

North Yorkshire Council

Environment Executive Members

31 July 2025

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Expanding the Role of the Private Sector in Nature Recovery, Call for Evidence

Report of the Assistant Director – Environment and Transport

1.0 PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

- 1.1 To provide a summary and overview of our proposed response in relation to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Expanding the Role of the Private Sector in Nature Recovery, call for evidence.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 12 June 2025, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published Expanding the Role of the Private Sector in Nature Recovery, Call for Evidence. The purpose is to seek evidence and insights on how to support and incentivise business sectors to invest in nature recovery, especially those sectors which impact or depend on nature the most.
- 2.2 The call for evidence is seeking views on how to effectively use policy measures to increase business investment in the natural environment, secure the economic benefits of environmental protection and innovation, and identify and manage any associated risks to businesses, communities, or consumers.
- 2.3 It is estimated that over half of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is dependent upon nature and the services it provides, powering industries, safeguarding food security and protecting public health. The Office of National Statistics have valued the stock of Natural Capital in England (excluding oil and gas) at £1.4 trillion, and the annual benefits from these assets at over £35 billion.
- 2.4 The decline in UK nature creates risks to the UK economy and UK companies. Nature related risks could cause losses to UKGDP of £150 to £300 billion by 2030. The impacts on GDP will be caused by reduced productivity, fragmented supply chains, business disruption and increased insurance costs.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 There are two sections to the call of evidence. The first clarifies the role of the environment in the government's economic growth mission and the economic case for business investment in the natural environment. It seeks views on four objectives which could shape future policy design.
- 3.1.1 The second section seeks views on increasing investment in specific environmental outcomes: clean and plentiful water, nature-based carbon reductions, access to nature, flood management, sustainable land use and food production and international nature finance.

- 3.2 Objective one: Economic Growth. The government is seeking views on how to improve business productivity, strengthen the wider economy through natural capital, and encourage the growth of green industries and nature-based markets.
- 3.3 Objective two: Business Certainty. The government is requesting feedback on how to provide long-term policy and regulatory certainty to support business investment and a fair, cost effective transition to a nature-positive economy.
- 3.4 Objective three: Innovation. The government is seeking views on how to design flexible, outcome-focused environmental policies that avoid unnecessary burdens while enabling private sector innovation and effective nature protection.
- 3.5 Objective four: Fair and proportionate burden sharing. The government is requesting opinions on fair and efficient ways to determine which sectors should contribute more to environmental restoration, including applying the polluter pays, beneficiary pays and fair burden sharing principles.
- 3.6 Outcome one: Clean and plentiful water – cleaning up rivers. The government is gathering evidence on how to attract investment in nature-based, catchment-level water management to build a resilient, sustainable water system that supports biodiversity, economic growth, housing, and climate goals.
- 3.7 Outcome two: Nature-based carbon reductions and removals. The government is inviting views on scaling up investment in high-integrity nature-based carbon markets, including the Woodland and Peatland Codes, exploring their inclusion in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme, and developing standards for other carbon sequestering habitats to boost private investment and support net zero goals.
- 3.8 Outcome three: Access to Nature – supporting tourism, recreation, and wellbeing. The government are seeking opinions on how to attract greater and more diverse funding into England’s Protected Landscapes, including ways to improve access to green and blue spaces.
- 3.9 Outcome four: Flood Management. The government is requesting evidence on how to increase private investment in flood and coastal management to reduce flood risk, protect infrastructure and deliver multiple environmental benefits.
- 3.10 Outcome five: Sustainable land use and food production. The government are seeking views on introducing incentives across the agri-food supply chain to support nature and climate goals, ensuring farmers are fairly rewarded from sustainable practices.
- 3.11 Outcome six: International nature finance and access and benefit sharing. The government is asking for opinions on how to mobilise private finance and support UK businesses in addressing global nature-related risks, aligning with international biodiversity goals, and promoting high-integrity nature markets.

4.0 SUMMARY OF CALL FOR EVIDENCE RESPONSE

4.1 The Call for Evidence is seeking views on expanding the role of the private sector in nature recovery. This could have a potential impact on NYC policy and service delivery. Hence, internal consultation has been undertaken with officers in both the Community Development Directorate, and the Environment Directorate. These are the following service areas who have been consulted:

- Planning Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Climate Change

- Natural Capital and Ecology
- Sustainability and Environment

4.2 The call for evidence is wide ranging including technical questions covering the specific environmental outcomes: clean and plentiful water, nature-based carbon reductions, access to nature, flood management and sustainable land use and food production. It also includes broader questions on future policy design and development to align with both international environmental goals and domestic environmental targets under the Environmental Protection Act. To read the full call for evidence please refer to Appendix A.

4.3 Objectives one to four - Economic Growth, Business Certainty, Innovation, and Fair and Proportionate burden sharing – are strongly supported by the council. Together they provide a comprehensive framework that reflects the complexity of scaling up private investment in nature recovery. However, we recommend the inclusion of additional objectives such as environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and good governance. These elements are essential to ensure that economic growth does not deplete natural resources, promotes equal access, and upholds regulatory standards and best practice.

4.4 Outcome 1: Clean and plentiful Water – cleaning up rivers, lakes, and seas. We have identified four barriers for sectors dependant on the water system, economic, institutional, technical, and social. To address these, we recommend the introduction of clear guidance, effective governance, and consistent standards, supported by education and training.

4.4.1 We also highlight the potential for utility companies to invest in projects that improve water quality, reduce flood risks and support mitigation efforts. When evaluating proposals, we suggest prioritising ecosystem improvement, water availability, and cost effectiveness. To ensure the water sector deliver multiple benefits we propose embedding ecosystem services into investment frameworks, setting cross-sector objectives and adopting integrated planning tools.

4.5 Outcome 2: Nature-based carbon reductions and removals. Our evidence indicates that businesses are investing in the Woodland Carbon Code and the Peatland Code to meet regulatory requirements, offset emissions, achieve corporate sustainability goals, and deliver co-benefits such as biodiversity net gain and improved water quality. However, investment is hindered by barriers including limited understanding, high upfront costs, long and uncertain payback periods, concerns over the reliability of monitoring and reporting, and a limited supply of high-quality projects.

4.5.1 To unlock investment into woodland carbon we have suggest several measures such as long-term policies, streamlining planning and regulations, robust certification, co-funding while promoting transparency in the market.

4.5.2 To incentivise businesses emitting greenhouse gases or negatively impacting on biodiversity we recommend securing carbon pricing and biodiversity levies, mandating offsetting, tax incentives and integrating nature-based solutions into Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting.

4.6 Outcome 3: Access to nature – supporting tourism, recreation, and wellbeing. Improving access to nature is essential for public health, wellbeing, and environmental awareness. However, it must be carefully managed to avoid unintended consequences such as overtourism – where natural areas receive more visitors than they can sustainably support.

4.6.1 Policies need to promote responsible tourism and invest in initiatives that balance public enjoyment with conservation. To increase and diversify funding for Protected Landscapes, we propose a range of measures including blending finance models, corporate partnerships, green bonds, community investment schemes, visitor or tourism charges and

rewarding landowners for conservation efforts. We would support a broader application of the beneficiary pays principle, such as incentivising farmers to improve land management practices that enhance water quality and biodiversity, ensuring that those who benefit from healthy landscapes contribute to their upkeep.

- 4.6.2 We also advocate for the polluter pays principle in Protected Landscapes. Our evidence highlights successful examples, including funding from the Landfill Communities Fund and the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, which have supported conservation and access initiatives in our National Parks and Protected Landscapes.
- 4.6.3 We have identified several benefits and barriers for businesses investing in actions contributing to 30 by 30. The benefits include enhancing a company's reputation, alignment with future regulations, risk mitigation and market differentiation. The barriers include a limited awareness of investment opportunities, unclear metrics, fragmented policies, and perceived complexity around biodiversity investment.
- 4.6.4 To support urban green spaces and local parks, we recommend expanding funding through public-private investment partnerships, community investment schemes, corporate sponsorship, health, and wellbeing funding streams.
- 4.7 Outcome 4: Flood Management. We have identified several sectors well positioned to fund Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes, including water utility companies, the insurance industry, local authorities, farmers, and landowners. Successful examples include payment schemes where landowners are compensated for managing land in ways that reduce runoff and improve water quality. We also emphasise the importance of early stakeholder and community involvement in the design phase of flood management projects to ensure solutions are tailored to local geography and needs.
- 4.8 Outcome 5: Sustainable land use and food production. We advocate for the adoption of a holistic approach to land management. Land use policies must reflect the complexities and competing demands placed on land, balancing environmental objectives with the need to maintain a resilient domestic food supply. Nature conservation efforts should not undermine agricultural viability. We have provided examples of local projects or industry sectors within the food and drinks sector that have benefited from supportive policies and financial models. These include funding for sustainable farming practices, converting food waste to energy, and upgrading production facilities at a local creamery.
- 4.8.1 Clear, long-term policies and accessible green initiatives are essential to encourage farmers and land managers to adopt sustainable practices. These initiatives should be co-designed with stakeholders to ensure they are practical, locally relevant, and financially viable. To drive further environmental improvements in this sector, we recommend introducing incentives such as mandatory biodiversity reporting, tax incentives and nature-based certification schemes. We also advocate for transparent food supply chains, targeted incentives for farmers and landowners, and collaborative frameworks to ensure fair cost distribution across the supply chain.
- 4.8.2 We consider agriculture and forestry, marine and aquatic resources, and waste management to be key sectors for the bioeconomy in this region. Additionally, we recognise the growing importance of biotechnology, biomanufacturing, bioenergy and fuels, health, and pharmaceutical sectors. To support sustainable timber production and broader bioeconomic growth, we suggest financial incentives, clear policy and regulation, investment in innovation and research, and enhanced skills and training programmes.
- 4.9 Outcome 6: International nature finance and access and benefit sharing. We recognise that while our operations are primarily local, our procurement and investment decisions can have global nature-related impacts. We are aware of frameworks like the Taskforce on

Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and are exploring how its principles can inform our sustainable procurement and planning strategies. Although our investment strategy is locally focused, we are beginning to consider global nature impacts by avoiding investments linked to deforestation or biodiversity loss and monitoring developments in biodiversity credit markets and nature-based solutions.

- 4.9.1 To better integrate nature into investment decisions, we need clear policy guidance that links nature to economy and planning outcomes. This would enable us to confidently prioritise green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain, and climate resilience. We believe the UK can support biodiversity co-benefits in international carbon markets by setting clear standards, promoting nature-based solutions, and supporting international frameworks that align carbon and biodiversity goals. Our experience with carbon markets has shown the importance of robust monitoring, long-term stewardship, and integrating ecosystem co-benefits from the outset.
- 4.9.2 Through initiatives like the York and North Yorkshire Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) programme, we are embedding benefit sharing into our delivery model via stakeholder engagement, transparent governance, and knowledge sharing. We recognise that bio-rich countries face additional challenges such as resource exploitation and weak enforcement. To scale international nature investment, policy makers must establish consistent frameworks, standard metrics, de-risk investments, and build market infrastructure that connects supply with demand while ensuring integrity and equality.

5.0 FINANCE

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications for the Council associated with this report at this stage, in terms of responding to the consultation except for existing officer time which will be covered by staffing budgets already in place.
- 5.2 The Council will need to consider any implications of the final implemented version of the policy in its future work, and financial implications will be highlighted accordingly in future reports. If implemented, we will need to review our investment strategy to align with the emerging Taskforce on Nature-related Finance Disclosures (TNFD) and UK Green Finance Strategy.

6.0 LEGAL

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications for the Council associated with this report at this stage, in terms of responding to the consultation except for existing officer time which will be covered by staffing budgets already in place.
- 6.2 The Council will need to consider the legal implications of this call for evidence if all the recommendations are introduced as it may result in new legal responsibilities to facilitate or regulate private sector investment in nature recovery. We may also need to revise our procurement policies to align with nature recovery goals and comply with national frameworks such as Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosure (TNFD) and UK Green Finance Strategy.

7.0 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 There are no specific equalities implications associated with this report.

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 There are no climate change implications associated with commenting on this report, however, increasing the private sector role in nature recovery would significantly contribute

to reducing the impacts of Climate Change. By establishing a clear framework, standardised metrics, and a transparent market, the policy would help to connect supply and demand for nature-based solutions while ensuring integrity and equality.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that the Executive Member for Managing our Environment, in line with delegated authority:

- i. note the North Yorkshire Council statutory consultation process and
- ii. authorises the submission of the Council's detailed response to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

APPENDIX:

Appendix A: Expanding the Role of the Private Sector in Nature Recovery, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) call for evidence response.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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20 June 2025

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Call for Evidence Questions

Expanding the Role of the Private Sector in Nature Recovery, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) call for evidence questions: -

Please refer to the full call for evidence document –

[Expanding the role of the private sector in nature recovery: call for evidence - GOV.UK](#)

Section 1: Policy Principles

Q1. Do you agree with the four intended objectives for policy to increase investment in nature as set out above?

Yes. We agree with the four intended objectives. They provide a comprehensive framework and reflect a clear understanding of the complexity for scaling up private investment into nature recovery.

Q1. a) Do you agree with each of the four objectives?

Yes, we agree with each of the four objectives.

- Economic growth will provide confidence for long-term planning, incentives for investment and job creation.
- Business certainty will be guaranteed by clear regulations, consistent policies, and reliable enforcement.
- Innovation will drive improvements in productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness.
- Proportionate burden sharing ensures the costs and responsibilities are distributed. This builds social cohesion and public trust.

Q1. b) Any further comments including other factors the government should consider?

Yes. We would like the government to include the following objectives: -

- Environmental sustainability to ensure growth and innovation does not deplete natural resources or harm ecosystems but encourages green technologies, circular economies, and climate resilience.
- Social inclusion to promote equal access to opportunities, education, and services.
- Good governance provided by transparent institutions to uphold regulations and best practice. This will ensure accountability and build confidence.

Q2. Is there evidence from existing domestic or international policies which the government can learn from regarding:

a) The benefits of policy action to increase private sector investment in nature?

Yes. A strong example of domestic policy success is the development of the voluntary carbon markets, particularly through the Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code. These initiatives provide clear, science-based standards and a trusted framework for business to invest in UK-based carbon sequestration projects. They have demonstrated how policy support and robust governance can unlock private finance while ensuring environmental integrity and measurable outcomes.

In addition, the Environmental Improvement Plan and the Nature Markets Framework offer further evidence of effective domestic policy. These strategies outline how the UK will meet long-term environmental targets, such as habitat restoration and water quality improvement – by developing high-integrity environmental markets. They also emphasize the importance of private sector involvement in delivering nature-based solutions, supported by clear standards, incentives, and regulatory certainty.

There are also several international policy examples that illustrate how government action can successfully mobilise private investment into nature-based solutions:

- EU Restoration Law: introduced binding targets to restore 20% of land and sea by 2030. This has created demand for biodiversity credits and green infrastructure investment by providing regulatory certainty and access to EU funding instruments.
- Columbia's Sovereign Green Bond Programme: issued green bonds to finance ecosystem restoration, water resource management and climate adaptation. This attracted institutional investors and blended finance for large-scale nature-based projects demonstrating how public finance can de-risk private capital.
- New Zealand Emission Trading Scheme includes forestry as the key sector allowing landowners to earn carbon credits for afforestation and reforestation. This has encouraged private investment in native forest restoration and carbon farming through a market-based mechanism.

These examples collectively show that well-designed policy frameworks, regulatory clarity and market-building tools are essential to unlock private finance.

Q2 b) the policy actions that are most effective and efficient at increasing private sector investment in nature?

Several policy actions have proven to be effective and efficient in mobilising private sector investment in nature, both in the UK and internationally.

- Establishing Clear and Trusted Standards. Standards such as the Woodland Carbon Code provide credibility, transparency, and assurance for investors.
- Creating regulatory drivers. Biodiversity Net Gain has created mandatory demand for biodiversity credits.
- Supporting market infrastructure and governance. Initiatives such as the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) in the UK and Columbia's Green Bond Programme have provided early-stage funding to assist projects to become investment ready.
- Providing long-term policy certainty. Commitments such as the UK's Net Zero targets and Environmental Improvement Plan give investors the confidence to commit capital to nature-based solutions over the long term.
- Enabling blended finance and innovative mechanisms. Combining public, philanthropic, and private capital can unlock larger-scale investment and support complex, multi-benefit projects that deliver environmental, social, and economic returns.

Q2. c) the risks of policy action to increase private sector investment in nature?

Identified Risks: -

- Greenwashing – without robust standards and verification, investments may be marketed as environmentally beneficial without delivering real or additional outcomes.
- Market integrity – inconsistent quality, double counting, and exploitation of loopholes.
- Equity and access – exclusion of smaller landowners, farmers, or community groups due to complexity or high entry costs.
- Perverse incentives – poorly designed policies resulting in monocultures or inappropriate habitat development.
- Voluntary market over reliance – Resulting in a delay or weakening of ambitious regulatory action.
- Uncertain long-term returns – Nature-based investments can require long time restraints and uncertain returns.

Section 2: Outcome – and sector-specific examples and questions

Outcome 1: Clean and plentiful water – cleaning up rivers, lakes, and seas.**Q4. a) What are the barriers to incentivising sectors that depend on the water system to invest in water outcomes?**

We have identified four barriers to investment for sectors that depend on the water system: -

- Economic – unclear or a delay in financial returns, high upfront costs, and the undervaluation of water in pricing.
- Institutional – fragmented governance and weak enforcement, lack of supportive policies or incentives.
- Technical – limited data and system complexity. Low capacity among small actors.
- Social – low awareness and resistance to change. Equity concerns in cost distribution.

Q4. b) What actions are needed by government to address these barriers?

Government Actions required to remove these barriers: -

- Economic – provide clear guidance on expected financial returns, investment timeframes and water pricing. Offer financial incentives or support to reduce upfront costs.
- Institutional – establish clear, coordinated governance structures and responsibilities. Ensure consistent and rigorous enforcement of standards and regulations.
- Technical – Clarify data requirements and ensure small investors and landowners are not excluded.
- Social – Promote fair distribution of costs and benefits across stakeholders. Provide education, training and public endorsement of sustainable technologies and best practices.

Q5. What activities by water companies that support nature recovery have potential to attract additional private-sector investment?

Discussions with utility companies have indicated the following potential investment opportunities:

- Water Quality improvements, match making utility company priority areas with both existing and future projects to improve water quality.
- Flood mitigation and reduction – investing in innovative nature-based solutions for flood and water management at a catchment scale.

Q6. What should our priorities be when assessing the benefits of environmental enhancement measures proposed by the water sector?

We suggest the following priorities: -

- Ecosystem improvement – measurable improvements in biodiversity, habitat quality and ecosystem resilience.
- Availability and water quality – improvements in water supply and water quality.
- Climate resilience – measurable flood mitigation, drought resistance and carbon sequestration.
- Community benefits – social, recreational and health gains for local people.
- Regulatory alignment – compliance with legislation and contribution to environmental targets.
- Cost-effectiveness – long-term value for money and efficiency.

Q7. How can the water sector ensure that opportunities to deliver multiple benefits are considered from the start of investment planning and decision-making?

Establishing a collaborative partnership with all interested parties will assist with the delivery of multiple benefits. Other factors for consideration include:

- Embedding Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services into investment appraisal frameworks.
- Using integrated planning tools to assess environmental, social, and economic outcomes together.
- Establishing cross-sector objectives that align water, climate, and biodiversity goals.
- Applying long-term adaptive thinking to capture co-benefits over time.

Outcome 2: Nature-based carbon reductions and removals

Q8. What are the reasons why businesses fund or buy nature-based carbon through insetting agreements or markets such as the Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code?

Businesses fund or buy nature-based carbon through insetting agreements or markets like the Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code for several reasons:

- Carbon offsetting – to meet net zero or carbon neutrality goals.
- Regulatory compliance – to align with environmental regulations and reporting standards.
- Corporate sustainability – to demonstrate environmental responsibility and enhance brand reputation.
- Local and co-benefits – such as biodiversity gains, water quality improvements and community engagement.

Q9. What are the barriers for businesses in buying nature-based carbon through markets such as the Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code?

Barriers for business investment:

- Complexity and lack of understanding – many businesses are unfamiliar with how nature markets work and how to access them.
- Upfront costs and long payback times – nature-based projects require significant upfront costs with potential benefits realised over significant timescales.
- Businesses worry about the long-term reliability and monitoring of carbon sequestration.
- Limited supply of high-quality projects especially those which meet strict sustainability and carbon accounting standards.
- Regulatory uncertainty – changing standards and policies increase investment risk.

Q10. How can government ensure policies to support tree planting are also effective in unlocking private finance for woodland carbon?

- Guarantee long-term policy stability to reduce investment risk.
- Support robust certification schemes.
- Offer co-funding or match funding.
- Streamline planning and regulatory processes.
- Promote market transparency

Q11. Which sectors could be further incentivised to use, reuse, and recycle timber as a low-carbon material?

The following sectors could receive further incentives to use, reuse or recycle timber:

- Construction and housing
- Furniture and interiors
- Retail and packaging
- Transport and logistics.
- Public infrastructure

Q12. How could businesses which emit greenhouse gases or have negative impacts on biodiversity be further incentivised to fund or buy nature-based carbon reductions and removals, in line with the polluter pays principle?

Further incentives should include.

- Strengthen carbon pricing and biodiversity levies.
- Mandating offsetting for residual emissions
- Offering tax incentives or credits
- Integrating nature-based solutions into Environmental, Social and Governance reporting
- Create public-private co-investment funds

Outcome 3: Access to nature – supporting tourism, recreation, and wellbeing.

Q13. What measures could be used to increase and diversify funding to ensure our Protected Landscapes are sustainably resourced?

Improving access to nature is vital for public health, wellbeing, and environmental awareness, but it must be carefully managed to avoid unintended consequences. Overtourism, where natural areas receive more visitors than they can sustainably support, can lead to habitat degradation, soil erosion, littering, and disturbance to wildlife. Popular rural and protected areas may suffer from overcrowding, putting pressure on local infrastructure and ecosystems. To ensure equitable and sustainable access, policies should promote responsible tourism, invest in visitor management infrastructure, and support community-led initiatives that balance public enjoyment with conservation. This approach helps protect natural spaces while ensuring they remain accessible and beneficial to future generations.

The following measures could be used to increase and diversify funding for our Protected Landscapes:

- Blended finance models combining public, private and philanthropic funding.
- Corporate partnerships
- Green bond and environmental impact funds
- Rewarding landowners for conservation outcomes
- Community investment schemes
- Visitor or tourism charges

Q14. Would you support greater application of the beneficiary pays principle in Protected Landscapes?

Yes. There are successful examples of the beneficiary pays principle:

- Visitor donations and tourism levies used to fund path maintenance and conservation in the Lake District National Park
- Payments to farmers to improve land management. This protects water quality and reduces water treatment costs.

Q15. Would you support greater application of the polluter pays principle in Protected Landscapes?

Yes, we would support a larger application of the polluter pays principle in Protected Landscapes.

- The North York Moors National Park have benefited from funding from the Landfill Communities Fund. This assisted in the delivery of moorland restoration and biodiversity enhancement projects.
- The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Yorkshire Dales River Trust have both benefited from funds raised by the polluter pays principle.
- In North Yorkshire, the National Parks (North York Moors and the Yorkshire Dales) and the Howardian Hills and Forest of Bowland National Landscapes have benefited from funding from the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. This has included restoration of hay meadows, improving soil health, restricting livestock access to watercourses, and supporting regenerative grazing practices.

Q16. What are the benefits, and barriers, to businesses investing in actions which help to contribute to 30by30?

Investing in 30by30 enhances a business's reputation, aligns with future regulations, unlocks green finance, mitigates risks, differentiates brands, and encourages long-term innovation and resilience.

Barriers include limited awareness, unclear metrics, short-term financial pressures, fragmented policies, and the perceived complexity of investing in biodiversity.

Q17. To support access to green spaces in more urban settings, what measures could be used to increase and diversify funding for local parks and natural spaces?

Private investment funding for urban green spaces could be raised by public/private partnerships, community investment schemes, green levies, corporate sponsorships and health and wellbeing funding.

One successful example of this type of initiative is the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London which is maintained through a mix of developer contributions, commercial leases, and event revenues.

Outcome 4: Flood management**Q18. Which of the beneficiary sectors of natural flood management are best placed to contributing to funding it?**

The following beneficiary sectors would be best placed to fund Natural Flood Management schemes: -

- Water companies – less infrastructure and treatment costs.
- Insurance industry – lower flood risk resulting in fewer claims.
- Local authorities – saving on emergency responses and infrastructure repair.
- Farmers and landowners – gains from improved soil health and water management.
- Health Sector – green space benefits and wellbeing improvements.
- Developers – Natural Flood Management schemes can meet planning requirements and increase property prices.

Q19. What mechanisms could best enable this?

Innovative funding mechanisms that can enable Natural Flood Management (NFM) include: Payments for Ecosystem Services – e.g. Yorkshire Water's 'Upstream Thinking' pays landowners to manage land in ways that reduce runoff and improve water quality. Planning Policy and Developer Levies -e.g. The Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme integrates NFM upstream of Leeds, supported by planning policy and both public investment and developer contributions.

Public Private Partnerships – e.g. The Upper Aire Land Management Project brings together the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and local farmers to deliver NFM through land use change and habitat restoration.

Blended Financial Models – e.g. The Yorkshire Dales NFM Projects in Swaledale and Wensleydale combine funding from the Environment Agency, local authority, and non-government organisations, like the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust.

Catchment- Based Approaches – e.g. The Ousewem Project is a large scale, collaborative initiative, involving stakeholders across an entire river system to deliver NFM at scale.

Q20. How can mechanisms such as these account for and adapt to the local nature of natural flood management?

These mechanisms can adapt by involving local communities in the design and delivery of schemes, tailoring funding to local land use and geography, coordinating actions across the catchment and remaining flexible to evolve over time.

Outcome 5: Sustainable land use and food production

Q21. What policies or financial models have been successful in improving environmental performance and sustainability within the food and drink sector? Please provide evidence.

Increasing food security and production while supporting nature-based solutions requires a holistic approach that integrates sustainable agricultural practices, ecosystem restoration, and community engagement. It is essential that policies acknowledge the complexities and competing demands on land use, balancing environmental goals with the need to maintain domestic food production. Encouraging nature conservation should not come at the expense of agricultural viability, as this could lead to increased reliance on food imports, undermining both food security and the sustainability of global supply chains. Instead, policies must promote integrated land management strategies that support biodiversity, climate resilience and productive farming ensuring that conservation and food production are mutually reinforcing rather than conflicting objectives.

One successful example is a local creamery, which received a LEADER grant through the Rural Development for England to develop a new visitor centre and improve production facilities. This project boosted local tourism, created jobs, and enhanced sustainability by sourcing milk from local farms, reducing transport emissions and supporting the regional economy.

Circular Malton and Norton Project promotes a circular economy in the food sector by using anaerobic digestion to convert food waste into renewable energy. This reduces landfill use and carbon emissions, while creating a local, closed loop system for energy and waste. Yorkshire agricultural Society's Future Farmers Network supports sustainable farming practices that feed into the local food supply chain, improving environmental outcomes through education, innovation, and peer learning.

York Food Strategy encourages sustainable sourcing, reduced food waste and local supply chains, supported by local councils and community groups.

Q22. What further measures would be most effective in incentivising the food and drink sector to reduce its impact on nature and increase its investment in nature recovery?

Clear, long-term policies and accessible green initiatives are essential to encourage farmers and land managers to adopt sustainable practices. When policies are consistent, well-communicated, and aligned with long-term environmental and economic goals, they provide the stability and confidence needed for farmers to invest in nature-based solutions. These initiatives should be co-designed with farmers to ensure they are practical, locally relevant, and financially viable, - fostering a sense of ownership, long-term sustainability, and land stewardship.

Further measures could include:

- Tax incentives and green subsidies.
- Mandatory biodiversity reporting
- Nature-based certification schemes to reward sustainability.
- Public procurement policies favouring environmentally responsible suppliers.
- Collaborative funding models linking food businesses with conservation projects

Q23. How can measures best be designed to ensure fair distribution of costs and accountability across the food and drink supply chain, and avoid putting domestic farmers at a disadvantage?

The following measures would ensure a fair distribution of costs: -

- Transparent supply chain standards
- Mandatory reporting and due diligence
- Incentives and support for farmers
- Trade policies
- Collaborative frameworks.

Q24. How can measures recognise and mitigate the impacts of the wider bioeconomy on land (for example, the use of natural fibres, timber, paper, and pulp)? Which sectors are most important?

The most important sectors in the bioeconomy are agriculture and forestry, biotechnology and biomanufacturing, marine and aquatic resources, health and pharmaceuticals and waste management, compost, biochar, and biogas.

There are two notable examples in North Yorkshire where the impacts of the wider bioeconomy are being recognised and addressed:

- BioYorkshire Initiative – a regional partnership which supports regenerative farming, sustainable biomass production, and the development of bio-based products like natural fibres and bioplastics.
- Circular Biobased Construction Projects. Local firms using natural materials such as timber and straw in, low-carbon building, reducing land-use pressure and supporting biodiversity.

Q25. What measures could be used to increase investment in sustainable timber production and processing, and timber reuse and recycling?

To boost investment in sustainable timber and its circular use, the following measures are key:

- Financial Incentives - Grants and subsidies for sustainable forestry practices and timber recycling infrastructure. Tax relief for companies using certified sustainable timber or investing in reuse technologies.
- Policy and Regulations - Strengthen building regulations to favour timber reuse and low-carbon materials. Require Sustainability Certificates for public procurement. Support local timber markets and supply chains to reduce transport emissions and boost rural economies. Promote green public procurement to create a stable demand for sustainable timber.
- Innovation and research and development - Fund research into engineered timber and recycling technologies. Encourage design for deconstruction in buildings to encourage timber reuse
- Skills and training - Develop training programmes in sustainable forestry, timber processing and circular construction.

Outcome 6: International nature finance and access and benefit sharing

Q26. Are you aware of your international nature-related risks, dependencies, and impacts, for example, through using frameworks such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)?

As a local authority, we recognise that while our operations are primarily local, we may still have indirect international nature-related risks and dependencies. For example, through the procurement of goods such as timber and paper that rely on global supply chains and ecosystems.

We are aware of frameworks like the Taskforce on Nature-related Finance Disclosures (TNFD) which help organisations identify and manage their nature-related risks, dependencies, and impacts. While full TNFD adoption may not yet be in place, we are exploring how its principles can inform our sustainable procurement, land use planning, and climate-nature strategies.

Q27. a) What role is global nature playing in your investment strategy? For example, are you exploring investing in international ecosystem services, including biodiversity credit markets, or avoiding certain types of investments due to their impacts on nature?

As a local authority, our investment strategy is primarily focused on delivering local economic, social, and environmental benefits. However, we recognise that our financial decisions can have global nature-related impacts, particularly through supply chains and financial instruments.

We are beginning to consider the role of global nature in our investment by

- Avoiding investments in sectors or companies linked to deforestation, biodiversity loss, or unsustainable land use.
- Exploring opportunities to support nature-positive investments, including those aligned with international ecosystem services.
- Monitoring developments in biodiversity credits and nature-based solutions, while assessing their relevance and credibility for future investment or partnership opportunities.

While we are not yet directly investing in international biodiversity markets, we are committed to aligning our strategy with emerging frameworks like the Task force on Nature-related Finance and the UK Green Finance Strategy, ensuring our investments support both local and global goals.

Q27. b) What would help you better integrate nature into investment decisions?

We need clear national policy guidelines that link nature to economic and planning outcomes. This would provide the legal and strategic clarity required to embed nature-based considerations into our decision-making processes. We would then be able to confidently prioritise green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain and climate resilience into our investment strategies.

Q28. a) How can the UK help ensure biodiversity co-benefits are integrated into international carbon markets, and visa-versa?

The government should set clear standards to ensure carbon offset projects do not harm but enhance biodiversity. Carbon offsetting schemes should promote nature-based solutions, supported by monitoring and verification tools that track both carbon and biodiversity goals. Private investment should be encouraged through incentives for projects with dual benefits. Additionally, the UK should support and help shape international frameworks that align carbon and biodiversity goals.

Q28. b) How has your experience with carbon markets influenced your approach to nature markets?

As a local authority, our experience with carbon markets has highlighted the importance of clear standards, robust monitoring, and long-term stewardship. It has reinforced the need to design the developing nature markets with similar integrity, ensuring measurable outcomes, community benefits, and alignment with local planning and environmental goals. We also recognise the value of integrating ecosystem service co-benefits from the outset.

Q29. a) Does the concept of access and benefit sharing apply to your organisation or sector?

Yes. The York and North Yorkshire Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) programme have established a partnership with stakeholders and interested parties to explore opportunities to increase private investment into natural capital projects. Building on the success of this programme we have the ambition to establish a Natural Flood Management Forum. This would enable knowledge sharing of best practice, discussions to agree standards for measurement and governance, and enable resource sharing and learning.

Q29. b) If so, how do you incorporate benefit-sharing into your business model?

Benefit-sharing is embedded into our York and North Yorkshire Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) programme delivery through a collaborative approach. This has been achieved through stakeholder engagement, transparent governance, knowledge sharing and measurable outcomes.

Q30. a) What are the key challenges to investing in nature-based opportunities in biodiversity-rich countries?

Biodiversity-rich countries face many of the same barriers already highlighted in this call for evidence, including:

- The need for clear governance to guide investment and ensure accountability.
- The importance of agreed standards and definitions to create consistency and comparability across projects.
- The requirement for an enforced framework for monitoring and reporting to track outcomes and build investor confidence.

However, these challenges could be compounded by additional pressures unique to biodiversity-rich regions such as: -

- Ongoing exploitation of natural resources, for example deforestation of rainforests for timber extraction or conversion to agricultural land.
- Conflicting land-use priorities, where short-term economic gains from extractive industries may be prioritised over long-term sustainability.
- Limited enforcement capacity, which can make it difficult to protect biodiversity and uphold environmental regulations.

Q30 b) What can policy makers and market enablers do to help scale international nature investment and better connect supply with demand?

To scale investment in nature and bridge the gap between supply and demand, policy makers and market enablers need to undertake the following actions

- Establish clear and consistent policy frameworks.
- Standardise metrics and reporting.
- De-risk investments
- Build a market infrastructure.
- Raise awareness and demand