

FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

Summary: To present a summary of progress on the FiPL programme year 6 (2026/27)

Recommendation: That the report is noted

Report by: Mark Connelly, Land Management Lead, Olivia Blackwell, Farming Engagement Lead, Tatiana Chapman Farming Engagement Officer, Eleanor Robinson, Programme Administrator, Jonathan Rogers, CNL Management Accountant and Lyna Zhang, CNL Finance and Programme Manager

Introduction

- 1. Following five successful years of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme, FiPL has been extended for a further three years to March 2029.
- 2. The allocation for 2026/27 is:

Grant available for projects	£1,174,656.00
Admin and Advice and Guidance	£201,231.00
Total	£1,375,887.00

Progress to date

- 3. Tatiana Chapman joined the FiPL team in early June as Farming Engagement Officer alongside Olivia Blackwell, Farming Engagement Lead and Eleanor Robinson moved up into the role of FiPL Programme Administration Officer. With financial management support from Jonathan Rogers and Lyna Zhang, the FiPL team is now back to full strength for the first time in over a year.
- 4. The FiPL Panel has also seen some changes with new members filling the seats left by Nick Bumford and Brendan McCarthy and the vacant NFU seat. The Natural England representative has also changed. See Appendix 'A' for the list of FiPL panel members.
- 5. The FiPL Panel has met three times since 1st April, assessing 23 applications, approving 22, deferring 1 and rejecting 1. Five applications for less than £10,000 have been assessed and approved by the CNL's Land Management Lead. The extension of FiPL runs to March 2029 with the ability to support projects that span more than 1 year. 7 multi-year projects have been approved to date. The allocation of FiPL funding for projects to date is:

	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
	2026-2027	2027-28	2028-29
Project Delivery Allocation (£)	£1,174,656.00	£1,174,656.00	£1,174,656.00
a) Capital	£916,616.00	£916,616.00	£916,616.00
b) Revenue	£258,040.00	£258,040.00	£258,040.00
Total Approved (£)	£569,004.75	£395,205.27	£222,766.23
a) Capital	£366,103.44	£229,486.26	£57,031.44
b) Revenue	£202,901.31	£165,719.01	£165,734.79
Total Remaining (£)	£605,651.25	£779,450.73	£951,889.77
a) Capital	£550,512.56	£687,129.74	£859,584.56
b) Revenue	£55,138.69	£92,320.99	£92,305.21

Project pipeline

6. Interest in FiPL remains healthy with a good flow of enquiries. However, we are seeing a trend in enquiries for projects to start in 2027/28. With 52% of the grant budget remaining for allocation this year we are beginning to promote FiPL, encouraging applications for projects that can complete by 31st March 2027. A FiPL newsletter was circulated at the beginning of September; the NFU have agreed to include an item on FiPL in their newsletter, and we are in the process of asking others, such as catchment partnerships, LNPs and farmer clusters to help promote FiPL.

Supporting papers:

Appendix 'A' members of the FiPL Assessment Panel

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Nathan Boyd	NFU
Jonathan Brunyee	Farmer
Andrew Bullock	Farmer
Rebecca Charley	Farmer
Mark Connelly	CNL
Laura Elliott	Farmer
Celia Fallon	Natural England
Andrea Graham (Panel Chair)	Retired Head of Policy, NFU
Nicola Jameson	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
Harry Long	Farmer Cluster Facilitator

Guidance from Defra states that:

The panel must consist of representatives of:

- Protected Landscape Team
- Natural England
- Farming and land management community (several members)