



Background

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is a part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan which was launched in November 2020. The programme was developed by Defra with the support of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Park staff from across England. It was launched on the 24 June 2021 and will run until the 31st March 2024.

The programme offers funding to farmers and land managers in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Parks and the Broads. It is a programme of projects not an agri-environment scheme. The programme will fund projects that:

- support nature recovery
- mitigate the impacts of climate change
- provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or place

Peak District update

As soon as year 1 (2021/22) funding was confirmed in late May recruitment for the FiPL staff began but it was not possible to get all the staff in place until the end of October 2021. Authority Farm Advisers have also been supporting the delivery of the programme and will continue to do so during the remaining two years. Despite the challenging timescale and with the support of local contacts and networks such as the local NFU and CLA representatives and farmers and land managers on the Peak District Land Managers Forum Brexit sub-group FIPL was successfully launched locally and began to deliver.

The year 1 project fund budget of circa £1.1 million was the largest allocation of the three-year programme and unfortunately this was not a full year given the launch date and the time needed to recruit staff. Following discussions with Defra the year one project fund allocation was revised down to £475,000 with the balance of £625,000 re-allocated to for years 2 (2022/23) and 3 (2023/24). Despite over committing this revised year one project fund budget by approximately 15% Covid-19, contractor, materials and equipment availability have impacted on project completion dates and the final spend was £440,000. However, given the challenges of the new programme this is considered a success and is a testament to the interest and engagement in the programme by Peak District farmers and land managers and the hard work of the FiPL team.

The FiPL Year 1 Headlines report provided below summaries the project delivery across the four themes in a format that allows comparison across all protected landscapes and a whole-England picture to be assessed as requested by Defra. In addition to these headline statistics there are less tangible programme outcomes which in many cases have more relevance and significance to the individual farm and generally to the future landscape of the National Park. The project team have encouraged farmers to think about FiPL projects in the context of their ambition for their holding or on the wider landscape. A focus on public goods delivery, particularly in relation to nature recovery, climate change mitigation and management and encouraging an enhanced relationship between people and protected landscapes has also been encouraged. Common themes include:

- Infrastructure to support regenerative agriculture with the associated benefits for soil health, carbon storage and sequestration and biodiversity. This has included hedge planting to subdivide bigger grazing units and the establishment of herbal leys, with similar projects in development for year 2 along with the water supply necessary to facilitate grazing.
- A marriage of land for grazing and the establishment of trees in the development of wood pasture landscapes e.g. tree planting within improved grassland swards and along historic field boundaries. One farmer is being supported to develop his proposal for an agro-forestry project (to be funded through the Mersey Forest).
- Ensuring that habitats and/or features are in good condition making them more resilient to climate change whilst also delivering benefits for the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park.
- Enhancing access to or across high quality sites.

Farming in Protected Landscapes

Year 1 Headlines

We've been able to deliver the following by working with a range of partners, such as:

- 65 farmers/land managers plus the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts & Farming Life Centre
- 19 farmers who have not engaged with agri-environment schemes before
- 9 farmers who we have not engaged with before
- 1 new farm cluster created and 1 existing informal cluster supported

Our Local Assessment Panel has met 6 times in the first year of the programme. The Panel includes representatives from;

- Natural England
- National Farmers Union
- Country Land & Business Association
- Environmental Non-Government Organisations
- The Farming Community
- National Park Authority

Our main stakeholders are our farmers and other land managers

44 projects delivering for climate



Including:

- 6 ha of wood- pasture creation and 7ha enhancement
- 1 ha woodland management
- 3.2 ha of land being managed with regenerative farming techniques
- 1 information gathering project to inform regenerative agriculture
- 507 in-field and boundary trees planted
- 1 project to pilot a strategic approach to moorland wildfire prevention and mitigation; with a second project to protect moorland habitats from fire damage

25 projects delivering for people



Including:

- 4 new permissive paths supported accessing features of interest and land supported through FiPL
- 6 projects to make the landscape more inclusive for visitors
- 4 projects to support greater public engagement in land management
- 2 projects delivering farmer-farmer training for environmental land management

68 projects delivering for nature



Photo Credit: Tom Aspinall

Including:

- 2511 metres of hedgerows planted and 996m restored
- 36 ha of positive management on SSSIs
- 106 ha of habitat improvement for biodiversity
- 6 projects delivering enhanced water quality in River Hamps SAC river catchment
- 620m riverbank protected delivering enhanced water and habitat quality, targeted in one location at the protection of a native crayfish refuge
- 13 pond restoration projects for great crested newts



60 projects delivering for place



Including:

- 5 historic structures/features where the restoration project has been initiated
- 10 projects increasing the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses, through diversification projects or support for the existing business
- 135 meters of dry-stone walling restored
- 3 SHINE features maintained or improved
- 5 archaeology/ecology/bird surveys to inform sustainable nature-friendly farm businesses

Summary

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- 72 projects supported
 - 12 projects completed
 - 158.2 ha of land supported
 - 1,793 ha of high-quality moorland and species rich grassland including SSSIs also supported through projects
 - 59 projects in Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs)