



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Tests and Trials Evidence Report

Schemes for environmental land management

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1. Executive Summary

This is the fifth in a series of evidence reports sharing the key findings from Tests and Trials between October 2021 to March 2022.

These findings originate from individual tests and trials as well as discussion points from stakeholders participating in our Thematic Working Groups (TWGs). The findings have been categorised according to our 6 priority themes (Land Management Plans, Spatial Prioritisation, Collaboration, Role of Advice and Guidance, Payments and Innovative Delivery Mechanisms). See Table 1 for a breakdown of what each of these covers.

This report has been compiled by the Defra Tests and Trials Team and is intended as a collation exercise rather than an analysis or evaluation report.

2. Highlight Findings

This section will provide a short summary of the key learnings across each of the 6 themes. There is evidence of findings cross-cutting across themes. This includes access to current and reliable data to support effective monitoring and decision-making activities as well as access to flexible, dynamic tools to identify opportunities and track change over time. The value of facilitators in bringing parties together with a shared common interest to mediate the agreement-making process was also consistently raised, as well as the importance of making schemes and subsequent actions clear, flexible, and simple to apply for and complete. We will cover these further in the report.

Land Management Plans (LMP)

There is continued agreement across tests and trials that LMPs must be simple to complete, use plain language and be flexible to different farms' circumstances. It was also widely agreed that LMPs should include an assessment of existing natural capital. Actions presented as prompts or checklists were consistently seen as valuable to support effective decision-making. The importance of maps and digital tools to create, monitor, and report LMPs has been emphasised. However, farmers and land managers have recommended that paper-based options continue to be offered due to preference, lack of digital skills or poor internet access, and that accessibility requirements should be considered when introducing online sources for LMPs.

There are mixed views from farmers and land managers on the value of advice and guidance in implementing an LMP. Earned recognition could be included in LMPs to encourage ongoing public goods delivery. Landlords and tenant farmers not being joined up could be a barrier to scheme participation.

Role of advice and guidance

Farmers and land managers want advice when applying to enter a scheme, however there is continued support for advice being optional. Opportunities for farmers and land manager upskilling could also be effective. It's important to farmers and land managers that advisers are experienced, local, trusted, and impartial with local knowledge. There is a mixed view on accreditation when compared to adviser experience. Peer-to-peer learning continues to be found to be a valuable resource for sharing best practice and one-to-one advice continues to be reported as a popular format for advice. In reference to guidance, it is important that it is accessible and jargon free. However, guidance isn't viewed as an effective replacement for in-person advice, farm visits or events

Spatial prioritisation

A bottom-up approach, where views from local farmers and land managers are used to lead decision making, is recommended when identifying priorities. There is also continued support for the use of tools to support effective prioritisation activities across different scales and sectors. National Character Areas (NCAs) were found to be useful for prioritisation as they use accessible, local data, and cover all 6 public goods. There is continued evidence for a need for access to reliable, comprehensive, current data to effectively identify priorities and monitor change. Some participants have reported a disconnect between individuals who collate and use data for spatial prioritisation activities

Collaboration

Evidence shows support for the use of trusted facilitators as an effective model for collaboration. It is recommended that to be effective facilitators should have certain skills and attributes. These include providing local knowledge, technical support, conflict resolution, monitoring, and evaluation activities. Financial incentives continue to be seen as a key tool for effective collaboration, though it is unclear what format incentives should take. Collaboration has been viewed as a useful learning tool as it enables sharing of best practice. Tests have cited the value of similarities, such as similar farm types, sizes and locations between farmers and land managers as key to collaboration. One of the reported outcomes of collaboration is the development of a sense of community which comes with a range of social benefits.

Payments

There is agreement among Test and Trial participants that an income foregone plus costs (IF+C) model may not provide enough of an incentive for farmers. To encourage participation in higher ambition levels for Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) standards, it's recommended that payments need to be increased. A Natural Capital Payments mechanism was reported as having the potential to support identifying land use improvements, natural capital account and value for money. Tests have been looking at

payments for public access. Findings show a variety of views on this concept, but evidence shows that land managers believe that training is of high value and should be self-funded, followed by payments for resulting visits

Innovative delivery mechanisms

Findings indicate a lack of trust between farmers and private sectors in ensuring both parties objectives are prioritised. There is support from Test and Trial participants for government to play a role in bridging the gap between farmers, land managers and corporates. A test looking at reverse auctions highlighted the importance of engagement with bidders to identify suitable times of the year to run auctions to encourage greater participation. Removal of the risk of a nil payment was seen as a benefit of a hybrid Payment by Results (PbR) approach, making it suitable for whole farm scale. However, reports find that where the base payment amount is fixed is critical to hybrid PbR scheme success. Farmers indicated that PbR should consider the baseline state of the landscape to mitigate the potential risk of land managers allowing land to degrade to access higher payments

3. Introduction and purpose

The purpose of this report is to share key findings from the Defra Tests and Trials arising from October 2021 to the end of March 2022. At the time of writing, we have 109 tests and trials underway (Annex A), with 63 of these having concluded. The findings in this report are collated from individual tests and trials as well as discussion points from Tests and Trials stakeholders participating in our Thematic Working Groups.

This report does not aim to provide an analysis or evaluation of evidence. It is the fifth in a series of evidence reports as Tests and Trials continue to progress.

Tests and Trials have been running since 2018 and will continue throughout and beyond the pilots and introduction of the future schemes so we can understand if and why things do not work and improve operability, value for money and outcomes. This is essential as we move away from the traditional model under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), towards incentivising sustainable land management. Our goal is to recognise and support farmers to deliver environmental outcomes in alignment with food production.

We have used a phased approach to delivery and have selected proposals that contribute to our understanding of 1 or more of the 6 priority themes outlined in Table 1. A key pillar of the programme is the use of co-design methods to ensure we are giving voice to and using the views of those directly impacted by farming and agricultural policy to help shape our approach. We continue to work with a range of participants across different geographies and sectors.

Tests and Trials will continue to feed into scheme development to ensure we're constantly learning, testing, and evolving our approach. This way our schemes will be sustainable for

the farmers of today and tomorrow. The Tests and Trials team collaborate closely with the policy teams, with findings actively developing farming and agricultural policy. This report will demonstrate how this is driving change.

4. Headline findings and evidence by theme

The following section outlines the findings gathered by each priority theme, with some additional findings drawn together in the final section. The 6 priority themes are:

1. Land Management Plans - What would be included in a plan, how long it should be and what information is needed to support the land manager or farmer.
2. Role of Advice and Guidance - The level and role of advice and guidance required to support farmers and land managers in the uptake and successful delivery of the future schemes.
3. Spatial Prioritisation - To test mechanisms to identify and agree local priorities.
4. Collaboration - To test how different mechanisms of collaboration would work to deliver environmental outcomes.
5. Payments - To test different approaches to valuing environmental outcomes and how these might work in practice.
6. Innovative Delivery Mechanisms - How these could be rolled out more widely and in what circumstances. For example, trialling payment by results and reverse auctions.

Over 5,000 farmers and land managers from across England have contributed to these findings through methods such as workshops, surveys, farm walks and one-to-one interviews.

Land Management Plans

68 tests and trials have worked with farmers and land managers to test and develop Land Management Plans (LMPs). This involved engagement with participants across a wide range of sectors and geographies. Our objective under this theme is to understand whether LMPs are a valuable tool for helping farmers and land managers to plan and record which public goods they will deliver.

Findings

There is continued agreement across tests and trials that LMPs must be simple to complete, use plain language and be flexible to different farms circumstances. The Cholderton Estate test suggested the farming industry and public sector should agree on a standardised template for consistency. Doing so was seen to move away from bureaucratic processes associated with the Countryside Stewardship schemes. The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, which set out to define the content of LMPs and how they could support delivery on farms, suggested that reducing an LMP to a core plan could reduce its complexity. Features suggested included farm background, natural capital

maps, actions in progress, planned actions to deliver, and a simple nutrient budget. However, concerns were raised with sharing potentially business sensitive data.

Findings recommended that LMPs should include an assessment of what is already on the land. The Cholderton Estate test suggested this could cover existing risks, current benefits to farm business and how they could be better managed. The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust test agreed by recommending that a baseline of existing natural capital should be included in LMPs. However, experienced advisers in this test reported a baseline assessment on average takes 2 days for medium sized farms to complete with large farms taking up to as long as 4 days. This can be further impacted if there isn't access to current ground-truthed mapping data.

Checklists, questionnaires, drop down lists, scoring cards and spreadsheets continue to be popular format options for keeping LMPs simple to update and monitor over time. Advisers from the Gloucester Wildlife Trust preferred completing checklists against agreed actions to deliver public goods as it provided a guide and limited the amount of text required. The National Farmers Union (NFU) Net Zero test agreed, recommending that actions presented as prompts or checklists are valuable to support effective decision making and to identify potential opportunities. A farm data sheet was developed using Microsoft Excel in the West Country Rivers Trust. This aims to record information collected by adviser visits and can be assessed for potential investment packages. The information in the data sheet can be transferred into an individual farm plan.

There continues to be strong support for the use of maps for LMPs. Benefits include the ability to monitor change, identify targets such as natural capital and areas of risk, foster collaboration through sharing plans with neighbours and tracking deliverables. A habitat mapping tool was developed by the Southwest Partnership for Environmental and Economic Prosperity (SWEEP) as part of the Dartmoor National Park test to produce a map of Dartmoor which resulted in 94% of participants agreeing it would help monitor change. Plantlife explored free online mapping tools such as MAGIC, LandApp and Soilscales and 2 newer apps designed by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. There was strong agreement through the test of the usefulness of mapping ecological data for land management planning. However, challenges were raised by farmers associated with data quality and lack of functionality to input local information.

Three tests cited MAGIC as a useful interactive mapping tool, however feedback showed there were feature limitations that should be addressed to be effective for developing LMPs. Challenges were raised with ensuring maps were up to date and reliable. This led to tests such as the Gloucester Wildlife Trust carrying out ground truthing activities to plug gaps. Some farmers have stated online mapping tools were difficult to use due to lack of experience, confidence, or confusing layout. It was also felt that maps could not fully take the place of an adviser working with a farmer on the ground.

Farmers have reported that accessibility requirements should be considered when introducing online channels and tools for LMPs. In the Aqualate Mere test feedback included that not all participants have the knowledge, time, or inclination to engage with new technology. Participants recommended that some element of support will be needed

for some farmers and should be built into scheme design. In both the Gloucester Wildlife Trust and Peak District National Park tests, both paper and digital maps were seen as necessary as not everyone would have access to online systems. This is supported by 133 farmers (45% of participants) in the NFU Southeast test stating they wanted a combination of online and paper based LMPs.

There are mixed reviews from farmers and land managers on the value of advice and guidance in implementing an LMP. For example, commoners in the Foundation for Common Land test cited that guidance provided them with a better understanding of the public goods. The Small Woods Association test, which looked at the role of incentives in farmers and landowners' decision making around their woodlands agreed, citing advice as an important factor and that free initial advice should be incorporated as an incentive. This test also recommended that practical examples on what they should be doing should be offered through local demonstration woods. However, participants in the NFU Southeast test reported that requiring an adviser to complete an LMP means the requirements are too complicated. The NFU West Midlands test agreed, stating they would want to produce their own LMPs with training and further cited costs of external advisers to complete applications and LMPs as a barrier to participation.

Two tests suggested earned recognition should be included in the LMP to preserve ongoing public goods delivery and reduce administration duplication. This concept was popular with smaller growers as this could help their farm achieve certification. However, some larger growers within the Land Workers Alliance test felt accreditation was a marketing tool that should not be included.

Three tests cited relationships between landlords and tenant farmers as a barrier for tenant participation. Those with short-term tenancies were reluctant to invest financially in long-term agreements and struggled to work collaboratively. It was suggested that landlord engagement would be needed. The Clinton Devon Estates test reported that environmental benchmarking of tenanted land could potentially provide a legal mechanism for landowners to use to encourage improved environmental outcomes of tenanted land.

The MyMeadow Tool – what expert support will participants require to help them plan and record which public goods they will deliver?

There continues to be support for the use of digital tools for producing LMPs. With tests reporting benefits such as the ability to collate, save, edit, and monitor data. Several tools were tested as part of Tests and Trials. The Plantlife test looked at the information and data farmers and land managers require when developing an LMP, including if and how ecological opportunity mapping support this. As well as evaluating farmer responses to an online interactive decision-making tool to aid the development of LMPs.

During the test 87 farmers and advisers were engaged: 37 took part in the mapping workshops, 33 tested the online MyMeadow Tool and 17 contributed their views exploring collaboration between farmers and land managers.

Challenges were found with creating an online decision-making tool at the right level of expertise to account for the range of knowledge levels of the farmers who would use the tool. For example, an arable farmer might be interested in the reversion of arable land back to species rich grassland but have very little knowledge about grassland and livestock management, compared to a lowland grassland farmer. 88% of those who took part in testing the tool thought the language used was at the right level for users.

More than 70% of participants found it useful for assisting decision-making. Showing the value of a tool incorporating both interactive questions and appropriate tailored advice and guidance when setting up an LMP.

A third of those who trialled the tool found it increased their understanding of the grassland restorations, showing how an online decision-making tool has the potential to support advice provision within schemes. Since using the tool 64% of participants assessed themselves to be confident to create a species-rich grassland.

71% would recommend the tool to a friend or fellow landowner. However, those who were uncertain stated that it couldn't substitute one-to-one advice with challenges found with creating a tool that was bespoke enough to each individuals' circumstances.

Overall participants found value in an online decision-making tool to determine management practices, finding it best suited to those at the initial stages of planning habitat creation and/or management. These types of tools could help provide options, speed up decision making and increase understanding. However, this test recognised that these tools cannot be a replacement for skilled one-to-one advice.

How we're shaping policy

Tests and trials provided 3 LMP templates to instigate LMP learning in the Sustainable Farming Incentive pilot. The 3 templates showcased the diversity of templates received and helped pilot participants to design their own plans to start the learning process. Learning from Tests and Trials has been used to help build the current pilot learning process thanks to the abundance of information generated from tests and trials, identifying gaps in understanding, and informing the research agenda.

Tests and Trials also helped design the application prototype for Local Nature Recovery. The policy team requested evidence on what participants want for an LMP and what mapping features should be included. Policy teams were then able to make a case for including maps that allow a participant to update and amend boundaries and natural capital, included areas for free text, added a function to export the LMP to an offline version and reduced the application size to units that were necessary with the opportunity to add other units if required.

The policy question "should an LMP be requested as part of the future environmental land management schemes?" is a current and complex question to answer. Tests and Trials

look to investigate if the benefits of producing one are enough to compensate for the time spent completing and updating an LMP.

Role of advice and guidance

There have been 40 tests looking at advice and guidance since the last evidence report. The purpose of this theme is to understand what support farmers and land managers need to make informed decisions when it comes to applying and delivering actions for schemes. Tests are looking at the role of advice, advice delivery, where and how people get advice, testing advice quality and chargeable advice.

Findings

There continues to be evidence supporting the value of advice and guidance by farmers and land managers. Common drivers for taking advice include economic factors such as cost savings and profitability and environmental factors covering areas such as protection, enhancement and adding benefits.

Feedback from Tests and Trials shows that participants want advice when applying to enter a scheme. As shown by over 90% of those participating in the NFU Net Zero survey wanting initial advice, and 87% of respondents in a carbon offsetting and sequestration test seeking advice when entering the scheme. A test conducted by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire (BCNWT) suggested farmers and landowners in smaller farms might need more assistance when preparing an LMP as they didn't have the time, knowledge, or inclination to complete these on their own. The same test suggested larger estates are more likely to have the financial capacity to pay someone to complete these on their behalf with the support of an adviser.

Three separate tests and trials found that experienced advisers with a wide skill set would be useful to support delivery of agreements. Examples included habitat surveys, mapping techniques, legal advice, natural capital assessments, soil health and regenerative farming. Farmers involved in the Clinton Devon Estates test found farmers were unfamiliar with terminology such as public goods and ecosystems. However, farmers and land managers continue to agree that advice should be optional. Scheme requirements should be simple with clear guidance to enable confident delivery without the need of an adviser. As shown by farmers in the NFU West Midlands and Dartmoor tests stating they'd want to be able to produce Land Management Plans themselves. However, they would continue to want the option of advice in the future as and when needed.

Farmers have cited impartial advisers with local knowledge, established relationships, farm business and communication skills as essential. The NFU West Midlands test found these to be important attributes when considering the quality of advice for farm business, along with a recommendation to include aftercare visits once a scheme is established to give farmers confidence in their approach. Similarly, farmers in the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC) test, felt that knowledge on specific farms and the local area as being

critical to the identifying opportunities for farms. This covers areas such as farm operations, conditions, and rotations. This knowledge is perceived as defining the quality of the plan and in turn optimises the success derived from their farming plan.

Tests and Trials have highlighted opportunities for farmer and land manager upskilling. Participants in the DM Lowes and Sons test felt that land managers and farmers would need to learn new skills to deliver successful Landscape Recovery projects. Training is suggested to work best if it is informal and practical, with jargon free guidance. Four tests found peer-to-peer learning to be a low-cost, effective tool. Examples include farmer groups, demonstrations, cluster groups, or farm visits. 73% of farmers taking part in the Breckland Farmers test supported advice by farmer groups. Farmers in the Pilio test consultation group agreed that their trusted network and neighbours were an essential source of advice.

Farmers and land managers get advice and guidance from a range of sources, often depending on the type of advice they're seeking. One-to-one advice continues to be reported as a popular format. The Soil Association test developed a Public Good Tool (PGT) for farmers and advisers to give an understanding of a farm's strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of public goods. Findings recommended one-to-one advice was effective to support farmers with identifying the impact that making changes will have on their business. Participants stated they would most likely look for support in the first instance from a local adviser. 58% of those who completed the PGT needed a follow up call compared to 20% who had an initial farm visit. This is supported by farmers in the Dartmoor test who when looking at using a scorecard alongside a map and advice for delivering a land management plan found they would want to retain the option of accessing an adviser in person.

Guidance that is accessible is important to farmers and land managers. This is key to supporting farmer autonomy to deliver actions without the use of an adviser. Tests and Trials continue to find varied preference on the format to account for different learning styles. Participants in the Pollardine test stated they look at online resources first before approaching an adviser. However, this can be time-consuming and frustrating if they are unable to find the right material. The Foundation for Common Land tested a mixture of online and do it yourself guidance with specialist advice to fill gaps. Feedback suggested that needs will vary between commons and be dependent on skills and experience, but commons are likely to need a combination of both. 82% of survey responses in the Pollardine test stated that guidance shouldn't replace advice, with some citing tailored and face-to-face advice as critical.

Feedback from tests and trials shows a varied response to whether advice should be paid for by Defra or individual farmers and land managers. Whilst some participants expect to pay for advice, other favour options such as free initial advice when applying for a scheme or a partial payment model from public funding with supplementary contributions from farmers. The Clinton Devon Estates test stated that investing in a trusted adviser provides good value for money when considered against scheme costs and the scale of public benefits. They also reported that advice shouldn't be linked to financial outcomes as this could lead to schemes being based on financial rewards rather than public value.

Participants in the Cornwall Wildlife Trust test expressed that they would prefer to pay for external help, either from a trusted adviser or a Defra accredited adviser, to help complete paperwork. However, Participants in the Peak District test stated that advice should be available fairly for everyone, not just those who can afford it. Concerns were raised around the ability to pay for advice when the Basic Payments Scheme (BPS) is removed. Costs in the area were quoted at approximately £400 per day which could lead to individuals being shut out. This was supported by farmers within the NFU West Midlands test who viewed using an external adviser as a barrier to scheme entry when considering factors such as falling farmers income.

Case study: How will we ensure advisers have the skills and knowledge they need?

In this case study we found mixed views on accreditation compared to adviser experience when it comes to assessing the value of an adviser. The Agricultural Industries Confederation test investigated existing on-farm interactions between farmers and advisers. This involved 12 farmer-adviser case study interviews and 3 focus groups, comprising of 28 farmers.

Farmers and advisers within this test believed that availability of up-to-date technical, as well as policy-based knowledge, contributes towards the delivery of good environmental outcomes.

All advisers and some farmers in this test had qualifications such as FAR, BASIS and FACTS and were on existing professional registers. Some also had specific environmental qualifications, such as BASIS's BETA Conservation Management. These qualifications were recognised by farmers who believed that these mechanisms could be used to bring themselves and their advisers up to speed on the future schemes and environmental management opportunities.

All advisers, new and existing, were found to need to build on their existing skills by obtaining specific qualifications or Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Focussing on training and upskilling advisers in the delivery of environmental benefits to ensure they have up-to-date technical information in this area and to maintain their place on the professional register. However, challenges identified, particularly for farmers, included maintaining their professional status after becoming qualified through channels such as CPD. Farmers reported they struggled to find the time and resource to maintain this.

Following on from this test an overall report on the capacity and capability of advisers used by farmers will help to inform the tests and trials view of advice provision available for schemes.

How we're shaping policy

The findings from tests and trials continue to support policy development around advice needed to support farmers in engaging with the future schemes.

The evidence above continues to highlight the value placed on established, trusted relationships between farmers and their advisers. The Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme policy position is intended to be self-service, being sufficiently straightforward for farmers to make applications and amend agreements themselves using online guidance. Pilot participants will be testing this further, with data collected on participants who did and didn't seek advice whilst completing their applications and agreements.

Evidence highlighting the importance of advisers having the right set of skills will support development of approaches to training and quality assurance, including opportunities for the existing adviser workforce to develop their skills. The appetite for land manager upskilling has also been fed into policy development to complement the use of advice.

We have identified a wide range of advice and guidance sources and adviser training requirements, along with participant views on capability and capacity within the advice sector from our tests and trials. This information will be used to inform advice offers for the future schemes.

Spatial prioritisation

We have 51 tests and trials exploring how, and by whom, spatial prioritisation could be carried out, as well as identifying the most effective scales and mechanisms for targeting environmental outcomes.

Findings

It continues to be a view that a bottom-up approach, where views from local farmers and land managers are used to lead decision making, should be taken to spatial prioritisation. This is because farmers and land managers have extensive knowledge in their local area and provides opportunities for their views to be voiced. This was shown by farmers in the Dartmoor National Park-led trial stating that priorities should be identified by a local farm or commoner led organisation to ensure all parties views are included. The Foundation for Common Land participants agreed finding commoners, as well as farmers, should be involved in the process.

The Clinton Devon Estate test found similar findings with 20 farmers and land managers who conducted a prioritisation exercise across 4 catchments. Non-farming stakeholders were involved initially to identify priorities, followed by farmers who looked at how these could be implemented on their land. This approach was found to be positive, not costly, but requiring significant coordination and time.

Case study: How can we use local convenors to engage with local stakeholders to help bring farmers together to deliver public goods?

Tests and Trials have been looking at different models to support effective governance and facilitate co-ordination across different sectors. The Farm and Environment Consultancy engaged 20 farms in the South of England on the role of a local convener. Farmers supported the concept of a convener being from a farming background and independent of Defra. Another model explored was the use of an adviser board. The ELM Convener Partnership Board test based in Hampshire, trialled this approach.

The test identified over 60 organisations with an interest or influence over the way land in Hampshire is managed, of which 18 were classified as 'key players'. Each organisation was free to decide who should represent them. A farmer discussion group expressed a desire to see 'working farmers' represented on the board. The board's functions included identifying local priorities and communicating these with farmers, providing feedback on local experiences, aligning spending alongside other programmes providing a collaboration framework across public, private, and voluntary sectors, and disseminating information to interested stakeholders.

The Hants ELM Convenor Partnership Advisory Board consists of 10 members. From the private sector, it features one member each from the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), NFU and Southern Water. From the third sector, it features the Hants and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and the Campaign to Protect Rural England. From local government, Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Winchester City Council. There will also be an independent chair and a secretariat.

Through the secretariat, the board will liaise closely with the government's relevant agencies and arm's length bodies and other statutory undertakers.

The adviser board structure was found to provide a balance between the private, voluntary, and public sectors in a group that was small enough to facilitate dialogue and effective decision-making. This test recommended that advisory boards should be established at a sub-national scale to reflect the diverse range of public goods and all land. The terms of reference should include the alignment of spending on schemes rewarding environmental land management alongside other relevant programmes of delivery and providing a framework of collaboration across public, private, and voluntary sectors. A technical officer was recommended to provide support to the board for local delivery, prioritisation, monitoring, and evaluation of environmental land management schemes.

The Black Sheep Countryside Management test found that the support of facilitators is important for local knowledge, technical support, conflict resolution and monitoring and evaluation activities. Participants felt that the role of the facilitator should not be restricted to the delivery of initial objectives at the beginning of tests as priorities evolve. It was also felt that a facilitation team would be beneficial, either instead of or alongside the main facilitator. Providing the same support as outlined above as well as identifying opportunities for additional funding.

Tests and Trials have been exploring with stakeholders the effectiveness of different tools in supporting prioritisation activities across different scales and sectors. The Landworkers Alliance test, involving 60 horticultural growers, adapted the UKHab Classification System so that it could be used for auditing natural capital and land management techniques. They asked growers to test the system through GIS mapping using LandApp and through a checklist approach. This tool was found to be accurate, although some of the growers needed one-to-one support through an 'expert advice session' to learn how to use LandApp. Growers reported it was difficult to map multiple public goods clearly in small areas where they overlap.

The Peak District National Park test used a carbon ready reckoner tool to introduce participants to carbon storage and sequestration opportunities. This was found to be an effective educational tool as a public good, but too simplistic to be used for land management changes. This test also recommended that tools should be available both online and offline to ensure they are accessible to all. The Clinton Devon Estate test explored the use of biodispersal scores to identify existing ecological networks and opportunities for habitat create or enhancement and found them to be useful tools.

Using national character areas (NCAs) to inform spatial planning was investigated by tests and trials. The Peak District National Park test found that NCAs are useful for prioritisation as they're based on soils and landscapes, use data that is easily updated, can incorporate local data, and cover all 6 public goods. The ELM Convener Partnership Board test also concluded that NCAs are suitable for identifying local priorities as they have been defined by farming interaction with ecosystems, topography, soils, and microclimate, which farmers and land managers can readily relate to. This outweighs the disadvantages of NCAs not fitting with administrative and protected landscape boundaries.

There is continued evidence for a need for access to reliable, comprehensive, current data to be able to effectively identify priorities and monitor change. For example, participants within the Aqualate Mere Farmers Group have recognised that data collection activities will be needed alongside existing mapping data to cover gaps. Similarly, the Plantlife-led trial found after engaging with over 50 farmers that ground truthing would be needed for mapping tools. This test found that 67% of participants thought an app would be valuable for recording and monitoring species. 71% of farmers involved stated they would recommend the MyMeadow tool.

The Black Sheep Countryside test found that there is a disconnect between parties who collate data and users of that data for spatial prioritisation activities. Leading to spatial prioritisation decisions being reliant on local knowledge, inhibiting strategic thinking. Suggestions to address this include species recording apps such as the LandApp which shares maps and directories of trusted local specialists. The Cholderton Estate test involving 2 estates of mixed farms on chalk soil concluded that a single portal is needed for the farming industry to access all relevant information across future schemes. This information should be spatially articulated at a scale that is relevant to every farm.

How we're shaping policy

Our tests and trials are influencing policy in several ways. Reflecting our feedback, we are testing how Local Nature Recovery might provide land managers with information about where to focus effort to achieve our environmental objectives most effectively, empowering them to build tailored agreements, choosing options that deliver on our national environmental objectives in a way that is appropriate for their local landscapes. We are testing the best ways to do this, including the role of data and advice.

More widely, Defra is addressing issues around data availability and ensuring that this data is consistent.

Collaboration

25 tests and trials are working with farmers and land managers to understand how collaboration methods can contribute towards good environmental outcomes and encourage farmers and land managers to collaborate effectively. The goal is to achieve a joined-up way of working within the farming community leading to sustainable outcomes for farmers and the environment. Tests continue to gather evidence on the drivers, mechanisms, incentives, and barriers for collaboration.

Findings

Findings show common drivers are diverse across environmental, social, and economic. For example, 95% (82 woodland owners in total) of survey responses for the Small Woods Association test cited species and habitat conservation, local partnerships for advice and support, pest management and joint funding applications as drivers for collaboration.

Evidence shows support for the use of trusted facilitators as an effective model for collaboration. They felt that the role of a facilitator was to manage relationships, organise events, mediate discussions and liaise with regulators. The Dartmoor National Park test agreed that an independent facilitator should support the agreement-making process and delivery of commons through annual work plans. The NFU Southeast trial agreed with these findings when using a facilitator to design land management plans.

There is a shared view within farmers and land managers of the skills and attributes that facilitators should have - including being unbiased with local knowledge, environmental expertise, farm business skills, good communication and leadership skills, and having existing trusted relationships with the community and regulators. This is supported by the Plantlife test which looked at introducing the Weald to Waves Nature Corridor in West Sussex, who voiced the need for an experienced local facilitator to mediate discussions and organise events.

Case study: What tools and methods are most effective at communicating local priorities with farmers, for both their local area and their local holding?

The Irwell CSFF and Catchment Partnership worked with 20 farmers and local organisations to develop and test a collaboration approach to identifying catchment-scale priorities.

Several collaboration mechanisms were investigated including facilitation, one-to-one engagement, Steering Groups, an online virtual hub, membership groups including thematic groups and the use of a convenor.

When looking at the value of facilitated groups a significant percentage of those engaged had experience of being a member of a locally facilitated group and had a largely positive view of their experience. Positive attributes reported included those such as having a local, trusted facilitators, seeing business benefit, feeling 'heard' and being able to have sense of strategic influence. The farmers involved also welcomed the coordinating, organisational and translational skills of the facilitators, as these enabled groups to respond to wider activity, maintain momentum, communicate effectively, and understand different drivers and perspectives.

Participants in this test also noted the benefits of participating in existing facilitation or membership groups included access to funding, training, capacity building, knowledge exchange or changes in perspective through the sharing of good practice.

This test highlighted the value of a facilitation mechanism as necessary to bring farmers together to collaborate on environmental action, especially at scale or in response to spatial prioritisation. This is due to farmers and land managers in the Irwell Catchment being dispersed and less likely to form groups. Feedback indicated that the size and remit of these groups will depend on the purpose and on the ability to reach relevant landowners and managers.

Other models explored included the use of Farm Clusters. The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust found training workshops for farmers and land managers within clusters as crucial to success of landscape scale conservation. The use of a cluster facilitator was found to encourage engagement with activities such as monitoring. The Plantlife test found a key motivation for joining a group was learning from others. Farmers were keen for opportunities for knowledge transfer, whether about farming practices or wildlife. Others found mechanisms such as a Memorandum of Understanding, a document co-produced and signed by farmers, outlining background and a mission statement, as a suitable form of collaboration. The Knepp Estate tested this approach and found it an effective way to gain trust and develop an approach that all parties agree with. However, it was thought this might be difficult for groups larger than 6 landowners due to the challenges with getting all parties to read, review and approve the document.

Financial incentives continue to be seen as a key tool for effective collaboration. Farmers in the Foundation for Common Land test agreed that funding agreements strengthened

collaboration, ownership, and a sense of group achievement. However, evidence is varied on the preferred way to incentivise collaboration, with tests suggesting the use of bonuses, top-up payments, group funding agreements or voucher systems. For example, the Aqualate Mere Farmers Group suggested a top-up system for recognising actions associated with participation, delivery, and management.

Farmers in the Dartmoor test suggested including additional payments to incentivise collaboration on targeted outcomes with added financial value being applied to the most desired outcomes. The ELM partnership in the Irwell Catchment test found that some farmers identified the need for financial incentives for involvement in collaboration. However, some indicated that they do not feel their time or work is often ascribed a value, and this leads to the development of mistrust which is counter to willingness to collaborate. It was suggested that incentives could also be things like the ability to access support which provides business benefit. Tests and Trials will be looking at the role of incentives for collaboration.

Collaboration has been viewed as a useful learning tool as it enables sharing of best practice. As shown by the Countryside and Community Research Institute finding that collaboration can improve understanding of the underlying benefits of conservation. Supported by the Irwell CSFF and Catchment partnership who found collaborative experiences can support learning through engagement with knowledgeable peers, organised activities, and productivity experts. The Prowater test also found that collaboration helps to reduce duplication of information and identify shared opportunities with farmers in existing cluster groups.

Tests have cited the value of common ground between farmers and land managers as key to collaboration. The Yorkshire Dales National Park's Raydale Project highlighted the importance of this with participants being able to relate to each other's situations. Plantlife's findings supported this with greater group cohesion achieved between farmers with similar farming systems, scales and focuses. However, 2 tests found tenancies can act as a potential barrier to collaboration, due to tenants' reluctance to invest in a long-term vision for land management as well as retaining agreements during tenancy change overs. Conversely tenants with farmland owned by the organisations such as the National Trust and Water Companies found this helped increase the ease of collaboration. The Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust has suggested that collaboration should be promoted as an opportunity to participants by highlighting the potential financial benefits.

There are many social benefits of collaboration, such as promoting social interactions between farmers, sharing risks and benefits, and encouraging a sense of community. For example, the Somerset Levels Lowland Peat test looking at Moor Associations found farmers and land managers beginning to see themselves as a community united by a shared goal. The Plantlife test found being part of a group is important to farmers to aid against feelings of isolation.

However, a barrier that continues to be highlighted by a small number of participants is trust between neighbouring farmers and land managers. There were concerns with

inaction of members within a collaborative agreement. Surveys and feedback sessions from a test with 24 farmers in the Cleve Hills area of South Shropshire showed a need for a cultural shift in mindsets towards landowners working collaboratively with neighbours. Contrasting farming priorities are highlighted as an obstacle to cooperation. Similarly, the Peak District National Park found that different farming and management styles could be a potential barrier to collaboration, especially where there are differing views between neighbours on how to balance productivity and wildlife. Supported by 86% of survey respondents (100 responses in total) for the Common Land test highlighting the main challenge for collaboration is getting agreement from all parties.

How we're shaping policy

Tests and trials' findings on facilitation and financial incentives have led to the decision to continue testing whether more can be paid for local join-up to achieve greater impact in Local Nature Recovery specifically. There has also been a commitment to a new facilitation offer with the goal being to make this more flexible and straightforward than the current offer.

Going forward we aim to address a key gap in our collaboration tests and trials – how to construct agreements between tenants and landowners. We also aim to narrow down what type and level of financial incentive is needed – while most tests and trials refer to the need for funding, we still lack clarity on type of payment and exact costings.

Payments

We have 53 tests and trials addressing payments. The tests under this theme focus on the financial incentives needed for the delivery of environmental interventions, methods of calculating payment rates, appropriate basis of payment, natural capital valuation approaches and preferences for payment triggers and frequency.

Findings

There is agreement among Test and Trial participants that an income foregone plus costs (IF+C) model may not provide enough of an incentive for farmers. Findings suggest that payment rates need to include an element of reward for the farmer, and that payment rates within current schemes do not accurately reflect costs incurred. For example, Commoners in the Wensum Farmers Group suggested there should be an annual payment and that payments should factor in the maintenance costs of sites that are difficult to manage.

Members in the South Lincolnshire Land Management Group within the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust test agreed, stating that current SFI soil standards need to be more ambitious and to improve payment rates to encourage uptake in productive agricultural land. Doing so could lead to improved soil health and encourage practices that promote

restorative agriculture. Participants within the Landworkers Alliance agreed when looking at the horticulture sector and suggested that the current SFI-points based system is unfeasible due to issues such as scale, timescales and complexity of actions and associated costs.

Case study: What is the best approach to setting payment rates for specific sectors?

The Landworkers Alliance test set out to design and test tools to enable grower businesses of all sizes to plan a programme of public goods (PG) actions to be rewarded by payments. Tools needed to be flexible enough to cope with the diversity of business types and sizes within the horticulture sector, whilst remaining simple to use and able to enhance take up of the future schemes. The project ran for 15 months and involved 65 growers, representing most of the systems and scales operating in England.

The Public Goods Action Audit (PBAA) catalogue was explored as an alternative SFI and LNR payment system. This worked by participants being assigned payment rates for each action based upon the following calculation:

$$\text{Payment} = \text{quantity of action} \times \text{cost of action} \times \text{adjustable incentive payment}$$

To address challenges with ensuring the tool was simple, flexible and reflective of the complexity of the horticulture sector, the group recommended that rates could be set by a panel of representatives from across a range of horticultural subsectors and Defra.

All 33 growers who tested the catalogue favoured this payment mechanism with it being credited as being accessible to growers operating on all scales due to the actions being quantified in line with the most appropriate unit, for example hectares, days, meters and so on. Growers appreciated the clear and transparent layout of the catalogue and the fact it enabled them to build up a costed LMP from individually monetised actions. Feedback showed that this allowed the flexibility for growers to choose actions appropriate to their business to build a bespoke LMP.

This test found that the concept of a Public Goods Action catalogue could be translated into other sectors beyond horticulture and applied in the development of the Local Nature Recovery scheme.

When looking at carbon management activities participants within the Brown and Co's test preferred a fixed payment rate rather than relying on carbon markets flexible rates. They also stated they would carry out certain activities without payment, such as rotational diversity, non-inversion cultivates and nitrogen management.

Another mechanism we've been exploring is a natural capital payment approach. The Clinton Devon test has reported success with this approach when engaging with farmers to develop 2 costed catchment scale Landscape Nature Recovery plans. It found natural capital payments had the potential to support farmers and land managers identifying land use improvements, natural capital account and value for money provided. This test has

demonstrated that the potential public benefit value is 10 times greater than the delivery costs.

Tests have been looking at payments for public access. Findings show a variety of views on this concept, but evidence shows that land managers believe that training is of high value and should be self-funded, followed by payments for resulting visits. Participants within the Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) test suggested that land managers could receive a payment per farm visit based on hours spent on delivery. Participants in the Landworkers' Alliance test were open to offering public engagement, but highlighted barriers such as time demands of hosting visits and health and safety with inviting the public onto farms. Around 50% of participants supported the idea of a Defra funded 'public engagement coordinators' who would offer a service of outreach to schools and other community groups. Other growers in this test preferred a direct payment to their own farms to help them meet the costs of public engagement covering staff time, facilities, and educational materials.

How we're shaping policy

Reflecting findings from tests and trials, the need for setting fair and effective payment rates to incentivise future scheme uptake has been recognised. The approach to payments under the Sustainable Farming Incentive has been updated to better reflect understanding of delivery costs, with payment rates based on up-to-date market data which provide a fair compensation to farmers delivering Sustainable Farming Incentive actions. We have received a positive response from tests and trials that have tested these indicative rates.

Tests and Trials' findings around maintenance payments has contributed to policy understanding that payments need to recognise the value of existing natural assets without unfairly disadvantaging those already protecting and enhancing these assets. This is a key principle of scheme design across all 3 of the environmental land management schemes and will be achieved by paying for ongoing management and maintenance of existing assets.

Innovative delivery mechanisms

We have 41 tests and trials researching innovative delivery mechanisms. This theme will examine novel financial delivery mechanisms, such as reverse auctions, results-based approaches, and blended finance.

Blended finance findings

Blended finance refers to the alignment of public and private funding to deliver environmental outcomes that are mutually beneficial. Evidence shows a lack of trust between farmers and private sectors in ensuring both parties objectives are prioritised. For example, farmers in the Pilio test wanted a list of vetted investors provided by Defra. The

same test found farmers also wanted assurance from Defra, ahead of committing to an agreement, that payments would be covered by Defra if companies were to default on payments, change priorities or go into administration. This test found these views were from a lack of trust and the potential for private companies to not be able to keep up with payments over long periods of time.

The Pollardine Farm test found the biggest barrier to blended finance is managing multiple parties and funding sources. Participants in the DM Lowes and Sons test raised the importance of a secure income stream to bridge the gap between BPS and current business income and private funding as land use business models adapt to Landscape Recovery.

There has been evidence across multiple tests for the desire for government to play a role in facilitating agreements between parties. For example, the Dillington Hall Estate found a need for government regulation to safeguard interests of both parties. The 33 land managers who participated in the Cotswold Downs test proposed a Landscape Recovery market model where private investors provide funding without the need for public funding, with government providing market regulation. Most of the participants responded positively to the model and were supportive of governments regulatory involvement.

The same test looked at investor and buyer willingness to engage in private investment models in Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for Landscape Recovery. They developed a 'Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)' schedule. This found that private funding through PES schedule would be sufficient to fund landscape recovery without the need for public funding. The schedule estimated a £4,750 p/ha (per hectare) revenue, almost 20 times more than the £275 p/ha revenue estimated by local farmers. Investors suggested that to incentivise farmers to participate in PES schemes, payments based on actual results rather than the current approach of using forecasted results are needed.

The Dartmoor National Park test found concerns with tenant eligibility in accessing private funding and the potential instability of the private sector. This resulted in a preference for a blended finance model with a mixture of private and public funding by Defra.

Reverse auctions findings

Reverse auctions are a competitive pricing model where farmers and land managers can bid for the sale of natural assets to private organisations.

The RSPB Turtle Dove Reverse Auction test, which aims to look at the role reverse auctions could play in the development of future schemes rewarding environmental land management, found most bids were successful and that 2 to 4 weeks is an appropriate timescale for an auction to be live. This highlighted the importance of engagement with bidders to identify suitable times of the year to run the auction to encourage greater participation. This test will be further exploring how reverse auctions can encourage stakeholder engagement.

However, some Land Managers within the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust voiced concerns that reverse auctions for ecosystem services might favour larger estates over smaller farms.

Payment by Results (PbR) findings

The Dartmoor National Park Authority test found that a PbR mechanism was unfeasible as rates made farms financially unviable. Participants in the Natural England PbR trial have tested a hybrid PbR scheme, combining fixed and performance-based top-up payments, to reduce the financial risk to farmers. Participants have reported a removal of the risk of a nil payment as major advantage of hybrid PbR approach, making it suitable for whole farm scale. However, this report finds that where the base payment amount is fixed is critical to hybrid PbR scheme success.

A group of commoners within the Wensum Farmers Group test agreed that PbR should consider the baseline state of the landscape to prevent the risk of land managers allowing land to degrade to access higher payments. Land managers within this test reported the importance of payments to cover costs, followed by PbR and that this approach could stimulate innovation.

The barriers to calculating and implementing natural capital valuation have led it to be excluded from the early roll-out of the new schemes. However, tests and trials are continuing to explore the feasibility of calculating and implementing natural capital payments on a 'top up' basis, with a view to potentially revisiting the approach in future offers.

How we're shaping policy

The findings from tests and trials are being used to develop continuing policy thinking around the role these innovative delivery mechanisms can play within the future schemes. Specifically for blended finance, we are looking to develop our understanding of barriers and potential solutions, facilitation mechanisms, mechanisms to determine the value of environmental outcomes and how future schemes can be designed to encourage private finance.

Ensuring all 3 environmental land management schemes blend public and private finance and that public money does not discourage private investment are 2 of our scheme objectives. Learning from tests and trials to date has informed policy understanding around areas such as the value of intermediaries to facilitate the aggregation and sale of environmental outcomes from land managers to private-sector organisations.

Tests and trials' have also informed our thinking on the role of market-based price discovery mechanisms by looking at the cost-effectiveness of reverse auctions and payment rates determined by auction.

5. Conclusion

From October 2021 to March 2022, tests and trials have continued to explore how the future environmental land management schemes could work on the ground with our stakeholders. The evidence and learnings from Tests and Trials contribute to the wider evidence base to inform policy and future scheme design. These insights have been used to identify gaps in understanding and inform the research agenda.

This Evidence Report has shown how Tests and Trials findings have been used to inform policy thinking across our 6 themes, such as on the role of market-based price discovery mechanisms and the importance of payments reflecting current delivery and ongoing maintenance costs. Evidence has also been used to highlight common barriers across themes such as the access to reliable and consistent data. Findings have shown opportunities for policy development such as the wide range of advice and guidance sources and adviser training requirements. This information will be used to inform advice offers for the future schemes. Feedback from Tests and Trials has also led to changes in scheme design such as the commitment to introduce a more flexible and straightforward facilitation offer and added mapping features for LMPs.

Tests and Trials will continue to build on this evidence in the following areas:

- how to construct collaborative agreements between tenants and landowners
- what type and level of financial incentive is needed to encourage collaborative action
- how we can ensure all 3 schemes blend public and private finance and that public money does not 'crowd-out' private investment
- to develop our understanding of the barriers to blended finance and the potential solutions, as well as the facilitation mechanisms and ways to determine the value of environmental outcomes
- testing with pilot participants the use of advice and guidance when completing applications and amending agreements for the SFI scheme
- exploring approaches to training and quality assurance for advisers, including opportunities for existing advisers to develop their skills
- investigating if the benefits of producing an LMP are enough to compensate for the time spent completing and updating an LMP
- how Local Nature Recovery might provide land managers with information about where to focus effort to achieve our environmental objectives most effectively
- investigating the effectiveness of reverse auctions and PbR at a larger scale and how we value payments across specific sectors and on a natural capital basis

In our next evidence report we will cover how we have explored these areas and informed policy design.

6. Annex A: Headline findings by scheme

Land Management Plans (LMP)

Sustainable Farming Incentive

- Landlords and tenant farmers not being joined up can be a barrier to scheme participation.

Local Nature Recovery

- LMPs should include an assessment of existing natural capital.

Universal findings

- LMPs must be simple to complete, use plain language and be flexible to different farms circumstances.
- Reducing an LMP to a core plan could reduce its complexity.
- Actions presented as prompts or checklists are valuable to support effective decision making.
- There continues to be a strong support for the use of maps and digital tools for LMPs.
- Farmers have reported that accessibility requirements should be considered when introducing online sources for LMPs.
- Earned recognition could be included in LMPs to encourage ongoing public goods delivery.
- There are mixed views from farmers and land managers on the value of advice and guidance in implementing an LMP.

Role of Advice and Guidance

Local Nature Recovery

- Guidance that is accessible and jargon free is important. However, this isn't viewed as an effective replacement for in-person advice, farm visits or events.

Landscape Recovery

- There are opportunities for farmers and land manager upskilling.
- Peer-to-peer learning continues to be found to be a valuable resource for sharing best practice.

Universal findings

- Farmers and land managers want advice when applying to enter a scheme.
- There is continued support for advice being optional.
- It's important to farmers and land managers that advisers are experienced, local, trusted and impartial with local knowledge.

- There is a mixed view on accreditation compared to adviser experience.
- One-to-one advice continues to be reported as a popular format for advice.
- Earned recognition could be included in LMPs to encourage ongoing public goods delivery.
- There are mixed views from farmers and land managers on the value of advice and guidance in implementing an LMP.

Spatial Prioritisation

Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery

- Participants have reported that the role of a facilitator is to provide local knowledge, technical support, conflict resolution, monitoring, and evaluation activities.
- There is continued support for the use of tools to support effective prioritisation activities across different scales and sectors.
- Some participants have reported a disconnect between individuals who collate and use data for spatial prioritisation activities.

Universal findings

- A bottom-up approach, where views from local farmers and land managers are used to lead decision making, is recommended when identifying priorities.
- National character areas (NCAs) were found to be useful for prioritisation as they use accessible, local data, and cover all 6 public goods.
- There is continued evidence for a need for access to reliable, comprehensive, current data to effectively identify priorities and monitor change.

Collaboration

Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery

- Evidence shows support for the use of trusted facilitators as an effective model for collaboration.
- It is recommended that to be effective facilitators should have certain skills and attributes.
- Tests have cited the value of common ground between farmers and land managers as key to collaboration.

Universal findings

- Financial incentives continue to be seen as key tool for effective collaboration. It is unclear what format incentives should take.
- Collaboration has been viewed as a useful learning tool as it enables sharing of best practice.
- One of the reported outcomes of collaboration is the development of a sense of community which comes with range of social benefits.

Payments and Innovative Delivery Mechanisms

Sustainable Farming Incentive

- To encourage participation in higher ambition levels for SFI standards it's recommended that payments need to be increased.
- Tests have been looking at payments for public access. Findings show a variety of views on this concept, but evidence shows that land managers believe that training is of high value and should be self-funded, followed by payments for resulting visits.
- Findings indicate a lack of trust between farmers and private sectors in ensuring both parties objectives are prioritised.

Local Nature Recovery

- Removal of the risk of a nil payment was seen as a benefit of a hybrid PbR approach, making it suitable for whole farm scale. However, reports find that where the base payment amount is fixed is critical to hybrid PbR scheme success.
- There is support from Test and Trial participants for government to play a role in bridging the gap between farmers, land managers and corporates.

Landscape Recovery

- A Natural Capital Payments mechanism was reported as having the potential to support identifying land use improvements, natural capital account and value for money.
- Farmers indicated that PbR should consider the baseline state of the landscape to mitigate the potential risk of land managers allowing land to degrade to access higher payments.

Universal findings

- There is agreement among Test and Trial participants that an income foregone plus costs (IF+C) model may not provide enough of an incentive for farmers.
- A test looking at reverse auctions highlighted the importance of engagement with bidders to identify suitable times of the year to run auctions to encourage greater participation.

7. Annex B: List of live and concluded Tests and Trials

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
Peak District National Park Authority	Using the White Peak National Character Area (NCA) for testing and trials ideas	Peak District National Park	Advice and Guidance LMP Spatial Prioritisation
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trusts	A trial to test the creation of land management plans through a partnership of 5 Wildlife Trusts, working across 8 counties, and engaging 100 farmers	Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Berks Bucks and Oxon and Hampshire and the Isle of Wight	Advice and Guidance
Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust	Practitioner-led farmland wildlife monitoring	Pewsey Vale, Wiltshire	Advice and Guidance
ELM Convenor Partnership	ELM Convenor Partnership for Hampshire	Hampshire	Collaboration Spatial Prioritisation LMPs Advice and Guidance

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust with South Lincolnshire Water Partnership and University of Lincolnshire	Habitat restoration at landscape scale through a partnership driven market for integrated land and water management services	South Lincolnshire	Advice and Guidance Payments and IDM Spatial Prioritisation
NFU – South East	Farmer group plans: how to achieve more, bigger, better and more joined up	South East England	LMP Advice and Guidance Payments Spatial Prioritisation Collaboration
Farm and Environment Consultancy	Test a mechanism for identifying the Hope Valley's most important natural capital assets	Yorkshire and The Humber	Advice and Guidance Spatial Prioritisation Payments
Foundation for Common Land	Development of a Commons Proofing Tool	Nationwide	Advice and Guidance Collaboration LMP Spatial Prioritisation Payments and IDM
Small Woods Association	Small Woodland management option - Strategic networks for sustainable woodland management	Nationwide	Advice and Guidance LMP Payments

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
Aqualate Castle Holdings	Blending Public and Private Finance within Landscape Recovery	5,000 hectares of Aqualate Mere Catchment Group in Shropshire	IDM
NFU West Midlands	Test approaches to natural capital delivery in a network of mixed farming businesses in north Shropshire and north-west Staffordshire	North Shropshire/Staffordshire and South Shropshire	LMP Advice and Guidance
Claughton Hall Estate	Claughton Hall Estate Test	Garstang, Preston, Lancashire	LMP Advice and Guidance Collaboration
Plantlife	Plantlife	Herefordshire, Hampshire, Duchy of Cornwall, Worcestershire and Sandringham Estate	LMP Collaboration Payments Advice and Guidance s
Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Trialling how Environmental Land Management and net gain could help to deliver the Nature Recovery Network in peri-urban areas	Greater Manchester Peri-Urban areas	Collaboration Spatial Prioritisation LMP Payments

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
Knepp Estate	Weald to Waves	Southeast of England, and encompass Climping on the Sea, the Arun to Adur catchment and Sussex Trawler Exclusion Zone, the Knepp Castle Estate, St Leonard's Forest, Wakehurst Place, ultimately connecting to Ashdown Forest.	LMP Spatial Prioritisation Payments
Irwell CSFF and Catchment Partnership	Investigate the feasibility of securing local stakeholder engagement with the farm planning process	Greater Manchester Peri-Urban areas	Spatial Prioritisation Collaboration Advice and Guidance LMPs
NFU	NFU IPM	Nationwide	LMPs Advice and Guidance Payments Collaboration
Landworkers' Alliance and Growing Communities	Growing the goods: an ELMS trial to map, assess and improve delivery of public goods in the horticulture sector	Nationwide	LMPs Advice and Guidance Payments
Natural England and Yorkshire Dales/Norfolk	Payment by Results	Yorkshire Dales National Park	Advice and Guidance Payments and IDM

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)	Multi-functional land and water management on the Somerset Levels	Somerset Levels and Moors	Payments and IDM Advice Spatial Prioritisation LMPs Collaboration
Dartmoor National Park	To test and trial a plan-based approach, building on our experience of Dartmoor Farming Futures	Dartmoor National Park	Spatial Prioritisation LMPs Payments
Barningham Farmers Group	Explore the blending of finance between public and private funding, via a platform driving private sector investment into supporting land use change	Barningham Estate in Richmond, North Yorkshire	Payments and IDM LMPs
NFU	Net Zero	Nationwide	LMPs Advice and Guidance
RSPB	Investigating the potential for reverse auctions to deliver the recovery of priority species	South East England	Payments and IDM Collaboration

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
Brown and Co.	Develop partnerships between agriculture and polluter industries to realise, promote and attribute a monetary value to land management practices promoting carbon capture and storage through a polluter pays principal.	York to Oxford	Advice and Guidance Innovative Payments and IDM
Soil Association and Partners	Testing the Public Goods Tool for ELM	Exe Valley, The Clun	LMPs Advice and Guidance Spatial Prioritisation
Cornwall Wildlife Trust and the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire	Delivering a catchment-based nature recovery network	Upper Nene Valley Catchment	Advice and Guidance Spatial Prioritisation LMPs
Clinton Devon Estate	Catchment Co-design in East Devon: testing collaborative approaches to landscape planning and ecosystem service delivery	Beer and Lower Otter Catchments, East Devon	LMP Advice and Guidance Spatial Prioritisation Payments

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
Entrade	EnTrade/Wessex Water Proposal	Poole Harbour Catchment, Dorset	Payments and IDM Collaboration
Cholderton Estate	Establish a non-statutory Adviser board to help the public sector develop an LMP for Hampshire and assist in securing delivery	Hampshire	Spatial Prioritisation Innovative Delivery Mechanisms Advice and Guidance Collaboration
Historic England	Integrating Heritage within Land Management Plans.	Shropshire	LMP Advice and Guidance
Agricultural Industries Confederation	Evaluation of Animal, Crop Nutrition and Agronomy Advisers	Gloucestershire, Cambridgeshire, Kent. Bedfordshire, North Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Suffolk, Uttoxeter Herefordshire.	Advice and Guidance
Pollardine Farm	Develop online platform to facilitate a blended finance	South Shropshire	Advice and Guidance Payments and IDM
Black Sheep Countryside Management	To develop the next generation of collaborative initiatives	Wiltshire	Advice and Guidance Spatial Prioritisation Collaboration
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	Raydale Project	Raydale/Wensleydale	Advice and Guidance

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
Wensum Farmers Group	Blended finance, advice and guidance	The Upper Wensum river catchment area in North Norfolk.	Payments and IDM Advice and Guidance
Pilio	Exploring a delivery and tools solution for Landscape Recovery	Evenlode catchment area in the Costwolds and the River Thames Catchment area in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.	LMPs Payments and IDM Advice and Guidance
Dillington Hall Estate	Using the Landscape Recovery scheme within a blended finance solution for sustainable land use change	Wendling Beck catchment and surroundings, Norfolk	Payments and IDM
DM Lowes and Sons	Testing and comparing two different approaches to funding and delivering landscape recovery	Barningham Village, County Durham	Payments and IDM Advice and Guidance
Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF)	LEAF Demo Farms and LEAF Marque as an environmental land management platform	Geographically dispersed regions: Somerset Wiltshire Cambridgeshire Northumberland Norfolk Hampshire Kent Northamptonshire East Yorkshire Hertfordshire North Yorkshire Lincolnshire Essex Suffolk	LMPs Advice and Guidance

Organisation	Title	Location	Priorities: (Information on how the proposals will inform Test and Trial priorities)
South East Rivers Trust	PROWATER	Kent	Payments LMPs
Zodus Ltd	The Cotswold Downs Project	The Cotswold Downs is located to the north-east of Bath covering 4,100 acres of varied landscape types	Payments Collaboration
Breckland Farmers Network	Investigate mechanisms to achieve Landscape Recovery objectives through collaboration	Breckland Region	Spatial Prioritisation Collaboration Advice and Guidance
North Cumbria Farmers Group	The Forgotten Lands ELM Test	Cumbria	Land Management Plan Advice and Guidance Spatial Prioritisation