

North York Moors National Park Authority

2 November 2020

Environmental Land Management (ELM) System

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members on progress with the Authority's Test and Trials (T&T) project which forms part of the development process for the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) System.

2. Background

- 2.1 The contract between the North York Moors National Park Authority and Defra for the delivery of the Test and Trials proposal that was submitted to Defra in June 2018 commenced in October 2019.

3. Progress to Date

- 3.1 A paper was brought to the July 2020 meeting of the National Park Authority which updated Members on the headline results of the questionnaire that sought the views of farmers and land managers as to which public goods they feel willing and able to deliver and the series of Focus Groups that followed up on the questionnaire.
- 3.2 The second element of the Test and Trials contract has been the development of a tool that models the economic impact of attaching different values (payments) to the delivery of different public goods and the impact that this has on different farming sectors active within the North York Moors National Park.
- 3.3 Following a successful tendering process, a contract was awarded to Cumulus Consultants who have been developing the modelling tool in collaboration with the Authority's Future Farming Policy Officer. Whilst the contract was originally due to complete at the end of the August, the contract has overrun and will be completed by the end of October. Defra have agreed to this extension as there is a clear recognition that the end result is a far more robust and useful tool that will have undergone more rigorous testing than was originally envisaged, and the end cost will still be within the budget allocated.
- 3.4 A draft version of the tool has been shared with Defra and a request has been made for the Future Farming Policy Officer and Cumulus Consultants to present the tool at the next Test and Trials Thematic Working Group meeting that will focus on 'payments' on 19 November 2020. The Working Groups have been established by the Defra ELM Test and Trials Team covering each of the six Test and Trials Themes (Land Management Plan, Role of Advice and Guidance, Spatial Prioritisation, Payments, Collaboration and Innovative Delivery Mechanisms). They meet quarterly via teleconference with the intention of bringing together stakeholders delivering Test and Trials with Defra Policy teams in order to share findings of emerging evidence and experience.

4. **Next Steps**

- 4.1 The final element of the Test and Trials contract is to identify and develop a range of delivery mechanisms that allow for the appropriate delivery of public goods. This work will be informed by the significant levels of consultation with farmers and land managers that the Authority has engaged with throughout the earlier elements of the Test and Trials work. A final report was due to be submitted to Defra in November 2020, but due to the overrun with the modelling tool, an extension to the end of January 2021 has been recently approved by Defra.

5. **Wider ELMs Engagement**

- 5.1 The Ryevitalise Programme has recently been selected by a research team from the Centre for Rural Policy Research (CRPR) at the University of Exeter, working in partnership with the Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire, and commissioned by Defra to conduct research evaluating different approaches to collaborative and coordinated land management. The research aims to examine 'what works' by exploring experiences and opinions about what has worked well, or not so well, in past efforts to achieve environmental benefits at large spatial scales.
- 5.2 Defra has commissioned ICF, ADAS and CEH to conduct an evaluation of the Environmental Land Management (ELM) Scheme Tests and Trials (T&Ts). The aim of this is to gather and analyse information from the T&Ts that will help to identify lessons for the design of the new ELM scheme. As part of this evaluation they are conducting a number of case studies, which explore different themes. The North York Moors Test and Trials have been one of five case studies chosen to explore which payment methodologies and other incentives would best incentivise land managers to engage with the scheme.
- 5.3 ADAS have arranged an interview with the Future Farming Policy Officer to understand our experiences delivering our T&T, the lessons we have learned as well as the challenges that we have faced. In particular, they would like to understand:
- Which types of incentives do land managers respond best to?
 - Have innovative delivery mechanisms (e.g. reverse auctions/payment by results scheme/blended finance scheme/tech) encouraged stakeholders to engage more than traditional delivery mechanisms (e.g. Countryside Stewardship)?
 - How do different payment methodologies affect stakeholder engagement in T&Ts?
 - Which innovative delivery mechanisms work well to encourage take up and in which holding types? Which works less well?

6. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

- 6.1 The salary costs of the Future Farming Policy Officer for 3 days per week until end of November 2020 are met by DEFRA as are the full operating costs of the contract.
- 6.2 From 1 December 2020 the salary costs of the Future Farming Policy Officer revert back to being paid from the staffing budget. The additional time secured for the writing of the report will be met by the existing provision for this role within the core staff budget.

7. **Contribution to National Park Management Plan**

7.1 A well designed Environmental Land Management System that delivers sustainable land management and secures the provision of public goods will contribute to a wide range of the aims and policies identified in the National Park Management Plan.

8. **Legal Implications**

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

9. **Recommendation**

9.1 That: Members note the level of engagement that the Future Farming Policy Officer has had with DEFRA on the Test and Trials stage of the development process for the new Environmental Land Management System.

Contact Officer
Rebecca Thompson
Future Farming Policy Officer
Tel No 01439 772700