

*The Defra-funded **Farming in Protected Landscapes** programme will be open for applications from Summer 2021*

Protected Landscapes - our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - are special and unique places. They are living, working landscapes that also support a huge range of habitats and species, and they are enjoyed by millions of people every year. By supporting the farmers, land managers and people who live and work in these areas, we can help protect these exceptional places and support local communities.



To help do this, Defra is introducing the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, which will run from July 2021 to March 2024.

Through the programme, farmers and land managers can be supported to carry out projects that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and cultural heritage, or support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses. This is a programme of funding for one-off projects covering these areas of work, not an agri-environment scheme.

The Programme is part of Defra's [Agricultural Transition Plan](#). It has been developed by Defra with the support of a group of AONB and National Park staff from across the country.

The Cranborne Chase AONB team will be awarding in the region of £360,000 worth of funding between now and the end of March 2024.

Eligibility

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is open to all farmers and land managers (including from the private, public and charity sector) in a National Park, AONB or the Norfolk Broads – or where activity on the ground can bring benefit to one or more of those areas.

You must manage all the land included in the application and have control of all the activities you'd like to undertake, or you must have written consent from all parties who have this management and control.

Other organisations and individuals can apply, as long as they do this in collaboration with a farmer or land manager, or in support of a farmer or group of farmers.

Common land is eligible for support through the Programme. You can apply as a landowner with sole rights, or as a group of commoners acting together.

The programme supports activity on any land within Cranborne Chase AONB. It can also support activity on other land where projects can demonstrate benefit to this area. Most of the funding will probably be provided to projects within the AONB boundary.

You can see the boundary by visiting the [MAGIC mapping website](#). Click on 'designations', 'land-based designations' and then 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty England.'



What the Programme will pay for

The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme will pay for projects that, in the opinion of the Local Assessment Panel (see 'Application assessment' below) provide value for money and meet at least one of the outcomes listed below, under four themes.

Climate outcomes

- More carbon is stored and/or sequestered
- Flood risk is reduced
- Farmers, land managers and the public better understand what different habitats and land uses can store carbon and reduce carbon emissions
- The landscape is more resilient to climate change

Nature outcomes

- There is a greater area of habitat improved for biodiversity
- There is an increase in biodiversity
- There is greater connectivity between habitats
- Existing habitat is better managed

People outcomes

- There are more opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape
- There are more opportunities for more diverse audiences to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape
- There is greater public engagement in land management, such as through volunteering
- Farmers and land managers feel increasingly comfortable with providing public goods

Place outcomes

- The quality and character of the landscape is reinforced or enhanced
- Historic structures and features are conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively
- There is an increase in farm business resilience

Farming in Protected Landscapes in Cranborne Chase AONB

Your project must also help to deliver at least one of the objectives of the Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan. The top priorities for Cranborne Chase AONB will be available at www.cranbornechase.org.uk

For example, the Programme might support:

- Replacing stiles with gates on public footpaths to promote easier access
- Creating ponds to support a variety of wildlife
- Promoting connectivity between habitats
- Creating and promoting a series of farm walks across a cluster of farms, providing new access opportunities, links to the rights of way network and interpretation of farming and of the natural and historic features on the land
- Parking improvements at a key site provide safe access to popular walking routes and reduces congestion for visitors and for local residents
- A pop-up camping facility, alongside the provision of new walking trails and on site activities, including e.g. stargazing and dawn chorus walks
- Action to reduce carbon emissions on a farm
- Whole farm planning for conservation, energy efficiency and economic resilience, including in farmer clusters
- Gathering data and evidence to help inform conservation and farming practice
- Working with new audiences to enable them to experience the Protected Landscape



Payment rates

If an applicant will not make a commercial gain through a project, they could receive up to 100% of the costs.

Where an applicant would benefit commercially from a project, they could receive between 40% and 80% of the costs through the Programme, depending on how much commercial benefit the project will give them.

The Programme will work alongside – not in competition with – Defra’s existing and new schemes, adding value where it is most needed. If a potential project can be rewarded through those schemes instead, you will be made aware of them.

If an activity is equivalent to one under Countryside Stewardship (CS), the Programme payment rate will be the same as the CS rate. If not, we will base Programme funding offers on the projected costs of an activity (with final payments made against evidenced costs).

Maintenance agreements

Capital infrastructure assets (including, but not limited to, fences, gates, building restoration), should be maintained for 5 years from the date of completion.

Machinery assets (for example a brush harvester for grassland restoration) should be maintained for 5 years from the date of purchase.

The requirement to maintain natural, cultural and access activities delivered as part of the Programme will cease no later than 1 April 2024.

How to apply

NB: More detailed guidance for applicants will be available soon.

To apply, please fill in an application form.

Applications for the first year of Programme funding should be made between 1st July 2021 and 31st January 2022. Funding will be awarded to successful applicants throughout the application window, rather than after the window closes, so you should submit your application as soon as it is ready.

We will also consider applications for funding in year 2, especially if they aim to begin early in the financial year.

Multi-year awards are possible for longer projects. All projects must end by March 2024.

Before applying, please contact the Cranborne Chase AONB team who are in the process of recruiting to provide support for farmers and land managers in this process.

We expect to hold information sessions and will offer site-visits to help support applications.

Application assessment

Applications for over £5000 will be judged by a Local Assessment Panel. This kind of system has been used before by the team at Cranborne Chase AONB.

The Local Assessment Panel will be made up of 8 to 12 people. It will include representatives from Cranborne Chase AONB, Natural England, representatives from the farming and land management community, and local specialists.

We expect that the panel will meet to make decisions every 6 to 8 weeks.

Applications for less than £5000 will be decided upon by a senior member of the AONB team (who has no prior knowledge of the project).

More information

Cranborne Chase AONB is in the process of recruiting the team to help support this programme. The team will be providing more farmer-focussed information bulletins to support the application process.

Please check our website for updates at www.cranbornechase.org.uk and sign up to our e-newsletter.