

**COUNCIL BUSINESS  
COMMITTEE**

**6.00 P.M.**

**17TH APRIL 2025**

**PRESENT:-** Councillors David Whitaker (Chair), John Livermore, Sarah McGowan and Jean Parr

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Matthew Black (Vice-Chair) and Suhir Abuhajar

Officers in attendance:

Maurice Brophy	Service Manager - Planning and Housing Strategy
Liz Bateson	Principal Democratic Support Officer, Democratic Services
Phillip Abel	Democratic Support Officer

**29 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

**30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**31 RESPONDING TO THE DEFRA LAND USE CONSULTATION (Pages 3 - 4)**

The Service Manager -Planning & Housing Strategy presented a draft response to the Land-Use consultation published by DEFRA. The Committee was asked to note the proposed draft response and consider it for submission as the Council's corporate response to the consultation on or before the deadline of midday on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Comments received at the 14<sup>th</sup> April meeting of Local Plan Review Group concerning questions 4 and 11 of the proposed response were also presented to the Committee. These were discussed by the Committee while reviewing the proposed answers to the consultation.

After noting the consultation and reviewing the draft responses to each question, it was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Parr and resolved unanimously as follows: -

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the Committee notes the report on the DEFRA Land-Use consultation.
- 2) That the proposed response, with the amended answers to questions 4 and 11 as appended to the minutes, be submitted as the Council's corporate response to the consultation.

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Chair

(The meeting ended at 6.20 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Phillip Abel, Democratic Support - email [pabel@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:pabel@lancaster.gov.uk)**

**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?**

ANSWER: The government are producing a long-term farming road map and a Food Strategy. The incentives will need to reflect various ownership structure like tenancies and consider the wider food chain. LCC consider that it will be important that the issue is considered for food security and food sovereignty, so the farming system becomes more resilient to the risks of climate change and nature loss (like extreme weather events and declines in pollinator populations). **LCC encourages the Government to reduce the concerns currently felt by land managers by quickly re-establishing a clear regime for post-Brexit agriculture support and subsidies.** LCC also consider that there could be the introduction of a new product classification similar to 'free range' or 'organic' but for products grown or pastured on biodiverse land. This could provide a premium sale price for goods without need for subsidisation.

To implement large scale land use change without a commensurate decrease in agricultural output, a large shift would be needed towards more efficient and advanced farming technologies that can be employed over smaller areas, or take advantage of previously unsuitable areas. LCC therefore consider that some of the incentives and policies should be aimed towards farming innovation as well as for direct changes such as tree planting or enhancing wildlife. It should also be noted that there are risks of unintended outcomes, with some agricultural businesses responding in category 2, making small changes in the margins, but also increasing agricultural intensity in other areas, as has occurred in the past, e.g. production subsidies in 1970s led to major conversion from mixed farming to arable, requirement for rotational set-aside in 1980s led to reduced uptake of tree-planting and hedge loss continued or increased. **LCC feels that measures to achieve increased agricultural efficiency on land that continues to be managed primarily for food production should be assessed to ensure that the natural environment is not impacted negatively by the loss of ecological diversity that accompanied national policy on achieving greater agricultural intensification in the 1960s and 1970s.**

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

ANSWER: LCC support the need to support nature and food production and note that the Green Infrastructure Framework will guide principles in relation to this and how land is managed for recreation but consider that this should be widened to include 'blue' infrastructure too rather than just green to produce a Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework. In terms of the approaches that could cost effectively support nature and food production, LCC consider that there should be stronger requirements in central government planning policy for the provision of fruit trees in

the gardens of new builds and that the incorporation of rooftop growing spaces, balcony growing spaces, and land for **community** allotments, **areas for planting fruit trees/orchards**, and composting sites should also be included, as well as the incorporation of community-**managed** edible gardens, into the corners of parks and other open spaces **including opportunities to enable the planting of fruit trees/orchards**.