



As Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt tour the country taking part in hustings for the Conservative Party leadership there is an opportunity for those CLA members who are also members of the Conservative Party to quiz the candidates on their views on specific areas of interest to CLA members. Although held in private the commitments given in these hustings will form a crucial part of the policies that any future Prime Minister implements.

Below are some suggested questions on key issues that those attending the hustings may wish to raise.

If you have any questions or would like further information before attending please contact CLA Public Affairs Adviser Eleanor Wood on (eleanor.wood@cla.org.uk or 0207 460 7919).

If you are able to quiz the candidates on the below or any other rural issue the CLA would be grateful if you could feed back their responses to us.

Brexit

- The current Conservative manifesto commits to maintaining the total amount spent on agriculture through to 2022, do you plan to extend this commitment as Prime Minister?
- As part of the UK's own immigration policy post Brexit will you reintroduce the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) beyond the pilot for 2500 workers currently in place?
 - More information: In September 2018 a pilot of a new SAWS was announced but the 2500 places within it are inadequate to fulfil the labour shortage many farm businesses are currently experiencing. Despite a desire to recruit locally many farms employ a number of seasonal workers that outstrips demand in their local area.
- Will you rule out allowing chlorinated chicken and hormone fed beef being sold in UK supermarkets as part of any future trade deal?

Connectivity

- Rural 4G mobile coverage lags way behind urban areas, what plans will you put in place to ensure that the countryside gets the coverage it deserves?
 - More information: The CLA has been running a campaign since the beginning of 2018 called 4G For All – more information is available [here](#).
- Broadband services have made great strides in rural areas over the last few years, how will you make sure this does not represent the high point of rural broadband coverage? Do you think the Universal Service Obligation already needs to be updated?

Housing & Planning

- Rural landowners can hold the key to housing delivery in rural areas – how would you encourage them to have the confidence to bring forward proposals for development?

- How would you unlock the planning system to ensure it can deliver both the homes the country needs across the countryside but also give rural businesses the confidence to invest in projects that can deliver jobs and growth?
 - More information: 50% of CLA members cite the planning system as the reason for why they did not make a planned investment in their business.
- Will you maintain the policy to remove the ability for a landlord to evict a tenant using Section 21 powers?

Climate Change

- What role do you envisage for rural landowners in helping to deliver the ambition for the UK to be net zero by 2050?
 - More information: The Government recently legislated for the UK to be net zero in terms of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 the first major economy to do so.

Taxation

- Many rural businesses have multiple elements to them (agriculture, tourism, lettings etc) all of which are taxed differently despite forming part of a single business. Would you support the creation of a single rural business unit to allow all these elements to be taxed as a single entity?

Rural Crime

- Many police forces across the UK do not have a rural crime strategy as well as inadequate equipment or training to prevent or investigate crimes across the countryside? What would you do specifically to tackle rural crime?
 - More information: Crime of all types can happen in the countryside; the above question is designed to focus on crimes that are unique to the countryside or have their own challenges when they take place in a rural setting such as fly tipping.

Hustings Dates

Party members are likely to be contacted directly via the Conservative Party but the CLA understands the dates are as follows:

22 June – West Midlands
27 June – South
28 June – South West
29 June – Lakes and Borders
29 June – North West
04 July – Yorkshire and Humber
05 July – North East
05 July – Scotland
06 July – East Midlands
06 July – Wales
TBC – Northern Ireland

If you would like further information please contact the Conservative Party directly.

