

LM04141 What are the impacts of the Countryside Stewardship historic building restoration grant pilot scheme?

Agri-environment monitoring theme: Beauty, Heritage and Engagement

What are the issues?

One of the aims of Agri-Environment Schemes is to protect the historic environment for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. This encompasses both archaeological sites and monuments and traditional farm buildings (TFBs). The aim of the historic building restoration grant pilot (HBRGP) scheme was to bring life back to TFBs within five upland National Parks: Dartmoor, Lake District, Northumberland Peak District and Yorkshire Dales. The standalone capital grant scheme within Countryside Stewardship (CS) was a one-off pilot, with only one application round, to ascertain the demand for such a scheme and to trial the collaborative working model. The purpose of the grant scheme was to fund TFB restorations that would enhance cultural heritage features, landscape character, wildlife and public engagement with the environment. The purpose of this project is to evaluate the full impact of the HBRGP scheme including landscape, environmental and economic deliverables.

What are the aims of the project?

To assess the impacts of the Countryside Stewardship HBRGP scheme. To achieve this aim there were 6 objectives for the project to determine:

- 1) The spatial distribution of HBRGP scheme grants and compare with the historic building restoration projects completed under Environmental Stewardship (ES) and CS and ES TFB maintenance option uptake (2005-2023).
- 2) The economic impact of the scheme on the farming business, local building contractors, conservation consultants and local economy.
- 3) The total economic value including use and non-use values and to include culture and heritage capital; benefits for nature conservation and protected species; and landscape.
- 4) The amount of private funding secured in the building repairs.
- 5) The experiences of scheme participants and the impact of COVID-19 on delivery.
- 6) The effectiveness of integrated scheme delivery, identify lessons learned and make recommendations for any successor scheme.

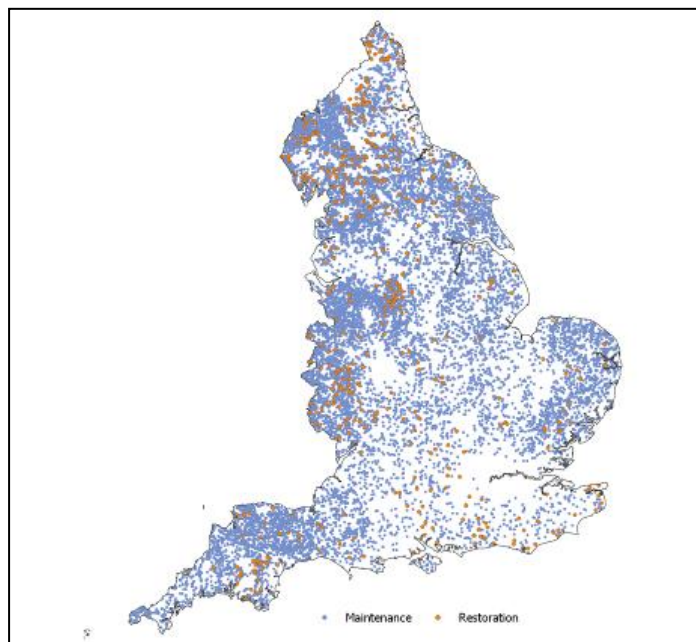


Figure 1: Uptake of TFB restoration and maintenance options CS and ES

Which policy areas will the research inform?

This approach sits firmly within the Beauty, Heritage and Engagement goal of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan which seeks to secure and enhance the benefits of the environment far into the future. This new approach will recognise good practices that build up and bolster natural and heritage assets.



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What are the results from the project and how will they be used?

From the introduction of TFB restoration and maintenance options in 2005 to 2023, ES and CS agreement holders have selected just under 18,000 options nationally, with the highest density being within the protected landscapes. The HBRGP scheme was popular among the farming and land manager community within the National Parks. 338 expressions of interest were received which resulted in 98 applications. After a robust selection process, 70 restoration projects were completed. The total expenditure of the scheme brought forward was £8.73 million and the grant claimed totalled £6.98 million.

The evaluation project developed an innovative ecosystems-based Return on Investment (ROI) model to assess the monetary value of social, economic and ecological outcomes generated by the investment in traditional farm building restoration. The model was applied to 15 case studies in the five national parks participating in the scheme.

A total of £3.3 million was invested in the 15 case studies with 97 per cent of the funding going into actual restoration work. Separate ROI models were developed for individual restoration projects to generate Benefit-to-Investment ratios (BIRs) at five- and 10-year periods.



Figure 2: The restoration work was carried out to a high standard. Combination barn in the Lake District National Park. © Jeremy Lake/CCRI

The average investment across the 15 case studies is £222,293 per project. Average returns on investment predicted by the ROI model are £4.55:1 over 5 years rising to £6.07:1 over 10 years. The model indicates an average benefit generation of £877,000 per project over 5 years, rising to £1.168 million over 10 years.

Present value of benefits generated by the 15 restoration projects over 5 years amounts to £13.2 million, rising to £17.5 million over 10 years. A breakdown of benefits by the four types of ecosystem service (Box 1) indicates that cultural services generate the highest level of outcome values (72% of the total).

Proportion of outcome value allocated to ecosystem service impact pathways				Present Value of benefits over 5 years
Supporting	Provisioning	Regulating	Cultural	
2.74%	19.75%	5.99%	71.52%	£13,204,989

Box 1. Proportional allocation of benefits by ecosystem service category (over 5-year period)

Outcomes include improvements in knowledge and skills, changes in wellbeing associated with engagement in the restoration work, and changes in landscape impacts and enhancement of local distinctiveness. Provisioning services (farm business and local economic benefits) account for almost one fifth of total outcome values generated while Supporting services (measuring the ecological benefits from restoration), account for less than 3% of total benefits.

The outcome values generated enable greater understanding of the benefits generated by restoring farm buildings. The valuation methodology developed can be used to assess value for money and improve design of future support schemes.

The final report can be found on the Defra Science Search website

This project was led by the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) at the University of Gloucestershire. For more information please contact Peter Gaskell pgaskell@glos.ac.uk or Annabelle LePage at Natural England annabelle.lepage@naturalengland.org.uk

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