

The North Yorkshire Moors Upland Land Management Initiative

The North Yorkshire Moors Land Management Initiative (LMI) lies at the head of the Esk Valley, towards the northern edge of the North York Moors National Park.

K. Paver



The landscape of the North York Moors, looking towards Westerdale.

The LMI, known locally as the Farm and Rural Community Scheme (F&RCS), covers approximately 5,000 hectares, encompassing the parishes of Castleton, Commondale and Westerdale, and containing 320 households. Farming is dominated by upland beef and sheep enterprises. The area was chosen for the pilot because of its range of typical upland characteristics. The two dales, Commondale and Westerdale, are relatively well maintained within the moorland, with each dale focusing upon a small village, and Castleton providing the service centre for the area.

The North York Moors' National Park status reflects the area's national importance in terms of wildlife, cultural heritage and landscape. The majority of moorland within the project area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Area (SPA) and has recently been identified as a proposed Special Area of Conservation (SAC).



CA/Ian Cairns

The project will explore how policies can be strengthened to provide a viable future for farming in the uplands.

A high percentage of the rural community gain their livelihoods from land-based industries. Tourism is also very important in the local economy. In common with most upland areas, farm incomes in the National Park are low. This can result in potential conflicts between the needs of agriculture and conservation, particularly where there are few resources to support the maintenance of the traditional farmed landscape.

What will the Farm and Rural Community Scheme do?

The F&RCS will test a “bottom up” approach to identify local social, economic and environmental objectives and action, through liaison the local communities and land managers. This will be a continuous process, building and adapting the scheme as it progresses.

An important element of the F&RCS is a locally tailored environmental scheme which has been developed in consultation with local land managers. It includes management agreements for whole holdings which provides guidelines and support for managing sensitive habitats, and assistance with capital works such as wall restoration.

Integrated farm appraisals are also available through the F&RCS, which help land managers take a more holistic look at their holding and businesses.

Community groups have been established through the scheme. Grants and other forms of assistance have been channelled through these groups to help initiate community projects. With the help of other partners, such as the Rural Community Council, projects are being developed which:

- enhance the environmental value of the area;
- protect and conserve the area’s cultural heritage;
- improve interpretation and information provision; and
- develop rural management skills, training and further education opportunities.



CA/Ian Cairns

The FRCS Land Management Agreements include payments for looking after habitats and landscape features.



CA/Ian Carstairs

Assistance is being provided to communities to help them conserve the area's cultural heritage.

The scheme will act in a facilitating role to develop links and partnerships with organisations which have the remit and resources to deliver such measures.

The emphasis of the scheme will be on experimenting, learning, developing, adapting and implementing, to explore how an integrated approach can operate. By designing the scheme to be adaptable it will be able to respond to new ideas and situations which impact on the project area, thereby increasing its value as an experimental process.

Conclusions from the scheme will be used by the Countryside Agency and the National Park Authority to inform policy development and advice to influence European, UK and regional policies.

Who is responsible for delivering the LMI?

The Project Officer, Fraser Hugill, is based at the North York Moors National Park Authority's offices in Helmsley. The day-to-day operation of the scheme is the responsibility of the Project Officer, who is managed by the National Park Authority and steered by a group drawn from the National Park, The Countryside Agency and local partners.

Recent changes to the LMI

Due to the initial success of the scheme, the boundary has just (Oct 2001) been extended to include the whole of Danby Parish. This decision reflected the need for the Scheme to evolve to take advantage of new opportunities.

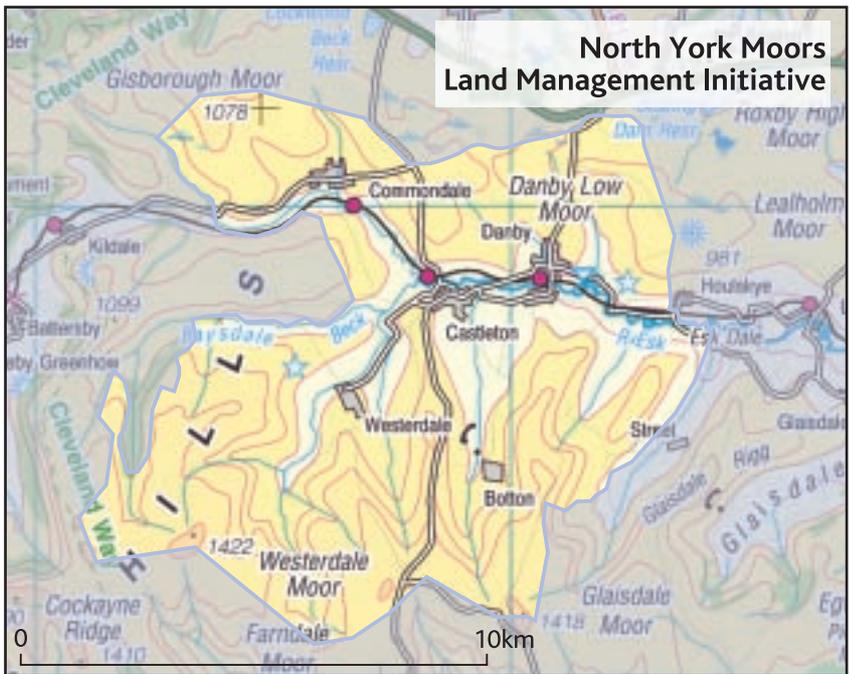
Details of the partnership

The initiative is being developed and implemented as a partnership between the local communities of Castleton, Comondale and Westerdale, the North York Moors National Park Authority, Scarborough BC and various others, the Countryside Agency, and Yorkshire Forward, with additional financial support from the European Union and advice from the Yorkshire Rural Community Council, the Rural Development Service, and North Yorkshire County Council.

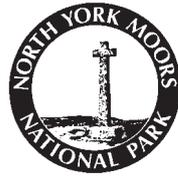
Cattle grid overlooking Westerdale. Cattle grids have been put in place through the project to assist with the management of Castleton Rigg.



CA/Ian Carstairs



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Yorkshire & Humber Regional Development Agency



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For further information please contact:

Fraser Hugill, North York Moors National Park,
 The Old Vicarage, Bondgate,
 Helmsley, North Yorkshire YO6 5BP

Telephone 01439 770 657

Fax 01439 770 691

Email f.hugill@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk



John Dower House, Crescent Place
 Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3RA
 Telephone 01242 521381 Fax 01242 584270
www.countryside.gov.uk

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