



NPA ELMS Tests & Trials Summaries

Introduction

Defra is currently developing its vision for agricultural policy post Brexit that will help to deliver the Government's ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. Basic Payment Scheme and Countryside Stewardship will be replaced with a system of public money for public goods - the 'Environmental Land Management scheme' (ELMs).

To encourage co-design and appropriateness of the new scheme, tests and trials are being run for collaboration between farmers and land-managers. Tests will help design some of the fundamental building blocks of the post-Brexit agricultural policy including how scheme participants plan and record which public goods they will deliver. Public goods include clean and plentiful water, clean air, thriving plants and wildlife, reduction in and protection from environmental hazards, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, beauty, heritage, and engagement with the environment. Trials will make sure any interventions and innovations work before they are applied across the country. Tests and trials will not analyse methods of delivery of environmental outcomes, including payments, but will run alongside the national pilot.

Nine of England's National Park Authorities are currently involved in running Tests and Trials as part of this process. This page includes a summary of each program, as well as contact information should you wish to learn more. Some changes may be required to the anticipated timescales as a consequence of Covid19.

The Broads

Summary

The Broads Authority is overseeing a Test and Trial which is:

- Investigating what management interventions are required to achieve these public goods for fens, reedbeds and grazing marshes and the costs associated with interventions on grazing marshes.
- Listening to farmers and land managers to report their ideas about working together on landscape-scale projects, the governance mechanisms to support this, and coordinate advice provision in the Broads.

Key Partners

- Defra
- Natural England
- National Farmers Union
- Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
- A wider steering group of farmers, reed cutters and nine land management organisations

Timescale

A series of workshops and one to one discussions will take place and is expecting to report to Defra in October 2020.

Anticipated Outcomes

Farmers and land managers have:

1. Improved understanding of relevant public goods for the Broads and those that are a priority.
2. Identified the appropriate management interventions that deliver priority public goods, helped create a tier structure for the Broads wetland habitats and explored the basis of payments that would be most effective.
3. Discussed how the interventions will be monitored, recorded, and verified, and tested an early self-assessment process for fens.
4. Identified the expert support structures needed locally for ELMs, including assessing how advice could be accredited, testing the concept of a local management board to provide advice and oversight.
5. Identified the interventions that could be made across multiple holdings and discussed how a bonus system could encourage and support the delivery of public goods at a landscape scale.

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Dartmoor

Summary

Dartmoor's Test and Trial is exploring four, interlinked objectives:

Objective 1: Develop a blueprint for Land Management Plans with a specific focus on commons and the link to the home farms and explore what advisor/guidance is required to support the development, implementation and monitoring of land management plans (at a farm, common and wider landscape-scale).

Objective 2: Develop and trial a 'Payments by Results' approach that is capable of delivering a range of public benefit objectives and could be operated on a common as well as the home farm, across farm boundaries and at a landscape scale.

Objective 3: Explore how private finance initiatives and other forms of environmental net gain could be incorporated into ELMS at a local level.

Objective 4: Explore the role that National Park Authorities can play in shaping, facilitating and delivering ELMS.

Key Partners

- Defra
- Duchy of Cornwall
- Dartmoor Commoners' Council
- Dartmoor Hill Farm Project
- South West Water
- Natural England

Timescale

All phases completed by October 2021

Anticipated Outcomes

1. A practical, tested model that uses the National Park Management Plan process for local priority setting and landscape-scale planning. The model would provide a clear framework for the development of land management plans at a holding level and for commons and the delivery of ELMS. This will inform an approach that provides a framework for partnership working at a local level to deliver local priorities and the objectives of the 25 Year Environment Plan.
2. A template for integrated management plans for a series of farms, up-to three commons and at a landscape scale that seeks to ensure the plans are 'owned' and understood by the farmers and land managers concerned and provide a basis for management to deliver the outcomes sought.
3. A 'Payment by Results' model for delivering a range of outcomes that links to the integrated land management plan for the farm and/or common, is understood and supported by the farming and land management community and rewards the management and enhancement of identified public benefits. The model would take a broad definition of 'payment by results' and would address how to assess delivery.

4. Assess private sector interest in whether there are environmental outcomes they would be willing to pay for; how they might pay for these; whether it would require landscape-scale action by suppliers of such benefits to attract purchasers; and the sort of advice and environmental brokering arrangements that would need to be put in place to deliver such a model.

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Exmoor

Summary

Exmoor's Test and Trial project is based on the 'Exmoor's Ambition' partnership proposal with Exmoor Hill Farming Network and further explores some of the key principles it sets out. The overriding ethos of the Ambition is to give land managers, mainly farmers and woodland managers, more say over how to manage their land to deliver public goods. It focuses on making better use of their expertise, rather than be constrained by prescriptions that might not be optimal in every location.

The Ambition proposes two complementary approaches, 'Good Farming Measures' to reward environmentally sensitive farming practice at an individual holding level and 'Enhanced Benefit Measures' to support benefits from wider landscape scale working. This T&T develops and tests some of the innovative components necessary to make the Ambition proposal work in reality and will give some indication of how successful the scheme will be in cost and outcomes. There are three main areas of work:

1. Developing natural capital registers that are fit for purpose.
2. Mapping where opportunities for public goods are across the whole of Exmoor.
3. Working out payment levels for public goods.

Key Partners

- Defra
- Exmoor landowners and managers, farmers, and woodland managers
- Exmoor Hill Farming Network
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission

Timescale

- 2020 – Development of natural capital registers and mapping public goods opportunities.
- 2021 – Determination of suitable payments levels for the range of public goods.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Identification of priority areas for delivery of public goods across the Exmoor landscapes.
2. Geospatial assessment of the landscape identifying areas of synergies and multiple benefits, as well as areas where different ecosystem services may be competing.
3. Developing a better understanding of what farmers and land managers will be willing to do, which choices they would be likely to make, thereby modelling the success of the scheme.
4. Demonstrating how farmers and land managers can work together to achieve optimal outcomes. As part of this process, also identifying gaps and limitations in available data.

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Lake District

Summary

The Cumbria Pioneer ELMS Test and Trial is being led by the Lake District National Park Authority focused on the test catchments of the Upper Derwent and Waver Wampool.

Phase 1 was a short scoping exercise completed in March 2019. The two workstreams were: Initial land manager engagement; and a best practice review of land management and area plans, including a review of evidence and data needs and availability. A comprehensive report on this phase was submitted to Defra in April 2019.

Phase 2 started in November 2019 and involves testing:

- The co-design by farmers, foresters and other land managers and stakeholders of two Area Plans for public goods, one in each of the two test catchments
- The attitudes towards and incentives for land manager collaboration
- The development of twenty Land Management Plans on farms and other land management units, including testing the added value of the Area Plans

Key Partners

- Farmers, foresters and other land managers in the Upper Derwent and Waver Wampool catchments
- Lake District National Park Authority
- Natural England
- Farming, environmental and other stakeholder organisations in the two catchments
- Defra

Timescale

Phase 1 – November 2018 to March 2019 - Completed

Phase 2 – November 2019 to January 2021 - This phase was originally planned to be completed at the end of October 2020. It was put on pause due to Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020. As of May 2020, the expected completion timeline is end of January 2021.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Testing the efficiency and effectiveness offered by an Area Plan for prioritising and enabling the delivery of public goods through Land Management Plans.
2. Testing the content, process of development, and people required to create an Area Plan and Land Management Plans.
3. Testing land manager attitudes and behaviours towards collaboration to deliver area-wide public goods and testing options to enable collaboration to happen.
4. Testing how Area Plans and Land Management Plans can enable a full range of natural and cultural public goods to be prioritised and delivered and to identify how plans can and should link to wider community, and socio-economic plans and strategies.

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Northumberland

Summary

The Curlew Contracts ELMS Test will take a broad range of land managers in Northumberland National Park Authority (NPA) on a journey to co-design Land Management Plans (LMPs) for their land. Through a series of in-depth workshops and additional work exploring LMPs and related elements of ELMS, the land managers, supported by Northumberland NPA, Natural England and Newcastle University, will seek to provide answers to Defra's key ELMS policy questions relating to: Land Management Plans, spatial prioritisation, payments and incentives, monitoring and advice & support.

Key Partners

- Land managers from across Northumberland National Park
- Natural England
- University of Newcastle upon Tyne
- Other key stakeholders within Northumberland National Park
- Defra

Timescale

Start November 2019 completed by January 2021.

Anticipated Outcomes

Answers to the following Defra questions (from the perspective of the land managers and other key stakeholders in Northumberland National Park);

1. How can Land Management Plans be designed to align with local and national priorities and deliver at a landscape scale?
2. What type and level of public goods could be delivered in this area and what contribution would land managers make?
3. How will actions be prioritised, at what scale and what are the key decision making processes that land managers will employ to facilitate delivery?
4. How can the delivery of public goods be monitored in a cost-effective and reliable way and in collaboration with land managers?
5. What kind of external knowledge building, support and advice would be required to enable effective plans to be developed and delivered?
6. What kind of payment mechanisms would effectively reward and incentivise the delivery of public goods alongside other activities land managers undertake?

Plus case studies and Land Management Plans based on the farms and estates involved in the project.

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North York Moors

Summary

Building on the Authority's experience of developing and delivering previously successful land management schemes the Authority will engage with as many farmers and land managers as possible within the North York Moors through a series of questionnaires, focus groups and 1-2-1 interviews to undertake the following two trials:

- Identify which public goods farmers and land managers within the National Park want to deliver and consequently identify which public goods are less popular and/or more demanding to deliver. We will demonstrate how this relates to the 25 Year Environment Plan.
- Develop a tool that models the economic impact of attaching different values to the delivery of different public goods and the impact that this has on different farming sectors active within the National Park.
- On completion of these elements the Authority will undertake the following trial:
 - Identify and develop a range of delivery mechanisms that allow for the appropriate delivery of public goods

Key Partners

- Defra
- Farmers and Land Managers
- Farming organisations

Timescale

Work is due to be completed by end of November 2020

Anticipated Outcomes

A report will be submitted to Defra that identifies a suggested range of delivery mechanisms that allow for the delivery of public goods that will result in positive outcomes appropriate to the North York Moors and those whose livelihoods depend on the sustainable management of the land. These suggestions will be in light of considerable consultation with the farming community and will take into account the attributes of previous schemes that stakeholders would like to see reflected in the new system.

Contact:

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Peak District

Summary

The Peak District National Park Authority is running a test in the White Peak, formulated using ideas put together by the Land Managers' Forum and White Peak Partnership. The White Peak National Character Area (NCA) is a special landscape within the National Park, but its habitats are some of the most fragmented. Coverage of agri-environment schemes has fallen from 80% in 2015 to 40% in 2018. As 89% of the White Peak is farmed and managed, ELMs will be the key mechanism for delivering public goods here.

This test is aimed at assessing whether a National Character Area (NCA) framework can be used as an approach to designing some of the building blocks for ELMs, and help change the relationship between Government and farmers and land managers.

Key Partners

- White Peak Partnership
- Land Managers' Forum

Timescale

The White Peak will run from November 2019 until October 2020, with a possible extension into two other NCAs running until October 2021.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Carbon ready reckoner - a simple tool to introduce farmers and land managers to land management in the context of carbon release, sequestration and storage.
2. Budget ready reckoner - a simple tool for farmers and land managers to test different scenarios of public good delivery within the context of their whole farm business.
3. One-to-ones - farm advisers will work with 25 farmers and land managers to test the above and design land management plan(s) to plan and record which public goods they will deliver.
4. Workshops - three workshops for 50 farmers and land managers will run to test the above and how the NCA framework could be used to prioritise local delivery of public goods.

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South Downs

Summary

The South Downs National Park Authority Test & Trial is in two parts:

Farmer Workshops – The first element involves the South Downs NPA working with Farmers and Farm Clusters within the National Park to test four questions relating to the ‘building blocks’ of ELMS design. These four questions are:

1. What should the Land Management Plan include and how should it be used in scheme design and delivery?
2. How should objectives be prioritised?
3. What specialist advice will be required to develop and implement schemes?
4. What is the role of Farm Clusters/landscape projects in scheme design and delivery?

The South Downs NPA will facilitate this test working closely with local farmers. Professional facilitators will be brought in to plan and run seven workshops across the National Park, with the questions being posed to farmers as end users of any potential future schemes. Participation will be voluntary and open to all farmers within the National Park. During the workshops, participants will be asked and guided through the questions, allowing them to think through and develop ideas that will work for them practically at their farm scale.

The Land App – The second element of the Test and Trial involves working with The Land App Team and four farm cluster groups in the National Park to test how The Land App, a bespoke GIS mapping system for land managers and farmers, can be used to evaluate and plan the delivery of public goods at a landscape scale. Each farm cluster group will focus on a key priority in their area:

- Eastern South Downs Farmers Group – Chalk Grassland
- Rother Valley Farmers Group – Water Resources
- Selborne Landscape Partnership - Pollinators
- Winchester Downs Cluster - Access

During the test, each group will use The Land App to collate data and information on their specific priority, use expert support (farm cluster facilitators) to help analyse, interpret and prioritise, and work with farmer members in the Cluster to plan delivery in a coordinated way at the landscape scale. Each group will produce a Land App project detailing their delivery plan and a short report detailing the process they undertook to get there.

Key Partners

- Defra
- Eastern South Downs Farmers Group
- Rother Valley Farmers Group
- Selborne Landscape Partnership
- Winchester Downs Cluster

Timescale

Farmer Workshops – The Farmer Workshops were run in 2019. The final report, containing collated farmer feedback for the four questions posed was submitted to Defra in January 2020.

The Land App –This test and trial will commence at the end of 2019 and be completed by summer 2020.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Report with farmer feedback on four questions posed, submitted to Defra
- Use of the Land App to collate data on respective priorities, which is analysed, interpreted and prioritised, and used in delivery at landscape scale. Reports will be produced by cluster groups detailing the delivery plan and process used to be able to prepare it.

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Yorkshire Dales

Summary

The Yorkshire Dales Trial extends an existing pilot, in collaboration with Natural England assessing the feasibility of a system of payment by results. This trial builds upon the momentum of the original pilot. The core of the proposal is to continue the existing pilot agreements for at least another 2 years to determine whether the outcomes observed in the first two years are maintained in the longer term.

The main objectives are:

1. To gather additional information on the attitudes of the participants over time, the management decisions they choose to make and their need for advice over the longer term.
2. To gather further evidence on the changes in environmental performance of the four habitats versus controls, particularly longer-term changes in grassland and the effects of weather.
3. To test approaches to verification and/or a risk-based approach selection for visits e.g. remote sensing as an alternative to site visits.
4. To refine or trial different results criteria or assessment methodologies on the four habitats.

Key Partners

- Natural England
- Farmers, landowners, and land managers.

Timescale

1 Jan 2019 – 30th March 2021

Anticipated Outcomes

The initial phase of this pilot has already produced some significant findings:

1. Farmers have an increased understanding of the outcomes they are being asked to deliver e.g. the benefits of a range of winter bird food crops, the range of wildflowers in their fields and their rarity.

2. Farmers like the flexibility and freedom to make their own management decisions, whilst being incentivised to move upwards in the payment structure. This gives them a strong sense of ownership and control.
3. Farmers feel it is a fair system that rewards effort; many have undertaken extra work or are carrying out extra operations that would not have happened under our current mainstream agri-environment schemes.
4. Training has been well received, effective and is key to providing them with the initial confidence to survey their options and understand the impact of their management choices. Farmers picked up survey skills rapidly.

Anticipated outcomes of the second phase

1. Accuracy of self-assessments improves.
2. Use of digital technology helps and speeds up assessment work – use of remote sensing and digital plant species recognition apps.
3. Habitat condition has improved from baseline.
4. Cost of delivery is further analysed and compared against management based agri-environment schemes.

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