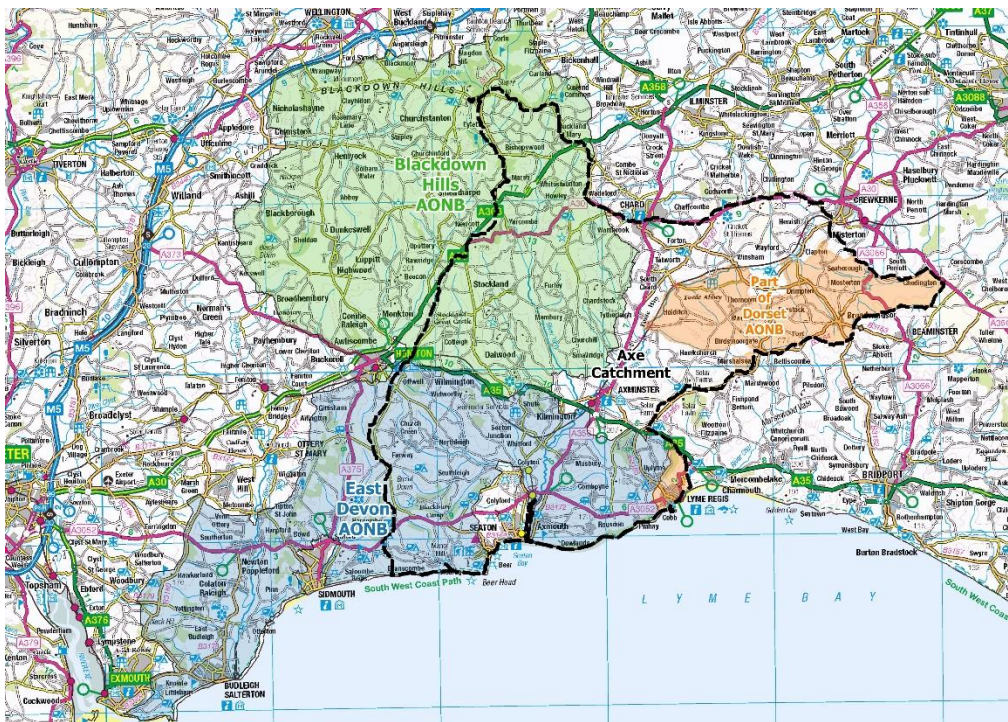




East Devon AONB Partnership ELM ADVOCACY PROJECT

Understand farming in East Devon AONB – gain feedback from farmers
– advocate for ELM and CS – make recommendations for the ‘Farming
in Protected Landscapes Programme’



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Date submitted 09/04/2021

Executive Summary

This is the final report for the East AONB ELM Advocacy Project, funded by Defra and the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB), delivered jointly by FWAG SW, independent consultant George Greenshields and Emma Herrod (AONB farmer liaison officer). The aims of this project were to gather information to then make recommendations of how the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FIPL) could best be developed by the AONB.

Aim 1: Provide baseline insight into farming in the East Devon AONB

Methodology: We mapped publicly-available and NAAONB datasets.

Outcomes

Land Use: 59% of the AONB area is grassland, 13% arable, 18% woodland and 11% is non-agricultural land.

Uptake of Agri-environment schemes: Up to 25.5% of the AONB area is in agri-environment schemes, including Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship.

Designations: 6.7% of the AONB is designated as SSSI, of which 4.9% is in an agri-environment scheme. There are 59 scheduled monuments, of which 37% are in an agri-environment scheme.

Priority habitats: 8.6% of the AONB area is mapped as priority habitats, of which 18-60% (depending on habitat type) are in agri-environment schemes.

Aim 2: Gain feedback from farmers

Methodology: We conducted an online survey in collaboration with Blackdown Hills AONB. In total, 126 farmers/landowners responded, of which 70 are in East Devon AONB). 23 one-to-one follow-up phone interviews were conducted. The results for East Devon AONB are summarised below.

Outcomes:

Please note that the survey respondents are likely to already be engaged with environmental issues and may therefore give skewed results.

Who took part? The respondents/interviewees were mainly beef and sheep (51%) and dairy farms (31%). Almost half of farms rely on agricultural income to 50-100%. Other income comes from separate jobs outside agriculture, contracting, renting out land and tourism.

Agricultural Transition Plan: Most farmers were aware of the plan but didn't know the details. 47% of respondents will see a big effect, requiring major changes with the gradual withdrawal of BPS. Beef and sheep farms will feel the loss of BPS more than dairy farms. Strategies for adjusting to the loss of BPS varied widely, 27% are still working on a plan and 29% are planning to go into CS/ELM. 60% of respondents are either already in CS or are planning to apply this year.

Advice needs: Advice needs are varied, covering business advice, agronomic/livestock advice and environmental advice. 47% of survey respondents prefer to receive advice from independent advisers and 34.4% would also like advice from an AONB adviser.

Farmer Groups: Almost 80% of all survey respondents either are already in a farmer group or are interested in joining one.

Role of the AONB: The survey showed there is appetite for the AONB to take a coordinating role – coordinating advice, farmer groups and landscape-scale conservation, as well as providing direct advice.

Almost all interviewees were keen on having a point of contact in AONB, to signpost to trusted specialist advisers and to coordinate advice across the AONB.

Aim 3: Promote farmer and landowner awareness of the Agricultural Transition Plan and Countryside Stewardship & recruit farmers for NAAONB farmer workshops

Methodology: We delivered 4 online seminars on ATP and CS, and sent the booking information to 16 interested farmers for the NAAONB workshops.

Outcomes:

Whilst approximately 30-40 survey respondents were interested in attending our online seminars, 20-30 attended the day.

Aim 4: Make recommendations on potential delivery for 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' (FIPL)

Methodology: We analysed the quality and usefulness of available mapping data, analysed the results of the online survey and farmer interview and conducted calls with 4 advisers.

Recommendations

FIPL Overall

- Run the FIPL programme focusing on the AONB area, but with fuzzy edges around the area, especially areas upstream that are affecting the AONB. Keep working with other AONBs in the area.
- Join FIPL delivery with existing projects/funding streams in the area, for example the Triple Axe project, Upstream Thinking, Soil Alliance, Catchment Partnerships, EA Axe regulatory project etc.
- Focus on conservation work that CS cannot currently fund (meadow restoration, detailed soils advice, business advice)
- Access to good quality (mapping) data will be key for a successful delivery of FIPL:
 - Ask DEFRA to provide access to up-to-date holding and land-use information from the RPA
 - The priority habitat layer is incomplete – survey the area to update layers to better target conservation of habitats already in good condition and restoration of those with potential.

Provide point of contact within the AONB

- Provide some direct advice
- Work with advisers and farmers in the area to set up a list of trusted advisers
- Signpost farmers to trusted advisers – continuity is key
- Coordinate landscape-scale conservation

Create farmer group(s) / engage with the farming community /provide advice

- Create an AONB-wide group (fuzzy edges) with a steering group of farmers from diverse farm types – similar to the East Devon Farmers Group, which almost all interviewees were very happy with.
- Create sub-groups where there is demand to run more specific events/discussion groups
- Use the adviser network to deliver such workshops
- Use locally known and trusted farm ambassadors to engage with the farming community, especially hard-to-reach farmers. Interviewees have given very good feedback on Emma Herrod's work. Also engage with EA and CSF for referrals
- Advice needs are varied, so provide a whole range of workshops as well as 1:1 advice. Include business advice with an environmental focus.
- Keep farmers updated on information coming from DEFRA regarding ATP
- Help farmers get ready for ELM and with CS Uptake
- Coordinate landscape-scale conservation and cooperation of farmers

Introduction

Contract Overview and Aims

This is the final report for the East Devon AONB ELM Advocacy Project, funded by Defra and the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB). This project covered the area of East Devon AONB and the Axe catchment.

The below table summarises the aims of the project and the used to achieve those aims.

Aim 1: Provide baseline insight into farming in the East Devon AONB

Methodology 1: Baseline mapping of publicly-available AONB datasets

Aim 2: Gain feedback from farmers on:

- Views and intentions on CS uptake, and the transition from BPS to ELM
- Advice needs
- Attitude to farmer cluster groups
- The potential role of the AONB going forward

Methodology 2: Online survey and 1:1 follow-up phone calls

Aim 3: Promote farmer and landowner awareness of the Agricultural Transition Plan and Countryside Stewardship & recruit farmers for NAAONB farmer workshops

Methodology 3: Online seminar series on ATP and CS

Aim 4: Make recommendations on potential delivery for 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' (FIPL)

- What role the AONB could have
- Engagement / relationship building model with farmers
- How to establish farmer clusters / groups that can work collaboratively across the area with others to improve and enhance the environment of the AONB

Methodology 4: Analysis of online survey results and farmer 1:1 phone calls, and adviser 1:1 phone calls

The project was delivered mainly by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG SW) and George Greenshields from Ecologic Consultancy with help from Emma Herrod (East Devon AONB farmer liaison officer). However, as FWAG SW secured several projects across South West England's protected landscapes (Blackdown Hills AONB, part of Dorset AONB, North Devon Coast AONB, Quantock Hills AONB, Exmoor National Park and Cranborne Chase AONB), some aspects of this work were developed and delivered in cooperation with partner organizations or consultancies such as Gavin Saunders, Robert Dean from Rural Focus, the Hill Farming Network and Westcountry Rivers Trust.

Background

Agri-environment policy is entering a period of fundamental change. It is shifting from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to the national Land Management Scheme (ELM). DEFRA published 'The Agricultural Transition Plan' (ATP) in November 2020, introducing the elements of the new ELM scheme.

Under the CAP, farmers received an area-based payment called Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). Farmers receiving such payments need to maintain Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) and Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs). In addition, farmers could, on a voluntary basis, enter Countryside Stewardship agreements with individual payments rates for different environmental options and capital items.

The ATP laid out a gradual reduction of direct BPS payments until 2024/25. It offers a lump sum payment of BPS for farmers who wish to leave the sector. CAP is to be replaced by ELM (fully by 2024). CS is still open until ELM is rolled out. ELM will be split into three component levels of actions that deliver public goods. The plan is for the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) component of ELM to be open and accessible to all farmers, to help them contribute to important environmental, climate change and animal health and welfare outcomes. The Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery components will be for those who want to go even further to achieve outcomes in a local area or at landscape and whole ecosystem scale. Farmers and land managers will have flexibility to decide what they want to deliver under each component part and how they want to go about it. Payment rates for these actions have not been decided yet.

Within the ATP, it is recognised that farmers and landowners in protected landscapes are providing huge environmental, social and cultural benefits but that farming profitably without direct payments is often challenging. Therefore, the 'Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme' (FIPL) (2021-2024) is proposed to provide advice and funding for those in protected landscapes to lay the groundwork for ELM, as well as to provide funding for public access and engagement, infrastructure and to enhance the environment.

This project is funded by Defra money that was secured by the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB). The aim of the ELM advocacy projects is to raise awareness and understanding of the new ELM scheme with farmers and landowners across all 44 of England's AONBs and National Parks and to a) build on National Landscapes' existing networks and increase farmer/land manager engagement in ELM, and in Countryside Stewardship (CS) as a route into ELM. B) create an evidence base for the roles National Landscapes (AONBs/NPs) could have in ELM when it is rolled out which will support any future funding submissions.

Baseline insight: Mapping Farming in East Devon AONB

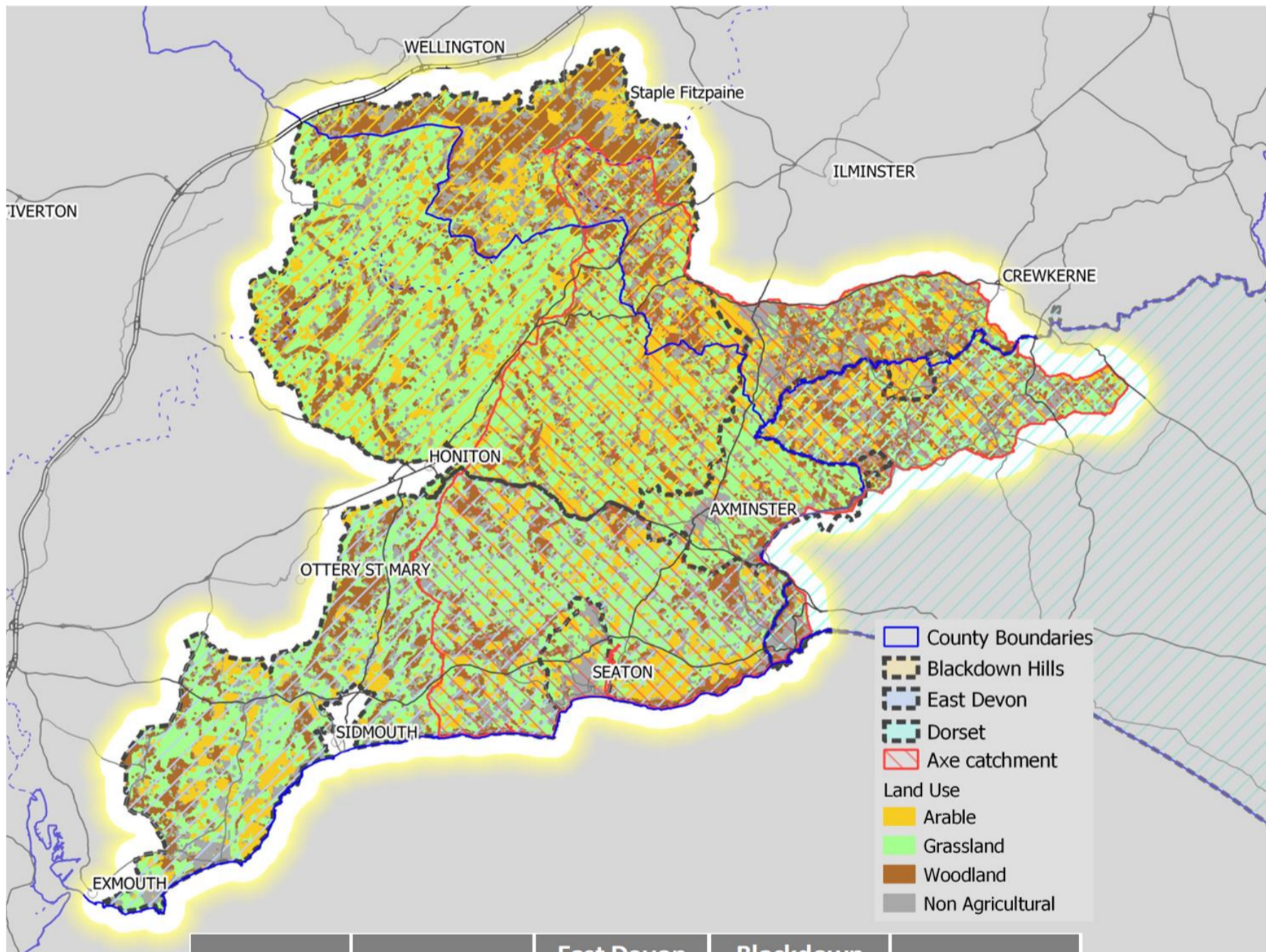
Mapping was conducted to gain a baseline insight of farming in East Devon AONB and the Axe catchment. Publicly available datasets and a dataset provided by the NAAONBs were mapped (visually) and summary figures were extracted.

Farm / holding data

Such data is not publicly available as shapefiles. The EA holds rural land registry data for 2015 BPS recipients, but that needs a specific licencing agreement for specific projects. Land App allows the user to view holding outlines and field boundaries, but those can only be printed with agreement of the landowner, and have often been found to be out-of-date. As the AONBs are to deliver FIPL on behalf of DEFRA, they could try to request up-to-date RPA data on land holdings and contact details as this would be crucial for FIPL delivery.

Mapping: Land Use (RPA Crop Map of England 2018)

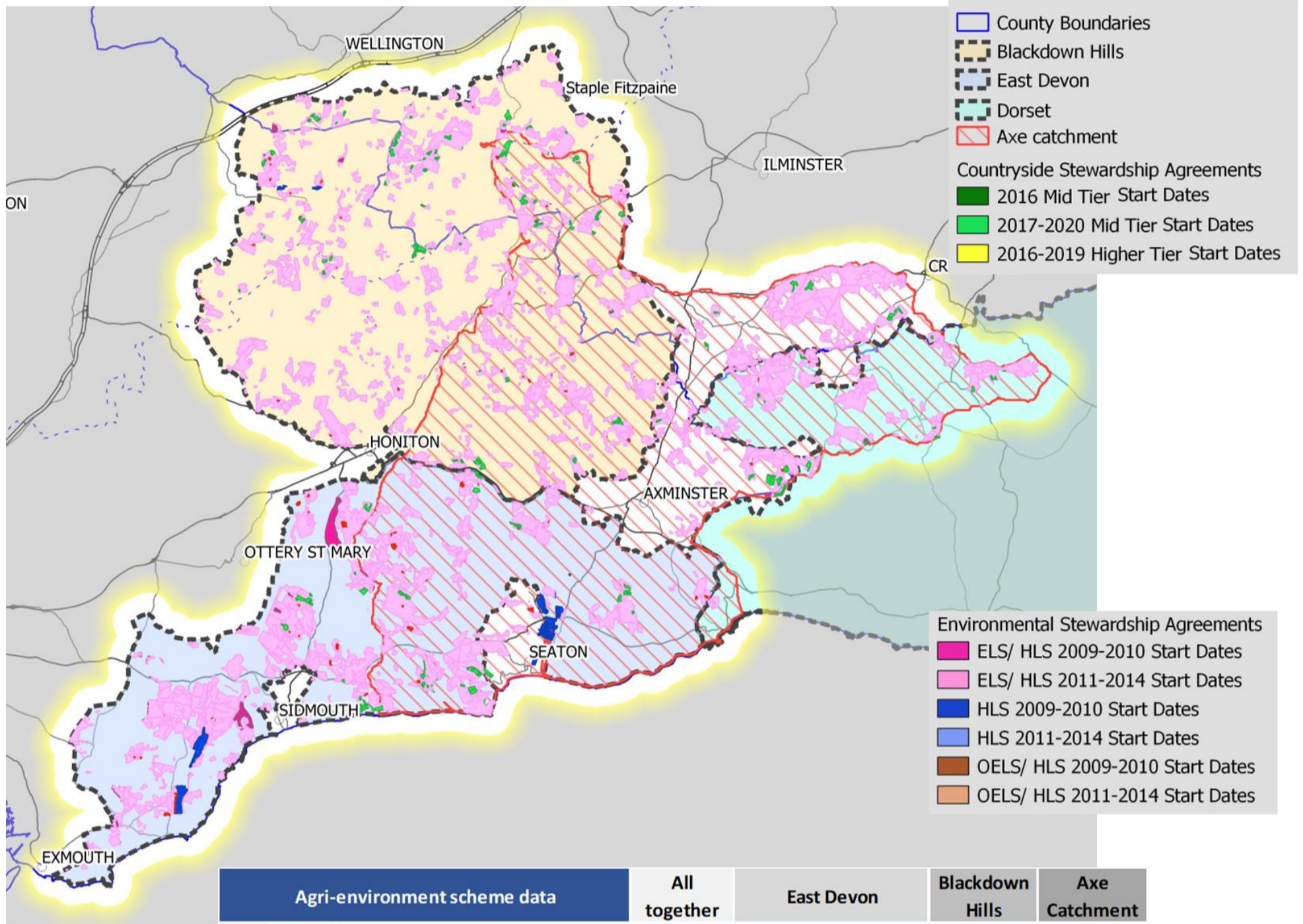
This dataset shows the main land cover data from 2018 in small hexagons (0.41ha) rather than field parcels. The dataset shows a wide range of land-use codes, which we combined into arable, grassland, woodland and non-agricultural land. We then calculated land cover for the Blackdown Hills AONB, East Devon AONB and the Axe Catchment (including parts of the beforementioned AONBs as well as part of Dorset AONB). Unfortunately, temporary and permanent grassland are grouped together as grassland. The distinction between those is important in terms of likely species diversity, eligibility for CS and potential ELM options as well as carbon storage. The AONBs should try to request up-to-date RPA data on parcel-based land use codes (for BPS recipients) as this would be crucial for FIPL delivery to allow a more targeted delivery. Permanent grassland could be targeted for example for species surveys to identify species-rich grasslands and those with potential to be restored to species-rich grassland and to update the priority habitat maps.



Land Use	All together	East Devon AONB	Blackdown Hills AONB	Axe Catchment
Arable Land				
Area (ha)	9931.7	3559	3631.9	6263.2
%	12.2%	13.2%	9.8%	13.9%
Grassland (temporary and permanent)				
Area (ha)	46765.8	15882.8	22638.6	25564.2
%	57.5%	59.0%	61.2%	56.8%
Woodland				
Area (ha)	15671.6	4876.9	7630.0	7758.5
%	19.3%	18.11%	20.6%	17.2%
Non-agricultural Land				
Area (ha)	9582.5	2874.9	3454.8	5894.5
%	11.8%	10.68%	9.3%	13.1%

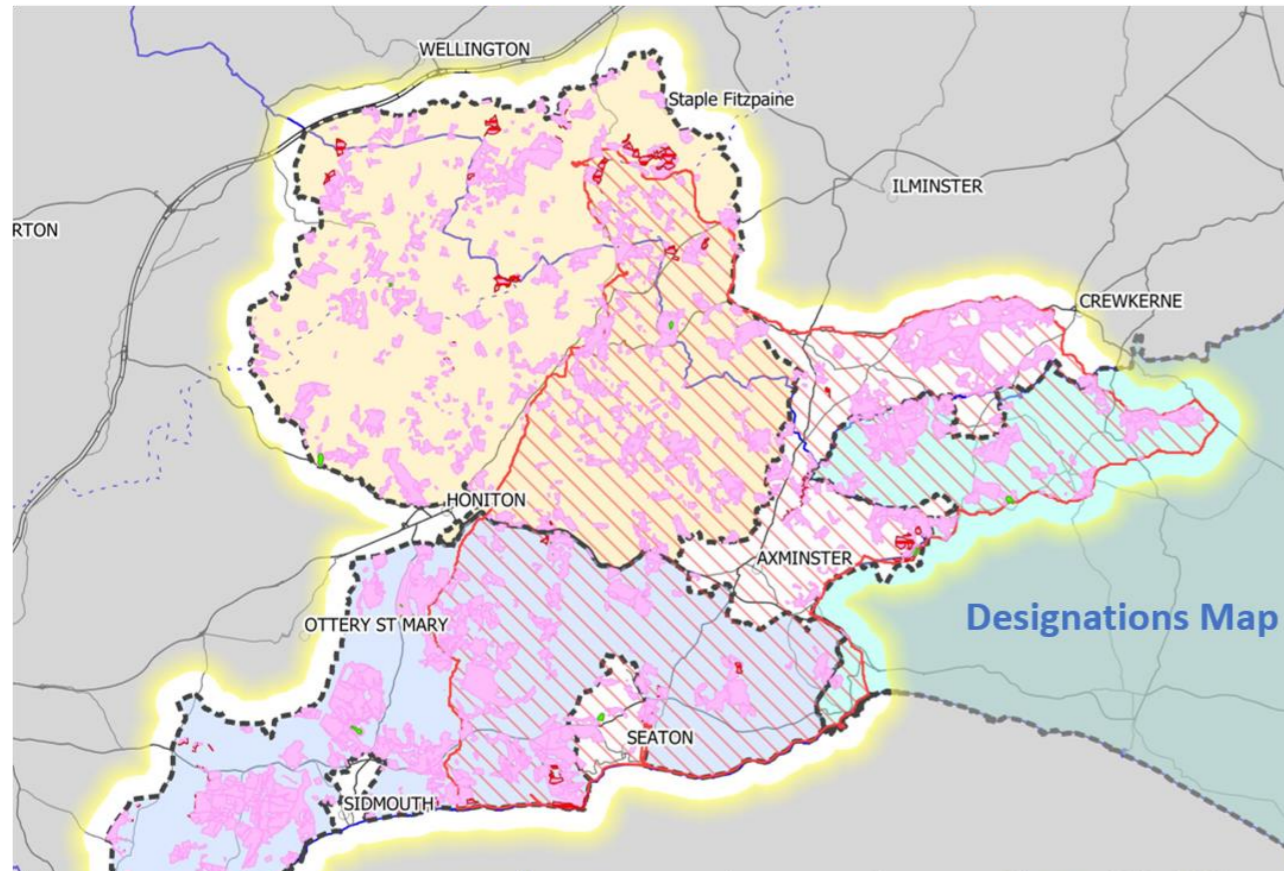
Mapping: Natural England Dataset - Agri-environment Scheme Uptake

This dataset shows areas that are in agreements, split by Environmental Stewardship (up to 2014 start dates) and Countryside Stewardship (started from 2016 start dates) agreements, type and start date up to 2020. We have mapped those agreements that are likely still to be in place, including HLS agreements that technically already expired but may have been offered an extension, and CS (Mid Tier and Higher Tier) agreements which would have finished in 2020 and could have been re-applied for with a start date for 2021. This dataset gives a business name for each agreement, but no further holding details. We calculated summary statistics on number of agreements, type of agreements, size of agreements, % coverage of the AONB. The dataset does not show the usage of individual options or capital items. Whilst those maps and summary statistics are an interesting baseline understanding, it would make more sense to look at those in detail on a mapping programme when planning FIPL delivery.

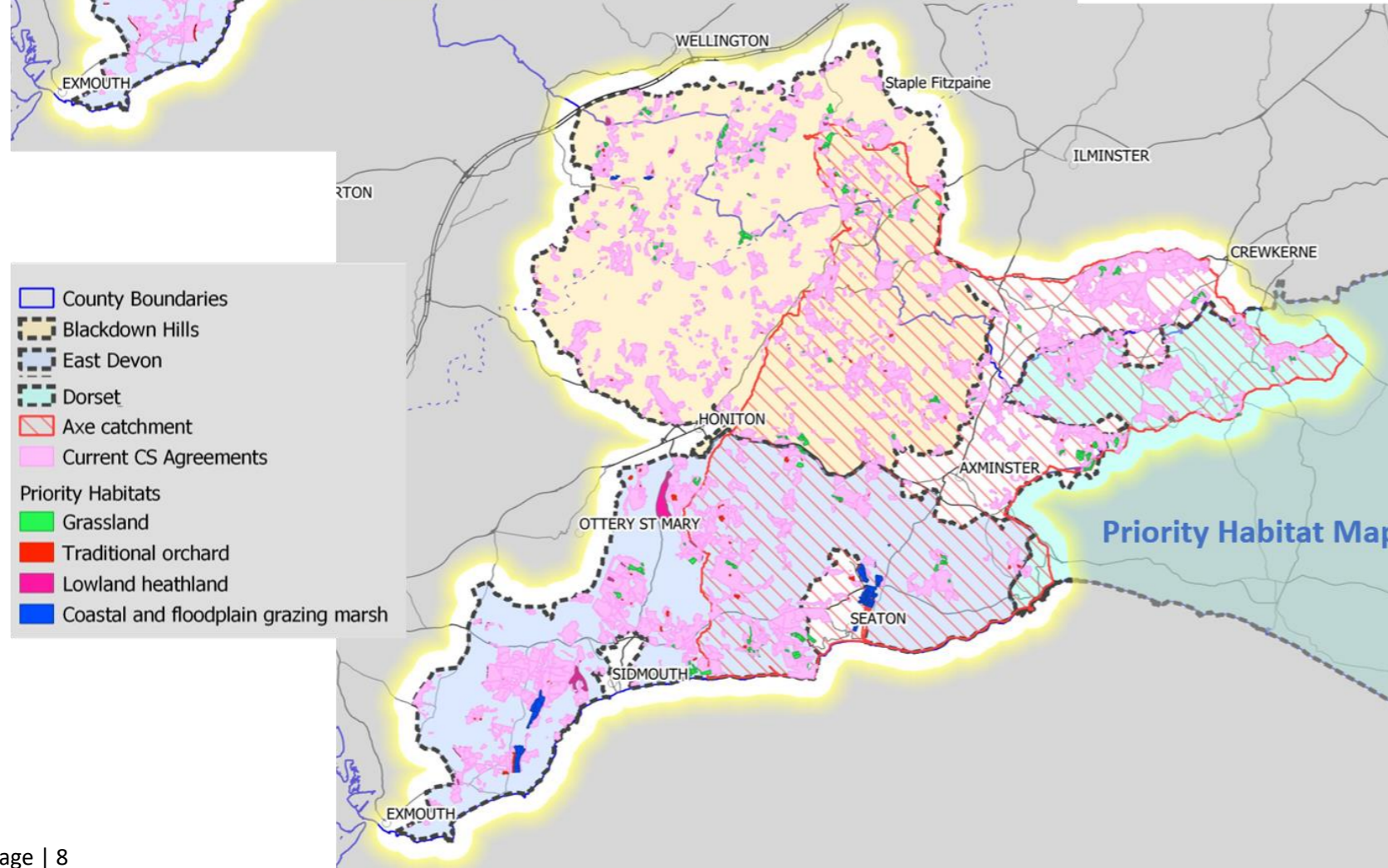


Agri-environment scheme data		All together	East Devon	Blackdown Hills	Axe Catchment	
Countryside Stewardship (from 2016 onwards)	Mid Tier 5-year agreements	MT 2016 start (might have reapplied for 2021)				
		no. of agreement holders	13	5	7	5
		ha in agreements	600.3	180.6	312.6	156.5
		median ha per agreement	41.71	33.5	41.7	30.8
		MT 2017- 2020 start dates				
		no. of agreement holders	240	70	144	127
		ha in agreements	7472	2519	3416	3691
		median ha per agreement	17.2	19.4	13.9	19.1
		% of areas in agreements	9.20%	9.4%	9.2%	8.2%
	% of area in agreements or likely to be (including 2021 start dates)	10%	10.0%	10.1%	8.5%	
	Higher Tier 10-year agreements	HT start dates from 2016-2019				
	no. of agreement holders	22	4	13	11	
	ha in agreements	1284.6	839.4	267.1	470.4	
median ha per agreement	21.27	217.1	9.5	24.8		
% of areas in agreements	2%	3.1%	0.7%	1.0%		
Environmental Stewardship (last year of start dates 2014)	HLS 2009 to 2014 start dates, many HLS have been extended					
	no. of agreement holders	113	34	67	65	
	ha in agreements	8259.3	3317.5	3089.3	4866.9	
	median ha per agreement	35.38	65.7	27.4	34.8	
	% of areas in agreements	10%	12.3%	8.4%	10.8%	

Mapping: Magic Map Dataset - Priority Habitats and Designated Sites



Designations Map



Priority Habitat Map

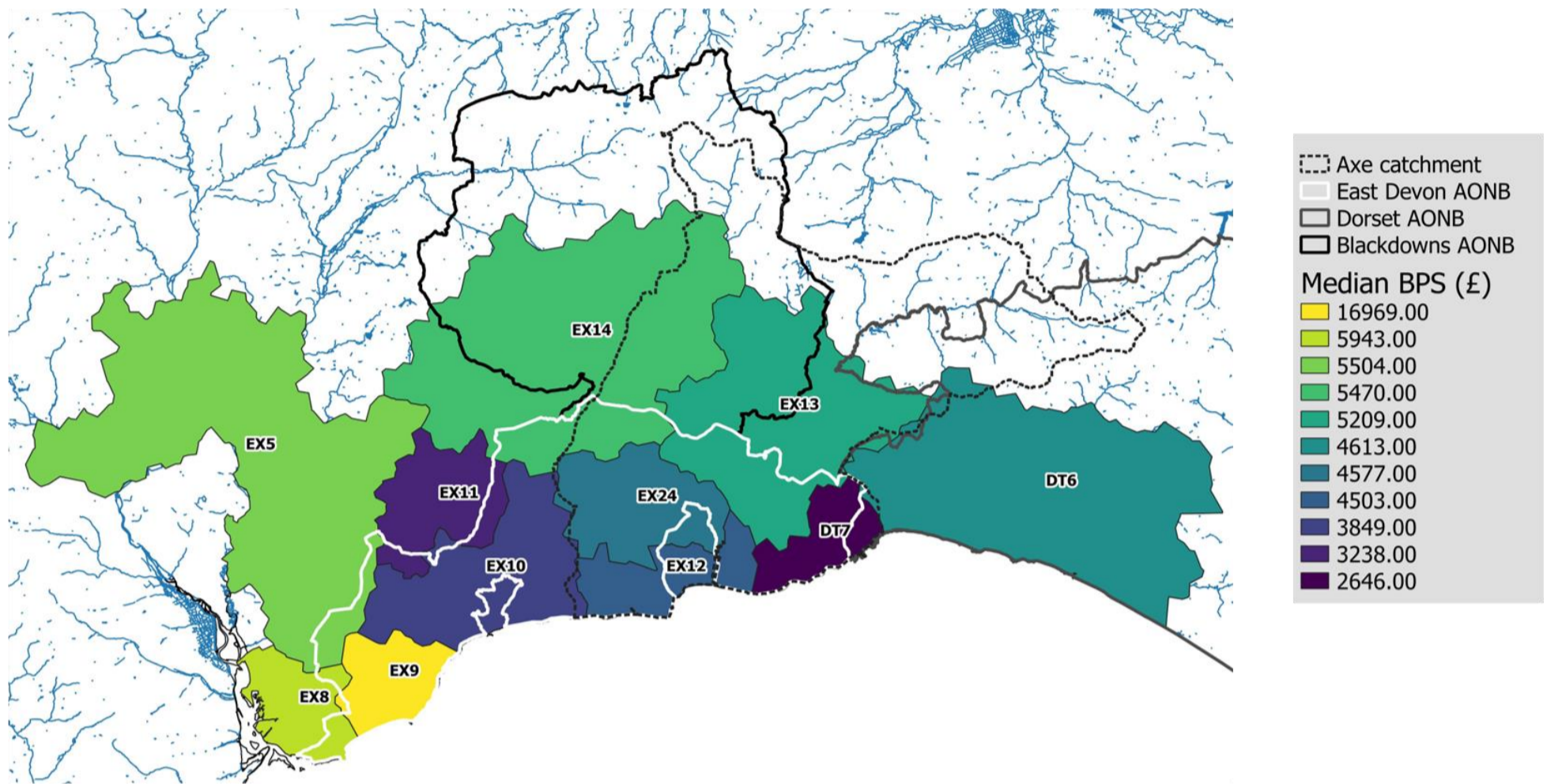
- County Boundaries
- Blackdown Hills
- East Devon
- Dorset
- Axe catchment
- Current CS Agreements
- Priority Habitats
- Grassland
- Traditional orchard
- Lowland heathland
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

This data can be downloaded from Magic Maps and includes shapefiles for designations such as Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Scheduled Monuments, and priority habitats. We focused on the designations and priority habitats that are currently relevant for agri-environment scheme delivery. We then calculated designations/priority habitat areas for Blackdown Hills AONB, East Devon AONB and the Axe Catchment (including parts of the beforementioned AONBs as well as part of Dorset AONB) and calculated % of those in existing agri-environment agreements. Please note that the priority habitat layers are incomplete and therefore should only be relied on for guidance. Again, the maps would be more useful on a mapping programme when planning FIPL delivery and it would be helpful to survey and update the priority habitat layer for a more targeted delivery.

Designations / Priority Habitats	All together	East Devon AONB	Blackdown Hills AONB	Axe Catchment
Designations				
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)				
ha per area	2588.9	1807.8	639.3	742.3
% of the AONB	3.2%	6.7%	1.7%	1.6%
ha SSSI in CS/ES agreements	394.9	88.8	255.7	160.8
% SSI in CS/ES agreements	15.3%	4.9%	40.0%	21.7%
Scheduled Monuments				
number in area	96	59	26	47
number in CS/ES agreements	39	22	13	17
% in CS/ES agreements	40.6%	37%	50.0%	36.2%
Traditional Orchards				
ha per area	329.9	102	81.6	101.7
% per area	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%
ha in CS/ES agreements	114.8	56.59	24.2	36.6
% in CS/ES agreements	34.8%	55.5%	29.6%	36.0%
Grassland (lowland meadow, purple moor grass and rush pasture, calmarian, lowland dry acid grassland)				
ha in the AONB	2059.3	281	372.8	479.6
% per area	2.5%	1.04%	1.0%	1.1%
ha in CS/ES agreements	482.1	168.71	245.3	334.9
% in CS/ES agreements	23.4%	60.1%	65.8%	69.8%
GS9 and GS10 Wet grassland (coastal flood plain grazing marsh)				
ha in the AONB	1930.8	663.75	60.1	699.7
% per area	2.4%	2.46%	0.2%	1.6%
ha in CS/ES agreements	375.1	206.7	8.4	102.4
% in CS/ES agreements	19.4%	31.1%	14.0%	14.6%
Lowland heath				
ha in the AONB	3998.3	1263.5	162.6	72.9
% per area	4.9%	4.7%	0.4%	0.2%
ha in CS/ES agreements	418.18	238.68	20	19.45
% in CS/ES agreements	10.5%	18.9%	12.3%	26.7%

Mapping: NA AONB dataset – BPS and Agri-environment payments

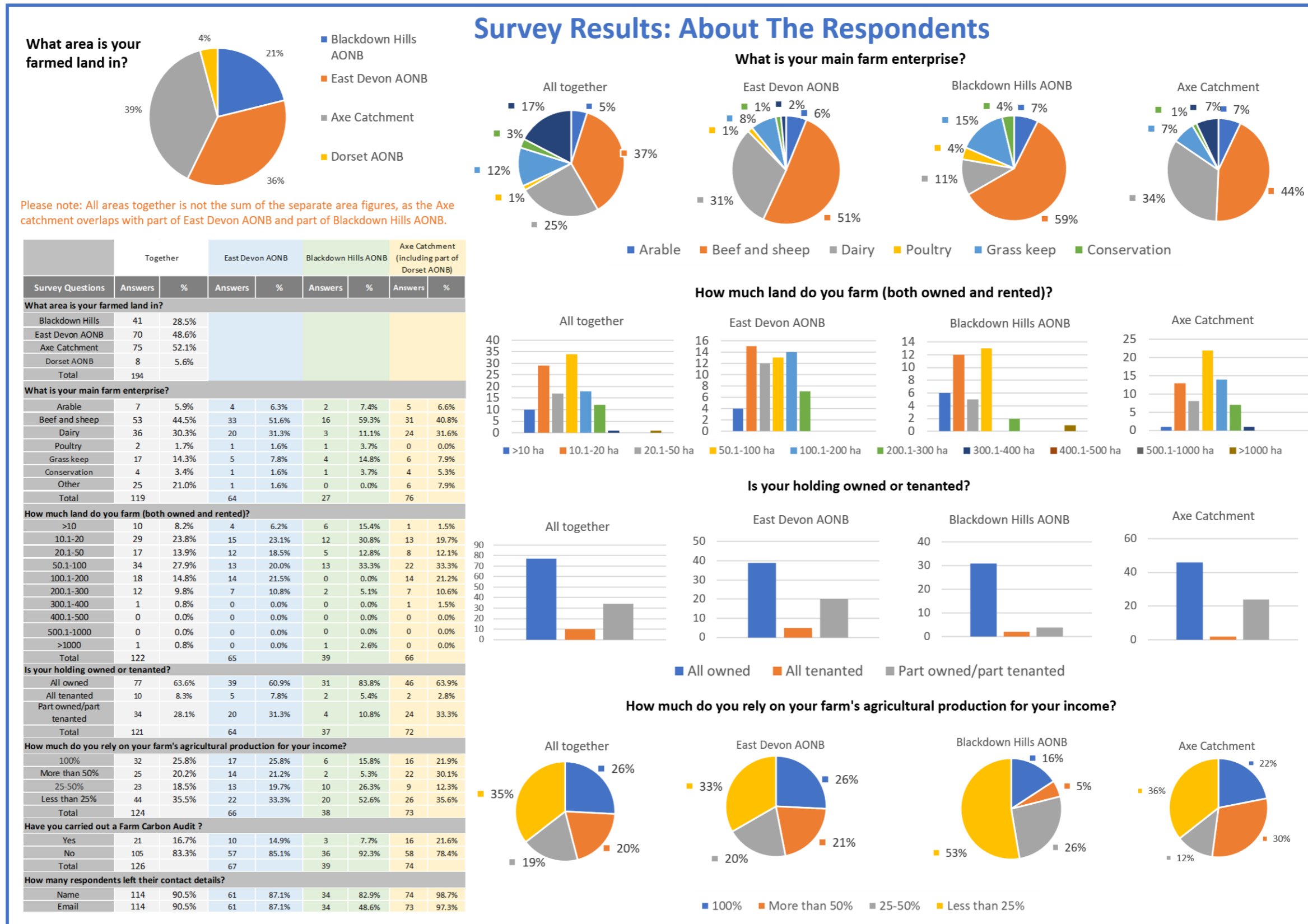
This dataset was provided by the NA AONB. Unfortunately, is not very useful for the purpose of this report. The data is shown by 4-digit postcode area. Those postcode areas are not the same size, which makes comparisons between the areas difficult. We calculated farm sizes (BPS eligible farm sizes) within those areas based on the 2019 BPS payment rate. There is such a wide range in farm sizes and therefore BPS and CS payment rates, making even a mean or median comparison between postcode areas (even when normalised by ha) very difficult. The AONBs should try to request up-to-date RPA data on parcel-based land use codes (for BPS recipients) as this would be crucial for FIPL delivery to allow a more targeted delivery.



	Postcode Areas covering East Devon AONB, Blackdown Hills AONB and the Axe Catchment														
Postcode District	EX5	EX8	EX9	EX10	EX11	EX12	EX13	EX14	EX15	EX24	DT6	DT7	TA3	TA20	TA21
Postcode area (ha)	23123	2990	2782	7444	4229	3290	12548	21098	18261	5072	17562	2563	19219	13698	10385
Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2019															
No. of BPS recipients (holdings)	235	11	19	62	48	28	187	292	295	77	221	21	209	166	160
No. of BPS recipients (holdings) per 100 ha of postcode area	1.0	0.4	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.3	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.5
Mean BPS £ per holding (BPS and Greening together)	15718.0	14319.6	36906.5	15631.0	10845.3	17580.1	11824.5	12132.2	10421.4	10151.9	13515.8	11758.9	13391.4	12814.9	11799.5
Stdev BPS £ per holding (both BPS and greening together)	21785.0	13653.0	43331.8	33357.3	13716.0	28919.5	12415.2	12630.5	9994.3	9711.2	20579.5	20979.0	18195.9	19397.9	15854.1
Mean BPS £ per holding per 100ha of postcode area	68.0	478.9	1326.6	210.0	256.5	534.4	94.2	57.5	57.1	200.2	77.0	458.8	69.7	93.6	113.6
Mean BPS eligible area per holding (ha)	96.6	88.0	226.7	96.0	66.6	108.0	72.6	74.5	64.0	62.4	83.0	72.2	82.3	78.7	72.5
Stdev BPS eligible area per holding (ha)	0.9	4.6	15.6	4.5	3.2	8.8	1.0	0.6	0.5	1.9	1.2	8.2	0.9	1.4	1.5
Agri-environment schemes 2019															
No. of agreements	62	1	6	18	4	9	39	72	65	25	51	2	72	34	29
No. of agreements per 100 ha of postcode area	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3
Mean £ per agreement	8133.0	4029.0	15041.0	7423.2	2578.9	8413.5	3457.3	2669.3	2140.8	4397.2	6090.8	5371.0	6242.1	6859.3	5409.1
Stdev £ per agreement	14220.0	0.0	12094.0	7331.2	2644.7	12919.7	4608.4	4216.9	2899.1	5443.8	6583.2	2890.8	11659.6	14902.1	11056.8
Mean £ per agreement per 100ha of postcode area	35.2	134.7	540.7	99.7	61.0	255.7	27.6	12.7	11.7	86.7	34.7	209.6	32.5	50.1	52.1
Registered organic holdings 2019															
No. registered organic holdings	3	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	9	3	2	0	1	2	1

Feedback from Farmers: Online Survey

An online survey was conducted from 11/2-05/3, covering the area of East Devon AONB, with Blackdown Hills AONB and the Axe catchment (including part of Dorset AONB). The survey was promoted through emails to existing contacts by each delivery partner, NFU newsletters and the FWAG SW website. Emma Herrod (East Devon AONB farmer liaison officer) circulated the survey information and contacted farmers directly to encourage them to take part. The survey was designed on Microsoft forms in collaboration with FWAG SW colleagues, Gavin Saunders, Robert Dean and Exmoor Hill Farming Network from Rural Focus who were delivering similar contracts for other protected landscapes (Blackdown Hills AONB, Cranborne Chase AONB, North Devon Coast AONB, Quantock Hills AONB, Exmoor National Park). The assistance of these organisations in promoting the survey is gratefully acknowledged.

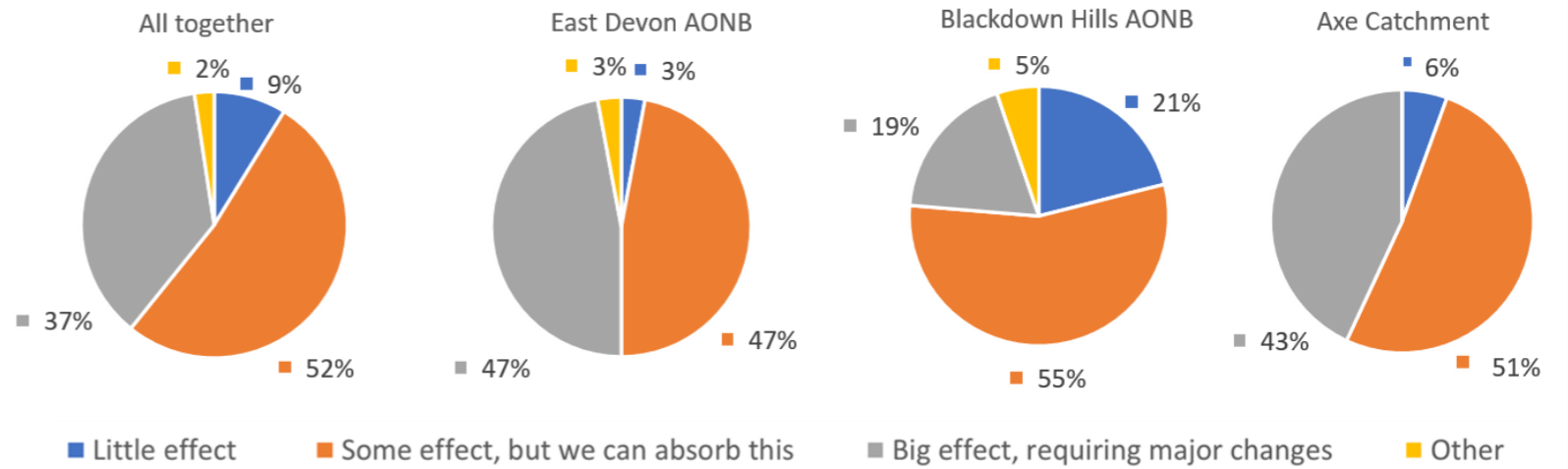


Please note: All areas together is not the sum of the separate area figures, as the Axe catchment overlaps with part of East Devon AONB and part of Blackdown Hills AONB.

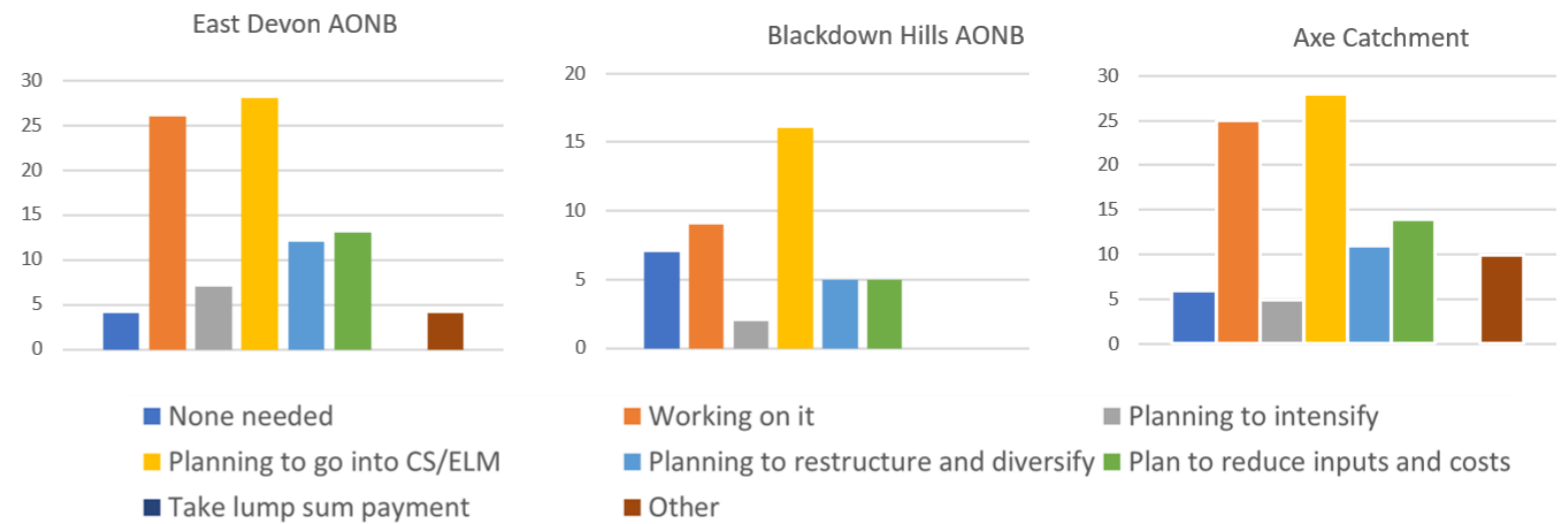
Survey question	Together		East Devon AONB		Blackdown Hills AONB		Axe Catchment	
	Answers	%	Answers	%	Answers	%	Answers	%
Are you aware of the Agricultural Transition Plan?								
Yes I have read it	16	12.7%	7	10.4%	7	17.9%	8	10.8%
I've read about it in the farming press / in an adviser briefing	25	19.8%	14	20.9%	6	15.4%	16	21.6%
I'm aware of it, but don't know the details	73	57.9%	40	59.7%	23	59.0%	42	56.8%
No, I was not aware of it	12	9.5%	6	9.0%	3	7.7%	8	10.8%
Total	126		67		39		74	
How much of your current turnover is reliant on Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments?								
Less than 25%	70	55.6%	32	47.8%	22	56.4%	39	52.7%
25%-50%	49	38.9%	31	46.3%	14	35.9%	31	41.9%
More than 50%	7	5.6%	4	6.0%	3	7.7%	4	5.4%
Total	126		67		39		74	
How big an impact will the gradual withdrawal of BPS over the next few years have on your business?								
Little effect	11	8.8%	2	2.9%	8	21.1%	4	5.6%
Some effect, but we can absorb this	65	52.0%	32	47.1%	21	55.3%	37	51.4%
Big effect, requiring major changes	46	36.8%	32	47.1%	7	18.4%	31	43.1%
Other	3	2.4%	2	2.9%	2	5.3%	0	0.0%
Total	125		68		38		72	
Do you have a strategy for adjusting to the loss of BPS?								
None needed	13	7.8%	4	4.2%	7	15.9%	6	6.1%
Not yet, but we're working on it	39	23.5%	26	27.4%	9	20.5%	25	25.3%
Yes, we plan to intensify to improve yields and gross margins	10	6.0%	7	7.4%	2	4.5%	5	5.1%
Yes, we plan to go into CS / wait for ELM	51	30.7%	28	29.5%	16	36.4%	28	28.3%
Yes, we plan to restructure the business and diversify	19	11.4%	12	12.6%	5	11.4%	11	11.1%
Yes, we plan to reduce inputs and other costs to improve gross margins	23	13.9%	13	13.7%	5	11.4%	14	14.1%
Take a lump sum payment and leave the sector	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other	11	6.6%	4	4.2%	0	0.0%	10	10.1%
Total	166		94		44		99	
Is your farm in a Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreement								
Plan to apply in 2021	30	24.8%	15	23.1%	5	13.5%	21	29.2%
Might apply subject to more information	33	27.3%	22	33.8%	8	21.6%	18	25.0%
Not interested	6	5.0%	4	6.2%	2	5.4%	2	2.8%
Yes in CS	52	43.0%	24	36.9%	22	59.5%	31	43.1%
Total	121		65		37		72	
If you are NOT in a current Stewardship agreement, what are the main reasons you have chosen to stay out?								
Not financially worthwhile for us	3	21.4%	8	15.0%	3	30.0%	9	29.0%
We're put off by the bureaucracy	8	57.1%	16	25.0%	7	70.0%	15	48.4%
We didn't have advice available to help with an application	3	21.4%	8	10.0%	0	0.0%	7	22.6%
Total	14		32		10		31	
Would you be interested in information about the Slurry Investment Scheme described in the ATP when it becomes available? Systems that are SSAFO compliant with 4-months slurry storage capacity are likely to be eligible to receive funding to further increase capacity to 6 months for future proofing.								
No - we have secure, 6 months storage	14	25.5%	17	28.3%	6	15.4%	17	23.6%
Yes - we have less than 6 months storage	7	12.7%	25	41.7%	8	20.5%	33	45.8%
N/A	34	61.8%	18	30.0%	25	64.1%	22	30.6%
Total	55		60		39		72	

Survey Results: The Agricultural Transition Period

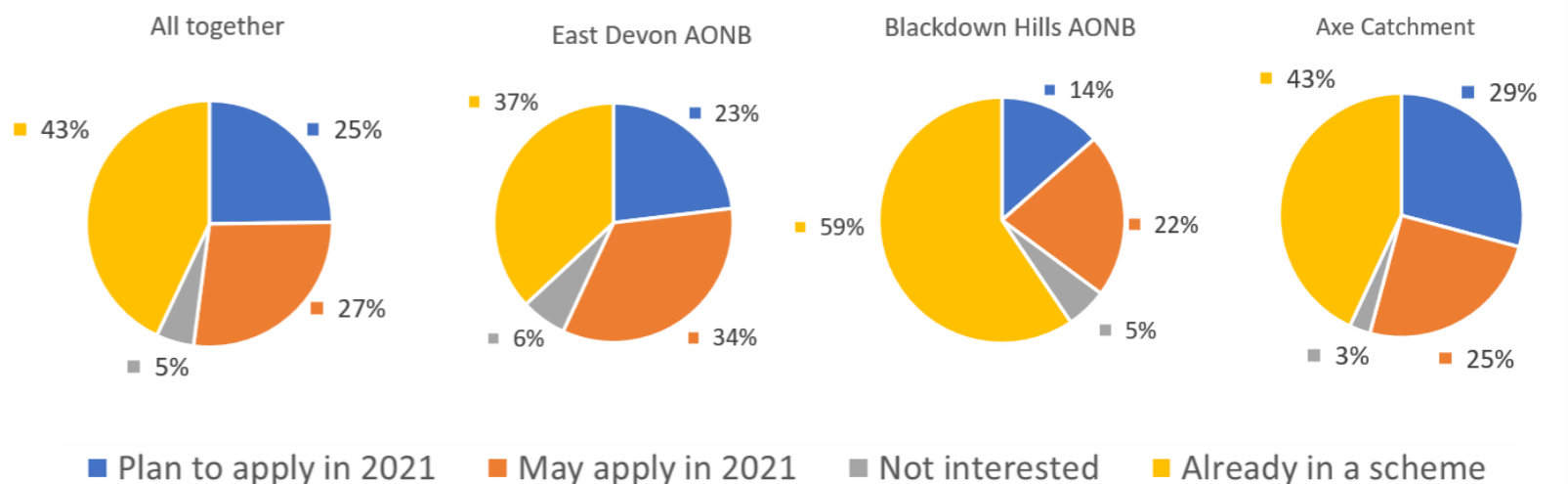
How big an impact will the gradual withdrawal of BPS over the next few years have on your business?



Do you have a strategy for adjusting to the loss of BPS?



Is your farm in a Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreement?

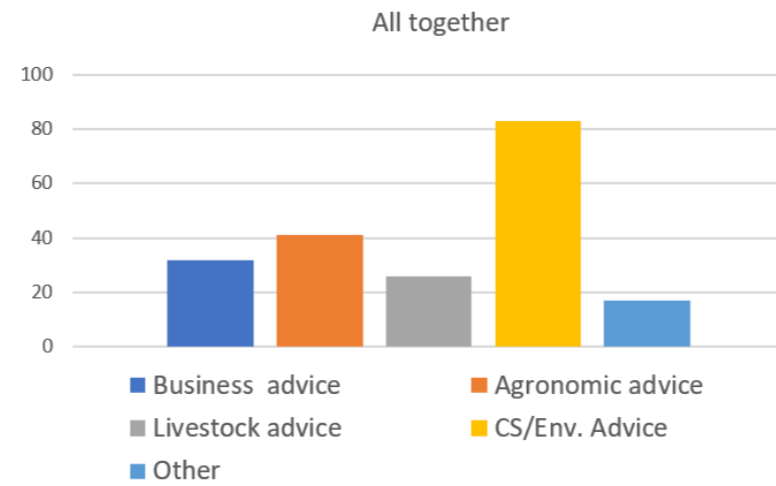


Please note: All areas together is not the sum of the separate area figures, as the Axe catchment overlaps with part of East Devon AONB and part of Blackdown Hills AONB.

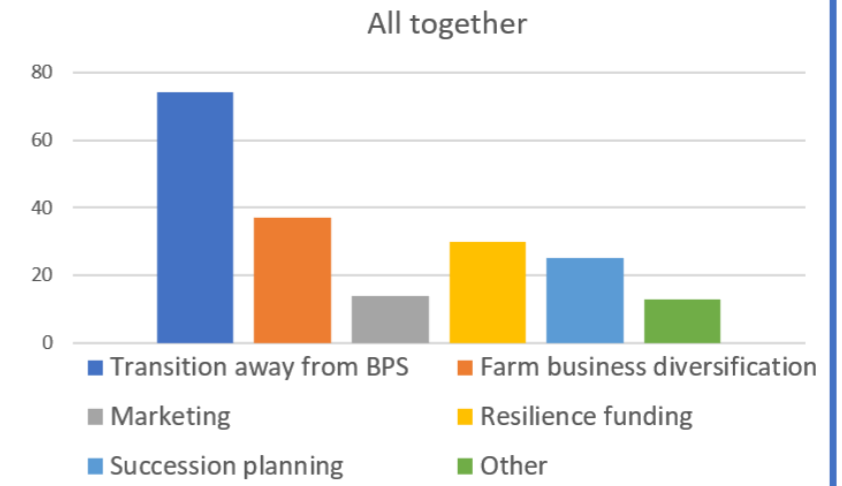
Survey Results: Farmer Advice

	All together		East Devon		Blackdown Hills		Axe Catchment (including part of Dorset AONB)	
Survey question	Answers	%	Answers	%	Answers	%	Answers	%
Do you currently receive, or have you recently received any of the following types of farm advice?								
Business advice	32	16.1%	22	19.6%	5	13.5%	21	16.9%
Agronomic advice	41	20.6%	25	22.3%	9	24.3%	25	20.2%
Livestock advice	26	13.1%	16	14.3%	4	10.8%	18	14.5%
CS /environment advice	83	41.7%	38	33.9%	17	45.9%	50	40.3%
Other	17	8.5%	11	9.8%	2	5.4%	10	8.1%
Total	199		112		37		124	
What kind of business advice are you interested in / do you need?								
Transition away from BPS	74	38.3%	46	46.5%	13	38.2%	46	39.3%
Farm business diversification	37	19.2%	20	20.2%	7	20.6%	21	17.9%
Marketing	14	7.3%	9	9.1%	2	5.9%	11	9.4%
Resilience funding	30	15.5%	14	14.1%	5	14.7%	18	15.4%
Succession planning	25	13.0%	10	10.1%	7	20.6%	16	13.7%
Other	13	6.7%	11	11.1%	0	0.0%	5	4.3%
Total	193		110		34		117	
What kind of agronomic / livestock advice are you interested in / do you need?								
Grassland management	57	26.6%	33	30.6%	11	26.2%	39	28.7%
Reducing agrochemical use	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Manure management	38	17.8%	22	20.4%	10	23.8%	25	18.4%
Soil management	59	27.6%	28	25.9%	14	33.3%	35	25.7%
Yard infrastructure	47	22.0%	24	22.2%	7	16.7%	29	21.3%
Crop rotations	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other	11	5.1%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	8	5.9%
Total	214		108		42		136	
What kind of environmental advice are you interested in / do you need?								
Compliance to regulations	40	10.4%	21	10.3%	11	16.9%	24	10.5%
CS / CSF	79	20.6%	43	21.2%	15	23.1%	49	21.5%
Hedge / tree management	59	15.4%	36	17.7%	7	10.8%	36	15.8%
Natural flood management	26	6.8%	11	5.4%	5	7.7%	14	6.1%
Habitat management	50	13.1%	26	12.8%	5	7.7%	27	11.8%
Woodland management	48	12.5%	23	11.3%	7	10.8%	29	12.7%
Water/air mitigation	26	6.8%	16	7.9%	3	4.6%	16	7.0%
Carbon auditing	51	13.3%	26	12.8%	12	18.5%	33	14.5%
Other	4	1.0%	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	383		203		65		228	
Who do you / would you prefer to receive advice from?								
Independent advisors	70	41.2%	42	46.7%	13	39.4%	43	41.3%
National advisory body	28	16.5%	12	13.3%	8	24.2%	19	18.3%
An AONB adviser	68	40.0%	31	34.4%	12	36.4%	37	35.6%
Other	4	2.4%	5	5.6%	0	0.0%	5	4.8%
Total	170		90		33		104	

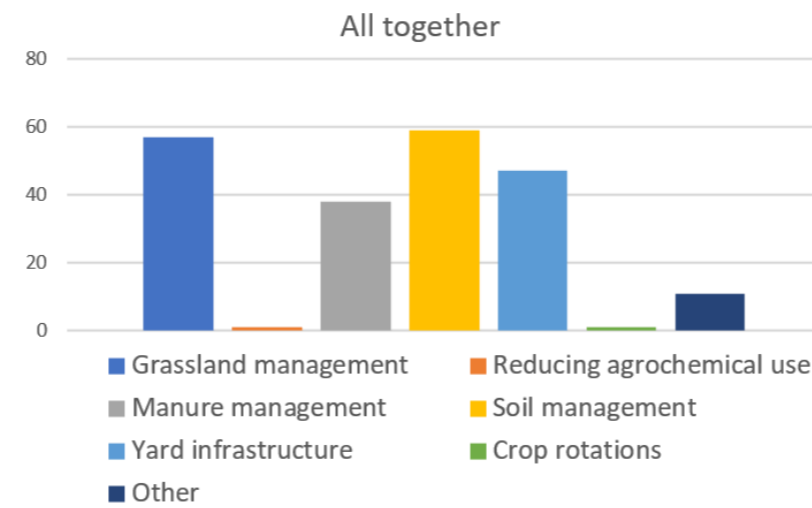
Do you currently receive any of the following types of farm advice?



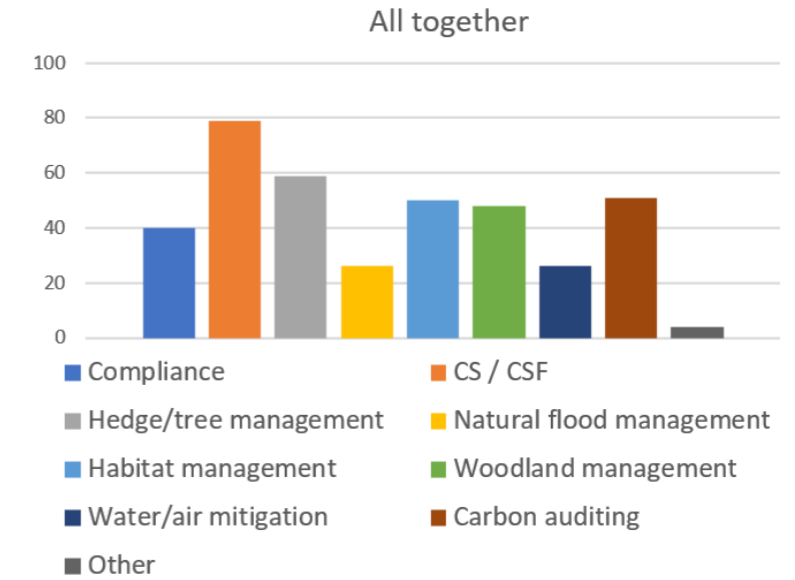
What kind of business advice do you need?



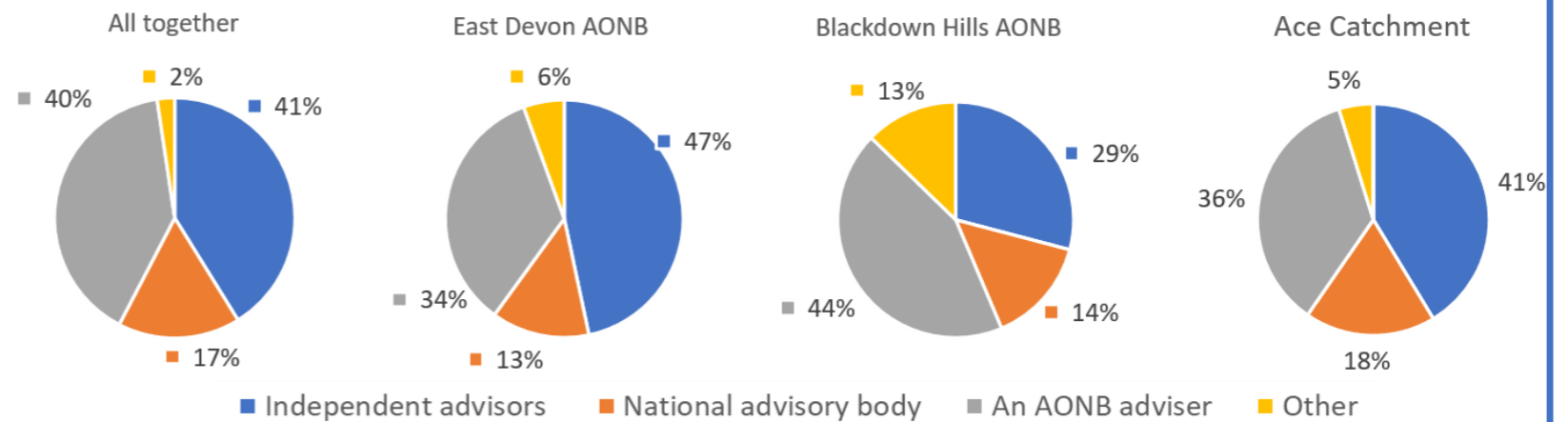
What kind of agronomic / livestock advice do you need?



What kind of environmental advice do you need?



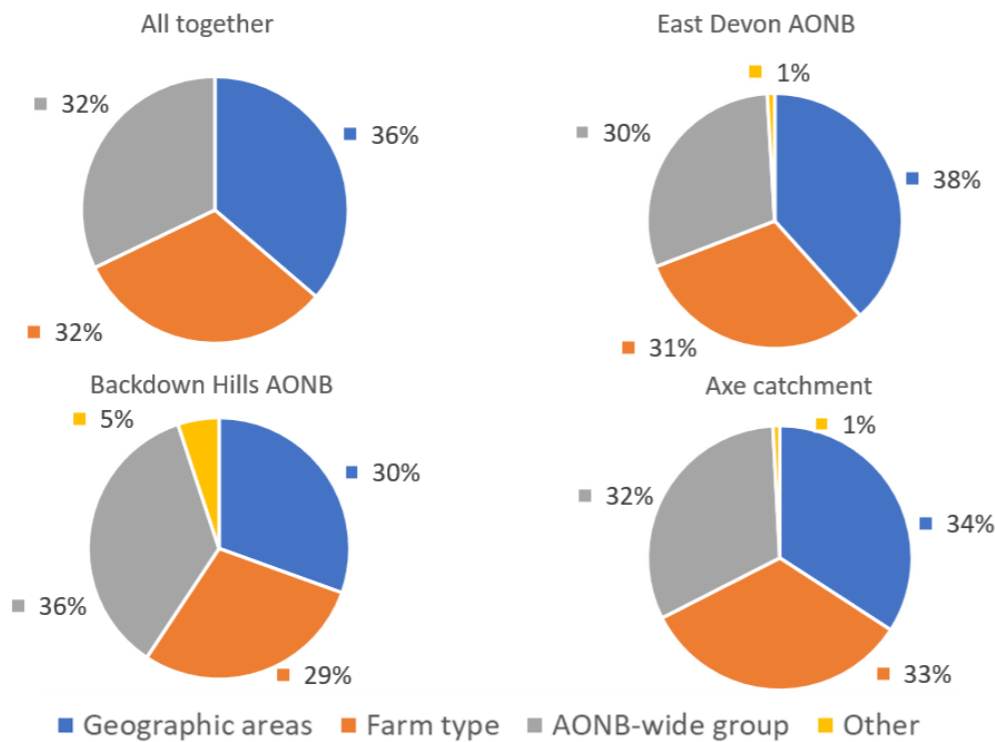
Who do you / would you prefer to receive advice from?



Please note: All areas together is not the sum of the separate area figures, as the Axe catchment overlaps with part of East Devon AONB and part of Blackdown Hills AONB.

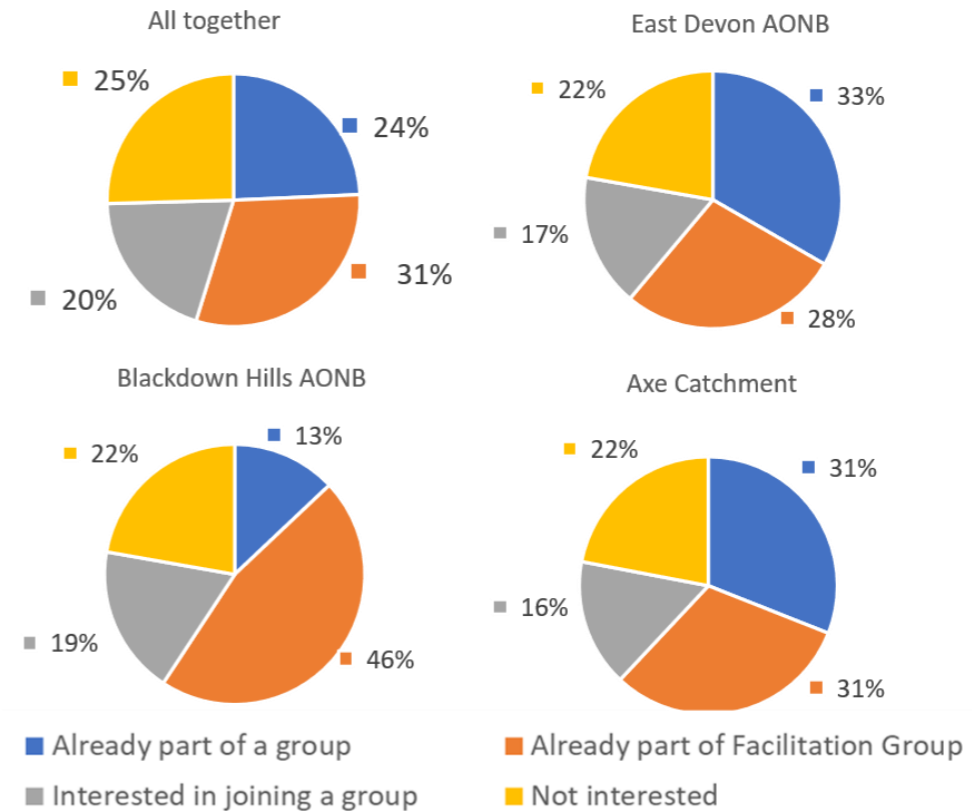
Survey question	All together		East Devon		Blackdown Hills		Axe Catchment	
	Answers	%	Answers	%	Answers	%	Answers	%
Are you interested in local collaboration/discussion with other farms in your area?								
Yes, we are already part of a farm group	43	24.3%	30	33.3%	7	13.0%	31	31.0%
Yes, we are already members of East Devon or Blackdown Hills Facilitation Fund	54	30.5%	25	27.8%	25	46.3%	31	31.0%
We are not currently in a group but would be interested in finding out what is available / in joining one	35	19.8%	15	16.7%	10	18.5%	16	16.0%
No, we are not interested	45	25.4%	20	22.2%	12	22.2%	22	22.0%
Total	177		90		54		100	
What should farm groups be based on to make them most useful?								
Local geographic areas (small catchments / parishes)	70	36.3%	41	38.7%	18	32.1%	41	34.5%
Farm business type (dairy group / beef & sheep group / woodland group etc)	61	31.6%	33	31.1%	17	30.4%	40	33.6%
AONB-wide group or network	62	32.1%	32	30.2%	21	37.5%	38	31.9%
Total	193		106		56		119	
How would you like the AONB to help you in future?								
Coordinate a stream-lined approach to farm advice across the AONB	55	25.1%	27	24.1%	14	20.9%	32	25.2%
Coordinate farmer groups as a means to share experience	56	25.6%	33	29.5%	15	22.4%	33	26.0%
Coordinate landscape-scale conservation	48	21.9%	20	17.9%	22	32.8%	24	18.9%
Provide direct advice	60	27.4%	32	28.6%	16	23.9%	38	29.9%
Total	219		112		67		127	

What should farm groups be based on to make them most useful?

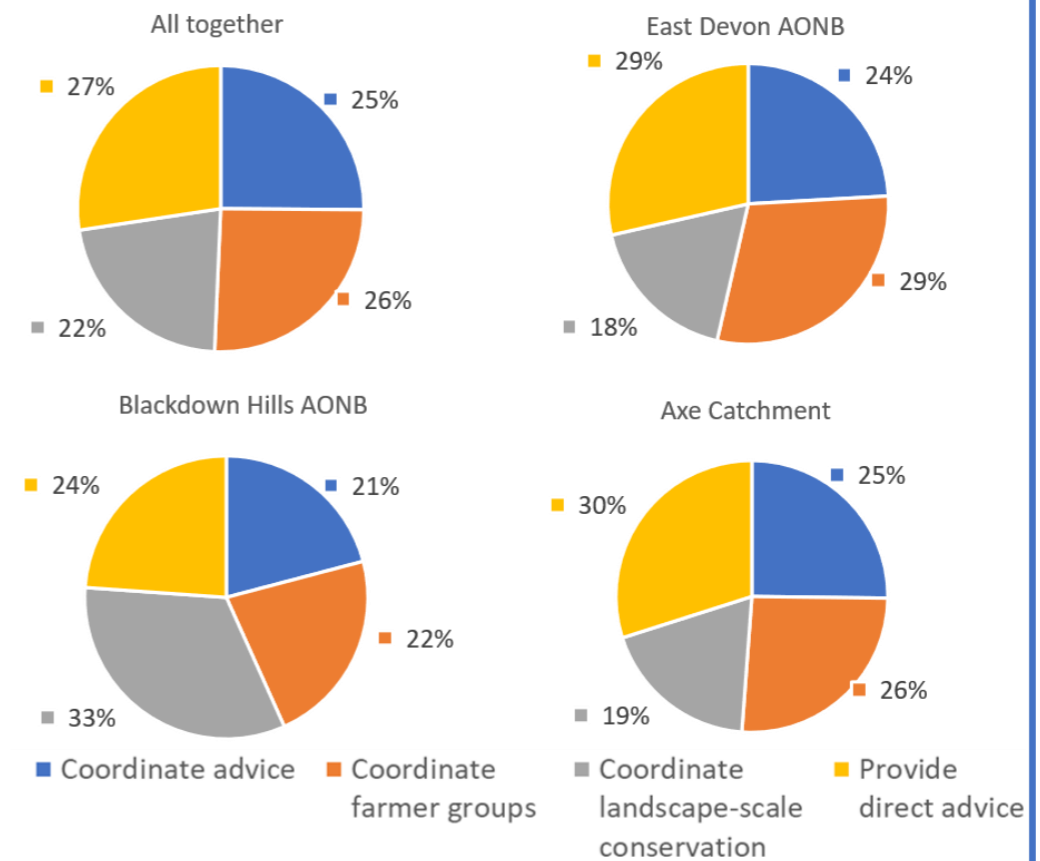


Survey Results: Farmer Groups

What should farm groups be based on to make them most useful?



How would you like the AONB to help you in future?



Feedback from Farmers: 1:1 phone calls and group discussion

1:1 phone calls

Following survey analysis, we decided to discuss several questions in more detail with those farmers who had shown interest in 1:1 conversations. A few questions from the survey were chosen to be discussed in detail. In total, 23 farmers / landowners were interviewed. The below table shows the detailed questions on the left and a summary of responses on the right.

<p>Do you have a strategy for adjusting to the loss of BPS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stage have you reached in your planning? • What are the barriers to progressing a strategy? • What advice would you need? • If you are planning to go into CS do you expect that to make up for BPS loss? • Does the loss of BPS encourage you to apply for more CS Options than you would otherwise have done? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly dairy farms said they would be able to adjust without BPS. However, they stated that changes in milk prices would have a major impact on the viability of their businesses without BPS. • Beef and sheep farmers stated BPS payments are important for their businesses. • One beef and sheep farmer said that CS is crucial for business income. <i>'As soon as this agreement is up, he will be applying for another agreement to maximise his options for the most money available to support the farm income'</i>. • Several farmers said they have diversified over the past few years and are not less reliant on BPS than they used to be. • Those for whom the farm was not a major part of their income were more relaxed about the loss of BPS • Several landowners who are renting out their land were unsure about how to adjust to the loss of BPS. They would either have to raise rents in order to not lose the income themselves. Some were interested in CS, but this may complicate the relationship with the tenants. • Many of those interviewed were already in a CS agreement. • Several stated that they entered CS for the capital items. <i>'The capital payments are well worth while however the field payments we will be losing money on due to loss of production'</i> • Several interviewees were looking at applying for CS this year. • There was doubt that ELM would be able to make up for the loss of BPS: <i>'I believe we are going to lose our BPS & could gain back half of it by doing twice as much work via Stewardship'</i>
<p>If you are not in a CS agreement, what are the main reasons to stay out?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are put off by bureaucracy, which aspect of bureaucracy? • Has access to an adviser affected your decision? • How could future schemes be designed to have less bureaucracy? • How could farmers prove they have done what they are paid for? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many farmers mentioned they were put off by the hedge cutting requirements of every 2 years for every field in the agreement. • Some mentioned that only having an online manual with 100+ pages was offputting. • Lack of trust / confidence in the RPA. <i>'It is very difficult to have any confidence in the RPA as they are so slow with responses, it is impossible to plan ahead when you cannot get hold of them & they do not respond to my emails.'</i> • One farmer was concerned about paying for advice if it wasn't clear the application would be successful. • One farmer mentioned that photographic evidence is what is required for many Farm Assurance schemes already – so should not be too much additional burden for CS. • The RPA is perceived to be working against farmers and not with them to find solutions. ELM must work with the farmer and be outcome based rather than prescription based. An example of a bad ELS experience was given with the RPA: The ELS winter stubble was eroding and he sowed a cover crop in the areas worst affected to reduce erosion risk. He wanted to do the right thing and let the RPA know but as a result got severely fined.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several farmers agreed that a rolling 5-year scheme would be good, with a break point and more flexibility to when capital works can get done.
<p>What kind of business advice are you interested in / do you need and how could this be delivered?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several farmers said they would need farm-type specific 1:1 advice • Diversification advice was mentioned a few times, in terms of marketing for holiday lets and advice on planning in order to diversify towards tourism. • Farmer discussion groups were felt to be useful for learning about different farming businesses and to help each other. • Several farmers have found the current model of the East Devon farmers group helpful: group workshops with specialist speakers. One farmer suggested to have ‘farm specific workshops that just cover having a suckler herd for example’ – delivering business advice by putting on specialist workshops for different farm types. • One farmer said he would <i>‘like advice on how they can decrease cow numbers to help the environment but increase profits. He feels there should be incentives to reduce cow numbers.’</i> • One farmer said he would need succession advice / advice for the future as his daughters are not interested in farming.
<p>Who do you / would you prefer to receive advice from?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you prefer to have one adviser who provides all advice or several specialist advisers? • What kind of advice could the AONB provide or enable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like receiving advice from the AONB as <i>‘it is LOCAL & they will understand the land here’</i> • Most farmers agreed it would be great to have a local point of contact within the AONB, for direct advice as well as for coordinating advice across a broad spectrum of specialist subjects. <i>‘It would give us confidence in applying for CS if we knew there was someone local we could call for support’.</i> <i>‘The AONB would be a great central point of contact to disseminate advice.’</i> • Most farmers agreed the AONB had done a great job at engaging farmers. <i>‘Pete is a good reflection on what the AONB may be able to offer. He has good knowledge that I trust from an environmental & farming point of view – he understands farmers & is not criticizing’</i> • Many farmers require specialist advisers, some of which needs to be farm specific. • Several farmers stated they do not mind where advice comes from as long as it is helpful’ • <i>‘the most important job for the AONB is to keep us up to date with the most up to date information to ensure we can make the most of any support available & gain understanding of ELMS as it comes into practice’</i>
<p>Are you interested in local collaboration / discussion with other farms in your area? What should groups be based on to make them most useful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you’re not interested, why not? • How are groups best formed and who should run them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most farmers interviewed were either already in the East Devon Farmers Group or interested in joining. • Those in the group were generally very happy with how it was run.’ <i>You can check in to what is relevant to your business & there is no pressure to attend more than what is useful.’</i> • The interviewees were fairly split on how groups should best be formed: some said groups of similar farm types would work best, some said having local groups to work collaboratively would be best, some said AONB-wide groups would be great with smaller sub-groups. • One farmer suggested workshops on farm business advice rather than focusing just on the environment. The above comments on business advice reflect this and also suggest that small business-specific group events could work.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few farmers raised concern over events getting too large as it is more difficult to have vibrant discussions with many and only the more confident people speak at large events. • Most farmers interviewed would be happy with the AONB leading farmer groups, but suggest a farmer steering group would be helpful. • Many farmers said that it is important to work together and groups are a good way of doing this. • A variety of day-time and evening events is great.
<p>How much do you rely on your farm's agricultural production for your income?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your other non-agricultural income? Is it farm based or off-farm? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately a third of all interviewees rely solely on the farm income. • Those who have income from outside the farm stated the following income streams (ordered by importance): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tourism (holiday lets / caravans etc) ○ A job outside of farming ○ Contracting ○ Renting out the farm ○ Horses/ livery
<p>Would farm ambassadors or a farmer steering group be helpful in delivering the 'Farming in Protected Landscapes Program' effectively?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be interested in being a steering group member? • Would you be interested in being an ambassador? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all farmers said a farmer steering group would be very helpful if not vital and many would be interested in helping out if they have enough time. • The steering group should have farmers from diverse farm types / sizes. • Generally, the idea of farm ambassadors was supported. • Most interviewees were happy with Emma Herrod's work, having set up relationships and trust over time. • Some farmers said it might be difficult to find the right person to be a farm ambassador: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One farmer did not feel farm ambassadors was a good idea – he said <i>'any real farmer wouldn't have time for this & if they were a real farmer, we would feel guilty ringing them as they would probably be busy.'</i> ○ <i>'The farm ambassador would need to be able to be open to all ideas & not try to push what they felt was right.'</i> ○ <i>'It needs to be someone with enough time, someone with good knowledge & someone that gets on with everyone'</i>

Feedback from Farmers: Group Discussion

On 16/03/2021, a group discussion session was held on zoom on the survey results and what it might mean for future delivery. We presented the findings from the survey and suggested certain discussion points.

Reliance on BPS

Reliance on BPS and attitude to its withdrawal varied amongst respondents, according to farm type and size. The survey had asked what proportion BPS represented of turnover, but during subsequent discussion it was pointed out that reliance on BPS is much higher when expressed as a percentage of profit margin rather than turnover. One farmer said his agri-environment agreement would not have made financial sense if he did not also receive the BPS payments on that land.

Transition planning: strategy for adjusting to the loss of BPS

Many farmers are waiting on more information about payment rates and options would in ELM before they make decisions about how to adapt to the loss of BPS. Many are hoping to make up for the BPS loss with CS/ELM payments. This will only be possible if ELM payments are considerably higher than current rates in

CS based on income foregone. A tenant farmer described how difficult it was to make decisions as it also depends on landlord aspirations and the length of tenancy agreements.

CS uptake

- 1:1 versus 1:many advice provision: Whilst workshops can be helpful in giving an overview of the scheme and options/capital items, 1:1 advice can help make farm-specific decisions. At best 1:1 advice including a farm visit can help make the best decisions for the habitats present.
- Bureaucracy of CS schemes: Farmers agreed that they understood that the government needs records to prove to the public that public money is well spent and have no problem with that. In fact, most of the information is already being kept on most farms. The problem lies with the way such information needs to be gathered and presented to the RPA. The RPA is perceived to be working against the farmer rather than with them.
 - Example 1: A claim was rejected initially because of missing photographic evidence as 3 photos were expected for 3 capital items, whereas the photo showed all those in the same place.
 - Example 2: Photo attachments are often too large to send to the RPA so that a simple job turned into a big undertaking with reducing photo sizes etc.
 - Example 3: The RPA often undertakes remapping based on satellite data, which is often not correct and causes more work and anxiety for farmers.
- On-going support: The farmers agreed it would be helpful to have advice on CS not just for the applications but also once they are in a scheme. Having a friendly and local AONB adviser to contact would fill them with more confidence to join agri-environment schemes in the future.

Farm advice

- Payments for advice: Farmers agreed it would be helpful if the new schemes provide funding for advice (as used to be the case under HLS) to encourage farmers to join but also to choose the right options for the right habitat.
- On-going advice: Having a regular adviser who gets to know the farm and does regular (every 2 years) visits to advise on scheme compliance and further options has been helpful in the past.
- Conflicting sources of advice: Farmers commented that business advisers often want to sell something related to their advice, making their objectivity difficult to trust. Environmental and productivity-related advice are often very different and many farmers suggested that a more balanced approach is required, potentially one where advisers from different disciplines communicate with each other to provide a more joined-up service.
- Advice via farm groups: A dairy farmer said she got most of her advice through a discussion group with other dairy farmers and learning from each other's experiences.
- Soil management advice: Whilst interest in receiving soil management advice was high in the survey, farmers admitted they are not sure who to contact for such advice. It was also noted that soils advice is best delivered by on-farm 1:1 advice as the issues are farm/field-specific.

Farmer groups

Most farmers agreed that AONB-wide farmer groups are effective (such as the current Facilitation Fund), with subgroups based on farm types or local areas also having a potential role. Generally, it was seen to be helpful if the person organising such groups had a farming background or was a farm ambassador. A dairy farmer said how useful their dairy discussion group is for getting advice and learning from each other.

Generally on-farm workshops are particularly useful, but online events during lockdown have been well received – ‘a lifeline for some people’.

The role of the AONB

The general consensus was that having a point of contact or an adviser in the AONB would be welcome. This could be in the form of a coordinator of an adviser hub, putting farmers in touch with specialist advisers (for example for specific soils advice). Having a friendly and local AONB adviser to contact would fill farmers with more confidence to join agri-environment schemes in the future.

Promote Awareness and CS Uptake: Online Seminars

Online seminar series

The following online seminars were delivered, in collaboration with Blackdown Hills AONB and Dorset AONB:

- Agricultural Transition Plan – transition from BPS to ELM. Q&A session. (17/02/2021- 12:00-13:30). 22 participants
- Mid Tier Countryside Stewardship 2021: an update to changes to the application process and available options. (23/02/2021- 12:00-13:30). 31 participants
- Countryside Stewardship Capital Grants: an update on capital grants focusing on hedgerows and boundaries. (24/02/2021- 12:00-13:30). 25 participants
- Countryside Stewardship Capital Grants: an update on yard infrastructure, water and air quality grants. This session will also include a short overview of SSAFO and the Farming Rules for Water. (02/03/2021- 12:00-13:30). 29 participants
- Discussion session on the results from this survey and what it might mean for future delivery. (16/03/2021- 12:00-13:30). 30 participants.

The seminars were promoted through emails to existing contacts, NFU newsletters and the FWAG SW website and the online surveys. Farmers could express interest via the survey or the FWAG SW website and were sent the zoom link to the events via email.

NAAONB Seminars

The seminars were promoted through emails to existing contacts, NFU newsletters and the FWAG SW website and the online surveys. Farmers could express interest via the survey and were sent the booking information via email.

64 farmers / land managers / landowners expressed interest in attending the NAAONB seminars through the survey. Of those 64, 32 were in the East Devon AONB.

Recommendations on Farming in Protected Landscapes Delivery: Adviser Interviews

Four advisers were interviewed about what the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme could look like and what the role of the AONB could be. One adviser is an independent land agent and the other advisers were part of the following organisations: Devon Wildlife Trust, Westcountry River’s Trust (x2, one an active adviser and one a more regional project development role).

Ideas on what FIPL could look like?

Run the programme with fuzzy edges, not strictly limited to land within the AONBs as the environment does not know AONB boundaries. For example, the AONBs could benefit from beneficial work for example in upstream catchments. Every adviser stated that neighbouring AONBs / protected landscapes should work together. It would be great if FIPL could fund conservation work that CS currently cannot fund. Examples that were given were meadow restoration, detailed soils advice as well as business advice with an environmental understanding.

How could FIPL be joined up or complemented with existing projects?

Generally, the feedback was to join up with projects in the area and fund aspects that it is difficult to get funding for otherwise.

Should there be regional/AONB-wide adviser meetings?

Most of the advisers felt that such meetings were already happening, such as catchment partnership meetings (also including EA, NE, water companies) and meeting up at local events pre lockdown. Therefore, such meetings should be joined up with existing meetings and discuss both current delivery, future projects and triage on clients to be handed over to various projects for funding / specialist advice. A regular overview of current projects and what can/can't be funded would be very helpful so that all advisers can point farmers to the right project/advisers, this could be done in meetings or in an AONB newsletter that everyone contributes to. One adviser particularly mentioned that there should be more honest exchange rather than organisations 'bigging themselves up' and 'hogging project funding'.

Future role of the AONB

AONB having a contact list of advisers: Consistency is key. Most farmers do not mind where advice comes from as long as it is reliable, consistent and good quality. Therefore, it would make sense to work with existing advisers in the area (as well as with land agents, contractors, business advisers etc). One adviser mentioned that a national adviser hub is being put together through the Catchment Partnerships and the Rivers Trusts nationally.

AONB forming farmer groups: Generally, farm groups would be welcome. The AONB is seen as ideal to take a coordinating role on such groups as well as on landscape-scale conservation. Everyone spoken to would be interested to run workshops to such groups and be involved. It was mentioned that, unfortunately as always the case, such groups are likely to only reach those who are already interested and engaged. Therefore, EA or regulatory presence is important to make contact to the hard-to-reach farmers and encourage them to join such groups.

If the AONB provided direct advice: Opinions were mixed on this. Again, it was pointed out how important consistency is and that it could be difficult for farmers if the AONB's hired new advisers to work with. Generally, all advisers were keen to work together and triage advice to who is most suitable / has funding. Especially for landscape-scale conservation and public access, it was deemed that it would make sense for the AONBs to take a lead on this. 'It would be a shame if the AONB hired their own advisers if we have worked in partnership, a lot of the time in-kind from partner organisations, to get funding for certain projects and not get to work on those projects in the end.'

Recommendations on Farming in Protected Landscapes Delivery: Conclusions

FIPL Overall

- Run the FIPL programme focusing on the AONB area, but with fuzzy edges around the area, especially areas upstream that are affecting the AONB. Keep working with other AONBs in the area.
- Join FIPL delivery with existing projects/funding streams in the area, for example the Triple Axe project, Upstream Thinking, Soil Alliance, Catchment Partnerships, EA regulatory approach etc.
- Focus on conservation work that CS cannot currently fund (meadow restoration, detailed soils advice, business advice)
- Access to good quality (mapping) data will be key for a successful delivery of FIPL.
 - Ask DEFRA to provide access to up-to-date holding and land-use information from the RPA
 - The priority habitat layer is incomplete – survey the area to update the habitat layers to better target conservation of habitats already in good condition and restoration of those with potential.

Provide a point of contact within the AONB

- Provide some direct advice
- Work with advisers and farmers in the area to set up a list of trusted advisers
- Signpost farmers to trusted advisers – continuity is key
- Coordinate landscape-scale conservation

Create farmer group(s) / engage with the farming community /provide advice

- Create an AONB-wide group (fuzzy edges) with a steering group of farmers from diverse farm types – similar to the East Devon Farmers Group, which almost all interviewees were very happy with
- Create sub-groups where there is demand to run more specific events/discussion groups
- Use the adviser network to deliver such workshops
- Use locally known and trusted farm ambassadors to engage with the farming community, especially hard-to-reach farmers. Interviewees have given very good feedback on Emma Herrod’s work. Also engage with EA and CSF for referrals.
- Advice needs are varied, so provide a whole range of workshops as well as 1:1 advice. Include business advice with an environmental focus.
- Keep farmers updated on information coming from DEFRA regarding ATP
- Help farmers get ready for ELM and with CS Uptake
- Coordinate landscape-scale conservation and cooperation of farmers