

Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) Broads Test & Trial

Report from Workshop held on 13 November 2019



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Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Summary | 3 |
| Background | 4 |
| A Test & Trial for the Broads – objectives, methodology and test questions | 6 |
| Outline of Workshop 1 - 13 November 2019 | 8 |
| Workshop 1 outline | 8 |
| Workshop 1 Session 1 – Learning from previous agri-environmental schemes – what worked well and what could be improved? | 11 |
| What worked well | 11 |
| Aspects for improvement | 12 |
| Workshop 1 Session 2 – What is required to deliver good outcomes in the Broads? | 15 |
| Test question 1 | 15 |
| Test question 2 | 18 |
| Test question 3 | 20 |
| Next Steps | 23 |
| Workshop Evaluation | 23 |
| Appendix 1 - Agenda Workshop 1 held on 13 November 2019 | 24 |
| Appendix 2 - Defra’s Environmental Land Management scheme design principles and payment for public goods | 26 |
| Appendix 3 – Workshop Evaluation | 29 |

Summary

During 2018, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) consulted widely on a series of proposals for the future of farming when the United Kingdom leaves the European Union and is no longer a participant in the Common Agricultural Policy. A key element of these proposals was a new environmental land management scheme (ELMS) where public money would be available for the provision of public goods. In order to develop the new scheme, Defra invited proposals for a programme of 'tests and trials' to commence in 2019.

Subsequently, a proposal for a Broads test and trial was submitted by a partnership for the Broads and wider river catchments consisting of the Broads Authority, National Farmers Union, Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Natural England, RSPB, local farmers, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Water Management Alliance, and the Broads Reed and Sedge Cutters Association. This proposal was successful and commenced in October 2019.

A key aspect of the proposal is to engage local farmers, land managers and conservation organisations in a collaborative and bottom-up process to bring forward a series of measures and actions that might be incorporated within the new ELM scheme that would address the management of fen and grazing marsh habitats.

The test and trial commenced with an invitation to more than 150 local farmers and land managers to participate in an initial workshop held on 13th November 2019. This report brings together the outputs of the discussions among the 60+ attendees, providing the main themes, as well as comprehensively transcribing examples and experiences.

The first session within the workshop invited participants to reflect on their experience of previous agri-environment schemes and asked, **what worked well and what could be improved?** The responses to these questions have provided a strong basis to inform the development of ELMS in a way that builds on past experience of what works and pitfalls to avoid.

The second discussion session began to scope out what a future scheme for the Broads might look like and asked the question, **what is required to deliver good outcomes in the Broads?** The discussions begin to address the three test questions and provide a good basis for the next phase of the test and trial where more detailed work with farmers and land managers is planned.

The next phase commences in early 2020 and includes two workshops, a series of one-to-one interviews, and local meetings with farmer and land manager groups. The final report for the Broads test and trial will be produced in June 2020.

Background

Defra proposals for an Environmental Land Management scheme to follow exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union

In February 2018, the Government Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published a consultation document entitled Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit. This document set out a range of possible measures to be put in place in support of farming and the environment following the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Brexit).

The document set out the Government's ambition for farming and the environment:

“Leaving the European Union and the CAP will give us the opportunity for fundamental reform. We want a more dynamic, more self-reliant agriculture industry as we continue to compete internationally, supplying products of the highest standards to the domestic market and increasing exports. But, alongside this, we want a reformed agricultural and land management policy to deliver a better and richer environment in England.

We will incentivise methods of farming that create new habitats for wildlife, increase biodiversity, reduce flood risk, better mitigate climate change and improve air quality by reducing agricultural emissions. We will achieve this by ensuring that public money is spent on public goods, such as restoring peat bog and measures which sequester carbon from the atmosphere; protecting dry stone walls and other iconic aspects of our heritage; and reducing disease through new initiatives that better monitor animal health and welfare.”

A new environmental land management system

A key part of delivering that ambition was provided by a proposal for a new land management system where public money would be for the provision of public goods. This new environmental land management system (ELMS) was to be focused on the delivery of measures set out in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan published in 2012.

The new system will incentivise providers for delivering environmentally beneficial outcomes and will be underpinned by natural capital principles, so that the benefits the natural environment provides for people and wildlife are properly valued and used to inform decisions on future land management. The new system aims to deliver benefits such as improved air, water and soil quality; increased biodiversity; climate change mitigation and adaptation; and cultural benefits that improve people's mental and physical well-being, while protecting the historic environment.

The Defra Test & Trial process

In developing the ELM system, the Government intends to learn from the implementation of past schemes, consult with stakeholders on scheme design and undertake pilots in preparation for the introduction of the system. This intention is being taken forward through a series of ELMS 'tests and trials'. These seek to explore various aspects of the potential future scheme with a high level of engagement of stakeholders and farmers.



A Test & Trial for the Broads – objectives, methodology and test questions

An application for a test & trial in the Broads was submitted to Defra in July 2019 by the Broads Authority, working with Natural England, Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and National Farmers Union (NFU). Defra accepted the proposal and delivery commenced in October 2019. This followed the Broads Authority submitting a proposal for a Pilot Agri-Environment Scheme in the Broads in March 2018. The Broads test and trial has 5 main objectives:

Objective 1. Confirm relevant public goods for the Broads and those that are a priority.

Objective 2. Identify the appropriate management interventions that deliver priority public goods and explore the basis of payments that would be most effective.

Objective 3. Identify how the interventions will be monitored, recorded and verified.

Objective 4. Identify the expert support structures needed locally to make this happen, including assessing how advice could be accredited and testing the concept of a local management board to provide advice and oversight.

Objective 5. Public goods at a landscape scale. Identify the interventions that need to be made across multiple holdings and how this can be encouraged and supported.

Methodology for the Broads test and trial

In order to achieve these objectives, the proposal sets out a process for working with farmers and land managers within the Broads National Park and Broadland river valleys. The aim of this process is to secure farmer and land manager buy-in for a series of land management interventions and a process for enabling effective collaboration. This is to be achieved through the following activities:

- Four farmer and land manager collaborative meetings
- Three farmer and land manager workshops
- A series of multiple one to one and group meetings
- Production of a farmer and land manager agreed report.

Test questions used in the Broads test and trial

Three test questions relating to the 'development of ELMS design provide the structure for farmer engagement:

Test question 1 - What should the land management interventions and monitoring and verification be to deliver 'basic, better and best' public goods for grazing marshes and fens/reedbeds and what are the costs for managing these habitats?

Test question 2 - What coordinated advice will be required to develop and implement schemes? Is there a role for a local management board and how would that operate?

Test question 3 - How can working across multiple holdings / landscape scale projects be incentivised to maximise delivery of public goods?

We report here on the first farmer and land manager workshop held on 13th November 2019.

The work plan for the Broads Test and Trial activities is set out in the Next Steps section of this report on page 17.



Outline of Workshop 1 - 13 November 2019

This report provides a summary of the outputs of the first workshop held on 13 November 2019. The overall approach to this workshop was to engage a significant number of farmers, owners and other land managers from across the Broads National Park and Broadland river valleys in preliminary discussions on agri-environment programmes and the three test questions. The results of these discussions will then be used to inform subsequent activities in the test & trial process including one-to-one and group meetings, and two further, more detailed, workshop sessions.

Workshop 1 outline

Welcome, introductions and aim of the workshop

Louis Baugh, farmer at Neatishead, opened the workshop, welcoming everyone and setting out the history of agri-environment schemes in the Broads, with the Broads as the birthplace of these schemes. Louis emphasised the importance of the need for all parties to work collaboratively to achieve environmental benefits for this special area.

The workshop was facilitated by Nigel Stone (Exeter University), previous Chief Executive Officer of Exmoor National Park, an experienced facilitator working with the Uplands Farming Alliance and farmers and rural economists at Exeter University.

Andrea Kelly, Environment Policy Adviser for the Broads Authority and Project Manager for the Broads Test and Trial said that the work is funded by Defra. Andrea explained the joint working with the National Farmers Union (NFU), Natural England and Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) to deliver the test and trial and described the role of the Steering Group in guiding this work.

Project Delivery Group: Broads Authority, National Farmers Union, Norfolk FWAG, Natural England, Nigel Stone

Steering Group: Broads Authority, National Farmers Union, Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Natural England, RSPB, Farmers (Jake Fiennes, Joe Mitchell, Louis Baugh, Nick Deane, Tony Bambridge) Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Water Management Alliance, Broads Reed and Sedge Cutters Association

The aim of the workshop was to have an initial exploration of Defra approved test questions for investigation in the Broads. Groupwork sessions were facilitated and recorded by individuals from conservation and land management organisations, most of which are on the Steering Group. The aim was to create an inclusive process, where everyone had the opportunity to contribute their views and ideas. The recording of the discussion captured the words as they were spoken, forming the basis for this report.

Groupwork session 1 – Reflecting on previous agri-environment schemes. What worked well? What could be improved?

The first discussion session for Workshop 1 invited attendees to reflect on their experience of previous agri-environment schemes and set out what they think worked well and what could be improved. The outputs from these discussions will be used to inform aspects of the design of future delivery of ELMS in the Broads.

Presentation – Defra’s Environmental Land Management scheme design principles and payment for public goods

Rob Wise (NFU) outlined the policy context for ELMS, Defra’s description of public goods, the proposed timeline for a new ELM scheme and lessons learn from past schemes. See Appendix 2.

Presentations – What does good look like in the management of grazing marsh and fen in the Broads?

Joe Mitchell and Andrea Kelly set out pictures of what good looks like for the grazing marshes and fens and reedbeds, using examples of public goods that are achieved, for example wintering and breeding birds, biodiversity in ditches and managed fens, storing water and carbon, public access and engagement.

Groupwork session 2 – What is required to deliver good outcomes in the Broads?

In the second session, attendees were asked to consider the types of actions and support that could deliver good outcomes for grazing marsh and fen within the Broads. Each group was invited to address one of four more specific questions:

- A) How do we ensure that those who do the active management are adequately rewarded, e.g. reed/sedge cutters and graziers?
- B) How can we encourage farmers and land managers to work together to achieve good outcomes across the landscape / river catchments?
- C) What sort of advice is required to achieve these good outcomes?
Prompts:
 - a. Who should pay for advice provision?
 - b. Should advice providers for the new scheme be accredited and how could this work?
- D) Is it important to prioritise different outcomes locally? If yes, who should do this and how could it work?

The agenda for workshop 1 is reproduced in Appendix 1

Workshop 1 Session 1 – Learning from previous agri-environmental schemes – what worked well and what could be improved?

What worked well

All of the discussion groups had positive views about the former Broads Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) scheme that ran from 1987 following the success of the 1985 Broads Grazing Marsh Conservation Scheme (BGMCS). The BGMCS was the country's first agri-environment scheme, set up in response to landscape impacts when livestock farming was becoming less profitable and this led to ploughing up grass and cropping marshes in Halvergate. Aspects of the ESA scheme that were regarded as favourable included:

- **Simplicity** - The ESA was relatively simple and easy to understand with straightforward guidance and a simple slimline application form.
- **Inclusive** - The ESA scheme was open to everyone within the designated area and enabled farmers to voluntarily enter into 10-year management agreements for which they would receive an annual payment on each hectare of land under agreement. In exchange, agreement holders had to follow specific management practices designed to conserve and enhance the landscape, historic and wildlife value of the land under agreement, including, in the case of the Broads, grazing marsh, fen and the traditional landscape.
- **Encouraged increased delivery through tiered approach and capital grants** - The ESA had a range of tiers which prescribed different management practices depending on the management required. In addition, a farmer could apply for a conservation plan on any part of their land within the ESA. These plans were aimed at improving particularly valuable features and attracted a specified level of grant aid, referred to as capital grants. It was commented that the tiered approach and capital funds enabled the ESA package to develop on a farm so that a farmer could start by improving the landscape and then move to enhancements for specific environmental outcomes. These aspects were considered desirable for future schemes.
- **Access payments** - As well as potentially being eligible for conservation plans, land entered into an ESA might also be eligible for an additional payment if new permissive public access was provided on the farm. In later agri-environment schemes, there was also potential for payments for educational access where provision was made for school visits. These aspects of historic schemes were welcomed and several groups (3 of 7) indicated that they would like to see options for public access brought back in future schemes.
- **Local advice and support** - An additional benefit of the ESA mentioned by all groups was the availability of advice from a locally based project team. As well as being

locally based and accessible, the advisers were regarded as knowledgeable, understood the farmers' objectives and were trusted by farmers who were delivering the scheme.

- **Landscape scale** - Simplicity of the application process and non-competitive nature of the scheme, led to high uptake leading to landscape scale outcomes.
- **Farm scale rather than site specific** - It was also commented that the whole-farm nature of the ESA meant that it changed the way of farming across the holding rather than is the case in current schemes that separate the Ecological Focus Areas (EFA) under agreement from the surrounding farmed land.

In 2005, Environmental Stewardship (ES), a national agri-environment scheme, replaced the ESA. This scheme had a baseline Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) element that was open to all farms; an option to enter land into Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS), and more focused support through Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) for land of higher ecological value. Subsequently, in 2015, the agri-environment schemes changed again to Countryside Stewardship (CS) which offers a range of specific land management options and capital grants for elements such as water management under the Catchment Sensitive Farming project. Positive aspects of these later schemes included:

- Entry Level Stewardship, like the ESA, had been available to everyone.
- The schemes had multiple start dates that allowed flexibility on joining the schemes and
- HLS allowed for more focused habitat management and creation although several groups did not like the fact that it was a competitive scheme with restricted entry.

One group summarised the transition between the schemes with a simple diagram:



Aspects for improvement

Although the overall view on the ESA was very positive, there were aspects that some groups felt could be improved. One group commented that the ESA needed to be **more aspirational**, and there was not as much environmental gain/delivery as could be achieved.

Moving on to the subsequent and current agri-environment schemes, a wide range of aspects were identified as having potential for improvement:

- The **competitive nature** of HLS and CS received adverse comment as it means that some farmers are not able to join the scheme and there is a loss of landscape-scale impact.
- The increasing role for the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) in monitoring and auditing schemes was identified by five of the seven groups as leading to **fear and unfairness arising from the RPA inspection regime**. It was felt that this aspect would be

improved if there was greater 'reasonableness' amongst RPA staff; removal of the "climate of fear" around the inspection process, and more on-the-ground support from advisers who are locally based and knowledgeable.

- **Restriction in start dates** for current schemes to one date a year.
- Constraints on **landholding size** and **capping of agreement value** were aspects that several groups felt should be withdrawn.
- Concerns were expressed about the current **payments regime** where delays in payments and uncertainty of getting successful payments have had an adverse impact on cash flow and business income.
- **A rigid interpretation of 'ineligible features'** by the RPA has led to loss of Basic Payment on areas deemed to be 'reed' and 'scrub'.
- **Little monitoring** of the results is done in the current schemes with no audit of outcomes and a general lack of knowledge from RPA inspectors.
- The increasing **complexity** in the application process in the CS scheme is a barrier to applying.
- One factor that has remained through the evolution of the agri-environment schemes has been the **use of prescriptions** for the management of land under agreement. All seven discussion groups felt that this was an area that could be improved. For example, with ability to take into account the weather and other local conditions rather than specifying calendar dates for management operations. The introduction of flexibility through an adviser to move prescriptions was also felt desirable in order to deliver the required results.
- More **capital works** support and the ability to undertake bolder projects would be welcomed.
- Several groups expressed concern that **payments for doing the work** are not adequately going to reed-cutters or graziers, resulting in lack of investment and threat to the viability of their businesses.

The most frequent comments for the features that might be included in any future schemes included:

- Long term clear strategy with a wide area of coverage, for example:
 - "Need to bring in the bordering landscape"
 - "Need to bring in / recognise connected water courses"

- “There are reedbed / marsh grazing areas upstream of the main Broadland marshes”
- “Need targeting broader than just the grazing marshes to improve the marshes”
- “Need to include neighbouring arable land?”
- “Broader targeting of funding, not just in the lower reaches of a SSSI or environmental target area – upstream has an effect on the target area.”
- Simple application process.
- Open to all landowners and enabling progression through tiers.
- Availability of capital grants, including specialist machinery for managing fens, reedbeds and marshes that support public goods and local business such as reed and sedge cutting.
- Aspects to help manage the water environment including, water storage; flood protection; measures for improving water quality, and support to install foot drains etc.
- Control of invasive species such as Parrot’s Feather at Repps
- Support for rewilding
- Establishment of wet woodland, particularly as there is evidence from the brushwood peat that this was the dominant habitat in much of the Broads
- Several groups also commented on the increase in grazing by horses since the move from ESA to HLS. This was considered to be harmful as horses did not provide the sort of grazing wanted to sustain the marshes, and it was considered that future schemes ought to restrict or ban horses on land in agreements. Horse grazing demand was also seen to be pushing rents to unsustainable levels, undermining farming profitability.
- Better communications and a greater sense of trust that allows the farmer to get on with scheme delivery.
- A process for monitoring and enforcement that is fairer.

Finally, there was strong support for a locally rather than a nationally designed scheme that contains objectives for the whole landscape and has trusted local inspectors and advisers. Also, the scheme needs to evolve on the back of targets met and improvements made.

Workshop 1 Session 2 – What is required to deliver good outcomes in the Broads?

In the second discussion session, attendees were asked to consider the types of actions and support that could deliver good outcomes for grazing marsh and fen within the Broads. Each group was invited to address one of four more specific questions:

- A. How do we ensure that those who do the active management are adequately rewarded, e.g. reed/sedge cutters and graziers?
- B. How can we encourage farmers and land managers to work together to achieve good outcomes across the landscape / river catchments?
- C. What sort of advice is required to achieve these good outcomes?
- D. Prompts:
 - a. Who should pay for advice provision?
 - b. Should advice providers for the new scheme be accredited and how could this work?
- E. Is it important to prioritise different outcomes locally? If yes, who should do this and how could it work?

In summarising the outputs of this session of the workshop, the structure of the three test questions has been used, namely:

Test question 1 - What should the land management interventions and monitoring and verification be to deliver 'basic, better and best' public goods for grazing marshes and fens/reedbeds and what are the costs for managing these habitats?

Test question 2 - What coordinated advice will be required to develop and implement schemes? Is there a role for a local management board and how would that operate?

Test question 3 - How can working across multiple holdings / landscape scale projects be incentivised to maximise delivery of public goods?

Test question 1

What should the land management interventions and monitoring and verification be to deliver 'basic, better and best' public goods for grazing marshes and fens/reedbeds and what are the costs for managing these habitats?

Land management intervention suggestions broke down into two potential approaches:

Payments for land management

Payments for management, not results, was preferred by some. This might involve a series of scheme options including options for rotational grazing and/or allowing 'flying' herds or flocks. For the latter, the potential to tag and monitor cattle remotely was thought to be helpful. Or, alternatively, the introduction of guidelines that are flexible enough to take into account geographic and seasonal variations. Management prescriptions were not favoured as it was considered to be very difficult to create prescriptions that deliver the right outcomes in all eventualities and there needs to be flexibility over calendar dates etc.

This approach of funding land management actions also has the potential to enable some support to be separated from land ownership so that tenant graziers and reed cutters might receive direct support. Apparently, in Holland a percentage of an agri-environment payment goes to the land manager.

Other measures to facilitate land management were also proposed, such as by providing capital funding for items such as specialist equipment and capital works, and other interventions suggested included for predator control.

As well as supporting beneficial actions, it was suggested that exclusions might also be considered. For example, one group questioned the role of horses on grazing marshes and another suggested that horses be removed from land in ecological grazing areas as they cause damage. Limits on fertiliser use also suggested.

Payment by results

Here the suggestion was that, for biodiversity outcomes, there would be a basic payment to deliver the habitat and increasing payments for delivering better outcomes including, potentially, species outcomes. This might range, for example, from a basic payment for uncut grassland and tiered payments for more diverse vegetation and habitat mosaics. There might then be further additional payments made if the land achieves certain species results.

It was felt that this approach should seek to fully capture the value of public goods. This would need a clear definition of “Public Goods”, how they will be measured and what is locally important.

It was suggested that baseline surveys would enable improvement to be captured.

As well as management for biodiversity outcomes, several groups referred to using the new scheme to help achieve appropriate water levels and good water quality. As one group commented – “we need joined-up thinking on water management and catchment basins”. This might include actions to clean run-off water and natural flood management (water storage). The latter was regarded as needing good payments that reflect any damage or loss of value to the land involved. “Water management is wider than just the marshes and the scheme should recognise where water quality issues are coming from.”

Monitoring and verification of land management

It was considered that effective monitoring and verification of outcomes or management actions need local knowledge and a high level of trust between the monitor and the agreement holder. Involvement of independent experts such as using ecologists etc. was thought desirable by some groups, while others felt that at least a base level of monitoring could be carried out by farmers and agreement holders themselves. Any such self-monitoring by the farmer/landowner would need to be practical and straightforward to implement.

Some caution was expressed about the measurement of very specific outcomes such as the presence of bird species and breeding populations. The relative unpredictability of these results might mean that failure to achieve the specific outcome might be down to factors outside the control of the agreement holder.

Several groups considered that there might be a need for penalties and felt that any penalties should be proportionate and not impact on the whole agreement payment. One group favoured a self-regulating scheme with a less punitive approach to managing issues.

Costs / payments

Whatever the basis of the future scheme, i.e. payments by results or payments for management, the overall funding available through the scheme ought to be sufficient to underpin farm viability as lowland livestock farming is not profitable. To enable something like the current mix of farm enterprises to be sustained also needs the scheme to be accessible to all farms irrespective of size or ownership.

The scheme needs to pay sufficiently well for wetland/grassland/reedbed and it was felt that payment rates have dropped in real terms as schemes have evolved.

Another reason provided for seeking sufficient payment rates was that financing needs to be sufficient as “horse grazing raises more [rent than cattle]”.

Prioritisation of public goods

There was general support for local prioritisation based on a collaborative approach for setting priorities that involves environmental groups and farmers. Collaboration that is bottom up was considered to create ownership and lead to a better landscape approach, and should take place at set-up and also with monitoring. An approach where farmers design, deliver and monitor delivery, such as one being trialled in Dartmoor, was advocated.

One group felt that local prioritisation ought to take place within an overall framework provided for what is achievable / expected in the Broads. Another suggested that consideration should be given to the impact of national policy on local outcomes. This raised the question on how local priorities might get communicated back up to national policy; for example, in response to a call for widespread tree planting.

Catchments were proposed as the focus for prioritisation with themes to fit upper catchment and lower catchment and different prescriptions [guidelines] picking up soil types and water levels. This would also allow a farm cluster approach. For large catchments, maybe divide into sub-catchment groups.

As well as broader priorities, their needs to be an understanding of what characteristics are relevant to each farm.

Communication is important and local people need to understand what local benefits the scheme is offering.

Test question 2

What coordinated advice will be required to develop and implement schemes? Is there a role for a local management board and how would that operate?

Advice methods

There was very strong support for there to be advice available to scheme participants with an emphasis on there being direct officer contact (not centralised) where advisers are trusted, have local knowledge and are capable of providing blended advice in terms of public goods and business. The need for adviser support was thought to increase as the scheme evolves.

Examples of good advice included that provided through the Catchment Sensitive Farming project. The use of a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) in ES was felt to be a good approach although there was a problem over consistency of delivery.

Several groups commented that there needs to be a different culture between adviser/inspection and farmer with a focus on rectifying a problem, rather than penalising it, e.g.:

- “RPA (policeman), NE (doctor) – we have too much of the former, not enough of the latter.”
- “We need a “doctor,” not a “policeman,” to work with landowners, not penalising them – allow a period of grace.”

Separating advice from inspection might assist in building trust and dealing with problems.

Also, one group questioned what the recourse might be if an adviser is offering “poor advice”.

Some groups suggested that the scheme should aim to encourage farmers to become advisers and enable peer-to-peer support. There might be a possibility for advice to be provided through training, to “help farmers to help themselves”.

In addition to any formal advice provision, it was suggested that a range of measures might assist in scheme delivery including knowledge sharing of different outcomes (e.g. between farmer, ecologist and owner). Sharing best practice through farm walks, farmer meetings or webinars was also suggested.

As well as advice, it was felt to be important to provide feedback during the lifetime of an agreement, ideally, at least annually.

Sources of information

As well as using advisers, access to sources of information was also proposed by several groups. Examples included:

- Access to LIDAR data to help inform where to put water features/fen scrapes etc.
- Online information via a website with an officer coordinator.
- Online information and mapping software.

Group advice / facilitation

Two groups suggested that there ought to be group advice in addition to individual land holder advice. This might take the form of group facilitation when working with several agreement holders.

Specialist advice

Particular topics suggested for specialist advice included:

- Advice on skills such as reedbed management and the use of reed cutting machines or rotary ditchers.
- Drainage advisers were thought to be important for obtaining advice on water level management.

One group listed several topics of advice including water level advice; historic environment; ecology; landscape advice; agronomy, and predator control, and felt that it would require multiple organisations to achieve this range of advice coverage.

Adviser accreditation

Advisers were thought to need some sort of accreditation, particularly if public money will pay for it! One group felt that accreditation could be tricky to implement given the need to cover a wide range of topics where nobody will know everything. This group suggested that networks might play a role so long as local advice was also maintained.

Who pays for advice?

There appeared to be an even split between incorporating and paying for advice within the scheme on the one hand, and farmers paying for advice directly. Comments included:

- “Officer advice should be paid for by the scheme budget.”
- “Farmer to pay and hire their own person.”
- “Paying for advice should come out of the scheme pot/budget e.g. 3-4 project officers.”

- “Farmers might pay for advice if scheme payments made it worthwhile.”

One group asked whether it might be set up so that a group of farmers can club together to pay for advice across all of their land holdings.

Governance

Few comments were made on governance and this aspect ought to be one for the next set of workshops. Some comments relating to governance included:

- “We need trust between scheme governance and deliverers (Farmers).”
- “We need a mechanism to regulate and undertake compliance monitoring paid for by more resource or re-direction of resource.”
- “Management of the scheme rather than scheme itself is a critical point. Must be more flexible to adapt to local conditions.”
- “Is there a role for a local management board and how would that operate?”

One group advocated an approach involving a ‘governance board for the Broadland ELMS’ with a variety of support mechanisms including an online forum (for local participation); webinars; administrative support for advisers, and different advice / communication channels.

Test question 3

How can working across multiple holdings / landscape scale projects be incentivised to maximise delivery of public goods?

Encouraging participation

The most frequent response to this question was to provide a scheme where everyone across a catchment was eligible and could participate at least at a baseline level. This is illustrated by the history of agri-environment schemes where the Broads has gone from record levels of engagement in the ESA to progressively less participation in successor schemes.

Encouragement to participate can be achieved by:

- **Simplicity** - Engagement is the first hurdle and complexity is a turn-off so participation can be increased by making the scheme simple, flexible and adaptive. It was considered imperative that whatever the scheme is, it shouldn’t be so difficult that a consultant needs to do it – “if it cannot be accessed by people of average intelligence, it has not been set up properly”.
- **Trust** – the scheme needs to rebuild trust which has been lost with the RPA.

- **Non-competitive** – A competitive process doesn't deliver on a wide scale so the new scheme needs levels (tiers) to allow everyone to access the scheme and be engaged. As well as encouraging participation a baseline tier acknowledges that some farms won't be able to deliver as much. Competition also wastes a lot of time and money in making applications that are not successful.
- **Flexibility** - Start at baseline, with option to increase, farmers moving at own pace and the facility for amendments and changes to an agreement.
- **Bespoke** – With a capacity to develop agreements that suit local area and priorities, taking account of sensitivities and with careful local design.
- **Longer Term** – It was suggested that schemes should be a minimum of 5 years, with an option to extend to 10 years. A 5-year agreement technically only delivers 3-4 years of delivery. Another group felt that 10 years is not long enough to achieve significant environmental improvements.
- **“Peer pressure”** – To encourage people to take part.
- **Adequate funding** – Participation will occur naturally if the incentive is right. A cap on payment on a large estate was considered to be a disincentive. Payments should be index linked.

One group suggested that the scheme should “Just start”, get a facilitation group going and see how it works in 6 months to a year. Then take lessons from this, identifying which bits are working and which bits aren't. In other words, “go with it and let people have a crack – no-one in the wrong or right – don't spend too much time on design.”

Another group suggested that farmers should design, deliver and monitor the scheme with payment for these activities included within the scheme. The example of a test project on Dartmoor was cited where the National Park acts as a critical friend.

Coordination and collaboration between farmers

While it was considered to be nearly impossible to get all involved and overcome all barriers to cooperation, several suggestions were made to encourage collaboration. This included building on existing cluster groups such as catchment partnerships; providing incentives to encourage working together; and facilitation support through local advisers. Geographic scale is important and the Broads IDB was considered too big for effective collaboration.

Some other general points on scheme design

A word of caution was provided by one group who thought it important to understand wider factors that might affect scheme delivery. The example given was the influence on water quality by a Sewage Treatment Works.

One group thought there should be fewer scheme objectives as newer schemes try to do too much everywhere. Another thought the scheme needs to be more complex than the ESA to get good local benefits but less complex than ES or CS with the wide range of options and prescriptions.

Next Steps

The work programme below sets out the farmer and land manager 1:1s and group work and further smaller and targeted workshops. The activities in the work programme will be informed by the first workshop and the remaining work to answer the test questions and be informed by the Steering Group.

Work plan for Broads Test and Trial activities

| Action | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Submit final proposal to Defra | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steering group meetings | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Delivery Group meetings | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Workshop 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Workshop 1 Report | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Farmer and land manager 1:1s | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Workshop 2 & 3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Final report | | | | | | | | | | | |

Workshop Evaluation

Overall over 93% of participants who completed the evaluation thought that the event invitation was well handled, were aware of the purpose of the day, and the presentations were fair and balanced, with 95% of people agreeing that they could have their say, 98% learning something new and only 2 people out of the 42 responses saying that they are not sure about attending future events.

63 people attended the event.

A more comprehensive workshop evaluation is in Appendix 3.

Appendix 1 - Agenda Workshop 1 held on 13 November 2019



Environmental Land Management system (ELMs)

Broads Tests & Trials Workshop

Agenda

69 participants

| | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 12:15 | Arrival and Lunch | |
| 13:15 | Welcome | Louis Baugh & Nigel Stone |
| | Scene setting | Andrea Kelly |
| 13:30 | Group work - What has worked well - What could be improved | Nigel Stone |
| 14:35 | Comfort break | |
| 14:50 | ELMs design principles and public goods | Rob Wise |
| 15:00 | Presentation/s What good land looks like | Joe Mitchell – grazing marsh Andrea Kelly - fen |
| 15:15 | Group work - What is required to deliver these good outcomes? | Nigel Stone |
| 16:20 | Sum up of key points | Mike Edwards & Katherine Trehane |

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 16:30 | Next steps and thanks | Andrea Kelly |
|-------|-----------------------|--------------|

Project Delivery Group: Broads Authority, National Farmers Union, Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Natural England, Nigel Stone

Steering Group: Broads Authority, National Farmers Union, Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Natural England, RSPB, Farmers (Jake Fiennes, Joe Mitchell, Louis Baugh, Nick Deane, Tony Bambridge) Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Water Management Alliance, Broads Reed and Sedge Cutters

Appendix 2 - Defra's Environmental Land Management scheme design principles and payment for public goods

Slide 1

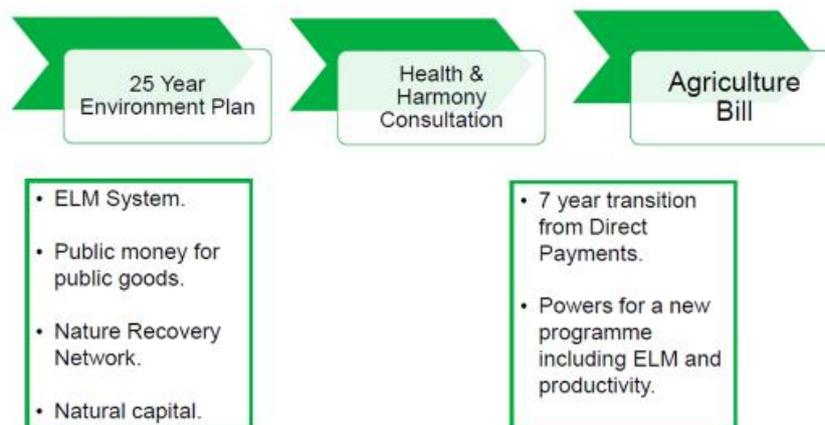


Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Environmental Land Management (ELM) Our vision for a future scheme

Slide 2

Policy Context for ELM



ELM Public Goods



-  Clean and plentiful water
-  Clean air
-  Protection from and mitigation of environmental hazards
-  Mitigation of and adaptation to climate change
-  Thriving plants and wildlife
-  Beauty, heritage and engagement

A new ELM system

- Multi-annual agreements
- User-friendly focus
- Innovative mechanisms
- Funding for collaborative projects



Proposed timeline



The design of ELM will build on lessons learnt from past schemes

Current agri-environment schemes

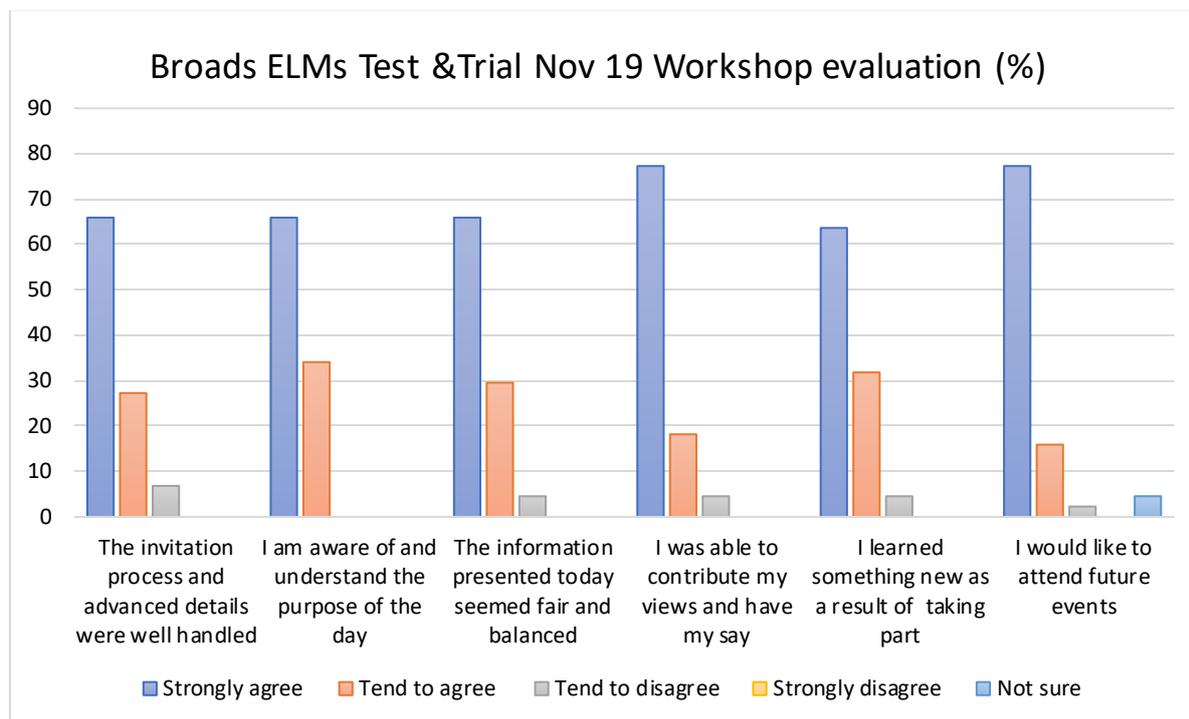
- Good return on investment compared to AE schemes across Europe but...
- Criticised for being prescriptive and bureaucratic
- Payments based on nationally prescribed actions
- Limited scope to tailor actions to local circumstances

How ELM can be better

- Lighter-touch approach
- Premise of paying public money for public goods
- Giving land managers flexibility to create 'land management plans' appropriate for their area
- Delivery of the 25 Year Environmental Plan
- Advantages:
 - value for money – we only pay for what we get
 - motivation – payment scales motivate land managers to do more
 - fairer – harder to get away with doing little and still getting paid
 - flexibility – allows land managers to innovate and adapt to their local circumstances

Appendix 3 – Workshop Evaluation

Overall responses to the evaluation questionnaire are shown below.



This Wordcloud shows three words respondents used to describe their experience in the workshop.



Sector evaluation showed farmers (18 responses), academics (1), IDB (3), ecologist (1), public authority (1), NGO (3) and reed-cutters (2) gave the highest rates of positive feedback, followed by farmer/advisers (7), then advisers (9). However the variation in sectors only ranged from 72-100% percentage of people that agreed positively with the statements. (These statements were: the workshop was well handled, aware of the purpose of the day, presentations were fair and balanced, people could have their say, learning something new and attending future events.)

The holding area and farm type from the farmers that filled this section out was mainly mixed farming (arable and grass marsh)

| Mixed | Grass marsh | Arable |
|---------|-------------|--------|
| 400 ha | 280 a | 60 |
| 200 | 40 a | 50 |
| 1400 ha | 100 a | |
| 1750 a | 350 a | |
| 225 ha | | |
| 220ha | | |
| 550 ha | | |
| 800 ha | | |
| 172 ha | | |
| 240 ha | | |
| 500 | | |
| 1700 ha | | |

Comments and Observations included:

- Look forward to today’s input shaping ELMS
- Talk around catchment/area approach but not able to delve into the issues of water provision and management
- Presentations on payment by results - does it work?
- No discussion on water
- Updates on progress as they happen please!
- Viewpoints varied depending on your situation, everyone has different priorities i.e. conservation no profits

- Good event but a little concerned that general ELM development will overtake T&T
- Great lunch - thanks!
- Group worked well (A), Group (6) 1 person interrupted and talked over others repeatedly PS nice lunch
- Well run, enjoyable and informative and hopefully will lend to an exciting and successful scheme
- Really need the promised one to one discussion
- Really limited parking and not sure where else to go. Could have been mentioned on email before event
- Very good event. Good mix of people. Well organised. Well done
- Disappointed that the advanced notice indicated the meeting would end at 4:15 and it ended at 4:30
- It would be helpful to have feedback on the outcomes from the meeting and next steps
- Talks around catchment/area approach but not able to delve into the issues of water provision and management