Land Use Framework Consultation – Response from Confederation of Forest Industries (UK) Ltd (Confor) - 22/04/2025

Consultation Summary & Key Insights

Background

Confor is a not-for-profit organisation representing over 1,200 forestry and wood-using businesses across the UK, including 680 in England. As the voice of the forestry and wood supply chain, Confor is committed to addressing strategic challenges, including expanding woodland cover, securing timber supply, and improving woodland management for a sustainable future.

We welcome the Land Use Framework consultation for England as an important opportunity to shape a forward-thinking strategy. However, the current framework largely overlooks forestry and woodlands in land-use planning discussions. While the consultation highlights the transition of 19 per cent of high-emission agricultural land for climate and nature objectives, it fails to fully acknowledge forestry's crucial contribution not only to timber security, biodiversity, carbon capture, and rural economic growth but also as a multifunctional land-use option where food, timber, and nature can coexist.

Survey and Review Process

To inform this submission, Confor conducted a member survey, gathering insights from 34 respondents across five key stakeholder groups: timber processors, woodland owners, agents, forestry contractors, and nurseries.

Additionally, Confor engaged a representative group of members from across England to review the draft response, ensuring feedback reflected perspectives from all membership categories. This process reinforced a key concern: the framework's limited recognition of forestry risks overlooking critical challenges and opportunities, including climate adaptation, timber supply, and sustainable land management.

Recognising the Role of All Land Managers

The consultation document repeatedly refers to "farmers" as primary land-use decision-makers, potentially excluding other essential stakeholders. Land management extends beyond agriculture, incorporating foresters, estate managers, and environmental practitioners who play a critical role in shaping sustainable land use.

Confor recommends adopting "land managers" as a more inclusive term throughout the framework. Recognising all sectors involved in land-use decisions will ensure forestry and woodland management are properly integrated rather than treated as secondary considerations.

Addressing Climate Adaptation Challenges

A robust Land Use Framework must actively tackle risks facing existing forests, yet forestry-related challenges are largely overlooked. The Forestry Commission's Climate Change Adaptation [Report](#) identifies key threats such as limited tree species diversity and land-use pressures that undermine resilience.

This consultation misses a vital opportunity to outline how forestry supports climate adaptation. Without a clear role for forestry, essential aspects of woodland management - including species diversification, climate resilience, and active management may be neglected. Integrating forestry into the framework ensures both timber security and environmental sustainability are central to future planning.

Call to action

The Land Use Framework must work backwards from future land-use requirements to ensure today's decisions align with long-term objectives. Expanding productive woodlands, supported by strategic woodland categorisation under the National Wood Strategy (NWS), is critical to achieving these goals.

Meeting the statutory target of 16.5% woodland and tree cover requires a significant expansion of productive woodlands. However, the National Wood Strategy (NWS) advocates for a 17.5% target - recognising that a more ambitious approach is essential to meeting climate resilience, nature recovery, and timber security goals. Without a stronger policy shift towards increasing tree cover, England risks falling short of its long-term sustainability objectives. The Land Use Framework must reflect this urgency, ensuring forestry is fully embedded in national land-use decisions as a core solution for tackling environmental and economic challenges.

Additionally, the Timber in Construction Roadmap 2025 outlines a strategy for increasing the use of sustainable wood products in the built environment, directly supporting net zero targets and the transition towards a low-carbon economy. Aligning the Land Use Framework with this roadmap strengthens the case for integrating forestry into national policy discussions, ensuring timber security and land-use planning work in tandem.

To fully embed forestry within strategic land-use decisions, forests and woodlands must be recognised as core components of planning processes. This will help meet net zero targets, foster economic growth, and support sustainable, high-quality housebuilding.

Meeting future wood fibre demand

In the coming decades, demand for wood fibre is expected to rise as the UK transitions towards low-carbon solutions across sectors such as housebuilding, energy, and sustainable fuels - all central to government policy.

To fully leverage wood fibre's role in a low-carbon economy, forestry resources must expand to secure a sufficient timber supply. Strengthening domestic production reinforces carbon sequestration efforts and supports the circular economy while ensuring wood remains a key material for sustainable development.

Our response

Confor's full response to the questions below is available in tabular format on pages 3-32. Appendix One (page 33) provides a summary list of all the questions in the Land Use Framework consultation, while Appendix Two (pages 34-40) outlines Confor's key responses to each question.

Full tabular consultation response from Confor (questions 1 to 24)

Question No	Consultation question	Confor Response
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? [Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / I don't know] 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.**	**Response to Question 1** We strongly disagree with the assessment of the scale and type of land use change needed, and there are key areas where the framework could be improved. **1.1 Forests: beyond environmental benefits** The current framework treats forests primarily as "non-agricultural land use" focused on environmental and climate benefits, failing to recognise their full potential. Forests are not only essential for carbon sequestration and biodiversity but also serve as a renewable source of timber, vital for sustainable construction and economic growth. The Confor survey highlighted that timber processors feel government policy has not adequately acknowledged the role of homegrown timber. Productive forestry must be explicitly integrated into land use discussions, ensuring that timber security is treated as a priority alongside agriculture and conservation. **1.2 Call to action** To fully realise the benefits of forestry, the framework must prioritise increasing productive woodland cover, improving sustainable management, and expanding areas of commercial forestry. Existing strategies, such as the National Wood Strategy and Timber in Construction Roadmap, should be used to support timber production while achieving climate goals. The Confor survey found that financial constraints hinder forestry contractors' expansion to deliver more woodland creation. Supportive policies and funding, including aid for modern cultivation machinery, could encourage investment, strengthening land use strategies with environmental, economic, and social benefits. **1.3 Timber security and economic impact** The UK currently imports 73 per cent of its timber, creating vulnerabilities in supply chains and exposing the industry to rising global prices. With global timber demand expected to triple by 2050, failing to expand forestry resources now will significantly increase the UK's reliance on imports. At the same time, 42 per cent of England's woodlands remain unmanaged, according to the Environmental Audit Committee [report](#). The Confor review panel identified the need for greater policy focus on active woodland management, which would

		enhance biodiversity, improve timber supply, and support rural businesses. The private sector should be involved in helping guide future changes to woodland management grants to ensure they're practical and implementable. **1.4 Category 4 and woodland creation** Category 4, focused on land use for environmental and climate benefits, will be central to woodland creation efforts. To meet the UK's statutory tree planting target, around 250,000 hectares must be dedicated to forest expansion, representing a third of the 750,000 hectares allocated to this category. The Forestry Commission has identified up to 3.2 million hectares of low-sensitivity land that could be suitable for tree planting, presenting a significant opportunity for woodland expansion. Mapping these areas against Category 4 allocations would help optimise land use. Additionally, the National Food Strategy shows that the least productive 20 per cent of farmland generates only three per cent of the calories consumed, making it a strong candidate for woodland creation. Taking an evidence-based approach to land reallocation would ensure that timber production, biodiversity, climate resilience, and food security are balanced effectively. Investing in woodland creation on underproductive farmland provides long-term economic and environmental benefits. Expanding woodland cover supports carbon sequestration and enhances ecosystem resilience. However, Priority Habitat and Breeding Bird regulations have unintentionally restricted woodland expansion. A more pragmatic approach to habitat quality and land potential should be considered to balance conservation with sustainable land use and climate goals.
2	**Do you agree or disagree with the land use principles proposed?** **[Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / I don't know]**	**Response to Question 2** We agree with the proposed land use principles, as they provide a thoughtful framework for balancing the many demands placed on land. However, certain areas could be refined to maximise their impact and long-term sustainability. **2.1 Protecting agricultural land** It is essential to prioritise the preservation of the highest-quality farmland for food production. The best agricultural soils are not necessarily the best for trees, which tend to prefer more acidic soils than grasses and arable crops. Trees can also utilise land that is unsuitable for productive agriculture.

2.2 Balancing homes and nature
While green spaces in housing developments are vital for biodiversity and recreation, priority should be given to locating homes near workplaces and areas with existing infrastructure. This approach reduces car dependency, supports public transport, and aligns housing development with sustainability goals.

2.3 Promoting timber in construction
The government's Timber in Construction Roadmap 2025 outlines strategies for integrating timber as a renewable, low-carbon material in construction. This complements land use principles by supporting housing development that aligns with emissions reduction goals and promotes the use of sustainable materials. Encouraging timber in new construction would drive innovation while advancing climate resilience and sustainability.

2.4 Multifunctional land and woodlands
Woodlands provide habitats for biodiversity, act as carbon sinks, improve air and water quality, and offer recreational spaces that enhance mental well-being. Despite their significant contributions, it is disappointing that woodlands were not highlighted as a key consideration in the framework.

Survey insights from Confor members, including woodland owners and agents, underscored the need for stronger recognition of woodlands as multifunctional assets. Members raised concerns about forestry being sidelined in policy discussions, despite its ability to deliver environmental, economic, and social benefits. A more integrated approach would ensure that forestry is positioned as a key component of land use strategy.

2.5 Planning resilient housing
Trees, whether street-side or in parks, play an essential role in residential development by providing shade in summer and improving urban environments. Ensuring trees are included in new developments is critical. There are also opportunities for integrating housing within some newly planted woodlands, allowing communities to benefit from already established woodland while promoting sustainable urban planning.

2.6 Managing irreversible land use changes
Reviewing and adapting land use policies based on emerging data is practical, but irreversible changes require stricter oversight. Robust checks should guide decisions involving such changes, and measures to prevent data manipulation—such as reclassifying land for specific objectives—are essential.

		Confor's survey reflected concerns from agents and forestry contractors about unclear land categorisations within funding schemes, leading to confusion over eligibility for grants. A more transparent and consistent approach to land classification would reduce administrative barriers and support long-term sustainability.
3	**Beyond Government departments in England, which other decision makers do you think would benefit from applying these principles?** **Combined and local authorities (including local planning authorities)** **Landowners and land managers (including environmental and heritage groups)** **Others (please specify)**	**Response to Question 3** Beyond government departments in England, the following decision-makers may benefit from applying these principles. **3.1 Combined and local authorities** – Local planning authorities play a crucial role in shaping housing, infrastructure, transport, and energy policies. Integrating these principles into regional spatial strategies will help ensure developments meet local needs while addressing environmental pressures and climate resilience. **3.2 Landowners, land managers, and forestry organisations** – Farmers, environmental groups, heritage organisations, and woodland managers have a vital role in balancing land use priorities. They must align land management decisions with multifunctional benefits, including preserving agricultural land, enhancing biodiversity, expanding woodlands, and supporting climate goals. **3.3 Construction firms and property developers** – Applying these principles would enable developers to design sustainable housing projects that are resilient to climate impacts, integrate green spaces effectively, and prioritise the use of renewable materials such as timber, as outlined in the Timber in Construction Roadmap 2025. **3.4 Energy sector** – Organisations involved in renewable energy generation and grid management can use these principles to optimise site selection, balancing energy development with land use priorities such as food production, forestry expansion, and conservation efforts. **3.5 Environmental research institutions** – These organisations can apply the principles to refine best practices in land management, forestry, and climate adaptation. Their insights could support policymakers in identifying areas for sustainable woodland expansion based on long-term environmental modelling. **3.6 Non-governmental organisations and community groups** – Local communities should play a more active role in land use decisions, ensuring that developments align with social, cultural, and environmental priorities while protecting natural heritage.

			Response to Question 4
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?**		To address this question, productive forestry has played a vital role in the landscape for millennia and must be considered by farmers and landowners when making significant land use changes. **4.1 Policies** • **Clarity and standards** – There needs to be better alignment between farming and forestry sectors, ensuring that landowners can make informed decisions. For example, regenerative farming has a direct parallel in forestry - Continuous Cover Forestry. Similarly, organic certification schemes in farming are equivalent to PEFC and FSC certification in forestry. **4.2 Incentives** • **Grants for land use changes** – Financial support should cover the costs of adopting new practices, managing land, and offsetting initial income losses. Clarity on expected outcomes is essential to ensure investment leads to measurable environmental and economic benefits. • **Clashes Between Different Incentives in Agri-Environment Schemes** - Agri-environment schemes like Countryside Stewardship promote responsible land management but transitioning to the English Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) can be difficult. Even when woodland creation is the best option, existing agreements hinder landowners, reducing woodland expansion and confidence in the system. Urgent review is needed to allow smoother transitions for greater environmental benefits. • **Private investment in nature** – Encouraging private nature markets, inspired by forestry's carbon credit systems, could help finance biodiversity improvements, carbon storage, and sustainable land management. However, the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) currently fails to support faster-growing woodlands that maximize CO_2 sequestration. To fully unlock private finance and drive positive land use change, the WCC needs a review to better enable high-impact reforestation. Survey feedback from woodland owners highlighted that confusing grant schemes, such as the overly complex Woodland Creation Planning Grant, discourage long-term forestry investments. Many agents and Forestry Commission staff avoid using it due to bureaucratic hurdles. Simplifying the application process, aligning funding with sustainable land-use objectives, and reviewing the woodland creation approval system to remove barriers and improve efficiency

| | | would encourage more farmers and estate managers to diversify into productive forestry.

4.3 Other Changes

- **Monitoring progress** – Introducing simplified reporting tools such as photo submissions or satellite data would help track land use changes and ensure public investment delivers tangible outcomes, as demonstrated successfully in forestry.
- **Making organic food affordable** – Support for environmentally sensitive forestry processes and certification should align with incentives for organic farming, ensuring that both sectors can compete fairly in sustainable markets.

Survey insights from forestry contractors reinforced the need for greater collaboration between farmers and foresters, ensuring knowledge-sharing and policy alignment across sectors. |

| 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?** | **Response to Question 5**
Supporting land managers in implementing multifunctional land uses requires clear definitions, structured incentives, practical contracts, and long-term viability measures. By providing policy clarity, financial support, and technical training, the government can ensure land transitions deliver environmental and economic benefits while maintaining food production.

As outlined in the National Wood Strategy, woodland types should be clearly defined to determine how much of each type is needed, enabling the government to set targets and monitor progress effectively. This ensures that funding and policy decisions align with long-term environmental and economic objectives.

A scoring system could allocate grant rates based on the specific benefits of different land-use models, ensuring funding aligns with long-term sustainability goals.

5.2 Contracts with Land Managers
Contracts should clearly specify the land uses being implemented, their expected public benefits, and measurable targets over time (e.g. tree growth, biodiversity indicators, or carbon sequestration rates). Funding should include upfront grants for initial costs and annual payments tied to evidence of implementation, such as photo submissions or site inspections. |

5.3 Support for Sustainable Tree Establishment on Farms

Integrating trees into farm landscapes requires ongoing stewardship to balance agricultural productivity, ecological benefits, and economic viability. Land managers must commit to the longer-term management of these systems, ensuring their sustainability beyond initial establishment. Government funding is important to support essential management activities, including pest control, soil conservation, and planting success rates.

The government should promote diversified land-use models where trees - whether in hedgerows, shelterbelts, orchards, or agroforestry systems enhance biodiversity, soil health, and climate resilience while maintaining farm productivity. Where timber or tree-based products (including biomass) are incorporated, they should be explicitly recognised for their potential to provide economic resilience, reducing dependence on grants and ensuring productive, financially viable land management

5.4 Skill Development & Resource Management

Both woodland management and agroforestry systems require specialist skills. Land managers should be supported through training programmes, and forestry expertise should be integrated into agricultural education. Cooperative models or specialist land management companies could provide professional forestry oversight for farms looking to incorporate trees into their land-use strategy.

With the closure of the Forestry and Arboriculture Training Fund, there is perhaps an opportunity to rethink how training initiatives support land managers across the countryside. Future programmes should take a holistic approach, addressing skill development in woodland management, agroforestry, and broader agricultural land-use needs. This will ensure land managers have the expertise required to balance productivity, sustainability, and biodiversity within rural landscapes.

5.5 Viability of Multifunctional Land Uses

Woodland creation and agroforestry adoption often depend on grants to incentivise uptake. The government should explore pathways to profitability through additional income streams, such as timber production, biomass, carbon credits, and ecosystem service payments.

5.6 SMART Grants & Implementation

All grants, whether for woodland expansion, agroforestry, or land-use diversification, should adhere to SMART principles - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound ensuring effective and accountable implementation.

6	**What should the Government consider in identifying suitable locations for spatially targeted incentives?**	**Response to Question 6** To ensure spatially targeted incentives maximise environmental, economic, and social benefits, the Government should consider key factors when identifying suitable locations. However, it is essential to recognise that not all benefits can be maximised simultaneously some land uses may require careful trade-offs to ensure the most effective and sustainable application of incentives. **6.1 Clear Definitions of Target Areas** • The Government should establish clear criteria to prioritise areas with the highest potential for delivering multifunctional benefits, such as enhancing biodiversity, boosting carbon storage, supporting sustainable food production, and expanding timber resources. • While tools such as the Forestry Commission's Low Sensitivity Mapping provide useful guidance, it is important to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. • Productive upland forestry areas often overlap with sensitive landscapes, including national parks and breeding wader habitats, which hold significant cultural, historical, and recreational value. Balancing ecological and economic priorities with cultural considerations is essential. Where appropriate, incentives should support sustainable forestry within national parks, provided they align with goals such as biodiversity enhancement, cultural preservation, and sustainable timber production, as outlined in the Timber in Construction Roadmap. • Confor members highlighted concerns that blanket classifications could restrict woodland expansion, reinforcing the need for a flexible, site-specific approach when determining suitable land for spatial incentives. **6.2 Balancing Productivity, Sustainability, and Population Needs** • Spatial incentives must consider how land is currently used, its environmental characteristics, and the needs of local communities. Multifunctional land use must be carefully designed to avoid spreading benefits too thinly, which can result in land underperforming across multiple areas rather than excelling in one. • In urban areas, land-use changes could focus on improving air quality, reducing pollution, and increasing local food production, supporting both public health and climate objectives. In rural locations, spatial incentives could encourage job

		creation, sustainable land management, and local enterprise growth, ensuring these areas remain economically viable and attractive places to live.
		• By integrating clear criteria, balanced ecological and economic priorities, and a strong emphasis on local needs, spatially targeted incentives can enhance rural and urban resilience, drive sustainability, and support multifunctional land use in a practical and effective way.
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?**	**Response to Question 7** Successfully steering land use changes requires a strategic, evidence-based approach that helps land managers, and the agricultural sector maximise benefits while minimising trade-offs. The following approaches will ensure environmental, economic, and food production objectives are balanced effectively. **7.1 Comprehensive Mapping and Decision-Making Tools** National and regional land-use planning frameworks should provide clear guidance on where certain land uses such as forestry, agroforestry, conservation, and farming can deliver the highest value with minimal trade-offs. Mapping tools should assess soil quality, biodiversity value, and carbon sequestration potential, allowing land managers to make data-driven land use decisions. Survey feedback from woodland owners and forestry agents highlighted that a lack of accessible mapping tools makes it difficult to determine where land use transitions would be most effective, reinforcing the need for robust spatial planning. **7.2 Financial Incentives and Long-Term Investment Support** Financial incentives should be structured to reward well-targeted land-use changes rather than blanket schemes that may lead to fragmented or inefficient outcomes. Long-term funding mechanisms should allow land managers to commit to sustainable land-use transitions without economic uncertainty. **7.3 Research, Advisory Services, and Knowledge Exchange** Independent advisory services should be expanded to ensure land managers receive expert guidance on how land-use changes can support climate resilience, biodiversity, and

		farm productivity. Knowledge-sharing between the agricultural and forestry sectors should be encouraged, promoting best practice models that demonstrate how integrated land use can work effectively. Pilot projects and case studies should be funded to help land managers assess real-world trade-offs and opportunities before implementing large-scale changes.
		7.4 Regulatory Frameworks and Adaptive Land Management Environmental regulators such as the Forestry Commission, Natural England, and the Environment Agency should be aligned with national land-use change strategies to ensure regulatory consistency and enforcement. A central hub for regulation should be established, allowing land managers and investors to access biodiversity, forestry, and agricultural policies in one place, with expert advisors available for guidance. Regulations should support land-use diversification while maintaining environmental protection standards, allowing land managers to make informed investment decisions. Feedback from our members highlighted concerns about inconsistent regulatory guidance, reinforcing the need for coherent policy alignment across government agencies. **7.5 Embedding the Polluter Pays Principle into Land-Use Policy** Businesses whose activities impact natural resources should contribute financially to land restoration and biodiversity projects. Environmental enforcement mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure industries comply with sustainable land-use policies. Carbon offset schemes should be expanded to direct private sector funding into regenerative land-use projects, helping balance economic viability with environmental responsibility.
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**	**Response to Question 8** While Confor's expertise lies in forestry and timber rather than agricultural policy, we recognise that land use decisions inevitably impact food production. The following suggestions highlight potential measures to reduce the risk of displacing food production and environmental impacts abroad. **8.1 Monitoring Land Use Change and Agricultural Production:**

	for your answer. Monitoring land use change or production on agricultural land Accounting for displaced food production impacts in project appraisals Protecting the best agricultural land from permanent land use changes Other (please specify)	• Establish comprehensive systems to track land use changes and agricultural output using satellite imagery and remote sensing. • Ensuring agricultural land remains productive would help meet domestic demand and reduce reliance on imported food, which may carry higher environmental footprints. **8.2 Public Awareness and Collaboration:** • Launch campaigns to educate consumers on the environmental impacts of imported food and timber, highlighting the importance of supporting UK agriculture and forestry. • Foster partnerships between government, industry, and research institutions to develop policies and innovations that promote both food security and timber security. **8.3 Market Conditions and Waste Reduction:** • Strengthening market conditions for agricultural products and reducing food waste could complement land use strategies by supporting domestic food security and minimising unnecessary environmental impacts.
9	**What should Government consider in increasing private investment towards appropriate land use changes?**	**Response to Question 9** The Government could take the following key steps to encourage private investment in appropriate land use changes: **9.1 Strengthening Financial Incentives:** Expanding tax reliefs, grants, and subsidies would make nature-based investments more attractive to the private sector. Financial incentives help overcome initial cost barriers while supporting land use changes aligned with environmental objectives. **9.2 Enhancing Market-Based Mechanisms:** Systems such as Biodiversity Net Gain, the Woodland Carbon Code, and the Peatland Code play a vital role in driving private sector investment. For the Woodland Carbon Code, addressing limitations in the additionality test such as the requirement for investors to choose between carbon credits or timber revenue is essential. Introducing flexibility to bundle carbon credits with timber revenues, refining financial models to reflect real-world scenarios, and simplifying the additionality test for smaller projects would enhance effectiveness. **9.3 Ensuring Effective Regulation and Alignment:** The Polluter Pays principle is fundamental to both regulation and incentives. Regulation - particularly its enforcement - needs an overhaul, and environmental regulators such as

		the Forestry Commission, Natural England, and the Environment Agency must be fully aligned with the land use change strategy. This should encompass the entire supply chain for each relevant sector. **9.4 Creating a Unified Regulatory Hub:** Establishing a centralised framework where biodiversity, forestry, and agricultural regulations can be easily accessed, alongside expert advisers, would improve transparency and compliance. **9.5 Reducing Restrictions on Forestry Investment:** Removing permanency rules for forestry projects as set out in the National Wood Strategy would allow farmers to grow fast-growing tree species while retaining the option to revert to agricultural activities in the future. This adaptability would attract more land managers and investors, increasing timber production to meet national demand.
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)**	**Response to Question 10** To accelerate 30by30 delivery and strengthen the role of woodlands in nature recovery, the Government should prioritise the inclusion of managed woodlands, enhanced conservation efforts, policy reforms, and addressing financial barriers. **10.1 Inclusion of Existing Managed Woodlands in the Framework:** Existing managed woodlands, including productive forestry, should be incorporated into the Land Use Framework. Current policies focus heavily on agricultural land-use change and rewilding, overlooking the biodiversity, climate resilience, and timber security benefits of well-managed forests. Survey feedback from forestry agents highlighted that productive forestry is deprioritised not only compared to agriculture but also to non-productive woodlands, reinforcing the need for stronger policy recognition of managed forests. **10.2 Unmanaged Broadleaved Woodlands:** The Environmental Audit Committee's findings show that 42% of broadleaved woodlands remain unmanaged in England, limiting their ecological potential. Prioritising management plans for these areas can enhance biodiversity and climate resilience. Tailored support programmes for woodland owners, including training on sustainable management practices, should be introduced. Survey responses from woodland owners indicated that conservation policies often favour non-intervention

approaches, sidelining landowners with the expertise to implement effective woodland management strategies.

10.3 Restoring Ancient Woodlands: Only 9% of ancient woodlands are in favourable condition, highlighting the urgency for intervention. Dedicated resources and conservation initiatives should ensure ancient woodland restoration and preservation of their unique biodiversity.

Survey insights from forestry contractors reinforced that current grant mechanisms fail to prioritise active woodland restoration, reinforcing the need for targeted investment in ancient woodland recovery.

10.4 Expanding New Woodland Creation: Woodland creation delivers on multiple government objectives, supporting habitat expansion, providing carbon sequestration and economic growth through the growing of productive crops. Incentives should be aligned with local biodiversity goals while recognising the role of sustainable timber production.

One concern raised by Confor members is that land protection may inhibit land use change, such as woodland creation. Any new land designations should prioritise advancing government objectives for land use change rather than simply preserving existing conditions.

10.5 Challenging Existing Policies: Current forestry frameworks should enable greater species diversity, allowing the planting of both native and non-native species to:

- Enhance resilience against pests, diseases, and climate change.
- Provide varied habitats to strengthen biodiversity.
- Future-proof forests by ensuring adaptability to evolving environmental conditions.

Survey insights from forestry agents indicated that rigid regulatory frameworks limit flexibility in species selection, reinforcing the need for policy revisions that allow climate-adaptive forestry management.

10.6 Addressing the Impact of the 2024 Autumn Budget: Changes to Business Property Relief (BPR) in the 2024 Autumn Budget, including the 20% Inheritance Tax (IHT) rate, risk discouraging sustainable forestry practices such as longer rotations and continuous cover forestry, which benefit soil health, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity.

Survey responses from woodland owners highlighted concerns that short-term financial pressures may lead to

		reduced investment in woodlands and fragmentation, hindering nature recovery efforts. The Government should review this IHT anomaly to enable family woodland estates to continue delivering well-managed woodlands that contribute to 30by30 objectives.
11	What approaches could cost-effectively support nature and food production in urban landscapes and on land managed for recreation?	**Response to Question 11** To support nature and food production in urban landscapes and recreational areas cost-effectively, the Government should focus on expanding tree planting initiatives, improving urban biodiversity connectivity, integrating timber-producing forestry, and enhancing public engagement through community gardens and allotments. **11.1 Revitalising Community Gardens, Allotments, and Urban Food Forests:** Community gardens and allotments should be expanded to support food security, biodiversity, and local engagement. Including fruit and nut trees in urban spaces enhances food production, shade, and wildlife habitats. Initiatives like AllotMe and Transition Towns encourage shared garden spaces, ensuring unused land is actively cultivated for sustainable food growing. Planning frameworks should incorporate green infrastructure within new developments, ensuring residential areas contribute to nature recovery. Survey responses from woodland owners reinforced the need for public spaces to transition from manicured lawns to biodiverse habitats, supporting food forests and family coppices. **11.2 Creating Green Networks to Connect Urban Ecosystems:** New hedgerows and shelter belts could significantly improve connectivity between woodlands, city parks, and urban gardens, benefiting biodiversity. Streets should incorporate trees to form urban wildlife corridors, ensuring resilient ecosystems. Feedback from the Confor survey that covered this question highlighted the need for better integration of green networks in cities, reinforcing policy changes that prioritise tree-lined streets and biodiversity corridors. **11.3 Expanding Urban Tree Planting and Timber-Producing Forestry:** Urban forestry is progressing well, but the real issue lies in the lack of timber-producing forest expansion. Managed urban woodlands could generate revenue through

		sustainable timber harvesting, supporting further green infrastructure projects while reducing reliance on imports. Survey feedback from timber processors reinforced that while tree planting is increasing, productive forestry must not be overlooked, reinforcing the need for long-term timber-producing forest integration. **11.4 Enhancing Public Engagement and Woodland Access:** Public transport networks should ensure accessible woodland visits, allowing city residents to connect with nature. Schools should incorporate forestry education, teaching children about tree planting, food growing, and sustainable forestry cycles. **Learn more about urban food-growing initiatives**
12	**How can Government ensure that development and infrastructure spatial plans take advantage of potential co-benefits and manage trade-offs?**	**Response to Question 12** To ensure development and infrastructure spatial plans maximise co-benefits while managing trade-offs, the Government should focus on low-carbon construction, integrated spatial planning, nature-based solutions, collaborative approaches, and strategic data-driven decision-making. **12.1 Embedding Low-Carbon Construction and Forestry Goals** • Leverage the Timber in Construction Roadmap to prioritise timber use in housing projects, reducing embodied carbon, supporting sustainable domestic timber production, and improving long-term forest health. • Align infrastructure plans with the National Wood Strategy, promoting softwood planting in new woodlands and increasing timber objectives in broadleaves, contributing to the 16.5% afforestation target while securing future timber supplies. **12.2 Integrated Spatial Planning to Balance Development Needs** • Develop Spatial Development Strategies (SDS) that balance housing, energy, transport, and water infrastructure with environmental goals. • Align natural capital mapping to prioritise multifunctional land uses, integrating flood protection, biodiversity enhancement, and food production into spatial plans. Survey insights from forestry agents emphasised the need for holistic planning approaches, ensuring land-use trade-offs

		are minimised while delivering ecosystem benefits.
		12.3 Promoting Co-Benefits Through Green Infrastructure • Incorporate nature-based solutions such as urban forestry, wetlands, and woodland corridors into spatial plans to reduce climate risks, enhance biodiversity, and improve public well-being. • Strengthen planning frameworks to prioritise tree planting and green networks, ensuring urban and rural developments contribute to climate resilience. **12.4 Collaborative and Localised Approaches** • Engage local authorities, foresters, farmers, communities, and industry experts in co-designing infrastructure plans, ensuring land-use trade-offs, such as food production versus renewable energy expansion, are addressed holistically. • Promote cross-sector cooperation to align urban planning, forestry management, and biodiversity conservation. Confor survey feedback from forestry contractors highlighted concerns that infrastructure and land-use decision-making often overlook forestry sector contributions, reinforcing the need for greater industry collaboration. **12.5 Strategic Use of Data and Tools** • Use tools like the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) and outputs from the Land Use Framework to identify priority development areas, ensuring planning accounts for pressures on land and resources.
13	**How can local authorities and Government better take account of land use opportunities in transport planning?**	**Response to Question 13** To ensure transport planning aligns with land-use opportunities, local authorities and the Government should focus on strategic timber haulage infrastructure, spatial data integration, modal shifts, and coordinated stakeholder collaboration. **13.1 Accommodating Transport Needs in Forestry Expansion** • Timber haulage requires robust infrastructure, including rural roads, bridges, and access points that can withstand heavy vehicles over long-term forestry cycles (typically 20+ years from woodland establishment). • Unlike agriculture, forestry operates on seasonal harvesting cycles, causing periodic spikes in timber traffic. Spatial planning must capture these dynamics to prevent community disruptions while ensuring efficient timber logistics.

Survey feedback from forestry agents reinforced concerns that rural transport networks rarely account for forestry sector needs, highlighting the importance of long-term infrastructure investment strategies.

13.2 Strengthening Road Network Resilience for Timber Haulage

- Planning must ensure rural roads are suitable for increasing timber transport demand, with investment in maintenance and upgrades to improve safety and durability.
- Strategies such as designated haulage routes and timed operations can minimise community disruptions, similar to existing models in Northern England.

Survey responses from woodland owners highlighted that road conditions often limit forestry expansion, reinforcing the need for better haulage infrastructure planning.

13.3 Exploring Modal Shifts to Reduce Pressure on Roads
- Promoting alternative transport modes, such as rail or water-based timber transport, can ease road congestion and reduce environmental strain, ensuring efficient supply chain transitions.

Survey insights from timber processors highlighted concerns that transport bottlenecks can disrupt domestic timber markets, reinforcing the need for stronger investment in alternative transport routes.

13.4 Enhancing Spatial Data for Timber Resource Planning
- Mapping timber resources across current and future woodland sites can help predict timber yields and determine logistical requirements for transport demand.
- Advanced scenario modelling should assess how different land-use transitions (e.g., converting agricultural areas to forestry) impact transport infrastructure needs, ensuring smoother long-term planning.

13.5 Strengthening Cross-Sector Collaboration in Transport Planning

- Councils, forestry groups, local communities, and transport authorities must work together to ensure timber haulage strategies align with broader infrastructure plans.
- Joint investment models should incorporate forestry

		needs into regional transport budgets, ensuring long-term resilience for timber logistics networks. By enhancing forestry transport planning, strengthening road networks, exploring modal shifts, leveraging spatial data, and fostering stakeholder coordination, the Government can ensure transport strategies align with land-use priorities, supporting sustainable timber production and infrastructure resilience.
14	How can Government support closer coordination across plans and strategies for different sectors and outcomes at the local and regional level?	**Response to Question 14** To improve coordination across land-related plans and strategies, the Government should focus on integrating planning frameworks, incorporating wider forestry factors, facilitating cross-sector collaboration, and leveraging real-time data for policy development. **14.1 Creating an Integrated Planning System** • Develop a unified framework that merges Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs), Forestry Commission low sensitivity mapping, and other land-use strategies. • Streamline decision-making to ensure productive woodlands, such as those for timber, are considered alongside nature recovery priorities. Survey feedback from forestry agents highlighted concerns that current planning systems operate in silos, reinforcing the need for greater integration between environmental and forestry objectives. **14.2 Incorporating Wider Forestry Factors into Land-Use Mapping** • Ensure planning tools account for forestry-related considerations, such as the accessibility of timber processors, landholding scale, and economic opportunities in upland areas. • Reduce planning gaps by providing land managers with a comprehensive view of land-use possibilities, supporting both biodiversity and productive forestry. **14.3 Facilitating Cross-Sector Collaboration** • Establish partnerships between Local Planning Authorities, the Forestry Commission, and industry stakeholders to balance environmental and economic land-use outcomes.

		• Develop shared forums to align timber production needs with biodiversity targets, ensuring collaborative decision-making. **14.4 Using Data to Improve Policy Coherence** • Leverage LNRS and forestry mapping data to evaluate national policy decisions, ensuring a data-driven approach to land-use planning. • Enable real-time data sharing with local leaders, improving policy coherence and democratic accountability.
15	**Would including additional major landowners and land managers in the Adaptation Reporting Power process (see above) support adaptation knowledge sharing? Please give any reasons or alternative suggestions**	**Response to Question 15** At present, it is too soon for a wider rollout of the Adaptation Reporting Power (ARP) process to include major landowners and land managers. The Forestry Commission's current submission provides a well-grounded and structured input, ensuring adaptation priorities are effectively represented. **15.1 Challenges of Expanding the ARP Process** • Private landowners and their representative organisations are not currently resourced to provide technical responses comparable to the Forestry Commission's structured assessments. • Premature expansion could lead to fragmented reporting, risking inconsistencies in adaptation strategies across sectors. Survey feedback from woodland owners reinforced concerns that many landowners lack the technical capacity to engage effectively in adaptation reporting, highlighting the need for structured support before any wider inclusion is considered. **15.2 Long-Term Potential for Private Sector Engagement** • Over time, incorporating private landowners and forestry stakeholders into the ARP process could enhance adaptation knowledge sharing. • A broader reporting framework could foster innovation, diversify climate adaptation insights, and strengthen resilience across land-use sectors.

| 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.
● **Providing better information on local climate impacts to inform local decision making and strategies (for example, translating UK Climate Projections into what these mean in terms of on-the-ground impacts on farming, buildings, communities and nature)**
● **Providing improved tools and guidance for turning climate information into tangible actions (for example, how to produce an adaptation plan for different sectors)**
● **Developing and sharing clearer objectives and resilience standards (for example, a clear picture and standards of good practice for each sector under a 2°C climate scenario)**
● **Supporting the right actions in the right places in a changing climate (for example, prioritising incentives for sustainable land uses where they will be most resilient to** | **Response to Question 16**
To support landowners, land managers, and communities in preparing for climate change, the Government should prioritise clear local climate impact data, improved adaptation tools, species diversity for woodland resilience, and educational initiatives delivered through public-private partnerships.

16.1 Delivering Better Information on Local Climate Impacts

● Providing clear, location-specific climate projections would empower land managers to develop tailored adaptation plans for their specific landscapes.
● The Forest Research Ecological Site Classification and climate matching tools already support woodland sector decision-making, but greater accessibility and awareness are needed.

Survey feedback from woodland owners reinforced that practical climate data tailored to specific regions remains underutilised, highlighting the need for wider dissemination and integration into decision-making frameworks.

16.2 Improving Tools and Guidance for Climate Adaptation

● Practical frameworks on how to develop adaptation plans should be made more accessible across land-use sectors, ensuring forestry, agriculture, and conservation benefit from climate resilience planning.
● Decision-support tools must integrate forestry-specific considerations, such as species selection and site conditions under future climate scenarios.

16.3 Diversifying Tree Species for Woodland Resilience

● Policies such as [Keepers of Time](#) and the 1985 Broadleaf Policy focus on preservation, but a wider palette of tree species is needed to create resilient and financially sustainable woodlands.
● Forestry policy should promote species diversity, ensuring woodlands can adapt to changing climates while maintaining productivity.

Survey responses from timber processors reinforced that current conservation frameworks do not fully address future forestry resilience, reinforcing the need for policy adaptation to support sustainable woodland expansion. |

	climate change) ● **Other (please specify)**	**16.4 Expanding Educational Initiatives Through Public-Private Partnerships** ● Workshops tailored to specific land-use sectors should be held nationwide, helping land managers understand how climate impacts affect their land and long-term sustainability. ● These events do not need to be government-led—land-based organisations could take a leading role in delivering training and knowledge-sharing. ● A centralised database of successful adaptation actions could enable knowledge-sharing and replication of best practices, ensuring scalable and effective climate resilience strategies. **16.5 Ensuring Long-Term Adaptation Plan Reviews** ● Climate adaptation plans should undergo regular reviews and updates, ensuring effectiveness as new tools and data emerge. ● Public-private collaboration can allow civil servants to focus on policy priorities while industry-led initiatives drive adaptation programme implementation.
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?** ● **Updating existing Government tools, apps, portals or websites** ● **Changes to support use through private sector tools, apps or websites** ● **Bringing data from different sectors together into common portals or maps** ● **Increasing consistency across spatial and land datasets** ● **More explanation or support for using existing tools, apps or websites**	**Response to Question 17** To increase the value and accessibility of Government spatial data in decision-making, priorities should focus on modernising tools, consolidating datasets, ensuring consistency, and expanding open-access data. **17.1 Improving Existing Tools and Portals** ● Platforms such as MAGIC's database require a redesign to enhance usability, ensuring a more straightforward and user-friendly experience. ● Adding interactive maps and intuitive navigation features would improve accessibility, making information more practical and actionable. ● Developing interrogable data layers within MAGIC to display national spatial priorities would enhance decision-making by providing clearer insights into key land-use objectives. Survey feedback Confor members highlighted concerns that current mapping tools are difficult to navigate, reinforcing the need for technical upgrades to enhance functionality. **17.2 Creating a Central Hub for Spatial Data**

	• **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** • **Other (please specify)**	• Government datasets should be centralised into a single platform, reducing complexity for users searching for key land-use information. • A unified data hub would improve efficiency, ensuring planners and decision-makers spend less time navigating multiple fragmented systems. **17.3 Standardising Data Formats and Terminology** • Inconsistent formatting and varying terminologies across Government datasets make it difficult to compare and integrate spatial information. • Standardising presentation methods would ensure seamless interoperability, making it quicker and easier to interpret data. Survey responses from woodland owners reinforced concerns that differences in dataset structures slow down planning processes, highlighting the need for greater uniformity in data management. **17.4 Expanding Open Access to High-Quality Spatial Data** • Making more spatial datasets freely available would foster cross-sector collaboration and innovation, enabling stakeholders to utilise data for land-use optimisation. • Though collecting, organising, and maintaining large datasets requires substantial investment, increasing accessibility would ultimately drive better decision-making across industries.
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.** • **Development and planning: such as environmental survey data** • **Farming: such as supply chain data and carbon or nature baseline measurements** • **Environment and forestry: such as**	**Response to Question 18** Improving spatial data capture and management requires addressing inefficiencies within the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) land classification system, which is currently not fit for purpose and overly complex. Streamlining this system will be essential to ensure land-use incentives run smoothly, particularly as land transitions across sectors. **18.1 Addressing RPA Land Classification Complexity** • The current RPA land classification system creates unnecessary barriers to effective land management and planning.

		local and volunteer-collected environmental records • **Recreation and access: such as accessible land and route data** • **Government-published land and agricultural statistics**	• As land use changes over time, this complexity will only worsen, making it harder for landowners to adapt to new environmental and economic realities. Survey feedback from forestry agents reinforced that many land managers struggle with bureaucratic inefficiencies in land classification, highlighting the need for simplified frameworks. **18.2 Potential Solution: Self-Certification with Online Mapping** • A self-certification model using online mapping for land-use change could help reduce administrative burdens, making classification more dynamic and responsive to real-world conditions. • This approach would allow landowners to update land-use data more efficiently, reducing delays in grant applications and incentive delivery. Survey responses from woodland owners indicated frustration with RPA processing delays, reinforcing the need for faster, more adaptive land classification systems. **18.3 Strategic Alignment with Land-Use Incentives** • Any classification reforms should align with climate adaptation goals, afforestation targets, and multi-functional land management priorities. • A streamlined RPA system would ensure funding supports productive land transitions, rather than being hindered by excessive administrative processes.
19	**What improvements are needed to the quality, availability and accessibility of ALC data to support effective land use decisions?**	**Response to Question 19** To improve the quality, availability, and accessibility of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data, the Government should focus on GIS integration, prioritising spatial database reliability, leveraging geological expertise with caution, and improving accessibility and transparency. **19.1 Integrating ALC Data with GIS Platforms** • Ensure ALC classifications are accessible via GIS mapping tools, incorporating Protected Landscapes and forestry data, such as low-sensitivity mapping by the Forestry Commission. • GIS integration would create a comprehensive decision-making tool, accommodating both agricultural and forestry considerations.

		19.2 Prioritising a Robust Spatial Database for Land Classification • Develop a reliable spatial database using England's geological knowledge, ensuring consistent, evidence-based land-use assessments. • Avoid costly and potentially biased field-level refinements, ensuring classification methods reflect broad-scale environmental patterns. **19.3 Leveraging Geological Knowledge with Caution** • England's extensive geological research can be useful in predicting soil types and agricultural productivity, but caution is needed, as historical soil maps were never fully completed. • While geological data can provide valuable insights, a reliance on incomplete soil mapping could introduce classification uncertainties, requiring supplementary ground-truthing and validation. Survey responses from woodland owners highlighted concerns about gaps in soil mapping, reinforcing the need for careful integration of geological predictions into land classification decisions. **19.4 Improving Data Accessibility and Transparency** • Make ALC classifications centrally available via a user-friendly platform, ensuring landowners and policymakers can easily retrieve relevant land-use data. • Standardise classification methodologies and oversight processes to prevent subjective biases, ensuring transparent and evidence-based decision-making.
20	**Which sources of spatial data should Government consider making free or easier to access, including via open licensing, to increase their potential benefit?**	**Response to Question 20** To maximise the potential benefits of spatial data, the Government should prioritise open access to general designations and boundary information, ensuring transparency while recognising the cost considerations associated with maintaining high-quality datasets. **20.1 Balancing Open Access with Funding Considerations** • Spatial data serves a broad range of users, including corporate professionals, urban planners, and private landowners, supporting business operations, environmental management, and policy decisions.

- While freely accessible datasets promote transparency and innovation, charging users for high-quality data provides a revenue stream to support data preparation and maintenance.

20.2 Making Key Spatial Datasets More Accessible

- Land ownership records – Ensuring greater accessibility to publicly available datasets would support land-use planning and conservation efforts.
- Ordnance Survey maps – Streamlining access to boundary and designation information would improve mapping and infrastructure decisions.
- Environmental classifications – Open licensing would support biodiversity monitoring and sustainable land management.
- Transport infrastructure data – Making connectivity maps more accessible would improve rural planning and sustainable logistics.

20.3 Enhancing Accessibility to Forestry-Related Spatial Data

- National Forest Inventory woodland map – Open access to this dataset would support woodland creation projects, carbon sequestration planning, and afforestation strategies.
- Tree species and habitat datasets – Ensuring greater accessibility would improve forest biodiversity assessments and long-term woodland resilience.
- These datasets, managed by the Forestry Commission, hold immense value for conservation and forestry policy development.

Survey responses from forestry agents reinforced that better access to forestry spatial data would reduce planning barriers, highlighting the need for broader availability of key datasets.

20.4 Encouraging Public Participation and Innovation

- Open access to spatial data reduces barriers, fosters innovation, and encourages collaboration, enabling co-design of land-use policy among industry, government, and communities.
- Interactive mapping tools could further enhance user engagement, ensuring spatial data is practical and easy to interpret.

References:

- [Forestry Commission Datasets – GOV.UK](#)

		• [Forestry Open Data Portal – ArcGIS](#)
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.** ● **Development and planning** ● **Farming** ● **Environment and forestry** ● **Recreation and access** ● **Other (please specify)**	**Response to Question 21** The forestry sector in England faces urgent challenges, including an aging workforce, declining educational uptake, and critical skills shortages. By 2030, an additional 2,500 skilled workers will be required to meet the Government's 2050 woodland cover target of 16.5% land cover. **21.1 Key Gaps in Forestry Sector Capacity** • Workforce Recruitment and Retention – A lack of new entrants has created challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled foresters, supervisors, and operatives. • Training and Education – Forestry-related education at further and higher levels has declined, further exacerbating the skills shortage. • Specialist Expertise – There are shortages in woodland management, biodiversity enhancement, and climate-resilient forestry. Survey feedback from forestry stakeholders reinforced that workforce development and sector capacity-building require urgent intervention, highlighting the need for greater investment in skills and education. **21.2 Forestry as a Standalone Category in Policy Frameworks** • Despite occupying just over 10% of England's land, forestry faces unique challenges and should be considered separately from environmental policy. • The sector plays a pivotal role in climate and biodiversity strategies, timber production, and the rural economy, requiring targeted policy support. • Workforce development, sustainable woodland management, and skills shortages must be addressed systematically, rather than being grouped under broader environmental categories. **21.3 Suggestions to Address Forestry Skills Gaps** • Dedicated Initiatives – The Forestry Sector Skills Plan and Forestry Training Service led by Confor are crucial steps. Through the Sector Skills Plan we must

		continue to expand apprenticeship schemes at Levels 3 and 6 to attract and train new talent. ● Educational Outreach – Collaboration with schools (via STEM), universities, and community organisations can raise awareness and inspire younger generations to pursue forestry careers. ● Increased Funding – Securing additional financial support would make forestry education and training programs more accessible, improving pathways into the industry. ● Partnerships – Strengthening partnerships with educational institutions and ENGOs can promote sustainable forestry and provide hands-on experience for trainees. ● Sector Promotion – Campaigns showcasing forestry as a rewarding and impactful career would highlight the role of skilled professionals in climate change mitigation and national tree targets. Survey responses from forestry agents reinforced that government-backed education funding and workforce promotion are essential to securing the long-term sustainability of the industry.
22	How could the sharing of best practice in innovative land use practices and management be improved?	**Response to Question 22** Improving the sharing of best practice in innovative land-use management requires a balanced approach between practical, local engagement and scalable digital solutions, ensuring wide and meaningful impact across the UK and beyond. **22.1 Collaborative Forestry Networks** ● Regional and national hubs should be established to allow foresters, researchers, land managers, and policymakers to engage directly. ● The Tree Planting Taskforce and cross-nation collaborations provide a platform for knowledge exchange across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, fostering joint progress on afforestation, biodiversity, and rural economy strategies. ● Strengthening links with international forestry networks would ensure England can learn from proven approaches in sustainable timber production, afforestation, and biodiversity conservation. Survey feedback from woodland owners reinforced that peer-to-peer engagement across UK and international forestry professionals improves knowledge retention, highlighting the value of cross-border learning initiatives.

		22.2 Digital Tools for Forestry Knowledge Sharing
		• Online platforms tailored to the land management sector should be developed or enhanced, ensuring wider accessibility to industry expertise. • These platforms could include GIS tools, case studies, success stories, and real-time data-sharing features, helping land managers bridge gaps in knowledge and implementation. **22.3 Two-Way Knowledge Exchange, Including UK-Wide and Global Best Practices** • Encouraging ongoing dialogue between researchers and forestry practitioners would ensure real-world challenges are integrated into scientific research, fostering co-created solutions. • Sharing expertise across the UK nations—leveraging successful forestry initiatives from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland—could ensure England adopts proven strategies that align with national objectives. • England should also engage with global forestry leaders, learning from countries with established best practices in sustainable land management, afforestation techniques, and biodiversity protection, while adapting those lessons to domestic priorities.
23	**Should a Land Use Framework for England be updated periodically, and if so, how frequently should this occur?** • **Yes, every 5 years** • **Yes, every 3 years** • **Yes, another frequency or approach. Please provide details. A 10-year primary update cycle with a 5-year mid-point review** • **No** • **I don't know**	**Response to Question 23** A 10-year primary update cycle with a 5-year mid-point review offers a balanced approach, ensuring long-term stability while maintaining adaptability. This structure can allow meaningful progress to develop, while the mid-point review provides flexibility to adjust to emerging challenges, innovations, and policy shifts. **23.1 Ensuring Policy Stability While Maintaining Responsiveness** • A 10-year cycle allows for substantial advancements in afforestation, biodiversity strategies, and sustainable land management, ensuring the framework remains strategic and forward-looking. • The 5-year mid-point review would serve as a structured check-in, assessing progress against targets, addressing emerging challenges, and incorporating urgent innovations without requiring a full update. • This approach promotes resource efficiency, reducing the burden on stakeholders while ensuring policies remain relevant and aligned with evolving priorities.

		23.2 In Practice • Forestry England uses this review cycle across all its Forest Plans, ensuring structured yet flexible long-term management of the nation's forests. • Adopting a similar model for England's Land Use Framework could provide consistency across forestry and land management policies, reinforcing national objectives while allowing targeted refinements over time. **Reference:** • [Forestry England – Forest Planning](#)
24	**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed areas above? Please include comments or suggestions with your answer.** **[Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree / I don't know]**	**Response to Question 24** Neither agree nor disagree – While we do not take a definitive stance, Scotland's land use review provides valuable lessons that should be considered in shaping England's framework. It would be expected that Defra has been analysing these insights, but certain challenges in Scotland's approach highlight the need for regional flexibility, addressing power imbalances, and ensuring data accessibility. These factors can inform a more balanced and effective implementation of the proposed areas. **24.1 Key Considerations from Scotland's Land Use Review** • Strategic Oversight Function – A long-term vision is crucial, but Scotland's experience with Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUPs) underscores the importance of regional flexibility. A fully centralised oversight model risks overlooking local challenges and stakeholder concerns. • Cross-Governmental Spatial Analysis Function – Scotland's efforts to enhance transparency in land ownership data revealed issues with accessibility and data standardisation. England must consider similar challenges, ensuring timely, evidence-based insights are delivered. • Embedding Land Use in Strategic Decisions – Scotland's land use strategies focused on adaptability, ensuring responses aligned with evolving socio-economic and environmental conditions. Embedding land use in strategic decision-making risks creating overly rigid frameworks, limiting flexibility. • Open Policy-Making Processes – While collaboration with research organisations is beneficial, Scotland's public interest tests for significant land holdings highlight the importance of addressing power imbalances. Without mechanisms for equitable

		stakeholder representation, policy decisions may unintentionally favour dominant groups. **References** [Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy 2021–2026 – Scottish Government](#) [The Future of Scotland's Land Use – Scottish Environment LINK](#) [Summary of Research and Recommendations – Scottish Land Commission (March 2024)](#)

Appendix One – Summary of Consultation questions

1. **Assessment of Land Use Change** – Does the assessment accurately reflect key areas for improvement in land use strategy?
2. **Land Use Principles** – Do the proposed principles provide a strong framework for sustainable land management?
3. **Decision-Makers Beyond Government** – Which other stakeholders would benefit from applying these land use principles?
4. **Supporting Agricultural Decision-Makers** – What policies, incentives, and changes are needed to help farmers implement land use changes while maintaining food production?
5. **Supporting Multifunctional Land Uses** – How can Government assist land managers in integrating agroforestry and woodland creation?
6. **Spatially Targeted Incentives** – What factors should the Government consider when identifying suitable locations for incentives?
7. **Steering Land Use Changes** – What strategies can support land managers in transitioning land use to achieve greater benefits with lower trade-offs?
8. **Reducing Displacement of Food Production and Environmental Impacts** – What measures can mitigate the risk of shifting food production abroad?
9. **Increasing Private Investment in Land Use Changes** – What steps can encourage private sector investment in sustainable land-use projects?
10. **Accelerating 30by30 Delivery** – What policies and resources are needed to strengthen Protected Landscapes and nature recovery?
11. **Supporting Nature and Food Production in Urban Landscapes** – How can land-use strategies enhance biodiversity and food security in urban areas?
12. **Integrating Land Use into Development and Infrastructure Planning** – How can spatial plans optimise co-benefits while managing trade-offs?
13. **Transport Planning and Land Use** – How can local authorities better align transport planning with land-use priorities?
14. **Improving Coordination Across Land-Use Plans and Strategies** – What approaches can enhance collaboration between sectors and regions?
15. **Expanding the Adaptation Reporting Power Process** – Should more landowners and land managers participate in adaptation reporting?
16. **Climate Change Preparedness for Landowners and Communities** – What activities should be prioritised to support climate resilience?
17. **Making Spatial Data More Accessible** – What changes would improve the usability and availability of Government spatial data?
18. **Enhancing Spatial Data for Specific Sectors** – How can data improvements support better land-use decisions in development, farming, forestry, and recreation?
19. **Improving Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Data** – What updates are needed to enhance accuracy and accessibility?
20. **Increasing Open Access to Spatial Data** – Which datasets should the Government make freely available to maximise benefits?
21. **Addressing Land Management Skills Gaps** – What workforce challenges exist, and how can skills development be improved?
22. **Improving Knowledge-Sharing in Innovative Land Management** – How can best practices be shared more effectively?
23. **Updating the Land Use Framework for England** – How frequently should updates occur?
24. **Agreement with Proposed Areas for England's Land Use Framework** – Do the proposed areas align with best practices, or should adjustments be made?

Appendix Two – Confor Consultation Response Summary (Key Points)

Question 1: Assessment of Land Use Change

Response: Strongly Disagree

- **Forests are overlooked in the framework** – The focus on the 19% agricultural land-use change to improve climatic and environmental benefits sidelines forestry and woodlands.
- **Forests provide economic value beyond conservation** – Productive forestry supports timber production, sustainable construction, and rural economies.
- **Policies should boost productive woodland cover** – Increased support for commercial forestry is needed to align with climate and biodiversity goals.
- **UK timber security is vulnerable** – The heavy reliance on imported timber (73%) exposes the country to supply chain risks.
- **Unmanaged woodlands need attention** – 42% of England's woodlands remain unmanaged, reducing their ecological and economic potential.

Question 2: Land Use Principles

Response: Agree

- **Ensure land-use principles support climate resilience** – Strategies must integrate sustainability across agriculture, forestry, and urban planning.
- **Strengthen woodland and forestry recognition** – Managed forests contribute to carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and sustainable economic development.
- **Promote timber as a key sustainable construction material** – Reducing reliance on high-carbon building materials aligns with net-zero goals.
- **Improve oversight of irreversible land-use changes** – Misclassification and short-term decisions can undermine long-term environmental stability.
- **Encourage multifunctional land use** – Balancing conservation, food security, and commercial forestry ensures economic and ecological resilience.

Question 3: Decision-Makers Beyond Government

Response: Identified key stakeholders

- **Local authorities and planning bodies** – Responsible for housing, transport, and infrastructure.
- **Landowners, farmers, and forestry managers** – Key players in conservation and sustainable land use.
- **Construction firms and developers** – Should integrate green spaces and sustainable materials.
- **Renewable energy sector** – Optimising site selection for energy projects.
- **Research institutions and NGOs** – Providing data-driven policy insights.

Question 4: Supporting Agricultural Decision-Makers

Response: Key policies, incentives, and changes needed

- **Strengthen financial incentives for land-use transitions** – Grants should compensate farmers for income shifts while encouraging sustainable practices.
- **Simplify access to funding schemes** – Streamlining application processes for Countryside Stewardship and EWCO ensures better uptake.
- **Improve advisory services for farmers** – Offering expert guidance on integrating woodland creation, agroforestry, and soil health improvements.
- **Ensure alignment across policies** – Reducing conflicts between agricultural and environmental schemes prevents inefficiencies in land management.

Question 5: Supporting Multifunctional Land Uses

Response: Encouraging tree and woodland integration on farmland

- **Defining multifunctional land uses** – Improving funding allocation based on ecosystem benefits.
- **Measurable contracts with land managers** – Setting clear targets for sustainability and biodiversity.
- **Support for tree establishment on farms** – Ensuring long-term maintenance and resilience.
- **Skills development and training** – Expanding forestry knowledge in agricultural education.
- **Making sustainable land uses profitable** – Aligning grants with timber, tree crops, and carbon markets.

Question 6: Spatially Targeted Incentives

Response: Considerations for identifying suitable locations

- **Define priority areas** – Focus on biodiversity, carbon storage, and sustainable food production.
- **Avoid blanket classifications** – Ensure incentives support sustainable forestry while preserving sensitive landscapes.
- **Balance productivity and sustainability** – Account for local economic and environmental needs.
- **Address urban and rural priorities** – Improve air quality and local food production in cities while supporting jobs in rural areas.
- **Ensure regional flexibility** – Adapt land-use incentives based on changing environmental and community needs.

Question 7: Steering Land Use Changes for Greater Benefits and Lower Trade-Offs

Response: Strategic approaches for land managers

- **Use spatial mapping to guide decisions** – Identifying areas suitable for woodland creation, regenerative farming, and biodiversity restoration.
- **Strengthen advisory support for landowners** – Provide technical expertise to help balance food production, conservation, and sustainable land use.
- **Target financial incentives effectively** – Ensure grants and funding schemes support long-term sustainability rather than short-term land-use shifts.
- **Expand access to carbon markets** – Support landowners in benefiting from voluntary carbon offset schemes to drive sustainable land management

Question 8: Reducing Displacement of Food Production and Environmental Impacts Abroad

Response: Key measures to mitigate displacement risks

- **Monitor land use changes** – Use satellite tracking to assess domestic food production.
- **Educate consumers** – Raise awareness of the environmental impact of imported food and timber.
- **Strengthen domestic markets** – Support local food production to reduce reliance on imports.
- **Account for displacement in planning** – Integrate food security into land-use strategies.
- **Protect prime agricultural land** – Prevent irreversible changes that harm food production capacity.

Question 9: Increasing Private Investment in Land Use Changes

Response: Key government actions to encourage investment

- **Expand financial incentives** – Introduce tax reliefs, grants, and subsidies for nature-based projects.
- **Improve market mechanisms** – Strengthen Biodiversity Net Gain and Woodland Carbon Code investment models.
- **Align regulations with investment goals** – Strengthen enforcement of the Polluter Pays principle.
- **Centralise regulatory guidance** – Create a unified portal for land-use and conservation policies.
- **Reduce restrictions on forestry investment** – Allow flexibility in fast-growing tree species and land-use reversion options.

Question 10: Accelerating 30by30 Delivery and Strengthening Protected Landscapes

Response: Key measures to support nature recovery

- **Recognise the role of managed woodlands** – Ensure productive forestry is included in conservation policies alongside rewilding efforts.
- **Improve the management of broadleaved woodlands** – Address the 42% of unmanaged woodlands to enhance biodiversity and long-term resilience.
- **Expand woodland creation strategically** – Incentivise afforestation in areas suited for forestry while maintaining agricultural balance.
- **Restore ancient woodlands with targeted funding** – Support ecological restoration projects for long-term habitat stability.
- **Enable greater species diversity in planting schemes** – Ensure climate-adaptive woodlands are resilient while maintaining productivity.

Question 11: Supporting Nature and Food Production in Urban Landscapes

Response: Key strategies to enhance biodiversity and food security

- **Revitalise community gardens and food forests** – Expand allotments with fruit and nut trees for local food production and wildlife habitats.
- **Create urban biodiversity corridors** – Strengthen green networks with hedgerows, shelter belts, and tree-lined streets.
- **Expand urban tree planting and timber-producing forestry** – Support managed woodlands that balance environmental and economic benefits.
- **Enhance public engagement and woodland access** – Improve transport links to green spaces and integrate forestry education in schools.
- **Prioritise green infrastructure in planning** – Ensure new developments support biodiversity and sustainability.

Question 12: Integrating Land Use into Development and Infrastructure Planning

Response: Key government strategies for optimising co-benefits

- **Embed low-carbon construction and forestry goals** – Prioritise timber in building projects via the Timber in Construction Roadmap.
- **Develop integrated spatial planning strategies** – Balance housing, transport, and environmental needs with natural capital mapping.
- **Promote nature-based solutions** – Incorporate wetlands, urban forestry, and woodland corridors into spatial plans.
- **Strengthen collaborative approaches** – Engage local authorities, foresters, and industry experts to align sustainability and development goals.
- **Use strategic data tools** – Leverage mapping frameworks like the Land Use Framework to identify priority areas.

Question 13: Transport Planning and Land Use

Response: Key improvements for aligning transport strategies with land-use priorities

- **Enhance transport infrastructure for forestry** – Strengthen rural roads, bridges, and haulage routes to support sustainable timber production.
- **Improve road network resilience** – Invest in safe and efficient rural transport for timber logistics.
- **Encourage modal shifts** – Promote rail and water-based transport to reduce road congestion and environmental strain.
- **Use spatial data for transport planning** – Map timber yields and infrastructure needs for long-term optimisation.
- **Strengthen cross-sector collaboration** – Align transport policies with forestry and agricultural stakeholders to balance trade-offs.

Question 14: Improving Coordination Across Land-Use Plans and Strategies

Response: Key measures for better local and regional collaboration

- **Create an integrated planning system** – Unify frameworks like Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) for streamlined land-use decisions.
- **Incorporate forestry considerations** – Ensure timber processing, biodiversity, and economic land-use factors are included in planning tools.
- **Strengthen cross-sector partnerships** – Connect local authorities, foresters, and industry experts to create balanced strategies.
- **Use real-time data sharing** – Enhance land-use planning decisions by providing timely and transparent access to spatial data.
- **Ensure policy consistency** – Improve alignment between environmental, agricultural, and forestry policies to reduce fragmentation.

Question 15: Expanding the Adaptation Reporting Power Process

Response: Considerations for broader participation

- **Challenges of expanding ARP** – Private landowners may lack resources for structured climate adaptation reporting.
- **Avoid fragmented reporting** – Premature expansion could create inconsistencies in adaptation strategies.
- **Explore long-term private sector engagement** – Future participation could foster better knowledge-sharing.
- **Encourage innovation in climate adaptation** – Broader reporting frameworks may strengthen resilience strategies.
- **Provide structured support** – Before expanding participation, landowners need guidance and resources.

Question 16: Supporting Climate Adaptation for Landowners and Communities

Response: Key government actions to strengthen climate resilience

- **Provide location-specific climate data** – Ensure land managers receive regional adaptation insights.
- **Improve tools for climate planning** – Offer frameworks for landowners to develop sector-specific resilience strategies.
- **Encourage diverse tree planting for climate resilience** – Promote varied species selection for adaptive woodlands.
- **Expand educational programs and public-private partnerships** – Facilitate nationwide workshops and resource-sharing.
- **Review long-term adaptation plans** – Periodically assess effectiveness and adjust strategies.

Question 17: Making Government Spatial Data More Accessible

Response: Key improvements to usability and availability

- **Enhance government mapping tools** – Upgrade MAGIC and similar platforms for more intuitive navigation and interactive maps.
- **Create a centralised spatial data hub** – Consolidate datasets in a single, user-friendly platform for streamlined access.
- **Standardise data formats and terminology** – Improve consistency across datasets to enable easier integration and interpretation.
- **Expand open access to high-quality spatial data** – Increase the availability of free datasets to support land-use planning and research.
- **Utilise geospatial identifiers for better mapping** – Incorporate Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) and INSPIRE IDs to improve accessibility.

Question 18: Enhancing Spatial Data for Key Land Sectors

Response: Key upgrades to data capture and management

- **Simplify RPA land classification** – Reduce bureaucratic barriers to effective land planning.
- **Introduce self-certification with online mapping** – Enable landowners to update classifications with less administrative burden.
- **Ensure alignment with incentives** – Land-use data should support climate adaptation and multifunctional land management.
- **Improve accessibility to environmental records** – Facilitate public and volunteer-collected environmental data sharing.
- **Expand farming and supply chain data** – Strengthen carbon and nature baseline tracking for better land-use decisions.

Question 19: Improving Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Data

Response: Key updates for accuracy and accessibility

- **Integrate ALC data with GIS platforms** – Enhance usability with mapping tools and forestry overlays.
- **Develop a reliable spatial database** – Use geological insights for consistent classification.
- **Supplement incomplete soil maps** – Implement ground-truthing for improved accuracy.
- **Standardise classification methods** – Reduce inconsistencies across different datasets.
- **Improve public accessibility** – Make ALC data easily available for land-use decision-makers.

Question 20: Expanding Open Access to Spatial Data

Response: Key government actions to increase accessibility

- **Balance open licensing with funding sustainability** – Provide free access while maintaining quality datasets.
- **Increase transparency in land ownership records** – Improve accessibility to property and boundary information.
- **Enhance access to forestry-related spatial data** – Open datasets for woodland inventory, species mapping, and habitat records.
- **Encourage collaboration and innovation** – Open licensing fosters industry partnerships and efficient land management.
- **Develop interactive mapping tools** – Improve usability with better visualisation features.

Question 21: Addressing Land Management Capacity and Skills Gaps

Response: Key workforce challenges and solutions

- **Shortages in forestry professionals** – Urgent need for recruitment in timber production, conservation, and management roles.
- **Need for specialised expertise** – Woodland management, biodiversity, and climate-resilient forestry require targeted skills development.
- **Expanding apprenticeship schemes** – Levels 3 and 6 apprenticeships must be increased to build workforce capacity.
- **Strengthening partnerships with schools and universities** – STEM outreach and funding would attract new talent into forestry careers.

Question 22: Improving Knowledge-Sharing in Innovative Land Management

Response: Strengthening best practice exchange

- **Establish regional and national forestry hubs** – Encourage direct engagement between policymakers, land managers, and researchers.
- **Develop digital knowledge-sharing platforms** – Improve accessibility with GIS tools, success stories, and real-time data-sharing features.
- **Enhance cross-nation collaboration** – Share afforestation strategies between England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- **Leverage global best practices** – Learn from international leaders in sustainable land management and climate adaptation.

Question 23: Updating the Land Use Framework for England

Response: Recommended update cycle

- **10-year primary update with a 5-year mid-point review** – Allows long-term stability while maintaining flexibility.
- **Ensures strategic oversight while adapting to new challenges** – Avoids frequent disruptions to policy goals.
- **Balances forestry, biodiversity, and land-use planning needs** – Structured updates ensure alignment across sectors.
- **Mirrors Forestry England's review cycle** – Provides consistency in approach for land-use planning.
- **Encourages evidence-based assessments** – Regular evaluations allow refinement of national objectives.

Question 24: Agreement with Proposed Areas for England's Land Use Framework

Response: Neither agree nor disagree

- **Lessons from Scotland's land use review should inform England's approach** – Addressing flexibility and accessibility concerns.
- **Strategic oversight must balance national and regional needs** – A centralised model may overlook local challenges.
- **Cross-governmental spatial analysis needs improvements** – Accessibility and standardisation of land ownership data must be considered.
- **Embedding land use in strategic decisions requires adaptability** – Rigid frameworks risk limiting long-term flexibility.
- **Equitable policy-making is essential** – Scotland's public interest tests highlight the importance of addressing power imbalances in land use policy.