

The Council expresses concern that:

- The UK's level of food sufficiency is decreasing. According to the National Farmers Union, this decreased from 78% in 1984 to 60% in 2021.
- ~~Austerity policies have left many in rural communities feeling abandoned, due to the decrease in accessibility of local services and the detrimental impact of rural transport poverty on social mobility and equal opportunity.~~
- **National, County and Mayoral policies have impacted lives in rural communities, including the detrimental impact of rural transport poverty. Local authorities are operating in a difficult economic climate with reduced funds coming from central Government in some areas.**
- The UK experiences significant skill shortages, agriculture being one of the industries most affected **by post-Brexit national immigration policies, local demographic changes and other factors**. ~~The impact of Brexit, with many EU workers returning to home countries or choosing to work in another EU country, has exacerbated these shortages.~~
- ~~In addition, the shortage of vocational options locally for many and accessibility of agriculture-related university courses in our region is a barrier for many young people considering farming.~~ **the skills strategy of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has and does impact accessibility of agriculture-related educational and advancement opportunities within Cambridgeshire. This is situated in a national context where vocational education is competing with a focus on university education.**
- Climate change and extreme weather has visibly and negatively impacted our farmers, with the effects on soil, water supply, natural pest control and many other factors.

The Council is recommended to commit to:

- Looking at, subject to ensuring compliance with procurement and changes to procurement rules, **and confirming that the council could actually measure the outcomes**, targeting that at least half the food procured for council funded events is sourced locally and encouraging our partners to do the same.
- Supporting the National Farmers' Union "Back British Farming" campaign.

- Promoting, in partnership with our relevant education partners and organisations working with farmers, pathways and opportunities for young people, including young people from non-farming families, to develop their own businesses in farming locally.
- Considering, when assessing our policies against the socio-economic duty we adopted as a council, rural-proofing our policies to mitigate disproportionate impact on rural communities.
- **Asking the Combined Authority to include specific training to support and encourage future agricultural, agritech and related employment.**
- Asking our Chief Executive to write to the Minister of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to call for protecting UK food standards under all existing and future free trade agreements, calling for protection of workers' rights in the agricultural sector and expressing concern about labour shortages locally and nationally, calling for a more flexible seasonal worker scheme at a minimum for our agricultural sector.