

Environment Land Management (ELM) scheme
BROADS TEST AND TRIAL

Advice Provision



January 2021

Broads Test & Trials Extension – Advice Provision

This is a supplementary report to the full report of the Broads Test and Trial to inform Defra's development of the Environment Land Management (ELM) scheme. Other reports are available on the Broads Authority's website at <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/projects/environment-land-management-system>.

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1. Introduction

Following the work completed for the Broads Test and Trial (2019 – 2020) we have been asked to extend the contract in the form of a online survey to gain further knowledge and understanding around how advice should be provided in the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme.

As background, we asked the following questions regarding 'advice' at the workshop in November 2019:

- a. What sort of advice is required to achieve these good outcomes?
 - i. Who should pay for advice provision?
 - ii. Should advice providers for the new scheme be accredited and how could this work?
- b. What coordinated advice will be required to develop and implement schemes? Including exploration of group and specialist advice, adviser accreditation and who pays for the advice.

In the online survey conducted in June 2020 we asked two specific questions regarding advice provision;

Figure 1 - Who should pay for the following potential aspects of advice provision, monitoring and verification?

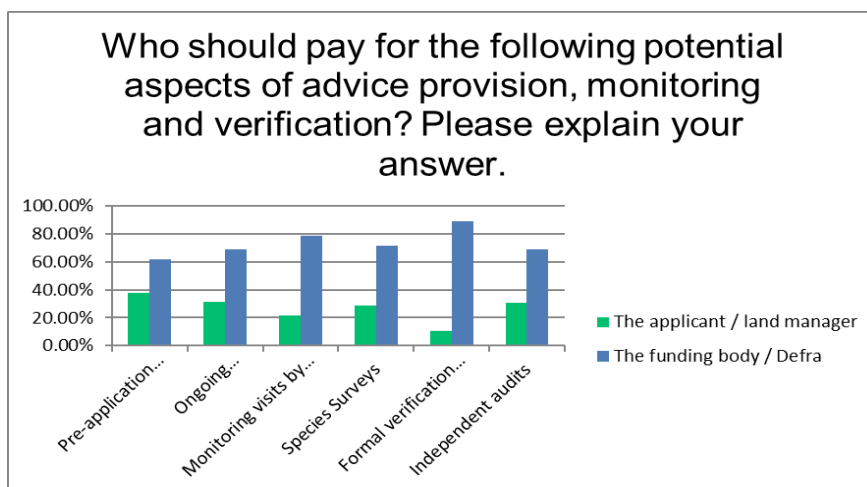
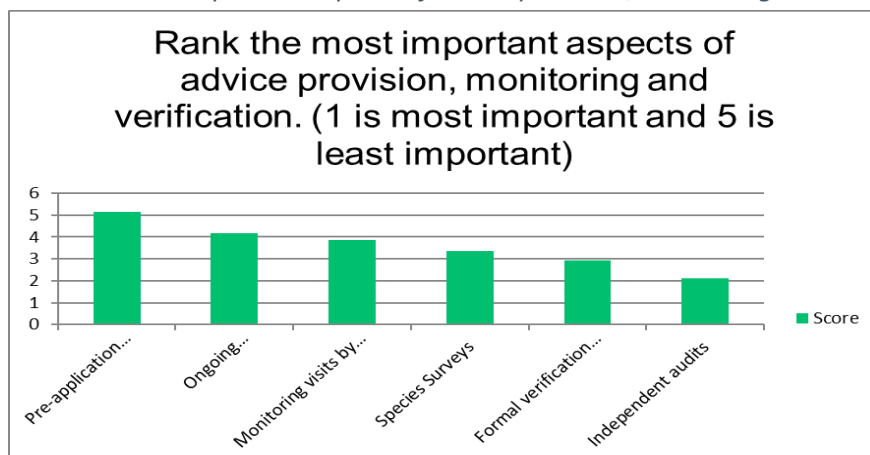


Figure 2 - Rank the most important aspects of advice provision, monitoring and verification



In our 2020 Test and Trial report¹ we concluded the following statements and recommendation regarding advice provision;

'Good advice is key to the delivery of good outcomes. Our discussions with farmers and land managers confirmed that they would expect the scheme to pay for and provide advice to applicants and for the life-time of an agreement. This is important for the independence of such advice, and would favour environmental benefit over financial gain. It was considered that a scheme will deliver the greatest environmental benefits where it is initially co-designed with an adviser or project officer who is then able to make periodic pro-active management visits to ensure the scheme is delivering its full potential.'

'To provide a well-resourced, local and trusted project officer-based advice provision for the initial and on-going support of applications and agreements, with a mechanism to make ongoing alterations to a scheme to meet the desired objectives.'

'To develop a co-ordinated private market place for advice provision that enables the supported co-design of a scheme, followed by ongoing pro-active management advice and a mechanism to make ongoing alterations to a scheme to meet the desired objectives. This would need to be well coordinated with local advisers provided by the funding body.'

The following details the further in-depth questions we have asked and analysed, and the conclusions we have reached regarding advice provision required for a successful scheme.

2. Methodology

2.1 The online surveys and follow-up work

We developed an online survey covering the work area of advice provision. The survey was accompanied by a narrated introductory PowerPoint presentation. The full list of questions asked are at Annex 1, not all questions have been referenced in detail within this report.

We used the comments from the survey participants and those already received in the original Broads Test and Trial, to further inform how we consider advice should be delivered for maximum impact on environmental delivery and scheme uptake. The full comments received against each question are included in Appendix 2 (where the option for a free text answer was provided).

¹ [ELM Test and Trail full Report \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk)

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographics

60 people took part in the survey. 71% were farmers or farm managers, with the remainder made up of conservation organisations, advisers, agents, contractors, and 'other' (these included a reed and sedge cutter and a water company representatives).

A broad range of sectors and farm sizes was represented, as shown in Annex 3. There was a large proportion of mixed farmers with arable and beef enterprises as is quite typical of the Broads. Farm sizes varied, but the majority were between 100-400ha. Tenant farmers were well represented with 40% of those who responded to the survey farming some or all of their land under a tenancy.

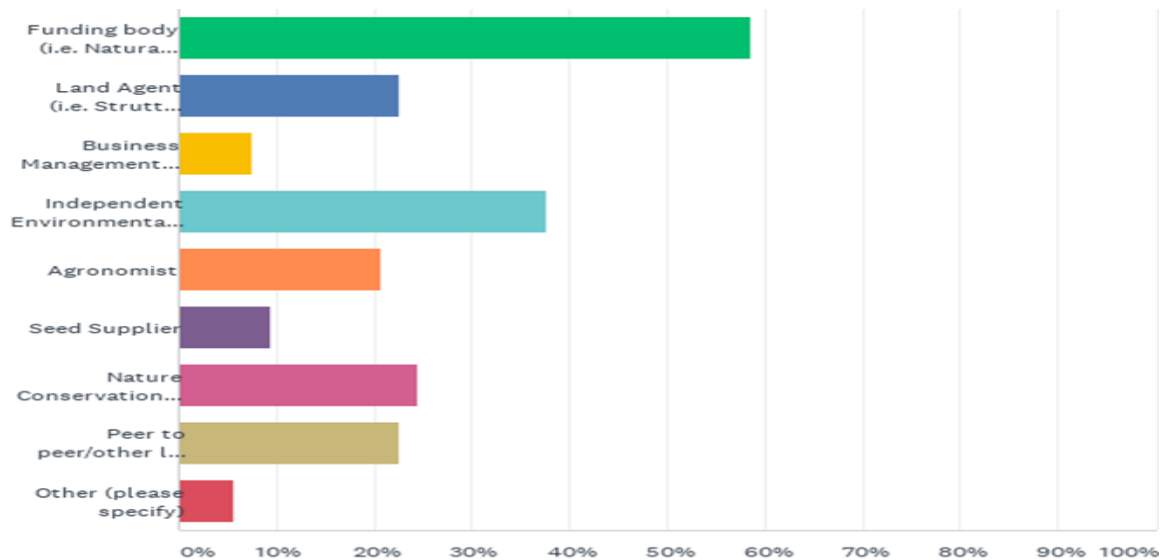
There was a very good level of experience of agri-environment schemes with 70% of respondents currently in a live agri-environment scheme and a wide variety of key Broads habitats under management by respondents.

3.2 Existing Advice and How it is Delivered

A series of questions were asked to understand the range of advisers currently providing advice and how this advice is viewed by the farmers responding to the survey.

The majority of respondents (58%) received their agri-environment scheme advice from the grant funding body i.e. Natural England or Forestry Commission with the second highest coming from independent environmental advisers such as the Farming and Wildlife Advice Group, this is followed by nature conservation organisations, land agents and agronomists. This question did not allow multiple advisers to be chosen to allow us to draw out who the principal adviser or whom most advice was being received from. It is clear from comments received in other questions that multiple advisers are being used, for example land agent or independent environmental advisers advice is being combined with that of the funding body.

Figure 3 - Who do you currently receive advice from on your agri-environment schemes?



When we asked respondents to give weight to the advice they have received from the different advisers they use. They weighted the advice from the funding body, independent environmental advisers and nature conservation organisations highly. They also gave weight to advice from their agronomist and that received via peer-to-peer learning. The advice received from land agents, business management advisers and seed companies was weighted lower.

A range of comments were also received which reinforce the reality of advice being sought from several sources;

- 'I am cautious of so-called 'free' advice as what else are they trying to sell you?'
- 'We initially consulted our land agent then contacted Natural England before putting together our scheme largely based on NE advice. We also consulted our contractor who would have to implement the cultivation and sowing aspects of the scheme.'
- 'Natural England for Higher Tier as they were the 'gatekeeper' of the scheme. FWAG advice for all schemes.'
- 'For me Suffolk FWAG have been crucial in advising on what options best suit my farm and on what is realistically achievable. This was most important in the development of the original scheme but has also been helpful where we have encountered problems with delivery and in untangling the chaotic administration of the scheme by NE and RPA.'
- 'Professional conservation advisors often give the most beneficial advice, especially if they are experienced. They also are more familiar with the relevant schemes, especially the application process where the help is invaluable. Advice from other farmers, agronomists often helps with the practical side of achieving results'.
- 'The weight given to each is determined by their knowledge and experience on the specific subject matter. Unfortunately, the turnover of NE staff means their advisers sometimes are not sufficiently experienced to fulfil their role, whereas others are v good. It is also determined by their independence and what motivates them. Each have their place and area of expertise. I wouldn't go to a land agent for advice on wetland management. Just as I wouldn't go to an agronomist to set up an FBT.'

- *'Natural England was my main scheme adviser. RSPB Berney advised on the development of the site initially and carried out the practical management of the wet grassland site at the start. As a combination these were experienced operators/advisers which had the knowledge and skills to provide the all-important early consultation and advice.'*
- *'Advice is often sought from organisations that do not have another motive behind their recommendations.'*
- *'I have periodically asked advice from my NE rep and appreciated the excellent help received'*
- *'Access to advice needs to be centralised and needs to be available to all. The quality of advice we have received over the past ten years has been very poor. Requirements differ from farm to farm.'*

When asked about the quality of advice received in the context of agri-environment it was again led by the funding body and independent environmental advisers providing higher quality advice, with nature conservation bodies and peer-to-peer support also featuring highly.

The comments point towards getting the right advice from the right adviser and that the advice given can be motivated by other factors such as financial gain, environmental gain or current organisational policy;

- *'Specialist advice from someone who is experienced, on a specialist area is very important. You don't ask a plumber to give you legal advice!'*
- *'In general advice is of good quality for mid tier options from the current advisory group and specialists in the dryer options. however, the specialist advice on managing wetlands can be lacking.'*
- *'Best advice from FWAG as they combine conservation knowledge with knowledge of the schemes and farming practicalities.'*
- *'yes you do see a difference, I am entering a scheme for financial benefit of my business, if you are paying someone to put a scheme together they are more focused on getting it accepted. there is a hard cost to some options, especially the removal of them.'*
- *'independent advisers tend to work on giving advice which will work best for our agreement / farm whereas N.E advisers in some cases work to their own agenda or the latest agenda set by higher office and this changes frequently'*
- *'Some are highly skilled, qualified professionals, others are not. Some are primarily driven by money, others are not. Some care about the environmental outcome more than anything, some balance economics and practicality with environment and ecology.'*
- *'Our dealings with NE have been disappointing, hence our withdrawal from schemes. FC advice and help has invariably been first class.'*

Long standing relationships and a good understanding of a farmer's land built up over many years was mentioned many times during our workshop events as being important to good advice delivery. We asked respondents how long they have been receiving advice from their chosen advisers, and across all of the different adviser types, relationships of 5-10 years and 10 years + were more common than those of less than 5 years. Comments were also received against various questions that were negative about frequently changing advisers;

- *'I have favoured using FWAG because there seems to be slightly less turnover of staff than other organisations (especially the agents where junior staff tend to be*

allocated to this type of work). Continuity of advice is important to me as is the ability to work with somebody who knows and understands both my farm and my aspirations for it.'

- 'Some advisers come and go like days of the week, esp in CSF, one of the reasons for its failure. Continuity of advice over years is critical, so there is an in-depth knowledge of situations on the ground as well as the changes to AE schemes.'
- 'Unfortunately, the turnover of NE staff means their advisers sometimes are not sufficiently experienced to fulfil their role, whereas others are v good'.

The importance of long-standing relationships between farmers and landowners and their advisers was further reinforced when we asked how important the following aspects were;

- value for money
- good business advice
- timeliness of advice
- trusted relationship
- effective technical advice to achieve results.

If we add together all of the positive responses for the above aspects as shown in the table below a trusted relationship and effective technical advice are the most important aspects.

Figure 4 - How important are the following with regards to the adviser that you use?

Aspects of Advice	Percentage of Positive Responses
Value for money	61%
Good business advice	81%
Timeliness of advice	76%
Trusted relationship	97%
Effective technical advice to achieve results	97%

In thinking about how advice is delivered we sought to understand how often advice was being received. This varied across the different advice providers. Those receiving advice from the funding body had a high proportion of respondents saying that they received advice once a year or less than once a year, this has been confirmed by many of our conversations with farmers and landowners who frequently remark that they 'can't get hold of them' and that they are 'under resourced'.

Figure 5 - How often do you receive advice from your advisers on agri-environmental schemes?

Advice Provider	Once a month	Every 2/3 months	Every 6 months	Once a Year	Less Than once a year
Funding body	12%	8%	4%	28%	36%

If we look across all of the advice providers as to how frequently they are providing advice to farmers and landowners on their agri-environment schemes a good proportion are receiving advice more than once a year.

Figure 6 - How often do you receive advice from your advisers on agri-environmental schemes? Amalgamated data

	Once a month	Every 2/3 months	Every 6 months	Once a Year	Less Than once a year
Advice Provided	12%	9%	18%	14%	13%

As we know from previous discussions with farmers and land managers advice is seen as particularly important at the design and commencement of a scheme, following that it is requested on an as needed basis. This is supported by the following comments;

- 'According to need - more when applying for a scheme - with a normal annual visit in addition'
- 'They are there when I need them which is important'
- 'normally advice is sourced as and when needed'
- 'In both cases this varies: during periods of scheme change or when we had capital projects planned/executed there tends to be more regular contact than this'
- 'When needed'

When we asked about the most useful way of receiving advice, there was a clear preference for receiving that advice in a face-to-face manner via a farm visit with 75% of respondents stating that a farm visit was very useful and none rating it as not useful. This is supported by the comments of 'face-to-face advice is absolutely critical if schemes are to be successful' and 'nothing better than a face-to-face visit'. When the positive responses are amalgamated, a farm visit is still the most useful, with an email and written guidance (not paper or online handbooks) as the other highest rated ways of receiving advice. The description given of written guidance in the survey is open to interpretation, but given that it ranks much higher than general scheme handbooks and in line with an email, we have taken it to imply locally specific and tailored guidance.

Figure 7 - Thinking about all of the advice you receive on agri-environment schemes how useful are the following ways of providing you with advice?

Ways of Providing Guidance	Percentage
Farm Visit	95%
Email	82%
Written Guidance	73%
Group Events	72%
Telephone	44%
Paper handbooks	43%
Website	42%
Online handbooks	39%
Farming Press	32%

3.3 Future Advice Provision

The survey went onto gather information about the future advice requirement that the respondents considered they might need for the ELM scheme, considering the wider breadth of objectives.

We asked whether farmers and land managers considered that the current advisers would be able to advice across a wider range of topics including; nutrient management, soil management, pest management, efficient water use, habitat creation, species management, peatland restoration and the creation of coastal habitats.

A diverse range of comments were received, but a number of common themes can be drawn;

- There is not necessarily an expectation that an adviser would/should be able to advise on all of these aspects – some areas are very specialist and a farmer may need to consult more than one adviser
- It is expected that most advisers will need to develop their knowledge in certain areas with further training
- An expectation that agronomists will have a greater role to play to advise on nutrient, pest and soil management.
- Accreditation could be useful to ensure a basic understanding across a range of topics

A number of other areas where respondents felt that advisers may be lacking knowledge was around woodland management, water quality and commercial reed or sedge cutting.

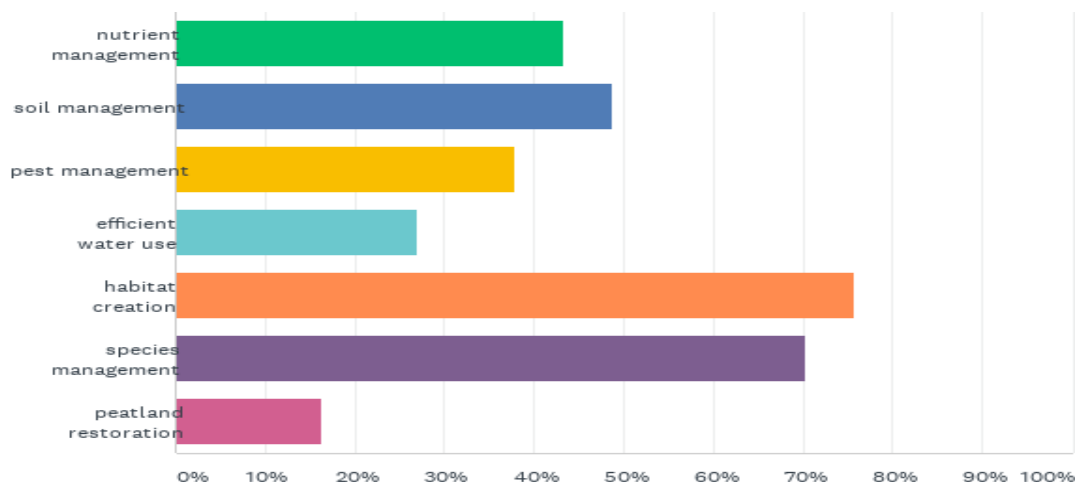
We also asked survey participants to consider adviser skills and knowledge gaps in a broader range of topics not limited to those specifically covered by the ELM scheme. This was to identify any other gaps in advice, as we are aware from discussions with farmers from the earlier Test and Trials work, that in many instances good ecological knowledge needs to be combined with good farming and business knowledge to provide the highest quality advice. The following table shows a number of areas where respondents considered there are gaps in knowledge or areas where advisers are not as strong as they could be;

Figure 8 - When thinking about local advisers - are there skills and knowledge gaps in any of the following areas?

Areas of Skills and Knowledge Gaps	Responses by Percentage
Business and Economics	53%
Carbon	53%
Agriculture and Farming	46%
Ecology and Conservation	33%
Air Quality	30%
Water Quality	26%
Tourism	26%

We also asked respondents to identify topics that they themselves may require advice and support with in the future;

Figure 9 - Which of the following topics might you need most advice and support with in the future?



Habitat creation and species management were identified by respondents as two areas that they would require the most advice on in the future.

3.4 Experience, Qualifications and Funding for Advice

We asked a number of questions to look at farmers attitudes and expectations around the experience and qualifications that their advisers should hold and how they would like advice to be funded.

66% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that qualifications are important for providing good quality advice compared to 98% who considered experience to be important for delivering good quality advice. We went further to try and understand how much experience is needed to advise on an agri-environment application and the majority of responses put the experience required at somewhere between 2-5 years.

A range of comments were made regarding the importance of qualifications and experience and these can be summarised into the following statements;

- Qualifications are a benchmark upon which to build with experience
- Continued professional development and training is critical
- Communication is important – must be able to convey the advice
- Need a good understanding of the landscape, ecosystem and farming systems to provide the best advice
- Experience imparts confidence and respect

In the Broads we have a history of advisers working in geographical 'patches', which stems from the original Broads ESA scheme. The idea of advisers working in 'patches' was mentioned several times during the earlier workshops and we tested this in the survey.

In response to asking whether advisers working in 'patches' would be of benefit to farmers, over 88% said that it would be. The perceived benefits of a 'patch' based adviser approach were;

- 'Consistent advice across a single landscape, is the only way you can build the bigger positive picture. it could be a team of advisors work together to deliver a shared vision though.'
- 'Would develop knowledge of what works in that area.'
- 'We need to work as part of the wider landscape in a coordinated way'
- 'local knowledge and ability to organise working with other farmers in the area'
- 'Helps with the wider landscape knowledge and linking local schemes into a regional overarching aim.'
- 'Share best practice locally, knows about linking with neighbours'
- 'Understand the area, how other land parcels are being managed and how to best get results'
- 'we would be able to sort out catchment problems better'

There was also a note of caution sounded for this approach;

- 'not all people get along, may be best if there is another adviser available'

In previous surveys we have asked farmers who should pay for the advice they require at different stages of the process and for monitoring and verification. In all cases respondents considered that it should be the funding body that paid (see figure 1). In this survey we focused on how that funding should be used to provide the advice;

Figure 10 - If the scheme was to provide funding towards your advice costs. How should this be funding be provided? Ranked in order of preference with 1 as most preferable

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Up-front grant for advice	22.73% 10	15.91% 7	47.73% 21	9.09% 4	4.55% 2	44	3.43
Voucher for advice	6.82% 3	15.91% 7	18.18% 8	52.27% 23	6.82% 3	44	2.64
Loan for advice	2.33% 1	2.33% 1	4.65% 2	16.28% 7	74.42% 32	43	1.42
Funded advisers employed directly by the funding body	34.09% 15	27.27% 12	18.18% 8	9.09% 4	11.36% 5	44	3.64
Funded advisers accredited and registered with the funding body	34.88% 15	39.53% 17	11.63% 5	11.63% 5	2.33% 1	43	3.93

The responses show very little support for advice to be funded via a voucher or loan. When the positive preferences are amalgamated there is strong support to see advice funded via advisers that are accredited and registered with the funding body (74%). This route allows farmers the choice of adviser whilst knowing that the adviser has been approved by the funding body. There was also strong support

(61%) for the funding of advisers directly employed by the funding body, and this mirrors the support for funding body advisers from earlier in the survey. The provision of a grant for advice to be spent on the farmers choice of adviser was also well supported with 38% when positive preferences are amalgamated.

4. Summary of Findings and Key Learning

- **Over 70% of respondents are expecting to need advice about species and habitats** in the future in and around the Broads area to achieve outcomes of the ELM scheme.
- **Existing relationships** with advisers are very important, there is a need to ensure that all the existing relationships are providing **high quality advice**².
- **Preference is to receive face-to-face on-farm advice** but a good locally tailored written guidance resource is also likely to be of benefit.
- Many farmers and landowners approach their advisers for advice on an 'as needed' basis currently. This is very reactive; some may not realise there is an issue or that their scheme is not delivering as much as it could. A proactive **annual programme of advice-based scheme reviews** could be more beneficial. Particularly as species features often require visits at specific times of the year rather than on an adhoc basis.
- There is preference for **readily available** advisers from both the funding body and others, with a **properly funded** advice provision, with the majority of farmers still wanting to **choose their adviser**.
- Identified areas for adviser training were around woodland, water quality and commercial reed and sedge cutting. It was also clear that to provide good advice, advisers also needed a good understanding of business and economics, agriculture and farming.
- Our respondents want the '**right advice from the right adviser**' and have set out what works well and is not working in the Broads area and there are lessons to learn.
- **Accreditation of advisers and creating a local board approach** where experience can be shared would help achieve outcomes for public goods. Farmers have an expectation of underlying qualifications and between 2-5 years' experience to be able to deliver good on-farm advice.
- **A 'patch' based approach to delivering on the ground advice** would be welcomed with centrally funded go-to advisers for these patches.

² Trusted relationship, qualified, experienced, face to face

5. Proposals

This research has reinforced the view that farmers in the Broads and surrounding area receive their advice from a wide variety of advisers, and that many of the valued and productive adviser/farmer relationships are long standing (over 5 years). Therefore, it is essential that with the current and future ELM scheme the key information farmers receive is consistent between the funding body and other advisers. This co-ordination and consistency of good quality advice will ensure good scheme uptake and that key management activities for example in the Nature Recovery tier of ELM scheme are delivered to a high standard.

We recommend that;

- **All advisers providing E.L.M scheme advice are qualified** and required to have undertaken a basic conservation management course such as a BETA Certificate in Conservation Management. Ideally this would be delivered locally and tailored to cover geographically specific issues. This is particularly relevant to the Broads wetland habitats which require complex and expert management.
- **A register of such 'accredited advisers'** is held by the funding body or local delivery board and readily available to farmers and landowners. The register should hold basic information regarding an adviser's experience, qualifications and any areas of specialism.
- **A series of training events are run annually by the funding body or the local delivery board** where continued professional development points are available. These training sessions should not be limited to conservation topics but embrace business, economics and farming related topics.
- An adviser must keep their CPD points up to remain on the register.
- Within the **Local Board approach**, consult on a model for forming, resourcing and operating adviser coordination training, disseminate best practice and knowledge exchange.
- If agreed by the local board, the adviser coordination would be commissioned by the local board and the funding body to jointly produce and provide the following:
 - a series of **local written guidance documents** for advisers and farmers on key topics. (Similar to the NE Technical Information Notes [ne-guide-to-lwg-mgt-for-breeding-waders.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#))
 - regular **coordinated training events** for farmers and advisers on key topics and scheme updates.

This Local Board approach will be tested in a further Broads Test and Trial which will examine a new model of local governance which could support collaboration and spatial prioritisation under the future ELM scheme. Partners will set up the

governance and trial the operation of the board over a course of three seminars to investigate some of the functions for which the board could be responsible.

When considering the payment for advice;

- To deliver the public good outcomes in the Broads area, it is of the utmost importance that there is a fully resourced and readily available advice provision from the funding body. This should be provided by experienced advisers working on a 'patch' basis to co-ordinate a wider landscape delivery approach.
- This should be supported by subsidised payments for advice from other accredited advisers. This subsidised advice should be available at the scheme outset and then available periodically throughout the lifetime of an agreement to ensure that it is on track and delivering its objectives.

Appendix 1

Full List of Questions

(excludes Demographic Questions)

1) *Who do you currently receive advice from on your agri-environment schemes?*

Tick as many as apply –

Funding body (i.e. Natural England, Forestry Commission)

Land Agent (i.e. Strutt & Parker, Savills, Brown & Co)

Business Management Adviser (i.e. Wilson Wraight, Larkin Gowan, Churchgate)

Independent Environmental Adviser (i.e. FWAG)

Agronomist

Seed Supplier

Nature Conservation Organisation (i.e. Wildlife Trust, RSPB)

Peer to peer/other land managers

Other (Add in free text box)

2) *What sorts of advice have you sought now and in the past and what weight have you given to each kind of advice?*

3) *Do you see differences in the quality of the advice provided between different types of advisers?*

4) *How important are the following with regards to the advisers that you use? (if you don't use an adviser then please leave the column blank)*

Value for money service

Good business advice

Timelines of advice

Trusted relationship

Effective technical advice – helped to achieve results

Other (free text box)

5) *How long have you been receiving advice from your advisers?*

Select one option

1-2 years

3-5years

5-10years

10+years

6) *How often do you receive advice from your advisers on agri-environmental schemes?*

Once a month

Every 2/3months

Every 6 months

Once a year

Less than once a year.

7) *How often would you like to receive advice from your adviser on agri-environmental schemes?*

Once a month

Every 2/3months

Every 6 months

Once a year

Less than once a year.

8) *Thinking about all of the advice you receive on agri-environment schemes how useful are the following ways of providing you with advice?*

Written guidance e.g. newsletter or case studies

Email

Telephone

Farm Visit

Group events or farm walks

Scheme Website

Online Handbooks

Paper Handbooks

Farming Press

Other

9) *The ELM scheme will cover a wider range of themes than the current agri-environmental schemes, likely to include – nutrient management, soil management, pest management, efficient water use, habitat creation, species management, peatland restoration, creation of coastal habitats. Please tell us your thoughts about the knowledge of current advisers to advise across such a wide range of topics, without further training?*

10) *Which of the following topics might you need most advice and support with in the future?*

- a. nutrient management
- b. soil management
- c. pest management
- d. efficient water use
- e. habitat creation
- f. species management
- g. peatland restoration

11) *Which are the areas you feel that advice would have greatest benefit to you?*

12) *When thinking about the management of fens, reedbeds and grazing marsh in-particular how confident do you feel in managing these areas to a good environmental condition? (if you do not manage these habitats please skip to the next question)*

13) *When thinking about the management of fens, reedbeds and grazing marsh in-particular how much additional environmental advice do you think you would require to help you manage them to good environmental condition? (if you do not manage these habitats please skip to the next question)*

None, A little, Lots

14) *When thinking about the management of fens, reedbeds and grazing marshes in particular, who would need to attend training courses to gain the ecological knowledge to deliver the outcomes ?*

Land manager / applicant

Adviser

Both Land manager / applicant and adviser

Other

15) Do you agree that your advisers' qualifications are important for providing you with good quality advice?

- Strongly agree
- Partially agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Partially disagree
- Strongly disagree

16) Do you agree that your advisers' experience is important for providing you with good quality advice?

- Strongly agree
- Partially agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Partially disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Other comment open text box

17) Do you agree that advisers should have a minimum number of years' experience before they can provide you with advice to inform an Agri-environment application?

- Strongly agree
- Partially agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Partially disagree
- Strongly disagree

18) If you agree, how many years' experience should an adviser have before they can provide you with advice to inform an Agri-environment application?

19) When thinking about local advisers - are there skills and knowledge gaps in any of the following areas? Tick all that apply

- Agriculture & Farming
- Ecology and Conservation
- Business and Economics
- Air quality
- Water Quality

Tourism
Carbon
Other

20) *If the scheme was to provide funding towards your advice costs. How should this funding be provided? Please rank them in order of preference*

Up-front grant for advice
Voucher for advice
Loan for advice
Funded advisers employed directly by the funding body
Funded advisers accredited and registered with the funding body

21) *When thinking about the future ELM scheme if your adviser could amend your scheme with your approval and had the authority to implement this, whilst it is active, would this be seen as advantageous?*

22) *When thinking about the future ELM scheme should your advisor be:*

Linked to the funding body
Independent advisor

23) *When thinking about the future ELM scheme would an adviser covering a contiguous area or 'patch' be of benefit to you and if yes why?*

24) *Do you agree that there are enough 'trusted, credible, accessible and locally-embedded' advisers to support applicants ELM schemes in the Broads?*

25) *If you had areas of both 'Sustainable Farming' and 'Nature Enhancement' on your farm would you prefer:*

- a. To have the same adviser for the whole farm
- b. To choose from a variety of advisers, some of which provide specialist advice for times when you need it

Other open text box

26) *Defra are considering the role of generalist, specialist advisers, facilitators of farmer groups and area-based convenors (to co-ordinate local delivery). Are there other models of advice that you can see working around the Broads wetland habitats?*

27) *Do you have other comments on ELM scheme Advice Provision?*

Appendix 2

Free Text comments received

What sorts of advice have you sought now and in the past and what weight have you given to each kind of advice?
I am cautious of so-called 'free' advice as what else are they trying to sell you?
I have sought little advice in terms of land management as working for the ORGANISATION we tend to lead on this. however in general I would say that general farmland advice on how to deliver arable options etc is very good. what is lacking is the more specialist advice on how to deliver the high level options as these are often more challenging and outside of most peoples, whether it be land owners of current advisory providers, experience and knowledge base.
We initially consulted our land agent then contacted Natural England before putting together our scheme largely based on NE advice. We also consulted our contractor who would have to implement the cultivation and sowing aspects of the scheme.
Natural England for Higher Tier as they were the 'gatekeeper' of the scheme. FWAG advice for all schemes.
For me Suffolk FWAG have been crucial in advising on what options best suit my farm and on what is realistically achievable. This was most important in the development of the original scheme but has also been helpful where we have encountered problems with delivery and in untangling the chaotic administration of the scheme by NE & RPA. Greater flexibility in the prescriptions which will hopefully come with any new scheme would mean that continuing advice would be more important through the lifetime of the scheme than at present. The ability to adapt to changing circumstances would mean access to advice would be essential to ensure changes were appropriate. I have not had advice from the funding body since the old ESA arrangements when we received useful advice from the project officer assigned to our area.
Work alongside the Broads authority
Professional conservation advisors often give the most beneficial advice, especially if they are experienced. They also are more familiar with the relevant schemes, especially the application process where the help is invaluable. Advice from other farmers, agronomists often helps with the practical side of achieving results.
I've used ADAS for support as it was funded by CSF.
We often seek advice from independent advisers first i.e FWAG / agronomist and then confirm with our N.E adviser.
Our primary land management goals have always been wildlife-outcome based rather than commercial so advice has been almost exclusively from conservation organisations (NWT/RSPB etc) with additional support from Natural England (& its' predecessors).
My late husband managed the farm himself well and efficiently until he died 5 years ago. Since then I've taken a lot of advice from NE and WW. NWT have also been very helpful in helping me understand all the complex information.
I am a land agent so wouldn't look to other agents. ORGANISATION are accountants and not the right type of advisor at all.

The weight given to each is determined by their knowledge and experience on the specific subject matter. Unfortunately the turn over of NE staff means their advisers sometimes are not sufficiently experienced to fulfill their role, where as others are v good. It is also determined by their independence and what motivates them. Each have their place and area of expertise. I wouldn't go to a land agent for advice on wetland management. Just as I wouldn't go to an agronomist to set up an FBT.

Natural England was my main scheme adviser. RSPB Berney advised on the development of the site initially and carried out the practical management of the wet grassland site at the start. As a combination these were experienced operators/advisers which had the knowledge and skills to provide the all important early consultation and advice.

Advice is often sought from organisations that do not have another motive behind their recommendations.

Never had formal advice from any of the above, however informal advice has always been very good from those asked

I have periodically asked advise from my NE rep and appreciated the excellent help received

Mt agreements are with NE/RPA, so why would I go anywhere else.

Advice needs to blend environmental targets with commercial realism

What do land agents no about practical, profitable farming or the environment?

I have worked closely with the RSPB, using their advice and contractors, as their reserve surrounds my land and I am confident that their recommendations are in line with NE and the aims of the HLS scheme I am part of.

When I set up my HLS/Els agreement I received a lot of support from a Natural England officer, whom I have since contacted for advice. I mainly use an advisor at Durrants Estate Agents now.

I do not like being charge big fees for advice!

Access to advice needs to be centralised and needs to be available to all. The quality of advice we have received over the past ten years has been very poor. Requirements differ from farm to farm.

None of the above seem to have any idea or clue regarding what is required to manage a commercial reed or sedge bed. I do not know of any Cutter who would seek advise from any of these groups, most of whom do not support sustainable or traditional management anyhow.

Do you see differences in the quality of the advice provided between different types of advisers?

Specialist advice from someone who is experienced, on a specialist area is very important. You don't ask a plumber to give you legal advice!

I had a Natural England assigned advisor who retired, no replacement advisor was provided.

In general advice is of good quality for mid tier options from the current advisory group and specialists in the dryer options. however the specialist advice on managing wetlands can be lacking.

Best advice from FWAG as they combine conservation knowledge with knowledge of the schemes and farming practicalities.

I have favoured using FWAG because there seems to be slightly less turnover of staff than other organisations (especially the agents where junior staff tend to be allocated to this type of work). Continuity of advice is important to me as is the ability to work with somebody who knows and understands both my farm and my aspirations for it.

Advice is varied and often if there is a problem the solution is difficult to define

As previous answer

yes you do see a difference, I am entering a scheme for finical benefit of my business, if you are paying someone to put a scheme together they are more focused on getting it accepted. there is a hard cost to some options, especially the removal of them.
independent advisers tend to work on giving advice which will work best for our agreement / farm whereas N.E advisers in some cases work to their own agenda or the latest agenda set by higher office and this changes frequently
Those sources of advise not referenced by us rated as "low" for the sake of ticking the option rather than based on our actual experiences
Some are highly skilled, qualified professionals, others are not. Some are primarily driven by money, others are not. Some care about the environmental outcome more than anything, some balance economics and practicality with environment & ecology.
I am really only experienced with NE and RSPB which both provide advice to a high standard for my wet grassland site. I have recently been in contact with Norfolk FWAG and expect to develop this relationship in future. I am always aiming to get a variety of different advisers to visit the site in order to come up with new environmental management ideas and alternative methods relevant to the site.
Quality is a vague term here
I do not understand the format low to high on this question
Did not understand the question
I've no experience in dealing with other advisors
I get my information from agronomists and industry publications
I have only used natural England and Durrants for advice both have been very good
I do not like the gravy train attitude!
Our dealings with NE have been disappointing, hence our withdrawal from schemes. FC advice and help has invariably been first class.
This does not really apply to reed and sedge cutting.

How long have you been receiving advice from your advisers?
Peer to peer can point you in the right direction to new ideas and/or better qualified people.
As I work for the RSPB this is difficult to answer. but we do get advice internally from or reserves ecology team.
We have always used independent advice to back up what the authority / N.E agenda we are being offered.
The Landscape Partnership
Funding body since we aquired the land some 15 years ago on an "as required"/semi-regular basis. From NCO's based on specific advice requirements so less regularly but with some informal advice during visits to other sites/reserves
SOME advisers come and go like days of the week, esp in CSF, one of the reasons for its failure. Continuity of advice over years is critical, so there is an indepth knowledge of situations on the ground as well as the changes to AE schemes.
All my working carreer
I took over an hls scheme on buying a marsh
Best advice from long term involvement with the farm
Ultimately the funding body and associated regulatory inspection is the most important 'partner' as they control payments, I don't receive 'paid for advice,'and as such I do not know if the decisions made are the best for business, but I assume the RSPB advice is best for achieving HLS results.

I received advice for ESA before HLS ELS
That's what it is!
The advice we currently receive is from our land agents but is reactive to our requests.
We have used the same agent for many years

How often do you receive advice from your advisers on agri-environmental schemes?
You see other peers and land managers as part of your day to day work.
As I work for the RSPB this is difficult to answer. but we do get advice internally from or reserves ecology team. we also speak to landowners on a regular basis and share good and bad practice, which is hugely important to help our delivery of wildlife.
According to need - more when applying for a scheme - with a normal annual visit in addition.
They are there when I need them which is important.
normally advice is sourced as and when needed
The quality of NE's advice has declined in recent years because of the cuts made to that Agency.
In both cases this varies: during periods of scheme change or when we had capital projects planned/executed there tends to be more regular contact than this.
NE staff can be very difficult to get hold of. No wonder given the 30+% cuts to their budget since 2012. FC advisers are very helpful and knowledgeable. FWAG are under staffed & under funded, you have to pay for their advice. RSPB and WT focus mainly on their reserves, with some limited targeted free advice in key areas. Peer to peer contact is most frequent.
Daily
I would have to check but my scheme is via an online portal and my application is once a year with some interaction regarding this
Rarely. I follow the prescriptions. Generally a copy of the agreement is in the tractor whilst carrying out management.
Allowing bird surveys over the marsh keeps me in touch with the HLS aims. The funding body has been proactive in amending prescriptions for the grazier, reacting to the annual weather conditions.
When needed
My day job of producing food takes up most of my time

Thinking about all of the advice you receive on agri-environment schemes how useful are the following ways of providing you with advice?
F2F advice is absolutely critical if schemes are to be successful
Twitter
Generally, these contacts are not really applicable to how I see my farm.
Nothing better than a face to face visit
Unless

The ELM scheme will cover a wider range of themes than the current agri-environmental schemes, likely to include – nutrient management, soil management, pest management, efficient water use, habitat creation, species management, peatland restoration, creation of coastal habitats. Please tell us your thoughts about the knowledge of current advisers to advise across such a wide range of topics, without further training?

not sure I understand the question. I do feel to be part of an agri scheme you should not have a full service agronomist. you should be BASIS & FACT qualified or use an independent.
I would not expect an adviser to have all the knowledge required for all of the ELMS themes. Currently I receive good advice on conservation and environmental management from FWAG, it would expect the soil, nutrient and pest management to be covered by my Agronomist, greater emphasis of these themes within ELMS may require some skills development for the Agronomist whose priorities currently are pest management first then nutrient and finally soil. I have confident in the FWAG knowledge levels and their ability to develop as the ELMS moves into it's delivery phase.
there are many specific elements and each are quite specialist subjects Each of these specialist subject varies depending on the scheme, ie predator management advice needs to change depending on the site and the circumstances, water level management is similar, as is grazing. Good quality advice is all available from high quality advisors who are specialist in there field but it is unlikely to be the same individual.
I think that our agronomist is the best avenue of delivery. He is very familiar with the land and its unique characteristics.
I expect most advisors will need to develop their knowledge in some areas. It is key that they can combine knowledge of outputs with scheme details and farming/land management practicalities.
very informative
Suffolk FWAG appear to be well equipped to deal with these. No mention of woodland management is made in your list which should be there
Good
We will all need to get to grips and understand this new scheme. There is too much that isn't known at present, and it will be difficult for one advisor to be an authority on everything. Obviously agronomists for example will have a wider roll to play when nutrient, soil and pest management are included. A lot of work still needs to be done on quantifying things like ammonia release and CO2 and NO3 emmissions of differnt farming and conservation methods etc
not sure I understand the question. I do feel to be part of an agri scheme you should not have a full service agronomist. you should be BASIS & FACT qualified or use an independent.
The best advisers tend to be local to our area and not influenced by nationwide agendas and as such will have greater knowledge of local issues
further training is needed
In the Broads knowledge of fen management is by far the most important asset.
Can only comment on our experience of funding body and wildlife charity advisors whose obvious knowledge and expertise is heavily weighted towards conservation and has been very positive for us. I would always "fear" that more commerically-orientated advisors would be looking first for the financial benefits over conservation ones whilst minimising impact on more mainstream commercial activities (if even mainly to try and justify their costs to the farmer/landowner). Accept this may be an overly simplistic or cynical view!
Well informed advice for the benefit of the scheme should balance with the financial reward for the advisor - scheme benefit should not be diminished by advisors working for financial gain. Advice should not be compulsory if applicants already have required skills and expertise.
Getting better as we all learn
As we currently use advisors with more experience on the nature conservation side of things, I think they would need more knowledge about soil and pest management potentially.

Important to consult a number of different advisors rather than just one. Most advisors available already have their specialities (e.g. Natural England for scheme rules, RSPB for habitat/species management, Broads Authority for specific local issues). Ensure a variety of advise is available from numerous sources if possible. Avoid main source of advise being RPA/Natural England helpline!
Many advisors will have a broad basic knowledge of all of those but not detailed knowledge. Some of those categories decent farmers will and should know more about than a land agent for example
all advisors have a good basic knowledge across all subjects but some are more specialised and advise would be sort from those with greater knowledge as required.
Mixed to poor. An independent agronomist would be best placed to advise on the 1st 4 of those topics. Ecologists best placed to answer the last 4. Brown and green advisers as they say.
Many of these aspects are already well covered by the advisers now. I am sure that additional/new topics would soon be learned by them, if needed, as there is a common environmental theme throughout.
I would encourage accreditation for ELMS, however I do not believe there is a suitable scheme available that can cover all of the above. Bespoke accreditation will be required.
I can't comment on this as I have no experience
I simply dont know
The advisers I work with are very up to date in their thinking and combine thoughts on the impact to the environment with practical advice on the business benefit to everything we do
Good
Improvements in water quality will be important after the 5 years is up. How many advisors are skilled in BASIS S&W? EA also seem to be missing. ADAS reports seem to have been forgotten about as are sediment finger printing data. We end up going down the wrong road because the advisers are not trained in diffuse pollution.
Very variable between advisers. I have been lucky to have an adviser whose knowledge has developed as she has been in post a long time.
My own advisers are extremely up to date .
I can't comment on advisers knowledge if they are subjects not yet discussed with them! Obviously if the range of themes increase under ELMS the advisers knowledge will have to cover them.
Extensive knowledge
Good
they will need training
A successful outcome of ELMS is not possible without further training of the advisers.
Have you published a definitive ELM doc.?
They seem to have a broad knowledge. I expect they'll learn as we go along like the rest of us.
Very doubtful if any of the current advisers are interested or know anything about commercial reed or sedge cutting. It may of helped if you gave us some names.

Which of the following topics might you need most advice and support with in the future?
I need an independent set of eyes to look at the potential & not sell me anything.
All as you never know everything, and always pick up new and interesting ideas.
As above
conservation development and habitat introduction
Soil management.
Advising on what aspects of any new scheme will best suit my farm and on how that may be achieved

Efficient water use
Getting schemes to work & remaining profitable
Experience of other options used elsewhere
Water quality
The best advice would help me to provide the required results of a scheme that has been scientifically shown to make improvements to biodiversity, environment etc.
habitat creation, species management. advice on cost to remove options once agreement is finished.
pest management
species management
The statutory bodies need to get a proper grip of the issues of water quality and quantity. At present they are not prepared to confront the farming lobby.
Specialist advice for optimising habitat management for specific/target species management.
Advice that ensures compliance with scheme rules
nutrient management
Species management
The water efficiency would have greatest benefit to our industry (water industry!) but we do have that expertise inhouse.
Habitat creation and management.
Water management.
As above.
efficient water use
Soil management, and everything that goes with it, nutrients, water, pests, disease etc.
Wet grassland management.
All of the above and more
Advice on applying for grants
I have a marsh that floods every year i plant willows to help and do get problems with them so management of them and understanding when to cut back and why would be very helpful
Nutrient and soil management
Habitat
How to apply special management (outside the prescriptions) which will benefit the rare species around the farm. Keeping cattle off high risk grass fields during the winter months must be paramount
Habitat advice
To maximise my income to ensure my business sustainability
How to balance the greatest financial reward and achieve the greatest environmental benefit, whilst taking the role and livelihood of the grazier into account.
Habitat creation whilst managing invasive weeds and still providing good grazing
Water availability for irrigation
habitat creation
see above
Species management.
Water quality updates and reports. (Environment Agency)

When thinking about the management of fens, reedbeds and grazing marsh in-particular how confident do you feel in managing these areas to a good environmental condition? (if you do not manage these habitats please skip to the next question)

What is 'good?'

This is what we have been doing for years

In conjunction with BA

Learning

I have years of experience and monitor the changes which occur as a result of management practice/ changes.

confident with the correct funding.

very confident if we are allowed to tailor the agreements to our specific farm.

water supply is out of our control.

Happy with most of the progress/improvements we have seen during our 15 years working our marshes

based on past experience and current and upcoming advice

Because of our partnerships with NGO's

I have taken alot of advise from RSPB and Natural England on this so now actively manage grassland with waders in mind.

I improve year on year.

I am very experienced in this area.

I've been involved in their management from a hands on basis to an advisory role for 20 years and have learnt a lot. I continue to learn.

Successful practical results have been delivered on a regular basis and records are kept and the site monitored on a regular basis.

All areas I manage are in good condition for breeding birds

I work hard to keep my marshes in good condition and looking around me mine are doing well in comparison

We have been doing it for years and have the balance right between providing grazing and protecting the grazed environment

Keep cattle off high risk fields in the winter to limit diffuse pollution. Then use the commercial reedbeds to clean/polish the water quality.

But could do better with advice.

My family have been managing this Envionment for over 100 years

Recent inspection show we are managing grazing marshes well at the moment

Obviously no chemicals are used but topping seems to have some success in controlling weeds

They are not top of my list

We have achieved a remarkably successful and biologically diverse marshland environment. This would not have been possible under any of the current agri-environmental schemes.

based on ESA prescriptions

We have been grazing marshes for a long time and see a lot of positive effects.

If we manage to keep a healthy population of rare birds & plants then we must be doing something right !

When thinking about the management of fens, reedbeds and grazing marsh in-particular how much additional environmental advice do you think you would require to help you manage them

to good environmental condition? (if you do not manage these habitats please skip to the next question)

Build on what I have already achieved.

Lots would be to much

I have years of experience and monitor the changes which occur as a result of management practice/ changes.

we can use historic plans & NE SSSI managers advice

changing climate and other environmental issues mean we will need to constantly change and adapt

Future advice would probably to address any new/unforeseen problems requiring specialist advice

An independent pair of eyes, particularly around monitoring and evaluating is always essential

There is always room for ongoing improvement.

Only recently started to take management control of marshes, so advice was invaluable

Site visits would be very helpful.

Guidance on getting works done is useful, eg suitable contractors. We have used the RSPB in the past which has been useful.

Detailed knowledge of life cycles of invertebrates is something I'd like to know more about.

I have received much grazing marsh advice so far. But, discussion need to be ongoing in order to hear of new ideas and to continuously improve systems.

Everyone has capacity to improve their advice on a subject, even advisors themselves. A reason that public funded specialists would be welcomed

I like common sense help i can understand as opposed to a science lesson

Managements the reedbeds correctly, improve water quality and the species will arrive. There are few species in acid water.

specialist knowledge

The most important thing is that advice 1 year is not reversed by glib pressure groups the following year

Perhaps how to move land into a higher option if possible

Just to confirm current management is good

My experience is not great!

The advice required would be scheme, rather than environmentally, related

when we know the prescriptions.

we work together with natural England and they give all the advice required

Essential we have water quality monitoring and reports .

When thinking about the management of fens, reedbeds and grazing marshes in particular, who would need to attend training courses to gain the ecological knowledge to deliver the outcomes ?

To ensure everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet.

Tried ticking them all as everyone needs some aspect of specialist knowledge to ensure full deliver. It also goes beyond this as if area is let for grazing graziers must also be aware and need to play there part in delivery. There is also a need for water managers to be trained.

This very much depends on the content of the course

Hopefully the advisor would be doing the training! This is the kind of advisor we would need, one that was fully trained.

training has to be beneficial.
we all need to learn to deal with change
Both would benefit.
There's always something more or new we can all learn! Getting better training for all parties also should improve understanding and communication overall.
If knowledge/skills are not already evident
More so the land manager as they will be the one actively managing the land daily, but it is important that specialist advisors know best practice as well
An adviser should know everything! This is rarely the case, we can all learn from each other and better our understanding of habitats and species as new research comes to light.
Need to get 'the knowledge' from somewhere. I have always operated alongside people on a frequent basis who know how to manage wet grassland effectively and so I have learned the various methods and approaches and objectives over the years.
Applicants often do not have the time or the inclination, of course it should be open to both.
I would think the adviser already knew?
Plus the reed and sedge cutter- he's doing the work. When the scythes are out, advisers are nowhere to be seen! So they miss the fine detail.
You need buy in from all parties.
Everyone on the same sheet.
The more knowledge the better
everybody because it will create debate
Both - but one would be paid to be there and the farmer would not.
we're the ones that have to implement things so we need the training
Those people who currently have little knowledge about reed cutting

Do you agree that your advisers' qualifications are important for providing you with good quality advice?
The qualification is a benchmark, upon which experience will build upon.
there are no qualification for wetland advice. what is more important is there experience of delivery and what outcomes that advice has achieved. sadly there are lots of people out there who have the qualification but very little experience or have a low success rate.
A qualification tells me very little about whether I would want to use that person
By definition an advisor would ideally have more knowledge than the people that are asking them for help.
I have met a lot of overqualified advisers with over inflated egos'
We take advice from the Landscape Partnership.
Related qualifications important but less so than time spent in the but at least show a commitment to the role
Not as important as experience
Qualifications to degree level are one thing, but it is the continued professional development & education that is critical. Being chartered or accredited should be compulsory.
I feel that it's important that the adviser has muddy boots experience rather than textbook learning
Experience backed up by some qualifications is the best imho i have met a lot of "clever" people who are classroom savvy but know little of the real world
The ability to get the advice over to the client and to staff on the ground is vital.

Only valid in conjunction with experience. An understanding that prescriptions need to be adaptable because of the changing nature of weather for example.
Not fit to advise otherwise, I want to have confidence in the advice given
experience is better than qualifications
We've seen too many academic advisors without enough practical experience. It doesn't work.
obviously
Not really applicable as just who would advise on reed cutting?

Do you agree that advisers should have a minimum number of years' experience before they can provide you with advice to inform an Agri-environment application?
What experience though? they need to have strong track records that their advice has been successful in delivering positive outcomes for the target feature/species/habitat.
Provided an advisor is properly supervised by somebody with the requisite experience that's fine. We can't expect there suddenly to be a whole mass of advisors available with years of experience.
see previous answer
yes provided the experience is in the required field of expertise
Landscape Partnership
More important that less experienced advisers have access to and support from their more experienced peers as they grow into the role than a particular length of service
You can be an expert on scheme rules within a shorter period of time which can be very useful advice

If you agree, how many years' experience should an adviser have before they can provide you with advice to inform an
2 years, not fresh out of university/college.
see comment above. experience of what? has to be relevant and appropriate. you would not expect an advisor of 30 years experience advising on agronomy to be able or good as providing advice on wetgrassland grazing systems.
3 years.
5 years
5 years
2 years
5 years
Approximately 5 years
Hard to provide a firm figure. Obviously someone straight from uni probably won't have enough practical experience, but some advisors may have been advising for years and still be useless.
5 + Like the NE FALMA/FAF advice framework
It should not take long provided time is spent 'shadowing' an experienced adviser.
3-4
At least 5
As long as they understand the subject and can effectively interact why put a number on it?
At least 3
10 years this should cut out the agri consultancy charlatans e.g. Brown and co et al
3

5

5

When thinking about the future ELM scheme if your adviser could amend your scheme with your approval and had the authority to implement this, whilst it is active, would this be seen as advantageous?

If set up correctly in the first place there should not need to be any amendments. Schemes which need amending have not been set up properly in the first instance

Loss of control

Essential to be allowed the flexibility to achieve results

This has to be viewed as essential as all schemes need to be tweaked in the light of what is working and what is not

I can't believe the system is so admin heavy, local reps are best placed to oversee schemes

The funding body should be doing this. We'll end up in a situation where that agent's hobbies dominate.

Major improvement. If it doesn't work, change it

Over a 10 year scheme, unforeseen changes...

Not really applicable for reed cutting.

When thinking about the future ELM scheme would an adviser covering a contiguous area or 'patch' be of benefit to you and if yes why?

consistent advice across a single landscape, is the only way you can build the bigger positive picture. it could be a team of advisors work together to deliver a shared vision though.

it would be easier to link areas

Would develop knowledge of what works in that area.

We need to work as part of the wider landscape in a coordinated way

local knowledge

Local environmental knowledge and how it could work with other schemes

Local knowledge

Get to know what works in an area and encourage neighbours to work together.

not all people get along, may be best if there is another adviser available

local knowledge and ability to organise working with other farmers in the area

more experienced

If the aim of improving wildlife outcomes at the "landscape" level are the aim then helping neighbouring landowners to make integrated and sympathetic changes would be aided by having the same adviser support neighbouring schemes

Local knowledge advantage

Landscape scale has potential for enhanced benefits both for the outcome and the participants

We are interested in landscape scale partnership working.

Local knowledge is key. Generic advisors/helplines are currently not helpful. An advisor that knows the area and even your scheme is invaluable

Helps with the wider landscape knowledge and linking local schemes into a regional overarching aim.

Local knowledge over time is invaluable

Advantages of covering a common area.
Would be good to see good practice on neighboring holdings
Local knowledge is better
The environment doesn't have field boundaries
Overall aims set first NOT left in hands of one or two advisors
Might be able to have some joined up thinking if he/she listens to farmers
Share best practice locally, knows about linking with neighbours
Understand the area, how other land parcels are being managed and how to best get results
we would be able to sort out catchment problems better
local issues and local knowledge
I thought it worked well with csf
Again, this is not applicable.

Do you agree that there are enough 'trusted, credible, accessible and locally-embedded' advisers to support applicants ELM schemes in the Broads?
I might be slightly biased but I believe some of the best independent advice comes from organisations who are often not 'liked'. This is not due to their ability to manage land, deliver outcomes and provide advice locally but more about national policies/views that the organisation might hold. This to me is a real shame as most advisors are there to work with the landowner to get the best out of the land for the farmer and conservation, not to push any 'agendas' from the organisation they work for.
I don't know
Do not know
My understanding is that there are virtually no advisers currently working in the Broads area (independent ones, anyway)
I don't feel informed enough to comment on this.
Not enough natural England advisers anymore. The RPA helpline for guidance on the rules is useless.
Have not agreed because I feel there would not be enough advisers available. Need to up the numbers.
I don't know on this requirement across the area. I personally have had all my needs met by my adviser/s to date.
How do you expect people to know the above imho 34 is a stupid set of questions
No idea
key question is are there 'enough', and the answer is no. Some are very good but are in hot demand.
In my experience yes, but I have only dealt with the same advisor throughout who has been very helpful.
Affordable should be on this list!
FWAG only - the conservationist need to have the cooperation of farmers.
I haven't really looked into it.
Probably but I do not know anyone in the Broads who can be trusted to advise on reed or sedge cutting from any of the bodies or organisations mentioned in this survey.

If you had areas of both 'Sustainable Farming' and 'Nature Enhancement' on your farm would you prefer:

Best to have a local adviser to the area
single advisor would see the whole picture on the holding and would stop conflicts between aspects of the holdings scheme
Conflicting opinions can become confusing and detrimental to outcomes
Would never apply to me
One point of contact is better they can seek and deliver advice they dont know
Do I have to have these on my farm? it will clash with the rest of the business.
Simplicity
Not applicable

Defra are considering the role of generalist, specialist advisers, facilitators of farmer groups and area-based convenors (to co-ordinate local delivery). Are there other models of advice that you can see working
Carbon Auditors
If we look at where I sit currently with technical advice received I have four advisors who support agronomy, stewardship and conservation, farm business and animal care. I do not see this changing as the BPS funding is redirected towards the objectives of the Environment and Farming Bills
No. wetland management advice is a very skilled area if land is to deliver for both the landowner and wildlife. it is best carried out by advisers who have a successful track record of this way of working otherwise agreements won't deliver.
I think we need to avoid too many tiers of advice and make sure that the maximum amount of funding reaches the farm to achieve the best delivery. Advisors need to keep their "feet on the ground" and know and understand the scheme and the farms on which they are advising. I don't want to see layers of administrators.
Sounds like we are not going to be short of advice.
Perhaps using specialist groups who monitor the area for species populations to measure results eg East Norfolk Bird Ringing group, The BTO, Norfolk Bat Survey, RSPB bird surveys, Tim Strudwick Insect surveys, Mick A'Court Moth trapping surveys, Norfolk Mammal survey, Hawk and Owl Trust etc
Avoid false consensus. Recognise the different vested interests and that it's not possible to avoid hard choices.
Not that come to mind
A club open to participants that helps keep momentum and enthusiasm without it being dictatorial.
Workshops and seminars/discussion groups/training would also be useful, to ensure the land manager interaction.
"Convenors" just sounds like another expensive layer of inefficient, ineffective middle management & bureaucracy. Qualified facilitators should be able to fulfill this role. Beacon/demonstration farms - farmers listen most to other farmers, who are passionate, experienced and have hands-on experience of delivering.
No.
Here you go again, stating roles most of us won't understand! Why don't you just have a local point of contact to interact with scheme owners and try to cut down on nonsense
Don't know
Pockets of advisers might work, but they need to be independent and not linked to any agreement holders.
look at the old ESA model
We must be aware of what the environmental aims are before we start and stick to them

WRE, FWAG, NE, Anglian Farmers, Brown & Co
No other options: this is definitely the sensible way forwards
local focus groups to engage n local issues and avoid travel out of the area.
csf
If you are not involving local people then you are better off just forgetting it.

Do you have other comments on ELM scheme Advice Provision?
Have to be TRUSTED and not trying to sell other unrelated services such as land agency and chemical/seed sales.
Please avoid the provision of advice from whatever Defra agency overseas ELMS especially if it reflects the recent model practiced within the CSFI of short term contracts and high staff turnover, this does not deliver the ability to engage in a meaningful manner or to develop adequate knowledge of the "patch" they are expected to advise in.
specialist advice for wetland is a difficult and skilled area that takes up a lot of time to do it well. We should not underestimate the resource needed to do this to an acceptable standard it is far more complex than agronomic advice and takes long to put in place and manage.
Get rid of the Broads Authority input , they are an unelected meddling quango that insist the Broads is a national park when it is not. If they are involved the scheme will surely fail.
Don't overcomplicate things. Keeping it simple is likely to lead to a far better outcome.
Please sort out the water abstraction, so we can move forward and have money to spend on conservation projects
It is in danger of becoming the vision of a few determining the look of a wide area
Good Luck
the advice for graziers and farmers will need to be tailored differently from the advice given to large corporate organisations with unlimited funding and political agendas
flexible on results allows for changes when needed
Avoid false consensus. Recognise the different vested interests and it's not possible to avoid hard choices.
Heard so much positive in the 2 "practical" sessions I attended. Just hope at least some of it comes to fruition in due course (but fear much will be watered down or miss the required financial support to implement well)
It has to be flexible and pragmatic also sensitive to local issues that can arise when a divergence of views becomes apparent. Nobody is ever absolutely right or wrong.
Use local advisors we can access directly rather than via the RPA national helpline.
Farmer groups would be a great way to produce an area / landscape model but not all farmers want to be in such a group. If the facilitator of such a group could also cover those more independent thinking farmers that would still help achieve the landscape scale aims.
There are many advisers out there with different strengths and weaknesses, I don't think there is one size fits all, as the face of farming and land management is at a point of fundamental change and adaptation of the advisory capacity is necessary. The FALMA model isn't terrible. The DEFRA commissioned visits were useful. As was the FEP payment, to undertake a baseline survey. The Whole farm land management plan idea should be funded as the FEP was- on an area basis x 3 to cover all the new elements of the scheme.
No.

The HLS model worked really well. Unbiased government funded advice coupled with private advice paid for by the applicant. Government funding for private sector advice to applicants will be met with hesitation (see FALMA).

Keeping things simple is imho the key to succeed. This needs to be right at the front end and all the way through. You guys love to make things hard to understand! Less classroom and more common sense works.

No

The advisers should be on a bonus scheme related to water quality improvements. That should focus their attention.

I am very keen that under the public money for public good heading the elms should not become another route for land agents and consultants to continue to fleece the local farming industry at the expense of the environment we are looking to protect and improve.

Impressed by the scale and thoroughness of the report to date. The deep and widespread concern amongst small farmers about the end of the subsidy scheme does seem to be recognised by this report.

It need to have long legs and run like the ESA Scheme

need to have a good relationship with an adviser linked to the RPA who can be trusted and is approachable and contactable, unlike the current situation

Yes. To get full buy-in from the landowners there has to be a enough flexibility in the scheme to make it attractive. This requires advisors who have the relevant practical experience.

don't try and reinvent the wheel - why was Broads ESA stopped.

Yes, please admit that reed and sedge Cutters will not see any benefit whatsoever from this ELMS process since nothing in the final report offers any firm commitment to promoting low carbon, traditional and sustainable management of the Broads reed and sedge beds.