

Address to NSC Cabinet 10th September 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to address Cabinet today.

I have questions regarding item 7 Local Devolution Programme Policy and Framework, specifically the Climate Change and Environmental Policy Implications.

My main concern is the impact that any devolution of land assets to town and parishes, its future use, and the tying up of land in BNG and rewilding initiatives for many years, may have on food security.

As you will be aware I have raised this issue numerous times at district level previously, but it still seems to be unaddressed. Fragmented land will not produce the same level of yield or security as large well managed farmland.

My understanding of the "Small Holdings and Allotments Act is that it aimed to increase the availability of small plots of land for cultivation and establishing responsibilities for local authorities to provide and manage such lands. It was enacted to address the growing demand for small plots of land for cultivation, particularly in the context of industrialisation and urbanisation in the UK. The Act aimed to promote self-sufficiency among small-scale farmers and the urban working class by enabling them to rent small plots for agricultural purposes. The Act aims to support individuals who wish to cultivate small plots of land, thereby promoting agricultural practices and enhancing food security within communities."

How many council smallholdings still exist to support local farming?

What farmed land and open space is currently being used for climate, nature and green initiatives, for how long, and is a map available publicly?

What was this land previously used for during the last 20 years and how much more land is planned for initiatives?

For example, how has the rewilding of this 40 hectares of open space and planting of 50,000 trees impacted farming and food security both regionally and nationally over this period?

This is particularly critical as the UK is far from being food secure at the current time.

How does development of Biodiversity Net Gain credits, or other green finance initiatives benefit hungry tax payers, experiencing food price increases due to a lack of local food production?

I urge the council to recognise that these assets belong to the residents that you are tasked to help feed and protect and are not tools to be manipulated for financial gain or achieve policy initiatives.

Thank you

NSC Video at 16mins https://youtu.be/dQ24B_hle0Y?t=958