

Transforming Food and Farming in Lincolnshire

Background

The Food, Farming & Countryside Commission (FFCC) is an independent, transparently funded commission providing policy expertise to government, industry, and communities on food, farming and land use. FFCC brings people, businesses, and organisations together on difficult issues, makes connections across farming, food, and the countryside, and stretches the debate with bold ideas and seldom-heard voices.

As part of its current multi-year strategy, FFCC is working in six places across the UK — Lincolnshire, Carmarthenshire, Cornwall, Cumbria, Fife and Northern Ireland — to support communities build a fairer, healthier, and more resilient future. FFCC has been invited to these places by people leading change in their communities and wider regions. The six locations have also been identified because they face thorny challenges around food, farming and land use, but they also have strong potential for transformative change that will have national impact.

Lincolnshire is one of England's most productive agricultural counties, but its landscape is under stress from flooding and drought, biodiversity has declined over decades, and farming businesses are under sustained financial pressure. Farmers are keen to adopt more regenerative, resilient and nature-friendly practices to keep growing food productively into the future, but find it difficult, too costly or risky to invest in that transition.

At the same time, the food system that Lincolnshire's farms feed into isn't benefitting the region's communities. Lincoln itself has childhood obesity rates significantly above the national average, and food insecurity is rising. Restoring the connection between what the county produces and what Lincolnshire families and children eat – especially in schools – is an opportunity to improve public health in the region and provide a significant economic boost for local farmers and businesses.

Momentum for change is building. The Lincoln and Witham Landscape Recovery project is bringing together over 30 land managers across 6,000 hectares to explore whole-farm approaches to nature recovery and action on climate change. The Greater Lincolnshire Food Partnership has built strong networks across the food system. The Combined Authority has identified food sector leadership as a growth priority. The Greater Lincolnshire Forum for Agriculture and Horticulture is bringing farmers and rural professionals across the wider region together to learn from each other and feed into national policymaking. These pioneers now need sustained, skilled support in a coherent nationally connected programme of change, which acts on local and regional challenges and simultaneously contributes substantial evidence to national and regional policy makers, to help create and sustain the conditions for long term positive change.

What the project will do

In each of the six places, FFCC will work closely with two anchor partners, joined by a memorandum of understanding. Over the next five years, the anchor partners will convene key senior leaders and influential organisations in the regions — from local authorities, farming networks, NHS bodies and community food organisations and economic partnerships. Local coordinators, hosted by anchor partners, support that convening and ensure people reflecting all parts of the community are part of it from the start.

Leaders who have worked separately in food, farming, health, land, economy, investment and risk begin working together on shared problems; institutions that bought food through centralised or national contracts begin buying from local producers; farmers, growers, businesses and communities gain the resource and capacity to grow, process and distribute food where it is most needed; and people experiencing food insecurity become involved in the decisions that shape their food environment.

Regional and devolved bodies treat food as central to ecological health, community wellbeing and economic resilience concurrently, and build it into how they plan, invest in and make decisions about land use. In each place, more of the economic, ecological and social value the food system generates is grown and kept where it is created.

FFCC creates and holds the conditions for cross-place working, helping the six regions connect and learn from each other, identifies and draws in sources of funding, and brings the link to national and international policy. This group will develop a shared picture of food, farming and land use in each place, identify promising prospects and recurring barriers, and work through cycles of action, reflection and adaptation, to make real progress on their chosen issues. Through the anchor organisations, funding will flow to community organisations, farmer networks and food enterprises.

Work so far in Lincolnshire

An initial meeting on 10th July 2026, hosted by Sue Pritchard (FFCC), Claire Birch (Doddington) and Laura Stratford (Greater Lincolnshire Food Partnership), brought together representatives from

- Lincolnshire County Council (Schools and Public Health)
- UK Food Valley
- LIAT and Riseholme College
- Birchwood Community
- City of Lincoln (Planning)
- farming.

Participants explored how the county's strengths in food production, agriculture, education, public health and environmental management could be better connected through a focused programme of work and contribute to improving the region's prosperity and resilience.

The meeting established broad support for creating a long-term portfolio of linked projects, rather than isolated initiatives, to improve health, especially children's health and prospects, strengthen local food systems, support regenerative farming and create economic opportunities.

[Nourishing-Lincoln-minutes 10 July 2026.docx](#)

Planning is underway for a workshop in October to shape an ambitious new action and research project, following on from this meeting.

Funding

The wider project is forming the basis of funding application to the National Lottery Climate Action Fund. This would deliver funding across five years over the six places. Around three-quarters of that funding will be directed towards place-led budgets, supporting local staff and coordinators, project delivery, and regranting to community organisations, farmer networks and food enterprises.

To begin this work in Lincolnshire, FFCC has already secured funding from the Aurora Trust of £60,000 for the first year. This will fund a dedicated local facilitator, alongside supporting capacity within FFCC's central team. The facilitator will be embedded in the Lincolnshire ecosystem — working across institutional boundaries with the trust and credibility needed to convene diverse actors and drive coordinated action.