Review of Agricultural Land Take to Development

Final Report

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NATURAL ENGLAND

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Citation

Foreword

Natural England commissioned this research project to undertake a rapid, desk-based review to gather evidence on the amount of agricultural land take occurring as a result of development. This project included an assessment of the recent loss of high quality agricultural land (i.e. Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land) in England over the period 2013 – 2022, and an analysis of this land take against previous assessments to indicate whether and how land take is changing, and reflecting current policy.

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system was developed by Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) in the mid 1960's to map the distribution of agricultural land quality across England and Wales, to a common standard. This was to characterise agricultural land quality and enable scarce high-quality land to be protected from loss to development, through the planning system.

Current planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)), recognises the importance of soil natural capital and ecosystem services, and the protection of the best agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is involved, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should take into account the economic and other benefits of BMV agricultural land. For development plans, poorer quality land for agriculture should be used in preference to that of a higher quality agricultural land and re-use of brownfield sites is encouraged.

This review aims to assess the spatial location and extent of BMV land lost to new development in the last decade; and to evaluate the information and processes used by planners to assess BMV land issues. The review also aimed to identify any tools or guidance necessary to improve the quality of decision-making process for LPAs in planning applications that affect BMV land.

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Executive summary

This research builds upon Defra's 2004 and 2011 reviews of policy on the protection of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (Defra 2004 and 2011), exploring the extent to which the current planning framework has protected BMV land in England over the past ten years. This is achieved by quantifying spatially and temporally the loss of agricultural land to development, and reviewing the weight given to BMV land by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and Planning Inspectors through interviews and case studies.

Spatial and temporal analysis of agricultural land loss to development

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) land use change statistics (2013-2018, and 2019-2022) and Ordnance Survey (OS) MasterMap data (2018-2019) were used to quantify conversion of agricultural land to developed land and vacant land in England. Analysis identified a gross total of 111,058 ha of agricultural land converted to development and vacant land between 2013-2022.

For the periods 2013-2018 and 2019, a net loss of agricultural land for each year data is available was observed, representing an estimated loss of approximately 1% of England's existing agricultural land. Results suggest no clear temporal trends in the overall rates of agricultural land lost between 2013-2018 and 2022. The analysis found an average rate of gross agricultural land loss of 10,645 ha per year for this period. This is substantially higher than the previous review, where an average rate of loss of 3,487 ha per year was identified between 1998-2008 (Defra, 2011). However, methodological changes mean land use change statistics pre- and post-2013 are not directly comparable.

Using the Natural England Likelihood of BMV agricultural land dataset, analysis indicates that of the gross agricultural land loss, 31% was in areas with a high likelihood of being BMV, 26% in areas with a medium likelihood, 23% with a low likelihood, and 19% in areas identified as non-agricultural. It is important to note however that this measures BMV likelihood only, and it is not possible from this alone to conclusively determine whether development has occurred on BMV or non-BMV land.

Regional profiles highlight spatial variance in development on agricultural land, with the East (18,196 ha), South East (17,955 ha), South West (17,346 ha) and East Midlands (15,321 ha) seeing the most loss. Similarly, LPA profiles highlight substantial variations in the quantity of agricultural land, the extent of land likely to be BMV, the volume of development, and the proportion of this on land with a high likelihood of being BMV.

Further analysis was performed using pre- and post-1988 "detailed" Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) mapping which distinguishes BMV land, but is only available for approximately 7% of the land area of England. Of the 106,600 ha of gross agricultural land change to development identified within the land use change statistics, 26.3% occurred in locations covered by detailed ALC mapping, of which 42.6% was mapped BMV land,

largely grades 2 and 3a. If it is assumed that this proportion of development on BMV land identified from detailed mapping holds true nationally, this would suggest an estimated net loss of approximately 1% of the estimated national stock of BMV land in England. It is important to note however that the distribution and extent of this detailed mapping will not necessarily provide a representative sample of the actual extent and distribution of BMV land in England, as such these are indicative values only.

These results, and the limitations of these described, highlight the need for a national-scale BMV map for England, following those found in Wales, to allow for the true scale of BMV land loss in England to be understood.

Review of weight that is given to BMV land by Local Planning Authorities and Planning Inspectors

Interviews were conducted with six LPAs situated in regions characterised by both a high proportion of land likely to be BMV and large urban areas. All LPAs were found to possess some level of understanding regarding the significance of BMV land, although those authorities containing a larger proportion of high likelihood BMV land and possessing more Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Chartered staff, were seen to demonstrate a comparatively greater understanding. Despite this, only one interviewed LPA was found to actively monitor and report on the loss of BMV land.

Six case study reviews were undertaken with selected LPA planning decision reports (refusal of planning permission). All decisions reviewed, referenced relevant NPPF policies, and the majority conducted thorough assessments of BMV land within their reports. However, the specific weight afforded to BMV land amongst other planning issues was not cited, and for four decisions it was further unclear if the LPAs considered the Government guidance on assessing development proposals on agricultural land. LPAs were found to utilise a variety of resources in their decision-making process, but a need for additional information and resources to allow for consistent decisions was highlighted.

No clear correlation was found indicating that planning applications affecting larger areas or higher ALC grades are more prone to refusal by the LPA on those grounds. For two case studies, the political influence of planning committees on decisions relating to BMV land was highlighted, with planning officer's recommendations for approval being overturned by planning committee members.

Five Planning Inspector appeal decision reports (appeals against refusal of planning permission) were subsequently reviewed. These indicated that the loss of BMV land was a material consideration in these case studies, with it being considered that the loss of BMV land was afforded moderate to significant weight by Planning Inspectors. It was also found that Planning Inspectors scrutinised the wording of the LPA planning policies relating to the loss or protection of BMV agricultural land against the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance. However, these reviews also highlight how Planning Inspectors weigh the loss of BMV land against other potential public benefits derived from proposed developments, such as bolstering energy security.

Contents

Introduction

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) was developed during the mid-1960s to map agricultural land quality to a common standard, and provides a system through which high quality agricultural land could be protected from loss through the planning system. The system provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use, with the principal factors influencing this being climate, site, and soil type. This is used to assign land to one of five numbered grades, ranging from Grade 1 (excellent quality agricultural land) to Grade 5 (very poor quality agricultural land).

Following the introduction of the ALC system, a Provisional Series of ALC maps were produced between 1967 and 1974, covering England and Wales. These Provisional maps were intended as a strategic guide to land quality, primarily to support regional and county level planning.

Revised technical guidelines and criteria for grading were subsequently published in 1976 and in 1988 with ALC Grade 3 divided into Subgrades 3a and 3b in the current ALC system. The current ALC grades and subgrades are as follows:

- Grade 1: Excellent quality agricultural land

- Grade 2: Very good quality agricultural land

- Grade 3: Good to moderate quality agricultural land

    - Subgrade 3a: Good quality agricultural land

    - Subgrade 3b: Moderate quality agricultural land

- Grade 4: Poor quality agricultural land

- Grade 5: Very poor quality agricultural land

Grade 1, Grade 2 and Subgrade 3a land is termed Best and Most Versatile (BMV). This is land which is most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs, and which can best deliver future crops.

Upon introduction, the national ALC system formed the basis for advice given by the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and Welsh Office Agriculture Department (WOAD) on land use planning matters, where it was noted that the classification was well established in the planning system (MAFF, 1988). Today, Government planning policy is outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that:

"where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. The availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside the other

policies in this Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development."

This research builds upon Defra's 2004 and 2011 reviews of policy on the protection of BMV land (projects LE0217 and SP1501), and will explore the extent to which the current planning framework has protected BMV land in England over the last ten years. Since the completion of the 2011 review, there have been changes in both the policy landscape, with the introduction of the NPPF in 2012 and government Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) in 2018; and available datasets, with the publishing of new statistics identifying land use change for the periods 2013 - 2018, and 2019 - 2022.

The aim of this project is to build upon and update this previous work, identifying where agricultural land in England has been lost to development since the last review, and exploring how BMV land is evaluated in the decision-making process by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and Planning Inspectors.

Spatial and temporal analysis of agricultural land loss to development

Background and Context

This chapter assesses the spatial location and extent of agricultural land, including BMV land, lost to permanent development in England between 2013 and 2022.

The ALC system was developed in the 1960s as a planning tool to protect the most productive and versatile agricultural land. The system provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which the physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. The principal factors influencing this are climate (e.g. temperature and rainfall), site (e.g. gradient and flood risk) and soil type (e.g. texture, stoniness, depth).

Following the introduction of the ALC system in 1966, a Provisional Series of ALC maps were produced between 1967 and 1974 at a scale of One Inch to One Mile. These were subsequently used to prepare a series of Regional ALC Maps (Natural England, 2010), more appropriate for use in strategic planning (Natural England, 2012), which remain the only currently available continuous and gapless estimate of ALC grades for England. These Provisional ALC maps show agricultural land in one of five grades, ranging from Grade 1 ('Excellent') to Grade 5 ('Very Poor'). Nearly half of England was assessed as Grade 3 land (

Table 0.1).

Table 0.1: Distribution of Provisional ALC grades across England.

ALC Grade	Area (ha)	% of total
Grade 1	354,585	3
Grade 2	1,849,074	14
Grade 3	6,290,210	48
Grade 4	1,840,050	14
Grade 5	1,100,734	8
Non Agricultural	656,189	5
Urban	951,513	7
Exclusion	1,646	0.01
Total	13,044,001	100

Source: Regional ALC Maps (Natural England, 2010)

An updated set of guidance was published in 1976 (MAFF Technical Report 11/1), which subdivided Grade 3 land into Subgrades 3a, 3b and 3c. In 1988, a significant further revision was made and published as The Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land (MAFF, 1988), which included more robust soil and climate assessments. Furthermore, this revision included a split of Grade 3 into Sub-grades 3a and 3b (3c was amalgamated with 3b). Grades 1, 2 and Subgrade 3a have subsequently been used to define BMV agricultural land (Natural England, 2001), the highest quality agricultural land, considered to be most productive and versatile. Current planning policy (the NPPF) notes that planning policies and decisions should recognise the benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, including the economic and other benefits of BMV agricultural land (DLUHC, 2023).

The last assessment of agricultural and BMV land loss to development was undertaken in 2011, covering the period 1998 – 2008 (Defra, 2011). This identified around 38,355 ha of agricultural land converted to other permanent development uses during this time, equating to approximately 0.35% of the total agricultural land in England. Of this 38,355 ha, it was estimated that around 15,725 hectares was BMV, equating to approximately 0.35% of BMV land within England.

Since the 2011 review (Defra SP1501), further datasets identifying land use change have been published for the periods 2013 - 2018, and 2019 – 2022. This chapter utilises these latest datasets to provide an updated assessment of agricultural land and BMV land loss to development.

Datasets Utilised

Following discussions and investigation into national dataset availability with Natural England, the following data sources were assessed and considered for use in this analysis.

Agricultural Land Classification Mapping

Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (England)

A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) dataset of the national Provisional ALC map (Natural England, 2019a), available under the Open Government License, was provided by Natural England. This dataset was digitised from the 1:250,000 Regional ALC maps (Natural England, 2010). It therefore does not distinguish ALC Subgrades 3a and 3b, and such is unable to distinguish BMV land. For this reason, it was not used as a primary data source in the subsequent analysis, in favour of detailed ALC mapping and Likelihood of BMV Agricultural land mapping.

Detailed Agricultural Land Classification Mapping

A dataset containing pre-1988 (Natural England, 2016) and post-1988 (Natural England, 2019b) detailed ALC mapping for limited areas was also provided for use in the project (**Figure 0.1**). This data is only available for a small proportion of England. However, it can be used to identify BMV land, with pre-1988 mapping subdividing Grade 3 into Sub-grades 3a, 3b and 3c, and post-1988 mapping distinguishing Subgrades 3a and 3b (with 3c amalgamated with 3b).

Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

In England in 2000, a predictive map for ALC was created. This complemented the Provisional ALC maps but did not replace them. Land in Grades 1 and 2, on the Provisional Maps, were classed as high probability BMV. This was supported by field survey evidence. Land climatically limited to Subgrade 3b, Grade 4 or 5 was automatically placed in low probability BMV. For other areas, likelihood was assigned using soil associations as the main basis for assessment, with each soil association being assessed against current ALC classification criteria (MAFF, 1988) using a combination of post-1988 field survey evidence, provisional ALC map data, climate data, and published Soil Survey and Land Research Centre (now National Soil Resources Institute) information (Natural England, 2001).

Five categories are identified on the maps:

- Areas where more than 60% of the land is likely to be BMV agricultural land ("High likelihood of BMV agricultural land").

- Areas where 20-60% of the land is likely to BMV agricultural land ("Moderate likelihood of BMV agricultural land").

- Areas where less than 20% of the land is likely to be BMV agricultural land ("Low likelihood of BMV agricultural land").

- "Non agricultural use"

- "Urban / industrial"

A national GIS dataset containing this BMV likelihood data was provided for use in this project by Natural England (**Figure 0.2**). It is noted that the map is intended for strategic planning purposes only, and is therefore not suitable for the definitive classification of individual sites (Natural England, 2001). It is at this time however the only national dataset available for assessing potential changes in BMV land in England.

Figure 0.1: Coverage of detailed ALC mapping (pre and post-1988) within England. © Natural England 2024 © Crown Copyright and database rights 2024. Ordnance Survey AC0000851168 © RSK ADAS Ltd

Figure 0.2: Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Land dataset. © Natural England 2024 © Crown Copyright and database rights 2024. Ordnance Survey AC0000851168 National Soil Map data © Cranfield University © RSK ADAS Ltd

Land Use Change Mapping

Land Use Change Statistics - Hectares

Land use change – hectarage, published as part of the DLUHC land use change statistics, presents information on the amount of land changing from one land use to a new one (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2023).

The statistics are derived from a combination of OS data products. At the start (April 1st) and end (March 31st) of each reporting period, snapshots of these datasets are extracted and matched against a series of lookup tables to assign a land use classification to each feature. Land use at the start and end of the period is compared, and polygons identifying where there has been change generated (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015).

Polygons representing this land use change were provided by DLUHC to Natural England for use in this project, with OS data within these being licensed under the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement. Polygon data was provided for the following time periods:

- 2013 – 2014

- 2014 – 2015

- 2015 – 2016

- 2016 – 2017

- 2017 – 2018

- 2019 – 2022

Data was unavailable for the 2018 – 2019 period. In addition to this, data for the 2016 – 2017 period was provided as points only. These points identify the central location of land use change, but do not delineate the change boundary itself.

It is important to note that there is a time lag between a land use change occurring, and this being recorded and featured within OS products, and therefore the land use change statistics datasets. Land use change statistics documentation notes that at the time of the statistic's production, all of England was updated on a two to five year cycle (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015), and that major developments and landscape changes are monitored every six months, and rural areas and more minor changes revisited on a three-year cycle (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2023). Consequently, change recorded within the statistics will not represent all real-world change within the reporting period, rather, only that change which has been captured by the OS within that period.

Methodological Changes

Land use change statistics were likewise used in the previous assessment of agricultural and BMV land loss to development, covering the period 1998 – 2008 (Defra, 2011). It is important to note however that the methodology used in deriving the change statistics was updated for the 2013 – 2014 release. These methodological changes, and expected impacts on derived statistics, are outlined in Department for Communities and Local Government (2015). Changes likely to be of relevance to reviewing change in agricultural land are highlighted in Table 0.2. As a result of this, land use change values used in this assessment and in the previous assessment are not directly comparable. In addition to these changes to existing classifications, four new classes were also introduced for features that cannot be identified with confidence in the new methodology (Table 0.3).

Table 0.2: Subset of land use classifications and definitions used until 2008, and from 2013 onwards, and their expected impact on resulting statistics.

Classification	Previous Definition	New Definition	Impact
Agricultural	Agricultural Land (as identified by a surveyor).	Inferred agricultural land use, based on any "general natural surface" that is not otherwise classified, in rural areas.	More land will be identified as agricultural in the new methodology than the old methodology.
Agricultural Buildings	Agricultural Buildings (as identified by a surveyor).	Inferred agricultural buildings, defined as any building with no other classification that lies within 300m of a farmhouse.	Some differences in this category will be apparent.
Outdoor Leisure	Outdoor leisure areas (as identified by a surveyor).	Outdoor leisure areas, inferred from OS MasterMap and additional attribution. Likely to be incomplete – some will be wrongly classified as agricultural.	The new methodology is expected to report a smaller area than the old methodology.
Vacant	Vacant land. This was generally excluded as a category to reduce the number of rows in the old methodology, apart from where	Vacant land is now well-defined, and includes ALL land that is "sealed" off for development – either with development underway, or closed off for future	The new methodology is expected to report a much larger area in this category than the old methodology.

Classification	Previous Definition	New Definition	Impact
	land was cleared to remain vacant for a substantial period of time.	development. This category is no longer suppressed.	

Source: Modified from Department for Communities and Local Government (2015).

Table 0.3: New land use classification categories added from 2013-14

Classification	Description
Unidentified building	Buildings where no other classification is available
Unidentified general manmade surface (not roadside)	Hard standing; usually a car park, paved area, tarmac or other similar construct
Unidentified structure	Manmade structures where no other classification is available
Unknown surface type with no other classification	Applied to features where no other classification is available

Source: Modified from Department for Communities and Local Government (2015).

Land Use Classification

The full land use classification system used within the land use change statistics from 2013-2014 onwards is outlined in Table 0.4. In this system, change is recorded from, or to, one of 28 classes. These classes are themselves organised within 13 groups, which are further classed as developed land, non-developed land, or vacant.

Table 0.4: Land use categories used within the land use change statistics (post 2013/14).

Group	Category	Code
Developed Land		
Community services	Community buildings	C

Group	Category	Code
Community services	Leisure (indoor)	L
Defence buildings	Defence buildings	D
Industry and commerce	Industry	I
Industry and commerce	Retail	K
Industry and commerce	Storage and warehousing	S
Minerals and landfill	Minerals and mining	M
Minerals and landfill	Landfill and waste disposal	Y
Other developed use	Unidentified building	~B
Other developed use	Unidentified general manmade surface	~M
Other developed use	Unidentified structure	~S
Other developed use	Unknown surface type with no classification	~U
Residential	Communal accommodation	Q
Residential	Residential	R
Transport and utilities	Highways and roads	H
Transport and utilities	Transport (other)	T
Transport and utilities	Utilities	U
Non-Developed Land		
Agriculture	Agricultural land	A

Group	Category	Code
Agriculture	Agricultural buildings	B
Forestry, open land and water	Forestry and woodland	F
Forestry, open land and water	Rough grassland	G
Forestry, open land and water	Natural land	N
Forestry, open land and water	Water	W
Outdoor recreation	Outdoor recreation	O
Residential gardens	Residential gardens	RG
Undeveloped land	Undeveloped land	X
Vacant Land		
Vacant land	Vacant land	V

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government (2023).

Following the previous assessment, this work primarily considers loss from the agricultural land category. Within the land use change statistics, this is classified as areas of crops, grassland, hop fields and fruit bushes etc, corresponding to white areas without symbol or annotations on the OS map. Orchards and nurseries shown by annotations on the OS map. Notably, this excludes rough grassland, which sits within its own category. Following this previous methodology, land use change from the agricultural land category, to a category within the developed land or vacant land groups (Table 0.4), is quantified.

Within the land use change statistics, the vacant land use group is defined as land that is sealed off for future development, or where development is underway (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015). For this assessment, it is assumed that change to this group constitutes a loss of agricultural land, although it is not possible from the provided datasets to definitively define whether the land is currently, or will in the future be, of a developed land use type (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2023).

Similarly, it is noted that within this assessment, change from the agricultural category to the new unknown surface type with no classification category is considered a loss of

agricultural land. This mirrors the methodology used within published land use change statistics, where unknown surface types are categorised as developed land (Table 0.4).

Finally, maintaining consistency with the previous assessment, this work largely excludes change from agricultural buildings (Category B) to development. In the previous report, it is noted that this primarily concerns the conversion of farm buildings to residential and therefore will not directly impact the availability of BMV land.

Processing of Land Use Change Data

As highlighted in the preceding section, land use change data provided for use in this project was incomplete and in incompatible formats. A number of additional processing steps were therefore carried out to provide the most complete land use change time series for the period 2013 – 2022 feasibly achievable with available datasets.

Gap Filling of 2018 - 2019 Land Use Change Data

Land use change data was not available for the period 2018 – 2019. To address this gap, historic OS MasterMap data was obtained under the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement for April 19th 2018 and March 21st 2019, the closest available dates to the land use change statistics reporting period.

A total of 13,334 MasterMap data files were provided by the OS consisting of 212,000,000 land use parcels. These were subsequently merged, and relevant features extracted.

Within OS MasterMap, each feature is assigned to one of 21 descriptive groups. These are broad categories that define the primary classification of a feature. Within this system, agricultural land is assigned to the General Surface group, which includes further man-made features such as tanks, spoil heaps and slipways. The descriptive group alone cannot therefore be used to identify areas of agricultural land specifically.

Features may also be optionally assigned one or more descriptive terms, which provide further classification information, including whether the area is agricultural land (Ordnance Survey GB, 2023). Visual inspection of the provided datasets indicates that not all agricultural areas are assigned this optional agricultural land term. Nonetheless, it was considered that usage of this was the most practical method of identifying agricultural land within the scope of this project.

Further to these descriptions, each feature is also assigned a make, indicating whether the feature is man-made, natural, or a combination of these. Areas classified using Agricultural Land descriptive term in 2018, which were subsequently reclassified to the manmade or multiple categories in 2019, were therefore identified and extracted.

This is a simplification of the standard process used in creating the land use change statistics (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2023), and as described may provide an underestimate of the agricultural land area due to incomplete assigning of the agricultural land descriptive term. It therefore provides an indication of agricultural land loss for this period, but is not directly comparable to other periods in the time series.

Conversion of 2016 – 2017 Point Land Use Change Data

Spatial land use change statistics data for the 2016 – 2017 period was provided as points only. These points identify the central location of land use change, but do not delineate the boundary of this change itself. In order to provide an indication of this boundary, and therefore allow the grade of agricultural land within this to be identified, it was decided to convert this point data to polygons through a simple buffering process. In this, the area of development recorded at each point was identified. A circular polygon equalling this area was then drawn around the corresponding point.

Averaging of Combined 2019-22 Land Use Change Data

Whereas annual data was provided for 2013 – 2018, data for 2019 – 2022 was provided in a single combined three-year timestep. To aid in comparison, in the subsequent analysis this data is presented as three average annual values. It is noted however that that temporal variations within this period will be masked.

Methodology

The land use change datasets were standardised to follow a common schema, and inserted into a geodatabase.

Queries were first performed to summarise by year total amounts of change recorded within the land use change statistics, followed by land use change from the agricultural land category to a category within the developed land or vacant land groups specifically. Separately, OS MasterMap data was summarised to provide an indication of agricultural land loss for 2018-19.

Following this, land use change polygons identifying agricultural land loss were overlaid with the Likelihood of BMV Agricultural Land dataset, identifying the amount of agricultural land by BMV likelihood category lost to development for each time step within the provided land use change datasets.

It is important to note the Likelihood of BMV Agricultural Land dataset, produced in 2000, provides a BMV likelihood classification for areas of land used for agriculture at this time only, with other areas being assigned to the non agricultural use, or Urban / industrial categories, as appropriate. The resolution of the Likelihood of BMV Agricultural Land dataset is also at a scale much coarser and less detailed than that of the Land Use Change Statistics mapping.

As a result of this spatial and temporal mismatch, there will be instances where land use change mapping records a change from agricultural land to development, while ALC mapping indicates this area is developed already, or was not agricultural land to begin with. This may be because the area only became agricultural land after production of the BMV likelihood dataset, or because it was too small for inclusion in the coarse BMV

likelihood mapping. In these instances, it is therefore not possible to determine the BMV likelihood of the converted agricultural land.

It should also be noted that this methodology, as with the previous assessment, only considers agricultural land change to a developed or vacant land use type. Where land is undeveloped, but not classified as agricultural land within the DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics, and is converted to developed or vacant uses, this has not been measured.

Similarly, following the methodology adopted in the previous assessment, only direct conversion of agricultural land to a developed or vacant land use type is quantified. DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics are produced annually, quantifying change that occurred between the start (April 1st) and end (March 31st of the following year) of each reporting period. Where a parcel of land is converted from agricultural use to a developed or vacant use in this period, this has been included in the assessment. However, where for example a parcel of agricultural land is converted to another undeveloped use (such as open land) in one year, and in a subsequent year this is converted to a developed or vacant use, this would not be recorded as a change from agricultural land to developed or vacant, and so has not been recorded in this assessment.

Results and Analysis

Agricultural Land Change in England

A total of 9,613,617 records of land use change are recorded in the provided land use change statistics datasets (**Figure 0.3**, Table A1). Total areas of change are variable, ranging from 78,256 ha in 2017-18, to 206,607 ha in 2014-15, dominated by a change from the agriculture (331,009 ha), and forestry, open land and water (324,889 ha) groups (Figure 2.3 and Table A1).

A filter was applied to consider loss of agricultural land only. Following the previous review of agricultural land loss to development (Defra, 2011), this work largely excludes loss of agricultural buildings. Figure 0.4 and Table A2 therefore presents change from the agricultural land class, to all other land use classes. This shows that loss of agricultural land in England since 2013 has primarily been to forestry, open land and water (208,475 ha), followed by other developed uses (46,202 ha).

Figure 0.3: Land use change in England, 2013-2022, categorised by land use group the land was changed from. Full tabulated data provided in Table A1.

Figure 0.4: Agricultural land conversion to other land uses in England, 2013-2022, categorised by land use group the land was changed to. Full tabulated data provided in Table A2.

To quantify loss of agricultural land to development specifically, a final filter was applied to identify land use change from the agricultural class, to a developed group described in Table 2.4: community services, defence buildings, industry and commerce, minerals and landfill, other developed use, residential, transport and utilities, and vacant land. The results of this process are provided in Figure 0.5, Figure 0.6 and Table A3.

Figure 0.5: Loss of agricultural land to developed uses in England, 2013-2022. Full tabulated data provided in Table A3.

Figure 0.6: Spatial distribution of agricultural land to developed and vacant, 2013-2018, 2019-2022. © Natural England 2024 © Crown Copyright and database rights 2024. Ordnance Survey 10002857 © RSK ADAS Ltd

Results show that a gross total of 106,600 hectares of agricultural land were converted to developed and vacant between 2013-2018, and 2019-2022. Following the previous review, this is a gross total of direct loss of agricultural land, and therefore does not consider change to agricultural land, or indirect change (for example, change from agricultural land from forestry, and subsequently development).

Of these, land use change statistics identify 46,202 ha to the other developed use group (encompassing unidentified structures and manmade surfaces, as well as unknown surface types), and 35,875 ha to the vacant group (encompassing land that is sealed off for future development, or where development is underway). A further 9,470 ha was converted to transport and utilities, and 7,096 ha to residential. The remaining 7,957 ha saw change to minerals and landfill, industry and commerce, community services, and defence.

A further query was performed to identify instances where developed land uses saw change to agricultural land, and therefore quantify net change (Figure 0.7). Results highlight a net loss of agricultural land for each year data is available, ranging from -14,168 ha in 2014-15, to -9,405 ha in 2013-14, with a total net loss of agricultural land loss to development of 85,161 ha. This is equal to approximately 1,000 averaged sized UK agricultural holdings (Defra, 2024). The 2022 Land Use Statistics identify 8,225,085 ha of agricultural land in England (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2022). This therefore represents an estimated loss of approximately 1% of England's existing agricultural land between 2013-2018, and 2019-2022.

Figure 0.7: Net areal changes in English agricultural land, 2013-2022.

Temporal Variation

Results of this analysis suggest no clear trends in the overall amount of agricultural land used for new development between 2013 and 2022. However, the OS data which the land use change statistics are derived from is not updated nationally each year, and such apparent temporal trends will be partially influenced by the extent and composition of areas resurveyed as part of the OS data capture programme.

Compared with the previous review (Defra, 2011), rates of agricultural land loss found here are substantially higher (Figure 0.8). However, methodological changes since Defra project SP1501 mean land use change statistics from 1998-2008, and 2013-2022 are not directly comparable.

Figure 0.5 highlights that loss of agricultural land to development identified in this study is dominated by transitions to the 'vacant' and 'other developed use' land use groups. As noted in Table 0.2, vacant land was generally excluded as a category in previous statistics, whereas post-2013 this class is well defined and includes all land sealed off for development. It is therefore possible that the previous review underestimated the area of agricultural land converted to vacant, and subsequently developed uses. The Other developed use group, which encompasses unidentified buildings and surfaces, was introduced with the 2013 statistical release for features which cannot be further classified with any confidence using the new methodology.

Figure 0.8: Agricultural land loss to development in England, 1997 - 2008 and 2013 - 2022. Land Use Change Statistics data is unavailable for the period 2008 – 2013.

Conversely, it is also noted that post 2013, agricultural land identified within the land use change statistics is *inferred*, with more land identified as agricultural in the new

methodology than the old methodology. Results presented here will therefore overestimate areas of agricultural land, and therefore loss from this, compared with the previous review.

Agricultural land loss for 2018-2019

The land use change statistics data is not available for the period 2018-2019. It is therefore not possible to obtain a complete time series of agricultural land use change from this alone. Analysis of historic OS MasterMap data identified an additional 4,458 ha of agricultural land conversion to man-made surfaces during this time period.

With the inclusion of this, the analysis identifies a total gross conversion of agricultural land to development of 111,058 ha between 2013-2022.

Agricultural Land Change and Best and Most Versatile Land Likelihood

National Profile

The analytical process was extended by overlaying polygons identifying land use change from agriculture to developed land uses, over the BMV likelihood dataset. Results of this analysis (Figure 0.9, Figure 0.11) show a total of 33,522 ha of agricultural land with a high likelihood of being BMV lost (31%); 27,965 ha with a medium likelihood (26%); 24,958 ha with a low likelihood (23%); and 20,156 ha identified as non-agricultural, urban or industrial within the strategic-scale BMV likelihood dataset (19%).

This indicates that where development has occurred in areas identified as agricultural within the BMV likelihood dataset, this is more likely to have happened in areas with a high likelihood of being BMV, compared to a low or moderate likelihood. This is comparable to the previous review, which found that of the 38,355 ha of development identified, 31% of this was within the high likelihood category, 25% the medium likelihood category, and 44% in a combined low and other category.

To explore this further, the proportion of each BMV likelihood category in England was compared with the proportion of agricultural land change that occurred in each of these categories (Figure 0.10). This too suggests that considering the distribution of BMV land likelihood categories across England, recent development on agricultural land has been slightly more likely to occur on land with a higher likelihood of being BMV. That is, while 28% of England's land area is classified in the BMV likelihood dataset as having a high likelihood of being BMV, 31% of agricultural land change to developed and vacant was in these areas.

The result of this is that new development on agricultural land has led to the loss of 0.90% of the national stock of land with a high likelihood of BMV; 0.85% with a medium likelihood; 0.66% with a low likelihood; and 0.81% non-agricultural, urban or industrial, as measured by the BMV likelihood dataset (including areas such as rough grazing, not classified as agricultural within the land use change statistics).

Figure 0.9: Profile of BMV land by likelihood lost to new development, 2013-22. Where high: high likelihood of being BMV lost; medium: medium likelihood of being BMV lost; and low: low likelihood of being BMV lost.

Figure 0.10: The proportion of each BMV likelihood category in England compared with the proportion of development that occurred in each of these categories (2013-22).

It is important to note that loss quantified in this analysis considers agricultural land as identified within land use change statistics only, and not for example development on rough grassland. The BMV likelihood dataset conversely largely classifies areas such as these as agricultural. These trends may therefore reflect a higher likelihood of land identified as agricultural within the land use change statistics being in a high likelihood of BMV area. Other limitations of the BMV likelihood dataset should also be considered. Firstly, where land is recorded as non-agricultural, urban or industrial within the BMV likelihood dataset, the BMV likelihood of this land cannot be discerned. Secondly, it is important to note that this is both a strategic scale map and indication of BMV likelihood only. The High likelihood category encompasses areas where more than 60% of the land is likely to be BMV agricultural land. It is not possible from this to determine whether development occurred within a BMV or non-BMV area within this.

Regional Profiles

Further work was undertaken to explore regional trends in development on agricultural land. Results of this analysis (

Figure **0.12**,

Table 0.5 and Table 0.6) highlight regional differences in development on agricultural land, with the East of England (18,196 ha), South East (17,955 ha), South West (17,346 ha) and East Midlands (15,321 ha) seeing the most loss.

While total change recorded is higher here (between 2013-2022) than in the previous review (1998-2008; Defra SP1501), the regional distribution of this land take follows similar patterns, with the largest difference being seen in in the South East which has seen a larger increase in agricultural land loss compared to other regions. This is illustrated in Figure 0.13, which shows the proportion of the total area of agricultural land loss identified in both analyses that occurred in each region. The total values for each category therefore sum to 100%.

Figure 0.11: Agricultural land to developed and vacant, 2013-18, 2019-2022, in areas with a high likelihood of BMV. © Natural England 2024 © Crown Copyright and database rights 2024. Ordnance Survey 10002857 BMV Likelihood contains National Soil Map data © Cranfield University © RSK ADAS Ltd

Figure 0.12: Regional breakdown of development on agricultural land, categorised by BMV likelihood.

Figure 0.13: Distribution of agricultural land loss to development, 1998 – 2008 and 2013 – 2022.

Table 0.5: Regional breakdown of development on agricultural land (ha), categorised by BMV likelihood.

BMV Likelihood Category	Area (ha) of agricultural land within England					Gross area (ha) of agricultural land lost to development				
	High	Moderate	Low	Other	Total	High	Moderate	Low	Other	Total
East Midlands	539,958	481,485	341,086	218,544	1,581,072	4,439	5,345	3,535	2,002	15,321
Eastern	945,333	431,192	216,460	365,488	1,958,472	8,728	3,449	2,618	3,401	18,196
London	8,054	6,163	7,832	137,421	159,470	131	104	128	534	897
North East	75,350	199,606	430,784	161,810	867,551	400	1,566	1,955	1,344	5,265
North West	240,283	232,178	679,066	339,982	1,491,509	2,269	2,467	2,678	2,177	9,592
South East	410,730	625,566	430,151	473,546	1,939,993	4,969	5,037	4,699	3,251	17,955
South West	477,640	667,132	938,610	355,137	2,438,520	3,911	4,563	5,540	3,332	17,346
West Midlands	518,798	392,438	187,158	201,979	1,300,374	4,949	3,301	1,708	1,699	11,657
Yorkshire and the Humber	511,069	241,589	572,923	230,455	1,556,036	3,725	2,134	2,096	2,416	10,371

	Area (ha) of agricultural land within England					Gross area (ha) of agricultural land lost to development					
Total	3,727,214	3,277,350	3,804,070	2,484,363	13,292,996	33,522	27,965		24,958	20,155	106,600

Source: Derived from DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics (DLUHC, 2023b) and BMV likelihood mapping (Natural England, 2001).

Table 0.6: Regional breakdown of development on agricultural land (%), categorised by BMV likelihood.

BMV Likelihood Category	% of total agricultural land lost to new development				
	High	Moderate	Low	Other	Total
East Midlands	0.82	1.11	1.04	0.92	0.97
Eastern	0.92	0.80	1.21	0.93	0.93
London	1.63	1.68	1.64	0.39	0.56
North East	0.53	0.78	0.45	0.83	0.61
North West	0.94	1.06	0.39	0.64	0.64
South East	1.21	0.81	1.09	0.69	0.93
South West	0.82	0.68	0.59	0.94	0.71
West Midlands	0.95	0.84	0.91	0.84	0.90
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.73	0.88	0.37	1.05	0.67
Total	**0.90**	**0.85**	**0.66**	**0.81**	**0.80**

Source: Derived from DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics (DLUHC, 2023b) and BMV likelihood mapping (Natural England, 2001).

Local Planning Authority Profiles

To further investigate these spatial trends, additional analysis was undertaken to identify BMV likelihood and extents of development for each LPA within England. This is additional analysis not undertaken in the previous review, but is important to consider as it is local authority planning officers and committees who appraise the majority of planning applications.

Full results of this work are presented in Table A4 (Appendix A). These highlight substantial variations across LPAs in the quantity of agricultural land, the extent of land likely to be BMV, the volume of development, and the proportion of this on land with a high likelihood of being BMV.

Selected results are summarised in Table 0.10a-c. In percentage terms, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation LPA saw the greatest loss of high likelihood of BMV land, with 38% (65 ha) of high likelihood BMV land within the LPA seeing conversion from agriculture to developed or vacant uses. This is followed by the City of Kingston Upon Hull (19%, 16 ha) and Bracknell Forest (15%, 17 ha).

Harlow saw the highest proportion of total development on agricultural land being in areas with a high likelihood of being BMV. Of the 83 ha of agricultural land converted to developed and vacant uses, 93% (77 ha) of this was on land having a high likelihood of being BMV. This is followed by Boston (88%, 202 ha) and South Holland (87%, 299 ha). In absolute areal terms, North Yorkshire LPA saw the greatest loss in high likelihood of BMV land with 1,313 ha (0.7% lost), followed by Shropshire (974 ha, 0.7%) and the East Riding of Yorkshire (941 ha, 0.5%).

Table 0.7a: Top authorities for selected metrics in the LPA analysis: % high likelihood BMV land in LPA converted to developed and vacant

Rank	LPA	LPA size (ha)	High likelihood BMV (ha)	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	High likelihood BMV to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
1	Ebbsfleet	850	171	145	65	**38**	45
2	Kingston upon Hull	7158	84	60	16	**19**	26
3	Bracknell Forest	10938	118	148	17	**15**	12
4	Southampton	4988	12	5	1	**12**	26
5	Cambridge	4070	777	122	85	**11**	69

Source: Derived from DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics (DLUHC, 2023b) and BMV likelihood mapping (Natural England, 2001).

Table 0.8b: Top authorities for selected metrics in the LPA analysis: % total agricultural land converted to developed and vacant being on land with high likelihood of being BMV

Rank	LPA	LPA size (ha)	High likelihood BMV (ha)	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	High likelihood BMV to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
1	Harlow	3054	854	83	77	9	**93**
2	Boston	36401	32409	229	202	1	**88**
3	South Holland	75008	68667	345	299	0	**87**
4	Southend-on-Sea	4167	536	4	3	1	**85**
5	Great Yarmouth	11453	6511	118	100	2	**85**

Source: Derived from DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics (DLUHC, 2023b) and BMV likelihood mapping (Natural England, 2001).

Table 0.9c: Top authorities for selected metrics in the LPA analysis: Total agricultural land to developed and vacant (ha)

Rank	LPA	LPA size (ha)	High likelihood BMV (ha)	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	High likelihood BMV to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
1	North Yorkshire	511058	183903	**3440**	1313	1	38
2	Shropshire	319728	137605	**2167**	974	1	45
3	East Riding of Yorkshire	240477	177102	**1316**	941	1	72
4	Cornwall	354894	97723	**3708**	876	1	24
5	Huntingdonshire	91246	57537	**1057**	776	1	73

Source: Derived from DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics (DLUHC, 2023b) and BMV likelihood mapping (Natural England, 2001).

In interpreting these results, the accuracy and resolution of input datasets discussed previously should be considered, particularly the BMV likelihood dataset which is intended for use at a strategic level only. This is of particular importance for the LPA analysis presented here, where the comparatively small size of the authorities examined means that small inaccuracies in input data could lead to large discrepancies in percentage terms.

It is also important to note that as this dataset considers BMV likelihood only, it is not possible to definitively determine whether development occurred within a BMV or non-BMV area within this. For a more accurate exploration of BMV land loss, more detailed analysis considering detailed ALC mapping and individual planning applications would be required.

Detailed Mapping Analysis

Previous analysis in this chapter has largely been performed using the Likelihood of BMV Agricultural Land dataset. This is the only national dataset available for assessing potential changes in BMV land, but is suitable for strategic planning purposes only and cannot be used to definitively classify locations as BMV or non-BMV land.

Following the previous review, further analysis was therefore undertaken using detailed ALC mapping where this is available. This detailed mapping distinguishes between ALC subgrades 3a and 3b, and can therefore be used to identify BMV land. It is however only available for a small proportion of England (Table 0.10). Of the land mapped in detailed ALC mapping, 32% is classed as BMV land. This is 45% of the agricultural area (excluding other land, missing, and not surveyed).

Table 0.10: Coverage of detailed ALC mapping used within this analysis, and extents of each ALC grade contained within.

ALC Grade	Area (ha)	% of mapped area	% of graded area
Grade 1	15,288	1.7	2.4
Grade 2	89,151	10.0	13.8
Grade 3a	183,996	20.6	28.6
BMV land sub-total	**288,435**	**32.3**	**44.8**
Grade 3b	231,381	25.9	35.9
Grade 3c	63,255	7.1	9.8
Grade 4	56,138	6.3	8.7

ALC Grade	Area (ha)	% of mapped area	% of graded area
Grade 5	5,035	0.6	0.8
Other	232,589	26.1	-
Missing / not surveyed	15,434	1.7	-
Total	**892,266.2**	**-**	**-**

Source: Pre-1988 (Natural England, 2016) and post-1988 (Natural England, 2019) detailed ALC mapping.

Results of the overlay analysis are presented in Table 0.11. Of the 106,600 ha of agricultural land change to development identified within the land use change statistics, 28,028 ha (26.29%) of this occurred in locations covered by detailed ALC mapping. Of this, 11,943 (42.6%) was on mapped BMV land, largely grades 2 and 3a.

Table 0.11: Breakdown of ALC grade where conversion from agricultural land to developed and vacant occurred in an area covered by detailed ALC mapping.

ALC Grade	Area (ha)	% of ha developed
Grade 1	545	1.9
Grade 2	3,978	14.2
Grade 3a	7,420	26.5
BMV land sub-total	11,943	42.6
Grade 3b	8,966	32.0
Grade 3c	1,353	4.8
Grade 4	1,020	3.6
Grade 5	218	0.8
Missing / not surveyed	467	1.7

ALC Grade	Area (ha)	% of ha developed
Other	4,060	14.5
Total	28,028	-

Source: Derived from DLUHC Land Use Change Statistics (DLUHC, 2023b) and pre-1988 (Natural England, 2016) and post-1988 (Natural England, 2019) detailed ALC mapping.

The 2022 Land Use Statistics identify 8,225,085 ha of agricultural land in England (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2022). Of the agricultural land identified in the detailed mapping, 44.8% of this was found to be BMV (Table 0.10). If it is assumed that this proportion of BMV land identified in detailed mapping holds true nationally, this would suggest approximately 3,684,838 ha of BMV agricultural land in England.

This proportional estimate is comparable with the Revised Statistics for the Proportions of ALC Grades (ADAS, 1994), which estimates that 42.2% of agricultural land in England is BMV (ALC Grades 1-3a). These estimates were based on soil and site data obtained from the National Soil Inventory which describes soil characteristics at 5 km intervals across England and Wales and was graded in accordance with the revised ALC system published in 1988 (MAFF, 1988). The revised statistics for each agricultural grade are given as a percentage of the total agricultural area (i.e. non-agricultural and urban land are not included) (ADAS 1993/94 MOU).

The analysis of agricultural land use change in England identifies 106,600 hectares of gross agricultural land conversion to developed and vacant between 2013-2018 and 2019-2022. Of the change that occurred in areas covered by detailed mapping, 42.6% of this was found to be on BMV land (Table 0.11). If it is assumed that this proportion of development on BMV land identified from detailed mapping holds true nationally, this would suggest approximately 45,412 ha gross of BMV agricultural land lost to development in England over this period. Similarly, with a net change of 85,161 ha, this would indicate an approximate net loss of 36,278 ha of BMV land to developed and vacant. This is equal to 1% of the estimated national stock of BMV land currently used for agriculture.

It is important to note that these are approximate, indicative values only, which extrapolate from a limited sample to derive national values. Detailed ALC mapping covers only a small proportion of England. The distribution and extent of this mapping may not provide a true representative value of the actual extent and distribution of BMV land in England. As the previous review highlights (Defra SP1501), a focus of this government led detailed ALC mapping was the edge of existing towns, which may have particular soil and land quality characteristics. Similarly, patterns of land use change in areas covered by detailed ALC

mapping will not necessarily match those found nationally. To fully understand the scale of BMV land loss in England, a national, detailed ALC and BMV dataset is required.

Conclusions

The analytical work undertaken in this chapter has provided an indicative assessment of loss of agricultural land to developed and vacant uses between 2013 and 2022.

Available land use change statistics for the periods 2013-18 and 2019-2022 indicate a net loss of 85,161 ha during this time, representing 1% of the agricultural land resource in England as measured in the 2022 land use statistics (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2022). While this could be considered relatively low, it is noted that this is equal to approximately 1,000 averaged sized UK agricultural holdings. Analysis further indicates a net loss of agricultural land for each year data is available, although there are no clear temporal trends in rates of loss. Compared to the previous review of agricultural land loss undertaken between 1998 and 2008 (Defra, 2011), the rates presented for the period 2012 - 2022 are substantially higher. However, methodological changes mean land use change statistics pre- and post-2013 are not directly comparable. Further analysis of historic OS MasterMap data for the period 2018-2019 identified 4,458 ha of agricultural converted to man-made surfaces. This indicates a total gross conversion of 111,058 ha between 2013-2022.

Using land use change statistics and the Likelihood of BMV Land dataset, analysis indicates that 33,522 ha (31%) of this agricultural land loss was in areas with a high likelihood of being BMV, 27,965 ha with a medium likelihood (26%); 24,958 ha with a low likelihood (23%); and 20,156 ha identified as non-agricultural, urban or industrial. Further analysis performed using detailed ALC mapping where available shows that 42.6% of development was on areas recorded in detailed mapping as BMV land, largely grades 2 and 3a.

It is emphasised that these are estimated results using best available data sources at the time of writing, with limitations of these datasets being discussed throughout the chapter. This work particularly highlights the need for a comprehensive, national-scale detailed ALC or BMV map for England, following those found in Wales, in order to accurately quantify current stocks and losses of the BMV land resource. It is further highlighted that incomplete land use change statistics for 2013-2022, and methodological changes in 2013 meaning these are incompatible with earlier releases, currently limit our ability to monitor temporal trends in agricultural and BMV land loss in the long term. Backdating of the current land use change statistics methodology to previous years to produce a consistent, long term time series would allow for temporal trends to be distinguished and impacts of policy change assessed and such should also be considered.

For consistency and comparison purposes, this work has largely followed the same analytical methodology as the preview review (Defra, 2011). This is a relatively simple approach, which considers total direct change of agricultural land to developed and vacant land uses for each time step for which data is available. Future spatial assessments of

agricultural land loss may wish to consider extending this by further quantify indirect change, for example from agriculture, to forestry, and then to a developed land use, or by considering change in further uses such as rough grassland which while not classed as agricultural land within the land use change statistics, may still be associated with agricultural production.

In line with the previous review, this work has largely considered total areas of change in agricultural land use. Future analysis may wish to further explore the spatial characteristics and context of this land take. This could include:

- Analysis of the size of change parcels to distinguish larger, continuous areas of change (which may better indicate new areas of development) from smaller 'slivers' of change (which may indicate for example a shift in the recorded boundary between a road and a field);

- Identification of major developments by hectarage or numbers of new residential addresses in areas of BMV / high BMV likelihood for further analysis;

- Distinguishing urban expansion and development in existing areas, from the development of greenfield sites and 'new towns', and potential differences in the impact of BMV land resulting from these;

- Exploration of impacts on agricultural landscapes, for example potential fragmentation of agricultural land, and the potential impacts this could have on farming efficiencies;

- Identification of ALC grades of lost land under future climate scenarios;

Similarly, while this work has quantified changes in agricultural land areas, further work would be required to explore both the environmental and economics drivers of this change, and impacts this could have.

Review of weight that is given to BMV land by Local Planning Authorities and Planning Inspectors

Introduction

Background and Context

This chapter explores how Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land is evaluated in the decision-making process by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and Planning Inspectors, by evaluating planning applications, appeals and developments.

This chapter builds upon Defra's 2004 and 2011 reviews of policy on the protection of BMV land (projects LE0217 and SP1501) (Defra 2011 and Defra 2004), and evaluates the extent to which the current planning framework has protected BMV land in England since these reviews. It analyses the pressures and circumstances leading to decisions that have allowed or prevented development on BMV land.

This study serves as a research paper and is not intended to be used as guidance or to inform planning policies, guidance or planning decision-taking or plan-making functions.

Confidentiality

In terms of the interviews, the identity of the LPAs and all data supplied by respondents and interviewees that links the response to the respondent or the LPA they are employed has been anonymised in this report.

National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Introduction

This section will explore the significance of the primary national planning policy and guidance documents for England concerning BMV land. It then reviews the statutory requirement of LPAs to produce a Local Development Plan (LDP) to manage development within their administrative area. Overall, the section will provide contextual insights for the broader study on the consideration of BMV land in the planning process.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF (December 2023) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2023c) holds significant importance as a material planning consideration in both plan-making and decision-taking processes. It serves as a framework and delineates the

Government's planning policies for England, along with guidelines on their application. The NPPF emphasises that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to achieving sustainable development through social, economic, and environmental aspects.

According to the NPPF, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Paragraph 2, NPPF (2023)). The NPPF should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes) (Paragraph 3, NPPF (2023)).

Since its initial publication on 27 March 2012 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2012), the NPPF has undergone seven updates. The most recent revision (as of this report) is dated 20 December 2023. There have been several notable changes to the BMV land policy within the NPPF since 2012.

In the 2012 NPPF, the policy on BMV land was first introduced in Paragraph 112, which advised:

'local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of BMV agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.'

In the subsequent revisions of the NPPF in 2018 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2018) and 2019 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019) respectively, the policy was refined and included as Paragraph 170. These revisions expanded the scope to cover the conservation of the natural and local environment through six key criteria. Paragraph 170 emphasised:

'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.'

Criterion b) specifically aimed to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services including the economic and other benefits of the BMV agricultural land amongst other matters. Moreover, in these revisions Footnote 53 offered supporting text to advise on the need for a sequential approach, stating:

'where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.'

The NPPF underwent further revision in 2021 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021). In this update, the aforementioned policies were simply revised as Paragraph 174 b), and Footnote 58. No changes were made to the policy wording.

The current version of the NPPF covers BMV land in Paragraph 180. The wording remained unchanged from the superseded Paragraphs 170 and 174 above, however Footnote 53 became Footnote 62 and was supplemented to refer to food production, advising:

'where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. The availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside the other policies in this Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development.'

Annex 2 of the NPPF contains a glossary. BMV agricultural land is defined here as:

'land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.'

Planning Policy Guidance

The Government's PPG (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024a) is the online guidance for users of the planning system to support the NPPF, including explaining statutory provisions.

In relation to guidance on soils and agricultural land, the PPG for the Natural Environment Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024b), describes how the planning system should take account the quality of agricultural land using the ALC system, and states that:

'a local planning authority must consult Natural England before granting planning permission for large-scale non-agricultural development on BMV land that is not in accord with the development plan.'

Natural England has published a Guidance Note for LPAs in assessing proposals to protect the BMV agricultural land from inappropriate and unsustainable development (Natural England, 2021). Published on 16 January 2018, and updated on 5 February 2021 by Natural England, this Guide offers advice and resources for developers and LPAs, including guidance on utilising ALC to inform planning decisions. It outlines how the planning system should consider the quality of agricultural land through the ALC system, advising:

'Planning authorities must consult Natural England on all non-agricultural applications that result in the loss of more than 20 hectares (ha) of BMV land if the land is not included in a development plan. For example, this includes the likely cumulative loss of BMV land from the proposed development if it's part of a phased development.'

This broadly aligns with planning legislation (Schedule 4, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England) Order) (DMPO) (2015)), that sets out the statutory consultation requirements for Natural England:

'Development which is not for agricultural purposes and is not in accordance with the provisions of a development plan and involves-

(i) the loss of not less than 20 hectares of grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land (b) which is for the time being used (or was last used) for agricultural purposes; or

(ii) the loss of less than 20 hectares of grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land which is for the time being used (or was last used) for agricultural purposes, in circumstances in which the development is likely to lead to a further loss of agricultural land amounting cumulatively to 20 hectares or more

The Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land also provides online links to the Natural England Regional ALC maps and Post 1988 ALC Magic Maps resources (Natural England, 2021).

Local Development Plans

The NPPF requires all LPAs to prepare an LDP as part of their statutory functions (Section 39(2), Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)). It advises on the plan-making framework for each LPA, and states:

'The development plan must include strategic policies to address each local planning authority's priorities for the development and use of land in its area. These strategic policies can be produced in different ways, depending on the issues and opportunities facing each area. They can be contained in:

a) joint or individual local plans, produced by authorities working together or independently (and which may also contain non-strategic policies); and/or

b) a spatial development strategy produced by an elected Mayor or combined authority, where plan-making powers have been conferred.'

The LDP directs the decision-making process on proposed development proposals and planning applications. It takes into account the requirements of the area for the period specified in the plan.

The LDP must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, aligning with the principles outlined in the NPPF. It plays a pivotal role in determining where development should be encouraged or restricted. Typically, it covers a range of subjects and strategic planning policies related to different types of development, such as housing and tourism, as well as planning matters like the natural environment and BMV land.

As advised in the NPPF (Paragraph 33), policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and updated as necessary.

Local Planning Authority Interviews

Six LPAs were interviewed to explore how BMV land was affected by LPA planning decision-taking and plan-making. For the purposes of confidentiality, the LPAs will be numbered and referred to in the same manner throughout this chapter of the report.

The six LPAs had varying proportions of high likelihood BMV land and urban areas within their administrative areas (Table 0.1). To maintain anonymity, data is presented here in terms of ranks, rather than absolute values. These indicate the relative position of each LPA in terms of the proportion of high likelihood BMV land and urban area.

A copy of the methodology is presented in Appendix B, and the questionnaire, cover letter and cover email are included in Appendix C.

Table 0.1: LPA BMV Land and Urban Area Percentages and Score.

LPA	High Likelihood BMV Land (%) (Rank)	Urban Area (%) (Rank)
LPA 1	1 (Highest %)	6 (Lowest %)
LPA 2	6 (Lowest %)	2
LPA 3	2	4
LPA 4	5	3
LPA 5	4	1 (Highest %)
LPA 6	3	5

Source: Derived from BMV likelihood mapping (Natural England, 2001)

Interview Results

For the purposes of the analysis, the results and responses from questions with similar themes will be grouped appropriately and subsequently analysed together in the following chapters. Some of these will be supported by the relevant graphs and charts to provide context for the responses. The full set of data and results is included in Appendix C.

Questions 1-5: Staffing and Resource

To assess the level of Planning resources available, the LPAs were asked (1) the number of Development Management (DM) and Planning Policy (PP) staff of each LPA, and (2) how many were chartered members of the RTPI. The RTPI is the professional body representing planners in the United Kingdom and Ireland and is responsible for maintaining professional standards and providing accreditation within the planning profession.

Table 0.2 illustrates the number of staff compared to the number of RTPI chartered members from each LPA. To maintain anonymity, responses are presented in ranges rather than specific values.

Table 0.2: LPA staffing and RTPI chartered membership.

LPA	Number of DM and Policy Officers (Range)	Number of RTPI Chartered Members (Range)
LPA 1	45 - 60	30 – 45
LPA 2	0 - 15	0 - 15
LPA 3	15 - 30	0 – 15
LPA 4	45 - 60	15 – 30
LPA 5	15 - 30	0 – 15
LPA 6	0 - 15	0 - 15

Source: LPA interview output

Table 0.2 illustrates the difference between LPAs 1 and 4 in comparison to the remaining four. LPAs 1 and 4 employed an excess of 45 staff members each. It is noted that LPA 1 covers multiple districts within the administrative area, and LPA 4 strategically employs a set number of staff to cover each area within the entire District. Therefore, it is considered that the difference in staffing within these two LPAs may provide additional levels of resource whereas the remaining four LPAs with lower staffing numbers may provide a more accurate representation of staff resources available to a single District.

Generally, there appears to be little correlation between the number of staff members and RTPI chartership. Over half of staff in LPAs 1-3 were chartered whereas over three-quarters of staff at LPA 2 were chartered despite having fewer than 15 staff. Some LPAs clearly have a higher ratio of chartered staff, however it is unclear as to whether this was a requirement as part of the recruitment process or simply encouraged/desired. Notwithstanding this, chartership appeared to have little importance in the remaining LPAs and this was demonstrated by LPA 4 with less than half of its staff being chartered despite having a large quantity of staff.

During the interview, the interviewee for LPA 4 confirmed that chartership "serves no purpose for me, as a local planner in an authority" though there was little context provided as to the reasoning for this position.

Figure 0.1: LPAs overall understanding of the significance of BMV land, where 1: Full understanding; 2: very knowledgeable; 3: Good to average; 4: needs improvement; and 5: Don't know / No understanding

Figure 0.1 illustrates the score each LPA gave to their overall understanding of the significance of BMV land. The LPAs indicated their overall understanding of the significance of BMV land ranged between 'very knowledgeable' to 'good/average'.

Notably, only LPA 1 stated that staff had a "full understanding" of the significance of BMV land. LPA 1 contains the highest proportion of 'High Likelihood of BMV' land of those interviewed (Table 0.1)**,** suggesting that LPA 1 staff may regularly deal with BMV land through the planning functions. As a result, these staff are likely more aware of the significance of BMV land.

LPA 2 recorded the lowest understanding of the significance of BMV land and felt improvement was needed in this area, despite having a large percentage of chartered staff. The LPA 2 interviewee stated that the level of understanding varied amongst colleagues due to their professional experience. This variability in staff understanding could reflect the low amount of land mapped as 'high likelihood of BMV' in the LPA 2 administrative area, the lowest of the six LPAs interviewed (Table 0.1).

LPAs 3 and 6 possessed similar proportions of land mapped as 'high likelihood of BMV' (rank 2 and 3, respectively). However, LPA 3 felt very knowledgeable about BMV land, whereas LPA 6 characterised their understanding as ranging from good to average. Similarly, LPAs 4 and 5 had similar proportions of land mapped as 'high likelihood of BMV' at rank 5 and 4, respectively. LPA 4 indicated a "very knowledgeable" understanding, whereas LPA 5 described their understanding as "good to average."

Despite having comparatively few staff and chartered members, LPA 6, whose understanding was described as "good to average," were undertaking a BMV agricultural

land study. This initiative aimed to enhance their comprehension of the potential loss of BMV land to development. As a result, their understanding of this issue is expected to evolve as the study progresses.

These findings indicate that the collective understanding of the importance of BMV land within the participating LPAs was somewhat influenced by the percentage of land within their administrative area mapped as 'high likelihood of BMV'. This is exemplified by LPA 1, which had the highest percentage and greatest understanding of BMV land, compared to LPA 2, which had the lowest percentage of BMV land and required improvement in understanding its significance.

The results for LPAs 3, 4, 5 and 6 do not provide a similar correlation, rather, the results can be viewed as an "average" score. It is recommended that this is explored further in a future study that examines the detailed knowledge of BMV land within LPAs rather than a general overview.

LPAs ranked the list of available information resources used to inform planning decisions involving BMV land (Question 4; Appendix C). Due to inconsistent data provided by the LPAs, only data provided by LPA 2 and 5 is discussed (see Limitations, Appendix B).

The frequency of resource use for planning decisions related to BMV land from LPA 2 and 5 have been grouped by order of ranking with primary being most used and tertiary being least used:

- Primary Resources:

    o Site Specific Surveys

    o Local Planning Policy and Supplementary Planning Documents

    o Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decisions

- Secondary Resources:

    o Post-1988 ALC maps

    o Natural England Regional ALC Maps [note 1]

    o Natural England Consultation Advice

    o Planning Officer Decision Reports

- Tertiary Resources:

[note 1] Data included in these resources is the same, yet presented in a different format

- o Provisional ALC Maps for England [note 1]

- o NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance

- Unused:

- o Specialised ALC Consultants

The preference of using site specific surveys over other resources is understandable as they can provide a detailed and bespoke assessment of the soil and ALC for specific site in contrast to other indicative resources like the provisional ALC mapping. The use of detailed site surveys is consistent with the requirements set out in the Government guidance on assessing development proposals on agricultural land (Natural England, 2021).

Notably, specialised ALC consultants were not used for planning decisions related to BMV land.

It should be noted that despite the ranking presented above, there was little correlation between the types and frequency of resources used by the LPAs with the only similarity being the NPPF and Natural England consultation advice for applications exceeding 20 ha. These two resources appear to be consistent across the decision-making process for BMV land planning applications.

Notable differences are found between the two LPAs rankings of Natural England Regional ALC Maps and Provisional ALC Maps for England which are depicted as secondary and tertiary resources. These mapping resources are not used in the same order in the decision-making process for BMV land applications. However, these maps present the same data, just in a different format.

It is also worth noting that planning appeal decision reports and officer decision reports since 2010 were not afforded much significance, with LPA 5 not using them at all. This may explain why the NPPF was rated as being of higher importance as a resource. The latest Defra review in 2011 preceded the adoption of the NPPF in 2012 (Defra 2011; SP1501). The NPPF marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of the UK town planning system. Its subsequent revisions up until 2023 have further solidified its significance and utilisation by LPAs.

The remaining four LPAs provided some level of indication on their use of these resources, despite answering the question in different ways, three of which indicated that the NPPF and local planning policy/guidance were amongst the most used resources. When coupled with LPA 2 and 5 ranking these resources in the mid-range, the frequency of use of these resources is consistent to inform planning decisions involving BMV land.

A pertinent point raised by two LPAs was that the resources used were dependent on the individual circumstances and merits of the case under consideration e.g. application and development. This demonstrates that the resources have been ranked based on the overall professional experience of each LPA, whereby some may have determined

planning applications and cases that essentially required the use of particular resources than others or a combination. The results of this question and the overall study are therefore based on the LPAs view at the time of participating in the study, and this may change in the future should the LPA develop their assessment process and decision making for applications affecting BMV land.

Several LPAs noted that the consultation advice sought from Natural England did not provide sufficient information relating to the importance of BMV land. For one LPA, the Natural England consultation response for development over the 20 ha threshold was generic and not bespoke to the respective planning application.

The results from Question 4 show that all the listed resources provide some service towards the LPA decision-making process with the exception of the use of specialist ALC Consultants.

LPA 5 added the use of IEMA's 2022 'A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment' (Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2022) as an additional resource used for BMV land decisions.

The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) guidelines are intended to help practitioners understand and record the full environmental implications of development on land and soil, embedding sustainable soil management throughout the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The guidelines states:

'The guidelines and annexes seek to improve planning for the sustainable use of soils; as well as the delivery of soil handling mitigation measures to more fully conserve soils displaced by development, as this is currently a matter of some concern. The main purpose of this document is to develop, improve, and standardise the approach to soils and land use within a proportionate EIA, to ensure sustainable outcomes from development projects.'

The Guidelines detail the current planning policy, including the consideration of BMV agricultural land.

Three of the six LPAs (LPAs 2, 4 and 5) stated that they did not have all of the information needed to make decisions consistently on planning applications affecting BMV land (Question 5). Interestingly, these three LPAs had the lowest concentrations of BMV land whereas the LPAs with the highest amount confirmed they had all the required information. It can be suggested that the LPAs with the higher areas of BMV land have the required information as they may experience BMV land more in their statutory planning functions compared to the others, providing them with a clearer understanding on the determination process and likely resources/tools required for this.

Additional resources identified by the LPAs which would enable consistent decisions on BMV land to be made include:

Tier 1 (Requested by 3 LPAs)

- Clearer identification between Subgrade 3a and 3b and up to date / accurate mapping

Tier 2 (Requested by 2 LPAs)

- More involvement from Natural England

- Greater guidance on the weighting of BMV land

Tier 3 (Requested by 1 LPA)

- Statutory consultation to clearly identify BMV land on site of less than 20 ha

- Site selection guidance for BMV land

- Tracking of percentage of BMV land

The identification of the need for a clear differentiation between Grades 3a and 3b agricultural land by 2 LPAs and the need for updated and accurate mapping by 1 LPA highlights the demand for detailed ALC mapping to reflect the 1988 ALC guidelines, which illustrates the subdivision of Grade 3 into Subgrade 3a and 3b. This mapping requirement is considered the main source of data required by LPAs.

One LPA advocated for a document that depicted the cumulative effect of a development on the surrounding BMV land and a process to investigate why this development would not be suitable on lower grade land.

Of interest, LPA 6 felt they had enough information to make decisions consistently but also required additional information at national level including clearer guidance on the balance between renewable energy development and agricultural land, the percentage of lost BMV land and basis of protecting agricultural land in case-by-case scenarios.

It is recommended that Natural England explores these opportunities for additional support.

Planning Policy, Case Studies, and Implementation

Questions 6-9 referred to national and local planning policy, LDPs, case studies concerning BMV land and planning appeals.

All LPAs questioned, were aware of Footnote 62 of Paragraph 181 of the NPPF and considered BMV land when devising the spatial strategy and site allocations document. In addition, all six of the LPAs had a policy relating to BMV land. Footnote 62 states:

Footnote 62 NPPF: 'where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. The availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside the other policies in this Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development.'

Five of the six LPAs interviewed had an adopted LDP (Regulation 24). Notably, one LPA had two adopted LDPs and was currently undergoing an LDP Review at Regulation 18. Three LPAs all had adopted LDPs also at the review stage, whereas the LDP for one was adopted with no review.

One LPA did not have an adopted LDP, however confirmed the LDP was at Regulation 18 stage. As a result of this LPA's out-of-date LDP, their housing land supply figure was three years and therefore they did not have a 5 year housing land supply (5YHLS) (Paragraph 69, NPPF).

Departure cases refer to planning applications which are not consistent with policies in the LDP for a particular area. Of the six LPAs, two LPAs gave substantial weight to BMV land in departure cases, whereas one gave moderate weight. Two LPAs stated that the weight was dependent on the application and did not select a choice from the available answers, and one LPA had not dealt with a departure case.

LPAs provided the determining factors and priorities in applying the BMV land policy. A complete list of the responses is illustrated below in **Table 0.3**.

Table 0.3: LPA determining factors and priorities in the application of the BMV land planning policy.

LPA factors/priorities in applying the BMV land policy	Number of LPAs that stated this factor/priority
Site by Site Basis	3
NPPF Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	2
Policy Constraints	2
Planning Balance	1
Impact on Provision of Renewable Energy	1
Sensitivity of Planning Committee Members	1
Food Security	1
Volume of BMV land	1
World Events	1
DM Response	1

LPA factors/priorities in applying the BMV land policy	Number of LPAs that stated this factor/priority
Evidence from Applicant	1
Endorsement by Natural England	1
5-Year-Housing-Land-Supply	1
Housing Delivery Test	1
Grade of Agricultural Land	1

Source: LPA interview output

Two LPAs emphasised three key factors or priorities, with the most common being that the application of policy depended on the specific development and site. Another recurring factor related to the sustainable development objectives set out in the NPPF (Paragraph 8), and local planning policies. Notably, these responses align with those from Question 4, where the NPPF and local planning policies/guidance were frequently cited as resources used to inform planning decisions on BMV land.

When considering any notable case studies where BMV land was a material planning consideration in the determination of the planning application (Question 8), one LPA responded with "every solar application".

Two LPAs indicated BMV land had been used as a reason for refusal of a planning application (Question 9). However, the applications cited were not solely refused on this basis, and rather BMV land was a contributing factor. For example, one LPA provided a planning decision for a renewable energy development with the primary refusal reason relating to harm to the Green Belt. Another provided three refused planning decisions for proposed residential developments, of which the primary reason for refusal was countryside harm.

Following the refusal of a planning proposal, this LPA experienced an appeal against those decisions for refusal and provided the case studies for these appeals. Further research into LPA case studies and refusals of development on BMV land is contained in Section 0 (Local Planning Authority Decision Case Study Review).

Notably, the interviewee for one LPA stated that in their 25 year career across multiple LPAs, they had "never seen a standalone planning reason for refusal on the ground of BMV land." Upon elaboration of this, the interviewee felt that either planning officers were not considering planning issues properly or the Government was not giving BMV land the

full and proper consideration that it required linking it to the climate change emergency and local food production.

These planning decisions are not conclusive as to how much weight was afforded to the impact of development on the loss of BMV land by the respective LPAs, rather they showed that BMV land was an ancillary reason for refusal to other reasons/areas of harm that were afforded more weight such as Green Belt.

It should be noted that the remaining 4 LPAs interpreted the question to refer to BMV land as the 'sole reason' for refusal. Therefore, upon reviewing the responses, it is evident that the wording of this question should have been more specific.

Implementation and Monitoring

Questions 10-11 related to the monitoring of BMV land within LPAs.

Despite a high proportion of high likelihood of BMV land in a number of LPAs interviewed, only one LPA monitored the loss of BMV land. The monitoring process for this LPA was explained as collating data into a spreadsheet which would eventually feed into an adopted Annual Process and Monitoring Report. This is then published on the Council's website along with the reports for previous years.

Another LPA was currently working towards implementing a monitoring system and referred to the internal resources required to achieve this as an 'obstacle'.

The LPA found to monitor loss of BMV land maintains fewer staff compared to some other authorities interviewed, and a relatively high percentage of high likelihood BMV land. This highlights an ability to monitor their BMV loss annually, despite having a higher likelihood of BMV land to monitor with less staff available. This could reflect how the responsibility of BMV land is divided or managed between the respective DM and PP functions.

Generally speaking, the monitoring process would be a task undertaken by the PP department rather than the DM function, however, this would be entirely dependent on the structure of the team/department, and resources available of that LPA. If the number of PP staff are low compared to their DM counterparts in that LPA, it is likely that the LPA may not have enough resource to undertake this task.

Three LPAs did not strategically record loss of BMV land, but were aware of how to monitor it through other systems such as making planning decisions on development affecting BMV land and then tracking this via internal systems such as GIS. It is arguable as to whether this counts as a 'monitoring system.'

A key observation is that LPAs with no monitoring system rank low in understanding the significance of BMV land out of the participating LPAs. It is likely that LPAs that do not have a full or knowledgeable understanding of BMV land have either been unaware of implementing systems to continually monitor the loss of BMV land or they do not consider it a priority in their planning functions.

The findings suggest that five of the six LPAs in the study were unaware of the extent of BMV land lost to permanent built development and had not implemented any systems to monitor this loss. Instead, these LPAs seem to prioritise the DM function related to BMV land and focus on controlling its loss through the assessment of planning applications. This raises concerns, as these LPAs may continue to permit development on BMV land without accurately tracking the total amount lost. Without a monitoring system in place, there is a risk that an LPA may exhaust its available BMV land for crop production without realisation.

To help prevent significant loss of BMV land from development over sustained periods or throughout the LDP period, it is advisable for each LPA to establish their own systems for recording, monitoring, and reporting any permanent or temporary loss of BMV land. LPAs are best suited to devise these systems internally, as they possess a deeper understanding of their own opportunities and constraints. Collaboration with organisations such as Natural England could facilitate the implementation of such systems.

Establishing systems to monitor the loss of BMV land may not be onerous or necessitate specialised bespoke software; it can be relatively straightforward. As noted, one LPA was found to monitor loss with a relative lack of resources, in comparison with the LPAs who do not monitor the loss of BMV land, demonstrating that this is achievable.

Other relevant/additional matters

Additional matters relevant to BMV raised by the LPAs in the interviews are provided in Appendix B.

Local Planning Authority Decision Case Study Review

Introduction

This section delves into six planning decisions from LPAs across England where BMV land significantly influenced the refusal of planning permission and was considered a contributing reason for refusal. It contains an in-depth analysis of how these LPAs assessed the adopted planning policy and guidance regarding the protection of BMV agricultural land and factored this consideration into their decision-making processes when determining planning applications involving BMV land.

The methodology is set out in Appendix B.

Case Studies

The following planning decisions were selected as case studies:

- Planning Case Study 1 (PCS1): 15/00562/OUT Residential and Community Development in Hodthorpe, Worksop

- Planning Case Study 2 (PCS2): Y/62/18/OUT Residential Development in Yapton, Arundel

- Planning Case Study 3 (PCS3): P/17/0681/OA Residential and Community Development in Fareham, Hampshire

- Planning Case Study 4 (PCS4): 06/20/0562/O Residential Development in Hemsby, Great Yarmouth

- Planning Case Study 5 (PCS5): 22/01987/FM Solar Farm at Walton Highway, Wisbech

- Planning Case Study 6 (PCS6): 19/01974/MAO Residential Development at Renhold, Bedfordshire

These planning decisions were issued between 2016 and 2023, on planning applications which were submitted between 2015 and 2022, and therefore occurred within the same timeframe as the review of land loss to development (2013-2022), as presented in Chapter 0 of this report.

The six LPAs had a varying proportion of the amount of 'high likelihood of BMV land' and 'urban areas', as presented in **Table 0.4**.

Table 0.4: LPA BMV land and Urban Area Percentages and Score.

Planning Case Study number	LPA High Likelihood BMV land (%)	LPA Urban area (%)	Score
PCS1	45.88	16.03	735.8
PCS2	46.94	35.73	1677.3
PCS3	30.10	41.70	1255.4
PCS4	56.85	28.21	1604
PCS5	56.07	6.97	390.9
PCS6	66.97	10.92	731.4

Source: Derived from BMV likelihood mapping (Natural England, 2001).

The planning decision case studies have undergone detailed examination to provide comprehensive insights into the rationale and considerations behind the LPA decision

making process concerning BMV land. The general context and background information regarding these planning decisions are provided in Appendix D.

Table 0.5: Case Studies, site area and ALC grade.

Planning Case Study number	Site area (ha)	ALC Grade
PCS1	3.53	Grade 2
PCS2	1.67	Grade 1
PCS3	6.6	Grades 1 and 2
PCS4	8.35	Grade 1
PCS5	48.5	Grades 2 and 3a
PCS6	19.65	Grades 2 and 3a

Source: Planning Case Study 1 to 6 planning documents

PCS1 Residential and Community Development in Hodthorpe, Worksop

PCS1 was submitted to Bolsover District Council under reference 15/00562/OUT. The development sought a proposed residential development (maximum 70 dwellings) and community building (Class D1/D2) with means of access off Broad Lane and Green Lane.

The application was considered to result in a loss of Grade 2 BMV land and was refused on three grounds by the Planning Committee. The decision date was 30th March 2016.

PCS2 Residential Development in Yapton, Arundel

PCS2 was submitted to Arun District Council under reference Y/62/18/OUT. The development was a proposed outline application for 33 dwellings with access, landscaping, and associated works.

The application was considered to result in a loss of Grade 1 BMV land and was refused on this sole ground by the Planning Committee. The decision date was 28th June 2019.

PCS3 Residential and Community Development in Fareham, Hampshire

PCS3 was submitted to Fareham Borough Council under reference P/17/0681/OA. The development sought a proposed scout hut, up to 150 dwellings, community garden, associated landscaping, amenity areas and a means of access from Posbrook Lane.

The application was considered to result in a loss of Grades 1 and 2 BMV land and was refused on 12 grounds by the Planning Committee. The decision date was 14th December 2017.

PCS4 Residential Development in Hemsby, Great Yarmouth

PCS4 was submitted to Great Yarmouth Borough Council under reference 06/20/0562/O. The development sought up to 150 dwellings, a new vehicular access, and associated infrastructure and landscaping.

The application was considered to result in a loss of Grade 1 BMV land and was refused on six grounds by the Planning Committee. The decision date was 3rd February 2021.

PCS5 Solar Farm at Walton Highway, Wisbech

PCS5 was submitted to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk under reference 22/01987/FM. The development sought the installation, operation, and decommissioning of a solar farm comprising an array of ground mounted solar PV panels and battery storage system with associated infrastructure including inverters and a substation compound as well as fencing, security cameras, cabling, and biodiversity enhancement measures.

The application was considered to result in a loss of Grades 2 and 3a BMV land and was refused on two grounds by the Planning Committee. The decision date was 24th April 2023.

PCS6 Residential Development at Renhold, Bedfordshire

This outline planning application was submitted to Bedford Borough Council under reference 19/01974/MAO. The development sought the proposed demolition of a dwelling and erection of up to 28 dwellings with access considered.

The application was considered to result in a loss of Grades 2 and 3a BMV land and was refused on two grounds by Planning Officers as a delegated decision. The decision date was 24th June 2020.

Decision Case Study Results

Planning Policy, Guidance and Resources

Five of the six LPAs referenced the pertinent policies outlined in the NPPF concerning BMV agricultural land. Some LPAs expanded on this and provided detailed explanations on these policies within their reports.

The six planning case studies selected for analysis were determined between 2016 to 2023. Within this six-year period, the NPPF was revised three times.

Notably, none of the LPAs referred to the Government guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land, as described in Section 0 above. This reference could have

been present in case studies PCS2, PCS4, and PCS6 which were determined following the adoption of the guidance.

However, the Council in PCS5 cited the requirement to consult Natural England as per the consultation trigger set out within the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England) Order) (DMPO) 2015 and stated in the Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land, most likely as the development affected 48.5 ha of BMV land.

It would have been pertinent for the LPA in PCS5 to highlight the DMPO legislation for readers, especially considering the potential implications for a planning appeal.

There is no evidence to suggest whether the Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land guidance was used in the LPA decision-making processes.

Only one LPA (PCS5) referenced the level of weight attributed to a BMV land consideration. In England, planning decisions are a DM function, where each planning application is assessed with consideration to the material planning matters relevant to each application. These considerations encompass the benefits, potential harm, and other pertinent factors. The decisions are made based on a planning balance, which is influenced by the weight attributed to various planning matters and considerations (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2014, Paragraph 009 Reference ID 21b-009-20140306). This balance can range from:

- Full weight

- Substantial weight

- Less than substantial weight

- Moderate weight

- Limited weight

- No weight

In the decision report for the proposed solar development in PCS5 (Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, 2023), the LPA advised:

"the other main issue is that there will be a loss of agricultural land for a period of 30 years. Whilst the appellant argues this land is used for biofuels (and therefore already for energy generation), it could at some point in the future be used for food production. The applicant also points out that this area is a very small proportion of the overall agricultural land in the eastern region, and that much of the site is grade 3b agricultural land, thereby minimising the use of the BMV agricultural land. Also, the statutory consultees on this issue are Natural England, and they raise no objection to this loss. Given the above officers give this issue limited weight in the decision-making process."

Although the LPA in PCS5 did not specify the level of weight given to the BMV land policy or guidance within the report, planning officers considered the loss of agricultural land within the balance of issues for this solar farm case study, which was refused in 2023. However, it is unclear why this specific LPA detailed the weight for this aspect while omitting the weighting for other BMV land considerations, such as policy or guidance.

It is worth noting that the LPAs in PCS3 and PCS6 included a planning balance and/or conclusion section within the reports where the relevant planning issues were summarised. In particular, PCS3 also provided an indication of weight in balancing the planning issues although this was not ranged in the aforementioned categories.

In PCS3, the LPA provided a detailed planning balance that included a relevant policy test (Fareham Borough Council, 2017). This stated:

"…however, in terms of environmental implications the proposal would lead to the loss of BMV agricultural land thereby failing this requirement."

This was subsequently supported with the weighting that stated:

"Notwithstanding, given the significant harm identified above to the landscape character, appearance and function of the countryside, which is considered to constitute a "valued landscape" in planning policy terms, along with the harm to the integrity of the strategic gap and loss of BMV agricultural land, the benefits that would arise from the proposal are not considered to outweigh the harm caused by developing this area of land."

In PCS6, the conclusion highlighted the absence of supporting information submitted with the application (Bedford Borough Council, 2020), stating:

"Furthermore, the applicant has not provided an adequate pre-determination field evaluation demonstrating the archaeological potential of the site, or evidenced the agricultural quality of the land to be lost to development and why this would be acceptable."

Whilst there is no strict requirement for LPAs to cite or publish the planning weight with the planning decision reports, the lack of clarity regarding the level of weight attributed to the BMV land matter poses challenges in comprehending its significance within the decision-making process for the purposes of this study. It is evident however that all LPAs felt the need to protect BMV land from these temporary and permanent developments, as indicated by the refusal of all case study planning applications and use of BMV land as a refusal reason in the LPA decision notices. Further discussion on the LPA report template will be provided in detail below.

Planning Appeal Decisions on BMV Agricultural Land

In terms of resources, it was found that two LPAs, specifically PCS3 and PCS5 referenced and evaluated planning appeal decisions pertaining to BMV land in their reports.

In PCS3, the LPA engaged a residential development appeal decision (The Planning Inspectorate, 2017) in considering the proposed loss of 5.5 ha of BMV land and sequential approach within the NPPF. The report stated:

"the issue of the loss of BMV agricultural land was considered by the Planning Inspector in determining the recent appeal by Persimmon Homes South Coast concerning land at Cranleigh Road, Portchester (PINS appeal reference APP/A1720/W/16/3156344). In that instance the Inspector noted that, given the site area of 5.5 ha, the development was not significant so as to necessitate the 'sequential approach' set out in the NPPF."

In the report for PCS5, the LPA highlighted and commented on a solar farm appeal decision while determining the requirement for the sequential approach. The planning decision also provided insights into assessing the quantity and grade of BMV land being lost of development. It stated:

"…the Planning Inspector indicated there were no preferred locations identified in the Local Plan for renewable energy protection (nor in the upcoming Review); there was little low quality agricultural land in East Anglia and there were practicalities of linking into the National Grid (Paragraph 25 of the appeal decision). Although each site proposal is considered on its individual merit, this appeal was allowed in September 2015 for a solar farm which involved the use of 66ha of grade 2 ALC. In contrast the current proposal involves the loss of 48.5 hectares of Grade 2 and 3a ALC land."

In comparison to the BMV land area and grade within the aforementioned appeal decision, this LPA considered the loss of approximately 30.5% less BMV land and a lower grade of BMV land acceptable. Of notable interest, this report indicated that the planning case officer for PCS5 initially recommended this planning application for approval, but this decision was overturned by members of the planning committee. The political influence in these case studies will be addressed further below.

It is important to acknowledge that the use of planning appeal decisions in the planning application decision making process is common practice, and planning appeal decisions can be material planning considerations as they provide useful insights into how Planning Inspectors apply planning policy and considerations. The two case studies above illustrate how two LPAs found value in utilising planning appeal decisions to evaluate specific aspects such as the loss of BMV land including its quantity and grade.

Sequential Approach

This study found that four of the six of LPAs considered the sequential and site selection approach and preference of areas of poorer quality land to those of a higher quality in the decision making process. As advised above, this approach is set out in the NPPF although it only applies where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary.

PCS1 discussed this at great length when determining the planning application on 3.53 ha of Grade 2 BMV land (Bolsover District Council, 2016), stating:

"A further issue of principle is that this site, indeed all land around Hodthorpe is on higher grade agricultural land (grade 2). Policy ENV 2 of the local plan will not allow development which involves the loss of grades 1, 2 and 3 agricultural land unless there is a strong need to develop the particular site which overrides the national need to protect such land. The NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable housing applications where the Council does not have a five year supply of deliverable housing is capable of being a material consideration which overrides this policy. This requires a balanced judgement, which will be influenced by whether the site is considered to be sustainable development."

This LPA deemed the sustainability of this site to be poor and thus this development failed to meet the sequential approach.

This matter was also discussed previously in PCS3 when evaluating the impacts on Grades 1 and 2 BMV land.

What is noteworthy here is that the NPPF does not explicitly define 'significant development' for the purposes of applying this policy, although it provides a definition for 'major development' (referenced on multiple occasions) (Annex 2, NPPF, 2023). There is evidently a distinction between significant and major development although this is ambiguous and left to the decision-maker in each case.

The appeal decision for PCS3 (The Planning Inspectorate, 2017) provides some clarity by confirming that a site area of 5.5 ha was not considered significant in this respect by a Planning Inspector. In refusing the planning application for PCS6 that affected 19.65 ha of Grades 2 and 3a BMV land, the LPA considered this matter and stated:

"therefore, for the reason that the site is almost 20 hectares in area and the proposals represent 'significant' development of agricultural land this should be included as a reason for refusal."

There is a concern here that the application of significant development is subjective and can thus affect large areas of BMV land in the LPA decision making process. According to the LPA assessment in PCS6, it could be suggested that the significant development of agricultural land highlighted in Footnote 62 of the NPPF broadly aligns with the DMPO legislation and Natural England consultation trigger however this is unclear. It is recommended that this definition is explored further.

Natural England Consultation

Natural England was consulted during the planning application determination period and provided a response in five case studies, however only one response (PCS5) related to the impact of the development on BMV land. The other four case studies affected site areas below the statutory Natural England consultation outlined in the DMPO.

PCS5 concerned a proposed solar farm affecting 48.5 ha of BMV land. The LPA report advised that Natural England raised no objection to this development, stating:

"Soil is a finite resource which plays an essential role within Sustainable ecosystems, performing an array of functions supporting a range of ecosystem services, including storage of carbon, the infiltration and transport of water, nutrient cycling, and provision of food. It is recognised that a proportion of the agricultural land will experience temporary land loss. In order to both retain the long term potential of this land and to safeguard all soil resources as part of the overall sustainability of the whole development, it is important that the soil is able to retain as many of its many important functions and services (ecosystem services) as possible through careful soil management and appropriate soil use, with consideration on how any adverse impacts on soils can be avoided or minimised."

In summary, for this temporary development, Natural England advised that any grant of planning permission should be made subject to conditions to safeguard soil resources and agricultural land, including a required commitment for the preparation of reinstatement, restoration, and aftercare plans; normally this would include the return to the former land quality (ALC grade).

PCS5 serves as an example of how successful engagement with Natural England can support LPAs in making decisions on planning applications affecting BMV land, although the consultation response containing advice on BMV land was only required due to the site area. It would be beneficial to assess whether this level of advice consistently extends across planning applications requiring statutory consultation with Natural England.

Scale and grade of BMV land

The selected case studies encompassed a range of site sizes, varying from 1.6 ha to 48 ha, and covered BMV agricultural land Grades 1 to 3a.

This study concludes that the size or grades of agricultural land affected by development alone do not entirely determine the decisions made by LPAs regarding BMV land. There is no correlation suggesting that planning applications affecting a particular size or higher grades of BMV land are more likely to be refused by the LPA for those reasons. Rather, the outcome is influenced by the specifics and merits of each individual planning application.

Of particular interest is that PCS1, PCS2 and PCS3 sought planning permission for new housing developments where the respective LPAs were unable to demonstrate a 5YHLS at the time of the reports, the consequence of which will have triggered Paragraph 11d of the NPPF (or equivalent within the version of the NPPF published at the time of the application) and the application of the 'presumption' for sustainable development. This meant that:

"where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii. any

adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

Despite the proposals for new housing in their administrative areas, among other elements of each development, these three LPAs believed that the proposed developments, which included up to 70 dwellings in PCS1 and 150 dwellings in PCS3, failed to outweigh the harm and impacts on Grades 1 and 2 BMV land.

Political influence

For context, planning applications are typically determined either by the Council's Planning Officers under delegated powers or Members of the Planning Committee, adhering to each Council's Scheme of Delegation. All planning case studies, except PCS6, were determined by planning committees. Typically, planning committee reports should list the reasons why the planning application requires a planning committee determination; however, only PCS1 and PCS5 provided a definite reason. PCS1 cited the scale of the development proposal in Hodthorpe, while PCS5 mentioned the Parish Council objection to the proposed development, which comprised eight grounds, including the significant loss of agricultural land. PCS5 further implies that BMV land was given weight by the Parish Council prior to being determined.

As mentioned previously, the LPA planning officers in PCS2 and PCS5 recommended the planning applications for approval. However, these recommendations were ultimately overturned by planning committee members.

In PCS2, the development sought permission for 33 dwellings on a site affecting 1.67ha of Grade 1 BMV land, and so it would have been considered as a 'major development' proposal under the definition provided in the NPPF (Annex 2, NPPF, 2023). In the report, planning officers acknowledged the additional conflict with the development plan in respect of the loss of potentially high value/grade agricultural land, although proceeded with a recommendation to grant planning permission. Subsequently and in the decision notice, the LPA listed a single reason for refusal (Arun District Council, 2019), stating:

"The proposal results in a loss of high grade agricultural land in conflict with policies SO DM1 of the Arun Local Plan, H1 of the Yapton Neighbourhood Development Plan and paragraph 170 of the NPPF."

This illustrates how the planning committee deemed it vital to protect agricultural land against potentially needed housing (lack of 5YHLS), using the loss of BMV land as the sole reason for refusal despite the relatively small size of the site (1.67 ha of Grade 1).

To reach the initial recommendation for approval for the solar farm impacting 48.5 ha of Grades 2 and 3a BMV land, the LPA officers in PCS5 evaluated various planning considerations. Aside from planning policy and guidance, this included the applicant's ALC Report (2022); the site selection approach within the planning statement; the Rose and Crown Farm solar farm appeal decision; and consultation response from Natural England, which raised no objections to the impacts of the temporary development on agricultural land. The members (of the planning committee) for this PCS5 disregarded the specialist

advice from Natural England by refusing the application, citing BMV land among other grounds. The decision notice stated:

"the proposal would result in the loss of 48.5ha of the BMV agricultural land (Grade 2 and 3a). Whilst the benefits of renewable energy are acknowledged, they do not outweigh the loss of a significant amount of the BMV agricultural land. As a result, the proposal would be contrary to Policy DM20 of the SADMPP (2016)."

These two case study examples vividly illustrate the influence of planning committees on BMV land decisions within the DM planning function. Specifically, they highlight instances where the planning committee overturned the professional view and recommendations of planning officers for approval. The impact of planning committees in such cases is substantial however it is also challenging to quantify. This is because these five planning applications would have been determined in a planning committee meeting(s), where planning committee members, planning officers, and various stakeholders such as local residents, the applicant/agent, and parish council may have been present and/or provided evidence/representations.

Furthermore, there is no specified level of experience or understanding of BMV land required for attendees to participate in the planning committee meeting. This raises questions about the attendees' knowledge of BMV land and the extent of their understanding. These factors collectively influence the decision-making process, ultimately shaping the decision of the LPA, regardless of whether the decision was delegated to planning officers or referred to planning committee members.

This study does not ascertain whether these planning committee referrals and decisions were appropriate for the respective planning applications. This matter is influenced by each LPAs delegation scheme which sets out the criteria for delegated and committee decisions. This could include an automatic planning committee referral system for planning applications that meet a certain threshold, or those considered complex or major planning applications by planning officers. Further investigation would be required to determine the reasons for the planning committee determination for PCS2, PCS3, and PCS6.

Refusal reasons

One notable observation is that for all case studies, with the exception of PCS2, cited BMV land as a reason for refusal, alongside other planning reasons for refusal.

Table 0.6 presents this information, with some of the reasons for refusal grouped together for clarity.

Table 0.6: Reasons for refusal in LPA case study decisions.

Planning Case Study number	Number of reasons for refusal	Summary of refusal reasons (grouped by discipline)
PCS1	2	Unsustainable location for residential development and loss of Grade 2 BMV land Traffic and highway impacts
PCS2	1	Loss of Grade 1 BMV land
PCS3	12	Loss of Grades 1 and 2 BMV land Landscape and visual impacts Grade II Listed Buildings Sustainable Urban Drainage System details Affordable housing provision Ecology mitigation Legal agreement to secure mitigation to Special Protection Areas, provision and management of open space, highway improvements, travel plan and public right of way improvement.
PCS4	6	Loss of Grade 1 BMV land Insufficient information on Ecology Site sustainability Insufficient information on housing delivery, highway safety and affordable housing

Planning Case Study number	Number of reasons for refusal	Summary of refusal reasons (grouped by discipline)
PCS5	2	Loss of Grades 2 and 3a BMV Landscape and visual impacts
PCS6	9	Loss of Grades 2 & 3a BMV Site sustainability Landscape and visual impacts Insufficient information on Archaeology and secondary school places Inadequate provision / contributions to highway works, affordable housing, health care and on-site play and open / amenity greenspace facilities

Only the LPAs for PCS3, PCS4, and PCS6 substantiated BMV land reason with other refusal reasons related to environmental impacts or legal obligations. In contrast, PCS1 amalgamated BMV land with grounds relating to the sustainability of the site for residential development and included a separate refusal reason on highway grounds. Similarly, PCS5 identified BMV land as a distinct reason for refusal and added another refusal reason on landscape and visual grounds. PCS2 was unique in that BMV land was the sole reason for refusal in its decision notice.

This study suggests that all but one of the selected LPAs did not issue a decision notice with BMV land as the sole refusal reason; rather, it was accompanied by other environmental refusal reasons. It is crucial to note that the ordering of the refusal reasons does not necessarily correlate with their significance or level of weight compared to other reasons. In fact, the decision notices provide no indication of how much weight was attributed to the BMV land matter by the respective LPAs.

Reports

The final observation across the board is the inconsistency of LPA planning application reports. Unlike planning appeal decisions, there is no standard template for LPA delegated or committee report. Each LPA employs a distinct planning report template, varying in length, format, and information.

It is worth highlighting that in case studies PCS1, PCS2, PCS5, and PCS6, the LPAs delineated BMV land as a separate planning issue within the list of considerations outlined

in their reports. Conversely, in the LPA reports for PCS3 and PCS4, BMV land was evaluated alongside other environmental considerations such as ecology and flood risk.

The LPA report for PCS5 highlighted the importance of front-loading a planning application submission with BMV land documents, to provide greater resources thus enabling the LPA to undertake a comprehensive review. This observation aligns with the experience of the LPA in PCS6, where planning officers commented on the lack of information to determine the planning application concerning 19.65 ha of Grades 2 and a BMV land. The assessment was provided in a single paragraph, and stated:

"The applicant has not submitted an ALC report in support of their submission which would otherwise provide evidence of the grade of agricultural land proposed to be used and explain why the use of this agricultural land rather than poorer quality land elsewhere is necessary."

One finding is that the LPA in PCS4 addressed the assessment of BMV land in a single paragraph (Great Yarmouth Borough Council, 2021). This stated:

"Policy CS11 seeks to safeguard and enhance the natural environment. The development of 150 houses would add undue recreational pressure on vulnerable habitat sites protected for conservation. The policy seeks to protect high quality agricultural land. The larger part of the site is designated Grade 1 agricultural land. Policy CS12 also seeks to protect the BMV agricultural land as a valuable resource for future generations. Given a sufficient housing supply is deliverable elsewhere in the borough including in Hemsby, it is not necessary to sterilise this current asset."

Whilst there is no universally prescribed approach to writing reports for planning applications, it is crucial to consider that these reports are subject to scrutiny once published. For instance, a Planning Inspector would review them should the planning refusal be appealed by the applicant or agent. In the context of planning appeals, LPAs and applicants may face an award of costs against them if they are found to have acted unreasonably. The PPG (Paragraph 49) provides guidance on planning appeals and awards of costs, and states:

"Local planning authorities are at risk of an award of costs if they behave unreasonably with respect to the substance of the matter under appeal…."

Examples of such behaviour include failure to produce evidence to substantiate each reason for refusal on appeal or vague, generalised or inaccurate assertions about a proposal's impact, which are unsupported by any objective analysis.

Refocusing on PCS4, there are no notable aspects in this case study that justify the brevity of the BMV land assessment such as the date of determination, proposal type or size of agricultural land affected by the development. Moreover, the LPA solely cited local planning policy within the report, without referring to the BMV land policies outlined in the NPPF. This omission distinguishes this case study from the others.

Across the case studies, with the exception of PCS4, LPAs conducted comprehensive assessments of BMV land within their reports, providing commentary on various planning considerations such as planning policies, ALC and the size of the land affected by the development. This transparency enables third parties, such as the public, to understand how the LPA evaluated BMV land within the broader planning context and how it influenced the decision.

As mentioned earlier, a notable challenge faced during this case study review was the absence of several published LPA decision reports for planning applications where BMV land was a contributing factor for refusal. This is set out further in Appendix B. It is presumed that this may have been an oversight, with LPAs potentially unaware of it. However, this highlights the necessity for improved training and resource allocation within LPA planning or administrative departments. It may be a case where implementing quality control checks is required to assist in ensuring that planning application reports (and decisions) are promptly published following determination of the planning application.

Planning Inspector Appeal Decision Case Study Review

Introduction

This section examines five planning appeal decisions from various regions in England where BMV agricultural land played a key role in the refusal of planning permission. These appeal decisions were issued between 2016 and 2023 and therefore occurred within the same timeframe as the review of land loss to development (2013-2022), as presented in the spatial and temporal analysis of agricultural land take in this report.

This section contains an analysis of how Planning Inspectors have evaluated the adopted planning policy concerning the protection of BMV agricultural land (including the weight attributed to it). This chapter also explores how Planning Inspectors have factored this consideration into their decision-making processes when determining a planning appeal.

The methodology for identifying the case studies is presented in Appendix B.

Case Studies

The following planning appeal decisions were selected as case studies:

- Appeal Case Study 1 (ACS1): APP/A2525/W/22/3295140 Solar Farm and Battery Storage Development in Walpole Marsh, Wisbech, PE14 7JH

- Appeal Case Study 2 (ACS2): APP/F1040/W/22/3313316 Solar Development in Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE12 8EW

- Appeal Case Study 3 (ACS3): APP/P2365/W/15/3132594 Hybrid Residential and Community Use Development in Aughton, Ormskirk, L39

- Appeal Case Study 4 (ACS4): APP/U2615/W/20/3262258 Residential Development in Hemsby, Great Yarmouth, NR29 4NQ

- Appeal Case Study 5 (ACS5): APP/G2713/W/23/3315877 Solar Farm at Scruton, Northallerton, DL7 0RG

The general context and background information regarding these appeals are provided in Appendix E.

ACS1 Solar Farm and Battery Storage Development in Walpole Marsh, Wisbech

This planning appeal was made against a refusal to grant planning permission by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk under application reference 21/01442/FM. The development sought the proposed installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure. The decision date was 24th February 2022.

The appeal site was situated within the administrative boundaries of two different local planning authorities: South Holland District Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Despite this division, the Inspector determined the appeals independently within the same appeal decision report however based their assessment on the primary issues and grounds for refusal put forth by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

This planning appeal was determined by written representations and allowed by the Inspector on 29th September 2023.

ACS2 Solar Development in Swadlincote, Derbyshire

This planning appeal was made against a refusal to grant planning permission by South Derbyshire District Council under application reference DMPA/2021/1014. The development sought the proposed installation of ground mounted solar photovoltaic panels with associated infrastructure and works, including substations, converters, inverters, access tracks, security fencing, boundary treatment and CCTV. The decision date was 8th August 2022.

This planning appeal was determined by an informal hearing and dismissed by the Inspector on 21st July 2023.

ACS3 Hybrid Residential and Community Use Development in Aughton, Ormskirk

This planning appeal was made against a refusal to grant full and outline planning permission by West Lancashire Borough Council under planning application reference

2015/0335/HYB. The development proposed was a hybrid application seeking full planning permission for the erection of 50 dwellings and associated works, and outline permission including details of access for development of up to 100 dwellings plus 295 square metres of D1 uses. The decision date was 30th June 2015.

This planning appeal was determined by a public inquiry and allowed by the Inspector on 19th August 2016.

ACS4 Residential Development in Hemsby, Great Yarmouth

This planning appeal was made against a refusal to grant outline planning permission by Great Yarmouth Borough Council under application reference 06/17/0540/O. The proposal comprised a residential development of 21 dwellings. The decision date was 16th June 2020.

This planning appeal was determined by written representations and dismissed by the Planning Inspector on 2nd July 2021.

ACS5 Solar Farm at Scruton, Northallerton

This planning appeal was made against a refusal to grant planning permission by Hambleton District Council under application reference 21/01362/FUL. The development sought the proposed installation of a solar photovoltaic array/solar farm with associated infrastructure. The decision date was 8th August 2022.

This planning appeal was determined by an informal hearing and allowed by the Planning Inspector on 27th June 2023.

Appeal Case Study Results

Inspectors and Planning Policy on Protection of BMV Agricultural Land

From the examination of the planning appeal decision notices, it was observed that each Planning Inspector introduced the BMV agricultural land matter within the appeal by citing and explaining the relevant policies within the NPPF on BMV agricultural land. It is worth noting that appeal case studies ACS2 and ACS5 were assessed against the edition of 2021, while ACS1, ACS4 and ACS3 were determined against the editions of 2023, 2019 and 2012 respectively.

Whilst the National Climate Emergency (2019), the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order (2019), Written Ministerial Statement (Pickles, 2015) and National Policy Statements (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2023; Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2023) are not strictly planning policy documents afforded the same level of weight as the NPPF or PPG, it was noted that the Planning Inspectors in appeals ACS1, ACS2 and ACS3 listed them within the appeal decisions, drew on their significance and afforded them varying levels of weight as part of the overall planning balance.

All Planning Inspectors scrutinised the wording of the LPA planning policies relating to the loss or protection of BMV agricultural land against the NPPF and PPG. This was evident within the three case studies for renewable energy development where the Inspectors drew comparisons between the respective planning policies and the former Paragraph 158 of the NPPF (now Paragraph 163). Here, Planning Inspectors also confirmed that the general wording of these local planning policies followed the direction of the climate change chapter of the NPPF.

It is noteworthy that in ACS4, the Planning Inspector considered that although the LPAs reason for refusal referred to Grade 1 BMV land, two planning policies from the Council's Core Strategy specifically referred to protecting and minimising the loss of BMV agricultural land. However, the Planning Inspector noted that these local plan policies lacked a clear definition of BMV land. Moreover, there was no provided definition elsewhere within the Core Strategy. BMV is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF, however this finding suggests further clarity is required in local planning policies regarding the definition of BMV land.

Planning Inspectors agreed that policies relating to BMV agricultural land did not seek to fully prevent the use of BMV land for development, however equally, Planning Inspectors gave considerable weight to whether the proposed use of any agricultural land was shown to be necessary and whether poorer quality land had been proposed in preference to higher quality land as set out in NPPF Footnote 62. Planning Inspectors also considered it important to assess whether any benefits arising from the development justified the loss of BMV land and whether adverse impacts could be satisfactorily mitigated as part of the proposed development.

In this regard, the issue of site selection emerged in three of the five case studies, particularly those concerning renewable energy development. While not explicitly mandated by policy, this suggests that Planning Inspectors deemed it important to assess whether the appellant had explored alternative development sites and adhered to a sequential approach for the appeal proposals, including the consideration of using lower grade (non-BMV) agricultural land (grades 3b, 4 and 5) and brownfield land.

In terms of resources, Planning Inspectors evaluated Site Selection Reports (in ACS1 and ACS2) and ALC Reports (in ACS1, ACS3, and ACS5) within the appeal decisions. Each document and its respective conclusions were given varying degrees of weight in the overall assessment of the proposed development and in reaching the planning appeal decision. It is unclear whether the remaining appeal case studies were accompanied by site selection and ALC reports, and further investigation would be required to establish this.

Inspectors and Weight given to BMV Agricultural Land Planning Policy

In terms of weight, Planning Inspectors gave varying levels of weight to the loss of BMV land within the appeal decisions ranging between moderate and significant for four of the five case studies. For reference, there is currently no national guidance as to what is considered a substantial, moderate, or limited loss of BMV land, and whether this should

differ between temporary and permanent developments, and this is personified within the appeal decisions which demonstrate that each planning appeal is determined on its own planning merits and a balance of the planning benefits and harm.

The Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook (ICE, 2019) and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA109 (Standards for Highways, 2019) offers a practical guide to the requirements of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process. The criteria presented in these two documents sets out area thresholds for the loss of agricultural land. This is also mirrored in the IEMA land and soil guidance. This advises:

"…the permanent loss, or reduction in quality, of more than 20ha of agricultural land due to development is of very high magnitude, 5 to 20ha is of high magnitude, and low magnitude is for the permanent loss of less than 5ha of agricultural land. The derivation of these definitions is related to previous guidance in England and Wales that referred to 20ha as a single magnitude threshold. Currently in Wales 20ha or more is considered a nationally significant loss, with less than 20ha usually considered a local matter for the LPA to consider on a case-by-case basis."

However, these assessment criteria would only be employed where an EIA is being undertaken.

In ACS1, moderate weight was applied to the conflict of the planning appeal proposal with the respective development plans in respect of the loss of 78 ha of Grade 1 BMV land. In ACS2, the loss of almost 34 ha of Grades 2 and 3a BMV land amounted to 50% of BMV on the respective site and this was described by the Planning Inspector (The Planning Inspectorate, 2023) as:

"a significant negative aspect of the appeal proposal which weighs heavily against the development."

In ACS3, the Planning Inspector considered that the loss of 12.6 ha of BMV land within an overall site area of 17.06 ha would cause a loss of BMV land of a sufficient scale to be considered locally significant, and this also weighed against the development. The Planning Inspector in ACS4 applied significant weight to the planning appeal proposals which conflicted with BMV land polices, despite the fact that the proposal resulted in the loss of 1.2 ha of Grades 1 and 2 BMV land. Here the Planning Inspector considered the loss was unjustified and therefore harmful. Notably and similar to the findings in Chapter 4, this suggests that the scale of the loss of BMV land is not the only determinative factor in the appeal decision making process.

In ACS5, following a thorough review of the appellants evidence and reporting including the ALC surveys submitted (The Planning Inspectorate, 2023), the Planning Inspector concluded that a majority of the appeal site did not form BMV agricultural land:

"As a result, the appellant submitted an ALC report (the Amet report). This indicates that the majority of the site is Grade 3b agricultural land with a small portion (5ha) being Grade

2. However, a similar report produced for the Council (the ADAS report) indicates that the majority of the land is Grade 2 with a small amount (5.85ha) being Grade 3b."

Consequently, the planning appeal proposal was deemed to comply with the LPA BMV land policy. The role of the spatial extent of the development relative to this Inspector decision is explored in the subsequent chapter.

It is noted that in terms of the overall planning balance, Planning Inspectors have applied significant and substantial weight to other factors such as the national and local climate emergency declarations, the provision and benefits of clean energy generation, Biodiversity Net Gain, and landscape enhancement. In ACS3, the Planning Inspector expanded on the economic benefits associated with the construction and occupation of the development (The Planning Inspectorate, 2018) and stated:

"In accordance with Framework paragraph 19 (and 28), economic growth through the provision of construction jobs and the sale of construction materials, and expenditure during occupation of the houses, attracts significant weight in favour of the appeal scheme."

In the same appeal decision, the Planning Inspector applied significant weight to other matters such as planning obligations to secure public transport/bus subsidy, travel plan contributions, secondary education contributions, open space, affordable and specialist housing.

This area of research reveals that Planning Inspectors accorded significant to moderate levels of weight to BMV land policies and the loss of BMV land. In ACS4, the Inspector drew comparison to the respective local planning policies (The Planning Inspectorate, 2021), and stated:

"…I find that other policies most important for determining the appeal, namely CS Policies CS6 and CS12 are consistent with the Framework and should be afforded significant weight."

Notwithstanding this, these findings alone are not entirely conclusive that Planning Inspectors afford more weight to the loss of higher grades or quantities of BMV land (as evidenced in ACS1).

Inspectors and Impact of Development on Use of BMV Agricultural Land

Planning Inspectors took the longevity of each of the development's lifespans on the loss of BMV land into consideration. In ACS3 and ACS4 (residential development) the Inspectors highlighted a loss or permanent loss of BMV land, whereas in ACS1 and ACS2 (renewable energy development), the Inspectors considered the appeal proposals to be a temporary loss.

In ACS1, the Planning Inspector acknowledged that the 35 year lifespan of the development would not represent a total loss of agricultural land as sheep would graze between and under the solar arrays (a matter which could be secured through a

management plan) and following decommissioning, the land would be restored to agricultural use.

The Planning Inspector in ACS5 highlighted that the Council provided no evidence that the use of the land for grazing sheep was contrary to any policy, whether or not the site was BMV and concluded that:

"Given this, it cannot be reasonably argued that the proposal will result in either the temporary or permanent loss of agricultural land."

The argument to support a temporary loss or change of use of agricultural land was also considered in ACS1, ACS2 and ACS5.

It is noted that Planning Inspectors considered soil health and fallow periods only within the decision notices for renewable energy developments (ACS1, ACS2 and ACS5).

The decision notice for ACS5 discussed this in detail where the Planning Inspector stated that there would be nothing in planning terms to prevent the farmers using the fields that formed the appeal site for the grazing of sheep at present or even leaving them fallow. This supports a general argument for appellants in solar development planning applications on BMV land that installing solar photovoltaic arrays does not represent a total loss of agricultural land thereby the impacts and harm of that development type is effectively reduced.

Versatility is a key component of BMV land, therefore the introduction of solar panels in ACS5 reducing the productivity and versatility of land for agricultural use, could be deemed a temporary lowering of the ALC grade.

Notwithstanding the above, the Planning Inspector in ACS1 recognised that whilst fallow periods could improve soil health, there was no substantive evidence to suggest that this would be the case for the specific soil types prevalent within the appeal site in the context of the fallow period associated with the proposal. As such, this was only afforded limited weight as a long-term benefit to agricultural production. It is clear here that soil health and fallow period was dependent on specific circumstances associated with each appeal proposal, including the information provided by the appellant. Understandably, this matter was not considered in the residential or mixed-use appeal case studies.

The final key observation highlighted the consideration of food security and production by the Planning Inspector albeit solely within the context of the three renewable energy case studies. Within ACS1, the Planning Inspector attached significant weight to the impact of climate change on food production and recognised that energy and food security were pivotal matters influenced by foreign markets.

The Planning Inspector in ACS2 acknowledged the main issues for food security as identified by Defra (Defra, 2009) were climate change and soil degradation and this only served to emphasise the importance of maintaining higher quality agricultural land. This case study highlighted that the loss of 34 ha (or just under 50% of BMV land of the appeal

site) made an unacceptable indent on the contribution that a large proportion of the site made towards food security for a significant period of time.

Significantly, this matter was extensively deliberated in ACS5 between the Council and appellant. During these discussions, the Council concurred that there were no national or local policies, guidance, or strategies pertaining to food security and production. The appellant underscored various government documents and statistics indicating that food security was not a significant concern in the country, and that the level of food production was satisfactory. These submissions were not challenged by the LPA.

The Planning Inspector observed the nature of crops in ACS5, stating:

"the majority of crops grown on the appeal site at present are largely used for industrial purposes rather than supplying the food chain, whereas if it were to be used for grazing of sheep it would be contributing food for human consumption."

Although the Inspector did not elaborate on the definition of 'industrial purposes' in this context, this finding suggests that the Inspector would have assigned more weight to this matter if the appeal site had been used for crops destined for the human consumption food chain. Taking this into account, the Planning Inspector concluded that the proposed use of the land would not be detrimental to the nation's food security. It appears that Planning Inspectors consider this issue, although similar to the findings regarding soil health and fallow periods discussed earlier, it was excluded from the residential or mixed-use appeal case studies.

Other Findings

An outline review of the planning application records for the appeal decisions on Public Access revealed that Natural England was consulted at the planning application stage for ACS1, ACS4, and ACS5. However, the advice or consultation responses from Natural England were not cited by the Planning Inspector in the subsequent appeal decision reports. The reasons for omitting references to the Natural England consultations were unclear, but this does not necessarily imply that Natural England's advice was entirely disregarded during the appeal proceedings for the aforementioned appeal case studies. Further investigation would be necessary to understand the extent and nature of this consultation process from the planning application phase to the appeal decision.

Conclusions

This chapter provides insights into the role of BMV agricultural land in the planning application and appeal decision making processes, through a series of LPA interviews and case studies, exploring the planning functions of LPAs and Planning Inspectors across various regions of England.

LPA Interviews

Each participating LPA had different ratios of DM and PP staff alongside RTPI chartered members. Whilst all LPAs possessed some level of understanding regarding the significance of BMV land, this understanding was typically influenced by the proportion of 'high likelihood of BMV land' within their administrative areas. LPAs with a larger proportion of 'high likelihood of BMV land' tended to demonstrate a greater level of knowledge regarding its importance.

This study suggests a positive correlation between the presence of RTPI chartered staff and an enhanced understanding of BMV land and its significance, with the three LPAs boasting the highest number of chartered members, demonstrating a greater knowledge of BMV land compared to the other three LPAs.

The resources and frequency of use by the LPAs appeared to be largely influenced by each LPAs individual experiences (such as the planning application and development), showcasing a general lack of correlation. Site specific surveys, local planning policy and guidance, national planning policy and appeal decisions were among the primary information resources utilised. It was found that ALC consultants were not used by any LPAs.

A significant theme was the necessity for LPAs to have additional information in order to consistently make decisions regarding planning applications affecting BMV land. Examples included the need for updated and accurate mapping, showing a clear distinction between Subgrades 3a and 3b agricultural land, and guidance on the loss of BMV land and sites smaller than 20 ha; assessing cumulative impact of development on BMV; and a process to investigate why this development would not be suitable on lower grade land.

Each participating LPA was aware of the NPPF Footnote 62 and considered BMV land when devising their spatial strategy and site allocations documents.

Five out of six LPAs had an adopted LDP. These LPAs were determined to have a greater basis for decision making with clear policies for strategic development and growth in their administrative areas within the relevant plan period. All LPAs had a planning policy relating to development affecting BMV land and the main factors and priorities in applying this policy was influenced by several factors such as an analysis of the site (e.g. location, character), followed by a review of the (sustainable development) and planning policy constraints.

This study identified the inconsistent nature of LPA decision-making regarding planning applications affecting BMV land. However, it is noteworthy that both the NPPF and local planning policy were consistently highlighted as priorities across authorities.

Two LPAs had cited BMV land as a reason for refusing a planning application; however, the case studies indicated that it was an ancillary reason for refusal rather than the sole reason. These case studies did not conclusively determine the weight attributed to the loss

of BMV land in these planning decisions. This prompts the question of whether LPAs feel confident in refusing planning applications solely based on the loss of BMV land.

Only one LPA actively monitored the loss of BMV land by publishing an Annual Process and Monitoring Report. Another LPA was in the process of adopting a monitoring process however this was proving challenging due to resource constraints. LPAs lacking a monitoring system also ranked low for understanding the significance of BMV land among the participating LPAs. This indicates that LPAs with limited or inadequate understanding of BMV land either overlook the importance of implementing continuous monitoring systems for BMV land loss or do not prioritise it within their planning functions. There is a concern that without such monitoring, LPAs may continue to permit development on BMV land without adequately addressing or accounting for this loss.

Two LPAs were aware of how to control loss of BMV land through other systems such as making planning decisions on development affecting BMV land and subsequently tracking this via internal resources such as GIS. It is arguable whether this can be classed as a monitoring system.

LPA Decision Case Studies

The analysis reveals consistent patterns in the LPA decision-making process, encompassing various factors such as the utilisation of planning resources (including planning policy, guidance and appeal decisions), and consideration of sequential approaches, consultation with Natural England, characteristics of BMV land and political influences. Additionally, this chapter scrutinised refusal reasons and planning reports.

All LPAs referenced the relevant NPPF policies, with most utilising the local planning policies. However, the specific weight afforded to BMV land amongst other planning issues was not cited. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether four LPAs considered the PPG advice on assessing development proposals on agricultural land.

This finding raises questions about the perceived efficacy of such guidance in informing LPA decisions. None of the LPAs confirmed the level of weight attributed to BMV land policies or guidance within reports, thereby also complicating the assessment of the significance of BMV land loss within the decision-making process.

Throughout the case studies, two LPAs highlighted the significance of front-loading a planning application submission with BMV land documents, facilitating a comprehensive review by the LPA of the associated impacts arising from that proposal.

Notably, there is no discernible correlation indicating that planning applications affecting larger sizes or higher grades of BMV land are more prone to refusal by the LPA on those grounds. Rather, the decision outcome is influenced by the unique merits of each individual planning application and planning balance. Additionally, three case studies exemplified the importance placed on preserving BMV land in housing applications, even in instances where the respective LPAs were unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply at the time of decision.

The two largest planning case studies (in terms of site area) for this review covered 48.5 and 19.65 ha of Grades 2 and 3a BMV land, respectively. It is noteworthy that if approved, these developments would have resulted in a potential loss (either temporary or permanent) of 3.8% and 0.1% of the overall BMV land area within each respective LPA administrative area. In both cases, the LPA administrative areas contained urban areas totalling 6.9% and 10.9%, respectively.

Conversely, the remaining four LPA case studies were of a more moderate scale, with an average site area of 5 ha. These LPAs, on average, had a high likelihood urban area of 23.2%. This suggests that alternative non-BMV land options could have been considered as starting points for each development. However, it is crucial to note that this data does not necessarily imply that the urban areas or non-BMV land was available or suitable to each planning development at the time of the planning application phase.

Particularly noteworthy were two case studies that vividly illustrated the political influence of planning committees on decisions related to BMV land within the DM planning function. In these instances, two planning applications recommended for approval by the professional judgment of planning officers were subsequently overturned by planning committee members. The planning committee decision making process is absent from the report, thereby making this a complex aspect to measure. Regarding decisions, it was observed that most of the selected LPAs did not issue decision notices with BMV land as the sole reason for refusal; instead, it was often accompanied by other environmental refusal reasons.

The majority of LPAs conducted thorough assessments of BMV land within their reports, although the report templates varied in length, format, and content. These assessments considered factors such as planning policies, ALC and size of the land affected by the development amongst other matters. However, it was concerning that some LPAs did not publish planning applications decision reports where BMV land was a contributing reason for refusal. This highlights the necessity for improved training and resource allocation within LPA planning or administrative departments.

Planning Inspector Appeal Case Studies

Similar to the planning case studies, this study shows that the loss of BMV land was a material planning consideration in the selected planning appeal case studies that was afforded moderate to significant weight by Planning Inspectors in appeal decisions.

Across the case studies, Planning Inspectors highlighted the importance of various aspects related to BMV land. These included the specific wording of BMV land planning policies; considerations regarding both temporary and permanent loss of BMV land; the availability and relevance of information such as site selection processes and ALC reports; the anticipated longevity of proposed developments; views on soil health; and the implications for food security and production.

Two of the case studies served as clear illustrations of the challenges posed by BMV land to development projects. Providing context, the LPA administrative area for one appeal

case study featured a high likelihood BMV area of 36.27% and a high likelihood urban area of 11.11%. Conversely, another displayed proportions of 56.85% for high likelihood BMV land and 28.21% for high likelihood urban area.

This indicates the presence of other non-BMV land within each LPA area, potentially suitable for development however again this does not necessarily mean that urban areas or non-BMV land was available or suitable to each appeal proposal.

The appeal decision review highlights how BMV land constraints can hinder LPAs from achieving net zero targets and meeting demands for housing land. Conversely, the remaining three case studies present contrasting viewpoints, demonstrating how Planning Inspectors weigh the loss of BMV land against the potential public benefits derived from proposed developments. These benefits may include bolstering energy security and contributing to environmental enhancement.

Recommendations and Next Steps

There are clear areas of improvement to foster a better understanding of BMV land and improve the quality of decision-making process for LPAs in planning applications that affect BMV land. The pertinent themes across the study have been drawn into recommendations and additional areas of research to explore topics in greater depth.

Planning Policy and Guidance

- Enhance Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF

    o Define precise thresholds for BMV land.

    o Define "significant development" to support Footnote 62 and Paragraph 180 of the NPPF

    o Define "temporary" and "permanent" development

    o Provide guidance on categorising substantial, moderate, or limited loss of BMV land.

Additionally, it is advised that Natural England assess existing online guidance concerning BMV agricultural land to ensure it remains current and effective for DM and PP functions, which includes:

- Guidance on the loss of BMV land and sites smaller than 20 ha

- Guidance on assessing cumulative impact of development on BMV land

- A process to investigate why development would not be suitable on lower grade land

- Guidance pertaining to BMV land to incorporate a Land Use Strategy aimed at locating developments on the most suitable land, enabling a cumulative consideration of developments. This should address particular development types and their effects on agricultural land (e.g., the long term impact of solar panels on soil health).

Implementing these recommendations would streamline the decision-making process for LPAs, Planning Inspectors, and other stakeholders, providing clear guidelines for both plan-making and decision-taking regarding BMV land. This approach would help maintain consistency in decisions and ensure that measures like the sequential approach are applied effectively to manage development on BMV land. Additionally, it could provide a practical and transparent methodology for LPAs to monitor the loss of BMV land, all while minimising resource strain.

Monitoring

To help prevent significant loss of BMV land from development over sustained periods or throughout the LDP period, it is advisable for each LPA to record, monitor, and report any permanent or temporary loss of BMV land. It is recommended that a system to monitor the loss of BMV land is established. A collaboration with organisations such as Natural England could facilitate the implementation of such systems.

Resources

A comprehensive review and improvement of the available mapping are needed to enable LPAs to make more informed decisions regarding the ALC and development implications of specific land parcels, particularly to:

- Update the online mapping resources to accurately differentiate between Subgrades 3a and 3b agricultural land.

Exploring the potential for standardised LPA planning application report templates nationwide in England is important. This initiative could be led by Local Government, LPAs, and other relevant stakeholders, derived from best practices in report writing. Potential options include:

- Adapting existing planning appeal templates; or

- developing an entirely independent and tailored report format.

By adopting universal report templates, LPAs would be able to ensure consistency in how planning assessments and key considerations, such as agricultural land, are presented and weighted. This endeavour would promote greater consistency and transparency, particularly in demonstrating the consideration and weight given to BMV land alongside other planning factors.

Furthermore, it is essential that LPA planning committee reports include justification for the committees determination. LPAs should adopt additional resources or practices to ensure these reports are consistently published on Public Access platforms for transparency and public view.

Collaboration among stakeholders including Natural England, LPAs, and the Government is critical in addressing the challenges and development pressures facing BMV land. Introducing national forums to facilitate better collaboration and engagement amongst stakeholders could provide valuable support in this regard. These forums could take the form of:

- Seminars, conferences, or training videos, allowing for in-depth discussions and knowledge-sharing on current issues related to BMV land.

At a national level, Natural England should review consultation responses for development over the 20 ha threshold and ensure these are tailored to the development especially where it concerns the permanent loss of BMV land. This area of work requires a review of the current consultation responses issued. This can then lead into investigating the incorporation of Natural England's advice provided during the planning application stage into the decision-making process of appeals.

Overall, it is considered that these practices would help enhance the general planning functions and processes for decision makers and stakeholders involved with developments affecting BMV land.

Further Studies

There are several suggestions as a result of the study.

There is an opportunity to broaden the scope and contact a wider selection of LPAs to build a more comprehensive view of the development and monitoring of BMV land across England. Interviewing more LPAs would help provide a more widespread and potentially qualitative range of results, which could also draw on the existing LPA needs further or identify new needs or areas of improvement. This could then investigate a broader spectrum of LPA decisions across various regions of England, encompassing both approved and refused planning applications. This comprehensive analysis would foster a more expansive comprehension of the subject matter, particularly in identifying disparities in LPA decision making practices on a broader scale.

Extending the study to include the perspectives of agricultural landowners, such as farmers, would also be beneficial. This could offer a well-rounded understanding into their views on development pressures impacting agricultural land and the material issues affecting BMV land from their standpoint.

Further exploration into the planning team and department structures of LPAs could reveal how responsibilities for handling BMV land are delegated across the DM and PP functions. This would help understand how LPAs allocate resources and prioritise BMV land across

planning policies and procedures, providing additional context for the LPA interview responses gathered in this study.

In future BMV land and development studies, it would be beneficial to evaluate the BMV resources and frequency of use given the challenge of obtaining consistent responses to Question 4.

It would also be worthwhile exploring planning applications that exceed the statutory Natural England 20 ha consultation threshold, as this would build an understanding of how LPAs balance the consultation advice from Natural England against other planning considerations when making planning decisions that impact BMV land.

Finally, it would be pertinent to examine a more extensive array of planning appeals. This would enable an assessment of the extent to which Planning Inspectors prioritise the loss of higher-grade or larger quantities of BMV land.

By delving into these aspects, the research can enhance the understanding of how LPAs and Planning Inspectors evaluate BMV land loss. Such studies can provide valuable insights for refining planning policies and procedures related to BMV land preservation and planning and appeal decision making processes in the future.

Project Conclusions

Research presented in this report has explored the extent to which current planning policy has protected BMV land in England from loss to development over the past 10 years. Using the latest available DLUHC land use change statistics, this research has quantified spatially and temporally the loss of agricultural land, and BMV land specifically, between 2013-2018 and 2019-2022. Through interviews with LPA Officers, and reviews of LPA planning decisions and Planning Inspector appeals, this work has further investigated the role of BMV agricultural land in the planning system, offering insights into how planning decisions can ultimately lead to this loss of agricultural and BMV land.

Analytical work undertaken in Chapter 2 identified a gross total of 106,600 ha of agricultural land directly converted to development and vacant between 2013-2018 and 2019-2022. A net loss of 85,161 ha of agricultural land was further identified. This is a notable amount, equal to approximately 1,000 averaged sized UK agricultural holdings, or 1% of England's current agricultural land.

This also indicates rates of loss substantially higher than the previous review (SP1501) in 2011, which found a total of 38,366 ha of agricultural land converted to other permanent development uses between 1998 and 2008. However, it is emphasised that the methodology used in deriving the land use change statistics used in both assessments changed for the 2013-2014 release, and results from the two studies are therefore not directly comparable. It is therefore difficult to confidently determine whether current policy and guidance, particularly the current NPPF, first introduced in 2012, can be linked to changes in overall rates of agricultural land take.

Results from this assessment, where land use change statistics production methodologies are consistent, suggest no clear temporal trends in annual rates of agricultural land take to developed and vacant uses between 2013 and 2022. It should however be noted that apparent temporal trends will be partially influenced by the extent and composition of areas resurveyed as part of the OS data capture programme. Despite this lack of observed temporal trend, it is however notable that results indicate a net loss of agricultural land for each year land use change data is available.

Using the Likelihood of BMV agricultural land dataset, analysis indicates that of the gross agricultural land loss, 31% was in areas with a high likelihood of being BMV, compared with 26% in areas with a medium likelihood, 23% with a low likelihood, and 19% in areas identified as non-agricultural within the BMV likelihood dataset. This is comparable with the previous review, carried out prior to the introduction of the current NPPF in 2012 and Planning Practice Guidance in 2018, which found that of the 38,355 ha of development identified, 31% of this was within the high likelihood category, 25% the medium likelihood category, and 44% in a combined low and other category. It is important to note however that this measures likelihood only, and it is not possible from this alone to conclusively determine whether development has occurred on BMV or non-BMV land. Further analysis performed using pre- and post-1988 "detailed" ALC mapping indicates an estimated gross loss of 45,412 ha of BMV agricultural land, although this is an indicative value derived from a small sample only.

As emphasised throughout this work, the lack of a national-scale detailed ALC or BMV map for England means that accurately quantifying loss of BMV land over time is currently not possible. This issue was similarly reflected in interviews with Local Planning Authorities (Chapter 3), where the need for clear differentiation between ALC subgrades 3a and 3b was raised by two of six interviewed LPAs, and a need for updated mapping by one LPA, highlighting a demand for detailed ALC mapping reflecting post-1988 guidelines.

Despite this uncertainty, results from this analysis suggest an ongoing loss of agricultural land, and importantly BMV land, to development. Interviews and case study reviews undertaken in Chapter 3 provide insights into the role of BMV agricultural land in the planning system, and the decisions that can result in both its loss and conservation.

In interviews with six Local Planning Authorities, all participating LPAs were found to possess some level of understanding regarding the significance of BMV land, and all were found to be aware of NPPF Footnote 62, considering this in their own spatial strategy and site allocations documents. Results however suggest that those authorities containing a larger proportion of high likelihood of BMV land (as measured by the Likelihood of BMV agricultural land dataset), and possessing more RTPI chartered staff, demonstrate a comparatively greater understanding of BMV land and its significance. It is also notable however that despite this understanding, only one interviewed LPA was found to actively monitor and report on the loss of BMV land.

A reoccurring theme highlighted in these interviews is the demand for additional information and resources to allow for consistent decisions regarding planning applications affecting BMV land. As discussed above, one example cited by multiple LPAs is the

requirement for updated and accurate ALC and BMV mapping. However, a need for further guidance and specific definitions in several areas was also raised.

Echoing the LPA interviews, all six LPA decision case studies reviewed referenced relevant NPPF policies. The majority of LPAs also conducted thorough assessments of BMV land within their reports. However, the specific weight afforded to BMV land amongst other planning issues was not cited, and for four decisions it was further unclear if the LPAs considered the PPG advice on assessing development proposals on agricultural land. It was also observed that most of the selected LPAs did not issue decision notices with BMV land as the sole reason for refusal; instead, it was often accompanied by other environmental refusal reasons.

A notable result of this case study review is that there is no clear correlation indicating that planning applications affecting larger sizes or higher grades of BMV land are more prone to refusal by the LPA on those grounds. Rather, decision outcome was seen to be influenced by the unique merits of each individual planning application and planning balance. In interpreting this lack of correlation however, the small sample size (six reviews) is emphasised. It is further noteworthy that for two case studies, the political influence of planning committees on decisions relating to BMV land is highlighted, with planning officer's recommendations for approval being overturned by committee members.

In line with findings from the LPA decision reviews, a review of selected Planning Inspector appeal decisions indicated that the loss of BMV land was a material consideration in these case studies, with it being considered that the loss of BMV land was afforded moderate to significant weight by Planning Inspectors. Across these case studies, Planning Inspectors highlighted the importance of various aspects related to BMV land. However, these case studies also illustrated how Planning Inspectors weigh the loss of BMV land against other potential public benefits derived from proposed developments, such as bolstering energy security, highlighting the often complex mix of requirements and competing priorities that must be considered as part of the planning process.

In all cases, the limited research sample size of both interviews (six LPAs) and reviews (six LPA planning decision reports and five Planning Inspector appeal decision reports) is highlighted, with further work being required to build a more comprehensive view of the development and monitoring of BMV land in England.

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Glossary

ACS   Appeal Case Study

ALC   Agricultural Land Classification

BMV   Best and Most Versatile Land

Defra   Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DLUHC   Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

DM   Development Management

DMPO   Development Management Procedure Order (2015)

DMRB   Design Manual for Roads and Bridges

EIA   Environmental Impact Assessment

GIS   Geographical Information Systems

ICE   Institute of Civil Engineers

IEMA   Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

LDP   Local Development Plan

LPA   Local Planning Authority

LUCS   Land Use Change Statistics

MAFF   Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries

MoU   Memorandum of Understanding

NE   Natural England

NPPF   National Planning Policy Framework

NSRI   National Soil Resources Institute

PCS   Planning Case Study

PINS   Planning Inspectorate for England

PP   Planning Policy

PPG   Planning Practice Guidance

OS   Ordnance Survey

RTPI   Royal Town Planning Institute

WOAD   Welsh Office Agriculture Department

5YHLS   5 year housing land supply

Appendices

Appendix A

Table A.1: Land use change in England (hectares), 2013-2022, categorised by land use group the land was changed from.

Year	Agriculture	Community Services	Defence	Forestry, open land and water	Industry and Commerce	Minerals and landfill	Other developed use	Outdoor recreation	Residential	Residential gardens	Transport and Utilities	Undeveloped land	Vacant
2013-14	48,714	719	11	72,522	5,499	543	6,863	2,360	748	859	1,715	3,286	3,967
2014-15	78,759	865	14	95,878	5,565	1930	7,896	2,042	933	1,266	1,820	4,557	5,082
2015-16	49,685	564	8	58,665	5,485	1261	6,985	1,920	501	1,329	1,890	3,938	6,105
2016-17	34,705	486	9	24,523	4,553	860	7,463	3,600	547	1,181	2,024	3,463	6,474
2017-18	33,117	640	25	17,392	4,982	670	6,520	1,242	515	1,373	1,391	2,729	7,661
2018-19													
2019-20*	28,676	572	6	18,637	3,640	544	6,082	7,210	398	812	3,572	3,573	6,086
2020-21*	28,676	572	6	18,637	3,640	544	6,082	7,210	398	812	3,572	3,573	6,086
2021-22*	28,676	572	6	18,637	3,640	544	6,082	7,210	398	812	3,572	3,573	6,086

* averaged from 2019-2022 data

Table A.2: Agricultural land conversion to other land uses in England (hectares), 2013-2022, categorised by land use group the land was changed to.

Year	Agriculture	Community Services	Defence	Forestry, open land and water	Industry and Commerce	Minerals and landfill	Other developed use	Outdoor recreation	Residential	Transport and Utilities	Undeveloped land	Vacant
2013-14	151.0	12.0		35,602.3	194.3	872.3	5,716.7	944.4	489.3	586.6	89.	3,286.4
2014-15	167.8	14.6	0.004	59,317.3	647.7	881.1	10,715.3	1,163.3	820.1	882.9	112.6	3,540.8
2015-16	147.3	6.6	0.088	34,814.8	270.3	463.2	5,934.5	1,246.8	745.1	852.8	157.6	4,631.1
2016-17	126.2	3.9	0.155	20,222.0	307.1	291.0	4,525.5	1,559.2	646.0	654.1	177.3	5,620.3
2017-18	93.14	5.7	0.001	17,082.6	759.4	340.7	6,037.1	1,046.	597.7	780.2	74.2	5,903.0
2018-19												
2019-20*	31.9	299.6	0.001	13,812.0	388.6	2742	4,424.3	1,278.1	1,266.0	1,904.6	464.9	4,297.7
2020-21*	31.9	299.6	0.001	13,812.0	388.6	274.2	4,424.3	1,278.1	1,266.0	1,904.6	464.9	4,297.7
2021-22*	31.9	299.6	0.001	13,812.0	388.6	274.2	4,424.3	1,278.1	1,266.0	1,904.6	464.9	4,297.7

* averaged from 2019-2022 data

Table A.3: Loss of agricultural land to developed uses in England, 2013-2022 (hectares)

Year	Community Services	Defence	Industry and Commerce	Minerals and landfill	Other developed use	Residential	Transport and Utilities	Vacant
2013-14	12.0		194.3	872.3	5,716.7	489.3	586.6	3,286.4
2014-15	14.6	0.004	647.7	881.0	10,715.3	820.1	882.9	3,540.8
2015-16	6.6	0.088	270.3	463.2	5,934.5	745.1	852.8	4,631.1
2016-17	3.9	0.155	307.1	291.0	4,525.5	646.0	654.1	5,620.3
2017-18	5.7	0.001	759.4	340.7	6,037.1	597.7	780.2	5,903.0
2018-19								
2019-20*	299.6	0.001	388.6	274.2	4,424.3	1,266.0	1,904.6	4,297.7
2020-21*	299.6	0.001	388.6	274.2	4,424.3	1,266.0	1,904.6	4,297.7
2021-22*	299.6	0.001	388.6	274.2	4,424.3	1,266.0	1,904.6	4,297.7

* averaged from 2019-2022 data

Table A.4: Local authorities, BMV likelihood and development. Aera in hectares (ha)

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
Adur LPA	1897.8	142.8	20.8	290.7	1591.0	3.6	0.0	10.1	2.5	16.3	2.5	22.2
Amber Valley LPA	26543.8	3763.6	7045.5	11269.9	4485.0	49.6	49.6	148.6	50.1	297.9	1.3	16.6
Arun LPA	11806.8	5542.5	348.4	1559.8	4349.3	228.2	3.7	33.3	56.7	321.9	4.1	70.9
Ashfield LPA	10955.8	1413.2	4179.3	1423.5	3947.8	29.5	74.6	9.4	26.2	139.7	2.1	21.1
Ashford LPA	58061.7	15064.5	9949.8	25563.0	7476.9	147.0	63.3	307.2	54.1	571.7	1.0	25.7
Babergh LPA	59511.7	39021.3	13987.9	1274.2	5130.2	161.1	81.3	2.0	43.1	287.4	0.4	56.0
Barking and Dagenham LPA	3610.1	96.3	0.0	56.1	3469.9	0.2	0.0	0.1	33.1	33.4	0.2	0.6
Barnet LPA	8676.7	0.0	58.7	1742.9	6878.8	0.0	0.0	61.7	5.2	67.0	0.0	0.0
Barnsley LPA	29847.9	6596.5	3072.3	11560.2	8641.8	41.8	37.3	140.3	109.3	328.6	0.6	12.7
Basildon LPA	11000.1	1142.5	200.4	4217.5	5434.4	37.3	2.2	48.1	205.9	293.5	3.3	12.7
Basingstoke and Deane LPA	63381.7	17449.7	30357.8	7717.6	7902.2	85.6	114.5	101.7	55.2	356.8	0.5	24.0

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
Bassetlaw LPA	63780.4	15111.6	30101.5	9742.1	8866.1	97.2	326.4	105.0	96.5	625.1	0.6	15.5
Bath and North East Somerset LPA	35112.3	4873.5	9037.9	14989.8	6238.2	29.1	29.6	81.1	34.4	174.1	0.6	16.7
Bedford LPA	47640.8	31907.2	3834.5	3799.7	8124.7	255.5	58.1	87.1	157.1	557.8	0.8	45.8
Bexley LPA	6057.8	391.0	147.9	184.8	5358.6	7.2	1.0	2.0	19.0	29.2	1.8	24.6
Birmingham LPA	26779.1	942.3	1654.8	34.1	24169.2	6.0	5.3	0.0	6.7	18.1	0.6	33.3
Blaby LPA	13046.9	929.2	9010.5	687.5	2429.1	7.2	260.2	10.7	28.6	306.7	0.8	2.3
Blackburn with Darwen LPA	13702.2	581.3	198.4	9263.0	3670.1	1.4	6.2	43.5	26.6	77.7	0.2	1.9
Blackpool LPA	3487.1	252.9	434.1	21.2	2780.7	1.1	3.5	0.0	4.0	8.6	0.5	13.4
Bolsover LPA	16033.5	7357.7	2233.8	3536.6	2917.2	96.2	37.3	40.6	22.5	196.6	1.3	48.9
Bolton LPA	13979.2	272.5	608.6	6013.9	7095.0	2.5	14.4	206.4	39.1	262.4	0.9	1.0
Boston LPA	36400.9	32409.3	0.0	415.4	3354.7	202.3	0.0	0.0	26.6	228.9	0.6	88.4

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole LPA	16206.8	1864.4	1515.3	1695.6	10974.3	32.4	62.0	17.7	12.6	124.7	1.7	25.9
Bracknell Forest LPA	10938.4	118.2	4116.6	164.1	6546.1	17.1	92.7	2.6	36.0	148.4	14.5	11.6
Bradford LPA	36641.9	890.4	3519.9	19260.2	13000.6	20.3	43.8	104.1	102.3	270.5	2.3	7.5
Braintree LPA	61170.8	44327.7	10590.3	674.7	5579.2	280.8	98.9	0.7	55.0	435.5	0.6	64.5
Breckland LPA	130511.7	34720.9	42106.0	24749.2	28922.0	236.9	207.1	149.0	108.5	701.5	0.7	33.8
Brent LPA	4125.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	4127.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Brentwood LPA	15312.4	1436.8	3488.4	7083.3	3306.5	8.2	29.4	59.4	9.0	106.1	0.6	7.8
Brighton and Hove LPA	4568.2	0.0	215.1	6.6	4361.9	0.0	5.0	0.0	1.6	6.7	0.0	0.0
Bristol, City of LPA	10966.7	110.4	465.5	593.6	9791.2	0.4	4.0	14.9	14.7	33.9	0.3	1.1
Broadland LPA	47563.7	26442.1	6791.8	5894.9	8419.7	442.4	48.8	123.0	96.9	711.1	1.7	62.2
Bromley LPA	15013.2	3837.4	2219.6	0.0	8960.7	40.5	10.4	0.0	6.9	57.8	1.1	70.0

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
Bromsgrove LPA	21696.8	8148.0	6969.1	3666.5	2930.5	81.3	74.4	34.4	21.6	211.7	1.0	38.4
Broxbourne LPA	5144.2	891.1	598.4	1229.4	2427.1	11.6	6.5	12.6	6.5	37.2	1.3	31.2
Broxtowe LPA	8009.9	1361.7	566.4	2684.1	3403.7	21.6	4.3	36.6	21.9	84.4	1.6	25.6
Buckinghamshire LPA	156494.9	22740.9	69998.3	34737.3	29117.0	382.4	698.0	510.0	219.5	1810.0	1.7	21.1
Burnley LPA	11068.4	0.0	0.3	8764.2	2312.7	0.0	0.0	36.1	10.5	46.6	0.0	0.0
Bury LPA	9946.0	891.3	174.0	3729.7	5158.9	12.2	2.1	27.1	38.8	80.3	1.4	15.2
Calderdale LPA	36396.1	929.6	1127.5	27021.7	7346.4	14.9	4.5	102.0	37.7	159.0	1.6	9.3
Cambridge LPA	4069.9	776.6	201.5	70.0	3022.9	84.7	7.5	0.3	29.7	122.3	10.9	69.3
Camden LPA	2177.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2178.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cannock Chase LPA	7888.3	1417.0	960.2	454.2	5063.1	81.4	11.3	58.2	63.1	214.0	5.7	38.1
Canterbury LPA	30875.3	11743.9	6793.0	3385.0	8944.1	90.4	40.8	68.8	44.4	244.4	0.8	37.0
Castle Point LPA	4467.4	209.0	170.1	1367.8	2858.6	0.5	0.8	13.5	5.0	19.8	0.3	2.7

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
Central Bedfordshire LPA	71566.5	29813.4	25231.3	2010.4	14548.1	562.5	468.4	45.6	401.1	1477.6	1.9	38.1
Charnwood LPA	27904.2	8930.1	8468.3	4729.8	5796.0	168.9	156.2	43.6	64.3	433.0	1.9	39.0
Chelmsford LPA	34222.8	14091.6	4237.7	10044.8	5848.0	242.3	64.7	76.7	22.0	405.8	1.7	59.7
Cheltenham LPA	4659.6	14.2	1786.2	97.9	2765.1	0.0	25.3	0.9	4.0	30.2	0.0	0.0
Cherwell LPA	58874.1	16228.5	20914.6	15902.7	5871.6	209.5	289.3	175.1	51.2	725.2	1.3	28.9
Cheshire East LPA	107803.4	39176.8	38524.6	15537.5	14648.5	529.0	497.3	271.7	204.8	1502.8	1.4	35.2
Cheshire West and Chester LPA	92001.8	30861.8	38770.5	7631.7	14289.2	349.3	248.3	59.7	186.0	843.3	1.1	41.4
Chesterfield LPA	6603.5	116.8	2315.2	590.4	3586.1	0.3	69.1	35.5	20.5	125.4	0.2	0.2
Chichester LPA	24007.7	10762.8	1735.9	6521.6	4777.8	131.4	50.0	105.9	72.3	359.7	1.2	36.5
Chorley LPA	20276.2	5766.3	6490.0	4474.3	3560.9	93.0	66.9	13.5	47.9	221.4	1.6	42.0
City of London LPA	289.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	298.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Colchester LPA	33232.5	13953.2	4989.0	6714.0	7392.8	161.2	91.3	226.7	32.5	511.8	1.2	31.5

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
Cornwall LPA	354893.9	97722.6	73166.0	147315.9	33706.4	876.1	561.6	1111.7	1158.7	3708.1	0.9	23.6
Cotswold LPA	116452.4	5942.9	38573.5	63261.5	8767.0	70.8	154.5	204.7	83.9	513.9	1.2	13.8
County Durham LPA	223144.1	15606.5	56793.7	124461.8	26329.2	118.8	500.8	289.4	232.6	1141.6	0.8	10.4
Coventry LPA	9863.9	1525.5	929.8	39.9	7376.3	22.8	2.0	3.6	48.1	76.6	1.5	29.8
Crawley LPA	4497.1	0.0	409.2	693.4	3396.3	0.0	53.3	41.2	172.6	267.0	0.0	0.0
Croydon LPA	8648.9	534.9	915.5	14.7	7186.9	1.6	0.6	0.0	1.4	3.7	0.3	43.2
Cumberland LPA	197834.5	48462.7	53807.3	67405.0	27063.6	273.1	279.6	257.0	210.1	1019.8	0.6	26.8
Dacorum LPA	21247.6	3670.7	11708.3	340.1	5540.1	32.5	77.8	10.0	72.9	193.2	0.9	16.8
Darlington LPA	19747.8	4962.6	4604.1	6840.6	3355.7	21.4	56.9	96.9	134.9	310.1	0.4	6.9
Dartford LPA	6622.3	2422.3	232.6	357.8	3616.6	23.7	0.4	2.4	23.1	49.6	1.0	47.8
Dartmoor LPA	95575.2	1997.2	5487.0	83008.1	5116.3	9.1	19.9	90.4	17.6	136.9	0.5	6.6
Derby LPA	7803.1	163.7	1230.8	406.0	6008.6	1.5	38.5	46.0	40.8	126.7	0.9	1.1

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
Derbyshire Dales LPA	33620.3	5547.8	13242.2	11743.5	3113.2	37.6	83.4	70.1	33.0	224.0	0.7	16.8
Doncaster LPA	56800.6	19048.7	17683.7	8647.4	11461.1	281.4	427.2	145.6	237.8	1092.0	1.5	25.8
Dorset LPA	249095.7	62164.7	84544.6	69567.9	32032.9	391.2	364.7	322.2	346.1	1424.2	0.6	27.5
Dover LPA	31533.8	17330.1	7832.6	399.7	5876.8	180.2	25.9	3.1	50.9	260.1	1.0	69.3
Dudley LPA	9795.8	624.4	361.2	301.3	8516.8	1.6	0.7	1.3	6.7	10.2	0.3	15.4
Ealing LPA	5277.9	0.0	0.0	47.0	5233.5	0.0	0.0	0.3	11.7	12.0	0.0	0.0
East Cambridgeshire LPA	65128.6	51091.7	7025.9	2556.1	4467.7	520.8	49.1	43.0	75.0	688.0	1.0	75.7
East Devon LPA	81424.5	14853.7	43652.9	14394.7	8432.5	290.2	314.8	96.9	62.4	764.3	2.0	38.0
East Hampshire LPA	22250.9	5553.8	8893.8	1489.3	6328.8	33.2	90.3	6.7	81.5	211.6	0.6	15.7
East Hertfordshire LPA	47566.9	26578.4	12470.1	1966.7	6567.7	211.3	99.0	21.6	81.2	413.2	0.8	51.1

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
East Lindsey LPA	176677.3	118072.0	29967.0	12865.4	14723.1	419.8	110.4	131.5	116.8	778.5	0.4	53.9
East Riding of Yorkshire LPA	240477.2	177101.6	33810.6	12951.4	16332.1	941.1	144.4	53.2	177.1	1315.7	0.5	71.5
East Staffordshire LPA	38998.3	8817.7	12568.3	12714.4	4928.8	161.6	119.3	235.6	80.9	597.4	1.8	27.1
East Suffolk LPA	123252.8	35364.2	35203.7	30426.8	21365.9	226.7	120.5	188.7	117.0	652.9	0.6	34.7
Eastbourne LPA	2576.4	0.0	0.0	493.1	2083.7	0.0	0.0	1.4	3.9	5.3	0.0	0.0
Eastleigh LPA	7967.9	1885.3	591.4	1426.3	4070.0	132.7	27.3	27.3	43.6	230.9	7.0	57.5
Ebbsfleet Development Corporation LPA	850.2	171.3	0.0	161.5	584.4	64.9	0.0	3.6	76.0	144.6	37.9	44.9
Elmbridge LPA	9633.4	471.1	1237.3	698.9	7230.8	6.7	13.3	2.8	15.1	37.8	1.4	17.8
Enfield LPA	8219.0	59.2	268.9	1795.5	6098.4	1.0	0.9	12.2	8.5	22.5	1.6	4.2
Epping Forest LPA	33898.4	16129.4	1265.8	9086.2	7425.6	141.6	9.9	87.4	42.8	281.6	0.9	50.3

LPA Name	LPA Size (ha)	High BMV likelihood (ha)	Medium BMV likelihood (ha)	Low BMV likelihood (ha)	Other (ha)	High BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Medium BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Low BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Other BMV likelihood of agricultural land to development	Agricultural land to developed (ha)	% of high likelihood BMV lost to development	% lost agricultural land having high likelihood of being BMV
Epsom and Ewell LPA	3407.9	66.3	361.1	6.8	2975.2	0.0	3.8	0.0	8.5	12.3	0.0	0.0
Erewash LPA	10963.0	1372.2	3528.6	2437.2	3633.3	4.9	15.8	14.1	18.6	53.3	0.4	9.1
Exeter LPA	4703.3	1168.2	86.7	683.1	2798.9	64.9	0.3	31.1	39.6	135.9	5.6	47.8
Exmoor LPA	68858.2	1454.3	7195.1	54748.7	5397.5	3.9	11.8	76.1	9.1	100.9	0.3	3.8
Fareham LPA	7425.7	2235.5	640.0	1006.1	3579.7	24.3	4.2	6.8	20.8	56.2	1.1	43.3
Fenland LPA	54645.0	48346.9	374.6	1542.1	4398.6	429.3	4.1	5.2	146.0	584.6	0.9	73.4
Folkestone and Hythe LPA	35692.1	19621.7	6152.3	2545.7	7348.4	83.8	26.3	25.0	80.2	215.3	0.4	38.9
Forest of Dean LPA	52590.2	17379.9	15420.6	3435.8	16287.9	153.5	91.2	15.0	75.9	335.7	0.9	45.7
Fylde LPA	16569.7	9090.9	3533.9	554.0	3324.4	181.6	49.7	31.7	45.0	308.1	2.0	59.0
Gateshead LPA	14235.5	593.0	5562.5	1434.5	6642.2	38.6	40.8	29.2	41.0	149.6	6.5	25.8
Gedling LPA	11998.2	1507.8	6299.1	87.5	4112.2	35.8	182.3	0.7	33.0	251.8	2.4	14.2
Gloucester LPA	4055.3	111.8	611.4	322.7	3012.6	1.5	64.8	11.7	7.9	85.9	1.3	1.7

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Gosport LPA	2537.4	91.5	0.1	0.0	2653.6	0.3	0.0	0.0	3.7	4.0	0.3	7.7
Gravesham LPA	9699.1	3527.3	2061.9	737.1	3373.3	34.6	9.8	9.8	14.0	68.2	1.0	50.7
Great Yarmouth LPA	11452.8	6511.4	575.5	199.7	4155.7	100.4	3.1	0.6	13.9	118.0	1.5	85.1
Greenwich LPA	4731.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4821.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Guildford LPA	27093.1	2945.1	8989.0	3263.2	11910.8	34.3	63.5	21.8	50.6	170.3	1.2	20.2
Hackney LPA	1826.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1826.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Halton LPA	7908.4	1757.0	1534.7	465.1	4190.0	27.7	37.3	36.3	21.2	122.4	1.6	22.6
Hammersmith and Fulham LPA	1459.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1495.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1	0.0	0.0
Harborough LPA	59269.2	5734.9	36886.9	13118.8	3569.2	52.5	528.6	169.7	62.6	813.4	0.9	6.5
Haringey LPA	2960.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2961.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Harlow LPA	3053.8	853.8	0.0	237.8	1963.1	76.8	0.0	0.4	5.5	82.7	9.0	92.9
Harrow LPA	5046.4	0.0	139.7	214.2	4695.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	52.0	53.0	0.0	0.0

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Hart LPA	21526.5	3591.8	6594.4	3416.8	7937.5	36.7	44.7	68.3	55.5	205.1	1.0	17.9
Hartlepool LPA	9371.7	787.6	3994.0	1350.5	3241.1	8.0	91.5	60.0	50.6	210.0	1.0	3.8
Hastings LPA	2979.6	0.0	407.9	207.6	2398.1	0.0	3.2	5.0	4.9	13.2	0.0	0.0
Havant LPA	5573.9	1098.6	328.9	362.2	3898.2	22.3	24.4	38.0	39.2	124.0	2.0	18.0
Havering LPA	11234.4	1529.3	615.6	2689.4	6397.5	62.6	5.3	40.1	313.9	421.9	4.1	14.8
Herefordshire, County of LPA	217971.3	157430.1	31772.0	12094.2	16700.4	578.3	96.2	12.6	111.6	798.6	0.4	72.4
Hertsmere LPA	10112.8	730.2	2039.7	4313.0	3034.4	46.0	65.2	59.6	9.3	180.1	6.3	25.5
High Peak LPA	12820.8	3.0	985.0	9064.2	2778.8	0.2	9.0	261.7	37.4	308.3	6.0	0.1
Hillingdon LPA	11570.4	520.8	1375.8	425.0	9254.8	7.0	79.9	0.7	40.4	128.1	1.3	5.5
Hinckley and Bosworth LPA	29735.1	6894.9	18127.1	1434.7	3301.0	113.6	251.9	25.7	25.0	416.1	1.6	27.3
Horsham LPA	43640.7	3341.0	5700.2	28993.5	5626.5	46.6	120.0	390.0	55.3	611.9	1.4	7.6
Hounslow LPA	5596.3	343.3	0.0	0.0	5261.8	0.3	0.0	0.0	4.7	5.0	0.1	6.2

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Huntingdonshire LPA	91245.5	57536.9	19659.0	3505.4	10583.9	776.3	138.5	34.8	106.9	1056.5	1.3	73.5
Hyndburn LPA	7300.7	230.9	174.1	4835.2	2066.2	0.8	0.1	40.9	22.7	64.5	0.3	1.2
Ipswich LPA	3951.0	323.6	111.9	258.7	3301.7	2.6	0.1	2.1	2.6	7.3	0.8	35.3
Isle of Wight LPA	37962.0	8631.7	7973.5	13977.5	7069.9	52.3	77.3	79.2	35.6	244.4	0.6	21.4
Isles of Scilly LPA	1631.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	10000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	5.6	0.0	0.0
Islington LPA	1485.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1486.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kensington and Chelsea LPA	1212.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1212.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
King's Lynn and West Norfolk LPA	143952.3	80714.7	37607.9	6267.4	18418.7	395.3	158.2	127.1	191.8	872.5	0.5	45.3
Kingston upon Hull, City of LPA	7158.4	84.0	0.0	589.4	6517.0	15.7	0.0	38.5	5.6	59.8	18.8	26.3
Kingston upon Thames LPA	3725.9	0.0	421.9	130.4	3175.4	0.0	5.1	0.6	7.0	12.7	0.0	0.0

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Kirklees LPA	36286.9	4591.6	380.1	17969.4	13374.4	60.0	5.5	163.2	99.7	328.5	1.3	18.3
Knowsley LPA	8650.0	3059.5	702.9	18.1	4875.8	44.9	16.3	0.2	20.9	82.2	1.5	54.6
Lake District LPA	234582.8	3007.0	3913.7	203961.5	23576.5	6.1	10.1	270.5	50.6	337.4	0.2	1.8
Lambeth LPA	2680.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2743.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Lancaster LPA	54416.1	3083.1	6380.4	39697.4	4909.6	23.1	55.6	162.7	41.7	283.1	0.7	8.2
Leeds LPA	55170.7	14812.5	6399.1	10486.5	23515.0	106.2	84.9	108.7	220.5	520.2	0.7	20.4
Leicester LPA	7334.2	53.5	804.3	43.2	6438.5	0.2	44.8	0.0	11.4	56.5	0.4	0.4
Lewes LPA	12937.9	1100.8	3714.4	5823.1	2302.7	24.1	26.6	79.1	13.2	142.9	2.2	16.8
Lewisham LPA	3514.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	3519.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lichfield LPA	33129.4	16070.3	11109.9	1925.4	4050.2	292.1	135.1	21.3	43.4	491.9	1.8	59.4
Lincoln LPA	3569.0	107.5	319.5	416.8	2727.3	3.1	1.3	0.8	6.8	11.9	2.9	25.8
Liverpool LPA	11183.6	503.7	152.1	0.0	10521.3	8.0	0.3	0.0	2.2	10.5	1.6	76.4

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London Legacy Development Corporation LPA	485.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	560.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Luton LPA	4335.2	93.7	255.8	0.0	3988.0	5.2	4.0	0.0	20.3	29.5	5.5	17.6
Maidstone LPA	39333.0	12467.2	10441.9	10913.3	5510.5	252.4	64.1	109.6	80.8	506.9	2.0	49.8
Maldon LPA	35781.6	8735.9	5985.4	17775.6	3091.5	97.3	42.9	150.2	36.0	326.3	1.1	29.8
Malvern Hills LPA	57707.1	23663.2	28344.7	1204.6	4539.9	130.9	177.6	4.2	53.0	365.6	0.6	35.8
Manchester LPA	11564.8	95.9	442.0	64.0	10972.1	0.0	59.5	0.7	195.6	255.8	0.0	0.0
Mansfield LPA	7669.7	1801.7	1940.7	10.8	3922.0	35.5	21.4	0.0	33.2	90.2	2.0	39.4
Medway LPA	19371.4	5658.6	1527.1	4841.6	7190.4	112.0	8.4	60.8	151.6	332.8	2.0	33.6
Melton LPA	48138.1	9741.9	22862.3	12404.1	3161.1	83.6	174.9	38.5	36.0	333.0	0.9	25.1
Merton LPA	3762.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3763.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.6	6.6	0.0	0.0
Mid Devon LPA	91024.9	24279.4	41823.1	21090.7	3877.2	186.7	205.0	81.8	31.4	505.0	0.8	37.0
Mid Suffolk LPA	87107.1	36414.5	40859.6	3246.9	6563.0	262.8	176.0	31.5	58.2	528.5	0.7	49.7

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Mid Sussex LPA	29666.3	499.1	14921.2	7981.5	6275.4	13.1	191.7	99.0	72.4	376.2	2.6	3.5
Middlesbrough LPA	5388.2	0.0	236.6	1498.0	3654.0	0.0	2.1	105.4	23.6	131.0	0.0	0.0
Milton Keynes LPA	30862.7	12258.7	9325.0	2451.0	6846.8	202.6	221.5	87.9	37.0	549.1	1.7	36.9
Mole Valley LPA	25832.1	1031.2	4654.6	11354.4	8803.7	2.2	27.2	96.3	17.6	143.3	0.2	1.6
New Forest LPA (merged)	78683.2	13693.5	15312.7	23839.2	25675.5	115.6	134.2	47.7	145.0	442.5	0.8	26.1
Newark and Sherwood LPA	65134.0	11689.5	31331.2	11611.0	10545.8	103.6	418.2	203.1	171.4	896.3	0.9	11.6
Newcastle upon Tyne LPA	11344.7	74.8	1973.9	2272.1	7031.9	0.1	151.7	61.1	15.1	228.0	0.1	0.0
Newcastle-under-Lyme LPA	21095.7	6843.3	6500.7	3054.0	4714.3	40.6	26.2	38.5	25.2	130.5	0.6	31.1
Newham LPA	3315.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3344.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
North Devon LPA	88703.1	13279.2	23658.0	46228.3	5322.6	84.1	110.4	249.9	46.3	490.7	0.6	17.1

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North East Derbyshire LPA	25156.7	2345.4	10761.6	8440.8	3628.0	38.2	89.2	129.9	38.4	295.7	1.6	12.9
North East Lincolnshire LPA	19262.3	11126.5	3245.6	197.3	4620.5	100.6	106.6	3.2	16.5	226.9	0.9	44.3
North Hertfordshire LPA	37538.2	18126.4	14536.8	60.3	4830.4	87.1	58.8	0.0	17.7	163.7	0.5	53.2
North Kesteven LPA	92247.1	48687.9	21961.3	14287.2	7359.5	320.2	156.7	381.7	71.5	930.1	0.7	34.4
North Lincolnshire LPA	84654.0	50961.2	12678.5	8946.7	11862.4	384.9	141.7	49.4	255.0	831.0	0.8	46.3
North Norfolk LPA	90768.7	55105.1	15606.6	5406.4	14091.5	214.9	72.4	17.0	80.6	385.0	0.4	55.8
North Northamptonshire LPA	98659.5	44777.5	29454.1	10506.2	13979.1	658.0	561.8	145.2	227.2	1592.2	1.5	41.3
North Somerset LPA	37463.7	8570.7	9616.4	11970.2	7074.4	123.2	91.5	169.3	38.4	422.4	1.4	29.2
North Tyneside LPA	8231.2	0.0	1981.2	794.4	5461.4	0.0	108.9	24.7	30.0	163.6	0.0	0.0

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North Warwickshire LPA	28426.2	15698.4	8345.0	668.3	3736.6	348.1	175.2	24.8	86.5	634.6	2.2	54.8
North West Leicestershire LPA	27932.8	11044.6	10354.6	2397.4	4157.3	270.4	395.5	41.6	115.5	822.9	2.4	32.9
North York Moors LPA	143610.6	10201.7	16692.5	97071.7	19736.4	41.4	56.0	119.8	43.7	261.0	0.4	15.9
North Yorkshire LPA	511058.1	183903.3	118639.8	174892.7	33943.5	1312.8	891.7	701.2	534.7	3440.4	0.7	38.2
Northumberland LPA (merged)	503231.3	47207.1	116617.4	267007.1	71677.1	155.4	409.4	693.0	219.6	1477.3	0.3	10.5
Norwich LPA	3896.1	111.9	112.9	34.4	3639.5	1.3	0.1	0.0	15.7	17.1	1.2	7.6
Nottingham LPA	7461.4	325.3	459.8	16.7	6665.0	22.0	1.6	0.0	81.3	105.0	6.8	20.9
Nuneaton and Bedworth LPA	7895.0	1000.4	2741.2	707.1	3452.3	23.0	40.1	126.0	66.5	255.7	2.3	9.0
Oadby and Wigston LPA	2352.6	0.0	711.8	125.2	1517.3	0.0	44.4	0.4	7.3	52.1	0.0	0.0

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Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation LPA	655.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	655.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Oldham LPA	11163.8	236.1	0.0	5359.8	5576.8	1.3	0.0	54.2	74.7	130.2	0.5	1.0
Oxford LPA	4560.3	144.6	306.0	965.0	3147.9	0.8	3.5	35.0	2.7	42.1	0.6	2.0
Peak District LPA	143786.3	177.0	6699.8	130505.2	6518.0	0.7	15.2	293.6	26.7	336.2	0.4	0.2
Pendle LPA	16938.0	29.5	136.1	14317.5	2468.3	0.0	0.8	52.9	15.2	68.9	0.0	0.0
Peterborough LPA	34337.8	17240.4	3399.8	5258.9	8454.2	268.6	40.6	59.0	171.0	539.2	1.6	49.8
Plymouth LPA	7985.0	375.5	560.4	1067.9	6020.9	4.8	43.5	24.2	19.3	91.8	1.3	5.3
Portsmouth LPA	4038.9	0.4	58.6	7.7	4374.9	0.0	0.2	0.2	16.9	17.3	0.0	0.0
Preston LPA	14228.4	1667.4	7722.0	1466.9	3381.7	12.1	332.4	4.6	36.9	386.0	0.7	3.1
Reading LPA	4039.8	116.6	130.5	375.1	3420.3	0.9	0.0	11.2	4.0	16.2	0.8	5.8
Redbridge LPA	5639.7	271.4	0.0	431.0	4939.0	1.5	0.0	10.3	7.6	19.5	0.6	7.9

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Redcar and Cleveland LPA	18336.7	1829.7	3712.2	6574.8	6197.4	13.6	57.1	38.6	160.9	270.1	0.7	5.0
Redditch LPA	5425.1	326.4	2179.9	400.1	2523.1	1.1	54.6	1.7	3.0	60.4	0.3	1.8
Reigate and Banstead LPA	12914.4	1129.3	2894.0	2851.2	6045.1	7.5	70.1	72.5	21.2	171.3	0.7	4.4
Ribble Valley LPA	58446.2	1084.2	5524.5	47678.2	4204.6	1.3	61.2	243.3	46.2	351.9	0.1	0.4
Richmond upon Thames LPA	5739.3	36.8	0.0	44.5	5675.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9	3.9	0.0	0.0
Rochdale LPA	15812.8	1708.7	113.1	7889.0	6114.7	31.8	1.2	80.9	45.0	158.9	1.9	20.0
Rochford LPA	16709.3	5311.2	2951.1	5437.2	2947.0	78.2	136.5	209.8	47.2	471.7	1.5	16.6
Rossendale LPA	13804.1	0.0	0.0	11311.6	2503.4	0.0	0.0	85.5	11.0	96.5	0.0	0.0
Rother LPA	51175.4	4128.2	19130.9	17833.4	10042.7	26.7	172.2	155.5	64.1	418.5	0.6	6.4
Rotherham LPA	28653.4	8121.8	7029.3	4356.6	9167.1	147.8	58.8	27.8	246.8	481.3	1.8	30.7
Rugby LPA	35355.7	10300.7	12691.0	8929.8	3460.7	250.1	206.8	136.2	19.5	612.6	2.4	40.8

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Runnymede LPA	7804.1	851.1	1071.8	579.2	5306.3	14.2	24.4	9.1	37.3	85.0	1.7	16.8
Rushcliffe LPA	40923.2	15214.1	14045.3	7226.7	4465.5	345.3	113.1	81.2	60.9	600.4	2.3	57.5
Rushmoor LPA	3904.5	0.0	100.6	37.3	3769.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	14.9	15.4	0.0	0.0
Rutland LPA	39374.9	6321.8	9576.5	19122.2	4377.7	38.6	51.4	101.5	27.2	218.7	0.6	17.7
Salford LPA	9719.7	2464.0	540.4	429.3	6293.6	15.6	39.3	52.7	68.8	176.4	0.6	8.8
Sandwell LPA	8555.9	66.8	138.3	0.6	8356.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.0
Sefton LPA	15657.8	4673.3	76.7	1532.6	9155.2	64.3	2.2	1.1	26.2	93.8	1.4	68.5
Sevenoaks LPA	37034.7	5985.9	14135.8	10611.3	6310.4	41.6	65.3	72.7	32.1	211.7	0.7	19.7
Sheffield LPA	22696.0	1203.7	774.9	5869.8	14865.0	5.2	5.0	44.7	31.8	86.6	0.4	6.0
Shropshire LPA	319727.5	137604.5	104848.3	54807.8	22466.3	974.0	599.7	199.7	393.5	2166.9	0.7	45.0
Slough LPA	3254.2	412.5	6.4	22.4	2814.7	7.4	0.0	0.0	14.6	22.0	1.8	33.5
Solihull LPA	17828.2	4177.8	5018.5	2725.5	5920.5	238.2	151.2	80.0	56.6	525.9	5.7	45.3

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Somerset LPA	296205.3	62604.6	89768.8	119715.7	23612.5	627.6	866.4	847.2	250.2	2591.4	1.0	24.2
South Cambridgeshire LPA	90162.5	65882.6	11831.2	3947.4	8528.1	745.5	289.2	219.8	148.7	1403.2	1.1	53.1
South Derbyshire LPA	33812.7	12265.7	14594.0	2505.5	4473.7	137.3	235.7	59.8	97.1	529.9	1.1	25.9
South Downs LPA	164890.8	32236.3	70843.0	30610.3	31291.1	140.2	205.7	154.3	93.0	593.2	0.4	23.6
South Gloucestershire LPA	49705.1	3582.3	12903.6	25941.6	7200.5	58.8	182.2	355.3	71.2	667.6	1.6	8.8
South Hams LPA	72115.4	16581.7	8864.2	39887.2	6088.6	66.6	54.5	326.3	90.6	538.1	0.4	12.4
South Holland LPA	75007.6	68666.8	0.0	1056.8	4511.8	299.0	0.0	0.0	45.7	344.7	0.4	86.7
South Kesteven LPA	94258.6	29706.9	26552.6	29518.4	8532.6	212.4	131.0	225.8	65.0	634.3	0.7	33.5
South Norfolk LPA	84188.9	32696.7	41356.5	2615.6	7490.2	285.3	309.8	35.0	113.5	743.6	0.9	38.4
South Oxfordshire LPA	67852.1	24642.9	23624.1	10276.9	9355.4	283.1	120.4	127.5	84.9	616.0	1.1	46.0

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South Ribble LPA	11314.2	2170.5	5302.4	648.0	3188.1	24.2	92.4	41.3	19.0	177.0	1.1	13.7
South Staffordshire LPA	40732.2	26749.2	7739.0	1421.9	4854.5	241.2	42.1	22.3	65.8	371.4	0.9	65.0
South Tyneside LPA	6442.0	1024.2	82.6	1163.0	4200.7	8.5	6.7	34.4	16.6	66.2	0.8	12.8
Southampton LPA	4988.1	11.6	49.3	82.7	4943.0	1.4	1.2	0.4	2.4	5.5	12.1	25.8
Southend-on-Sea LPA	4167.4	535.6	34.4	41.4	3584.8	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	3.7	0.6	85.2
Southwark LPA	2887.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3000.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spelthorne LPA	5116.1	472.2	0.0	51.3	4595.3	19.5	0.0	0.1	38.8	58.4	4.1	33.4
St Albans LPA	16120.6	3398.2	7740.3	169.8	4820.0	20.0	87.8	3.3	13.1	124.2	0.6	16.1
St. Helens LPA	13635.9	4775.8	2502.4	252.8	6115.1	42.4	40.8	2.1	22.3	107.6	0.9	39.4
Stafford LPA	59817.2	27046.8	21523.6	3522.2	7772.0	212.4	251.8	39.0	64.2	567.4	0.8	37.4
Staffordshire Moorlands LPA	36949.6	6804.5	13977.3	12139.4	4057.9	82.9	108.9	103.1	36.0	330.9	1.2	25.1

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Stevenage LPA	2596.9	202.7	401.2	0.0	1994.1	0.3	0.4	0.0	3.9	4.6	0.1	6.5
Stockport LPA	12603.8	52.1	3580.4	794.6	8186.8	0.0	50.2	5.7	21.3	77.2	0.0	0.0
Stockton-on-Tees LPA	20493.3	909.2	1227.2	11969.1	6365.6	1.4	103.9	456.7	340.5	902.6	0.2	0.2
Stoke-on-Trent LPA	9344.8	62.4	1302.3	1260.3	6727.3	1.2	43.5	14.9	21.6	81.3	2.0	1.5
Stratford-on-Avon LPA	97786.9	12990.0	44239.9	35658.5	4974.6	170.2	364.8	361.8	77.0	973.7	1.3	17.5
Stroud LPA	46054.2	3243.4	21177.1	16063.8	5500.5	41.4	110.6	141.7	38.9	332.6	1.3	12.4
Sunderland LPA	13743.6	1815.3	2212.6	1250.0	8461.8	34.0	35.5	63.8	78.1	211.4	1.9	16.1
Surrey Heath LPA	9509.3	35.5	1224.3	1194.5	7060.7	2.5	13.7	18.4	25.0	59.5	7.1	4.2
Sutton LPA	4384.8	436.3	1.2	0.0	3949.0	9.5	0.0	0.0	4.9	14.4	2.2	66.2
Swale LPA	37343.7	15772.0	4245.8	11798.0	5206.8	186.8	27.7	96.6	46.3	357.3	1.2	52.3
Swindon LPA	23009.3	5417.1	4622.9	7275.3	5712.3	66.6	55.9	134.9	35.7	293.0	1.2	22.7
Tameside LPA	10315.1	207.7	841.8	3627.0	5646.7	3.4	4.9	22.4	44.4	75.0	1.6	4.5

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Tamworth LPA	3085.1	571.0	777.0	0.0	1739.4	61.2	45.1	0.0	5.2	111.5	10.7	54.9
Tandridge LPA	24819.5	1534.1	9523.6	10081.7	3688.4	25.7	116.6	150.6	13.2	306.1	1.7	8.4
Teignbridge LPA	41710.5	16757.7	8573.8	9025.8	7347.7	143.8	163.2	123.8	105.2	536.1	0.9	26.8
Telford and Wrekin LPA	29031.4	13919.2	5317.9	1762.0	8054.6	160.8	74.9	81.4	106.6	423.8	1.2	37.9
Tendring LPA	33632.4	14224.3	5456.7	7753.8	5763.1	194.9	88.9	50.3	83.4	417.4	1.4	46.7
Test Valley LPA	62315.0	21367.5	25244.6	6272.0	9478.7	276.8	176.9	81.4	91.7	626.8	1.3	44.2
Tewkesbury LPA	41441.4	3445.4	25560.9	8718.6	3749.5	114.8	273.9	81.3	142.5	612.5	3.3	18.7
Thanet LPA	10360.9	6101.9	526.5	0.0	3731.0	126.1	2.3	0.0	48.5	176.9	2.1	71.3
The Broads LPA	29028.7	4069.6	14587.4	4636.8	5712.8	17.2	20.2	11.1	10.3	58.8	0.4	29.2
Three Rivers LPA	8882.4	258.7	4309.5	379.7	3939.1	18.3	68.9	2.4	39.4	128.9	7.1	14.2
Thurrock LPA	16383.7	3429.0	573.4	5490.6	6847.3	92.3	15.6	95.0	141.3	344.2	2.7	26.8
Tonbridge and Malling LPA	24011.4	8489.2	3518.6	5953.1	6053.8	202.0	27.2	43.3	30.4	302.9	2.4	66.7

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Torbay LPA	6288.7	1744.4	907.9	93.6	3561.5	42.4	20.4	0.3	7.0	70.1	2.4	60.4
Torridge LPA	98525.8	4352.7	40028.3	49432.0	4249.8	22.9	131.6	217.4	36.3	408.1	0.5	5.6
Tower Hamlets LPA	1899.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2030.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Trafford LPA	10604.5	2555.7	606.7	498.6	6951.8	12.3	2.2	3.5	52.6	70.6	0.5	17.5
Tunbridge Wells LPA	33132.9	1966.1	15608.8	10249.9	5310.9	60.2	129.8	86.5	35.9	312.5	3.1	19.3
Uttlesford LPA	64118.3	56672.3	2249.0	121.1	5088.3	505.7	28.0	4.3	232.8	770.7	0.9	65.6
Vale of White Horse LPA	57866.0	16926.0	19161.6	15781.3	6041.1	301.8	168.1	77.7	111.3	658.9	1.8	45.8
Wakefield LPA	33862.0	8474.3	6797.8	6106.3	12509.4	157.6	82.6	166.0	258.3	664.5	1.9	23.7
Walsall LPA	10397.4	1158.4	1121.1	772.6	7353.5	5.4	16.2	4.9	31.9	58.4	0.5	9.3
Waltham Forest LPA	3856.6	0.0	0.0	47.3	3810.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Wandsworth LPA	3426.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	3434.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9	4.9	0.0	0.0

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Warrington LPA	18062.8	5655.7	4600.6	1179.6	6616.4	56.1	129.1	24.9	168.7	378.8	1.0	14.8
Warwick LPA	28288.2	9883.5	12391.3	2015.2	4020.3	420.2	123.7	23.5	71.5	638.8	4.3	65.8
Watford LPA	2143.0	0.0	51.1	67.7	2025.3	0.0	0.0	0.2	11.4	11.6	0.0	0.0
Waverley LPA	34516.9	1522.9	6695.9	11367.2	14950.6	29.0	68.6	95.2	55.9	248.8	1.9	11.7
Wealden LPA	77485.0	809.8	36280.3	26060.9	14350.1	5.2	180.5	227.5	116.6	529.8	0.6	1.0
Welwyn Hatfield LPA	12953.7	1449.6	4024.6	2570.6	4914.3	32.0	17.8	18.6	13.6	82.0	2.2	39.1
West Berkshire LPA	70416.9	25375.0	33283.2	3935.2	7875.5	134.6	144.1	38.6	41.7	359.0	0.5	37.5
West Devon LPA	63005.8	5807.3	8290.5	46639.6	2284.5	20.3	20.8	225.7	18.1	285.0	0.3	7.1
West Lancashire LPA	34663.3	24806.1	3279.4	2105.2	4356.5	218.4	35.9	11.6	40.5	306.4	0.9	71.3
West Lindsey LPA	115573.2	38996.1	51327.3	14743.3	10378.5	151.8	178.6	79.9	69.8	480.0	0.4	31.6
West Northamptonshire LPA	138039.6	27564.7	54593.3	41049.1	14927.6	383.8	518.4	682.2	95.4	1679.7	1.4	22.8

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West Oxfordshire LPA	71442.2	7150.0	39005.6	19754.0	5587.6	39.1	203.8	196.3	69.6	508.7	0.5	7.7
West Suffolk LPA	103467.6	54224.4	9507.2	19163.3	20573.7	354.2	51.0	266.2	103.8	775.2	0.7	45.7
Westminster LPA	2148.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2157.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Westmorland and Furness LPA	189221.9	26907.1	24768.3	123601.3	12998.3	101.4	100.8	417.1	82.1	701.4	0.4	14.5
Wigan LPA	18817.1	1717.6	4159.3	2651.3	10303.2	19.7	95.2	34.0	157.4	306.3	1.1	6.4
Wiltshire LPA	322512.8	96719.5	87597.2	79311.4	59140.4	385.3	530.0	484.1	511.0	1910.4	0.4	20.2
Winchester LPA	39387.5	5285.2	22637.0	5252.6	6241.4	75.5	131.7	254.6	57.8	519.7	1.4	14.5
Windsor and Maidenhead LPA	19842.7	4787.8	5118.5	925.9	9022.4	104.3	38.4	6.9	54.9	204.4	2.2	51.0
Wirral LPA	16092.2	1445.9	4272.4	190.4	9980.7	12.1	26.5	0.1	18.9	57.7	0.8	21.1
Woking LPA	6360.4	497.2	1398.0	688.3	3780.4	4.7	12.4	7.4	23.4	47.9	0.9	9.8
Wokingham LPA	17896.5	2938.9	7005.5	2455.3	5508.4	54.5	316.4	39.6	66.7	477.2	1.9	11.4

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Wolverhampton LPA	6943.7	175.5	87.2	0.0	6686.5	0.9	0.1	0.0	3.6	4.6	0.5	18.8
Worcester LPA	3327.8	154.2	890.5	7.9	2277.8	13.1	10.2	0.0	7.9	31.2	8.5	42.0
Worthing LPA	2437.3	101.7	0.0	93.7	2242.7	4.2	0.0	19.0	6.4	29.6	4.1	14.1
Wychavon LPA	66354.2	17768.8	38513.4	4710.7	5414.1	317.6	305.9	27.7	98.4	749.6	1.8	42.4
Wyre Forest LPA	19540.4	7251.6	7642.0	237.0	4425.2	34.6	40.8	1.9	15.9	93.2	0.5	37.2
Wyre LPA	28216.5	9625.2	7042.1	8080.5	3383.7	98.2	104.1	33.7	44.7	280.8	1.0	35.0
York LPA	27193.2	11649.3	6205.0	3750.3	5607.7	92.2	38.0	66.1	27.9	224.2	0.8	41.1
Yorkshire Dales LPA	218489.7	1130.9	4221.0	207382.2	5927.9	4.7	9.9	89.9	21.8	126.4	0.4	3.7

Appendix B

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Appendix C

Provided as separate document.

Appendix D

Provided as separate document.

Appendix E

Provided as separate document.