



Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

Strategic Scrutiny Principles 2024–5

We're listening

and setting our priorities using an annual stakeholder survey, regular engagement events and nationwide visits, and by welcoming stakeholders to contact us with evidence, ideas or concerns at any time.

We're open

about why we take the decisions we do, and to feedback on our objectives and performance against them.

We're responding

to the fast-moving policy landscape by running long-term thematic inquiries, launching short and focused calls for evidence within them, and producing targeted and iterative outputs.

We're collaborating

with the public, politicians and stakeholder groups throughout the four nations of the UK.

We're consistent

by regularly returning to and following up on our recommendations and measuring ourselves against our objectives.

We're reflecting

the range of demographics and communities affected by Defra's work and on our scrutiny work to improve our outputs and impact.

Strategic Policy Priorities 2024–5

We will focus our work on the following thematic and long-term inquiries:



The future of farming

Working to enhance the Government's flagship Farming and Countryside Programme and the prospects of the farming sector.



Reforming the water sector

Helping to improve water regulation, quality, access and resilience, and efforts to improve water security and protect against drought.



Animal and plant health

Scrutinising the effectiveness of the UK's biosecurity regime and supporting efforts to improve animal welfare.



Fairness in the food supply chain

Consulting with individuals and businesses throughout the supply chain to help ensure that it operates under equitable principles and improves food security.



Fisheries and the marine environment

Assisting efforts to strengthen the fishing supply chain, monitoring international negotiations and helping to improve outcomes for the marine environment.



Preventing waste and enabling a circular economy

Making the case for policies that prevent the unnecessary use of resources and encouraging reuse, repair and recycling.

We will take the following cross cutting themes into account when conducting our work:



The work of DEFRA and its arm's-length bodies

Regularly scrutinising the work of the Defra ministerial team and considering the role and effectiveness of Defra's arm's-length bodies.



Supporting rural and coastal communities

Considering the interconnected issues facing rural and remote communities and the cross-departmental action required to improve their resilience.



Weather and climate resilience

Assessing whether the Government has the tools, capacity and knowledge to address the varied and changing environmental challenges facing the UK.