



THE HEATHER TRUST

Promoting Integrated Moorland Management

Natural England: The Upland Outcomes Approach

Stakeholder Workshops - March 2015

Summary Report

Introduction

To promote the new Upland Outcomes Approach, the Heather Trust (HT) facilitated a series of five workshops for Natural England (NE) that were held in different parts of the English uplands, during March 2015.

In essence the purpose of the new Approach is to manage relationships with stakeholders through partnership working that will help when dealing with complex and sometimes emotive issues.

The Upland Outcomes Approach

With support from members of the Uplands Stakeholder Forum (USF), of which HT is a member, Defra and NE developed The National Outcomes Framework that was published in December 2013 ([download¹](#)).

The Framework provides the background for the Uplands Outcome Approach and it includes the following important statements:

- Land managers are critical to delivery and in most partnerships, a key component. Implicit in this Approach is that, if they are to deliver both their own contributions and accommodate the interests of others, land managers need to understand and have ownership of the outcomes.
- The Framework does not set out a rigid process. While the Framework establishes the national principles, it is intended to apply it at a local level to deliver local outcomes. These will be consistent with local interests and needs, and take account of the local landscape and local partnerships.
- The Framework adopts the ecosystem approach, which puts people at the heart of the environment, and it recognises the value of local skills and knowledge in determining priorities for the uplands at a local scale.

Workshops

The workshops had two main aims:

- To inform people from different parts of the English uplands about the Upland Outcomes Framework and how the Outcomes Approach would be used to put this into practice, and
- To gather feedback about the Outcomes Approach that could be used to develop it further.

The workshops followed the same tried and tested, 'talk and walk' format, but to recognise local differences, they aimed to adapt the messages to a local audience. In the morning, presentations were given to introduce the topic by: a representative of Defra or Natural England at Director level, national and local representatives of Natural England, and a member of the Upland Stakeholder Forum. In the afternoon, a visit to an area of moorland took place to provide a practical backdrop for further discussion.

Workshop Locations

Location	Date
Jervaulx, Leyburn	10-Mar-15
Whitfield, Hexham	11-Mar-15
Moscar, Glossop	17-Mar-15
Derwent Fells, Keswick	18-Mar-15
Molland, South Molton	24-Mar-15

¹ <https://goo.gl/p42S2r>

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Discussion in full flow on Jervaulx Moor

Feedback from the Events

Ambition

- Through developing a shared vision for the future, the Outcomes Approach will usefully bring people together and provide an opportunity to engage everyone's skills and experience in achieving the objectives for the land.
- It is important to use language that everyone can understand.
- A way needs to be found to protect the owners and managers who adopt the Outcomes Approach from a loss of payments, if objectives are not achieved after every reasonable effort has been made.
- The Outcomes approach will not work everywhere, either because it is not appropriate due to the need for NE to use regulatory powers, or because the owners or managers view the risk of adopting an outcomes approach to be too high and would prefer to work within the certainty offered by prescriptions.

Objective setting

- All parties should share a clear, long-term vision of the objectives for the land.
- Businesses need longer-term certainty over outcomes to enable them to plan, adapt and/or evolve.
- A 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate. It is essential to consider what works best in different situations.
- Different land tenure arrangements must be considered when setting objectives.

Partnership working

- NE does not need to drive partnerships; the role for NE may just be to act as facilitator.
- For partnership working to be effective, trust, transparency, honesty and respect for the interests of others must be developed.

Monitoring

- Simple monitoring processes should be introduced to allow owners and managers to detect change. This will allow management adjustments to be made locally to keep progress on track towards the agreed objectives.

Next Steps

- There was support for a 'get on and see if it works' approach - the Outcomes Approach should be tested on the ground and the experience gained from testing used to develop the concept.
- More 'talk and walk' events held on pilot sites would allow a wider audience to develop an understanding of the Outcomes Approach, and this would develop support for the process.

Conclusions

- The workshops showed that there is an appetite for the approach being proposed to implement the Upland Outcomes Framework, but there is a long way to go before it will provide widespread benefit.
- There are many uncertainties, but the potential benefits of achieving better engagement from the owners and managers of the land are significant.
- The Outcomes Approach will not work unless there is willingness and determination both within NE, and by the owners and managers of the land. It should not be forgotten that there is also a need to engage other interest groups.
- There must be a move away from the situation that owners and managers feel disenfranchised from the management of the land. They need to be at the centre of planning and decision-making.
- For NE, the Outcomes Approach offers an opportunity to harness other skills and resources and put them to work to deliver agreed outcomes.
- For landowners and managers, the Outcomes Approach offers an opportunity to have a greater input into the development of a plan for the management of the land. Once the plan is agreed, they will be responsible for managing the land to achieve the agreed outcomes using their skills and experience, with less need to refer to regulations and external guidance.
- The Outcomes Approach may have come out of a blockage in the discussions about peatland management, but the approach can be applied to all aspects of management, and not just in the uplands.

- The Outcomes Approach is a big leap forward. It is long overdue, but to seize this opportunity all parties must be prepared to adapt.
- The new approach promoted by the workshops is welcome as it seeks to attach a higher value to the local knowledge and experience that is held by the owners and managers of the land, and the other stakeholders who share their interest in these iconic areas.
- It is hoped that these workshops are only the beginning of a process that will improve the way relationships work in the English uplands.



Striding across Moscar Moor

Acknowledgements

The Trust would like to thank the landowners, and their staff, who allowed us access to the moors and gave their time in support of the events.

The workshops would not have happened without the people who turned out to contribute to them and it is hoped that they all gained some value from the discussion.

Final thanks go to Natural England for commissioning this work from the Trust. Running events like this on a national stage is a unique service that the Trust can offer.

Simon Thorp
Director

3rd August 2015



Group photo on Derwent Fells