

LOOKING FORWARD: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE NORTHERN ENGLISH UPLANDS

Workshop on 13 January 2017

Newton Rigg College, Penrith, Cumbria

Summary Report

**An Uplands Alliance Event funded by the Lake District, Peak District,
North York Moors, Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland
National Park Authorities**

What we did:

We gathered to share views and work together to develop ideas on future policy and funding for upland land management. The focus was on the public benefits the Northern England uplands provide society; and how these could be supported and enhanced in the future.¹

Attendees included farmers, landowners, public agencies and environmental NGOs from across the North of England. The day was structured to provide a good mix of stakeholders in the discussions to ensure all could benefit from the range of perspectives present.

During the workshop we:

- . Built a shared understanding of the value of the Northern English uplands;
- . Identified the principles and practicalities of how this could be supported in future through Government policy and public funding;
- . Established what needed to be done to generate support for the Northern uplands with key audiences

Our conversations during the day were stimulated by three keynote speeches from Dame Helen Ghosh (National Trust), Nicola Riley (Defra), Robin Milton (NFU). Jim Bailey (North York Moors NP) and Jane Barker (Lake District NP) provided the introductions to our first workshop session on the value of the uplands. Further details of all these speeches are in the verbatim report.

¹ The workshop was intended to build on the Uplands Alliance event held in London in

- Adopt a simple and cheap administration that pays on time
- Evidence based
- Use schemes to encourage a range of sizes of farms and a range of ages of farmers

Motivation and Ownership

- Recognise farmers as key agents of land management – 70% of the uplands are farmed
- Develop trust and relationships through two way communication
- Reward active farmers by providing incentives for positive action
- Consider longer term schemes – align with the 25 year plans
- Support improved “better” and more efficient food production
- Recognise work in maintaining current systems as well as improvements
- Voluntary schemes
- Incorporate skills training requiring regular CPD by farmers

What might be the practical implications of delivering such a funding system using the principles proposed above?

- Take care to base scheme on rewards not penalties
- Pay agreement holders on time
- Develop trusted local relationships through local targeting, delivery, and monitoring and use of local knowledge
- A payments by results approach needs to be realistic and acknowledge variables outside farmers control
- Invest in facilitation schemes to allow landscape scale approach
- Reduce costs and increase ownership through self-assessment by trained farmers
- Develop metrics for goods, services and capital
- Empower and train farmers to deliver the outcomes
- Incorporate lessons from previous schemes e.g. HFA, ESA & UELS
- Raise public understanding of the links between farming activity and provision of public goods and beauty
- Consider more local governance and inspections of schemes
- Explore NPAs and AONBs as deliverers of schemes

How can we Build Support for the Northern Uplands?

Participants were asked to identify priority messages to convey to each of the following audiences about the uplands. Their conclusions were:

Urban UK Communities need to know:

- . The uplands are special and vulnerable and important to you e.g. 70% of water in NW comes from uplands
- . Come and see for yourself! See what you are missing.
- . Accessibility for all to these landscapes is important – this will lead to valuing and ownership and passion for the uplands.
- . The uplands offer climate resilience benefits – carbon, water quality, clean air importance of Uplands, (resource protection).
- . You have an opportunity to re-connect/connect with a rural environment (cultural landscape and way of life).

Visitors need to know:

- . The Uplands are farmed and managed landscapes (“Living, breathing landscapes”), which provide food... People are interested in farming and how it works.
- . Upland farming offers sustainable, quality food security for the nation.
- . Upland communities are stewards of our cultural heritage.

Local Upland Communities need to know:

- . Farming, land management and wider communities depend on one another for continued rural vitality and need to understand one another better.
- . Upland farming and land management delivers vital public benefits for everyone. Can upland communities become ambassadors about this link to visitors to the area.
- . Uplands are linked to the lowlands in farm management (sheep stratification) and ecosystem services (clean water). Need local people to understand and embrace this and then become ambassadors.

Farmer / Landmanager / Landowners need to know:

- . Provide a high quality output underpinned by good practice.
- . Environment as a resource is important and all farmers have need and responsibility to look after it for now and future e.g. soils.
- . Land use doesn't have to mean impact – balance possible but need skills needed to deliver this sensitive approach.
- . Soil condition and management practice – improvement of soils.
- . Tell them what a good job they are doing and valued them for the food, environment, culture they produce

Land Based Colleges and Students need to know:

- . Upland farming is not just about food production. Does this change the definition of farmer? However we recognise livestock production is the current main motivation.
- . how to diversify from the start of a career (tourism, etc. local food – premium – family farm visits).
- . Change their perceptions – ban the word 'marginal' and increase business acumen.

Policy Makers need to know:

- . the uplands are at risk
- . Uplands provide very special, diverse and distinct landscapes that relies on the people who live and work there to continue.
- . Overall Uplands have been undervalued and underpaid for what they provide – need to demonstrate what the Uplands do provide quantify the value of public goods, demonstrate not asking for money for nothing.
- . be presented with consistent messages – through a concord all could pull together for the common cause. By Uplands Alliance? An Uplands policy?
- . More of a recognition of the skills available/retaining them active farmers skills expertise training.
- . If we don't get it right Upland communities will collapse. Where we start the Brexit conversation from is not a very healthy economic position for upland farming.
- . Wildlife and landscape are such a popular hobbies. We need education of public to link land management/farming to deliver these benefits.



Looking Forward the most important actions following today are...

Identifying Common Ground

- Engage and work with a wider group of upland land interests
- Capture consensus and produce a Concord
- Create a joined up response to the two 25 year plans

Improved Communications

- Create public support for investing in the Uplands through communication and learning – capture the imagination – hearts and minds - stories
- Share a clear collective message from stakeholders
- Convey a consistent message to Defra

Influence Policy

- Respond positively on behalf of the Uplands to the 25 year plan consultations
- Help to develop schemes that have a national framework, but are locally tailored and include new approaches identified
- Ensure the economic and social value of the uplands is relevant to the Northern Powerhouse
- Highlight integration of rural social, environmental and economic issues – e.g. farming, housing, broadband

Increase Knowledge and Skills

- Improve evidence base and valuation of the benefits the Uplands provide and develop mechanisms for public and private funding
- Pilot new schemes and new approaches e.g. outcomes based schemes
- Enhance skills and knowledge of upland communities, including farmers, and advisors/agencies

Closing Remarks

A diverse range of views had been shared by participants with good humour and respect. Through out the day there was a real energy and determination to find joint areas around which to move forward.

In summary that day future recommended activity can be focused around these '3Cs':

Concord – develop consistent messages jointly given;

Communications – through the various media available to generate the greatest reach;

Champions – to share the word about what the uplands currently, and potentially, can deliver for everyone. This is all of us but also those from outside our world.

It is important as we take forward these tasks to remember the joined up nature of land management so let us; create links; listen beyond words; and use language that includes rather than excludes.



The Uplands Alliance is a cross-sectoral umbrella of organisations and networks looking at systems and policies for land management of England's uplands.

For more information about the Uplands Alliance please email:

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