

Response ID ANON-6JAU-FMQX-J

Submitted to **Environmental Land Management: policy discussion**

Submitted on **2020-07-31 23:21:37**

Introduction

1 Do you want your responses to be confidential?

No

if you answered yes to this question please give your reason :

2 What is your name?

Name:

New Forest Commoners Defence Association

3 What is your email address?

Email:

ojcook@gmail.com

4 Where are you located?

Please select:

South West

5 Who are you?

Please select:

Lobby Group

Please specify:

A group representing the interests of the New Forest Commoners

consultation questions

6 Do you have any comments on the design principles on page 14? Are they the right ones? Are there any missing?

Please leave your comments below:

N/A

7 Do you think the ELM scheme as currently proposed will deliver each of the objectives on page 8?

Please leave your comments below:

N/A

8 What is the best way to encourage participation in ELM? What are the key barriers to participation, and how do we tackle them?

Please leave your comments below:

Support – Ensuring that there is dedicated support for common land, so that claimants have access to someone that has some understanding of the commoning system which is unique to the New Forest.

Flexibility and adaptability – ensuring that agreement holders can review their agreements in the event that their circumstances change during the life of the scheme.

Fairness – ensure that those who deliver the public goods receive the reward for providing them.

9 For each tier we have given a broad indication of what types of activities could be paid for. Are we focussing on the right types of activity in each tier?

Please leave your comments below:

Tier 2; This Tier should include provision for projects supporting native and rare breeds

Tier 3; This should include support for National Park Authorities and or Land Managers for operating adequate Wildlife and Recreation Ranger services to ensure that habitats are protected and the growing public pressure on these areas in properly managed.

10 Delivering environmental outcomes across multiple land holdings will in some cases be critical. For example, for establishing wildlife corridors or improving water quality in a catchment. What support do land managers need to work together within ELM, especially in tiers 2 and 3?

Please leave your comments below:

Land managers will need support from people experienced in coordinating such schemes. New Forest Commoners currently have the support of the New Forest Land Advice Service which is funded by the current Higher-Level Stewardship Scheme.

A dedicated commons support team which can be contacted directly by applicants.

11 While contributing to national environmental targets (such as climate change mitigation) is important, ELM should also help to deliver local environmental priorities, such as in relation to flooding or public access. How should local priorities be determined?

Please leave your comments below:

The current HLS agreement structure (Natural England, Verderers of the New Forest, Forestry England and Commoners Defence Association) is a great example of how priorities can be determined.

In the future this can be further improved with new partners such as the National Trust and we can work collaboratively to decide priorities, and therefore ensure and ELMS funding is directed to the most important environmental targets.

12 What is the best method for calculating payments rates for each tier, taking into account the need to balance delivering value for money, providing a fair payment to land managers, and maximising environmental benefit?

Please leave your comments below:

Tier 1 – Should be on a cost plus basis meaning that the agreement holder (or it's beneficiaries) are reimbursed(at the very least) the cost of producing the public good plus an additional amount to reflect the cost of entering and managing the scheme. Many Countryside Stewardship agreements do not offer this basic remuneration meaning that only those that intend to provide the public good(s) regardless are entering the scheme.

Tiers 2 & 3 – Where these are generally more project based, it is important that basis for determining the payment rates is flexible and tailored to the individual scheme. It is important the value of the public goods being delivered are taken into account when determining the scheme payment rate. The New Forest HLS scheme is a multi-organisational collaboration which supports a wide range of projects and delivers a vast range of public goods on a landscape scale. The agreement covers over 20,000 hectares of land and provides essential support the New Forest's unique commoning systems, which is delivered by hundreds of individual commoners. It is vital therefore that the way in which payments are made to the various beneficiaries is not too prescribed to ultimately ensure that the public are getting value for money.

13 To what extent might there be opportunities to blend public with private finance for each of the 3 tiers?

Please leave your comments below:

We believe that there are opportunities for match funding under all three tiers. There are two examples where this has worked well recently in the New Forest: 1) Our Past, Our Future (OPOF) is £4.4m project, which has been underpinned by heritage lottery funding but heavily supported by local public and private organisations; 2) Under the New Forest Verderers' Higher Level Stewardship Agreement, commoners are able to apply for a grant which is typically paid up to 50% of the value of an item being purchased to support the applicants commoning activities.

14 As we talk to land managers, and look back on what has worked from previous schemes, it is clear that access to an adviser is highly important to successful environmental schemes. Is advice always needed? When is advice most likely to be needed by a scheme participant?

Please leave your comments below:

Larger more complicated schemes will need greater support

If Commoners will be applying for support directly from Defra (Rural Payments Agency) then it is essential that there is a common land team that is able to provide this specialist advice. This has been a serious omission from the Basic Payment Scheme.

Given the scale of the potential ELM Scheme in the New Forest, it is essential that proper support is given to enable the creation and delivery of the scheme.

15 We do not want the monitoring of ELM agreements to feel burdensome to land managers, but we will need some information that shows what's being done in fulfilling the ELM agreement. This would build on any remote sensing, satellite imagery and site visits we deploy. How might self-assessment work? What methods or tools, for example photographs, might be used to enable an agreement holder to be able to demonstrate that they're doing what they signed up to do?

Please leave your comments below:

Building on our existing governance for HLS we can ensure that as ELMS progresses we begin to look at how we can effectively monitor and report back to DEFRA a robust and fit for purpose monitoring plan will be needed so we can demonstrate value for money.

16 Do you agree with the proposed approach to the National Pilot? What are the key elements of ELM that you think we should test during the Pilot?

Please leave your comments below:

- Dedicated Support (especially for tier 3 pilots)
- Flexibility and adaptability of the scheme
- Fairness
- An effective and efficient way of monitoring

17 Do you have any other comments on the proposals set out in this document?

Please leave your comments below:

Consultee Feedback on the Online Survey

18 Overall, how satisfied are you with our online consultation tool?

Satisfied

Please give us any comments you have on the tool, including suggestions on how we could improve it. :