

DEFRA LAND USE CONSULTATION

Purpose

To advise of the Government's 12 week consultation on a Land Use Framework for England.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- DEFRA have published a 12 week consultation on a Land Use Framework until 25th April.
- The consultation invites stakeholders to give their views on 24 questions covering the type and scale of land use change needed to deliver on food production, nature recovery, climate resilience, the rural economy and housing.
- Question 10 specifically references Protected Landscapes, primarily in the context of 'making space for nature'.
- Members and respective organisations are encouraged to engage in the Consultation.
- The National Landscape Manager will collate a response on behalf of the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership and will welcome input, debate and collaboration on the consultation.

Reasons

DEFRA published the Land Use Consultation on the 31st January 2025. The Consultation seeks feedback from land use decision makers at different scales to understand how to shape land use policy to be most effective. The government is also consulting on the best governance structures for land use policy and how to most effectively implement it. Lasting 12 weeks, the Consultation will be accompanied by workshops around the country and will inform the publication of a Land Use Framework later this year.

Implications

DEFRA describe the Land Use Framework as setting out a vision for land use in England, and acting as a tool to drive better decision-making on how land is used and managed, by farmers and landowners right through to local authorities and developers. It is not described as a framework that will impose land use change. Rather, it aims to bring together the best and most relevant information to inform decisions about how land is used, including land

use change where appropriate, in order to maximise win-wins and avoid/mitigate competing demands on land in certain areas.

The Consultation document outlines DEFRA's indicative figures for the potential type and scale of land use change in England to 2050:

- Most (around 80%) of farmland changing how it is managed, e.g. through improved soil management, but not the primary land use.
- 1% (50kha) introducing small changes such as on farm habitat.
- 4% (370kha) introducing more substantive changes, particularly more trees alongside food production.
- 5% (430kha) introducing more substantive land use changes, primarily for nature and climate benefit, but retaining some food production.
- 9% (760kha) reflecting land use change away from farming, with land fully dedicated to delivering environmental and climate outcomes.

The Food, Farming and Countryside Commission state that "A Multifunctional Land Use Framework could mean better decisions are made about how land is used – ensuring that new housing is close to public transport, that we grow enough of the healthy food we need, that rivers are clean and flood risks – and droughts – managed, nature is restored, green energy increased, and carbon sequestered – and more."

Given the significance of the Land Use Framework for future land use, farming and landscape in England, members are encouraged to get involved in the consultation process.

The Consultation refers to Protected Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes) in the section 'Making space for nature' (page 24). The document states that the Government is developing a package of measures to ensure that Protected Landscapes are able to deliver the objectives in the Land Use Framework for nature, water, rural housing and climate. It subsequently asks:

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

- **Strengthened Protected Landscapes legislation (around governance and regulations or duties on key actors) with a greater focus on nature**
- **Tools: such as greater alignment of existing Defra schemes with the 30by30 criteria**
- **Resources: such as funding or guidance for those managing Protected Landscapes for nature**
- **Other (please specify)**

The National Landscape Manager will work with the National Landscape Association, fellow Lead Officers and other interested parties on compiling a suitable response on behalf of the Wye Valley National Landscape Partnership. Contributions from JAC members and partner organisations will be welcomed.

The Government propose to publish a Land Use Framework for England later in the year. This will be the beginning of a likely long and difficult process of putting in place strategic and spatially explicit land use planning, that will need to work on all scales from local to

national, cutting across all government departments and supported by evidence-based decisions.

Background

The Consultation document is available here:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use-framework/land-use-consultation/>