

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE BRIEFING NOTE

RURAL ECONOMY

House of Lords Debate

“Opportunities and challenges for agriculture, fisheries, and rural economy in the UK” (The Earl of Lindsay, Con)

Thursday 2 November 2017



The Voice of the Countryside

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Background

The Countryside Alliance welcomes this debate on the opportunities and challenges for agriculture, fisheries and rural economy in the UK. It is particularly pertinent given that Brexit presents considerable challenges to agriculture, fisheries and the rural economy as well as an opportunity to do things differently. There are also ongoing challenges, such as delivering digital connectivity, access to services and affordable housing in rural areas, which must be addressed if we are to have a vibrant rural economy and sustainable communities.

This Parliament and the decisions made by this Government in relation to future trade, regulations, agricultural and environmental policies as well as infrastructure will shape the future of our countryside for many years to come. At the heart of these decisions are defining questions about the kind of landscapes we want to create, the food we want to eat, and the communities we want to develop.

A new relationship with Europe brings opportunities. We have the chance to consider which EU policies are working and which ones are not, and develop an agricultural policy that is more appropriate for farming in this country. However, Brexit will only be a success if the interests of rural communities are central to the decision making.

This is not simply self-interest. The countryside is vital for our food and farming industry, provides public goods and recreation for millions of people, and its landscapes are an important part of our cultural heritage and home to an astonishing range of wildlife and habitats. A successful living and working countryside is important for the entire nation.

Agriculture

Future Trade

- Trade is key to the future success of our food and farming industry. For agriculture, membership of the Single Market has meant tariff free movement of goods between the UK and EU member states as well as significant protection from non-EU food imports.
- Approximately 62 per cent of UK agricultural exports go to the EU, while approximately 70 per cent of UK agricultural imports come from the EU. Food production and the processing supply chain is complex and often involves several countries within the EU.
- Agricultural goods generally carry higher import tariffs than other commodities. If the UK Government does not establish a new trade agreement with the EU prior to leaving the EU and adopts World Trade Organisation terms, the £12 billion worth of food and agricultural produce which the UK exports to the EU each year would face the prospect of high tariffs. This would be damaging to UK producers and EU consumers.
- Approximately 90 per cent of UK beef, sheep, and dairy exports go to the EU and high tariffs would be particularly damaging to some of our most rural areas where farming is a vital part of the local economy and community. The EU market is particularly important for certain cuts of meat and offal where there is little domestic demand and therefore exports are a significant proportion of carcass value.
- The EU is obliged by the World Trade Organisation to offer reduced (or tariff free) import opportunities to certain types of agricultural produce from outside of the EU under Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ). There is currently a TRQ in place for lamb from New Zealand and hormone-free beef from Argentina and North America which allows an annual quota of meat to avoid the usual import tariffs. The UK Government must ensure that the TRQs for agricultural produce are not passed back to the UK unless there is a guarantee that UK farmers will continue to have tariff-free access to the EU market.

- As well as maintaining tariff-free trade with the EU, the UK Government must ensure that food and agricultural produce are central to any new trade deals with non-EU countries to open up new export markets. We welcome the UK Government's continued efforts to open up markets in Asia. In China, the value of food and drink exports from the UK has increased by over 50 per cent from 2015 to 2016 and is now worth £439.5 million.
- A shift towards promoting export markets outside of the EU is likely to increase the need for UK agriculture to become more competitive, but there will be some farmers who will always struggle to compete on price in the global market. Farmers in the uplands, and other marginal areas, are not in fair competition with global producers who are operating in very different environments, often with fewer safety and animal welfare laws to comply with, meaning their production costs are significantly lower. This type of upland and marginal farming does, however, provide a vital public good in maintaining some of our most iconic rural landscapes and their communities. The interests of these farmers must be safeguarded in any new trade arrangements and in any new scheme for agricultural support (see below).
- Many of the countries with which new trade deals are seen as a priority, such as Australia, the USA and Brazil are also large meat exporting countries. These countries are likely to seek extensive agricultural concessions as part of any agreement with the UK and our farmers must not be used as a 'bargaining chip' in the negotiations. This is particularly important as World Trade Organisation rules do not allow the process by which something was produced to be taken into consideration when providing state support which is considered to have a distorting effect on the market.
- The ability of the UK to produce its own food must not be undermined by any new trade deals. Skills and experience in the food and farming industry have taken a long time to develop and in many cases would be hard to replace if they were lost. Securing our ability to produce food should not be mistaken for self-sufficiency as the UK will continue to import food and agricultural produce, just as it will continue to export. Food security will be achieved by ensuring fair competition for UK farmers and producers in EU and non-EU markets and this must be a priority for the UK Government.
- UK agriculture underpins our food manufacturing sector by providing over 60 per cent of the produce and raw materials involved. This is a vitally important sector, sustaining 3.8 million jobs and adding over £21 billion (GVA) to the UK economy every year. Food manufacturing is nationally important and benefits communities across the country, although it has particular importance in many rural areas. The UK's new relationship with the EU and any new trade deals with non-EU countries will be vital to the future success or otherwise of food manufacturing in this country.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **Tariff-free trade with the EU in food and agricultural produce, including game. Ensure that any new trade deals with non-EU countries recognise and protect the high standards of safety and animal welfare which UK consumers expect and to which our farmers and producers adhere.**
- **The UK Government to ensure that food and agricultural produce are central to any new trade deals with non-EU countries to open up new export markets.**
- **The UK Government to ensure that the TRQs for agricultural produce are not passed back to the UK unless there is a guarantee that UK farmers will continue to have tariff-free access to the EU market.**

Agricultural Support Payments

- Farmers in the UK benefit from support payments as part of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). CAP payments are currently divided into two categories which paid UK farmers a combined total of £2.8 billion in 2015. The majority of funding is provided as direct payments under Pillar 1 and additional payments are available to help farmers implement development schemes under Pillar 2. Support payments from the EU currently make up approximately 50- 60 percent of farm income in the UK.
- Support payments play an important role in the food and farming sector and the wider economy. In 2015, it was estimated that the contribution of farming to the UK across all areas was worth 7.4 times the funding it received in direct payments under Pillar 1 (approximately £2. 2 billion). This is particularly important in rural areas where farming remains an important part of the economic and social life of the local community. We welcomed the announcement from the UK Government that funding under Pillar 1 will be guaranteed until 2020 and the commitment that projects under Pillar 2, signed before the Autumn Statement in 2016, will also have their funding guaranteed.
- It is important that CAP is replaced with a fully funded UK agricultural policy to be in place and ready to be implemented before existing funding is removed. Farming in the UK has developed within the framework of CAP for the last 40 years and therefore the introduction of a new agricultural policy will need to include transitional arrangements to ensure that farm businesses in the UK are able to adjust as decisions often need to be taken years in advance. Farmers, particularly in upland and marginal areas, are often small to medium sized enterprises and a sudden change in agricultural policy would risk the sustainability of some of these businesses which are dependent upon support payments.
- The administration of the new agricultural policy must recognise the fact that many farmers are still unable to receive high speed broadband and those who are connected do not always have the skills to be able to use it to full advantage. The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations must ensure that applications under a new agricultural policy are able to be made by post as well as online for as long as required. This is only one example of why the UK must invest now in the infrastructure needed for proper digital connectivity.
- The UK Government has indicated that it wants to see a more market-orientated agricultural policy with a focus on competitiveness. Policies designed to make our farmers more competitive should be welcomed, however this must not be done to the detriment of the environment.
- Farmers already play a vital role in conservation. Using the skills and experience of farmers is often the best way to improve biodiversity and secure the future our vital natural resources. Farmers also manage the landscapes that are so important to our cultural heritage and provide the recreational opportunities people value so much. This work clearly has a public benefit and a new agricultural policy must support and incentivise farmers and land managers to ensure they can continue this important work. This means ensuring that support is provided to the people and businesses who have the task of carrying out this work on a daily basis.
- Despite efforts and incentives to improve competitiveness, there will continue to be some parts of the UK where farmers cannot survive on the profits of food production alone and this needs to be addressed in a new agricultural policy as well as continued efforts to support diversification. Farmers in the uplands and other marginal areas are limited to low intensity grazing which has small profit margins and is often more exposed to market

volatility than other sectors of the industry. Their work, however, often provides the most amount of public good in maintaining and improving some of our most iconic rural landscapes, on which rests much of the UK's vitally important tourism sector. A new agricultural policy should target support payments to those farmers who are providing the most amount of public good but are not rewarded for this by the market.

- Farming in upland and marginal areas is often central to the economic and social life of some of our most rural communities. As well as support payments helping to keep livestock on the hills, they also help to keep the local school open and provide employment in the wider rural economy from shops and garages to hotels and pubs. The importance of support payments to rural communities needs to be recognised when developing a new agricultural policy as without this support many of the most rural communities face the prospect of becoming unsustainable.
- The scope and level of funding of the new agricultural policy will be constrained by World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules which state that *"the amount of payment shall be limited to the extra costs or loss of income involved in complying with government programmes."* The principle of income foregone limits the extent to which payments can be used to support the provision of public good when there is no market for this and the UK Government will need to consider how best to provide support whilst remaining compliant with WTO trade rules.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **A fully funded agricultural policy with support payments targeted at those farmers who are providing the most amount of public good but not being rewarded for this by the market.**
- **The interests of farmers in the uplands, and other marginal areas, to be safeguarded in any new trade arrangements, recognising that this type of farming provides a vital public good in maintaining some of our most iconic rural landscapes and their communities.**

Agricultural Workers

- As part of the Single Market, our food and farming industry benefits from the free movement of people which has provided access to labour from across Europe. People from the EU play an important role in harvesting, production and processing across the food supply chain, in both skilled and unskilled jobs.
- The UK Government must consider how our future relationship with the EU will enable people to travel to this country to work in our food and farming industry, particularly at important times of the year. UK farmers and producers employ over 80,000 seasonal workers every year, the vast majority of these people come from countries within the EU.
- There are indications that it has already become difficult to recruit people from the EU following the referendum result. The decrease in the value of sterling combined with uncertainty about the UK's future relationship with the EU has reduced the appeal of working in the UK for some people. In order to ensure that UK farmers and producers are able to attract the labour they require, it is vital that the UK Government provides clarity on travel and migration arrangements as soon as possible.
- The UK Government should also consider the reintroduction of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), or similar scheme, which allows a person to enter a country

to undertake a specific role with a specific employer for a set period of time. The UK Government removed the SAWS in 2013 following the removal of freedom of movement restrictions on people from Romania and Bulgaria. The reintroduction of the SAWS, or similar scheme, could be one way to help UK farmers and producers in the event of removal of freedom of movement after the UK leaves the EU.

- Any new travel scheme for agricultural workers should also include the requirements of other land-based industries such as forestry, shooting and game farming. Game farmers are not included in the definition of 'agriculture' in the Agriculture Act 1947, so any new scheme will need to adopt a broader definition of 'agriculture' to ensure that people from the EU can continue to work on UK game farms.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **The UK Government to reintroduce the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme, or a similar scheme, which allows a person to enter a country to undertake a specific role with a specific employer for a set period of time.**

Food Labelling

- Leaving the EU provides an opportunity to address the issue of food labelling. The continuing lack of clarity on food labelling, particularly country of origin, remains an issue of concern to British farmers, producers and consumers alike.
- Without clear labelling identifying the country of origin, and other important information, British farmers and producers are not able to take advantage of the desire amongst consumers to 'buy British'.
- The lack of mandatory country of origin food labelling continues to place British farmers at a disadvantage when much of their competition comes from producers in countries, which are not subject to such robust animal welfare legislation and standards and the associated costs. For example higher welfare standards were introduced in the UK for pig production however pork products continue to be imported into the UK and labelled as 'British' despite originating in countries with lower welfare standards, even within the EU.
- The 2013 horsemeat scandal highlighted the vital importance of clear food labelling, particularly with respect to processed meat products. The introduction of legislation making it a legal requirement for the country of origin to be included on processed meat and products containing meat would support British farmers and provide consumers with greater choice and confidence.
- Tourism in rural areas has huge potential to support local farmers and producers. One of the main growth areas is food and drink tourism, which can generate a year round tourism 'offer' and represents a major component of tourism expenditure in rural areas. Promoting local food and drink as part of a tourism strategy can deliver additional economic and environmental benefits; including supporting diversification of farms and producer businesses, creating additional demands for skills and training, and reducing food miles and carbon emissions.
- Total tourism expenditure on local food and drink has been estimated by Defra to total £2.6 billion across England in 2013, of which £1.4 billion was estimated to be spent in rural areas. This suggests that tourists account for 50 percent of local food and drink sales in rural areas (comprising 5 per cent of sales in retailers and 63 per cent in food

service outlets). This expenditure is estimated to support 81,000 jobs and contributes £1.5 billion (GVA) to the rural economy.

- Our new relationship with the EU and any new trade deals with non-EU countries must protect market equality by ensuring that imports are produced to UK standards and product labelling should clearly distinguish country of origin and production methods in a way that is clear and not misleading.
- The UK produces some of the best food in the world, with the highest standards of safety and animal welfare. Our new relationship with the EU, and new trade deals with non-EU countries, must protect these standards and allow our produce to be promoted globally and compete on the basis of quality.
- The EU has established mandatory country of origin labelling for beef, lamb, pork and poultry. However, this does not include foods where the meat is processed or an ingredient, such as sausages and ready meals. Therefore it remains the case that sausages made in the UK using Danish pork can still legally be labelled as 'British'. The introduction of legislation making it a legal requirement for the country of origin to be included on food containing meat would help support farmers by providing UK consumers with greater choice and confidence.
- The EU Commission has resisted calls to extend mandatory country of origin labelling to milk and dairy products on the grounds that such a move would be too costly and bureaucratic. We believe that consumers would be willing to pay more for this information and we would welcome legislation extending mandatory country of origin labelling to these products, building on the work that has already been done under voluntary schemes. The UK Government should also explore options for extending mandatory food labelling to other foods such as cereals, fruit and vegetables.
- The UK has a wide range of regional and speciality food producers which should be promoted at home and abroad. The quality and authenticity of these products is often recognised in their labelling, such as 'Lakeland Herdwick' lamb and mutton, from purebred Herdwick sheep in the Lake District. For producers, these labels help to add value to their products, which often have high costs of production, and ensure their standards can be maintained. The UK currently has a total of 73 products that benefit from protected geographical or traditional status under EU law and the UK Government should look to develop its own system of legal recognition for product names outside of the EU.
- The UK Government must ensure that the three existing types of EU protected product names: Protected Geographical Indication (Scotch Beef), Protected Designation of Origin (Lakeland Herdwick), and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (Traditional Gloucestershire Old Spot Pork), continue to have the same level of protection both in UK and EU markets. It is also important that this protection is included in any new trade deals with non-EU countries, which may involve working to develop trademark protection in countries that UK producers export to.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **Development of a comprehensive food labelling policy and the extension of mandatory country of origin labelling to lightly processed meats and some dairy products.**

- **The continuation and development of protections for regional and speciality food and drink products in order to support UK farmers and producers.**

Rural Economy and Services

Tourism

- Tourism is vitally important for many rural areas, sustaining jobs in a number of areas from accommodation and hospitality to leisure and retail, which supports the wider rural economy. In 2015 the UK received the highest number of international visitors since records began (1961), with 36.1 million visitors, helping to generate more than £62 billion for the UK economy. Visitors from the EU are an important part of our tourist market. In 2015 more than 60 per cent of international holiday visitors and more than 70 per cent of business visitors to the UK were from countries within the EU.
- Rural tourism in the UK benefits from visa-free travel between countries within the EU and it is important that this continues for short leisure and business trips after we leave the EU. Any additional bureaucracy or costs on travel to the UK from the EU would place the UK at a disadvantage with other European tourist destinations as far as EU nationals are concerned.
- As well as maintaining access to the European tourist market, the UK Government should take the opportunity of leaving the EU to open new tourist markets. Enhanced visa services have already increased the number of visitors from China and this is a model which the UK Government should consider adopting with other countries. This should be combined with increased funding of Visit Britain and the GREAT campaign to ensure that the UK, and in particular the countryside, is promoted globally as a tourist destination.
- Tourism specifically associated with country sports is also an important economic contributor in many rural communities, particularly in the winter months when income from other forms of tourism is often reduced. It is essential that country sports in the UK remain easily accessible to people from the EU. In 2014/15 a total of 8,810 Visitor Permits were granted in England and Wales for people to bring firearms into the UK for game or sport shooting. There are also large numbers of people who travel to EU countries for shooting, hunting and fishing. In 2014/15 a total of 15,677 European Firearms Passes were granted by police forces in England in Wales enabling UK citizens to travel to the EU.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **The continuation of visa-free travel between the UK and countries within the EU.**
- **Continued access to, and acceptance of, the European Firearms Pass.**
- **A tourism strategy which recognises the contribution made by country sports tourism to the rural economy.**

Shooting and the Game Market

- Shooting and hunting benefit from trade with countries within the EU across a number of areas. As a member of the Single Market and Customs Union, this trade is currently

tariff-free and avoids other frictions to trade. It is vital that the interests of people who shoot and hunt are considered as part of our new relationship with the EU.

- In particular the majority of firearms that are used in this country are imported from countries within the EU, particularly Spain and Italy. Importers currently enjoy excellent relationships with manufacturers based in countries within the EU and have few problems importing into this country. The UK Government should seek to maintain tariff-free trade with the EU in firearms, component parts, and ammunition. It is also important that imports do not face other barriers to trade, such as an increase in bureaucracy and regulation which have the potential to disrupt the supply chain and add to costs.
- Capital expenditure on firearms and ammunition in the UK is over £150 million every year and approximately 820 jobs in the UK are directly linked to the manufacture, sale or servicing of firearms alone. It is vital that these jobs and investment are supported as part of our new relationship with the EU and in any new trade deals with non-EU countries.
- Similarly, the EU is an important export market for game meat which must be recognised.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **The interests of people who shoot and hunt to be considered as part of our new relationship with the EU.**
- **Continued tariff free and frictionless trade in firearms, ammunition and parts for sporting purposes.**
- **Continued access to the EU for UK produced game meat.**

Conservation, Fisheries and Wildlife Management

- Farmers play a vital role in conservation. Using the skills and experience of farmers is often the best way to improve biodiversity and secure the future of our vital natural resources.
- The EU has developed nature conservation policy that is comprehensive and ambitious compared with many other parts of the world. It has been a driving force for establishing and strengthening wildlife and habitat protection and this should be continued after we leave the EU.
- The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations should take the opportunity of leaving the EU to review existing levels of wildlife and habitat protection to ensure that they are fit for purpose and appropriate for the UK, as well as fulfilling our international obligations. This is an important opportunity to develop a sustainable nature conservation policy that balances the particular requirements of UK species and habitats while taking account of our economic and social requirements.
- There is abundant evidence that where land is managed for the benefit of game, other species naturally flourish and many shoots undertake conservation work for its own sake. Nearly 2 million hectares in the UK are actively managed for conservation as a result of shooting, with shoots spending £250 million each year on conservation work. As we leave the EU, it is vital that decisions about wildlife protection are not used to promote an anti-shooting agenda by changing the status of existing quarry species.

- The UK Government should continue to cooperate closely with the EU on biosecurity to help prevent and contain outbreaks of potentially damaging diseases such as avian influenza which are a significant threat to wild and reared birds.
- One of the most important areas of EU environmental policy has been water quality and the impact of EU Directives on the UK has been highly significant. The most important change over recent decades has been on waste water treatment which has led to significant improvements in the quality of rivers and coastal waters. Many EU Directives aimed at improving water quality are also vitally important for protecting fish, their habitats, and a range of other wildlife. Many fish stocks in and around the UK are in decline, but protection of EU Directives has generally slowed this decline and in some cases, particularly urban rivers, has led to a partial rehabilitation of stocks. Water quality should remain key to the development of a national fisheries policy, covering both marine and freshwater fish, taking greater account of the interests and requirements of recreational fisheries.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **Maintenance of environmental improvements, particularly in water quality, and develop a national fisheries policy which supports recreational fishing.**
- **Recognition of the importance of traditional management in creating and maintaining our iconic countryside landscapes and their communities, and ensure this is supported outside of the EU.**
- **A consistent and evidence based approach to the management of wildlife across all species.**

Digital Connectivity

- A number of measures were announced in the Budget earlier this year including £16 million to create a new National 5G Innovation Network to trial and demonstrate 5G applications and £200 million to roll out a series of local projects to accelerate market delivery of fast and reliable full-fibre broadband to more homes and businesses. It is vital that the Government ensures that rural areas are not forgotten in delivering fibre and 5G technology.
- The Countryside Alliance believes that high speed broadband is an essential service alongside water, electricity and gas; but is nowhere near as available in rural areas as it is in urban areas. This view is shared by Ofcom and highlighted in their Connected Nations Report published in December 2016.
- Continued poor connectivity in rural areas represents a huge missed opportunity for economic development and these gaps and weaknesses need to be addressed as a priority. Reliable broadband is essential for competitive and successful enterprises in a growing digital economy. It is vital that rural communities and businesses have access to effective and affordable broadband if the digital divide between rural and urban areas in the UK is not to grow any wider.
- 1.4 million premises remain unable to access broadband speeds over 10 Mbit/s, the speeds required to meet a typical household's digital needs, which is also the proposed speed of the Government's Universal Service Obligation. This is down from around 2.4 million in 2015 although 960,000 premises in rural areas are still unable to access

download speeds above 10 Mbit/s. Superfast broadband, measured at 30 Mbit/s, is now available to 89 per cent of UK homes although only 59 per cent of homes in rural areas are able to access superfast speeds.

- There is still a lot more to do, particularly in boosting mobile and broadband coverage, and improving the quality of service provided by telecoms companies. For example, rural areas still lag behind on broadband, with around a quarter of rural properties unable to get a 10 Mbit/s connection and 4G coverage in rural areas is only 37 per cent of landmass, compared to 89 per cent in towns and cities.
- The Countryside Alliance welcomed the Digital Economy Act and we hope that the Act will ensure that digital connectivity is delivered in rural areas. One of the main obstacles to high speed broadband and mobile connectivity in rural areas is the lack of infrastructure able to support high speed connections. The Countryside Alliance also welcomes the introduction of a Universal Service Obligation (USO) of 10Mbit/s for broadband speeds across the country. However, the UK Government needs to consider how the USO is going to be delivered and allocate resources to ensure that 10Mbit/s can be accessed in all premises across the UK, including rural areas.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **The full implementation of the Universal Service Obligation under the Digital Economy Act 2017.**
- **When we leave the EU the Government must seek to be at least as ambitious as the EU in digital connectivity and where possible to exceed EU targets.**
- **Government to promote and support alternative technologies, such as satellite and mobile broadband, which can deliver connectivity to remoter rural areas.**

Housing

- The shortage of affordable housing is one of the greatest challenges for communities across the country. It is a particular problem for young people and families, and has serious consequences for the sustainability of communities.
- The need for more housing stock is not just an issue in towns and cities. Many rural areas are also suffering from a lack of housing, especially affordable housing.
- Population growth, combined with migration from urban areas, has seen the rural population grow by 800,000 in the last decade according to the Office for National Statistics, driving up house prices and pricing many families out of the communities in which they work and in which they have often been brought up.
- In 2006, in a report by the Commission for Rural Communities, it was estimated that more than 30,000 affordable homes needed building in rural areas each year to meet need. However, since then, the average number of homes built has been around 8,000, leaving a significant shortfall.
- Rural house prices are much higher, rural wages are much lower and the gap between them is widening particularly for agricultural workers. There is a premium for rural housing in all parts of the country and property prices in the countryside are, on average, £43,490 (22 per cent) higher than in urban areas according to the Halifax Housing Survey 2015.

- Research by the National Housing Federation found that in 77 per cent of rural local authorities, house prices are outstripping average incomes faster than the rate of the national average. In 69 rural local authorities, house prices were more than the national average rate of 6.8 times average wages. The average rural worker would need a wage rise of around 150 per cent just to be able to buy a home.
- We are concerned that these factors have not been fully addressed in the Government's recent Housing and Planning Act and that the extension of Right to Buy to Housing Association properties in rural areas will further deplete affordable housing stock as there is no obligation to replace houses that are sold off.
- The proposals could be an opportunity to enable Local Authorities to work with communities and Housing Associations to develop small groups of affordable housing for local people to rent or buy, where they meet criteria of local support, good design, and are affordable in perpetuity.
- We also believe the Government should implement a number of proposals, consulted on by the last Labour Government, to provide incentives for landowners to bring forward land for affordable housing.
- The Countryside Alliance has also used the Government's Rural Planning Review to call for changes to permitted development rights which would mean farmers no longer have to choose between their residential or agricultural permitted development. Under our proposals farmers will have greater flexibility on when they are able to use their Class Q rights to convert from agricultural to residential use which will help deliver sustainable housing development whilst also supporting farmers who are facing some of the most difficult trading conditions in a generation.

Countryside Alliance calls for:

- **Planning system that is efficient with planning policies that support sustainable rural life and businesses; including better use of permitted development rights.**
- **Government to implement measures to incentivise landowners to bring forward land for affordable housing.**
- **Locally led provision of affordable local housing to meet local need.**

For more information please contact:

Sarah Lee
 Head of Policy
Sarah-lee@countryside-alliance.org
 0207 840 9250

James Somerville-Meikle
 Political Relations Manager
James-sm@countryside-alliance.org
 0207 840 9260