

Farming in Hampshire:

National Pilot - Test and trialling a local governance of Environmental Land Management

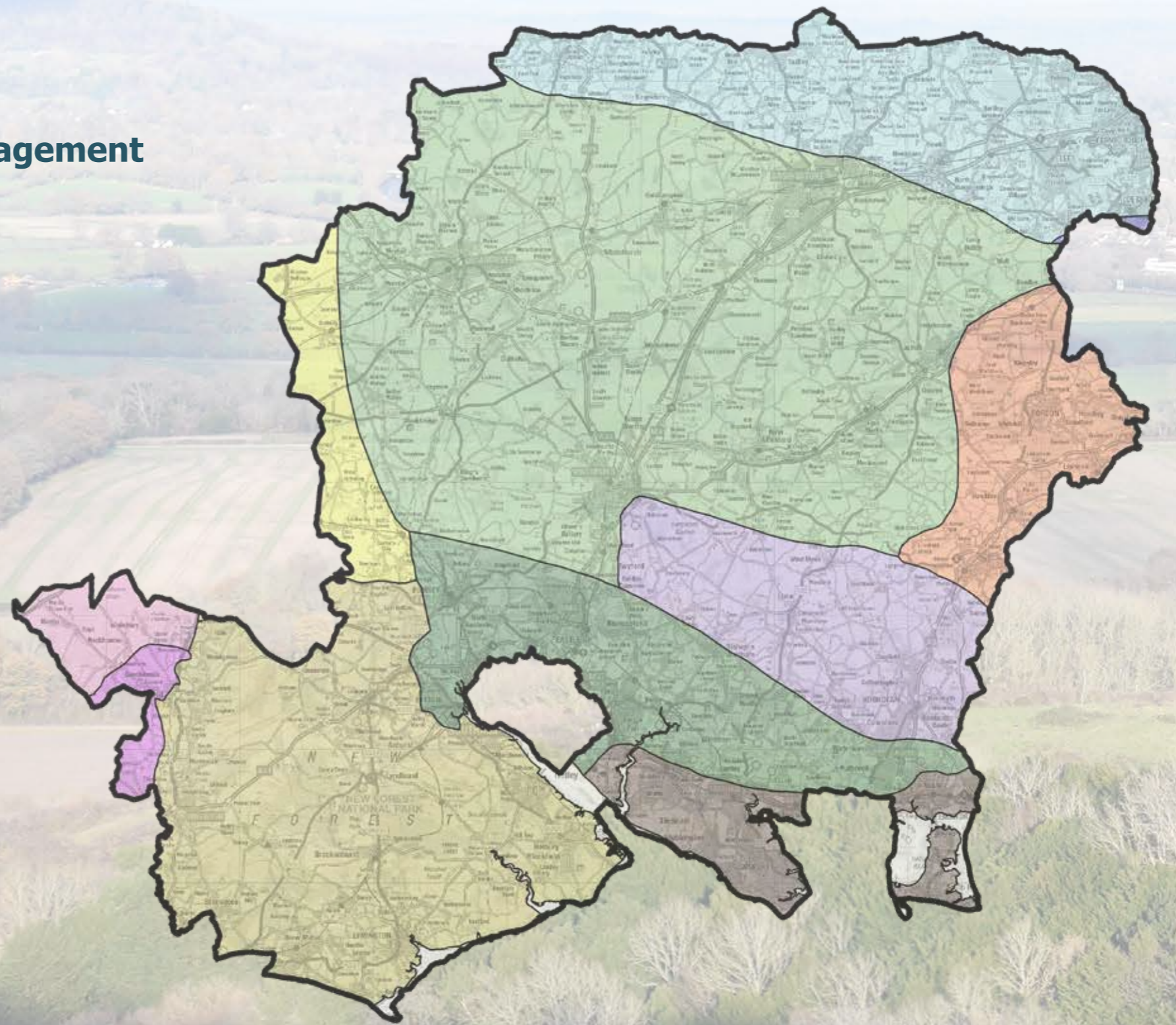
ELM Convenor Advisory Board, Sponsored by Defra

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The Convenor Model

by Lionel Fanshawe FLI, Project Director



Governance for a Hampshire ELMS Convenor

The Convenor

The concerns most often heard from the farming community around ELMS and land management generally, is in navigating the massive array of requirements and guidance there is out there, the sometimes-conflicting interests of the organisations tasked with overseeing land use, the criticism for not looking after the health of the environment and all at the same time as struggling to make a profitable living from producing food.

The Convenor model sets out to address all these issues by providing a forum where all the guidance can be collected and disseminated in a simple and relevant way, the Board members consisting of all the sometimes silo'd organisations they represent and supported by executive officers from the ALBs. This is done locally at county level to provide a meeting place for discussion and advice that can also be a conduit to central government. The purpose is to assist the farmer or land manager in understanding clearly what the wider environmental priorities and targets are for their area and the relevant practical options available to assist in meeting them along with the numerous different funding streams that might be available to assist, while also practising sustainable, productive farming.

Empowering the farming community is essential to deliver - secure sustainably produced food, the Environment Plan, the recovery of nature and a contribution to reversing the drivers of climate change.

To achieve this would need the **setting up of a permanent Board infrastructure**, with technical support, regular meetings and no doubt a website and full-time officer. These all arose in Phase 1 findings, and it was made clear this would be in addition to and not replace existing advisory bodies, advisors, clusters or protected landscape management plans.

With the coinciding emergence of LNRS at the county level, the opportunity to co-join the information gathering, targets and delivery with ELMs is obvious and the convenor could fulfil a vital dual function.

As well as setting out a comprehensive baseline of where we are now, the establishing of targets and priorities, then the consistent monitoring of progress, will be imperative if improvements are to be achieved and verified. With the right tools and support, the convenor would be well placed to co-ordinate this for the long term.

The Board

The County Convenor model centres around a Board representing the Private, voluntary and public sectors, small enough for effective discussion and decision-making, all as recommended to work by Phase 1. The Board is supported by executive officers from the ALBs to ensure access to the latest information and co-operation across all areas of the management of the land.

The Phase 2 Test and Trial Hampshire Convenor Board members;

Advisory Board Members		
James, Lord Malmesbury	JM	Chairman
Dr Sean Ashworth	SA	Southern Water
Isobel Budden	IB	National Farmers Union (NFU)
Lucy Charman	LC	Country Land and Business Association (CLA)
Dr Hannah Fluck	HF	National Trust (NT)
Simon Kennedy	SK	Representing Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils
Cllrs Russell Oppenheimer/Kirsty North	RO/KN	Hampshire County Council (HCC)
Margaret Paren	MP	Chair Hampshire Branch, CPRE
Susan Robbins	SR	Representing District Councils (Corporate Head of Economy & Community, Winchester)
Debbie Tann/John Durnell	DT/JD	Hampshire Wildlife Trust
Executive Officers of Advisory Board		
Kevin Austin/DJ Gent	KA/DJG	Environment Agency
Allison Potts	AP	Deputy Director, Thames Solent Team, Natural England
Matthew Woodcock	MW	Partnerships Manager SE, Forestry Commission
Alison McQuaid	AM	Historic England

How the Board might operate

For the Phase 2 T&T the Board met three times in-person and twice online over the 11-month period. This has been felt by the project team to be sufficient for the T&T and if a permanent Board is to be established, a similar frequency (or say, quarterly) in-person meetings might prove beneficial at the start, given the amount of information and issues likely to arise with the delivery of ELMS. This might reduce once systems are established and with online or individual meetings in between to deal with specific issues as they arise.

For this pilot, Board members were called upon to provide or point the project team to information from their various organisations to be fed into the land management frameworks, assist in reaching out to landholders for the consultation and consult with their own organisations (and in some cases, further organisations) they had agreed to represent. They were called upon to review project team research and recommendations (particularly for the NCA priorities).

With a view to the potential establishment of a permanent Convenor, the Board are now invited to discuss the County Convenor model around 8 initially suggested items:

- *Inter-relationships including ALBs/protected landscapes/Local Authorities*
- *Potential to take forward Convenor as a method for delivery and governance*
- *Convenor relationship to the farming community and their advisors*
- *Technical officer and administrative support*
- *Support and host Website/LandApp tool/research/advice/monitoring*
- *Privacy issues/sharing data*
- *Funding*
- *Possible Application to extend T&T project*

The Protected Landscapes have a statutory obligation to produce a Management Plan for their areas. These Management Plans would form the delivery framework for ELMs. To avoid duplication, it is considered appropriate for the Protected Landscape administrations to become the ELM Convenor for their area.

Phase 1 Background

Phase One set out the Pilot Project Board's terms of reference as follows:

Test and Trial #155. Final Report: Appendix 2

Land Management Advisory Board - Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Advisory Board will support the delivery of E.L.M. schemes in the convening area by:

1. Identifying the priorities for E.L.M. investment in their area to address the locally most pressing environmental land management issues and opportunities;
2. Co-ordinating the dissemination of this information to farmers and land managers directly and through relevant organisations and advisers;
3. Providing feedback to the Secretary of State on local experiences and outcomes of E.L.M. scheme delivery; and
4. Co-ordinating communication of public investment and achievements from E.L.M. schemes to local interest groups and communities in their area, providing a level of accountability for the public investment through E.L.M. schemes.

In order to facilitate this, Board members will:

- Provide strategic oversight based on the knowledge and experience held by their organisation and other organisations in their sector or area of interest.
- Attend the planned Board meetings and review papers prepared by the Technical Officer between meetings.
- Provide access to relevant information and expertise held within their organisation (subject to confidentiality consideration) to the Technical Officer.
- Represent and report to wider interests in their sector and sphere of influence. In doing so they will help to communicate the aims of the project and provide a means for interested parties to influence its outputs.

Membership of the Board

The Board will have a membership of 10 people, drawn from organisations that are active in the management of land and nature in the convening area. Nine of these Board positions will represent specific sectoral interests and the tenth position will be the independent chair (Figure 1).

Board members will be named individuals nominated by their organisation. Unless stated otherwise, Board papers may be copied to other people within these organisations for information or action. By agreement of the Chair and consultation with the secretariat, Board members may ask other people from their organisation to join them at meetings. Delegation is discouraged.

The fundamental purpose and terms of reference would appear to all be relevant to take forward in the setting up of a permanent Board. The level of responsibilities in terms of delivery would need to be clearly set out and this might extend to areas of LNRS which are also being targeted at County level.

Providing a central Hub for ELMs delivery and reaching out to wider stakeholders will be a vital part of the Board's duties. As a meeting point for discussion and resolution of issues, major decisions would need to arrive at an agreed threshold of consensus. Numbers of meetings would need to be agreed and attendance required. Inter-relationships and channels of communication would need to be open and measures on privacy issues/sharing data assured.

Creating a permanent Hampshire Convenor

This is discussed in **Section 21** of the **Main Report** and recommendations and comments can also be found in the **Executive Summary** at its beginning.

As stated there, a **clear remit and constitution** will need to be developed and the target audience, relationships to other groups (including existing ones already set up by Defra at regional level), organisations and authorities agreed and set out.

This will require time and inputs from Board members as well as some legal advice in setting the Convenor up as an entity. This may well be a specialist area in which Defra, the County or Board members can advise.

Developing the Convenor tools

The efttec/EnvSys Natural Capital baseline and mapping for the County's 6 larger NCAs would benefit from **extending to the remaining 4** and being **mapped to a finer grain** so as to be usable at a level LandApp could enable a landholding to individually obtain the maps and data for their property; this would include the "Vectorisation" of the Raster Data (turning images into polygon shapes). Along with **LNRS data targets**, priorities can then be set out and viewed at the most local of levels.

Similarly, the **Business Plan funding opportunities could be introduced into all the potential landholder actions** identified by terra firma for inclusion in the LandApp tool and as with all the data, be updated immediately after new schemes and data become available. In turn and with their permission, this will allow monitoring to take place as landholders update their information on the app.

The LandApp tool prototype trialled in Phase Two should prove the ideal vehicle for landholders to identify their opportunities under ELMs , LNRS and blended financial incentives to improve the health of the County's landscape. The Convenor would be its ideal promoter, advisor and monitor. However, there are other options and the Board cannot promote a single commercial entity so this would be subject to review and competitive tender. In any event, comments from the trials and the Board would suggest a lot of fine tuning is required including better data on biodiversity and the further development of the actions lists directly with their originators and apportioning of funding streams and natural carbon accounting values. There should also be other mediums for communication and advisors will have a continuing role.

A **website** would be an important hub for the convenor and is set out later.

Finally but importantly, Phase One Summary Conclusions identified the requirement for a **technical officer to support the Convenor** and this is recommended by Phase Two if a Convenor is to be set up permanently;

Q5. What are the skills required of a local convenor and who is most likely to have these skillsets?

Evidence

To address this question, the project:

- Has held discussions on this topic with the Advisory Board (Appendix 14);
- Discussed it at the stakeholder seminar in September 2021 (Appendix 13); and
- Drafted a job specification for a Technical Officer post to support the Land Management Advisory Board (part of Appendix 2).

Analysis and conclusion

It is suggested that a technical officer will be needed to provide support to each Land Management Advisory Board for the local delivery, prioritisation, monitoring and evaluation of E.L.M. They would work with and consult a wide range of stakeholders interested in land management within the convening area. The officer would prepare the necessary evidence base from which the Advisory Board would select E.L.M. priorities for the area, and they would co-ordinate the dissemination of this information to farmers, land managers and their advisors. The officer would liaise with Defra's nominated scheme administrator(s) and provide feedback to Defra regarding scheme delivery.

A proposed job description for the role has been drafted (see Appendix 2). Necessary skills and experience for the role include relevant qualifications in agriculture, land management, the environment or natural resource conservation to degree level of equivalent plus a minimum of 5 years' experience of relevant work in the sector. The job description has been graded against equivalent posts employed by Hampshire County Council. On this basis, a salary range of £26,000 - £30,000 is deemed appropriate.

The job description produced and referenced in the above mentioned appendix 2 can be found overleaf for Board discussion and could be updated:

Technical Officer (from Phase 1 Background)

Job Description of the Land Management Advisory Board Technical Officer

Overview of role:	<p>The technical officer will provide support to the Land Management Advisory Board for the local prioritisation, monitoring and dissemination of E.L.M. activities in the convening area.</p> <p>They will work with a wide range of stakeholders interested in land management, including establishing effective lines of communication with land management advisers and relevant organisations in the convening area.</p>
Employer:	To be decided. Potentially one of Defra's Arm Length Bodies or a Local Authority
Reporting to:	The Chair of the Land Management Advisory Board
Salary range:	£26,000 - 32,000 full-time equivalent
Hours:	<p>Part-time position (likely to be matched with other duties to create a full-time post):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">starting at 4 days/week during the formation of the Advisory Board, preparation and consultation of Land Management Frameworks and drafting of Statements of Environmental Land Management Prioritiessubsequently at 2 days a week to facilitate the Advisory Board and co-ordinate communication and dissemination.
Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Organise meetings, take minutes, present papers and ensure the effective administration of the Land Management Advisory Board.Liaise with local stakeholders and specialists and prepare the evidence base from which the Advisory Board will select appropriate priorities for E.L.M. schemes in their area.Co-ordinate delivery through E.L.M. schemes of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other relevant programmes as they arise.Analyse relevant local policy and programs in relation to public goods and management of all land, and ensure they are factored into the process of local prioritisation as part of E.L.M.Communicate and maintain good working relationships with Defra, its nominated E.L.M. scheme administering bodies and other Arm's Length Bodies and statutory authorities.Work with stakeholders to use existing networks to communicate public investment and achievements from E.L.M. schemes to local interest groups and communities in their areaCoordinate information from local stakeholders who have direct influence in ELM schemes, particularly in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of delivery processes and user experience
Skills and qualifications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have a broad understanding of the public goods provided by land managementBe able to understand and communicate with farmers, land managers and their advisorsHave relevant qualifications in agriculture, land management, the environment or conservation to degree level of equivalentHave a minimum of 5 years' experience of relevant work in the sectorBe highly organised and efficient, and capable of writing papers and policies to provide recommendations to the Advisory Board to agreed deadlines.

The above role is for Board discussion and would need revision to suit a potentially enlarged role to assist LNRS and Private Funding advice, say, as well as updating in salary range. In conversation with farm advisors the opinion was that with the Job specification still set as

above, except **full time 5 days pw** as is likely to prove necessary, a salary **in the region of £38-40k** would be more appropriate to attract and retain a good calibre of applicant. Further costs should be anticipated like equipment, materials, any office base, transport and admin overheads such as NI. The post might also benefit from a part time supporting administration assistant position.

A website

In order to fulfil the task of providing a centralised hub of data and advice for the convenor, the Board might want to consider a draft specification for a website. The project team suggests the website would need to;

1. Have a good www. title/domain name, be well presented, quickly and easily accessed and navigable.
2. Have a landing page that succinctly sets out the purpose, indicates where next to go on the site for the relevant information and have good SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) for the web.
3. Different pull downs setting out;
 - Constitution and governance
 - Board Members and Executive officers and their wider organisational outreach
 - A quick history
 - Natural Capital Baseline across the county and NCAs – the priorities to address
 - Hampshire LNRS
 - NCA statutory obligations and Advisory guidance with their related action schedules, origin and potential funding streams (LandApp summary templates)
 - Record of meetings
 - News, articles, press releases
 - Convenor support – where to come for advice, the technical officer contact and useful links.
4. Be easily managed and secure.

A website had been created by Phase One. Board members unaware of this until now might want to visit this on the link below before discussing the potential creation of a new one or an option of building off the existing. The project team will research the current status of the domain.

<https://www.elmconvenorhants.co.uk/>

Mike Linnane of MGL Marketing, an expert in the field who advises terra firma offered the following for budgeting purposes;

I would first secure a domain name such as www.helms.org.uk or www.hampshireelms.org.uk or similar. Ideally using the phrase people will most likely use to find the service in a search engine, if practical.

A .org domain helps to differentiate from similar sounding commercial entities.

If not already created, a logo and brand guidelines should be developed (colours fonts etc). These guidelines will inform the website build.

The HELMS entity should buy this domain itself (senior member) and I suggest doing this via Google domains to maintain independent control over the domain. See more on Google below.

Be aware a credit/debit card will be required to purchase and maintain any paid services that the entity controls directly (though basic Google accounts are free). It is worth it in the long run as you maintain control.

I would use a platform like WordPress which any Web developer will know and should the developer change, it is easy to pass onto another.

Any hosting agreement must include provision for software and plugin updates.

I also suggest setting up a Google account for the entity (free to do) and that this is done by the Convener or someone on the secretariat and suggest domain purchase is made via that account on Google Domains and website hosting on Google Cloud, which is good value and fast, but that is usually the developers choice unless specified up front.

I would suggest email addresses be set up on Gmail infrastructure, again for security, under the main Google account, giving independent access control and to remain independent of developer infrastructure. 'Google Gmail for business' allows email addresses for any domain e.g john.doe@helms.org.uk.

One also gets lots of storage on Google accounts by default and a suite of office products which can be used with Microsoft documents and pdf etc.

The owner of the Google account can give independent login details to the developer and other members of the team, to allow them to set up everything and access and activity is recorded and visible to the owner.

Contact Page Form and communication policies:

I suggest this is set up using a smart, spam protected for (e.g Google forms)

Careful consideration should be given to who should 'triage' incoming messages and what is the message distribution policy amongst members and importantly, the message response policy and who does this. Also, who has access to the general mailbox.

A database to hold internal and external contacts will be required and again this can be achieved on Google, wordpress itself (less secure) and of course other methods. With GDPR it is essential data is held securely under a policy signed by the board with a named data officer.

CONTENT

To enable fast development, it is essential the navigation/menu and hierarchy of pages is agreed early on and the content is agreed and written. Content or rather lack of, delays website launches 99% of the time.

Any imagery should be sourced early and licensed properly. Free to use forever images can be sourced on sites such as unsplash.

The most important SEO consideration is to ensure what words or phrase most people will use to look for the site, is replicated under a H1 heading tag on the home page. Ideally the domain name should reflect this too, but only if practical.

All pages should ideally have a descriptive suffix e.g. www.helms.org.uk/grants and the page is titled Grants, and the first heading (H1) says Grants.

Avoid big blocks of text. Use sub headings to allow skimming, break up, make digestible and helps to reinforce the main theme of the page.

ANALYTICS

I suggest the latest Google Analytics (GA4) (free) is set up for the website and automated reporting set up (auto emailed to one or many, weekly or monthly) so visitor numbers, geography, demographics and site/page dwell time by page can be monitored independently. It allows insight as to what is popular, what is working and what is not.

Google Web tools (also free) tells you how healthy the site is re: loading times, render blockers and broken pages or links etc.

Re costings a rough estimate of setting this website all up through a professional agency would be £10k to £20k and then monthly hosting and maintenance £500 to £1k+

For communications design and actions depending on volume, add another £1k pm.

Very rough though without numbers and detailed scope of work.

Funding

Defra are keen to hear from the T&T how the Board would see funding for setting up and running the Convenor.

One would hope there are obvious advantages to all the Board member and executive officer organisations to being present at a Convenor forum and that all organisations might be prepared to self-fund their attendance and contributions, at least in the immediate short term. It is understood that resourcing this will cause some organisations problems in the long term and some financial support is likely to prove necessary. It might be that the Chair is in a remunerated or revolving position.

As a Convenor that is in the County's interest as a co-ordinator with other responsibilities such as LNRS but also presenting a conduit to central government, it might be Hampshire County Council would be prepared to provide some on-going support such as providing the meeting venue. This was verbally agreed with HCC Leader at the 30th April presentation but the Leader has since stood down and this will need to be formally agreed with new leadership.

For the technical officer, website and further development of the Convenor LandApp tool, specific capital and operational expenditure would need to be set out and the Project Team have provided this below. While these are all elements that will need to be formally tendered, it should be noted that Land App would offer their part of this service (£76,500 plus VAT) free.

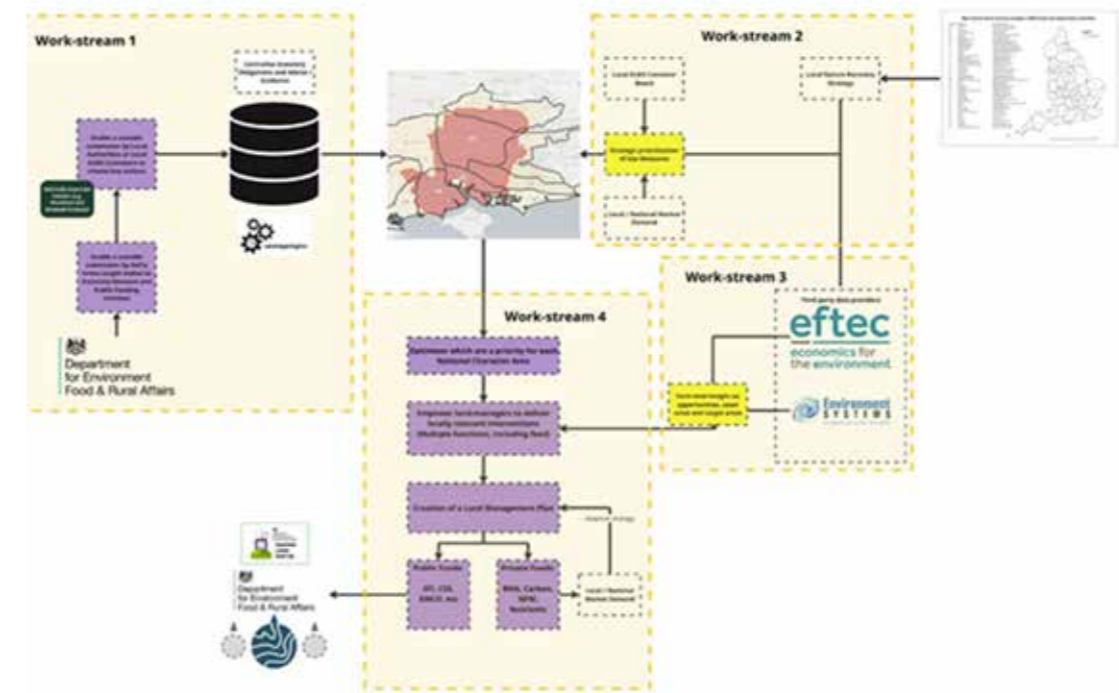
Roll out budget - ELMS Convenor.xlsx 7 KB

Workstream	Description	Staff member	Unit	# of Units	Unit rate	Cost (ex VAT)
Work-stream 1: creating a database that centralised the Statutory Obligations and Advisory Guidance	Expansion of Data Layers accessed, for Maintenance and Bug fixing of PostGIS	Data Engineer	days	10	£700.00	£7,000.00
	Server, Cloud Storage and developer	Back-end	days	10	£850.00	£8,500.00
	Iterative Improvements to the database	Server and Data Engineer	annum	1	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Work-stream 3: Third-party	Full Stack Developer to implement an	Full Stack	days	15	£900.00	£13,500.00
Work-stream 4: Use of a Mapping Platform (Land App)	Ongoing support - Support Advisors and Continue iterative improvements for	Customer	days	20	£650.00	£13,000.00
	User interface improvements based on	Data Engineer	days	6	£700.00	£4,200.00
	Implementing the UX product design in	UX Designer	days	6	£650.00	£3,900.00
	Legal support to ensure Land App User	Front-end	days	7	£750.00	£5,250.00
	Report writing and casestudies to share	Legal Advisor	hours	4.5	£200.00	£900.00
		Marketing lead	days	5	£650.00	£3,250.00
					Sub-Total	£76,500.00
					VAT	£15,300.00
					TOTAL	£91,800.00

*Land App Annual spend on server and

LandApp 18 April 2024

We are confident that with our existing infrastructure, and the initial prototype build that has been completed during the pilot, that we would be able to deliver Work-stream 3 and 4, as they are aligned with our current roadmap, and keen to ensure that the learnings from the trial be implemented into the system. For this, **we would not want to approach Defra for any additional funding, but keen to work in partnership.**



- Work-stream 1: creating a database that centralised the Statutory Obligations and Advisory Guidance for all farmers in the 6 Chosen National Character Areas.
- Work-stream 3: Third-party data providers providing data to support the Board with decision-making, AND to the farmer for insight and opportunities.
- Work-stream 4: Use of a Mapping Platform (Land App) to serve land-management suggestions and empower farms to make suitable decision on the future of their land management.

For Workstream 1, the creating and maintenance of a Database with all the Advisory Measures or Obligations; we do not feel in a position to be the ones to create this. We would happily work in partnership with Defra to provide technical support, but the scale of this is beyond what we can deliver with confidence. We of course, if this database was created centrally, be keen to access this data. I have included some indicative costs if this were to be progressed.

terra firma would not be offering to take further the Workstream 1 elements. Having created the groundwork for all this across all 10 NCAs, that work can be made available to build upon but the individual actions should come directly from their originators and the NCA summaries verified with those tasked with those areas' management.

Workstream 3 Data provision can be provided by further work from eftec and Environment Systems (see overleaf).

eftec and Environment Systems April 2024 ;

Option	Cost	Timing	eftec recommendation
A – Expand natural capital baseline and opportunity analysis to the other four NCAs	Total : £36,000 eftec: £12,745 Environment Systems: £23,255	Would take 2-3 months.	Not a priority, as remaining NCAs are only 10% of county
B – Engage with buyers, and test the use of existing natural capital info to facilitate deals.	Total : £9,000 eftec: £9,000	Could be done in 2 months if scope and number of buyers agreed.	Important to test the usefulness of the information we provided on natural capital baseline and opportunities with the potential buyers. The timing of this engagement could change depending on how it interacts with option D. Could be done before or after option D has been developed.
C – Interactive storymap and narrative around the maps (to be hosted by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre)	Total : £28,830 eftec: £5,000 Environment Systems: £23,830	Would take 2-4 months.	Recommended – improves the accessibility of the baseline, risk and opportunity maps to support landscape scale analysis. This supports D and E and beyond as a standalone source. Without this interactive facility the existing maps may not be as extensively used.
D – Developing the platform for Hampshire (matches Land App Workstream 4 – but for Hampshire only)	Total : £37,340* Environment Systems: £17,340 (Vectorise the maps for use in LandApp) Eftec: £20,000 (to produce land use baseline values per holding based on average values per area/unit) Note*: would require an additional input from Land App of around 45-95 days, but not included as this would be funded by Land App/other development resources as part of their development plan.	Would take 2-4 months and would depend upon fitting in with Land App development plans (as this would be funding at their expense)	We are in favour of developing this capability as it would help empower local land managers to understand opportunities for their land holding. Depends on where the Board / Defra wants to take this further. This is also useful test bed for option E
E – input to developing the platform for England (matches Workstream 4 – development of a national land manager toolkit)	Not yet costed – we are exploring how to do this through other work to find more cost-efficient ways of doing this - so it's too early to commit to a cost	TBA	eftec and Land App are keen to pursue this development, but exploring the most cost-efficient way to develop this is still work in progress.

Fifth Draft following 1st May meeting – 17/05/2024 with updated text and LandApp/eftec/EnvSys further development costs for database and tools)