



Extension given to environmental farming grant scheme in Suffolk and Essex

Farmers and land managers in the Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) will be able to benefit from a key funding stream for a further two years, following today's announcement and publication of the Environmental Improvement Plan by Defra.

The Farming in Protected Landscapes grant programme, which funds projects on farms and other land in AONBs and national parks, has today been granted a 12-month extension to its original closing date of March 2024, meaning that the scheme will now run until March 2025.

Since the programme launched in April 2021, more than £442,000 has been awarded to fund over 40 projects across Suffolk and Essex. The programme supports projects which have a focus on climate, nature, people, or place, and is open to landowners, farmers and other land managers, and its role in helping the government to achieve its environmental objectives is set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan.

The programme funds projects which help to restore biodiversity or create new habitats, or help to deal with the effects of climate change, such as through carbon sequestration or flood management. Farming in Protected Landscapes also benefits projects aimed at improving people's understanding and appreciation of the countryside, as well as which protect historic features, enhance landscapes and boost business resilience.

Cllr Nigel Chapman, chair of the Farming in Protected Landscapes application assessment panel, said: "This is great news and we're really pleased with this extension. We've got an additional one year to support new applications and get a whole range of new projects up and running throughout the Coast and Heaths and Dedham Vale.

The money provided through this grant programme will be able to make a real difference to farm businesses, nature, and the countryside within our wonderful AONBs in Suffolk & Essex."

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated by the Government to conserve and enhance outstanding landscapes for the benefit of the nation. To find out more about the programme and to apply, please visit www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/managing or www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/managing or phone 01394 445 227.