

# Sussex Research

## Deliberative-analytic approaches to Ecosystem Services as a way forward for the land sparing/sharing debate

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# Briefing for participants

## Appraising future land use scenarios for the South East of England A Multi-Criteria Mapping (MCM) exercise

### ABOUT THE MCM EXERCISE

This MCM exercise aims to assess contrasting approaches to enhancing biodiversity, food security and broader sustainability through the management of large herbivores within different rural and peri-urban landscapes in the Southeast of England. It therefore asks the question: How can large herbivores be managed within rural and peri-urban landscapes in ways that simultaneously enhance biodiversity, food security and broader sustainability? By participating in an MCM interview, you are agreeing to assess a suite of options that represent contrasting strategies for achieving this focal goal. Your appraisal will be considered in conjunction with a number of other appraisals carried out by experts with different perspectives on the issues at hand. The next steps in this process are explained on the back of this briefing.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The MCM exercise is part of a wider interdisciplinary research project entitled, “Delivering food security, community resilience, and biodiversity through rewilding and community agriculture”. The project uses a suite of other methodologies to explore synergies and trade-offs between the use of large herbivores within conservation and agriculture. It aims to explore both how different landscapes produced by different herbivore regimes perform against a range of ecological criteria, and how different understandings of performance change depending on the view that is taken.

The project is itself part of a portfolio of pilot studies under the umbrella of the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme (SSRP).

### HOW TO USE THIS BRIEFING

This briefing contains text, tables and images that describe four core options that you will be asked to assess in your MCM interview. The aim of the briefing is to inform you about the options and the MCM appraisal procedure in advance of the interview. This will help to save time on the day and ensure that you are properly prepared with the information that you need.



The options described below represent contrasting strategies for achieving the focal goal. They take the form of different scenarios for managing an imaginary area of land that has the following key characteristics: The site covers 100 ha of rolling hills including a chalk escarpment and the middle section of a river valley, characterised by sandy-clay loam soils. It has been under the current land use continuously for 30 years with only minor variations in management.

### OPTION 1: AGROECOLOGICAL FARM

- Community-owned organic farm.
- Pasture, arable fields, orchards, hedgerows, woodland, and wetland habitats.
- On the edge of a large village
- Raising of various traditional livestock breeds is a core activity - home to suckler cows, pigs and sheep.
- Certified to the highest organic standard.
- Agrochemicals are banned and efforts are made to restrict off-farm inputs.
- Meat is sold to the public through the farm shop and café, via a small number of local outlets, by mail order, and through Borough Market in London.
- Provides permanent residential care for ten adults.
- Hosts apprentices and agriculture students.
- Produces arable crops, fodder, fruits and vegetables.
- Runs a farm shop, butchers' shop, dairy, café and micro-brewery.
- The public are regularly invited onto the farm for guided walks, picnics, seasonal celebrations, craft workshops, experience days and volunteer work days.



In each scenario (i.e. under each option) other aspects of the site vary. As stated, the site and the four options are imaginary and do not correspond in any direct way to real sites, though they are based on research into land use in the South East of England. **Focal goal: The management of large herbivores within peri-urban and rural landscapes to simultaneously enhance biodiversity, food security and broader sustainability.**

### OPTION 2: PERI-URBAN NATURE RESERVE

- Council-owned open space. Managed by the city council in partnership with the local Wildlife Trust.
- A patchwork of grass (dominant), scrub and woodland.
- On the boundary of a small city and surrounding national park.
- A roaming flock of traditional ewes are grazed to maintain the Downland habitat - creating an attractive and accessible environment, benefiting biodiversity and protecting specific species.
- The grassland is unimproved (no chemical inputs used).
- The Wildlife Trust mobilises volunteers for periodic scrub management.
- Sheep are managed by a professional shepherd with help from a team of amateur volunteers.
- The meat is sold to a local community buying group. This group – which is administered by local volunteers from the city – sells ¼ shares of hogget to its members, by pre-order and collection from the city centre.
- Doubles as a recreational space, popular for exercising and dog walking.

### OPTION 3: REWILDED ESTATE

- Private farmland estate.
- Shifting landscape of open-grown trees, emerging scrub, grazing lawns, groves and thorny thickets.
- Relatively remote location - almost 10 miles from the nearest market town.
- Home to a range of large herbivore species – bison, various breeds of deer, ponies, cows and pigs – which play a central role in the rewilding project's conservation mission. All animals are allowed to roam freely across the estate.
- No fertilisers or other chemicals, imported feed, farm machinery or routine medication are used.
- Small quantities of meat are produced and sold on site as part of the culling regime to mimic natural predation.
- Despite attracting popular interest and media attention, the public are only engaged in small numbers through bespoke safari experiences.
- Public rights of way that cross the site are well maintained and accessible to walkers.



### OPTION 4: CONVENTIONAL FAMILY FARM

- Family-owned lowland beef and lamb farm.
- Predominantly comprised of improved pasture and arable fields.
- Located in a relatively remote part of the Low Weald.
- Raising of fast-growing commercial livestock breeds is the main activity.
- Home to suckler cows and sheep.
- Also produces a small amount of fodder.
- Agrochemicals and other external inputs are used to fertilise the pasture, eliminate pests and weeds, and feed the animals.
- Compliant with environmental and animal welfare regulation - certified by Red Tractor.
- Sells most of its meat into the deadweight market - it is most likely bought by large abattoirs and sold on to UK supermarkets and for export overseas.
- No active attempts are made to engage the public in the farm's activities.
- The public rights of way that cross the site are well maintained and accessible to walkers.

## NEXT STEPS

Once you have familiarised yourself with the four options, the next step is to think about the main factors that might influence their potential to achieve the focal goal. These factors will then become your criteria for appraising the four options. In the interview you will be asked to define them in a comparable manner, providing a title and key features for each criterion. For instance, if the overarching goal was to have a successful bedtime routine with your young children, then criteria against which to appraise different options for achieving that goal might include 'length of routine', 'level of distress incurred', 'amount of tidying up to do', 'opportunities for connection', and so on. There is no hard-and-fast rule, but 5-7 criteria tends to be a manageable number. Any more can become tedious and/or tiring when put into practice.

Once you have defined your criteria, the next part of the interview will involve scoring each option against each criterion. Rather than giving discrete scores (e.g. 50 out of 100), you will be asked to provide scoring ranges (e.g. 40-60 out of 100) and to explain the optimistic and pessimistic assumptions (or different conditions) under which you would expect the performance to vary. If this sounds confusing or complicated now, don't worry too much as it will make more sense in practice. This information is for the benefit of those of you who like to know what they'll be asked to do in advance, but it is not necessary for you to completely understand it now as there will be time to talk it through in the interview.

The final stages of the interview will be weighting your criteria, to provide an indication of their relative importance or relevance in your view, and reviewing your final ranking of the options once the appraisal is complete. At this point it will be worth bearing in mind that the aim of MCM is to "explore the ways in which different pictures of strategic choices change, depending on the view that is taken – not to prescribe a particular 'best choice'" (MCM Manual V2 page 9). In other words, it is the reasoning behind the scores and ranks that matter – and how they compare across different participant's appraisals – more than the scores themselves.

Once all the interviews have been conducted and the data has been analysed and interpreted, we hope to gather all participants together, along with other relevant practitioners and policymakers, to collectively ruminate on the results. We currently anticipate that this will take the form of a workshop to be held in spring 2019.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you should contact:

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