

## **Test & Trial: Ensuring ELM is effective on commons**

Abridged version of proposal to Defra

### **A. Summary**

This project covers 8 Test areas of England with common land – most likely the Lake District, Dartmoor, North York Moors, Exmoor, Shropshire, Malvern Hills, Cotswolds and the New Forest. It will work with a range of people including farmers/graziers, common land owners, public sector and conservation staff and land agents. The work will be in two parts.

**Test** – in 4 Test areas we will work with local stakeholders to produce a co-designed, agreed commons management plan for one common in each of the Test areas. These plans will support pastoral commoning and enhance public goods delivery on commons.

We will take the learning from these “tests” to develop a prototype delivery model for developing commons management plans, including a commons toolkit covering baseline data gathering; comprehensive mapping of public goods (environmental, social, economic, cultural and heritage) on the common; collective assessment (health checks) of these public goods; methods for agreeing and prioritising public goods delivery; good governance; framework for commons management plans.

**Trial** – Work with 4 commons from the other 4 Test areas to trial and refine the prototype delivery model for ELM. Develop practical guidance for policy makers and analysts in government to commons proof ELM and other policies on commons

### **B. Delivery of the T & T**

This T & T will be undertaken through collaboration with a range of people and organisations including those with legal interest in common land (common rights holders and landowners), those with statutory duties and others with a conservation interest in 8 Test Areas. The T & T facilitator will work with local partners who can help and guide us in the delivery of this T & T. We will contract local trusted intermediaries/ facilitators to carry out participatory engagement activities in the test areas.

### **C. Work Plan**

#### **Preparatory work**

- 1) Recruit T & T facilitator
- 2) Identify local partners to form a local collaborative partnership for each of the 8 Test areas to support/guide the delivery of this T & T. The role of the local collaborative partnership will be to:
  - a) Enable this T & T to be informed by local expertise and accepted locally

- b) Support data gathering and encourage local stakeholders to get involved
  - c) Identify local trusted intermediaries
  - d) Check this T & T is coherent with, and not duplicating, other T & T activity in the locality
- 3) Identify and Recruit test commons and local facilitators from the 8 Test areas with input from the local collaborative partnership
- a) Develop a selection criterion including geography, complexity of governance, landscape type, types of grazing livestock, engagement with previous schemes and level of current management and cooperation etc.
  - b) Draft a participatory engagement plan for participating commons that explains the test, ways of working (who will be involved, their roles, the activities), the input (time and resources) required and remuneration offered.
  - c) Recruit local facilitators
  - d) Identify a representative sample of commons (eight) to be included in this T & T through a selection process that encourages and supports commons to apply to be part of this T & T
  - e) Select the four commons to participate in the Test (Phase 1) and the four to participate in the Trial (Phase 2).
  - f) Recruit test commons - This will involve obtaining agreement from potential participants (all those who would have a stake in an ELM agreement) on the commons that they are willing to participate in the Test based on the participatory engagement plan (3b). Four of these commons will participate in developing the delivery model (Test) and the remainder (4) will provide further testing of the model once it is developed (Trial).
- 4) Gather quantitative data about the eight test commons. Work with:
- a) Local collaborative partnership and local facilitators to advise on existing published and unpublished baseline data relating to the test commons.
  - b) OS and their partners e.g. LandApp and Esri to draw together data and information on these commons and develop maps to show the data

- 5) Gather information on Heath Check options and draft a health check format

## **Test**

- 6) Plan and prepare materials for participatory engagement using participatory action research tools such as: semi-structured interview schedules for key informants, commons walks, pre-populated maps and group sessions
- 7) Support local facilitators to undertake co-design and development of a common land management plan and delivery model with the four participating commons. Using the maps and engagement plan work with the participants from the four test commons and collaborative partnership members to:
- a) Collate data about experience of previous scheme delivery such as how they worked, what they achieved, governance of commoners' associations, the internal agreement, the options and outcomes delivered, who did what, how the common is managed in relation to the home farm, who got paid and for what

- b) Review the maps for accuracy and add data on hefts, changes to numbers of livestock /stocking calendars, breeds, numbers of active graziers, infrastructure, cultural heritage, outdoor events and other relevant information
  - c) Adapt draft health check format to co-design a locally appropriate health check tool and assess the condition of the current public goods on the common
  - d) Build on the results of the health check to identify opportunities to increase public goods delivery and how and who will deliver this
  - e) Explore how payments for maintaining and enhancing public goods could be distributed
  - f) Prioritise and agree on actions that can be delivered and paid for in the lifetime of the scheme
  - g) Build on all the previous points to produce an agreed draft land management plan for each test common
  - h) Discuss and record the process and issues on where consensus could be reached and where it couldn't be agreed
- 8) Draw together the learning from the Test on all 4 commons to:
- a) Develop a prototype delivery model for producing commons specific land management plans
- 9) Produce an interim report on progress

### **Trial**

- 10) Prepare Trial engagement plan and re-engage the other 4 Test Areas/commons
- 11) Deliver engagement plan to test the delivery model and health check developed in the Test phase to:
- a) Develop a land management plan for each of the 4 commons using/adapting the model developed in the Test phase.
  - b) Further refine the delivery model and health check, so they are appropriate for a wide range of commons scenarios.
- 12) Draw together the learning from the Trial to finalise the delivery model and health check
- 13) Wider engagement through 3 regional workshops to present and refine the delivery model
- 14) Compile a final report on the delivery model and health check and the development process, with recommendations for commons proofing ELM design to ensure effective delivery on commons. Recommendations to include advice and guidance required, ways to support negotiation, collaboration and consensus building, distribution of payments and governance models for commoner's associations

### **D. Resources**

This T & T will pay for:

- T & T facilitator and other direct staff costs
- local facilitators
- fees for attendance at engagement activities
- Meeting venues and refreshments
- National travel and subsistence