



LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN (OBJECTIVE 2)

Cuckmere and Pevensey Catchment Partnership

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This report is submitted to Defra as part of the ELM Test and Trial programme	

Cover photo: Minister George Eustace talking to farmer Martin Hole, Chair of Pevensey Farmers, in November 2020.

We'd like to thank all our farmers and farm advisors for taking part in the test and trial under very difficult conditions.

There is an immense amount of goodwill, innovation and ideas in our farmer and farm advisor community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We developed a land management plan template through an iterative process and tested it with 20 farmers. 12 farmers completed the plan with an advisor, 8 completed the plan on their own. Feedback and comments about both the plan and a draft of this document were invited from all.

It is impossible to separate the development of a land management plan and the potential scheme content from the delivery mechanisms which would facilitate it. We've made suggestions about the plan and how it could be delivered in practice.

Framework for practical delivery of ELMS: A local board

We would strongly suggest the formation of local ELMS boards which would have a formal role and constitution and should combine elected farmer representatives with a wider membership. We've laid out how a board could operate [here](#). The board would:

- set priorities for the local area,
- encourage innovation by having a specific innovation fund,
- adapt the national scheme to local circumstances if and when necessary,
- put in place a funded monitoring programme providing feedback to national and local bodies as well as farmers.

A key role controlled by the board would be that of a local convenor (funded by the scheme) who would be responsible for working with local farming groups and advisors to coordinate activity.

How do you make the land management plan dynamic and ensure that it captures innovation? What are the important components to include in a LMP?

The land management plan needs to:

- be simple and captured through maps.
- acknowledge and reward previous work and features on the farm.
- acknowledge and work with existing accreditation schemes and food production
- include 'off the shelf options' but also to allow for innovation through specific projects either on holdings or across groups of holdings.

Mapping

Mapping is the most meaningful and important element for most farmers and advisors. It needs to:

- be free, simple and easy to access on a system that farmers understand, e.g. the Basic Payment Scheme portal.
- provide basic habitat and designation information and allow easy annotation.
- not be continually remapped (see present schemes) unless it has a significant impact on the scheme in its lifetime. Remapping is separate to assessing the outcomes of the scheme.

Permanent ineligible features, which are often the most ecologically important parts of the farm, e.g. scrub, water, rough grass, should not be continued into ELMS.

Monitoring and evaluation needs to measure the national and local impact of the scheme, show value for money and provide farmers and land managers with feedback about the effectiveness of their work. It should be done at both a holding and landscape scale.

- It needs to be funded and be planned from the outset.
- Proxy monitoring of delivery could be complemented by landscape-scale monitoring.

Strong farm business is an essential basis for ELMS

Farmers need a good understanding of their core business to deliver innovative environmental outcomes. Farmers should not be required to do mandatory business plans for ELMS. However, we recommend that:

- all farm advisors delivering ELMS are able to support farmers in assessing their business.
- a range of sector specific easy-to-understand and use tools are developed and made available to support farmers in assessing their business.
- Facilitation Funds/farmers groups and Prince's Farm Resilience Trust could provide business skills training.

How do you translate broad spatial plans into holding level land management plans (LMP)?

Local priorities should be based on a meaningful local geography. Local Character Areas don't necessarily answer this requirement, particularly outside of high value landscapes. They should:

- Be developed collaboratively and iteratively
- Have meaning and resonance with farmers and advisors

How do you encourage collaborative working across a catchment/landscape, and what are the benefits and drawbacks?

Farmers can see the necessity and advantage of working across holdings and at a landscape scale but cannot necessarily identify a way that this can be delivered. There may be sensitivities between neighbours and priorities which need to be addressed sensitively. Our previous work (on access) suggests that farmers would like assistance to help facilitate specific join up, e.g. in the case of access they would like an organisation to facilitate a project to identify potential access and areas where access is required and to coordinate with the local planning authority and County Council.

The remit of Facilitation Funds (where they exist) could be expanded so that they can provide one-to-one advice to enable link-up across holdings.

We suggest an ELMS board model where a convenor takes an active role in coordinating advisors in the area to deliver landscape-scale change across holdings where Facilitation Funds do not exist.

What sort of advice is needed to develop and deliver land management plans? In what way, if at all, has the provision of advice and/or guidance helped?

Good advice is essential for uptake and delivery of the scheme. The scheme will require moderation and quality assessment, and this should be done at a local level through the ELMS board and convenor.

- ELMS should include realistic advice costs for the application and lifetime of the agreement.
- Targeted advice should encourage scheme uptake and greater ambition in priority areas.

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE TEST AND TRIAL

Cuckmere and Pevensey's Environmental Land Management trial has three objectives:

Objective 1: Identify priorities for an Environmental Land Management Scheme in the catchment. We will work collaboratively with local bodies, organisations and communities. The priorities will attempt to join up natural capital, spatial planning and issues affecting local people and reflect the aims of Defra's 25 Year Plan.

Objective 2: We will identify and work with 20 local farmers to develop land management plans that deliver ELM priorities. We will engage with farmers and farm advisors to devise holding plans which record the potential of the farm business, how the farm could contribute to local priorities and how they think this should be done. During this process we will seek the views of farmers and farm advisors to understand the skills, knowledge and advice that is required to deliver ELMS.

Objective 3. We will consider how a locally led organisation, like a Catchment Partnership, could deliver ELMS. We will ask farmers and farm advisors what their preferences are for delivery. We will identify potential funding streams, for example water companies, charitable trusts, developer contribution including net gain and district licensing, and investigate the potential for delivering this funding coherently alongside or within ELMS.

THE CUCKMERE AND PEVENSEY LEVELS CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

The trial will be delivered by the Catchment Partnership. The Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment Partnership is a strong collaborative group which has developed over five years. Membership includes: local authorities, water companies, national agencies such as Environment Agency and Natural England, the local Wildlife Trust, Rivers Trust and ornithological trust, community groups, farmer groups, interest groups such as anglers and local artists. The group has strong attendance at quarterly meetings. The test and trial proposal has been developed by the partnership group.

<http://www.cplcp.org.uk/>

THE PROJECT AREA: CUCKMERE AND PEVENSEY CATCHMENT

The Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels catchment covers about 50,000 ha and covers land within Wealden, Rother and Eastbourne districts. At the centre of the area is the Pevensey Levels Site of Scientific Interest – one of the most significant wetland sites in the UK. Recent assessment of the economic value of the area for the local community concluded that it delivers £17 million of benefit to the local community through biodiversity, food production, recreation and protecting the main road and train transport links from flood risk (Environment Agency and Natural England, 2014).

The catchment around the site provides water to the local community and also presents flood risk and resilience opportunities – particularly in the face of climate change. Outside of the Pevensey Levels SSSI there are also significant areas of important habitats including species rich grassland, woodland, wet grassland and open water. 150,000 people live in the area and many more visit.

Approximately 20,000 new houses are planned in the area – 11,000 in Wealden, 5000 in Eastbourne and 3000 in Rother. All three Local Plans focus on sustainable water use and drainage, public access to greenspace and linking up and enhancing existing areas of biodiversity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEIR CONTEXT IN THE PROJECT

Questions in bold feature in our original proposal. In November 2020, our Defra Policy officer asked us to also consider questions put forward in **Defra’s Monitoring and Evaluation Framework Research Questions and Suggested Indicators for Tests and Trials** (published Feb 2020). We have picked out the relevant questions from the framework and grouped them under the project question they relate to:

- **How do you translate broad spatial plans into holding level land management plans?**
- **How do you make the land management plan dynamic and ensure that it captures innovation?** What are the important components to include in a LMP?
- **How do you encourage collaborative working across a catchment/landscape, and what are the benefits and drawbacks?**
- **In order to support collaborative working across farmers, do you need professional facilitators/advisors, or are other factors more important?**
- **What sort of advice is needed to develop and deliver land management plans?** In what way, if at all, has the provision of advice and/or guidance helped?

METHODOLOGY

Before the Covid pandemic we had hoped to develop this element of the project iteratively in a series of workshops. From March 2020, the first lockdown, this was not possible and instead we chose to undertake two surveys – with farm advisors and with farmers. Findings from these surveys (see our previous reports) contributed to land management plan development. We also conducted a series of consultations:

1. We asked our steering group of farmers for recommendations for component 1. (Prompted by a virtual ministerial visit by Minister Victoria Prentis).
2. We were asked by Defra to consider Land Management Plans developed by other Tests and Trials. We assembled a team of 11 advisors who commented on the land management plans passed to us by Defra. They were then given a series of options to:
 - a. Work with a blank template,
 - b. Work with existing templates developed by other tests and trials,
 - c. Develop a template from elements of the existing templates.Advisors chose to trial the CSF spreadsheet as it stood and develop a template from a elements of the existing templates. A final template and ‘how to’ guide were developed, advisors and the project steering group which includes farmers from the area commented on it.
3. The previous survey of farmers had 80 respondents, 40 of which indicated that they would like to take part in the land management plan process. 20 farmers were chosen across a range of categories including:
 - a. Whether their farm was small (>20ha), medium (20 – 100 Ha) or large (above 100 ha)
 - b. A range of farming types, arable/mixed, livestock only and dairy (although it must be noted that most farmers in the project area are livestock only)

- c. Whether they had participated in agri-environment before – we wanted to have a range of people who had and hadn't been in schemes.
4. 8 farmers were asked to do a land management plan on their own and 12 were assigned an advisor. Advisors came from a range of background including environmental charities, Natural England, AONB, agronomists and land agent/agricultural consultants.
5. Farmers and advisors were asked to offer up their thoughts and feedback on the process in a questionnaire and through phone interviews.

The land management plans were undertaken from Oct – Jan during which there was a national lockdown in November during which no farm visits could be made. Advisors were encouraged to meet where outside of this time with social distancing in place if the circumstances of both parties allowed, i.e. if neither were shielding or particularly vulnerable.

Farmers were paid to take part in the trial at £200 per day up to a maximum of 5 days. Farm Advisors were paid to take part in the trial up to a maximum of £400. Both of these day rates were inclusive of VAT.

RESULTS

Recommendations for Component/Tier 1 – see **Appendix 1**

Comments on land management plans developed by other tests and trials by farm advisors – See **Appendix 2**

Final land management plan and 'how to' guide developed for trialling – See **Appendix 3**.

Land management plans – **Appendix 4** (in a separate document).

Sample of maps from plans with no advisor input – **Appendix 5** (in a separate document). These have been separated from the plans to preserve farmer anonymity.

Sample of maps from land management plans developed with an advisor – **Appendix 6** (in a separate document). These have been separated from the plans to preserve farmer anonymity.

Farmer reflections on the process were captured in **Appendix 7 (in a separate document)**.

Farm advisor reflections on the process were captured in **Appendix 8 (in a separate document)**.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions and recommendations are based partly on the data gathered, which can be reviewed in the appendices, and partly on the conversations, meetings and discussions had before, during and after the land management development process. In this analysis we have adapted our recommendations around the ELMS proposal Defra has put forward in the last year, i.e. the component approach (see figure 1 below).

Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI)	Local Nature Recovery (LNR)	Landscape Recovery (LR)
Open to farmers. Relatively simple actions that achieve environmental outcomes	Locally-targeted environmental goals open to all land managers. Encourages collaboration	Landscape and ecosystem recovery through long-term, land use change projects

Figure 1 Defra’s proposed tiers or components for ELMS.

TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE THE PLANS

Most advisors took between 3 or 4 days to complete the plan.

Farmers with advisors spent significantly less time on the plan as would be expected. Some as little as one day.

Most farmers, however, took an average of three or four days on the plan.

Some advisors did manage to have socially distanced farm visit with farmers which both appreciated.

HOW DO YOU TRANSLATE BROAD SPATIAL PLANS INTO HOLDING LEVEL LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS?

Rather than an exhaustive mapping process we used a narrative approach – where we listed and described the priorities ([see the local priorities in the ‘How to’ guide in Appendix 3](#)). The priorities were developed collaboratively with a range of stakeholders including farmers, organisations (through the catchment partnership) and the wider community. Earlier in our project we undertook at detailed mapping exercise based on existing digital data and walk overs. This provided useful context. However, what eventually informed the prioritisation was the collaborative process described above which resulted in a relatively simple list.

The geography of local priorities needs to be meaningful and relevant to local people. Previously agri-environment targeted has been based on local character areas. Outside Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, local character areas are problematic because they don’t map

onto administrative boundaries or locally understood areas or neighbourhoods. In our case the Low Weald is particularly unworkable (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5212877774389248>). As an alternative the catchment geography makes sense. We'd suggest that geographical boundaries for local priorities should be developed from the bottom up on existing collaborations and partnerships.

Mapping exercises appear persuasive but have limitations. As one advisor pointed out, the danger of desk-driven mapping exercises is that they are often, if not usually, based on flawed and limited data. Secondly maps can alienate farmers where they suggest either that their land is a 'problem' or if areas which the farmer feels are particularly special, like species-rich grassland, are left out. A simple list allows farmers to think about how priorities apply to their land and where and how they plan to help deliver them.

Experienced advisors were less likely to refer to the priorities and tended to start with the farmer's aspirations. Farmers without advisors referred to but were not led by the local priorities. Generally, farmers start with their land, their interests and their ideas.

What has become clear during the our test and trial is that developing priorities and presenting them in written form won't get them adopted into land management practice. Previous attempts to incentivise local priority adoption, eg through HLS or Countryside Stewardship targeting statements, have largely been ineffective. A shared understanding of the why local priorities are important to the area and local community needs to be developed with farmers and farm advisors.

One farmer said that they were determined to put access provision in (despite it generally unpopular with livestock farmers) because they remembered being told during one of our workshops that their local community had mental health issues which could be addressed by providing time in nature. The priority meant something to him which he could relate to and which provided a driver for action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Local priorities should be based on a meaningful local geography. Local character areas don't necessarily answer this requirement particularly outside of high value landscapes.

Local priorities don't have to be extensively mapped but do have to be developed collaboratively. We'd suggested that priorities are developed by a local board which has representations from utilities, developers, local authorities, charities, the local community and farmers. (See our previous report about Community Engagement which makes detailed suggestions about how priorities can be built collaboratively.)

To make local priorities 'stick' they need to have meaning and resonance with farmers and advisors alike. Just writing (or mapping) priorities is unlikely to make them adopted. Local priorities need to be discussed and debated through farmers groups (where they exist), with farmers and with the farm advice community. We suggest that local convenor, working for the board, could take on this role.

HOW DO YOU MAKE THE LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN DYNAMIC AND ENSURE THAT IT CAPTURES INNOVATION?

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT COMPONENTS TO INCLUDE IN A LMP?

Reviewing a range of land management plans was helpful because it made advisors step back and consider the purpose and function of the land management plan. But it is worth remembering that the plan is a discussion around the kitchen table or out in a field – the template of the LMP is just a way of capturing this information.

- It should be as simple as possible – “what I am doing now and what do I want to do next?” Advisors pointed out that agri-environment schemes have a history of asking for information which then does not appear to be put to any practical purpose. The ‘rule of thumb’ for the land management plan is that it should only ask for essential information, ie template development should be subject to a rigorous process questioning ‘do we really need this information and why do we need it?’ When in doubt leave it out.
- Advisors and farmers created annotated maps which could act as a ‘to do’ plan for farmers. (See examples in Appendix 4).

Farmers and advisors both noted that ELMS has become divorced from sustainable food production and suggested that the Land Management Plan include and acknowledge:

- Accreditation schemes
 - Animal welfare including antibiotic use.
 - Breeding programmes.
- (see suggestions for Component/Tier 1 in Appendix 1.)

Advisors and farmers enjoyed having a relatively open-ended template because it encouraged them to think creatively. In several cases it provoked a round table intergenerational discussion about the farm’s future. This discussion and open thinking should be at the heart of the planning process. The Land Management Plan template is unlikely to encourage this but processes wrapped around the scheme – of advice and support – should be designed with this in mind.

Inevitably, farmers/farm advisors who had experience of option schemes like Countryside or Environmental Stewardship often related their plan to options known to them. However, farmers also made innovative suggestions – particularly in relation to soil health and climate change – which would require bespoke projects. If an options-based scheme is used it would be useful to have local innovation funds(which we have suggested in Table 1 could be administered through the board). Farmers or groups of farmers could put together projects to test ideas which could be funded by the board then fed back nationally and to other farmers in the area. This would help ensure innovation could be encouraged alongside the relatively closed nature of an options-based scheme.

Inevitably there is a tension between providing a closed template with limited options, which is simpler and easier to fill out and administer, and an open-ended template which can be challenging but more innovative and ultimately rewarding. We’d suggest a closed limited template is more suitable for Component 1 while Component 2 should be more open and encourage farmers and farm advisors to start with the farmer’s interest and aspirations (See table 1).

Most farmers who had been in scheme before liked the fact that the template allowed them to record what they were already doing and suggest how they could be rewarded for this. Some farmers have, either through previous agri-environment schemes or their own interests, done a fantastic range of pro-environmental work. The land management plan needs to capture this information and ensure that farmers are rewarded for their baseline as well as their planned actions.

Two advisors used the CSF spreadsheet which 'weights' actions by farmers and suggests where further work could be done (this became known as the 'wheel of fortune'). Other advisors found the spreadsheet prescriptive and questioned the subjective nature of the scoring. The CSF spreadsheet is a useful way of raising issues but isn't a 'plan', ie a list of achievable and specific actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The land management plan needs to be simple and captured in a visual way ideally through maps (see section on mapping below).

It needs to acknowledge and reward previous work and features on the farm.

It can include 'off the shelf options' but also needs to allow for innovation through specific projects either on holdings or across groups of holdings.

It should acknowledge and work with existing accreditation schemes and food production.

MAPPING

Farmers and farm advisors used a range of systems to create maps for the land management plan (see Appendix 7 and 8). Most farm advisors had access to a digital mapping system while farmers did not.

All farmers and farm advisors felt that clear and easy to understand maps are an essential tool for land managers. There is presently no universal, free and easy to use system which farmers and farm advisors can use. The variability of the maps provided by farmers and advisors demonstrates this issue (see Appendix 4).

Current Countryside Stewardship Schemes mapping is not fit for purpose and is unusable for any practical purpose by farmers. The Environmental Stewardship Scheme mapping was better but could still be improved upon. Agri-environment mapping to date has hampered by being continually updated (with resulting changes to scheme which sometimes translate as 'penalties') and the notoriously unpopular 'permanent ineligible features' which often exclude the most environmentally important parts of the farm.

RECOMMENDATION

Land Management Plan mapping is the most meaningful and important element of the agreement template for most farmers and advisors. Mapping needs:

- **To be simple and easy to access on a system, ideally, that farmers already understand, ie the Basic Payment Scheme portal.**
- **To be provided free with basic habitat and designation information and allow easy annotation.**

- **Not be continually remapped (as present Schemes are) but have pre agreed timescales for remapping, ie once every 5 years. (It should also be noted that remapping is a significant drain on administrative resources of the scheme.)**
- **To show the holding in detail and the land in the wider context, ie show different scales.**
- **Permanent ineligible features, which are often the most ecologically important parts of the farm, eg scrub, water, rough grass, should be abandoned.**

WHAT ABOUT CAPITAL WORKS? SHOULD THEY BE STANDALONE OR INSIDE THE SCHEME?

Under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme capital works sat within the scheme. Capital works were only meant to be funded if they supported an option, ie fencing for species rich grassland so it could be grazed. In practice in the past capital works were used as a bargaining chip by advisors to encourage farmers to think about more ambitious land management changes.

Stand-alone capital grants schemes are useful for addressing specific issues such as water pollution from farm buildings. The positive of stand alone capital grants scheme is that it allows advisors onto farm to discuss issues with the farmer – the capital grant is effectively “paying for the farmer to listen”. However the limitations are that the capital works, particularly if directly carried out by the provider, are not “owned” by the farmer and do not necessarily result in significant land management change. Farmers in our land management plan process appeared to expect capital works to come as part of a wider package.

RECOMMENDATION:

There is no simple answer to whether capital works should sit in a standalone scheme but, on balance, if capital works were included alongside in-field options they are likely to deliver better outcomes and encourage value for money.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In our land management plan we asked farmers to put forward ideas for monitoring. Monitoring of outcomes could serve two purposes for ELMS:

- It could provide information about the national and local effectiveness and value for money of the scheme and
- Provide farmers and land managers with feedback about the effectiveness of their work.

We’ve discussed in previous reports that seeing environmental changes on the ground motivates and inspires farmers. It is common sense that having a ‘feedback loop’ encourages farmers to consider their land management practice. It is also important to celebrate their successes. Two examples of based on work done in our area are:

- Farmers were trained to undertake breeding wader surveys across the wet grassland and the results of this fed back to them. This was a source of pride in the farming group but also encouraged individual farmers to think about how they could get more birds (there was a competitive element!).

- South East Water put Methaldehyde water monitoring stations along a watercourse and made the monitoring available farmers. Farmers could therefore see when there were chemical spikes which had an immediate effect on farming practice.

Most farmers suggested that actions in the plan be measured through the proxy of land management put in place, ie land managed in a certain way, rather than on the outcome, eg flood alleviation, which was outside the holding control. This has been the traditional approach in option-led schemes and is at odds with ‘payment by results’ methodologies. Farmers are acutely aware of what is within their control; they can put buffer strips in place but they cannot control overall water quality in the area alone. An alternative to a payment by results approach would be to harness the ‘feedback loop’ by:

- ensuring that farmers agree with and understand land management priorities,
- giving regular feedback about the effectiveness of schemes in the area monitored at a landscape scale and
- regular advisory visits on their own holding.

All advisors acknowledged the need for some kind of ‘value for money’ measurement of schemes. Some advisors particularly noted that the present Countryside Stewardship wildlife packages could result in high value agreements which would not necessarily translate into high value environmental outcomes. When challenged about how to address this advisors initially suggested that parameters be set, ie 50% of holding maximum for options, but immediately acknowledged that universal parameters could have unintended consequences, ie what if one holding was critical to water quality in the area and the 50% rule effectively prevented this holding from delivering. Some kind of local technical and knowledgeable judgement in relation to value for money and quality is necessary and, in our suggested model, could be undertaken by a local convenor.

Monitoring should not be ‘left to chance’ but funded through the scheme. Historically local monitoring (as described above) has taken place on an ad hoc basis because it was not planned or funded as a central element of the scheme. This seems short sighted and should be addressed through ELMS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Monitoring should be a planned and funded part of the scheme from the outset.**
- **Monitoring needs to inform national and local effectiveness of the scheme, show value for money and provide farmers and land managers with feedback about the effectiveness of their work.**
- **Proxy assessment of land management delivery within agreements is one way of measuring success but it needs to be complemented by and linked to outcome monitoring on a landscape scale which is appropriate for larger scale processes such as pollinators, water quality and nature recovery.**
- **We suggest that monitoring is organised on a scale relevant to the area – in our case a catchment scale. This could be organised by the local board. Funding for monitoring could be allocated at a percentage of land covered by agreements in the area (with starter fund**

to provide minimum funding levels) and be undertaken by the board who would then be responsible for sharing the information to target action and improve delivery. Farmers should be actively involved in the monitoring where possible and there should be regular feedback to the farmer community about the results of the monitoring.

PRACTICAL DELIVERY

It is impossible to separate the LMP process and scheme content from practical delivery. Previous schemes, particularly Countryside Stewardship, have stumbled when processes went awry despite the content of the scheme being sound (see our farm advisors report which details this). We have therefore suggested practical delivery alongside our recommendations on LMP.

Advisors observed that previous schemes have quickly become led by the process or IT system instead of by the outcome. Specifically advisors pointed to ‘process for processes’ sake’ within the Rural Payments Agency where administrative staff with little or no knowledge of the overall objectives or context of the scheme make yes or no decisions on scheme based on checklists. In order for any scheme to be effective the administration needs to be knowledgeable and apply judgement, ie use expert knowledge rather than pre-set yes/no parameters. The counter argument to this is that inconsistent decisions could be made however, on balance well-reasoned judgements would be more acceptable to farm advisors and farmers alike even if they can at the cost of some inconsistency.

LOCAL BOARD RECOMMENDATION: PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

In Cuckmere and Pevensey we have a catchment partnership – membership open to all and a Water Level Management Board – formally constituted board with local authority representatives and elected farmer land owner representatives (who are formally elected by other landowners who are the ‘rate payers’ of the board). We suggest an ELMS board which could combine the characteristics of these groups and sit alongside them.

The ELMS board would combine elected farmer representatives with a wider membership. It would need a formal constitution. The board could:

- set priorities for the local area
- encourage innovation by having a specific innovation fund for the area which it administrated to encourage local land management practices.

The board would not be responsible for the administration of ELMS but liaise with the administrators.

The convenor – who would be funded by the scheme - could work for this board and would be responsible for working with local farming groups and advisors to coordinate activity. The convenor could encourage landscape link-up (see table 1) and quality assess agreements.

In Cuckmere and Pevensey’s case the ELM board would sit alongside and be related to the catchment partnership, water level management board (who cover the same area) and the Local Nature Partnership (covers East and West Sussex) to make it efficient and use the existing networks/bodies effectively.

The advantage of a local board, which was suggested by farmers, is that it would reflect local priorities, understand both the land and the local farming community and be more accountable. The board would develop priorities and ‘shape’ the national scheme to local circumstance. It would also be accountable to the local community and this accountability could cut both ways between the farming community and the board improving compliance.

Table 1. How could the ELMS Board support delivery of Defra’s Component system.

What	Component 1 Sustainable farming incentive	Component 2 Nature Recovery network	Component 3 Landscape recovery
Suggested content of element	<p>Acknowledge existing accreditation schemes, eg organic, Tesco, Red Tractor, Arla.</p> <p>Sector specific (see Appendix 1 for detailed suggestions)</p> <p>Content universally available to all farmers, ie not locally tailored.</p>	<p>More complex options based on local priorities developed, ie offering a reasonably wide choice of options relevant to the local area.</p> <p>Options tailored to local circumstances where necessary by convenor in consultation with key agencies including Natural England (for protected sites), Forestry Commission (for woodlands) and Environment Agency/Water Companies (for water issues).</p> <p>Needs to recognise, reward and acknowledge the work done in the past.</p> <p>Longer term agreements which could be regularly amended.</p> <p>Sample of agreements quality assessed by convenor.</p>	<p>Bespoke projects identified and bid for through the ELMS board which will deliver relative largescale landuse change.</p>
Practical realisation	<p>Pick and click from limited options. Ideally through a pre-existing IT system which farmers are familiar with, eg Basic Payment Scheme. Simple options and well presented maps .</p>	<p>Strong mapping element and locally tailored options were necessary.</p>	<p>Where feasible should sit over existing schemes.</p>

What	Component 1 Sustainable farming incentive	Component 2 Nature Recovery network	Component 3 Landscape recovery
Advice	<p>Should be simple enough for farmers to undertake themselves</p> <p>Component 1, like Entry Level Scheme Environmental Stewardship could be a useful first step for some farmers. 'Converting' these farmers to Component 2 will require targeted action. The convenor could play a role in identifying farmers and holdings who advisors could work with,</p>	<p>Likely to need advice support and this should be underpinned by a thorough understanding of farm business. Existing farm advisors – agronomists, environmental charities and land agents – could be accredited to deliver this.</p> <p>Convenor to coordinate advice by identifying and working with Facilitators and advisors in the area and ensuring all have a shared idea of how local priorities can be achieved.</p>	<p>Specialist advice necessary but could be delivered through facilitators and farm advisors with coordination of the convenor.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation	<p>Basic compliance suitable for Rural Payments Agency type inspections which focus on quantitative rather than qualitative measures.</p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluation of schemes to be set up by local board funded in relation to agreement uptake in the area.</p> <p>Scope for farmers to be involved as well as other local organisations, community group and could be coordinated using existing resources, eg county record centre.</p> <p>Convenor responsible for setting this up and ensuring farmers and farm groups are involved and regularly fed back to inform future action.</p>	<p>Ideally should lock onto and upgrade the tier 2 survey and monitoring.</p>

STRONG BUSINESS UNDERSTANDING IS CRITICAL TO INNOVATION

Looking across the 20 land management plans it became clear that farmers with a strong financial understanding of their business were more likely to be ambitious and innovative. This reflects current evidence, for example a study in Devon found that identified a clear resistance to change, among livestock farmers in particular, many surviving only through a combination of 'belt tightening, avoidance of risk and consumption of savings.'¹ This seems counterintuitive because the expectation might be that farms where finances are risky were more likely to opt for agri-environment subsidy. The reality is that you are more likely to take a risk if you understand it.

¹ Reed et al (2002) quoted in **Lobley, M., Winter, M. and Wheeler, R. (2018) The Changing World of Farming in Brexit, UK. Routledge, London**

There is another group of landowners, prevalent in the South East of England and present in our Land Management Plan sample, who are not dependent on farm production for a living. To call this group 'hobby farmers' seems patronising. Although they don't necessarily have the skills, tools and background in land management they are often willing to be innovative but are not financially driven. For this group, advice is critical for supporting their aspirations (see the advice section).

Clearly in the light of the significant changes underway in agriculture there is a need for business insight. We found in a previous survey, 80% of farmers in the area do not have a business plan or clear idea of profit and loss. AHDB's analysis however shows that any profit in livestock only farming is likely to be gained from Basic Payment Scheme.

All the farmers in our land management plan group wanted business training, most wanted this to be one-to-one.

RECOMMENDATION

Ensuring all farmers have a strong understanding of their business will underpin ELMS delivery. However, farmers cannot and should not be required to do mandatory training or analysis to take part in the scheme. There is perhaps a case for ensuring:

- **That all farm advisors working on schemes have the ability to support farmers in assessing their business and should be encouraged to do this as a pre-cursor to developing schemes. This would ensure that both the farmer and advisor have a clear understanding of the opportunities and limitations of the farm business before entering scheme;**
- **That there are a range of sector specific easy-to-understand and use tools available to support farmers in assessing their business. AHDB's current Benchmarking system provides an example but more comprehensive and perhaps basic tools should be developed to help farmers unpick profit and loss (Farm Business Survey is an example).**
- **The Prince's Farm Resilience Programme provides useful short courses on business training. One farmer who had taken part in this training observed that the people who sign up to courses like this tend to already be 'clued up' to some extent. There is therefore a case to ensuring that this training is done through other avenues, eg Facilitation Funds (more on this below).**
- **That specifically tailored advisory services are provided for 'non-farmer' land managers to support them in delivery of appropriate land management.**

PAYMENTS

We asked farmers to suggest what they should be paid for each of the ideas they put forward for land management. Answers ranged from specific numbers to estimates of the actual cost of the activity (See appendix 4 in separate document).

Payments for land management needs to recognise the difference between long term changes - tree planting and water features, which require long term support and those that are easily reversed field margin management.

Farmers repeatedly made the point that they should get paid for what they are already doing. There is a sense of injustice about present payment rates, particularly between habitat creation and maintenance, eg reed beds would be a good example of this in Countryside Stewardship.

Farmers also pointed out that being in a SSSI or protected landscape could have a detrimental impact on their ability to diversify the farm to gain more income, ie by changing land use or building additional buildings. These constraints should be recognised in the payments.

Many felt that grassland payments, without Basic Payment Scheme to underpin it, does not reflect the public benefits of grassland, eg slowing the flow, biodiversity, providing habitat. Farmers and advisors suggested that grassland payments need to be reviewed and at least doubled.

Arable options which form part of a rotation would need to have different areas every year, ie would need to be declared annually.

Carbon storage and soil health should have need specific payments attached, eg farmers suggested a specific payment for adding organic matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Revisit grassland payments so that they better reflect grass' environmental value.

Ensure farmers are rewarded for existing activity and find a better balance between creation and maintenance payments.

Payments should recognise where constraints limit the diversification of the farm, ie on protected sites on in protected landscapes.

WOODLANDS

Farmers saw woodlands on their holding as part of the farm and were keen to manage it. Most farmers are not forestry training and woodlands in lowland farmland are generally small. In these land management plans most farmers suggested that woodlands should be covered by options, rather than bespoke woodland management plans.

Further there is clearly a need for training to in woodland management and collaboration to build woodland networks and find and share specialist contractors where necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

Ensure that small farm woodlands can be wrapped into the ELMS scheme.

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE COLLABORATIVE WORKING ACROSS A CATCHMENT/LANDSCAPE, AND WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS?

IN ORDER TO SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE WORKING ACROSS FARMERS, DO YOU NEED PROFESSIONAL FACILITATORS/ADVISORS, OR ARE OTHER FACTORS MORE IMPORTANT?

We asked farmers consider whether it would help to work on their land management priorities with their neighbours. The answer was yes, it would be useful for most issues (See appendix 4 in separate document). Farmers recognise the importance of collaboration and see their holding in the context of a landscape particularly of their neighbours. It would be difficult for farmers to achieve collaborative working without external help. Looking across existing mechanisms:

1. **Facilitation Funds.** These are funded to deliver peer-to-peer and group learning to improve the outcomes of Countryside Stewardship delivery. The group is facilitated by a professional usually a farm advisor. In some Facilitation Funds the Facilitator works across agreement to try and join and link options (dependent on schemes being able to be amended). Joining a Facilitation Fund is voluntary so not all farmers in a given area will be part of the group.
2. **Farm advisors.** Commercial farm advisors usually have a geographical patch. Farmers can choose their farm advisor. Commercial farm advice should, primarily, serve the farmer therefore creating collaborative landscape scale links are not necessarily part of their role.
3. In some areas Natural England (including Catchment Sensitive Farming), National Parks and AONBs or charities such as National Trust, RSPB and Wildlife Trusts also provide free farm advice and this will usually be targeted at landscape scale delivery across holding. Advisors will identify and work with hard to reach farmers in their geographical area.

RECOMMENDATION

One way of addressing collaborative working across farms would be to:

- A) Expand the remit of Facilitation Funds where they exist so that they can provide one-to-one advice to enable link up across holdings.**
- B) Using our suggested ELMS board model, the convenor, who works for the Board, could take an active role in coordinating farmers and advisors in the area develop a landscape-scale approach to issues. Quality assessment of component 2 agreements at an early stage could also support this by allowing the convenor to spot opportunities.**

WHAT SORT OF ADVICE IS NEEDED TO DEVELOP AND DELIVER LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS? IN WHAT WAY, IF AT ALL, HAS THE PROVISION OF ADVICE AND/OR GUIDANCE HELPED?

Some farmers, particularly those with previous agri-environment scheme experience and a good understanding of their business, were able to produce innovative and challenging land management plans on their own. However it was also clear that advisors stretched farmer's aspirations and helped them gain a better understanding into their business, their interests and, importantly, their blindspots.

During this project advisors were asked to meet farmers for the first time and produce plans in short order. Many pointed out that this was not good practice. Advice needs to be offered over several visits allowing a relationship to be built over time. The advisor then needs to follow up with the farmer when the agreement is place and amend or build on the farmer's work over time.

Naturally advisors did tend towards their specialisms, for instance a land management plan developed by a water specialist advisor was likely to have more water mitigation suggestions within it. There is nothing inherently wrong with this. However, during the process of our trial advisors from all backgrounds said that they would prefer to have a broad range of training over all aspects covered by the scheme and, importantly, farm business. This would enable advisors to ensure that they don't make suggestions which may have a long-term negative impact on the farmer or have unintended consequences for the environment, eg planting trees on species rich grassland.

Farmers clearly valued advice and sought it. But, as one farmer remarked in his plan "it all costs money." In our previous report (on farm advisors) we outlined the costs of advice which are about £800 a day plus VAT. Future ELMS scheme advice provision could be:

- Provided by organisations as part of the scheme. Advisors would be employed by an organisation and advice provided free to farmers. Advice that is free for farmers is usually funded by Defra, by grant funding or through other funding mechanisms such as water company business plans.
- Paid for through a contribution attached to the application process, paid directly to the farmer. Farmers could then choose their own advisors. The Farm Environment Plan payment effectively served this purpose in Environmental Stewardship.
- Paid for out of the farmers' pocket. This would discriminate against smaller businesses who are less likely to be able to pay. There is also a danger that advisors would have to 'earn their keep' through the scheme, ie pay for themselves by identifying and applying for expensive options.

Effectively you can argue that farm advice attached to agri-environment schemes is never 'free'. Evidence also shows that advice is a key element to improving the delivery and outcomes from schemes during the term of the agreement.

ELMS will continue to be a voluntary scheme. Where the local nature recovery network has specific requirements it may be necessary to proactively encourage farmers into the scheme. It is unlikely that that environmental delivery on the scale required by Defra's 25 year plan will be delivered otherwise. This issue needs to be considered and addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As per our previous report (about farm advisors) it would be useful to develop professional standards for farm advisors delivering agri-environment which including 'core skills' of farm business understanding.

Realistic advice costs need to be recognised and built into ELMS both for the application process and in ongoing, ideally annual advice provided throughout the scheme.

(Also as per our previous survey) a national survey needs to be undertaken to determine how many advisors are available nationally and regionally and whether or not their skills will be sufficient to support farmers in delivering ELMS agreement. If not a national scheme to train and develop advisors needs to be put in place in advance of ELMS to ensure a smooth transition. In future the role of training and accrediting advisors could be partly undertaken by local ELMS boards.

Targeted advice to encourage scheme uptake and to encourage farmers to upgrade their aspirations from Component 1 to Component 2 will need to be provided alongside advice for specific requirements, ie to encourage update in areas where the local nature network requires it. There is potential for this to be taken on by the convenor – either by commissioning advisors in the area or undertaking the work themselves.

Land managers who are not traditional farmers need specific and targeted advice to support them in land management delivery.

WHAT TRAINING DO FARMERS WANT?

This table summarises the training that farmers suggested that they want. Farmers mainly wanted one-to-one advice specific to their holding.

Table 2. Training requested

What?	Group Training	One to one
Farm business		✓
Use of technology, costing systems	✓	
Specific farm business support: planning, fund raising		✓
Livestock health or use of medicines	✓	✓Vet
Environmental feature management, eg Landscape issues, ecology, monitoring of species, encouraging wild pollinators and other species including birds	✓	✓
Access and community engagement suggested links with arts groups, woodland crafts and set up guided walks.	✓	✓
Soil health	✓	✓
Pasture management		✓
Woodland management particularly small farmer including deer management	✓	
Forage crops and herbal leys	✓	✓
Ferlizer use		
Slurry application methods	✓	✓
Soil health	✓	✓
Carbon/ energy	✓	✓
Health and safety	✓	✓

RECOMMENDATIONS

Broaden the remit of existing Facilitation Fund so that they can provide training on production and farm business as well as scheme delivery.

Incorporate a range of core on farm advice packages into the scheme and allow farmers to book one or two per year either free or at a reduced price. Examples could be: carbon audit, soil health, fertilizer audit. Natural England has a Farm Advice Framework contract which could serve as a blueprint for this service.

Three farmers were asked for their thoughts about a potential tier one, ie universal scheme, for different farm types in July 2020 after a virtual visit by Minister Prentis. This document pulls together their views.

Overarching principles/cross sector themes

Most importantly the ELMS tier one scheme needs to be one which all farmers can have access to no matter what their size or business type.

Any scheme must be linked to sustainable food production – this is farm ‘core business’

- Payments need to recognise the difference between long term changes (e.g. tree planting, water features) which require long term support and those that are easily reversed (e.g. field margin management, fencing)?
- Scheme needs to be flexible so that it reflects local needs.
- Funding should be sufficient to make it attractive to farm businesses.
- Constant remapping creates unnecessary bureaucracy and should be limited to scheme turnover.
- There needs to be sufficient appropriately trained advisers to support the scheme.
- It should encourage farm/groups or clusters to achieve better landscapes, predator control, advice and knowledge dispersal, monitoring of wildlife and the rebuilding of farmer communities with further outreach possibility
- It should encourage young farmers and build the skills of the farming community.
- Offer a range of improved public access management options

The application process needs to be simple, payments should be made on time and the inspection regime should be fair and encourage good practice rather than punish disproportionately.

Farmers are presently ‘punished’ for so called ‘permanent ineligible features’ which are discounted from their BPS and agri-environment scheme. These are usually the biodiverse elements of the farm and should, in fact, be recognised and funded.

Soil and animal health are seen as an important element for ELMS alongside the 25 year

Suggested focus for Dairy business

1. Reduce Nitrogen use by growing more clovers.
2. Minimise medicine/antibiotic use through good dairy management
3. Higher animal welfare through improved housing and handling systems
4. Promote closed herds to minimise disease risk
5. Promote diverse dairy breeding programmes for increased herd resilience
6. Encourage non-cultivation of awkward corners/edges to allow wild areas to develop

7. Manage land on agroecological principles to improve soils
8. Devise pollution control strategies that are cost effective and environmentally friendly
9. Promote tree planting, even if small scale
10. Promote agroforestry on dairy farms for shade, browsing eg willow to improve cow health
11. Grass field margins, corners etc – graze/cut + no fertiliser, manure or sprays to deplete fertility, then enhance for pollinators etc,
12. Use electric fencing for flexibility, dairy cows quite good at respecting them. Funding for solar fencers?
13. Promote water harvesting to reduce mains water use
14. Solar panels on dairy buildings to reduce mains electricity use

Suggested focus for Livestock business

1. Areas of scrub and woodland, fenced off to allow some natural regeneration.
2. Ponds, scrapes and water courses reprofiled and with managed water levels
3. Permanent pastures managed for clovers without sprays and herbicide, and soils undisturbed
4. Seldom grazed areas with consequent rough grass and tall vegetation, non browsed shrubs
5. Hedgerows widened, extended and grown more diverse
6. Landscape trees and copses
7. Wet grasslands for specialist ground nesting birds
8. Herb rich meadows
9. Fens and reedbeds
10. Non intervention areas with no fixed annual management,
11. Reduce stocking rates (to allow for the above
12. Reduce use of insecticidal medicines through adoption of Sustainable parasite control strategies, and reduce use of all antibiotics
13. Improve livestock housing and handling systems for better efficiency and welfare
14. Close herds and flocks to increase disease control, reduce livestock movements and develop hardier traits in animals

Suggested focus for Arable Business

1. Mid tier Countryside Stewardship options give a good basis along with
2. Cover crops to improve soil/water.
3. Good agronomy to minimise and make effective pesticide and fertilizer use.

APPENDIX 2 CUCKMERE AND PEVENSEY ELMS TEST AND TRIAL FEEDBACK ON TEST AND TRIAL DEVELOPED LMPS.

We asked 12 farmers advisors to look in detail at the 7 land management plans provided to us by Defra. These advisors included: 2 AONB officers, 2 Natural England Farm Advisors, 2 agronomists, 3 land agents, 2 Environmental (rivers trust) charity advisors, 1 Water company farm advisor

We then invited them to deliver a land management plan with

- 1) A blank page – 2 advisors chose this option
- 2) An existing template from the 7 provided – no advisor chose this option because none felt that any existing plans answered the purpose
- 3) A template incorporating elements from different templates – 10 advisors chose this option. We will be developing this template immediately (a combination of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 but particularly 2 and 5).

General points

Information should not be gathered for it's own sake. Any information should inform either payments, planning or evaluation. Simplicity is key so the process of developing the plan should try and find the minimum information necessary.

The templates provided tended to be good at gathering baseline, ie the background to the farm business and environmental conditions but weak on providing a plan, ie a practical to do list with a how and where.

Advisors felt that the focus on recording information could miss the point of the process which is about building relationship, understanding the farmer's priorities and aspirations - the high level objectives – and converting them into actions on the ground.

Advisors would like to see environmental information and farm production information linked so that they are not seen as two separate tasks and income streams but in reality this is difficult to achieve.

	Strengths	Weaknesses	What's missing
National Trust Stepping stones	<p>Liked the information gathering suggested in Table 2 (about the farm business) and the environmental details gathered in the bullet points on page one.</p> <p>Liked the fact that soil sampling was including in the template while others suggested that this was specialist advice to be delivered later.</p> <p>Straightforward in the way that it is laid out.</p> <p>Good balance between business and environmental recording.</p> <p>Interesting use of habitat categorisation which may be useful, ie permanent and semi permanent habitats</p> <p>Good for evaluation but not a plan.</p>	<p>Lacks structure.</p> <p>Heavily environmentally focused.</p> <p>Lots of information requested and recorded but this is not converted into a useful and practical plan which a farmer would be able to follow.</p>	<p>Seems to lack local priorities</p>

	Strengths	Weaknesses	What's missing
Natural England CSF	<p>Offers a nice presentation and is something you could work through with the farmer.</p> <p>Most comprehensive in terms of coverage of land management practice and it could be adapted to an ELMS tiered system and/or an option based scheme.</p> <p>Could form the basis of a useful environmental benchmarking.</p> <p>Linked to main objectives of 25 plan and is therefore easy to read across.– read across to Defra.</p> <p>Could be linked to GIS spatial datasets which could prepopulate it. Additionally it would be useful if it could also incorporate local dataset and advisor groundtruthing.</p> <p>Provides a useful baseline for evaluation.</p> <p>Farmers could work through the spreadsheet themselves</p> <p>Objective and gives space for advisor in comments section.</p>	<p>The questions are in a sequence that farmers will find confusing to answer. Would be better organised by farm type, ie arable, livestock</p> <p>It is a laborious to complete in total.</p> <p>The basis for the scoring is not transparent – how objective and evidence based is it? Additionally scoring should be able to be adjusted to reflect local priorities.</p> <p>Biodiversity section is the weakest.</p> <p>Does not deliver a plan, ie a to do list but provides a useful checklist for the farmer or advisor to work through when thinking about the plan.</p>	<p>Needs to be adapted to the tier it is relevant for</p> <p>Farming business not included.</p> <p>No landscape scale priorities or opportunities or collaborations</p>

	Strengths	Weaknesses	What's missing
North Devon Pioneer	<p>Liked the financial background which would allow farmers to see how they could improve their income particularly table 2. Starts with the farm business and leads through to a plan.</p> <p>Liked the map based information</p> <p>Made good links with local engagement and local priorities and potential collaboration with neighbours,</p> <p>You can set your outcome yourself – advisor and farmer will measure it.</p>	<p>Advisors don't necessarily want to do business planning and don't feel that farmers would want to share this in a template.</p> <p>Financial elements are difficult to do standardise and compare.</p> <p>Separates farming business from environmental delivery.</p>	<p>Suggest using AHDB benchmarking alongside this instead of gathering financial information.</p>
Gloucester Wildlife Trust	<p>Annex 4 was both useful and practical because it linked public goods to actions.</p> <p>Asks about farm priorities</p> <p>Simple and stripped down.</p> <p>Business analysis is for the farmer to do as an informative rather than an integral part of the process so informs but isn't necessarily recorded</p>	<p>Outcomes based payments could be daunting for the farmer - partly because it could result in a constant inspection process and lots of requests for amendment which are labour intensive.</p>	

	Strengths	Weaknesses	What's missing
Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust	<p>Liked sequence, leads the advisor or farmer through the thinking process while gathering information.</p> <p>Good balance of financial and environmental information gathered.</p> <p>Useful to include accreditation, food standards and animal welfare Because the existing paper could be used to provide information.</p>	<p>Lacked maps Not farmer friendly – no prompts</p> <p>1.1 question is badly framed because it pits farming against conservation</p> <p>Assumes that farmer can think in terms of public goods.</p>	
Environment Agency Cumbria Pioneer	<p>Good that it includes incentive, ie would you need to do the action and also discussed collaboration</p> <p>Liked the one page summary which could act as a focus for practical plan delivery.</p> <p>Local priorities are mentioned.</p>	<p>Farmers will find the terminology of public goods difficult and in particular could miss something that they are providing already, ie carbon sequestration.</p>	
23 Burns Farmer Group	<p>The natural capital account – would be straightforward to put in a spreadsheet.</p> <p>It captures farmer aspirations which don't come across so clearly in other plan.</p> <p>Simplicity is good.</p>	<p>Not a "to do" list. Needs to link aspiration with deliverable actions.</p>	<p>Payments rates</p>

“How to” guide

What you should have at the end of this?

1. A BASELINE map showing roughly what you have on the farm and any issues there are
2. A PLAN map showing what you are already doing environmentally on the farm and what you want to do.
A completed plan document with the following in it.
3. Some brief information about your farm, what you do, your plans and interests.
4. A table listing what are already doing which could count towards ELMS
5. A table showing what you want to do under ELMS
6. A list of the training and advice you would like to deliver your plan
7. Feedback on how doing the plan felt.

We don't know what the payment rates are yet but we have asked you to suggest what you want to get paid.

BEFORE YOU START

You will need two copies maps for your farm (your Basic Payment Scheme Maps) are fine.

You will need access to a computer, the internet and some coloured pens or pencils.

Step 1

Record what you know about your farm on the map – this is to help you with the next steps so there are no ‘rules’ about what you put down. Record what you think is important in a way that you can understand.

<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> has lots of information. Don't try and use it on Internet Explorer because it doesn't work.

Have a look under the **Countryside Stewardship Targeting & Scoring Layers**

Things to think about

- Any arable, grassland and temporary leys
- Any woodland, water, scrub, in field trees and hedgerows or any other important habitats?
- What kind of wildlife do you regularly see?
- Any problems with flooding?
- Are there any problems upstream with the water quality?
- Do you have private water supplies or public abstraction points on your land?
- Do you have access on the land? Do people keep going where they shouldn't?

Step 2. Think about your farm business – fill in table 1

This section is really just a prompt to help you think about your farm business. We've asked you to record some info which will help us analyse the completed land management plans.

- Future direction of the farm – are you planning any changes?
- What is the bottom line? What will the impact of loss of basic payment be?
- Think about the things that are important to you and interest you?
- What information do you already have? Accreditation schemes, organic certification, manure and fertilizer management plans. If you have these get the info out because it might help you think about the next steps.

Step 3 Think about the things you already deliver – fill in table 2

Look at the local priorities and the long list of questions.

Step 4 Think about the things you want to deliver – fill in table 3

Again look at the local priorities – what could you do to deliver them. But you can suggest ANYTHING you like here!

Step 5 What advice and/or training would you like to deliver your plan?

Step 6 Give us some feedback on how it felt doing the plan.

Be honest!

Cuckmere and Pevensey local priorities

What	Issue or opportunity	Potential solutions
Flooding	The upper part of the catchment has flashy flooding because of steep sided, heavy soiled gullies	Slow the flow in the upper catchment with natural flood management, eg woody dams
Water shortage	Not enough water	Reduce and reuse water on farm where possible.
Water quality	Sediment, pesticide and fertilizer in the water	Reduce run off by buffering watercourses. Consider arable reversion on steep sided slopes. Plant cover crops. Reduce pesticide and fertilizer use.
Wildlife and habitats	Scattered woods and hedges. Lots of improved grassland. Pevensey Levels – which is a protected site (Site of Special Scientific Interest) - in the lower catchment.	Join up woods with well grown A shaped hedge (trees, wide hedge and long grass at the base) or tree planting in the right places Buffer woods with uncultivated strips. Reduce intensive grass management and consider creating and restoring species rich grasslands. Provide nesting and summer and winter feeding for birds. Create nectar rich plots for pollinators. Create natural corridors alongside watercourses. Manage protected areas – like Pevensey Levels- appropriately.
Landscape and history	Restore field patterns on higher land but particularly in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty There area is rich in archaeological features – both under the soil and above it	Replant hedgerows Protect archaeological features from ploughing and scrub development

What	Issue or opportunity	Potential solutions
Access	There is a lacks of accessible natural greenspace around Hailsham and other urban areas	Join up existing paths with permissive paths. Provide spaces where dogs can be exercised safely
Air	South East England has air pollution issues.	Cover slurry stores
Soil	Good soil management addresses a range of environmental issues	Soil testing to identify the issues Avoiding compaction Maintaining ground cover and enriching the soil with clover and herb-rich leys
Climate change	Energy use Carbon sequestration	Cut energy use if possible Undertake a carbon audit and assess potential for further action

What do you want to do? Here are some ideas

Water

How are water courses buffered on the farm? The bigger the better.

How is run off reduced? Reverting to grassland, reducing fertiliser and pesticide, sediment traps.

Do you harvest rainwater? Is dirty and clean water separated?

What is the nitrogen contribution from your livestock? What is your stocking rate?

Do you have sufficient manure/slurry handling?

Off Pevensey Marsh, are water courses fenced to prevent stodging?

Do you grow cover crops?

Do you live in the upper part of the catchment? Could you put in woody dams or swales to slow the flow of water?

Do you have good pesticide handling and training?

Clean air

How long is your livestock housed for? Shorter housing means less manure and less ammonia.

Do you produce straw based farmyard manure? Which produces less ammonia than slurry

How much fertilizer do you use? Could you reduce it?

Do you spread slurry? Could you use a trailing shoe or dribble bar?

Do you have a covered slurry store?

Do you spread your farmyard manure or put it in a heap?

In livestock management do you have automatic scraper/is slurry regularly removed?

Do you have a tree belt around your slurry store and how wide is it?

Wildlife and habitats

Do you have important habitats and species on your land and do you manage for them?

Would you like to create any habitats or manage for particular species?

Are you encouraging birds by providing nesting, wintering and summer feeding.

Are you providing pollinator plots on arable or flower rich grasslands for pollinators?

Could you plant hedgerows to link up woodlands or existing hedgerows?

Are your hedgerows A shaped - about 1.5 m wide and 2 m tall - with trees, well grown shrubs and long grass at the base?

Are you buffering existing woodland by allowing scrub to grow?

Do you want to manage the woods you have?

Do you have areas of the farm you leave unmanaged?

Soil

Have you ever tested your soil to see if compacted?

Do you cultivate with non-inversion or min till methods?

Do you avoid compacting the soils by managing machinery, eg variable tyre inflation, cross slope working and tramline management?

How many crops rotations do you have?

Do you use manure?

Use clover or herbs in the grassland?

What ground cover do you have? Do you undersow or have permanent ground cover?

Do you grow root crops and maize on sloping fields?

Access

Do you have existing footpaths? Would you consider permissive paths to link up footpaths or access to specific areas.

Do you give guided walks or take part in public events like Open Farm Sunday?

History and landscape

Do you know what archaeological

features you have on your land – either underground or over ground. Do you look after these?

Are you in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty? Do you know the history of how your farm looked?

Climate change – lots of the questions above relate to this.

Do you know how much energy you use on the farm?

Have you done a carbon audit?

Cuckmere and Pevensey ELMS test and trial Land Management Plan

Table 1 About my farm

Name	
Farm	
Size	
Owned or rented?	
What is your main farm business (give as much detail as you like)	
Have you diversified?	
Accreditation schemes?	
Who do you get advice from?	
Got any plans for your farm?	
Have environmental aspects of the farm are you particularly interested in?	

Table 3. What training or advice do you think will help you?

Some examples are given here but put in what you like.

What?	Training in a group	On farm advice specific to your holding, ie an advisor coming over
Farm business advice – management and financial		
Soil health?		
