

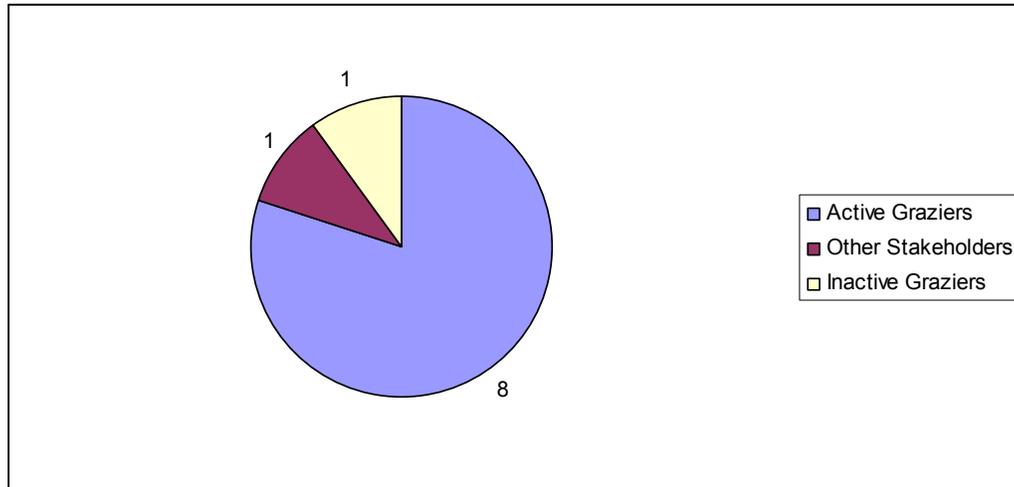
FOCUS GROUP: INGLETON CASE STUDY

Venue: Ingleton Community Centre

Date: 2nd of September 2008

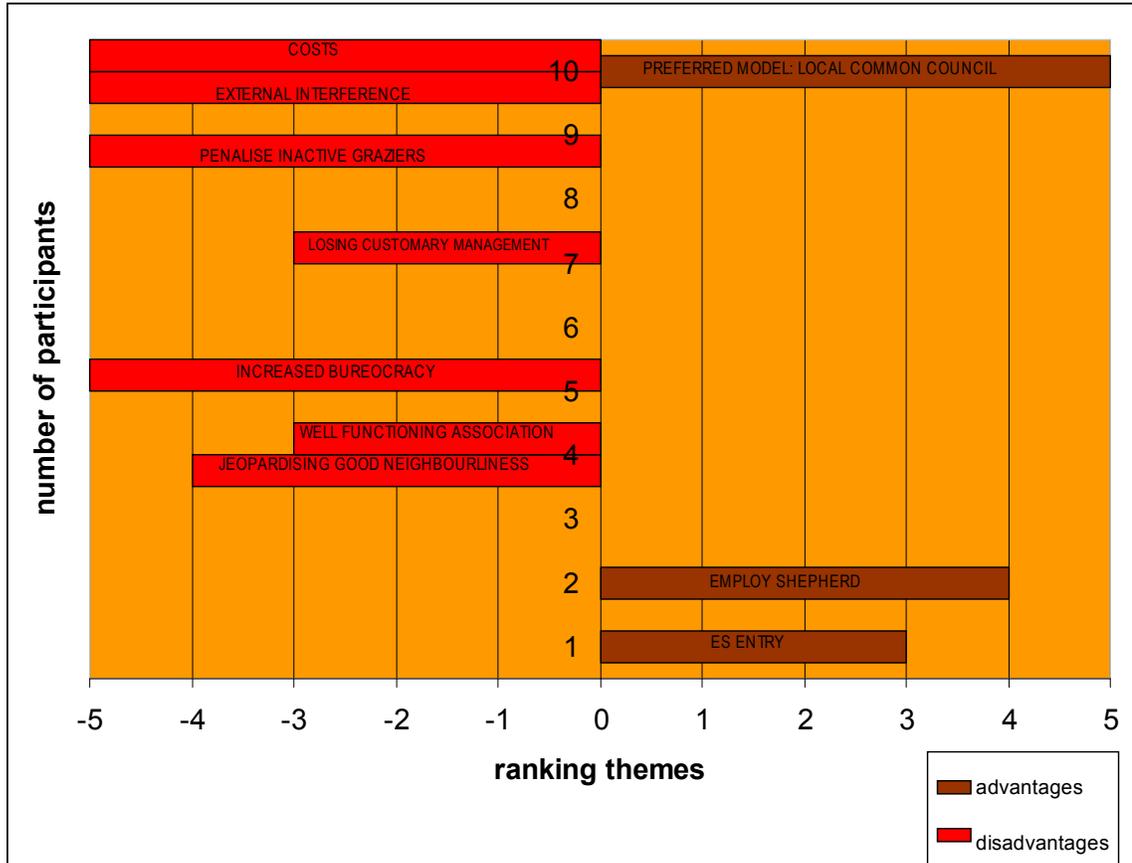
Report: Margherita Pieraccini

1. Participants: Group size and Composition



The focus group addressed stakeholders' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a statutory commons council to manage Ingleborough Common and Scales Moor (CL units 134, 208 and 272). The discussion was structured following the guided questions set out in the accompanying document – FOCUS GROUP ON STATUTORY COMMONS COUNCILS/Ingleton/guided questions.

2. Graphic Representation of Group's Perceptions



Explanatory text 2

The two dimensional coordinate graph serves to describe the main themes discussed during the focus group, surrounding the potential creation of statutory common councils. On the y axis, the number of participants is represented (from 1 to 10) in order to show how many people expressed an opinion/interest on a particular topic. On the x axis there is a scale representing the ranking of themes, from +1 to +5 for the advantages and -1 to -5 for disadvantages, with 1=slightly important, 2= somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important and 5=extremely important.

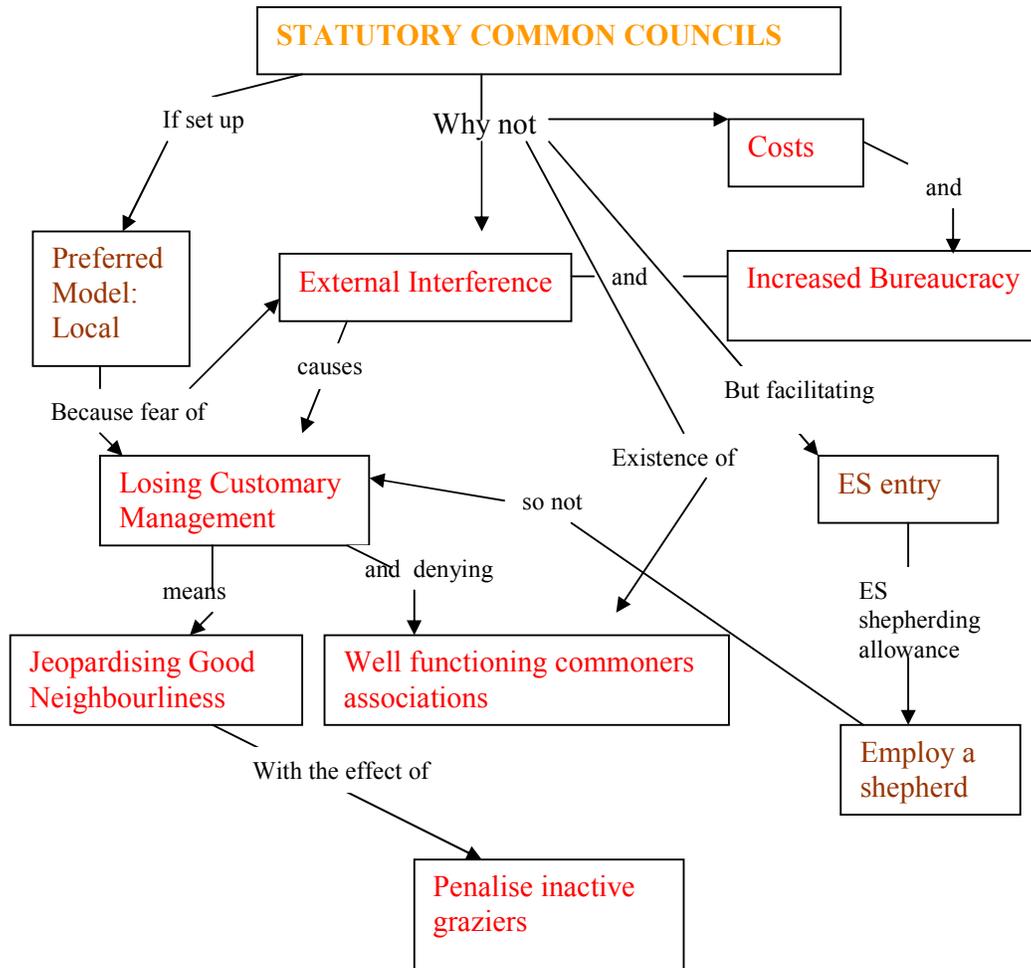
Using a coordinate system allows a link to be made between the number of people expressing an opinion to the degree of importance they attribute to it as well as showing simultaneously the advantages and disadvantages in the positive (+; 10) and negative (-;10) quadrants.

The number of potential disadvantages as well as their importance and the number of people sharing such views are overwhelming when compared with the number of perceived advantages, suggesting that common councils will be difficult to concretise on the Ingleton commons. All the participants found the costs of the councils, as well as the interferences from external bodies, such as government departments, especially disadvantageous. Also, many participants pointed out the irrelevance of having common councils given that the existing commoners associations are well-functioning. A closely related issue was the fear of losing customary management and

with its informal arrangements embedded in the principle of good neighbourliness. The increase in bureaucratic arrangements was also perceived as problematic. Although many of these reasons resonate with those of the other case studies, there is a striking difference in relation to the Ingleton commoners' attitude towards inactive graziers. The prospect of passing binding rules that could prevent inactive graziers from exercising their dormant rights was not welcomed but rather considered an unjust penalisation. This perception is attributable to the stinting system, which has allowed graziers to interpret rights as tradable commodities, to be valued independently from their exercise and their place of appurtenance. This perception not only shows the weight of the stinting system but also a negative characteristic of institutions: their discriminatory potential (the possibility of limiting certain members' capacity for action within the group of commoners).

On the positive side, one grazier pointed out the possibility of entering the Environmental Stewardship scheme and two participants argued that the Environmental Stewardship shepherding allowance could enable Clapham graziers to reintroduce a customary shepherding tradition lost in time. Certainly, entry into agri-environment schemes is something that common councils are designed to facilitate and it is generally the principal reason why their creation is welcomed by stakeholders (see other case studies). The different answer provided by the Ingleton focus group can be attributed to the participants' lack of interest in entering Environmental Stewardship, given the absence of current agri-environment schemes (at present only 8 sWES are in place in CL 208 and CL 134 and none in CL 272). In contrast to the other case studies, agri-environmental schemes do not play a fundamental economic role for the commoners of Ingleton, hence the ES is valued more for its inbuilt allowance on shepherding than for the potential economic gain it offers. Finally, the group was asked what kind of common council model they would prefer in the eventuality of one being set up. Given the flexibility offered by the Commons Act 2006 in relation to the shape that common councils could take, this question is of fundamental importance, enabling us to predict how diversified the new institutional landscape of the commons could look. All the commoners in Ingleton would strongly prefer to have individual common councils representing each common separately, rather than an umbrella organisation, in order to reinforce local management diversity.

3. Concept Map: Interrelations of topics



Explanatory text n. 3

The themes discussed during the focus group were all interrelated. The concept map is a simplified version of the principal connections between them. Interestingly, we see how not only the relations within the category of the disadvantages and that of the advantages but also how the two categories could be correlated. How a potential advantage (such as the ES shepherding allowance) could reintroduce a customary management tool that has been lost. If on the one hand common councils could risk undermining customary arrangements, on the other they could help their revaluation. This example shows how the categories of perceived advantages and disadvantages to stakeholders of establishing a statutory commons council are not as clear cut as might be imagined.