

Not delivered at the Consultative Panel, of 6th June 2024.

Report of Graham Ferris, Verderers

Since Brexit, DEFRA has been developing a set of Agri-environment Funding Schemes under the umbrella title of ELMS (Environmental Land Management Schemes).

There is a full spectrum of schemes including

- 1) Sustainable Farming Incentive – more prescriptive and short term (3-year agreements). Generally, for supporting land management that does not require input from DEFRA agencies.
- 2) Countryside Stewardship - longer term commitment (normally 10 years) and funding not only for new actions but also for maintenance of important features. Aimed at more complicated land management where designations and woodland are involved.
- 3) Landscape Recovery – large scale actions over decades (30 years typically). Much more Competitive application process. Bespoke and aimed at delivering a change of land use at scale.
- 4) Capital grants - funding for one off projects such as fencing, hedge/tree planting. Feasibility work and project development is also covered in addition to the staff who work with applicants.

Currently a subgroup of the Forest Farming Group, with representation from the Verderers, the NPA, Forestry England, the Commons Defence Association, the National Trust and Natural England is working with New Park Consultancy to look at which Scheme or Schemes would best suit the New Forest in the longer term.

Current work is focussed on identification of key features of the New Forest which merit future funding for improvement or conservation.

It is expected that soon DEFRA will announce a timetable for the next (third) round of competing projects for Landscape Scale proposals to be judged around the turn of the Year.

Were The New Forest to be successful in applying for such funding, a detailed development phase would follow for up to 2 years , with funded support from DEFRA.

Putting together such a proposal will benefit from the experiences of FE and National Trust who both have Landscape Scale Schemes under development outside the New Forest.

And consultation opportunities are being planned for coming months.