Multiple Deprivation

Additional barriers and concerns

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there is limited funding and capacity in local authorities to support environmental outcomes
- access to nature is lacking, including limited rights of way, inaccessible roads, and concerns regarding the Occupiers' Liability Act 1984
- the Community Asset Transfer Forms lack standardisation that could allow local residents to manage unused spaces for wildlife or food production

Making the best use of land: joined-up decisions on land use change

Question 12: How can government ensure that development and infrastructure spatial plans take advantage of potential co-benefits and manage trade-offs?

We received 738 responses to this question, from 373 individuals and 365 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The most common topic cited by respondents was the importance of adopting a holistic and joined up approach across the system. This was followed by community engagement, prioritising nature, aligning with other strategies, recognising the importance of green infrastructure development, and ensuring data-driven decision making. Several responses, including workshop participants, stated the importance of considering adaptation to climate change.

Planning and infrastructure

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- nature should be integrated into building and transport planning, for example by strengthening or increasing the use of biodiversity net gain (BNG) and the Green Infrastructure Framework; requiring swift and bat boxes, hedgerows and hedgehog, highways, and considering natural flood mitigation, wastewater treatment and grey water systems

- green infrastructure should be managed long-term
- clear, enforceable standards are required, potentially aligned to national and international environmental standards, including improving the ability to refuse applications on environmental grounds and improved climate resilience standards
- effective decisions are not made in planning at the moment, failing to build on low value land when this would safeguard agricultural land and wildlife habitats
- pressure should be minimised on greenfield sites by focusing on development density, repurposing brownfield sites, including more irreplaceable habitats in BNG, and treating nature-based solutions as critical national infrastructure
- energy use and storage should be optimised through co-location (such as using waste heat for swimming pool heating or co-locating bioenergy feedstocks to use areas), improving grid systems (including in rural areas), default renewable energy in homes and industrial units, and retrofitting solar panels in suitable areas
- high quality agricultural land should be safeguarded, such as through improved land value capture mechanisms to dissuade development, stronger protections to dissuade development on best and most versatile land, and considerations of development and food security trade-offs in strategies
- skills gaps in the planning profession should be addressed

Government join-up

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- spatial development strategies (SDSs) and local nature recovery strategies (LNRSs) should be aligned under the Land Use Framework and planning reforms to drive consistent environmental outcomes in line with environmental targets
- ensure local, regional and national planning goals are aligned
- water and catchment-based resource planning should be fully integrated into strategic decisions, starting from infrastructure capacity and incorporating nature-based solutions and third-party assets such as canals
- SDSs should be clearer, map-based, and informed by robust land use assessments and wider datasets
- a hierarchy of land uses would aid application of the principles, allow trade-offs to be understood, and separate ‘wants’ from ‘needs’ to achieve better outcomes
- desired outcomes should be coordinated across government departments, with training, co-design and improved system management in the civil service to achieve Land Use Framework outcomes

Data-driven decisions

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- clearer use of information to target infrastructure, including integration of data on up-to-date flood risk, health, air quality, local resource availability, nutrient burden, and transport connectivity into LNRSs and SDSs

- those making and delivering plans should have access to mapping tools and spatial data on the value of sites for agricultural productivity, nature recovery, flood mitigation and other purposes to identify multifunctionality (spatial tools should also be available which provide data on natural hazard risks projected under climate change)
- SDSs should be produced in online mapping tools to present spatial elements of strategies in a more interactive format than current Local Plans
- data should be provided on a common platform to allow multiple facets to be considered simultaneously, utilise new technology, and be more publicly accessible
- the Land Use Framework should spatially present where land uses will be required in future to inform planning and land use decisions
- data-sharing between environmental and development planning should be improved, with a digital portal to facilitate this
- the Land Use Framework should be flexible and evolve in response to new evidence

Community engagement

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- plans should be more clearly communicated, with early, meaningful involvement of local communities (for example, through people's assemblies and mayoral powers) in both the design and implementation of plans
- community benefits, such as reduced bills, should be given to those affected by major energy projects, such as reduced bills

Other

Within this, respondents stated:

- there is limited understanding of how land use decisions factor in development, food and nature – better integration would allow people to understand whether there is enough land to achieve goals
- bodies such as Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency should be better resourced to deliver
- degrowth or targets for social outcomes should be considered, rather than only considering growth, as the latter biases infrastructure decisions even when social outcomes are likely to be poor

Question 13: How can local authorities and government better take account of land use opportunities in transport planning?

We received 679 responses to this question, from 396 individuals and 282 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents emphasised the need for an integrated approach to transport and land use planning that prioritises public transport, active travel and environmental protection. Some respondents highlighted opportunities to use transport corridors for biodiversity enhancement, such as wildlife crossings and green bridges. They supported better alignment of national and local strategies, and raised concerns on habitat fragmentation, inequitable rural transport and insufficient long-term funding.

Integrated land use and transport planning

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- integrating land use and transport policy at the level of strategic authorities is needed, with authorities supported by transport and land use data within a standardised data framework
- transport requirements for any new development should be fully assessed, and brownfield and urban development should be prioritised where they are linked to existing transport infrastructure

Transport

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- transport planning should consider the ecological opportunities and challenges
- transport typically follows linear routes so could increase connectivity between wildlife habitats, but transport can also fragment the landscape and may require mitigations such as green bridges to limit disruptions
- denser developments should be prioritised to reduce urban sprawl and commute times
- transport routes could be more intentionally used to enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity, for example through strengthened highways guidance
- the pollution impacts of transport, including light, water and air pollution, should be addressed through nature-based solutions such as reed beds to reduce runoff and sustainable urban drainage systems to prevent flooding

Other

Respondents also stated that:

- focusing on active and sustainable travel options for new infrastructure would improve wellbeing and reduce emissions
- transport in rural areas should be prioritised
- if development is predicted to increase net traffic, developers should be required to contribute financially towards active transport options
- it is important to recognise the role of transport in accessing green spaces and connecting people to nature, and the inequalities associated with wild spaces only being accessible by car

Question 14: How can government support closer coordination across plans and strategies for different sectors and outcomes at the local and regional level?

We received 768 responses to this question, from 399 individuals and 368 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The most common suggestions were for government to encourage a more holistic approach, considering a greater range of different land use outcomes in decisions. This was followed by listening to local communities, aligning with other sectors' strategies, providing funding, involving local authorities, and providing a clear strategy.

Governance and guidance

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- government plans should be better integrated to avoid conflicting messages or duplication, with clear guidance on how different plans align
- guidance should also explain how to integrate local nature recovery strategies (LNRSs), land use plans, sector-specific strategies, catchment-scale plans, and other local and regional strategies
- clear guidance would support local and regional authorities to understand how their plans fit together within a wider national framework, including how to resolve conflicts between different levels of planning
- clear and effective communication with local authorities would help clarify delivery mechanisms and intended outcomes for plans and strategies

Integration across strategies and scales

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- better integration of environmental, economic and social goals would help achieve sustainable and balanced outcomes in land use planning
- maps should be provided at the scale of LNRSs to show the expected scale and type of land use change, and these strategies should be used to assess whether local actions are contributing to national targets
- map-based plans should be published at a full range of scales
- compatibility between terrestrial and marine spatial plans should be maximised

Data and digital

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- a centralised, digital mapping and data-sharing platform should be established to integrate information from all relevant sectors and improve coordination
- regulatory frameworks should allow for local flexibility, enabling community groups and landowners to access and contribute to datasets
- LNRSs should be uploaded to Defra's Multi-Agency Geographic Information (MAGIC) platform and made freely available

Other

Respondents also stated that:

- local government would benefit from increased resourcing, funding and upskilling to implement and manage plans effectively
- pilot projects should be developed with local authorities to test new strategies before wider rollout
- pan-regional bodies and nature partnerships should be better made use of
- best and most versatile land should be safeguarded for agricultural production at the local level
- downscaled national targets should be provided for LNRSs indicating, for example, how much of the national woodland creation target each area is expected to deliver based on Defra's spatial targeting principles
- long-term land use implications of increased flood risk and coastal erosion should be considered at local and regional levels

Question 15: Would including additional major landowners and land managers in the Adaptation Reporting Power process support adaptation knowledge sharing? Please give any reasons or alternative suggestions.

For the closed part of this question, we received 708 responses, from 496 individuals and 211 organisations.

Table 8. Responses to question 15

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Yes	77	85	80
No	23	15	20

For the open-ended part of this question ("please give any reasons or alternative suggestions"), we received 577 responses from 309 individuals and 267 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents were generally supportive of including major landowners in the Adaptation Reporting Power process, recognising their significant influence over large areas of land and resources. Their involvement could improve knowledge sharing, align adaptation across sectors and land holdings, and better reflect on the ground realities, particularly where climate risks span multiple estates. Some respondents also highlighted opportunities for improved transparency, accountability and innovation, including in the delivery of nature-based solutions. Some suggested a blended approach with both

voluntary and mandatory elements. Some raised concerns that a focus on major landowners would leave smaller communities and individuals underrepresented. Others cautioned that the process could be resource intensive and would create burdens without delivering clear benefits.

Data-informed decision making

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- levers such as the Adaptation Reporting Power are valuable to generate complete, timely and useful information to drive evidence-based decisions in and outside of government
- on the ground constraints, challenges and opportunities reported could provide practical insights for realistic policy appraisals and design
- reporting could provide insights on levels of preparedness across sectors
- public dashboards or centralised map-based data hubs could make information more accessible (although sensitivity is also key to trust and participation)

Accountability, knowledge sharing and best practice

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there is huge value in peer-to-peer learning and sharing lessons learned and practical insights on what works to manage climate change impacts
- there needs to be greater visibility and accountability of influential bodies and individuals taking climate change seriously
- these bodies need to evidence leadership, co-operation and transparency to motivate others in the sector to follow suit

Holistic, integrated approaches

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- adaptation reporting is useful at exposing the interdependencies between sectors, such as farming, food supply chains, nature recovery and net zero
- the reporting process and outputs could support intersectoral collaboration and approaches, particularly in addressing transboundary climate hazards
- an integrated approach would be particularly feasible given the significant stretches of land across diverse landscapes owned by those who would be invited to report

Practical delivery

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- adaptation reporting can prompt participants to identify practical and tailored solutions to climate change risks and promote innovative approaches, including nature-based solutions
- adaptation reporting has the potential to bridge the policy-action gap

- there needs to be consideration of particularly vulnerable areas of the country, or important services (such as food) and assets (such as built heritage)

Robust and aligned process

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there should be clear guidance and alignment with other reporting processes, such as the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)
- making the Adaptation Reporting Power mandatory or using a blended approach (mandating some key appropriate organisations such as government bodies, and inviting others) would ensure accountability and comprehensive data collection
- more frequent reporting than the 5-year Adaptation Reporting Power cycle could unlock more meaningful monitoring and evaluation
- the scope of Adaptation Reporting Power could be expanded to cover climate change mitigation and biodiversity, not just adaptation

Burden, proportionality and cost

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the benefits of reporting on climate risk would not be sufficient to mobilise in-depth participation in climate change adaptation reporting and action amongst major landowners primarily motivated by finance
- it is crucial that the reporting process is not too burdensome on participants – the government should clearly communicate the benefits and provide incentives and support, such as funding, advice and capability building
- of the minority who did not support the proposal, the most frequently cited theme was concern about administrative burden, cost (including to consult specialists) and risks of duplication with existing good work

Scope and definition

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- ‘major landowners’ as a category needs to be more clearly defined, or it risks weakening the aims of the process – for example, a threshold could apply, such as owning 500 hectares of land
- on one hand, limiting reporting to the largest types of landowner would ensure strategic insights could be captured – however, on the other hand, the lessons learned at such scale may not be useful or relatable for smaller organisations and individuals
- a focus on large landowners might introduce bias towards particularly influential voices over smaller landowners and farming communities

Timing and format

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the Adaptation Reporting Power might be better suited to public bodies, as landowners and managers might not have the expertise to carry out robust climate change risk assessments
- further work is required to support adaptation reporting across land use, and there may be more suitable formats to do so than the Adaptation Reporting Power

Question 16: Below is a list of activities the government could implement to support landowners, land managers, and communities to understand and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Please select the activities you think should be prioritised and give any reasons for your answer, or specific approaches you would like to see

For the closed part of this question, we received 829 responses, from 556 individuals and 272 organisations.

Table 9. Responses to question 16

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Supporting the right actions in the right places in a changing climate	78	81	79
Providing better information on local climate impacts to inform local decision-making and strategies	65	76	69
Providing improved tools and guidance for turning climate information into tangible actions (for example, how to produce an adaptation plan for different sectors)	63	69	65
Developing and sharing clearer objectives and resilience standards	54	58	56
Other	29	41	33

For the open part (‘give reasons for your answer’) of this question, we received 598 responses, from 265 individuals and 332 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents prioritised supporting the right actions in the right places. There was also a clear demand for better, more accessible local climate information – translating projections into specific, actionable impacts for food, communities and nature. This could be done through standardised, regularly updated datasets and visual tools. Alongside this, consultees strongly supported practical tools and sector specific guidance to help turn information into adaptation plans. Many also called for clearer, co-created resilience standards and consistent planning assumptions (what climate scenario to plan for, by when). Cross-cutting themes included calls for stronger government leadership and coordination, long-term and accessible financial support, and meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders. Additional points were raised around skills, transparency, sector specific needs and social justice.

Supporting the right actions in the right places

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- interventions in locations most suitable for climate adaptation should be prioritised, such as protecting low-lying grade 1 and 2 land from flooding, managed realignment in coastal areas, and spatially targeted nature-based solutions and agro-ecology
- there needs to be national risk and opportunity mapping and coordination between landowners to deliver landscape-scale restoration

Climate information and decision-making

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- consistent planning assumptions (climate scenarios to plan for, over what time horizon) would be valuable, such as planning for a minimum of 2°C
- there need to be clear resilience standards, co-created with practitioners
- there is a need to translate climate projections into specific, on-the-ground impacts for farming, communities and nature
- information needs to be standardised, accessible and regularly updated to support informed decision-making, using different formats such as visual maps
- tools are needed for specific sectors, including water management, small businesses, supply chains and heritage

Government leadership

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the government needs to show clearer governance, leadership and co-ordination on climate change adaptation

- opportunities for government action include a stronger fourth National Adaptation Programme, clear leadership across government departments, a Land Use Commission to drive oversight and accountability, and better integration of climate change into the planning system through local nature recovery strategies and spatial development strategies
- urgent action is required to address climate change impacts, including sector-specific support, integration of mitigation and adaptation strategies, improved training and education and greater government transparency

Financial support

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- government-backed incentives and long-term funding will be necessary to support climate adaptation
- there need to be improved insurance mechanisms, or a broadening of the scope of existing financial incentives such as Environmental Land Management Schemes

Community engagement and social justice

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- it is important to involve local communities, such as through citizen assemblies, in shaping adaptation actions and platforms for information sharing
- there is a need for public information campaigns on climate impacts to help communities understand what climate adaptation is
- policy needs to address the disproportionate impact of climate change on rural, poorer and vulnerable communities

Making the best use of land: accessible and high-quality data

Question 17: What changes to how government's spatial data is presented or shared could increase its value in decision making and make it more accessible?

For the closed part of this question we received 776 responses, from 516 individuals and 259 organisations.

Table 10. Responses to question 17

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Bringing data from different sectors together into common portals or maps	78	73	76
Updating existing government tools, apps, portals or websites	72	70	72
Increasing consistency across spatial and land datasets	63	69	65
More explanation or support for using existing tools, apps or websites	52	53	52
Changes to support use through private sector tools, apps or websites	43	46	44
Greater use of geospatial indicators such as Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) and INSPIRE IDs to allow data to be more easily displayed on a map	43	43	43
Other (please specify)	21	35	26

For the open part of this question (‘please provide reasons for your answer’) we received 799 responses, from 406 individuals and 393 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents consistently emphasised that effective land use decision making depends on high quality, accurate and accessible data, noting that current datasets are fragmented, inconsistent and often difficult to access. There was strong support for a unified national land use data hub to improve transparency, integrate datasets across sectors and reduce barriers such as paywalls, restrictive licensing and poor discoverability, particularly for publicly funded data. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of usable, interoperable tools underpinned by common standards, while cautioning for the need for user-friendly interfaces and skills development. The need to improve data quality and completeness was also widely raised. Overall, respondents agreed that better data governance,

standards and investment are critical in enabling collaboration, building trust, and supporting long term, joined up land use planning.

Data accessibility and transparency

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- data is currently held in multiple locations; a single, unified national land use data hub or portal that could bring together data from different sectors and provide a ‘one stop shop’ for government spatial data is preferred
- the ability to download data to apply is useful to some, whilst others need more user-friendly, interactive tools that wouldn’t require specialist skills
- publicly funded data should be open access, paywalls should be reduced, or access should be subsidised for certain groups to access certain important data sources
- data sharing should be incentivised
- datasets should consider the requirements of a range of decision-makers beyond government departments, including local authorities, landowners and managers, cultural and environmental organisations
- robust, suitable baseline datasets are needed to support effective monitoring of change and progress

Data and tool usability and interoperability

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- current data portals should be modernised to be user-friendly and efficient
- there needs to be more support for upskilling and capability to apply data
- interactive maps at different scales are helpful, as are scenario-modelling tools and integration of AI-powered decision tools
- tools that package various datasets are useful, for example the Environment Agency’s ALERT mapping tool
- some datasets should be integrated, such as linking HM Land Registry land ownership with geospatial INSPIRE polygons to help enable collaboration and spatial planning by local authorities
- data standardisation to address inconsistent formats is needed to enable integration and comparison

Data quality, accuracy and completeness

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the continued use of outdated agricultural land classification and the Priority Habitats Inventory hinders evidence-based decision making
- the government should use data from grant schemes, such as Environmental Land Management Schemes, to improve data and better understand landowner aspirations

- specific mapped datasets require clearer, mutually agreed definitions (for example, the England Peat Map and the definition of deep peat)
- there need to be data standards, ownership and governance to improve accuracy and accountability
- environmental datasets need to be linked to outcomes such as climate resilience and natural capital or ecosystem service valuation
- more data is needed on future climate risk
- incomplete or inaccessible private land ownership data is a barrier to decision-making

Concerns raised

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- data overload must be avoided by focussing on critical datasets and streamlining tools and platforms
- there needs to be a balance between open access and data quality, where charging for data supports better collection and management
- commercialisation could exclude users due to costs or introduce certain motives and biases which could undermine fairness and transparency
- creating more tools could add to confusion, therefore the focus should be on data quality combined with enabling access and interaction

Question 18: What improvements could be made to how spatial data is captured, managed, or used to support land use decisions in the following sectors? Please give any reasons for your answer or specific suggestions.

For the closed part of this question we received 690 responses, from 461 individuals and 227 organisations.

Table 11. Responses to question 18

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Farming: such as supply chain data and carbon or nature baseline measurements	71	64	69
Environment and forestry: such as local and volunteer-collected environmental records	72	61	68

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Development and planning: such as environmental survey data	68	68	68
Recreation and access: such as accessible land and route data	63	49	58
Government-published land and agricultural statistics	64	58	62

For the open part of this question ("please give any reasons for your answer") we received 795 responses, from 407 individuals and 388 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents highlighted data quality, accessibility and integration as priorities. Gaps were identified in biodiversity, soil, carbon, land ownership, land management and public rights of way data, alongside concerns about outdated datasets and barriers such as paywalls or restrictive licensing. There were calls for standardised spatial data formats and interoperability, aligned with FAIR (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability) principles and supported by open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). High resolution, up to date and spatially explicit data at multiple scales was seen as essential, with new technologies offering opportunities. Finally, respondents stressed the need for clear data governance, improved skills across sectors, and a central body or observatory to manage, integrate and monitor environmental data and land use change.

Accessibility and improved data collection and sharing

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- a central, open-access national data hub or portal would enable access, reduce fragmentation and consolidate data – an enhanced version of Defra's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) map could be part of this
- specific gaps include data updates, such as for agricultural land classifications and the Priority Habitats Inventory
- general data gaps identified include biodiversity, soil and carbon, land ownership and land management activities
- data also needs to be explicitly linked to delivery and implementation of policy outcomes

Standardisation and integration of spatial data

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- consistent data formats, schemas and ontologies across different sectors and datasets would enable integration of existing environmental, agricultural and recreational data into cohesive and interoperable databases
- widespread adoption of FAIR principles and alignment with frameworks such as the INSPIRE framework for spatial data is needed
- open APIs with government databases would enable better data sharing between public and private spatial mapping and data collection facilities, particularly across the planning and farming sectors
- there should be a centralised data repository and sharing hub or platform
- a central body could be introduced, such as a national observatory, to ensure consistency and enable integration

High quality, accurate and timely data

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there is need for high-resolution, up to date and spatially explicit data - this needs to be available at different scales, from local to regional to national
- farming data and agricultural statistics lacks the required granularity to inform decisions and are not collected and updated regularly enough
- there are abundant opportunities from new technologies, such as remote sensing, aerial drone imagery, and Earth Observation, as well as the adoption of AI and digital twin modelling to support policy development and monitoring

Ground-truthing and local engagement

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- ground truthing and validation is needed, ideally on a regular basis, such as repeated Light Detection and Ranging (Lidar) surveys
- there should be more investment and support of citizen science, voluntary data collection and participatory research
- local and practitioner knowledge needs to be represented
- integrating and triangulating these various approaches with national datasets and planning tools could help to build a richer spatial data picture

Sector-specific improvements

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- standardised environmental survey data, Geographic Information System (GIS) layers and post-development monitoring is needed for planning, development and infrastructure
- in farming and land management, granular data is needed for localised decision-making
- data should have consistent baselines, for nature, carbon and soil health

- there should be user-friendly mapping or GIS systems (paired with a programme to enhance digital skills amongst users) and a greater focus on data privacy for digital users
- environment and forestry sectors need open access land and environmental data, centralised volunteer data, improved biodiversity data, open historic records, advanced technologies for data collection and real-time monitoring
- in local and central government, spatially explicit data is required which is regularly updated and harmonised across different agencies and spatial scales
- for access and recreation programmes, mapping public rights of way, green infrastructure, and accessibility features would be helpful
- the food and drink industry needs standardised land and agricultural statistics, including carbon and nature baselines and supply chain transparency
- local authority ecologists and farm advisors should have required data application skills

Question 19: What improvements are needed to the quality, availability and accessibility of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data to support effective land use decisions?

We received 586 responses to this question, from 299 individuals and 286 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents highlighted the need to improve Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data, which is outdated, low-resolution and unreliable for modern land-use decision making.

Improving the accuracy and quality of the data should be prioritised, creating field-level granularity and using modern technology to more accurately map the land. Data should be made open-access and managed on a centralised hub that can also interact with other tools and platforms, highlighting the requirement for interoperability. Better guidance was also requested to improve the way ALC data is interpreted and used to inform decisions, such as through ALC surveys.

Updating Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the current ALC system does not take into account the quality of the land that has changed since it was first created, such as degraded peat soils, modern farming practices and climate impacts
- data should be updated with climate projections, including temperature and weather extremes and rainfall to facilitate decisions on suitability of long-term land use and management
- the peat data and classification system, particularly in the lowland fens, needs updating and potentially reclassifying due to peatland degradation

Improving data quality and accuracy

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the current scale in the provisional ALC map cannot support field-level or site-specific decisions, so a higher resolution would allow for detailed assessments and practical decision-making
- remote sensing and satellite imagery, calibrated with ground truthing would help improve accuracy
- developers can selectively commission surveys to obtain desired results, which could undermine trust in the ALC system - in order to reduce this risk, there should be a centrally managed ALC repository and standardised methodologies with quality assurance

Accessibility and availability

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- ALC data should be open-access, easy to download and in consistent and interoperable formats, so that the data can be used on other platforms
- a central and open-access geospatial portal with interactive datasets would be useful
- ALC data could be integrated with other spatial layers, such as biodiversity and habitat data, and flood risk data
- there needs to be clear and transparent guidance on how to interpret and apply ALC data
- the development of up-to-date methodologies would assist stakeholders in how to best use ALC data to make the best decisions

Question 20: Which sources of spatial data should government consider making free or easier to access, including via open licensing, to increase their potential benefit?

We received 645 responses to this question, from 348 individuals and 298 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents emphasised the need for core land use datasets to be made open, low cost and easier to access, particularly HM Land Registry, Ordnance Survey and Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) products. A strong theme was the importance of high-resolution soil data, including soil health and carbon datasets. Respondents cited the need for better access to biodiversity, habitat, species, and environmental datasets to support planning and nature recovery. Access costs and lack of interoperability were the main barriers to use, with a need for accessible datasets that can be layered and used alongside other sources of data and consumable in geospatial software. There was broad support for consolidating fragmented datasets into a single national spatial data platform. A minority

raised concerns about quality, privacy and rural crime risks linked to fully open ownership data.

HM Land Registry

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- HM Land Registry data is essential for understanding land holdings, supporting land-use planning and enabling collaborative partnerships
- HM Land Registry data should ideally be made freely accessible and open for public use, or with reduced costs, particularly when requiring multiple titles
- licensing fees are a barrier to development and spatial planning – opening up data would increase opportunities for collaboration in land use design across larger spatial areas and reduce the administrative burden of contacting landowners for information
- HM Land Registry data should be easy to download and interoperable with other datasets and data portals – for example, linking INSPIRE IDs to HM Land Registry data would improve integration with mapping systems

Ordnance Survey

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- Ordnance Survey is a source of high-quality and trusted data
- standard Ordnance Survey data should ideally be made open access and licencing restrictions reduced
- making Ordnance Survey data more openly available would drive innovation and reduce organisational or business costs)
- there are several Ordnance Survey products, including Ordnance Survey MasterMap, Ordnance Survey National Geographic Database and Ordnance Survey Terrain, that make up the baseline datasets for planning, environmental mapping and land management
- whilst there was strong support for open data, some respondents recognised that making all products open source could compromise the quality

Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the ALC system is based on outdated data, which no longer reflects current conditions and may be misleading if used in modern planning decisions
- the ALC provisional map has low spatial resolution, and improving the level of detail would facilitate land planning and development
- ALC data and classifications should be interoperable with other systems and data sources, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- an updated ALC system would support more accurate assessments of land suitability for agriculture and development

Soil data

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- soil data is currently one of the most critical yet inaccessible datasets - it is fundamental for assessing land suitability, improving land-use planning and achieving nature recovery and climate adaptation goals
- publicly funded soil datasets are currently held behind paywalls with licence restrictions preventing open use (for example, the National Soils Inventory and the National Soil Map (NATMAP) are particularly costly and restrictive)
- current soil data maps are outdated and at a low spatial resolution - high-quality data would help to deliver national priorities
- there is a need for soil data to be interoperable and work with other datasets, including land-use layers, ALC and habitat maps

Other datasets

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there is a need to make other sources of data more available, including biodiversity data, Environment Impact Assessment data, Priority Habitat Inventory and Local Wildlife Sites boundaries (these sources of information are important for nature recovery activities, planning and environmental monitoring)
- remote sensing elevation data and light detection and ranging (Lidar) datasets are important for both planning and monitoring
- Agri-environment schemes (such as Environmental Land Management schemes) uptake data and Rural Payment Agency (RPA) parcel boundaries should be made available publicly to improve land use transparency

Interoperability

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- datasets should be made interoperable, with data from different sources and sectors to enable better connectivity and map alongside other geospatial layers
- there is a requirement for the data to be analysis-ready and consumable in mapping software
- Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) would facilitate smoother integration of data sources)
- the current methods of accessing data are difficult and restrictive, and there would be benefits to making data and tools both more accessible and more user-friendly

Cost and barriers to access

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- the fees for data licensing and accessing certain datasets are a major barrier

- fees prohibiting access is a particular issue for small businesses, community groups and individuals as it limits their ability to make informed decisions on land use and development, but is also a barrier for larger project developers when seeking data from multiple sources, such as across multiple land titles
- fees are a hindrance to innovation and respondents commented that reducing costs would increase the use of government data sources and therefore increase its benefits
- an open-data approach can foster innovation and collaboration across sectors, and is crucial for better decision-making

Security and privacy

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- more accessible spatial data is a big step forward, though it is important that privacy, security and misuse of data are considered - there is a need to balance transparency with responsible data governance to prevent any negative consequences
- publication of sensitive or personal data would be concerning, particularly in relation to HM Land Registry data (to address this risk, individual or residential land ownership data could be redacted to protect privacy and access to sensitive datasets controlled where necessary)

Other comments

Respondents also stated that:

- there needs to be better funding and support of Local Environmental Record Centres, which hold important ecological data but lack stability in funding
- there is a need for improved data governance, including standardised data formats, metadata and quality assurance to ensure datasets remain consistent and trustworthy across England

Making the best use of land: the right skills in the right places

Question 21: What gaps in land management capacity or skills do you anticipate as part of the land use transition? Please include any suggestions to address these gaps.

For the closed part of this question we received 736 responses, from 490 individuals and 245 organisations.

Table 12. Responses to question 21

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Farming	73	69	71
Development and planning	57	64	59
Environment and forestry	60	57	59
Recreation and access	42	39	41
Other	21	35	26

For the open part of this question ('please include any suggestions to address these gaps') we received 831 responses, from 454 individuals and 376 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents identified skills gaps or labour shortages in the farming sector more than any other, with suggestions to improve training opportunities, knowledge sharing and advice. Responses also indicated perceived skills and capacity shortages in planning authorities, again with limited training opportunities, particularly in professions such as ecology and planning. Forestry was identified as having the most skills shortages in the environmental sector, with shortages in conservation, environmental management and public access to outdoor spaces also prevalent. Public engagement and education, particularly of young people, were highlighted across all sectors as ways to address these issues, as well as facilitating innovation and learning through online resources and in-person discussion groups.

Development and planning

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there is a shortage of skilled professionals in local planning authorities, especially in ecology, conservation, and spatial planning, which they reported was affecting delivery of biodiversity net gain, local nature recovery strategies, and green infrastructure
- underfunding and low pay are barriers to recruitment and retention
- there needs to be better integration of ecological expertise into planning, better use of digital tools and mapping, and strengthened intersectoral collaboration

Farming

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- labour shortages, an ageing workforce, and low appeal to younger generations are all barriers to farming
- improving agricultural training, including incorporating agro-ecology and agroforestry, and offering mentorship schemes, would help overcome these barriers
- skills in digital technology, ecological methods, and sustainable practices are important, as well as supporting innovation through sharing research
- there should be impartial advisory services and better support for technological adoption to improve farm profitability, with some focusing on advice for tenant farmers particularly
- there needs to be training in soil health, water management, and pest management, as well as broader financial literacy, and reform of apprenticeships to attract new entrants
- there needs to be improved knowledge sharing and collaboration, including via case studies, farm cluster groups and peer-to-peer networks
- there is a shortage of vocational training and practical experience in sustainable land management, with closures of agricultural colleges like Newton Rigg cited as a concern

Environment and forestry

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there is a shortage of skilled professionals in forestry, particularly in continuous cover forestry, agroforestry, and non-timber forest product management
- improved training in woodland management, invasive species control, timber processing and ecological standards is needed
- the sector faces an ageing workforce and declining interest among younger people, with insufficient training opportunities in practical forestry and ecological skills
- there needs to be interdisciplinary training that bridges farming, forestry and conservation, for instance by integrating forestry education into agricultural training

Recreation and access

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- there is a shortage of professionals with expertise in public rights of way, outdoor access planning, and inclusive design
- skills are needed to maintain and adapt access routes as land use changes
- there is insufficient education on responsible access and its impact on sensitive sites, with calls for improved public engagement and education to promote responsible recreation

Other comments and suggestions

Within this, respondents stated:

- there should be improved business management, digital mapping, data analysis and artificial intelligence skills, as well as monitoring and modelling
- there should be improved access to high-quality, standardised data, although many land managers lack the digital skills needed to utilise this
- there should be vocational training and accredited courses in regenerative farming and habitat management
- the government should support interdisciplinary collaboration and community empowerment
- there should be a national land skills framework, regional demonstration sites, test and trials, and better integration of nature-based solutions into training
- politicians, civil servants, and the public should be educated on land management and ecological issues
- there are potential limitations in capacity and skills in land surveying, regulatory roles and hydrology
- education hubs and providers have a key role in upskilling across multiple sectors (including biodiversity), as do digital resource of information (such as online videos)
- webinars, conferences and social media are useful education platforms

Question 22: How could the sharing of best practice in innovative land use practices and management be improved?

We received 687 responses to this question, from 365 individuals and 321 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Peer-to-peer learning was most commonly identified as an effective way of sharing knowledge and best practice, particular amongst the farming community. This can be supported through showcasing real-life examples and demonstration sites. Many also recognised the value of established networks (such as cluster groups and associations) to share information more widely, as well as formal collaboration opportunities (such as open days, workshops and conferences). Respondents recognised the need to financially support access to these, and for pilots and trials, as well as making digital resources available more widely. Respondents also identified data gathering sharing is key to support effective land management, as well as a role for established bodies (such as environmental NGOs, retailers, local authorities) in facilitating knowledge sharing.

Peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- learning could happen through farmer clusters – including farmer-led demonstration sites, mentorship schemes, and local discussion groups

- online forums and social media are useful tools for facilitating peer exchanges (such as sharing best practice) but these must be user-friendly and accessible to land managers with varying levels of digital literacy
- a centralised online platform, or ‘knowledge hub’ could be created, with case studies, practical guidance, peer-reviewed examples, and a national land use innovation network
- facilitation funds should be extended to support regular meetings and knowledge exchange
- there should be more government support for events such as Groundswell and the Oxford Real Farming Conference - access to these events should be expanded through webinars and digital platforms, as well as hosting them at accessible times of day and year for farmers and land managers

Formal education and training

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- apprenticeships or 'earn and learn' initiatives could improve knowledge of innovative land use practices
- regional centres of excellence and local advisors specialising in sustainable practices were also suggested
- specialist associations (for example, for soil or crops) are good portals for knowledge storing and sharing, including through conferences and online
- ‘college-style’ training resources can help farmers keep up to date on emerging innovations and science, and can encourage those from outside rural communities to engage and bring new ideas

Financial support

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- economic pressures are barriers to innovation
- grants or loans for educational opportunities or to encourage adoption of best practice and innovative land use would be welcome
- long-term funding is needed to support facilitation of farmer groups and knowledge exchange activities – many existing initiatives lack the resources to scale or sustain their work
- there should be investment in local advisory capacity, particularly in areas where trusted relationships already exist, to support land managers in adopting new practices
- government should support early adopters to trial and pilot new ideas before rolling out ideas

Joined-up approach

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- partnerships between farmers, researchers, and industry are important to test and develop innovations, including with UK Research and Innovation and Innovate UK
- collaborations with outdoors and environmental groups should be made to implement practices that are both environmentally and economically beneficial
- there needs to be better integration of existing resources, such as local environmental records centres and community of practice networks
- the government should involve traditional networks such as unions and farming clubs in knowledge-sharing initiatives to maintain cultural and social traditions within communities, and to reduce farmer isolation

Other

Within this, respondents stated:

- there should be more regionally relevant case studies and real-life examples that reflect local conditions and challenges
- demonstration farms and pilot projects should be established to showcase successful land use change and allow land managers to assess viability before committing to change
- there should be trained advisors, connected through a hub, who can support learning and implementation of best practice, including through one-to-one support
- a new or reformed public authority could provide benefits for implementing the framework and sharing best practice
- learning from other countries can provide ideas and evidence that could be applied in England

Co-creation and engagement on a Land Use Framework: next steps

Question 23: Should a Land Use Framework for England be updated periodically, and if so, how frequently should this occur?

For the closed part of this question we received 944 responses, from 632 individuals and 311 organisations.

Table 13. Responses to question 23

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Yes, every 5 years	42	50	45
Yes, every 3 years	19	18	19

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Yes, another frequency or approach	21	21	23
No	6	2	5
I don't know	12	7	11

For the open part of this question ('if you stated 'another frequency or approach' please provide details') we received 589 responses, from 264 individuals and 325 organisations.

Summary of key themes

The majority of respondents showed a preference for 5-year review periods. Reasoning included the need to align with other interacting strategies and incorporate new evidence whilst providing some stability and certainty to sectors affected. There was also support for more frequent reviews, most commonly for 3-year review periods, but also annual updates to include emerging evidence. There was support for retaining a long-term vision while ensuring the implementation was adaptable and responsive to change. Some were unsure on frequency of updates, or suggested it should be a live document, but were wary of the time and cost commitments involved in frequent review, or the implications that a regular revision could have.

Three years

On this time frame, respondents stated:

- this would help to ensure the Framework is adaptable and frequent updates to ensure the Framework remains responsive to rapid changes in climate, technology, and agricultural practices
- it is most appropriate for taking into account climate data changes, changes to agricultural innovation and the introduction of new technology
- more regular updates would keep momentum for delivery

Five years

On this time frame, respondents stated:

- this would give balance between stability and adaptability
- this approach would align well with other strategic and local plans, such as the Environmental Improvement Plan, local nature recovery strategies, ensuring consistency across various national and local levels
- it provides sufficient time to observe the impacts of land use changes and integration of advancements in new data, agricultural innovations, policy shifts, and technological development (including opportunities through artificial intelligence)

- this would align with political timelines, giving every administration the opportunity to review and amend the Framework in line with broader environmental and economic strategies
- there is a need for a mechanism and clear processes for updating the Framework, as well as systems to address urgent issues outside the regular timeline to maintain responsiveness to immediate challenges or opportunities
- more frequent reviews would not give land managers any stability to make investments or sustainable decisions

Ten years

On this time frame, respondents stated:

- this would provide long-term stability and certainty, particularly for those involved in agriculture and large-scale land management
- this could provide ample opportunity for implementation of land use strategies and observation of meaningful outcomes while offering stability for long-term planning and investments, especially in sectors such as forestry and major infrastructure projects
- periodic reassessments would be necessary in the interim to incorporate new evidence and shifts in environmental or economic priorities
- this may be more cost efficient than shorter review periods

Another time period

On this option, respondents stated:

- a balanced approach could work whereby regular updates or reviews could be made to incorporate the latest evidence and data (such as from Food Security Reports), but principles and vision should remain long-term to provide certainty
- a flexible approach should be used, which should be lined up with other related strategies (such as the Environmental Improvement Plan, carbon budgets or local nature recovery strategies) or sector needs
- regular review of policy actions (such as incentives) is needed to ensure continuous delivery and enable evaluation of progress against the principles and vision

Question 24: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed areas? Please include comments or suggestions with your answer.

Government will consider how best to co-ordinate and provide:

- a strategic oversight function to ensure the right information and policy is in place to enable delivery against a long-term land use vision
- a cross-governmental spatial analysis function to produce evidence-based advice on strategic implications across different demands on land
- processes to embed land use considerations in strategic government decisions
- open policy-making processes in collaboration with research organisations

For the closed part of this question we received 897 responses, from 615 individuals and 281 organisations.

Table 14. Responses to question 24

Response	Individuals (%)	Organisations (%)	Overall (%)
Strongly agree	22	32	25
Agree	37	46	40
Neither agree nor disagree	16	11	14
Disagree	5	4	5
Strongly disagree	12	4	9
I don't know	8	4	7

For the open part of this question ('please include suggestions or comments with your answers') we received 544 responses, from 257 individuals and 287 organisations.

Summary of key themes

Respondents emphasised the importance of a joined up, holistic government approach to land use, recognising its intersection with food production, housing, nature recovery, climate change and infrastructure, and the need to align the Land Use Framework with wider policy levers. Many supported the establishment of a strategic oversight function to provide long-term stability, accountability and alignment with national goals. An evidence-based approach, underpinned by spatial analysis, coherent data and appropriate governance arrangements, was seen as essential to balancing competing demands.

Respondents also highlighted the value of co-creation and better resourcing and empowerment of local authorities and communities. However, some respondents opposed greater government involvement, citing concerns about limited understanding of rural and agricultural needs and increased bureaucracy.

Holistic, cross-government co-ordination

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- land use change requires a whole-of-government approach across key departments, including Defra, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, His Majesty's Treasury and Cabinet Office
- it is important to engage with stakeholders, including local communities, non-governmental organisations, front-line practitioners and professional bodies

- land use policy sits at the intersection of food production, housing, nature recovery, climate change mitigation and adaptation, infrastructure and water management
- links need to be made between the Land Use Framework and other key policies and levers, including the National Planning Policy Framework

Strategic oversight function

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- a strategic oversight function would support long-term stability, continuity and intersectoral accountability
- it should maintain alignment with long-term national goals across government departments, such as climate resilience and sustainable development
- it could follow a similar model to the Climate Change Committee, with statutory duties and a legal mandate to hold government accountable
- the government lacks understanding of agricultural and rural needs, and intervention may lead to inefficiencies, bureaucracy, and policies that could potentially harm rural communities and food security

Evidence-based approach to decision-making

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- strategic spatial analysis would support balancing competing demands, integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations
- coherent spatial data, interoperable datasets and consistent methodologies are needed, alongside appropriate governance arrangements

Co-creation

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- open policymaking is important to ensure transparency, accountability, and diverse perspectives in the process, and to build trust
- there needs to be explicit consideration of the barriers faced by ethnic minorities, young people and other marginalised voices
- local expertise and capability should be championed, while local authorities should be given clear responsibilities, funding and capacity

Data and scope concerns

Within this theme, respondents stated:

- consultation proposals were too vague, with insufficient details on what would change
- spatial analysis may become too technocratic or complex
- decisions might be based on incomplete or poor-quality data