

DEFRA Farming in Protected Landscapes programme

Wye Valley AONB Partnership

Local Assessment Panel - Terms of Reference

Objectives

The purpose of the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Local Assessment Panel is to decide upon allocation of the FiPL programme in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). FiPL is a delegated grant from DEFRA administered by Wye Valley AONB Partnership. Panel considerations are made according to the National Framework, Annex C - Expectations for Local Assessment Panels and the programme criteria as published in the information for applicants and the scoring system provided.

Panel Membership

- 1) The Panel is an appointed sub-committee of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and has delegated functions and co-opted members.
- 2) Membership of the Panel will be based on the National Framework, Annex C - Expectations for Local Assessment Panels (appended). Panel members are appointed by the Wye Valley AONB JAC. The current membership of the Panel is appended.
- 3) The Panel will elect a Chairman. In their absence at a subsequent meeting, those Panel members present will choose a Chairman for the meeting.
- 4) If a member of the Panel has any direct and significant involvement with a proposed application, then they must declare this prior to the application being considered, and revoke their voting rights for any vote on that project. Further detail on Conflicts of Interest are in the Annex C - Expectations for Local Assessment Panels.
- 5) Panel members are to treat the contents of applications as confidential for discussion only between panel members in Local Assessment Panel meetings.
- 6) Member are encouraged to champion the FiPL programme with farmers, land managers and other relevant organisations. However any enquiries about the FiPL grant or applications are to be passed to the AONB FiPL officer without prejudicing their decision-making function.

Meetings

The National Framework, Annex C - Expectations for Local Assessment Panels details the 'Organisation of LAP meetings' & 'Administration'.

- a. Meetings will be held about every 8 weeks, depending on the flow of applications, and will be serviced by the AONB Unit. Meetings may be on-line or in-person subject to conditions.

- b. Applications for consideration will be circulated to panel members at least 2 days in advance of Local Assessment Panel meetings.
- c. The quorum for a Panel meeting shall be 50% +1. However previously submitted comments on an application by a Panel member will be recorded as valid for that item. If at any time the number of members falls below quorum the meeting shall be adjourned.
- d. The order of business at each meeting shall be as follows:
 - to receive any apologies for absence
 - receive disclosures of interest
 - approve the Minutes of the last meeting
 - dispose of business (if any) remaining from the previous meeting
 - report on progress of approved schemes
 - consider applications for grants
 - receive reports on grant applications fast tracked and /or under £5,000
 - update on committed, spent and unallocated funds
 - any other business.
- e. Decisions by the Panel shall be made by show of hands with the Chairman having the casting vote, after consideration of any previously submitted comments by absent Panel Members.
- f. The AONB officers in attendance shall keep minutes of each meeting, which shall be circulated to Panel members as soon as possible after each meeting.
- g. A fast track process may be initiated in exceptional circumstances where an application needs to be determined before the next Panel meeting. The application will be circulated to members for comment before a fixed deadline. The determination of the application will be made by the AONB Manager and Chairman based on the comments received. The result will be reported to the next Panel meeting.
- h. Applications of less than £5,000 are delegated to the AONB Manager to determine. The result will be reported to the next Panel meeting.
- i. The cumulative FiPL allocation and outcomes of the approved applications shall be reported to the Wye Valley AONB JAC for information.

Appeals & Complaints.

Applicants will have a right of appeal to the Wye Valley AONB JAC as detailed in the National Framework, Annex C - Expectations for Local Assessment Panels.