National Parks England

National Landscapes Association

Farming in Protected Landscapes

Year 4 Report | 2025

What is Farming in Protected Landscapes?

The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme – or FiPL as it is commonly called - was introduced in June 2021 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The aim was to provide grant funding for farmers and land managers in our treasured National Parks and National Landscapes (formerly 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty'), as part of the UK transition from previous direct payments to new environmental land management schemes.

National Parks and National Landscapes cover almost a quarter of England, supporting biodiversity and helping local communities to thrive. To enable the government to meet its climate, nature, health and economic targets, our protected landscapes must therefore be placed at the heart of national strategy. It is vital that we nurture these precious areas, and farming plays a crucial role. FiPL harnesses collaborative working through bespoke projects, delivering multiple cross-cutting benefits for nature, communities, and businesses alike.

FiPL projects must deliver on at least one of the following themes:

- helping to tackle the impacts of CLIMATE change
- helping NATURE recovery
- providing opportunities for PEOPLE to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- protecting or improving the quality and character of a PLACE.

You can see how each of the themes is delivered by the projects in the following pages.

How does FiPL work?

FiPL officers based in National Parks and National Landscapes advise farmers and land managers on developing projects to make sure they deliver on the themes and reflect local interests and needs.

Applications for under £10,000 are assessed by a senior Protected Landscapes Officer. Applications over £10,000 are assessed by an independent Local Assessment Panel made up of local experts and decision makers including farmers and land managers.

As part of locally specific solutions, projects must help deliver the priorities identified in the National Park or National Landscape Management Plans - strategic documents that outline policies and actions to conserve, enhance, and sustainably manage the natural, cultural, and recreational values of a designated landscape.

These management plans set out the actions needed to contribute to Defra's national targets, through alignment with the Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcomes Framework.

FiPL achievements up to the end of March 2025

97 new and 197 existing **farm clusters**
supporting farmers to work together

716 ponds
created or restored

237,000 trees planted

33,000 metres of dry **stone walling** restored and 197m of new walling created

5,500+ projects awarded funding

£100million funding spent so far

8,200 educational visits paid for and over **2,039** schools engaged

17,000 volunteers engaged

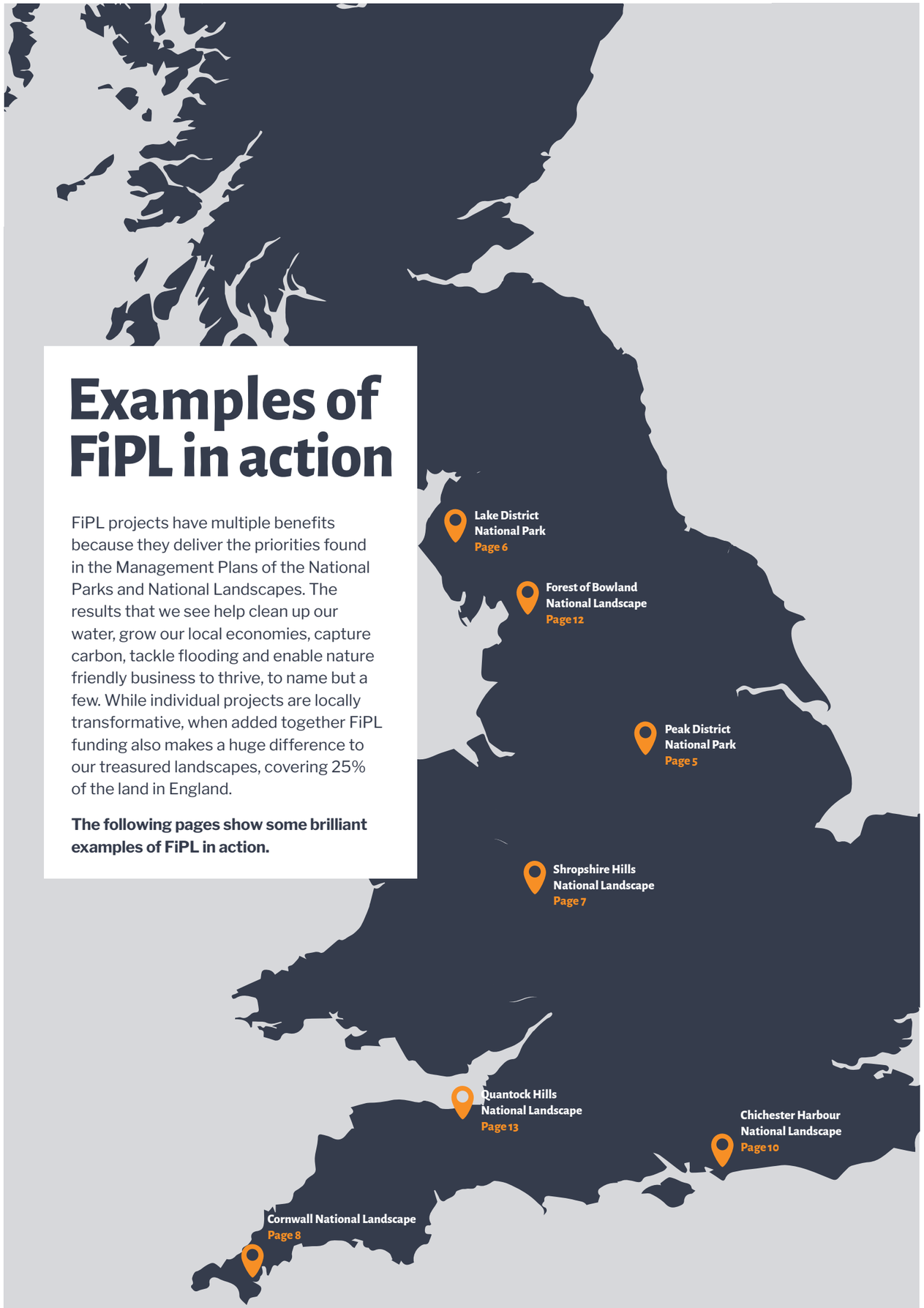
103,000 metres of new permissive paths created with 148,000 metres improved or better managed

362 nationally designated **heritage assets** deemed at risk have been supported

engaged with **+11,000 farmers and land managers**

394 SSSIs under favourable management through FiPL

362,000 metres of new hedgerows planted and 172,000m restored



Examples of FiPL in action

FiPL projects have multiple benefits because they deliver the priorities found in the Management Plans of the National Parks and National Landscapes. The results that we see help clean up our water, grow our local economies, capture carbon, tackle flooding and enable nature friendly business to thrive, to name but a few. While individual projects are locally transformative, when added together FiPL funding also makes a huge difference to our treasured landscapes, covering 25% of the land in England.

The following pages show some brilliant examples of FiPL in action.

Upper Booth Farm sits in the Peak District's Hope Valley, a shortwalk from the Pennine Way National Trail

CASE STUDY

Peak District National Park | FiPL grant: **£24,286**

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

Upper Booth Farm, Edale

Building a resilient farm business in the rural economy through nature-friendly farming

Nestled at the head of the Edale Valley in the Peak District, Upper Booth Farm is more than just a working farm - it's a shining example of how traditional practices and modern innovation can come together to create a financially resilient, environmentally conscious business.

By using FiPL funding at strategic points to complement their Higher Level Stewardship, Richard and Laura Worthington have transformed their vision of nature-friendly farming into reality on their new National Trust tenant farm.

They started by restoring and stock-proofing traditional boundaries, with almost 2000 metres of dry-stone wall and hedges reinforcing the cultural landscape while creating vital wildlife corridors.

Local provenance seed from green hay has helped restore four hectares of hay meadow, with FiPL part-funding a tedder machine to ensure long-term management.

> *"This innovative venture has exceeded expectations, delighting visitors and boosting farm income"*

As they have grown in confidence, FiPL has aided investment in cattle handling facilities to enable the Worthingtons to shift to rare breed cattle, which are being used for rotational grazing to benefit soil health and water quality.

A restored traditional building now houses vending machines offering locally sourced ice cream and other products. This innovative venture has exceeded expectations, delighting visitors and boosting income, which can be invested back into their nature-friendly land management.

The farm sits close to the iconic Pennine Way National Trail, welcoming people to one of England's most visited landscapes. Plans for educational access and interpretation will further connect people with the farm's rich heritage and environmental work. Now part of a Landscape Recovery project, Richard and Laura will continue to build a financially and environmentally resilient farm business that contributes to the rural economy in so many different ways.

Upper Booth Farm demonstrates how FiPL funding and advice can empower farmers to blend conservation with creativity. The Worthingtons are not only safeguarding the Peak District landscape, but also inspiring others to engage with sustainable farming.

CASE STUDY

Lake District National Park | FiPL grant: **£19,512**

Farm Visit Training

Multi-generational knowledge share project bringing farming inspiration to young people

Introducing children and young people to rural and agricultural life is one area of FiPL that doesn't always get a mention, and yet there are many examples of this invaluable work happening across the country.

One such project happened in the Lake District National Park, where a group of farmers came together for training to deliver educational farm visits. The training was part of CEVAS – the Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme – and covered topics such as health and safety, how to communicate with pupils and teachers, and how food and farming relate to school curriculums. Farmers were also given one to one support – both on their farms and on the phone – where they received advice on visits and help with their portfolios.

Funding was also made available for farmers to run the visits, and for schools to transport pupils to farms, helping to overcome the cost barrier of farm visits. The training also helped to connect the farmers involved to other people hosting the visits, forming a network of support. It's no wonder that 100% of the trainees said they would be hosting visits within the next 12 months. Farm visits bring to life the importance of farming to all of us, can help young people to develop a connection with food, farming and nature and inspire future generations to take up skills and careers in agriculture.

CASE STUDY

Shropshire Hills National Landscape | FiPL grant: **£82,805**

Clee Pond Restoration

Improving wetland habitat quality and connectivity in the landscape for at risk wildlife

In the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, FiPL is supporting crucial work on restoring ponds by providing the vital and necessary connecting habitats. As mains water has become the regular supply to most farms, many ponds – a traditional source of water for various farm needs - have been filled in, and wetlands have become overgrown and silted up.

The huge reduction in the number and condition of ponds and other wetland habitats across our landscapes, drastically affects the range of plant and wildlife species associated with them. Natural England's Shropshire Pond Scheme is delivered by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust and alongside FiPL is also funded from a levy on developers to compensate for lost ponds.

FiPL has been a key part of this collaborative project with five farmers on adjacent land holdings across 76ha, all of which fall within Natural England's great crested newt Strategic Opportunity Areas. FiPL has funded the creation, rejuvenation and enhancement of habitats adjacent to the new and restored ponds, improving connectivity and enabling great crested newts and other semi-aquatic species to move away post-breeding and find overwintering habitat.

Fencing ponds and watercourses to exclude farm animals means less disturbance and damage, with a new solar pump system providing an alternative water supply for stock. New hedge planting, hedge coppicing, gapping up, and bankside tree and shrub planting now connect ponds and give the newts woody habitats to hibernate in.

A landscape scale survey, funded by FiPL, has assessed the connectivity and condition of all the habitat corridors connecting 14 ponds, identifying target areas for future habitat work.

Pond dipping kit, including an aquascope, is used to deliver educational events for landowners. 'Pop up' events have enabled landowners, their families and the wider community to explore, learn about and fall in love with their ponds.

> *An ongoing legacy of the project is monitoring over the next 25 years, with farmers continuing to monitor their ponds and submit data, building a long-term dataset on the ecology and condition of these ponds and the wider farmland.*

CASE STUDY

Cornwall National Landscape | FiPL grant: **£41,140**

Loveland Community Field

An inspiring and accessible local community initiative, boosting food security and education of where our produce comes from

The Loveland Community Field project represents a transformative approach to sustainable land management, community engagement, and biodiversity enhancement within Cornwall's protected landscape, led by a group of community volunteers which reports to Falmouth Food Coop CIC (community interest company).

Before the community took on the tenancy of the 3.2ha site, the land was let on short arable tenancies, lacking long-term stewardship incentives, contributed to intensive farming practices. This left the soil vulnerable to erosion and polluting the Penryn River and adjacent Falmouth Special Area of Conservation.

Edges and grasslands have been restored for pollinators and small mammals to enhance biodiversity, landscape resilience, and habitat connectivity, with the FiPL grant providing equipment to manage these new habitats. Since completing the FiPL project, the community has joined up with Sustainable Food Cornwall and through them have also installed a wildlife pond.

Previously reliant on buying in compost for the market garden, FiPL has enabled the development of a rotational cropping system incorporating green manures, leading to improved soil health and reducing the need for compost. Funding for a two-wheeled pedestrian cutter with attachments has been vital to turning this vision into reality, with the equipment being used to cut and spread the green manures and prepare new beds for growing. An on-site composting clamp means all waste is able to be put back into the ground.

Through these actions, FiPL has supported the community on its journey to becoming organic certified, with full certification expected to be achieved by March 2026.

The installation of polytunnels for year-round food production and sheltered community activities, and constructing an access route into the site now means the community can welcome adults with learning difficulties and wheelchair users to participate in the various volunteering and wellbeing activities on offer, as well as hosting referrals from a social prescribing scheme.

The project has delivered a series of educational workshops, including 'BioBlitzes', community volunteering days focussed on growing food, and a visit from the local Penryn Academy.

Previously reliant on buying in compost for the market garden, FiPL has enabled the development of a rotational cropping system incorporating green manures, leading to improved soil health and reducing the need for compost.

Loveland is now well set up for ongoing volunteer involvement, as well as hosting community events.

> *Loveland has blossomed into a community vegetable plot where anyone and everyone is welcome to plant and harvest, and the local community are encouraged to take home whatever is ripe and in season. Food produced here is not-for-profit and any sales go towards supporting Loveland to continue.*

This multifaceted approach is supporting people's access to food growing and educating people on where food comes from. A core principle of this project is the ability for locally produced food to reach communities, boosting food security as well as health and wellbeing, and leaving a lasting legacy for people, nature, climate, and place.

"thought to be designed by renowned 18th century architect James Wyatt, the project aimed to preserve the heritage of the farm building"

CASE STUDY

Chichester Harbour National Landscape

Combined FiPL & Historic Building Restoration grant: **£82,805**

Chichester Harbour National Landscape

Itchenor Park Farm

Sensitive Grade II* barn restoration which now houses a local agricultural surplus food bank charity

Built in 1783, North Barn at Itchenor Park Farm was in desperate need of some loving care and attention. Over the years, the building had been altered several times and during the 1950s was converted to a grain store, eventually falling out of use and into disrepair.

Thought to be designed by renowned 18th century architect James Wyatt, the project aimed to preserve the heritage of the farm building by undertaking structural repairs to the roof, reinstating the windows and north entrance door arch, removing the old grain drying equipment, and reinstating the original doors and floor. As this is a Grade II* Listed Building, which needed careful restoration, specialist skills were used to undertake the works in phases.

A bat survey identified that the barn was used as a day roost – crucial when bats are generally not active – for individual bats of at least six species, and this included the rare grey long-eared bat, which is endangered in the UK. As a result, a large bat loft was created in the roof to house these species. The care taken meant that when an unwell long eared bat was discovered in the roof during the works, it could be carefully captured by a licensed ecologist and sent to a bat hospital. It has recently been successfully released back on site, a great result!

The building was entered for a Sussex Heritage Trust Award in July 2025 and won the Commercial Category. The whole team met to celebrate and to place the winners' slate on the barn wall.

The restored building is now occupied by the Agricultural Charity 'UK Harvest', which collects excess agricultural produce and food and supplies it to local food banks and schools for families on low incomes across the South of England. The Grade II* heritage of this beautifully restored farm building is now preserved for future generations, as well as beginning a new chapter by helping local communities to thrive.

CASE STUDY

Forest of Bowland National Landscape | FiPL grant: **£105,652** over 4 years

Wild Things

Unlocking access to wildlife-rich threatened hay meadows for disadvantaged communities near Burnley

Pennine Lancashire Community Farm is a small charity in Burnley, connected to Briercliffe Farm based in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

The community farm works with vulnerable groups such as those experiencing poverty, social isolation, or health inequalities and who are particularly disadvantaged and benefit the most from structured opportunities to connect with nature. Many of the people involved face barriers to accessing rural spaces, including a lack of transport, confidence, or knowledge of where and how to explore the countryside safely.

The four-year Wild Things FiPL project has engaged 250 people in 38 volunteer sessions, covering a wide range of topics that enabled volunteers to better engage with their local farmed environment, such as photography, mindfulness and art.

A 'Haytime' Officer has helped guide the restoration and management of a traditional hay meadow, with FiPL funding wildflower plug planting sessions, scythe training for volunteers, and species identification workshops. Through this crucial ongoing advice across the four years of this FiPL project, the meadow now has over 20 wildflower and 13 grass species.

Volunteers involved in the project have learnt to identify around 100 species on the 'iNaturalist' app in both the meadow and immediate surrounding areas, including plants, mammals, birds, fungi and invertebrates. A popular 'nature treasure hunt' has been set up to monitor across the seasons and can be modified for groups with different abilities, or from diverse backgrounds.

FiPL has funded the installation of benches and pedestrian gates to improve access to the meadow and provide the opportunity for those with mobility issues to rest and engage in nature.

> *The project has deepened people's understanding of the nature of agriculture, and the interdependencies between humans and the Forest of Bowland landscape.*

Through this approach, the project has supported nature connectedness to improve health and wellbeing, as well as spreading the word about the importance of wildflower meadows and the fantastic outcomes for nature and people.

CASE STUDY

Quantock Hills National Landscape | FiPL grant: **£47,944**

Herby4, Upcott Farm

Enhancing the long-term productivity of neglected and at-risk traditional orchards, strengthening the future of local businesses

This project has transformed a sample of traditional farm and community orchards into more workable and productive sites, resulting in nature-friendly businesses that can thrive.

A local food-producer, Herby4 have sought to reverse the 92.7% loss in orchards in the Quantock area alongside the challenge of reduced interest in 'orchard fruit' leading to a need for sourcing apples from outside the local area to ensure juice production is viable. With decreasing commercial interest in orchard fruit, there is a reduced incentive to manage the existing orchards, and they are increasingly falling into decline.

To turn around the fortunes of the orchards and create a more sustainable business platform, through FIPL the project has begun harvesting apples throughout the growing season, along with restoratively pruning and planting over 250 trees.
By selecting traditional varieties that have a higher juice content, are more easily harvestable, and have a flavour suitable for both apple juice and cider production, this also makes them more productive in a changing climate.

FiPL funding has also supported some of the logistics needed for effective operations such as purchasing and hiring equipment, including a tree shaker and harvester, marketing events and purchase of additional, resilient tree varieties.

Restoratively pruning these traditional orchards and diversifying the tree varieties used (and so extending the flowering period for pollinators), mean these habitats are now better managed for increased biodiversity.

The pattern of scattered small orchards and local cider production are also significant features of the local cultural and landscape character.

As a result of improvements led by the project, 20 tonnes of previously unharvested apples from local orchards were used in cider and juice production and sold to market in the first season. This pilot project demonstrates how farm and community orchards can be managed for increased productivity, while enabling wildlife to flourish.

This project is a model for existing or newly planted orchards; supporting local businesses to improve long-term environmental and economic outcomes, and making the use of apples from local orchards more viable.

What has FiPL achieved?

Boosting local economies – FiPL projects create opportunities and jobs in local businesses, support nature friendly farms to diversify their income streams, and help attract visitors to local areas.

Local issues, local solutions – by using locally based trusted advisers and Local Assessment Panels, projects will always be in harmony with what is needed on the ground.

Trusted advice – farmers and land managers value the service from reliable local advice teams, helping foster connected landscapes, great working relationships and successful projects.

Faster, more targeted decisions – the efficient nature of the scheme, through flexible, expert-led decision making by Local Assessment Panels, facilitates greater value for money, and means projects can get going quickly.

Harnessing farmer creativity – dedicated grant funding helps farmers and land managers to create bespoke, locally appropriate multi-benefit solutions. It enables them to focus on how best to use their land to restore nature and contribute towards solving environmental problems such as alleviating flood risk, while also addressing business concerns.

Working together – FiPL brings farmers together on projects that are bigger in scale. It builds community, grows confidence in Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes, increases wellbeing, and helps to test and trial innovative approaches which can be shared in other contexts.

Adding value – FiPL complements and works alongside the delivery of the government's existing agri-environment schemes, which will help nature recovery and climate in the long term.

Learning and growing – FiPL projects increase access and provide opportunities for local people and visitors to learn about farming, cultural heritage, rural life, and the benefits of a flourishing natural world. Many projects and farmers work with schools to establish ties to the curriculum and enable young people to visit farms.

Integrated solutions – many of the FiPL projects address all four themes at once – Climate, Nature, People, Place – meaning nature and climate can be blended into business planning, building resilience for businesses and ecosystems.

What's next?

It is clear that FiPL has been a highly popular and effective programme that delivers real solutions for nature, climate, people and place, for farmers, land managers and communities.

Scan here to find our more:

FiPL in National Parks

FiPL in National Landscapes

Recommendations

- Extend the FiPL programme beyond March 2026 so it becomes a mainstreamed part of Defra's Farming and Countryside Programme, supporting the delivery of the national targets set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan, in addition to 30by30 and the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework.
- Embed FiPL within Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)
- Embed permanent roles for land management advice in all Protected Landscape organisations, which will support farmers and land managers to take up future funding efficiently, and with enhanced environmental outcomes.
- Implement the learnings from those successful larger scale FiPL projects so that they become models for the delivery of nature-based farming and land management across the UK.

This report was published by National Parks England working with the National Landscapes Association on behalf of all of England's protected landscapes. For more information about applying to FiPL, please contact your local National Park or National Landscape team.

Contact details for all National Parks in England can be found at **nationalparksengland.org.uk**

Contact details for all National Landscapes in England can be found at **national-landscapes.org.uk**

Details about Farming in Protected Landscapes can also be found at **www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes**

To see the whole range of Defra schemes and grants on offer, search for 'funding for farmers' on GOV.UK

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