

Name of representative/organisation: Sally-Anne Bloomfield MRICS. FALA / Landsense Professional Ltd.	Answers provided to questions from the Committee:
1. How do you see the current state of agriculture in North Devon? What is its primary role and how do you think it contributes to the wider North Devon economy?	<p>The definition of agriculture is wide and varying, encompassing but not exclusively, everything from arable, dairy, beef, sheep, pigs, poultry, fruit, vegetables and horticulture. As such differing sectors have differing opportunities, threats and risks and whilst markets may be volatile in in one sector (e.g. dairy), another may at that time be more buoyant (e.g. beef and sheep).</p> <p>As such agriculture by its very nature is multifaceted and therefore to categorise the state of 'agriculture' as one entity does little to recognise the complexities and challenges farmers across North Devon face. However common denominator's affecting farm businesses across 'agriculture' such as significantly increased costs, changes in weather patterns/seasons and an overhaul of farm subsidies and regulations have left certain farm businesses vulnerable and at risk.</p> <p>In terms of its primary role and how it contributes, again as above it is difficult to categorise, however food production, management of natural assets, the countryside and the landscape around us is what gives North Devon a sense of place and therefore agriculture's contribution to the wider economy, through say tourism, should not be underestimated.</p>
2. What are the challenges and how do you see they can be overcome?	Regulation, cost, public perception, planning, competing with overseas markets, theft, startup difficulties, lack of

	<p>infrastructure, isolation, an ageing workforce – to name but a few!</p> <p>Government support, changes to planning policies, consistency with decisions across markets, education, increased rural policing, diversification.</p>
<p>3. What are the opportunities going forward for farming and what can farming contribute to the future of North Devon as a whole?</p>	<p>Land, livestock and buildings as assets all have incredible potential to provide a variety of opportunities to those fortunate to own or manage them. Farming is a way of life, but it is also a business which can evolve and change over time. Having the ability (financially or timewise) to take advantage of opportunities is perhaps a bigger challenge.</p> <p>By way of contribution sustainable produce, conservation, protection of natural assets, education, tourism opportunities, employment, green prescriptions – contributions have enormous scope providing there is a realisation of the importance of farming and respect for the farming community.</p>
<p>4. What can North Devon Council do to support the situation with agriculture in North Devon?</p>	<p>As a Rural Chartered Surveyor, common issues affecting my client base where I think NDC could offer further support would be a better understanding of agricultural needs and regulations in particular around planning, s106 agreements and their implications on taxation, infrastructure requirements, and an increase in public awareness of agricultural sensitivity such as livestock worrying, farm thefts, trespass etc.</p> <p>Working with the farming community and understanding roles and needs is fundamental.</p>