

Government fund creates collaborative farming communities

[The report](#), which is part of a programme of monitoring and evaluation for Agri-environment evidence, has highlighted that the funding has facilitated a more engaged, collaborative and environmentally aware farming community.

Chief Executive of Rural Payments Agency, Paul Caldwell, said:

These Facilitation Fund groups are a valuable aid in maximising the benefits of the Countryside Stewardship schemes, as well as providing a support base for group members looking to enter into new agreements to unlock the potential of their land.

A total of 98 groups have been supported by the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund between 2015 and 2017, which build on the principles of partnership-working to deliver environmental benefits.

Although it is too early to comment on environmental outcomes, there are initial signs of positive results to come from the work of these groups thanks to trust and collaboration.

With the deadline to submit an application for a Countryside Stewardship mid-tier agreement fast approaching on 31 July, farmers now have just over a week to apply for an agreement starting next year.

Victoria Prentis, Defra Farming Minister, said:

By getting involved in Countryside Stewardship, participants will put themselves in good stead to springboard into the new Environmental Land Management scheme when it is rolled out in late 2024, which will introduce new ways of working together with farmers to deliver better environmental outcomes and create cleaner, greener landscapes.

Since 2015, £10.3 million of funding has been committed to 136 facilitation groups across England through four national rounds and one flood-focused round of the fund.

Tony Juniper, Chair of natural England said:

We already know that farmers and landowners can achieve much greater environmental outcomes by working together on a landscape scale.

This report has shown that by sharing knowledge and expertise,

farmers and landowners benefit from the creation of a stronger community in their local area. At the same time, they also gain the vital skills that will be needed under future schemes that will reward farmers for the public goods they work hard to produce.

The national conversation around the future Environmental Land Management scheme is still open, with farmers warmly invited share their views on a policy discussion document.

[Priti Patel to give public greater say over policing through PCC review](#)

PCCs are directly elected to be the voice of the people and deliver an effective and efficient police force in their area. They are responsible for the budget and performance of their force, including cutting crime.

The review delivers on the manifesto commitment to strengthen and expand the role of PCCs. The public wants to see a reduction in crime and PCCs are elected to deliver on the people's priorities.

Measures to be considered in the review include:

- raising the profile of PCCs
- giving the public better access to information about the performance of their PCC
- sharing best practice so that PCCs are delivering consistently across the country
- reviewing the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables

Eight years on from their introduction in 2012, it is right that we look at ways to ensure the public can better hold PCCs to account for bringing crime down and protecting citizens in their area.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The British people want to know the police will uphold the law and then be held to account on that basis.

This review will help to improve accountability, scrutiny and transparency, ensuring Police and Crime Commissioners always put the law-abiding silent majority who voted for them at the centre of their decision-making.

Minister for Crime and Policing Kit Malthouse said:

We are committed to giving the police the powers and resources they need – it's why we're recruiting an additional 20,000 officers and are giving the biggest funding increase to policing in a decade.

This review will help PCCs to deliver effective police forces who can cut crime and protect their communities.

It will also ensure voters can hold PCCs accountable for performance – giving the public a stronger voice in matters of crime and justice.

The review will take place in two parts. The first stage, to be conducted over the summer, will look at raising standards and improving accountability, so that all members of the public are getting a good service from their PCCs.

It will also consider ways to strengthen the accountability of fire and rescue services in line with the Government's long-term ambitions on fire governance reform.

The review's second stage will take place following the PCC elections in May 2021 and will focus on longer-term reform. This will include looking at what extra powers PCCs need to better fight crime in their areas.

Longer-term plans, including increasing the number of mayors with responsibility for policing, will be detailed in the Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper, which we intend to publish in the autumn.

The review will not consider scrapping the PCC model nor will it review the 43 police force model.

The last PCC elections took place in May 2016. Every police force in England and Wales is represented by a PCC, except in Greater Manchester and London, where the Mayors and City of London Corporation are responsible for police and crime.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 enabled PCCs to take on responsibility for governance of their local fire service. There are currently four Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners (PFCCs) in England and Wales.

Introducing SIX – Sellafield Ltd's new social impact programme

Sellafield Ltd's social impact programme has been refreshed and relaunched as SIX – social impact, multiplied.

Its first investment will be Transforming West Cumbria, a £2.2 million fund

to help West Cumbria's most vulnerable communities.

SIX is a new approach to social impact which prioritises projects co-created with the community and stakeholders.

It recognises that more can be achieved in partnership and that impact can be multiplied through collaboration.

[Social Impact, Multiplied](#)

Transforming West Cumbria will take on West Cumbria's most entrenched social and economic problems. Sellafield Ltd and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) are funding the initiative, which will be delivered by Cumbria Community Foundation (CCF).

It aims to put local people in charge of their own futures by empowering neighbourhoods to create transformational change.

The West Cumbria challenge

- higher than average poverty rates
- more than 20,000 people in debt
- 10,000 households with an income of less than £10,000 a year
- 3,900 children living in poverty
- more children in care than in any other part of Cumbria
- teenagers achieve fewer GCSEs than the national average
- high levels of youth unemployment
- one in four people over 16 years has no qualifications
- low rates of business and social enterprise start-ups

The programme will focus on family wellbeing, financial education, community activism, and inspiring young people.

Among the initiatives are:

- a £1.3 million fund for community and voluntary groups
- £660,000 to support families
- £175,000 to fund financial education
- schemes to nurture young entrepreneurs
- and a drive to make community activism the norm for young people

It has been developed to address issues identified in CCF's West Cumbria: Opportunities and Challenges report.

Gary McKeating, Sellafield Ltd's head of community and development, said:

I believe Transforming West Cumbria can create profound and long-lasting change in our community.

It will laser focus on the causes of inequality and confront the

issues holding back our most vulnerable.

Research tells us people from poorer backgrounds are not lacking in ambition. What's missing is the knowledge, skills, and characteristics required to achieve those ambitions.

Transforming West Cumbria is a package of tailored support to address this.

It's not about telling people what's best for them. It's about giving communities the tools to be independent, self-reliant, and successful in the long-term.

Andrew van der Lem, head of government relations for the NDA, said:

Creating a positive legacy for our communities is one of the NDA's guiding principles.

That means ensuring as many people as possible benefit from the opportunities on our sites.

Alongside this, we're helping our communities to build diverse and sustainable economies which can thrive long after our decommissioning programmes have ended.

Transforming West Cumbria will help achieve those aims by using an evidence-based approach that prioritises measurable outcomes in the areas of greatest need.

Andy Beeforth, chief executive officer of Cumbria Community Foundation, said:

We have a long-standing relationship with Sellafield Ltd and we are proud to be a partner on this programme.

Community and voluntary organisations play a crucial role in helping us understand the needs of our local people and Transforming West Cumbria will enable this understanding to be used to tackle some key challenges in our area.

The programme will significantly invest in community projects that build the capabilities and financial sustainability of critical organisations, inspire and encourage new and existing social entrepreneurs and help children, young people and families to thrive by building resilience and self-efficacy.

We are looking to fund more innovative and diverse projects that offer unique alternatives and innovative solutions to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and reduce inequalities.

By working together and focusing our efforts, we will help create

thriving communities and a better future for West Cumbria.

Mike Starkie, Elected Mayor of Copeland, said:

Social inclusion has been and continues to be my key focus as Copeland's elected mayor.

I'll be working closely with partners in West Cumbria to ensure we support and enable the most disadvantaged in our community.

Projects within the Transforming West Cumbria programme include:

Bedrock

This will:

- empower leaders of community organisations with skills, resource, and time to invest in business strategy and development
- support businesses to explore new ways of working, including: money making, use of digital, collaboration, sharing resource and better management of community assets/premises
- improve governance
- build the ability and future proofing, through staff development, expert volunteer recruitment and clear succession planning

#CanDo

This will:

- raise young people's aspirations and build their confidence
- provide grants to support social or environmental action projects designed by young people, for the benefit of their communities

Family Wellbeing

This will:

- improve the health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families in west Cumbria
- invite community-based organisations working with disadvantaged children and families to apply for grants of up to £50,000 against the established criteria
- partner with local charitable organisations: West Cumbria Child Poverty Forum and Children's Social Care and Health Services

Financial Wellbeing

This will:

- improve the financial capability of people on low incomes living in deprived areas of West Cumbria
- promote financial capability via existing community networks and in places where people come together and feel welcome without stigma
- break down the barriers to discussing personal financial, overcome stigma and engage people in a solution-based approach

Spark

This will:

- inspire, encourage and nurture new and existing social entrepreneurs
- work with Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership

This will deliver 3 levels of support:

1. Think it – bespoke advice will be delivered in workshops or 1:1s
2. Try it – support to test out ideas via grant awards of up to £5,000
3. Grow it – supported for existing social entrepreneurs to build sustainable financial models via grant awards and/or repayable grant loans of up to £15,000

Young Disruptors

This will:

- provide young people (10–25 years) from disadvantaged backgrounds in West Cumbria with the opportunity to have their ideas and ambitions heard and the potential to have them realised
 - challenge young people to think creatively and in more enterprising ways
 - empower young people to ‘positively disrupt’ the status quo and to be heard
 - support young people to test out their enterprising ideas
 - break down the barriers for aspiring young entrepreneurs, by developing an enterprising culture based on encouragement and support
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Croydon's second government hub granted planning permission

Planning permission has today been granted for work to begin on the latest government hub in Croydon, with civil servants from the Home Office expected to move in by late 2024.

The Government Property Agency (GPA) has secured a 25 year lease for the site at Two Ruskin Square – a move which will save the taxpayer more than £8m a year.

The new hub will provide flexible workspace, allowing the lessons from working from home over the recent months to be incorporated.

About the hub

The new hub in Croydon will be the area's second, creating a government campus with excellent transportation links.

It will form part of the nine-acre Ruskin Square scheme and is located adjacent to East Croydon station. It sits alongside One Ruskin Square, the HMRC regional centre which opened in 2017, and currently houses around 2,000 HMRC staff, with more expected to move in by 2021.

The development of 329,500 sqft will be arranged over 10 floors and include ground level retail units. The ground works are anticipated to start on site before the end of this year, with the build of the main superstructure beginning in April 2021.

The Government Hubs Programme has so far seen the development of 16 office hubs announced in areas including Glasgow, Belfast, Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Cardiff, Birmingham, Peterborough and Bristol to support around 60,000 civil servants.

Welcoming news of the planning permission, Steven Boyd, Chief Executive of Government Property Agency, said:

"The Government Property Agency is at the heart of creating great places to work for civil servants and the news today reflects the great progress we are making.

"The Government Hubs Programme is creating strong regional centres where civil servants can build their careers in modern state-of-the-art shared workspaces, enabling efficient, collaborative and flexible working, driving engagement and improving staff productivity and wellbeing. This will also reduce government operating costs as we dispose of unnecessary office space and streamline our estate.

“We will continue to work with government departments, local authorities, investors and developers across the UK to take forward this ambitious programme.”

[UK Government launches consultation on 2025 Border Strategy](#)

- Government launches consultation on the 2025 Border Strategy, which will set out our vision for world’s most effective border by 2025
- The consultation seeks views on how new digital systems can improve trader and traveller experience and make the UK more secure
- The full Border 2025 strategy will be set out before the end of the year

Today the government has launched a [consultation on the 2025 UK Border Strategy](#).

This consultation seeks the views and expertise of a range of organisations to help develop the 2025 UK Border Strategy, and ensure that government and industry are able to work together to design the world’s most effective and innovative border by 2025.

On December 31 2020 the UK transition period with the EU will end, and the UK will operate a full, external border as a sovereign nation. The UK now has a unique opportunity to design the world’s most effective border, helping businesses take advantage of new trading relationships around the world and keeping citizens safer.

Using the ideas gathered through the consultation the government will publish a 2025 UK Border Strategy by the end of the year setting out a clear vision and roadmap that the government and border industry, working together, can deliver.

The government’s ambition is for a transformed border by 2025 that will deliver benefits including:

- reducing administrative costs and burdens for traders to improve the end-to-end experience for those moving goods across the border
- improving the experience of travellers, for example by using digital identification systems
- improving how we protect the UK from those who may pose a risk to us, for example by deterring and disrupting organised crime and terrorism, identifying and preventing biosecurity threats, and preventing abuse of the migration system

Government will work with industry to build a more user-centric border, moving processes away from the border where appropriate and using digital

systems to enable the swift clearance of goods and people.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

On January 1 2021, we will have full control over our border for the first time in decades, and the freedom to design how it operates in order to deliver the greatest benefit for the UK.

We are launching this consultation to draw upon the expertise of the UK border industry as we develop our strategy to build the world's most effective and efficient border over the next five years.

By taking advantage of our new independence, we will be able to get a proper grip on exactly who and what comes in and out of the country and give our dedicated Border Force personnel new tools to catch criminals, whilst improving the flow of goods to make the UK border the most effective in the world by 2025.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Our ambition to build the world's most effective and efficient border will ensure the UK takes full advantage of our new status as an independent trading nation.

We will harness new technology to create a digital border, supporting businesses to import and export with ease and at low cost, and supporting our aims to bring the brightest and best talent from around the world to the UK.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The British people have voted to take back control of our border and introduce a new points-based immigration system. Looking forward to 2025, our new border strategy will play an important role in realising that aim, ensuring we are able to attract the best global talent and have full control of our border.

We will transform the way in which people come to the UK, making it an even better place to live, work, study and visit. Whilst at the same time improving security, reducing illegal migration, and illicit commodity flows through investment in the border and better

use of data.

The consultation is open for 6 weeks and closes on 28 August.