

# **Actions and prescriptions or outcomes and engagement? Experience from agri- environment schemes in England.**

The logo for Natural England, featuring the words "NATURAL ENGLAND" in white, uppercase letters on a green rectangular background.

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Image: Natural England/Jenny Wheeldon

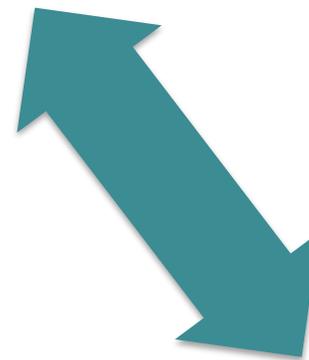
# Policy Objectives (Single or multi)



**Intervention  
design and  
implementation**



**Scheme Design  
and  
implementation**



**Agreement  
design and  
implementation**



# Intervention design and implementation



## Objectives

- Well designed interventions
- Appropriately located
- Effectively implemented by land managers

## Delivery tools

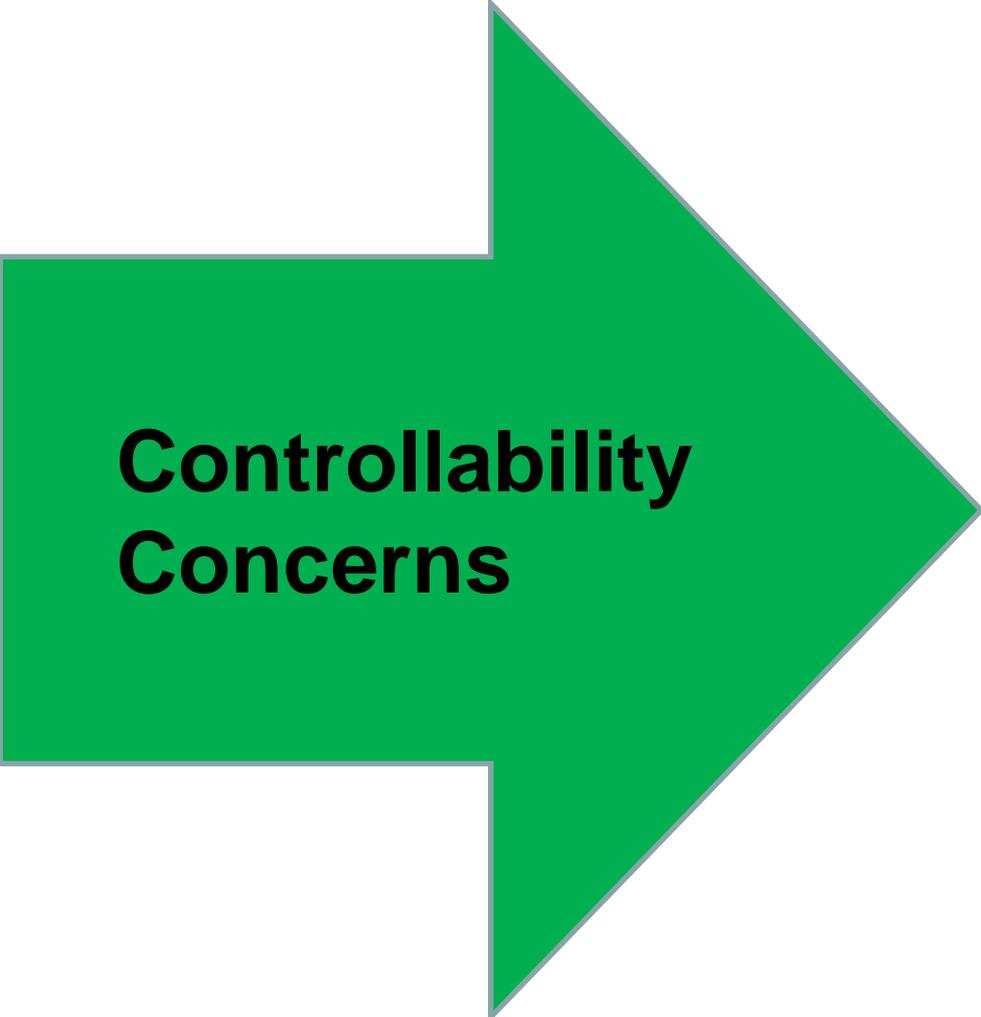
- Action-based or results-based interventions
- Eligibility criteria (eg baseline habitat quality, spatial restrictions)
- Audits/plans
- Advice/Guidance

# Action-based

Predominant approach since schemes began



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**Controllability  
Concerns**



**Effectiveness  
Concerns**

# Action-based - Example



## Countryside Stewardship Option GS6: Management of species-rich grassland

- 7 mandatory prescriptions (tailored for the site)
- 13 optional prescriptions (selected and tailored for the site)
- 11 Potential additional payment supplements (each with their own prescriptions) eg GS15 [Haymaking supplement](#)
- Agreement holders have to provide evidence that prescriptions have been satisfied eg keeping records of stocking rates/movements, invoices, photographic evidence.

# Action-based - Concerns



## Drives a focus on process not outcomes

- Less than a quarter of HLS agreement holders reported regularly referring to their environmental Indicators of Success (IoS)

## Risk of poor option selection/prescription setting

- In relation to HLS 20% of environmental IoS were judged unlikely to be met. Primarily attributed to wrong/poor option selection.

## Prescription Limits flexibility/innovation

- Approximately a third of CS Agreement Holders were concerned with the lack of flexibility the scheme offered and contended that the scheme doesn't always work at certain points in time or in certain locations.

## Time consuming/bureaucratic

- Over a quarter of CS Agreement Holders primary concern was with the ways in which the scheme was administered – often described as 'red tape' or 'bureaucracy'.
- Complexity – encourages the use of land agents. Farmers may consequently be unengaged and lack understanding of the scheme making successful delivery of outcomes challenging.

# Result-based Pilot



**YORKSHIRE DALES**  
National Park Authority



## **Pilot project in England, 3 year project, now in final year.**

- **Delivered by Natural England in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority**
- **One of 3 pilot projects funded by DG Environment**
- **Testing 4 Biodiversity Objectives**
  - **2 in arable farming systems**
    - Provision of winter bird food
    - Provision of nectar resources for pollinators
  - **2 in upland grassland farming systems**
    - Provision of wet grassland for breeding waders
    - Species rich grassland

# Result-based



## Flexibility/Simplicity

- Focus on outcomes reduces scheme 'options' and removes prescriptions.
- Freedom to manage for site/location/season.

## Motivation/Engagement

- Link between result and payment motivates, also an element of 'benchmarking'.
- Onus is on the farmer to seek advice and to improve their skills, and knowledge to enable them to deliver the results.

## Cost-effectiveness

- Payment is only made when results are delivered, potentially improving the cost-effectiveness of schemes. eg basic eligibility still a concern, but payment safeguard.

## Result-based – Flexibility/simplicity

“It gives me the freedom to manage the areas as I see fit within broad based parameters”

*“Not being tied down with prescriptions, decision making left to farmer”*

**“Ability to use local knowledge to achieve targets”**

## Result-based – Motivate higher levels of performance

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*“Both parties gain from this approach. I am prepared to put myself out for some reward”*

**“The more you improve the habitat etc, the bigger the reward - in monetary terms and environmental”**

**“It concentrated our effort to obtain a successful result”**

# Result-based



Winter Bird Food - Number of seed bearing sown species



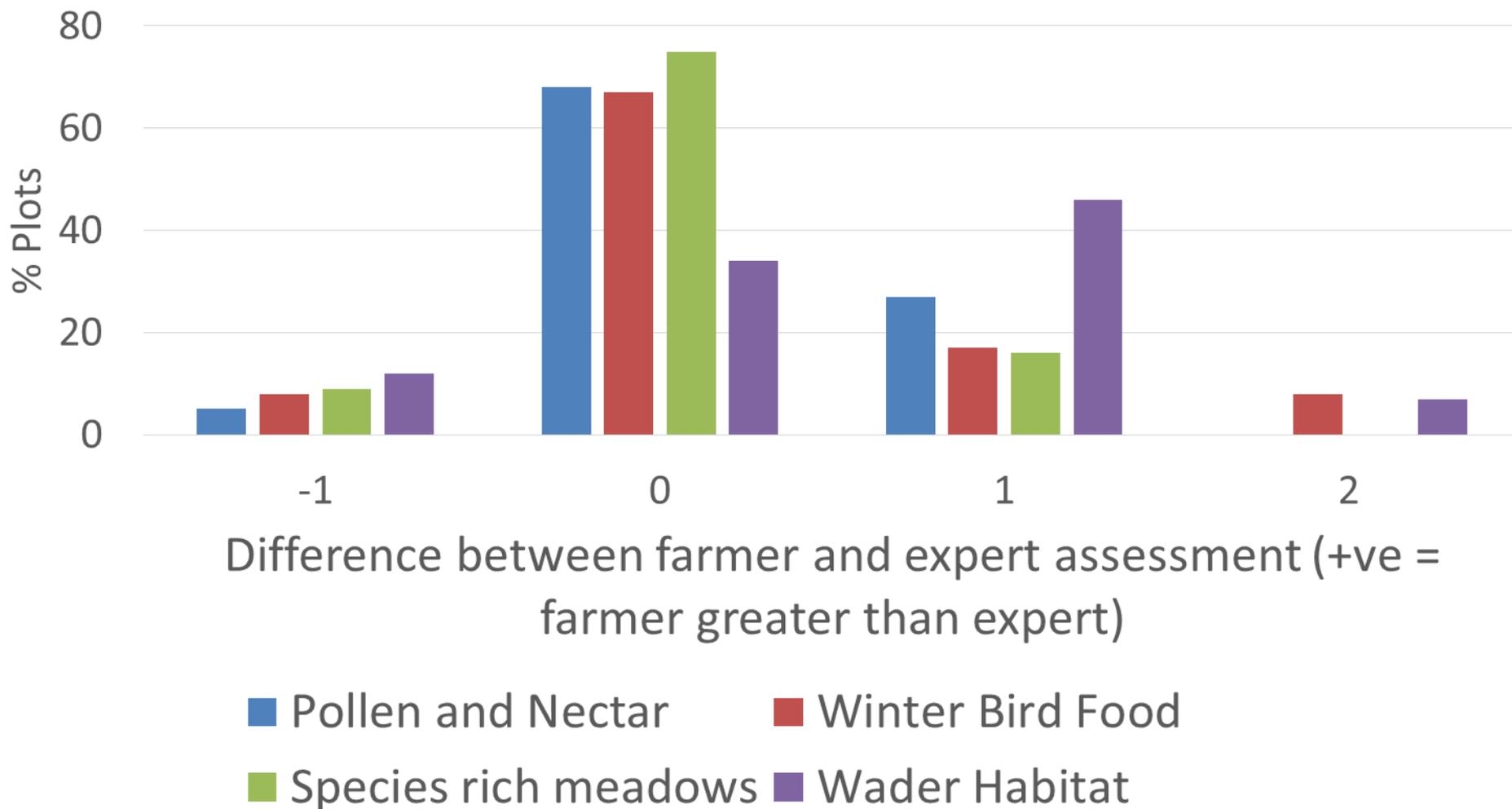




# Result-based



## Farmer Assessment Accuracy (Payment Tiers)



# Result-based – A golden bullet?

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# Result-based – A golden bullet?



- **Identifying results Criteria/Assessment methodology**
- **Balancing risk vs reward**
- **Control/Audit**
- **Advice and support**
- **Expectations**
- **Outcomes that operate at greater scale**

# Agreement design and implementation



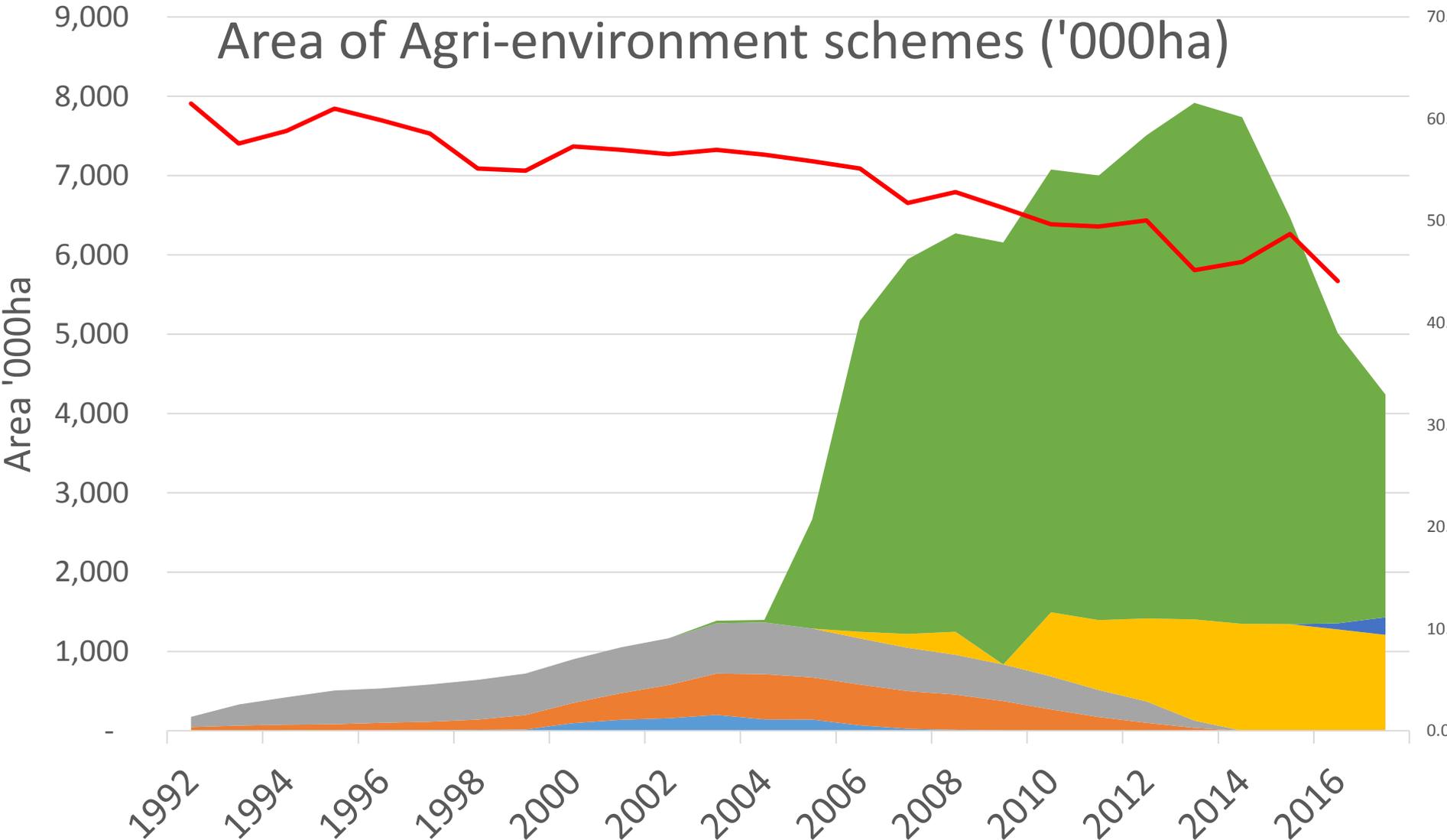
## Success measures

- Intensity/scale/mix of intervention required to deliver objective
- Spatial location of interventions (within agreement)

## Delivery tools

- Free choice menu
- Split lists/Packages
- Compulsory elements
- Advice

# Area of Agri-environment schemes ('000ha)



- Organic Farming Scheme
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme
- Countryside Stewardship
- Countryside Stewardship Scheme (old)
- Higher Level Stewardship
- Entry Level Stewardship
- All farmland bird species (19)

# Free Choice Menu

## Environmental Stewardship Review of Progress

Defra – Natural England 2008

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### 5.4 Issue 4. Balance of options within ELS agreements

101. Analysis shows that many ELS agreements are focused around a very limited number of options:

- The six most popular options in the scheme (including the compulsory Farm Environment Record) account for 49% of all points scored. The 20 most popular options account for 90% of all the points scored within the scheme. The remaining 42 options account for only 10% of the points scored within the scheme.
- 15% of all ELS agreements score more than 70% of their points from lowland grassland options, with 9% scoring over 90% of their points from this option group.
- 6% of all ELS agreements score 70% or more of their points from boundary options.
- Combining boundary and lowland grassland options together – 40% of all ELS agreements score more than 70% of their points from boundary and lowland grassland options alone, including almost 20% who score in excess of 90% of their points from these two option groups.



# Packages/Split lists



## Countryside Stewardship Arable Offer

- 1 of 4 ‘packages’
- There are 11 arable options to choose from, split between 3 categories.
- Farmers must pick at least one option from each category and the package delivers the minimum 3% of farmed land under option management which is needed for farmland birds and wild pollinators.

## High level of take up of original packages:

- 38% of CS Mid-tier agreements
- 8% CS Higher-tier agreements

# Scheme design and implementation



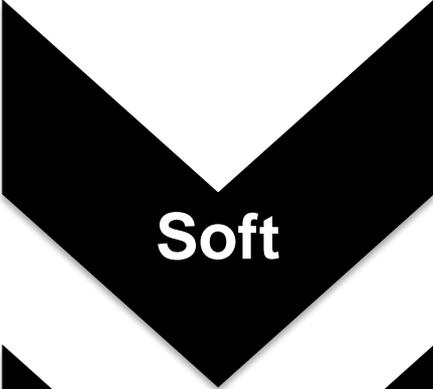
## Objective

- Intensity/scale/mix of intervention required to deliver objective at landscape scale
- Spatial location of interventions/agreements (within landscape)

## Design choices

- Locally led vs top down
- Payment rates
- **Spatial coordination mechanisms**
- Competitive vs guaranteed entry
- Advice/support model

# Spatial Co-ordination



**Soft**

- Targeting statements
- Targeting maps



**Intermediate**

- **Facilitated groups/Clusters**
- Agglomeration bonus



**Hard**

- Collective agreements
- Target auctions

# Spatial Co-ordination

## Recommendations – Scheme Design and Process

Natural England should complete further evaluation of the potential effectiveness of geographically explicit approaches to delivering better geographical literacy within ELS, and develop them subject to their effectiveness. As part of this evaluation Natural England should determine the extent to which Income Foregone varies geographically and inform future scheme development.

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To adjust the scale of HLS target areas to reflect the resource available and ensure effective co-ordination can be achieved, reflecting evidence on the thresholds of

on required to  
outcomes.

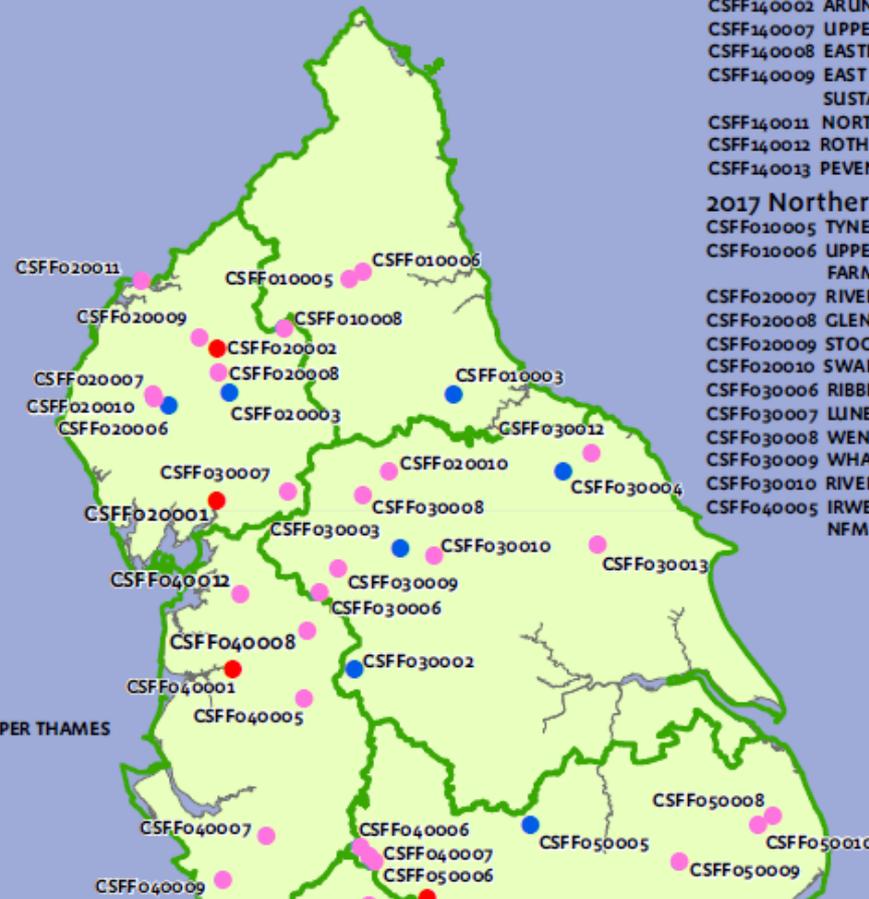
Natural England should continue to develop, refine and implement a map-based approach to targeting HLS agreements. A key feature of this approach will be that most of the resource will be concentrated in a series of multi-objective, priority target areas, with key features outside these areas being targeted individually.

The existing geographical targeting guidance for ELS, including the JCA based targeting statements, should be reviewed to explore ways that it can be made more effective. This review should be linked to the ongoing development work on map-based targeting for ELS.

# Spatial Co-ordination – groups/clusters

## COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP FACILITATION FUND AGREEMENTS

- CSFFo10003 SKERN CATCHMENT
- CSFFo10008 SOUTH TYNE
- CSFFo20001 MORECAMBE BAY
- CSFFo20002 RIVER PETTERIL
- CSFFo20003 LOWER LEITH CATCHMENT
- CSFFo20006 CROOKHURST CATCHMENT
- CSFFo20010 BORROWDALE
- CSFFo20011 BOWNESS
- CSFFo30002 SOUTH PENNINES
- CSFFo30003 UPPER NIDDERDALE
- CSFFo30004 DERWENT DALES
- CSFFo30012 ESK VALLEY
- CSFFo30013 YORKSHIRE FARM FORA
- CSFFo40001 RIBBLE RIVERS TRUST
- CSFFo40006 DANE HEADWATER
- CSFFo40007 LOWER DANE
- CSFFo40008 PENDLE HILL
- CSFFo40009 SANDSTONE
- CSFFo40012 ABBEYSTED FARMS
- CSFFo50001 SOUTH LINCS. FARMERS
- CSFFo50003 WHITE PEAK FARMERS
- CSFFo50005 GUARDIAN OF SHERWOOD
- CSFFo50006 SOUTH WEST PEAK
- CSFFo50007 HOPE VALLEY
- CSFFo50008 GREAT EAU
- CSFFo50009 LINCS. HEATHS
- CSFFo50010 LINCS. WOLDS
- CSFFo50011 WELLAND FLOODPLAIN
- CSFFo60001 FARMERS FOR AQUALATE
- CSFFo60004 WHISTON BROOK
- CSFFo60005 LONCO BROOK CATCHMENT
- CSFFo60006 BITHFIELD CATCHMENT
- CSFFo60007 LAND, LIFE & LIVELIHOODS
- CSFFo60008 RIVER MEASE CATCHMENT
- CSFFo60009 CHURNETT VALLEY
- CSFFo70003 WYRE FOREST
- CSFFo70005 WORCESTER W.T.
- CSFFo70006 LEADON
- CSFFo70007 FARMERS GUARDIANS FOR THE UPPER THAMES
- CSFFo70008 CARRANT CATCHMENT
- CSFFo70010 GO WILD IN THE CURL
- CSFFo70012 HEREFORD MEADOWS
- CSFFo70013 ARDEN FARMERS
- CSFFo70014 MALVERN HILLS
- CSFFo70015 SEVERN VALE
- CSFFo80001 BOURN BROOK



- CSFF120009 EARNE & YEALME
- CSFF120010 FAL VALLEY
- CSFF130001 SELBORNE L.P.
- CSFF130002 WINCHESTER DOWNS
- CSFF130004 BRIT & HOOKE
- CSFF130006 EAST YAR
- CSFF130007 WALLOP GROUP
- CSFF140002 ARUN TO ADUR
- CSFF140007 UPPER ROTHER AND DUDWELL
- CSFF140008 EASTERN SOUTH DOWNS
- CSFF140009 EAST KENT
- SUSTAINABLE FARMING GROUP
- CSFF140011 NORTH DOWNS ESCARPMENT
- CSFF140012 ROTHER VALLEY
- CSFF140013 PEVENSEY LEVELS

### 2017 Northern Flood Round

- CSFFo10005 TYNE RIVERS TRUST
- CSFFo10006 UPPER COQUETDALE FARMERS FARMERS GROUP
- CSFFo20007 RIVER COCKER CATCHMENT GRP.
- CSFFo20008 GLENDERAMACKIN NFM GROUP
- CSFFo20009 STOCKDALEWATH NFM GROUP
- CSFFo20010 SWALEDALE NFM GROUP
- CSFFo30006 RIBBLESDALE FARM GROUP
- CSFFo30007 LUNESDALE FARMERS
- CSFFo30008 WENSLEYDALE NFM GROUP
- CSFFo30009 WHARFEDAILE GROUP
- CSFFo30010 RIVER SKELL CATCHMENT
- CSFFo40005 IRWELL CATCHMENT NFM GROUP

# Advice/guidance



## Features across all elements

### Intervention delivery

- Guidance documents are important for delivery but are widely considered too technical to use.

### Agreement development and implementation

- 71% of agreement holders said that advice is important or very important to the successful delivery of their HLS agreement.
- Positive correlations between outcomes and the quality of agreement set-up and agreement holder knowledge.

### Scheme Implementation

- Advice and guidance key role in delivering spatial coordination.

# Summary

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**Land manager  
understanding  
of what 'good'  
looks like**

**Focused**

**Evidence-  
Based**

**Advice and  
Guidance**

**Spatial  
coordination**

**Flexibility**

# References 1/2



## Intervention design

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- Developing Payment by Results approaches for agri-environment schemes-experience from a pilot project in England  
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- LM0443: Resurvey of HLS Baseline for options HK6 and HK7: Species-Rich Grassland Maintenance/Restoration (RP01551)  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5768281406832640>
- LM0445 HLS Resurvey (forthcoming)  
<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=2&ProjectID=19360>

## Agreement Design and Implementation

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<http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/resources/000/250/625/PB13076.pdf>
- Making Environmental Stewardship more Effective (2013)  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5662762122870784>

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## Scheme Design and Implementation

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[http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=10339\\_EconomicsofCo-ordinationinEnvironmentalStewardship.pdf](http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=10339_EconomicsofCo-ordinationinEnvironmentalStewardship.pdf)
- Facilitation Fund <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-facilitation-funding>

## Advice/Guidance

- NECR114 Monitoring the outcomes of Higher Level Stewardship: Results of a 3-year agreement monitoring programme.  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/11462046?category=62001>
- LM0432: Assessing the role of advice and support in the establishment of Higher Level Stewardship agreements (RP01570)  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5163786125180928?category=62001>
- LM0433: Assessing the impact of continued advice and support on the environmental outcomes of HLS agreements once they have been established (RP01571)  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4903634587353088?category=62001>