

Land Business Update

Week commencing 21 July 2025

Farming & food

Capital Grants scheme already 50% allocated so act quickly

Defra has said that just over half of available funds have been allocated to around 5,000 applications. The round will close to applications when the available funding (£150m) has been committed, so act quickly if you might want to apply. Funding is not guaranteed even if an application has been submitted and is eligible and, when the scheme is closed, Defra will not fund applications that have been started but not yet submitted. Defra will aim to give reasonable notice of the scheme closing but this may not be possible. We have been warned! A further round is likely to open in 2026.

NB The closure applies to standalone Capital Grants only. Capital grant applications through Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier, Capital Grants Plans (for species, agroforestry and woodland management plans), Protection and Infrastructure grants or Woodland Tree Health will not be closed / affected. Please do call our farming team if you have any questions.

Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) 'exception groups' invited to apply

The 3,000 or so applicants who had started an application between 12th January and 11th March 2025 but did not submit it have been given to 18th August to complete an application. A further 800 people in other 'exception groups', including those who could not apply due to RPA system issues, can also apply. Please contact [Alice Johnson](#) if you would like to discuss.

Sustainable Farming Scheme final proposals

A revised and final version of the Scheme has been published. The structure of the Scheme remains the same, with three levels - universal, optional and collaborative – but there have been some significant changes, including removing the 10% tree cover requirement, reducing the number of universal actions to 12 from 17 and including common land. Instead, participants will need to complete an opportunity plan for woodland and hedgerow creation in the first year of their agreement and show progress towards it by the end of the 2028 scheme year. The requirement for farms to have at least 10% of their land actively managed as habitat is unchanged. The Scheme is expected to launch in 2026, with a four-year transition period during which Basic Payments will be reduced from 60% of historical payments in 2026 by 20% a year until they are phased out in 2030. There will also be a £300,000 cap on payments and tapering for those receiving more than £25,000 a year. The proposals have been broadly welcomed but farming organisations have asked for more funding and a multi-annual budget, while environmental groups have said that it does not go far enough quickly enough to restore nature.

Natural capital & environment

Lead ammunition to be banned for most uses in England, Scotland and Wales

Shotgun pellets and bullets that contain lead are to be banned for almost all uses. The restrictions will be phased in over three years from 2026, rather than the five as proposed by the HSE last year. The proposals have been welcomed widely although some shooting organisations have warned that replacement ammunition may not be fully available in time. There are some exemptions for shooting with small-calibre bullets, because of a lack of non-lead alternatives, and for some athletics, military, police and target shooting ranges.

Climate change is a growing threat to the UK economy, says Bank of England and the government

The Bank's deputy governor for financial stability said climate change represents a growing threat to the UK's economic stability, could worsen inflationary shocks and trigger the sudden repricing of assets. She warned the commercial property sector that current pricing of property and lending to property did not fully reflect the climate risks. Separately, the European Central Bank has said that climate change will increase global food price inflation and the EU's top insurance regulator has warned that more



households will be unable to insure their homes, calling natural catastrophes the biggest risk facing society. The government has also said that for political parties (and people) who say “let’s abandon the fight against the climate crisis”, this report is a sign of what a betrayal that would be. Because the warning could not be clearer about what is happening to our climate and the fact that our British way of life is under threat.”

Rural economy & property

Solar Roadmap published

The [roadmap](#), developed by the government’s Solar Taskforce, outlines 11 actions including how to address skills shortages and training in the sector. Solar energy capacity is expected to grow by 17% in 2025 and to triple by 2030 with solar, at times, providing virtually all of the UK’s electricity. Speaking at the launch, the head of Solar Energy UK Chris Hewett said that even in 2030 solar farms would occupy less than 1% of the country’s farmland, so too small an area affect food security. He also took the opportunity to warn how fossil fuel companies continue to issue false information about renewable energy, and quoted research for Copper Consultancy that found that solar farms are overwhelmingly popular among people who already live near them, with only a small minority vocally opposed to them. Separately, the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) has reported that home solar installation levels were at their highest rate since 2015 in the first half of 2025, buoyed by installations in Wales. The Government estimates that a typical existing UK home could save around £530 a year from installing rooftop solar, based on the current energy price cap. With the average cost of an installation being £7,600, this represents a 14 year payback period or 7% return on capital employed. Please contact [Tom Charles](#) in our renewables team if you would like to discuss the Roadmap or a solar project.

Plug in solar panels being assessed

The government has started a safety review that could allow plug in solar panels to be more widely used on houses, including rented ones. The review will focus on how the socket the panel is connected to would connect to a home’s fuse box. Plug in panels are allowed in a number of other countries, including Germany where almost half a million were installed last year.

UK’s first Onshore Wind Strategy also published

The Strategy sets out over 40 actions, primarily government commitments, to resolve the key blockers to onshore wind in the UK. It aims to boost onshore wind deployment and deliver economic benefits to communities, businesses and the consumer. It’s target is to deliver 29GW of onshore wind capacity by 2030 and to unlock £70m of community funding for rural towns and villages a year.

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, including a ban on upward-only rent reviews

The [Bill](#), which has been introduced to Parliament, includes measures for:

- A new Community Right to Buy, which gives communities the first opportunity to purchase local assets such as pubs, shops, and sports grounds, and extends the time to raise funds.
- Banning of upward only rent reviews in commercial leases in England and Wales, to reduce pressure on small businesses and reduce high street vacancies. The changes will not affect existing leases.
- Further powers for Mayors, including on planning and delivering housing and infrastructure.
- The creation of Strategic Authorities, to improve coordination between councils on major issues like transport and regeneration.
- A Local Audit Office, to improve transparency and accountability in council spending.

The proposals have been broadly welcomed by bodies representing the different layers of local government, with almost all calling for clarity on implementation and government financing. In relation to rent reviews, the British Property Federation criticised the proposal as interfering in long-established commercial leasing arrangements without any prior consultation.

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