



Suzanne Fletcher

**Head of Landscape and Engagement
Peak District National Park
Morridge Hill Country Project**

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. The foreground and middle ground consist of rolling hills and valleys. A large, prominent area of purple heath is visible in the center-right. The surrounding fields are green, and there are some small buildings and trees scattered throughout. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

Morridge Hill Country (MHC)

Defra Landscape Enhancement Pilot Project

Suzanne Fletcher (PDNPA)

Morrridge Hill Country - ELM Landscape Recovery Pilot Project

Ambition - to provide hope & inspiration for enhancing biodiversity in one of the worlds most visited national parks

Key partners:



15 + Farmers, land managers & owners



Working with: farmers, land managers & landowners across 2,600 + ha to create a ‘bigger, better, and more connected natural landscape which sequesters & stores more carbon

By developing:

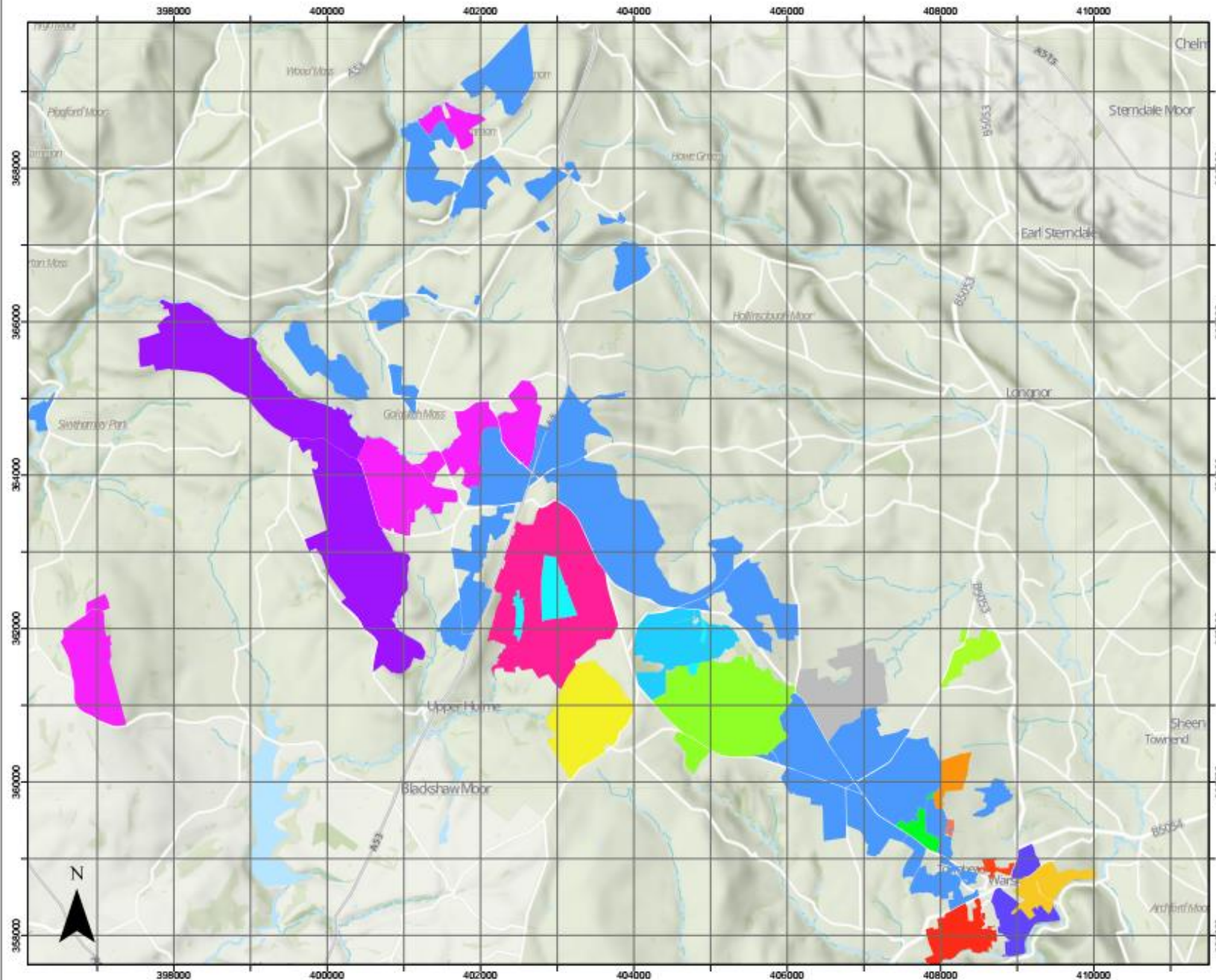
- novel private finance access for family farms
- sustainable farm business model including option analysis for landscape recovery
- artificial intelligence “AI” to baseline land type & natural capital
- restoration vision into an investable proposition

Enhancing - local sustainable food production, cultural heritage, access, engagement & special qualities

Defra Contract – 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2026 - £750k for 2 year Development Phase – no capital works

Aim - to develop a successful model which leads to a 20 to 30 year delivery phase.

MorrIDGE Hill Country – Landscape Enhancement in the Staffordshire Moorlands Project



- Legend**
- Big Fernyford Farm
 - Clough Head Farm
 - Gap Farm
 - Hayes Farm
 - Hobcroft Farm
 - Hurdlow Farm
 - Knowle House Farm
 - Land at Clough Head
 - Lower Fleet Green
 - Ministry of Defence
 - Noon Sun Farm
 - Warslow Moors Estate
 - Pump Farm
 - Roaches
 - Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
 - Swainsmoor Farm
 - Villa Farm



Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2022, Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2023
 Contains data from OS Zoomstack

MHC - habitats



Peat & Blanket Bog restoration - c1,500 ha



Lowland hay meadow, species-rich grassland, scrub pasture – c100ha



Increasing woody habitat - c400 ha



Species-rich grassland, scrub pasture



Wetland creation – c30ha

MHC - species



MHC - novel private finance access for family farms

Challenge: to develop a route for farmers (tenants) to access private £'s

Concerns:

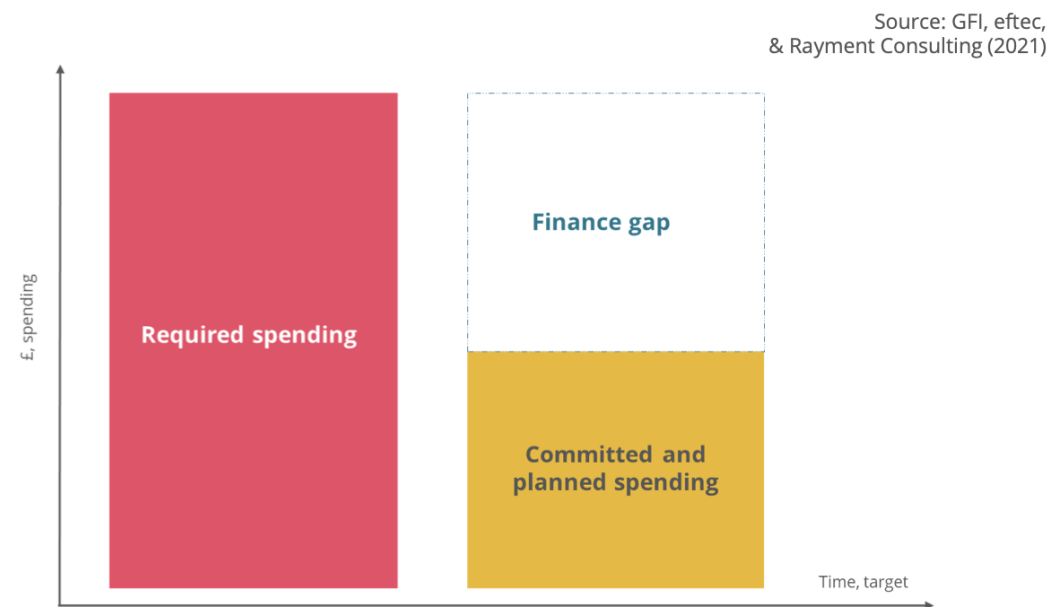
- **Uncertainty** of income potential – lack of direct comparables
- **Lack of confidence** in market rules - green washing, due diligence, tax
- **Long term** commitment – succession planning
- Integrating **food production**
- **Aggregation** of holdings & need for trust for financial relationships
- **Tenanted** land – who “owns” what?
- Farmer **capacity & expertise**
- Potential future **insetting requirements** (Carbon) - “Save it for the supermarket “
- Payment level – **what will it take?**
- Lack of **trust** of national/international business investment – might there be more confidence in sector related & local businesses - greater investment/emotional connection to the place?

Trusted local advice, support & whole farm approach - vital

Aim: simple, easy access to private £'s for a farmer

Pump Farm – develop local hub & exemplar demonstration farm

UK nature finance gap – £56billion - private £'s



2022



2031

MHC - sustainable farm business model

Opportunity of a generation

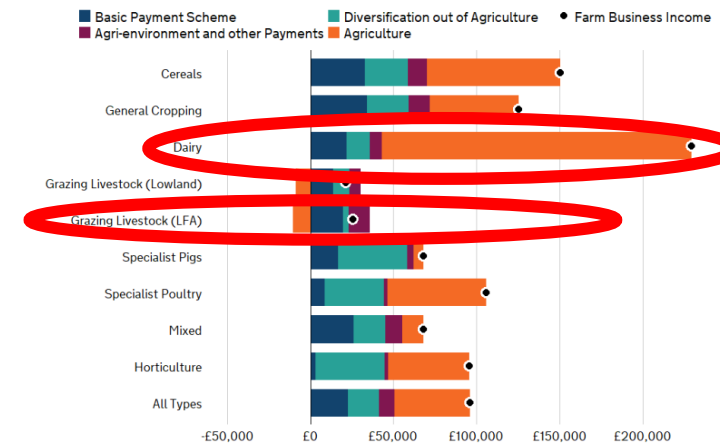
- **Consistent clear messaging** needed from Government & partners
- **Focus on landscape recovery** (nature recovery, climate change, water quality/quantity/flow, cultural heritage, access, engagement)
- Landscape recovery **& sustainable food production** - but less stock
- Role of **Protected Landscapes** – at the heart of nature recovery

How - Option analysis for landscape recovery & what it might look like for the farm business budget?

- **Current** farm system
- **“Utopia”** nature recovery (carbon management)
- **New approach** - what is practical & how far is the farmer/land manager prepared to go?
- **Consider both revenue, capital £’s** including infrastructure

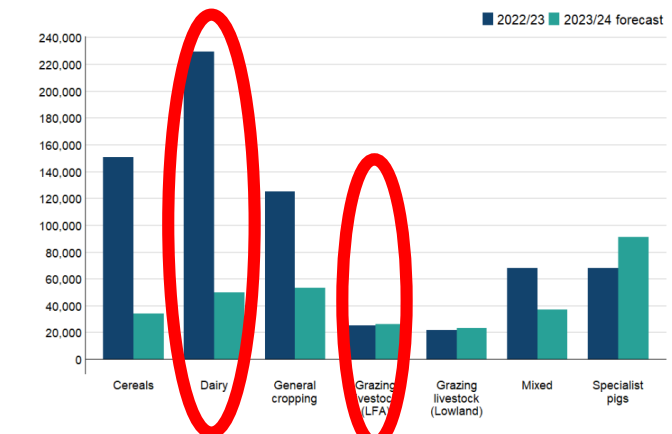
3 Farm Business Income by Cost Centre

Figure 3.1 Cost Centre breakdown for Farm Business Income by farm type, 2022/23.



1 Farm Business Income by farm type

Figure 1.1 Average Farm Business Income (£ per farm) by farm type, England 2022/23 and 2023/24 forecast

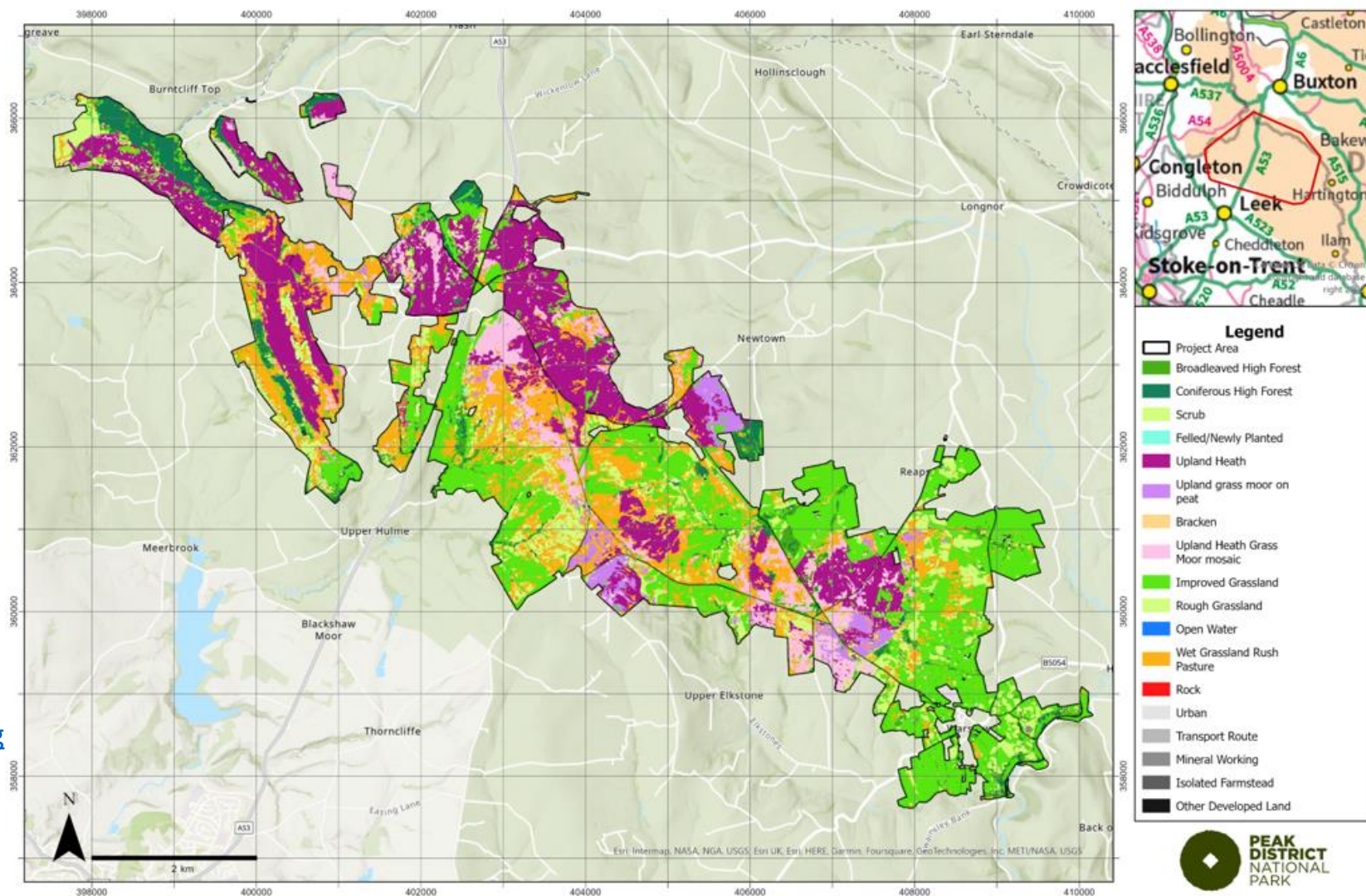


MHC - artificial intelligence “AI”

Further development of AI with Cranfield University to:

- Baseline land type/habitats
- Baseline natural capital
- Model habitat changes
- Model landscape change going forward
- 1991 what took 4 people 6 mths – now done in 1 day
- For more info see - [Remote Sensing | Free Full-Text | Multi-Stage Semantic Segmentation Quantifies Fragmentation of Small Habitats at a Landscape Scale \(mdpi.com\)](#)

Morriddge Hill Country – Landscape Enhancement in the Staffordshire Moorlands Project – Land Use & Cover



MHC - restoration vision into an investable proposition

Working with a Green Finance Consultant

- review **green finance opportunities & design business model** to deliver the nature restoration vision for MHC
- the business model will outline the following:
 - **costs** of delivery over the life of **Landscape Recovery grant agreement** (bespoke > 20 years)
 - sources of **private investment** e.g. income over the life of the project, unit based payments (Peatland & Woodland), upfront investment from private organisations – place based £'s
 - **conditions** of any private investment - repayment terms or monitoring/reporting, due diligence
 - how cash flow will be directed to capital projects
 - how **public funds** can be used to make the project financially viable
- market volatility e.g. risks to the projected cashflow
- legal complexities – special purpose vehicle, aggregation model?



An aerial photograph of a vast, rolling landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by vibrant green fields, some of which are divided by stone walls or fences. Interspersed among these green fields are large, rounded hills covered in a dense carpet of purple heather. The hills recede into the distance, creating a sense of depth and continuity. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a clear day. The text "Thank you for listening!" is overlaid in the center of the image in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

Thank you for listening!