

Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)



PEAK LEADER - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2014 – 2020



Submitted on 5th September 2014 by Peak Local Action Group

Reference: EM04

Signed on behalf of:

The Peak Local Action Group: Chair, Cllr Lewis Rose _____

The Accountable Body, Derbyshire County Council: Frank Horsley, Head of Economic Regeneration _____

The Local Development Strategy has been endorsed by partners engaged in:
The Rural and Farming Network
The Derbyshire Economic Partnership
D2N2, Stoke and Staffordshire and Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership



Contact: Amanda Brown: Amanda.brown2@derbyshire.gov.uk / 01629 538475

Contents:

Introduction	1
1. The Local Action Group	2
1.1 Representation	3
1.2 Structure and decision making process	3
1.3 Staffing and job descriptions	4
1.4 Equal opportunities	5
1.5 Involvement of the community and consultation activity	5
1.6 Training requirements	6
2. The LAG Area	6
2.1 Population and map	7
3. The Strategy	7
3.1 SWOT	9
3.2 Evidence of alignment with LEP activity	13
3.3 Local Priorities	16
3.4 Grant rates and intervention rates	25
3.5 Action Plan	25
3.6 Targets, results and outputs	26
3.7 Sustainability appraisal	26
3.8 Proposed co-operation activity	26
4. Management and Administration	27
4.1 Accountable Body	27
4.2 Project development and assessment procedure	28
4.3 Claims and payments	28
4.4 Communications and publicity	28
5. Financial Plan and Overall Funding Profile	29
5.1 Match funding	29
5.2 Use of grants, procurement or other types of financial support	30

Delivering a Difference

Peak LEADER: working through partnership to realise the growth potential of our rural economy through supporting enterprising, resilient and sustainable rural communities

The Peak LEADER area stands apart from other rural areas in terms of its economic growth potential¹; the unique geography of the area comprises the exceptional natural landscape of the Peak District National Park, the dispersed upland communities and popular market towns including Bakewell and Buxton. Located in the heart of the country the area is surrounded by the densely populated conurbations of Sheffield, Manchester, Derby and Stoke. The area has a high business density and better than average business survival rates², high levels of self-employment demonstrate a level of entrepreneurship within local communities upon which to build. The economy is driven by micro and small businesses in manufacturing, food and drink, creative and digital, alongside the visitor economy, all have opportunities for growth potential.

However, the area's productivity is below the English average and employment available locally is often relatively low skilled, part-time and poorly paid which has led to areas of relative deprivation. High housing costs affect the majority of the area and there is an outward migration of skilled people and young people seeking better job prospects in the urban conurbations. The dispersed nature of the area's rural communities generates significant challenges in terms of access to services and the physical and virtual connectivity of rural communities.

The Peak LEADER will deliver a difference by building on our successful track record of partnership working and achieving job creation, together with our experience of working with businesses during the previous programme period. It will help improve farm productivity and growth in the wider rural economy creating permanent jobs, opportunities for higher skilled/higher wage employment and increased prosperity. It will champion and support our entrepreneurial communities, ensuring that innovative ideas enabling essential rural services to be tested and delivered. Working alongside Local Enterprise Partnerships growth strategies the outcome will be a thriving, resilient and sustainable area attractive to residents and visitors alike and not a series of dormitory communities populated with outward commuters draining the skills base.

Peak LEADER is fully supported by the three LEPs (D2N2, Sheffield City Region and Stoke & Staffordshire) which overlay its boundaries, enabling local communities to benefit from investment in growth, spearheaded through the respective Growth Plans whilst ensuring our programme complements wider funding initiatives available to business. Peak LEADER will also look to complement and draw in other European funding available through the LEPs ESIF main programmes.

LAG partners have a proven track record of working across established administrative boundaries and will ensure this our strong record of local delivery continues through to 2020. Our success in delivering a package of support in the area has been demonstrated through successfully delivering RDPE, LEADER funding between 2008 to 2014. Access to new measures and the demonstrable need for support make this an exciting opportunity which

¹,and ² Independent Ekosgen report: Growing the Rural Economy, Evidencing the Case for the Peak District 2014

the LAG has the capacity and local knowledge to ensure it delivers a difference and makes a lasting impact within the area.

Without a Peak LEADER scheme, the area could not fully capitalise on its potential and it is likely to lag behind cities and other rural areas as they regenerate after the recession. Already productivity in the area is behind urban counterparts, and the area has seen a decline in its ranking within the competitiveness index. The Peak LEADER scheme is therefore vital to ensure that our weaknesses can be addressed and that the rural area does not slip further behind city growth. It is vital to ensuring that businesses with growth ambitions and young people with drive and determination to start up – do not feel compelled to migrate to urban centres – and to ensure that rural focused businesses such as farming have the opportunity to access funding, support and inspiration through linkages which can drive forward their productivity. The Peak LEADER scheme will enable us to build on our strengths and deliver a difference for the local economy and residents

1. The Local Action Group Partnership - Membership

The Local Action Group membership has been refreshed and is drawn from a mix of existing experienced LAG members and new partners, to reflect the increased geographic area and the priorities of the new programme. Consideration of the opportunities for growth and the specific needs of the area have informed the Partnership. Members are representative of the key sectors within the area and have a vast network of wider linkages with the Private, Public, Voluntary and Community sector to ensure effective communication and engagement across the area. The wider network encompasses: The Forestry Commission, The Environment Agency, Local Nature Partnerships, WiRE, health bodies and local partnerships including Moors for the Future, Churnett Valley Group and other local delivery bodies.

A skills audit and wider partnership analysis has been undertaken to ensure the correct representation on the LAG. Consultation with local businesses and community members alongside evidence from the previous programme identified a good level of knowledge of LEADER throughout the area. However, we recognise this can be developed further and training on disseminating the principles, priorities and opportunities of the LEADER approach will be undertaken at the first LAG meeting. The LAG is committed to ensuring the programme of activity meets the needs of those hardest to engage and is confident the membership and wider partnership networks have the capacity to reach those not previously involved and in the new eligible areas.

The LAG is mindful that membership will broadly reflect the demographics of the area and will not endorse any membership that is discriminatory in age, gender or ethnicity. However as the LAG membership organisations elect their representatives, the group is not able to dictate or predict the gender, age and ethnicity make up of future LAG representatives. The LAG will implement a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and criteria which avoids conflicts of interest

Where membership of the LAG representation covers organisations across district boundaries, members will be required to operate a 2 year rotational membership, agreed between partner organisations i.e. one District Council representative for a 2 year period rotating with the next District Council. This open system has operated effectively previously and will be facilitated by the LAG Manager.

The LAG will have direct links with LEPs through the Derbyshire Economic Partnership Board (appendix 1) and the Rural & Farming Network (appendix 2) to ensure complementarity activity and guarantee enquiries are signposted to the most appropriate form of support by operating a `no wrong door` approach. The current shadow LAG Chair is also a LEP Board member. The election of the Chair will be annual. Three LEPs cover the LEADER area, during the development of the LDS all three have been consulted and steps

put in place to continue to develop working relationships at both the local and strategic level. Cross border working has been a factor in delivery of a number of rural programmes such as LEADER, Live & Work Rural, Environmental Quality Mark and Rural Action Zone over the years and the sharing of knowledge and expertise has been a strength within the area.

LAG members and staff will work to the Defra National Behavioral Code of Conduct to ensure its core values of: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality are maintained throughout the lifetime of the programme. This will be included within LAG training and as part of induction procedures. Representation on the group will be reviewed and refreshed as the programme progresses.

1.1 The proposed representation reflects the majority Private/Voluntary and Community sector requirement.

Private Sector Representation: 11

Business Peak District, Farming Life Centre, Peak District Artisans, National Farmers Union, Derbyshire Dales CVS representing Peak Partners for Rural Action, LEADER Champion Business entrepreneur (representative of Peak District Farm Holiday Group), Market Towns/Town Teams Representative, Young Farmer, Housing & Community Association, Destination Management Organisation (Derbyshire and Staffordshire), CLA

Public Sector: 7

Elected District/Borough Representative, Peak District National Park Authority, Parish Council Representative, Natural England, Peak District Partnership (former LSP), Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Economic Partnership

1.2 Structure and decision making process

The Local Action Group is the decision making partnership for the LDS with Derbyshire County Council as the accountable body. The LAG is responsible for the overall management and the strategic direction of the LDS, monitoring the progress of the programme through regular quarterly meetings or more frequently if required and directing the work of the Manager. Decisions on strategic direction, expression of interest, full applications, rejection or approval will be taken by the full LAG. The accountable body will ensure the operational guidance is implemented in full and full compliance is in place including responsibility for meeting audit requirements. Contracts will be issued and signed on behalf of the LAG by the accountable body. M & A claims will be prepared by monitoring staff and approved by the accountable body, payment recommendations and IT compliance will be the responsibility of the accountable body. The accountable body will ensure separation of duties, audit requirements and perform management checks and inspections as laid out in the National Operational Manual.

The LAG Manager and partners will build the capacity of local people to develop and implement projects to meet the priorities of the LDS through animation and information sharing.

The LAG will implement a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and criteria which avoids conflict of interest. Open publicised calls for proposals will be advertised via LAG members and the wider partnership using a wide range of marketing techniques to ensure LEADER is accessible to all. Partners will assist in assessing projects through scoring of expressions of interest and appraising projects with decisions being made by the LAG. The LAG will make decisions based on the LDS with RDT input being sought prior to the LAG decision. The LAG will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the strategy with an agreed reporting structure in place to inform the Accountable Body, Defra and partners of progress,

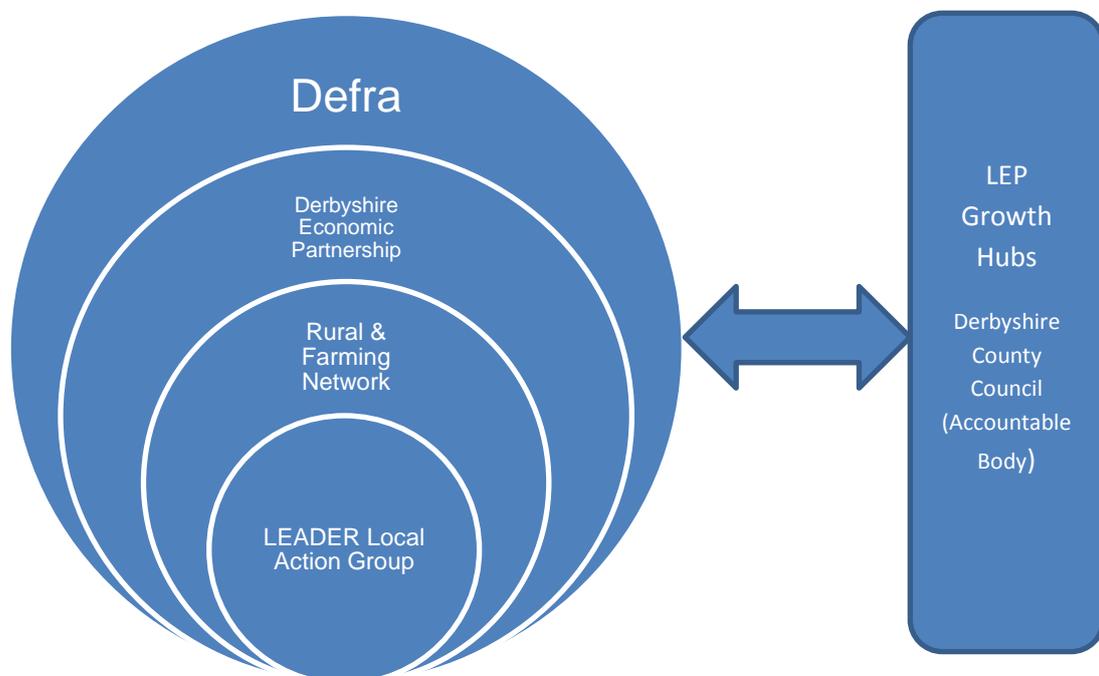
An induction process will be put in place for LAG members (and offered to other supporting partners) to develop the skills required to perform their roles on the group. This will cover

operational guidance requirements, codes of conduct, equality and diversity and provide an overview of project assessment.

A minimum of one third of LAG members must be present at meetings with at least 50% non-public representation to achieve quorum. Conflict of Interest procedures will also be implemented in line with best practice and operational guidance. Partners must declare a personal or prejudicial interest in any projects or matters being discussed at the start of the meeting and these individuals will leave the room when the matter is discussed. All LAG meetings will be minuted and any conflicts of interest recorded.

To enable private sector /voluntary sector and community input, LAG meetings will take place at times to suit the majority of members. As with current arrangements, the venues will be in accessible locations and rotate between Derbyshire Dales, High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands Districts. In addition where budgets allow, travel expenses will be made available to business and voluntary sector and community representatives to remove barriers to participation.

The LAG will take decisions on delivery of the programme independently but will operate within the following Economic Development Structure.



1.3 Local Action Group staff, numbers and job descriptions

➤ **Senior Responsible Officer: Head of Economic Regeneration (DCC/Accountable Body) – In Kind contribution**

Ensure the full compliance with all relevant contracted obligations including separation of duties, conflicts of interest and associated guidance from Defra are met and adhered to: Ensure the full compliance with all relevant Derbyshire County Council procedures relating to the programme are adhered to: Ensure LEADER activity is linked to the wider Growth agenda via DEP, LEPs and proposed Combined Local Authority structures

➤ **Full Time LEADER Programme Manager – Funded through M &**

Support the LAG to deliver the LDS and its outcomes in line with Defra and DCC requirements to ensure full compliance with the contractual obligations including separation of duties and conflicts of interest: Manage the expression of interest, application and appraisal process through to final decision. Market the fund in line with the marketing plan to all relevant stakeholders to ensure widespread understanding of

the programme. Engage hard to reach businesses and communities through animation activities: Preparation of programme performance (including financial) reports for the LAG, Rural & Farming Network and DEP Board. Line management responsibility for the Monitoring Officer.

➤ **Part Time Monitoring Officer (DEP) – funded through M & A**

Assist the manager in order to deliver the LDS and contractual obligations:
Undertake Quarterly claims procedure and ensure all documentation received is in line with Defra requirements as set out in the operational manual, ensure effective financial and performance monitoring for the projects in accordance with terms and conditions of funding.

➤ **Finance Officer – (DCC/Accountable Body) – In Kind contribution**

Manage all relevant audit arrangements: Ensuring the timely preparation and review of financial matters pertinent to the programme, in accordance with Derbyshire County Council Financial Regulations. In line with Derbyshire County Council Financial Memorandum, the appointed Finance Officer will represent and report accordingly to the Council Director of Finance as appointed Section 151 Officer.

1.4 Equal opportunities statement (the public sector equality duty)

The LAG will work to the aims and objectives of DCC Equality and Diversity Policy 2011 to ensure all work is undertaken in a fair and open manner with no discrimination to any persons engaged within the process. Steps will be taken to ensure that all applicants are treated in an equal way and that projects supported through LEADER adopt and implement an equal opportunities policy as appropriate.

1.5 Involvement of the community and consultation activity undertaken

A wide ranging and effective consultation process has been undertaken with businesses, public sector and community and voluntary sector partners to ensure an inclusive approach to LDS development. Nearly 300 on line responses have been received. In addition, feedback and lessons learnt from previous successful programme development and delivery has been taken into account during consultation to ensure future effective implementation of funding. Neighbouring LAG areas and LEPs have formed part of the consultation process to ensure complementarity and to establish the foundations for future collaborative working.

The following partners and their members have been consulted on the LDS during the consultation process, via a combination of the on line survey, focus groups, one to one and group meetings:

Main Organisations consulted	
D2N2	Local Football network to engage young people
Sheffield City Region	Parish Council networks
Stoke & Staffordshire LEP	Peak District Artisans network
Derbyshire County Council	CLA
Staffordshire County Council	Market Town Business network
Staffordshire Moorlands DC	Visit Peak District
Derbyshire Dales DC	Simply Staffordshire
High Peak BC	FSB Network
Derbyshire Economic Partnership	Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce
Peak District National Park Authority	Network
Rural Action Derbyshire	Friends of the Peak District
Derbyshire Dales CVS	Natural England
High Peak CVS	Princes Trust
Staffordshire Moorlands CVS	University of Derby
Farming Life Centre network,	MAS Local contact list
NFU local groups and County Groups	UKTI Local contact list
Local businesses through existing LEADER contact list	Forestry Commission network
Local Business Advisers - 700 businesses through	Local Nature Partnerships
Business Peak District membership list, Peak District	
Environmental Quality Mark members, WiRE,	

The high level of consultation returns (over 300), Peak District external 2008 – 2013 evaluation, National evaluation ¹ and statistical evidence base has been used to inform the development of the strategy. The top two priority measures identified by responders are (in priority order):

- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification; and
- Support for increasing farm productivity.

Rural service delivery and Tourism were ranked as the next two important areas for work. Support for Heritage and culture and forestry were noted as lower priorities to deliver economic impact. However, it is recognised these areas do have potential and will be supported and developed within the strategy.

43% of respondents identified grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 as being the most likely to be requested. While this is noted, the LAG has identified that in previous delivery, lower grant levels are often requested and have delivered good outputs. Likewise, the LAG does not believe putting a rigid ceiling on grant levels is appropriate as this can stifle creative thinking and slow business development. However, the majority of applications are anticipated within this range and care will be taken to ensure complementarity with other funding programmes available to the area in dialogue with LEPs. All applications will be robustly appraised to ensure they deliver best value for money and sustainable outputs.

1.6 Training requirements

The Local Action Group is committed to on-going training and development and will ensure members access appropriate training as required. Members are committed to attending free training on specific aspects of the programme through Defra or the European Commission. An induction process will be put in place for LAG members (and offered to other supporting partners) to develop the skills required to perform their roles on the group. New LAG Members will be offered this opportunity should changes happen in the make up of the LAG and/or changes in personnel occur. This will cover operational guidance requirements, codes of conduct, equality and diversity and provide an overview of project assessment. Programme beneficiaries will be able to access application, monitoring and claim training through a schedule delivered by the LAG Manager.

2. The LAG Area

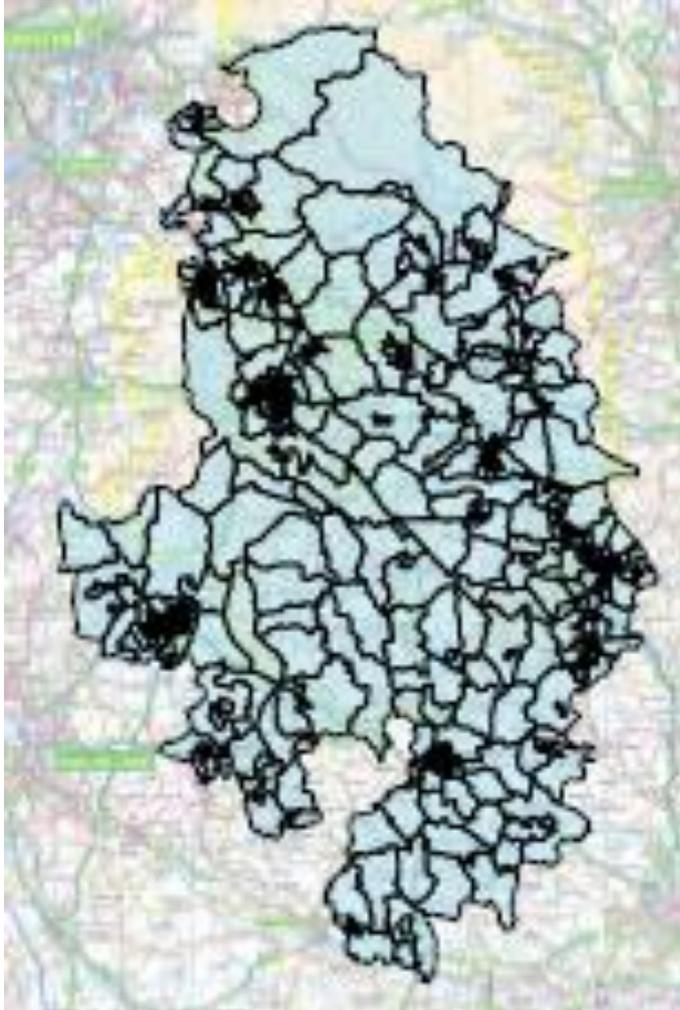
A coherent geographical area with a population of c 150,000 has been identified as the LEADER area. The area covers the rural parts of High Peak and Derbyshire Dales and Staffordshire Moorlands. The area has been agreed following consultation with Defra to meet the rural output definition. The inclusion of the three hub towns of Buxton, Matlock and Leek has been welcomed; work within the hub towns will be required to demonstrate the positive impact of any activity supported in them to the wider rural area. The hub towns included have been evidenced through research as important service centres to the wider rural hinterland.

Much of the area falls within the Peak District National Park, which is identified, protected and promoted for its high environmental quality. The remainder of the area includes the smaller market towns and three hub towns, bordering the Peak District and their hinterlands which are locally recognised as part of the “wider” Peak District area, providing the gateways to the National Park. Large parts of the area comprise strikingly attractive upland moorland and farmland at the

¹ A Review of the LEADER Approach for Delivering RDP for England – Lincoln Business School and Peak District LEADER evaluation – Wavehill Consulting

southern end of the Pennine Hills. Marginal hill farming dominates the landscape in these areas with the vast majority in sheep, beef and dairy enterprises.

2.1. The area has a population c150,000 and has been developed as a coherent functioning area using Defra guidance and the 2011 census output areas.



3. The Strategy

The LEADER strategy aims to embed the outcomes of the Peak District external LEADER evaluation 2008 – 2013. It has been informed by consultation with a wide range of rural stakeholders and a comprehensive independent evidence base¹ prepared earlier in the year. The evidence base uses a range of official statistics to profile the Wider Peak District economy i.e. the Derbyshire Dales, High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands districts, including the majority of the Peak District National Park. The employment analysis uses data from the Business Register and Employment Survey, the business base using Business Demography and UK Business: Activity, Size, Location, and the resident base profile and labour market analysis using the 2011 Census. Tourism data has been used from the D2N2 Colliers Tourism Impact Study 2014 and STEAM data. As only the Census allows for analysis at a lower geographic level, some data presented is at local authority district level.

Key Facts about the area:

The resident base profile draws on data from the 2011 Census. The Census is the most up to date and rigorous data source for statistics at low level geographies. The data is used to present a profile of the LEADER area, which has been defined using the 2011 Census output areas, and compare the area with the surrounding LEP areas and England as a whole. The England rural area average has also been used as a comparator where possible².

- 91% of businesses have fewer than 10 employees

¹ Growing the Rural Economy: Evidencing the Case for the Peak District, EKOSGEN January 2014

Tourism: D2N2 Colliers Tourism Impact Study 2014

² The rural urban Census analysis defines the working age population as aged 16 to 74 and therefore where the analysis is based on a working age population aged 16 to 64

- Micro and small enterprises within the 3 Districts covered by LEADER are 11,380¹
- average GVA per full time equivalent employee (FTE) is £50,350 (on a par with LEPs) but below the English average of £52,300 (excluding London)
- Over reliance on public sector employment – largest employer in the Derbyshire Dales
- On average, workplace earnings are between £340 and £350 per week (£17,680 and £18,200 p.a. respective) which is nearly 20% lower than the national average of £410 per week (£21,320 p.a.). Both full time and part time workplace earnings lag behind national averages and compare poorly to earnings of residents who commute into cities
- High levels of self-employment. Nearly a fifth of residents in employment are self-employed (19%) and the area performs well on this measure compared to the wider LEP areas (13%) and the national rate of self-employment (15%)
- High house prices, often unaffordable for low earners - all three districts have high ratios of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings i.e. Derbyshire Dales (8.45); High Peak (6.15) and Staffordshire Moorlands (6.22)
- A well-established business base with a business density of 67 businesses per 1,000 working age population (Derbyshire Dales 99 businesses per 1,000 working age population) (excluding non PAYE or VAT registered businesses) and better than average survival rates
- The demographic profile shows a slightly higher proportion of residents aged 65+ and lower working age population (aged 16 to 64) compared to the profile in the surrounding LEPs and nationally. The proportion of younger people aged 16-24 is slightly below the national average
- The area has a relatively low proportion of residents from BME (black and minority ethnic) groups (98% of residents are white), while the gender profile of the population and the proportion of residents with a limiting long term illness or disability is in line with wider LEP area averages, national profile and England rural area average
- The LEADER area has a relatively highly skilled workforce. A third of working age (ages 16 to 64) residents are qualified to degree level or above (Level 4+), outperforming the wider LEP areas (23% to 26%) and the national average (30%) on this indicator. There are a further 15% of residents qualified to Level 3, which are noted as important for the manufacturing and engineering sectors.

¹ Nomis Data August 2014

The consultation process and evidence base, together with local knowledge has enabled the LAG and wider partners to compile the following SWOT analysis of the area:

3.1 SWOT: Identifying development needs and potential – blue italics potential

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Geographical location and proximity to urban centres offering market and supply chain opportunities</i> • <i>Exceptional landscape quality and attractive, character market towns with many businesses deriving economic benefits from their association with the landscape</i> • <i>Renowned visitor destination, Peak District brand and strong visitor economy</i> • <i>High business density and enterprising rural communities</i> • <i>Strong business survival rates</i> • <i>Highly qualified resident workforce</i> • <i>Sector strengths in manufacturing, local food and drink, creative and digital and the visitor economy and opportunities to capture more (smaller scale) knowledge based activities as broadband improves</i> • <i>Vibrant voluntary and community sector playing an important role in delivering services, supporting community action and in providing employment opportunities</i> • <i>Communities with a strong sense of local identity and willingness to get involved</i> • <i>Established partnership arrangements and strong track record of cross boundary working and rural delivery across a range of rural development programmes</i> • <i>Peak District 2008-13 programme significantly above National Impact Assessment averages for LEADER^[1] (13-18% deadweight compared to benchmark of 47%)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fragility of upland areas / hill farming</i> • <i>Below average productivity</i> • <i>Jobs available locally often low skilled, part time and low paid</i> • <i>Reduced competitiveness at district level</i> • <i>Out commuting to higher paid jobs taking spending power out of the area and affecting the sustainability of rural services</i> • <i>Difficulty attracting and retaining a younger skilled workforce in the area</i> • <i>Housing affordability and availability leading to lack of young people living and working in the area</i> • <i>Transport connectivity and limited sustainable transport options creating challenges in accessing services, employment and training opportunities</i> • <i>Access to fast broadband and inconsistent mobile connectivity negatively affecting start-up and business expansion opportunities, the ability to attract new businesses to the area and exacerbating rural isolation</i> • <i>Over reliance on public sector for employment and traditional industries and need to broaden the area's economic base</i> • <i>Pockets of deprivation and unemployment hidden by more affluent areas, and deeper rural areas affected by barriers to housing and services reflecting scarcity and housing affordability issues</i>

^[1] National Impact Assessment of LEADER, ekosgen 2011.

Opportunities

- *External linkages with surrounding cities - 2014-20 potential: exploit market and supply chain opportunities as urban economies grow*
- *Strong micro / small business base - 2014-20 potential: develop and support those with growth potential and ambitions to expand*
- *High quality rural environment / 'natural capital' as an economic driver and opportunity to capture further value from the landscape - 2014-20 potential: business start-up and rural diversification opportunities alongside increased use of heritage and natural assets to add value to tourism product*
- *Attracting higher spending visitors to the area - 2014-20 potential: enhance the quality of the visitor experience, further developing growth markets such as cycle tourism and improving the supply chain to the visitor economy to increase value from tourism spend*
- *Developing other key sectors with opportunities for growth to help broaden the area's economic base - 2014-20 potential: manufacturing sub sectors, food and drink and creative / digital industries linked to Media City and Universities, and smaller scale knowledge based activities, encouraged by the quality of life offer, recreational opportunities and current rollout of Local Broadband Plans*
- *Developing the contribution of the rural economy through niche and more specialist activities - 2014-20 potential: eco-system services, health and wellbeing, agri-tech, specialist and heritage construction*
- *Promoting use of the Peak District brand beyond the tourism sector - 2014-20 potential: encourage small and micro-businesses supported by LEADER to utilise the 'Inspired by the Peak District' brand toolkit*
- *Highly skilled residents - 2014-20 potential: encourage higher skilled residents who commute to start-up businesses within the area*
- *Demonstrable track record in supporting farm diversification and micro business enterprise to create jobs - 2014-20 potential: previously supported businesses and diversification projects will provide best practice case studies to help stimulate new enterprise*
- *Renewed interest in / demand for locally produced farm products with a known provenance and traceability 2014-20 potential: Develop*

Threats

- *Businesses relocating to urban areas attracted by city deals, enterprise zones, availability of land/premises and fast broadband*
- *Continued pressure on farm viability due to low agriculture prices with implications for effective land management*
- *Low average wages within UK economy impacting on the spending power of domestic visitors*
- *Limited career opportunities for younger people and attractive employment opportunities in cities encouraging high skilled and young people out of the area*
- *Limited access to finance for small and micro-businesses*
- *Continued decline of key rural services*
- *Reduction in public spending impacting on the delivery of discretionary services*
- *Ageing population placing additional demands on service providers*

farming sustainability to increase productivity and maintain the landscape and add value to farm products

- *Supporting the rural delivery activity of three LEPs 2014-20 potential: to add value to and complement LEP growth strategies and raise awareness of opportunities within the rural economy*

As indicated by GVA figures, **productivity lags behind the national average** and is also below other comparable rural areas e.g. the Yorkshire Dales (£50,600). There is also variation in levels of productivity within sectors, with manufacturing generally achieving above average productivity and service sectors below average productivity.

Each district has also seen a **fall in competitiveness**. In 2010, the *UK Competitiveness Index* indicated that pre-recession the Peak District had seen strong growth in sustainable business development with Derbyshire Dales ranked 92nd, High Peak 134th and Staffordshire Moorlands 224th out of 379 districts in England & Wales. However, by 2013 the performance of all three districts had fallen significantly – Derbyshire Dales to 168th, High Peak to 221st and Staffordshire Moorlands to 296th indicating the significant impact the recession had on businesses in the Peak District. Alongside LEP growth programmes LEADER funding will be used to help re-dress this imbalance and build on post-recession growth to re-gain or improve on previous performance. Although there is some variation in the three districts' sectorial employment structure, there are also many areas of commonality which has helped guide the formation of the LEADER area. Unlike some other rural areas, there is a relatively high level of employment in **manufacturing** and the growth potential of smaller operations in rural areas began to be realised in this sector through the previous programme. A number of the area's sub-sector strengths are within manufacturing e.g. the manufacture of **food & drink**, and further growth opportunities have been identified here.

Linked to the landscape, the **visitor economy and agricultural sectors** are both important sectors across the LEADER area. The visitor economy provides a substantial number of jobs within the rural economy (although generally low wage and often part time) as well as providing opportunities for agricultural diversification. Improving the quality of the tourism offer will help to grow the value of this sector. Linked to the visitor economy, retail is also an important sector, providing jobs in hub towns and other visitor destinations.

Farming is a key underpinning sector for the wider Peak District economy and its communities, important for both the production of livestock for market and maintenance of the landscape. Nearly half of agriculture employment in the D2N2 LEP area is accounted for by Derbyshire Dales and High Peak (46%). As a predominantly high GVA sector, **quarrying activity** also remains important to the local economy with the majority of Derbyshire's aggregate industries operating within the upland Peak District.

The landscape and associated industries support wider production and service supply chains and a clear link has been identified between the economic performance of many rural businesses and the high quality environment. A 2008¹ study found that a significant proportion of businesses in the National Park (40%) felt that their performance would be seriously affected by deterioration in the landscape. While the wider LEADER economy is not solely defined by the landscape, it is a unique asset and one from which there are further economic benefits to be realised e.g. through the Peak District brand – ‘Inspired by the Peak District’ and development of eco-system services, as well helping to attract inward investment. Other wider benefits central to the Peak District offer include a high quality of life and strong sense of place.

The exceptional landscape, visitor economy and proximity to urban markets has helped stimulate micro-business growth within **creative and digital industries**. As only PAYE and/or VAT registered business are captured in available statistics, official figures are likely to under represent the size of the sector in the area and again there is potential for growth here alongside wider strategies to enhance access to broadband.

Self-employment rates are high, illustrating a level of entrepreneurialism within the LEADER community which can be harnessed to contribute to a more competitive business base across the area. However, **low workplace earnings**, point to a continuing need to re-orientate the economy towards higher value sectors. The high quality environment and the skilled resident base offer further opportunities for further new start businesses.

There are **strong economic linkages between the LEADER area and the surrounding conurbations**, with commuter flows into each of the major cities, and some in-commuting from the surrounding areas. Each part of the wider area looks outwards towards the nearest major conurbation for the provision of more specialist services, rather than to other areas within the Peak District to provide markets. Developing internal linkages, by building on networks such as Business Peak District and strengthening supply chain links between businesses will help to ensure that in future, a greater share of economic growth is retained within the area.

Access to fast **broadband** is critical to achieving sustainable communities and to growing the rural economy. However, a recent Ofcom report highlights that between 2011 and 2013, the gap between average download speeds in urban and rural areas continued to widen (from 9.5Mbs in May 2011 to 16.5Mbs in May 2013). Local Broadband Plans led by Derbyshire County Council and Staffordshire County Council and delivered by BT will enable access to superfast fibre broadband for 95% of premises in each county by 2016. However, there remains a challenge to enhance access in remoter areas due to the distance of many premises from the nearest telephone exchange.

From Evidence to Intervention

The Peak LEADER area is unique compared to other rural areas, in terms of its economic growth potential due to its proximity to surrounding cities providing markets for local businesses and visitors to help sustain the rural economy. Our approach aims to capitalise on this opportunity.

Our Strategy is threefold:

- to encourage small and micro enterprises growth opportunities, particularly in higher value sectors, and thorough supply chain development opportunities
- to raise productivity in Peak District sectors of lower value
- to ensure rural areas have access to key rural services to help maintain vibrant and sustainable communities

¹ A New Environmental Economy Evaluation 2008

Manufacturing, including food and drink, creative and digital, and knowledge based sectors in particular have been identified as having growth potential and require support to grow, with emphasis with regard to agriculture and the visitor economy on enhancing GVA output and (in the case of visitor economy which also has further growth potential) on driving up the quality of the local product or service/ visitor offer.

The potential for developing new rural economies, niche and specialist business activities will also be explored, including those associated with the area's high quality environment e.g. resource efficiency, eco system services, agri-tech activities.

The new policy priorities for LEADER meet the needs of the extended area and the inclusion of hub towns will enable the LAG to deliver a more integrated approach to rural development. The Strategy takes a holistic and integrated approach to delivering RDPE LEADER. The Peak LEADER approach will link effectively with other funding streams such as EAFRD, RGF, ERDF, ESF delivered through the LEPs and other delivery bodies to maximise the impact of funding at both a strategic and local level.

Learning from previous programmes has demonstrated how the area's environmental assets can be used to assist business development whilst ensuring that sustainable principles are in built to business planning and marketing as demonstrated through the Environmental Quality Mark which is available to businesses in the area.

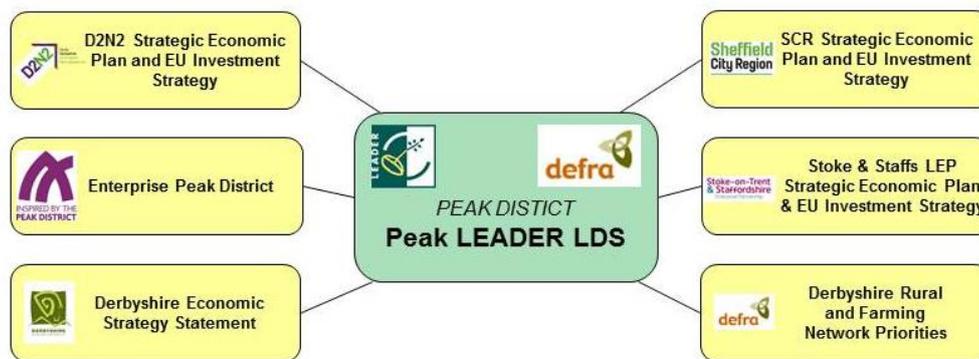
Peak LEADER will enable us to reach broader and deeper using knowledge and experience from the previous programme to engage harder to reach businesses to access support where it will assist growth. The opportunities for linkages and sharing of best practice with LEPs through the Growth Hubs and CLLD will be a factor of delivery to ensure there is no duplication of activity or reduction in the impact of LEADER.

Integration of activity, animation and networking are at the core of LEADER delivery and will continue under this programme. Under the previous programme we have been extremely effective at delivering funding through the LEADER approach with a record of meeting spending profiles and delivering outputs above the profiled requirement. The approach being taken is integrated with partner activity from a local parish level right the way through to partners on the Derbyshire Economic Partnership Board and LEPs.

3.2 Evidence of alignment with LEP activity

The LEADER Strategy has been developed within the context of the Strategic Economic Plans (Growth Plans) and European Investment Strategies of the three LEPs – **Sheffield City Region (SCR), D2N2 and Stoke & Staffordshire LEPs** - which cover the proposed area, with a strong emphasis on encouraging growth within the rural economy. As well as complimenting this activity and activity delivered through the main RDPE programme, Peak LEADER also:

- supports the strategic objectives within the **Derbyshire Economic Strategy Statement** (July 2014) in particular priorities identified to: *Strengthen the rural economy* through supporting micro-business growth and improving productivity in rural areas, including through access to finance;
- helps deliver the priority interventions within the **Enterprise Peak District Programme** (Feb 2014), specifically to: *Improve Access to finance to grow smaller Peak District businesses* and;
- aligns with the four priority
- identified by the **Derbyshire Rural & Farming Network**, in particular: *Growing micro-businesses*.



The Strategic Economic Plans of each LEP set out ambitious targets for private sector growth over the next 10 years. Emphasis is on sustainable job creation and growth in GVA. Each sets out policy priorities and priority sectors providing the framework for programme delivery using devolved Government and available EU funds. To maximise the impact of available public funds, the LEADER Strategy has been developed to ensure strategic fit and to complement wider LEP activity to stimulate growth.

A review of LEP plans suggests that (broadly speaking) each has similar priorities to grow their respective economies. As a key source of funding, EU Investment Strategies, including LEP EAFRD (Growth Programme) funds, are geared towards achieving these priorities. Core LEP priorities (shown in italics) are summarised below (as the proposed LEADER area covers 3 LEP areas a summary has been provided rather than listing each), together with complementary activity proposed through the Peak LEADER Strategy:

- *Enabling the growth of new start and existing SMEs* – key LEP interventions include co-ordinated business support via Growth Hubs providing access to growth orientated products and services including: finance, innovation and exporting support and skills deals and linked enterprise programmes. Peak LEADER aims to:
 - address a gap in the ‘ladder’ of funding available to businesses by providing smaller grants (from £3,500) below Growth Fund and LEP EAFRD grant fund levels to encourage new start-ups with growth ambitions and small / micro-businesses to expand (businesses seeking larger grants will be referred to the Growth Hubs / LEPs for potential assistance)
 - provide assistance to those business providing key services to rural communities (including those businesses with growth potential) helping maintain resilience within the rural economy
 - support projects to enhance farming and forestry productivity (in consultation with main RDPE programme level) enabling land-based sectors underpinning the rural economy to access support
 - encourage businesses in rural areas to maximise supply chain opportunities with surrounding urban markets, a priority for LEPs

Peak LEADER will provide a point of access to Growth Hub services to ensure businesses approaching the programme are also referred onto wider support services (as appropriate) and a co-ordinated approach to business support on the ground. A principle of "no wrong door" will be operated with cases referred to other forms of commercial or public funded support as appropriate This would enable, for example, a LEADER funded business in the Derbyshire Dales to access help with exporting through the Sheffield City Region Hub (an activity also earmarked for EAFRD growth funding). We envisage LEADER being promoted via the Growth Hubs as a product available to small and micro-businesses within the Peak District area, and support provided to develop growth proposals via the network of business advisors being put in place by LEPs, to be part funded (by some LEPs) using EAFRD funding.

- *Growing strategic and niche / high growth sectors* – key sectors identified by LEPs (several overlapping) include: advanced manufacturing, food and drink manufacturing, knowledge intensive sectors e.g. business and professional services, creative and digital, visitor economy and low carbon. Peak LEADER aims to:

- capitalise on the area's identified strengths – a strong manufacturing base and sub sectors with growth potential including food and drink manufacturing
 - maximise opportunities from the attractive location and quality of life offer for creative and digital and knowledge businesses with potential for growth
 - Build on the implementation of Local Broadband Plans to further develop the visitor economy with emphasis on driving up the quality of the visitor offer especially in new markets. These sectors have been prioritised within the LEADER Strategy under the micro-business and rural tourism stands.
- *Improving infrastructure to enhance connectivity and enable growth* – LEP activity includes enabling infrastructure for key employment and housing sites, strategic transport corridor improvements, addressing gaps in rural broadband coverage, enhancing visitor infrastructure and investments in key opportunity areas. Peak LEADER Aims to:
 - support small scale workshop developments in rural areas providing space for new businesses and existing micro-businesses to expand
 - support innovative transport solutions to enable remoter communities to access essential services
 - support investments in key visitor hubs and smaller scale visitor attractions (aligned to wider infrastructure improvements including through planned EAFRD spending by some LEPs)

The LEADER Strategy is not proposing investment in broadband provision at this stage and will work with LEPs to identify gaps in rural areas to tackle via LEP EAFRD funds and other main programme funding as available.

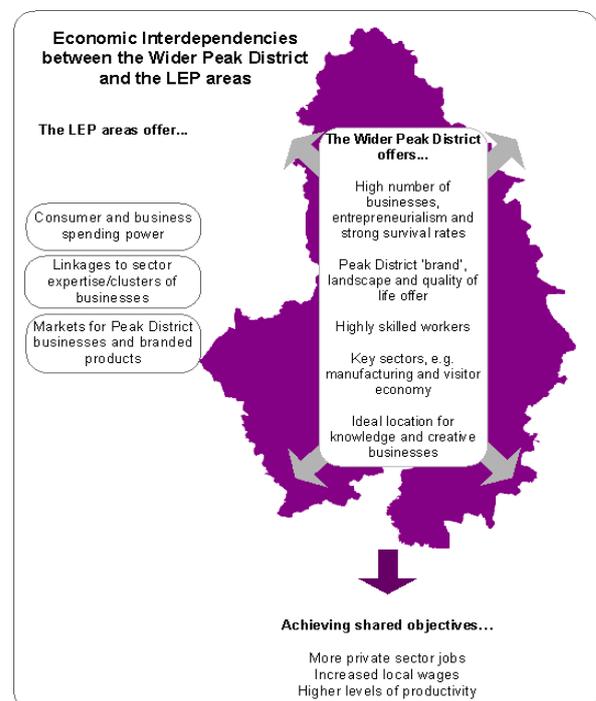
- *Growth from improving skills and labour market development* – key LEP activities include Skills Banks, developing higher level skills, work ready skills and improving access to economic opportunities.

Skills activity is not fundable through LEADER. Therefore the Peak LEADER approach will be to refer skills needs identified by rural businesses to Growth Hubs and provide an input into the design and delivery of wider LEP skills programmes, including those supported via LEP EAFRD funds, to help tailor them to meet rural needs.

The EU Investment Strategies of the 3 LEPs also include objectives aimed at enhancing social inclusion. Peak LEADER activities aimed at improving rural service provision will support this agenda by helping communities overcome issues of rural isolation both through safeguarding or developing new local services and supporting communities with local transport solutions where appropriate. The LAG will also continue to work with those LEPs considering CLLD in the future to share best practice and build on the success of LEADER.

Building linkages between the LAG and LEPs will increase opportunities for local businesses and communities to benefit from the investment in growth spearheaded through Growth Plans. As demonstrated, there is potential and capacity for growth within the Peak District economy and opportunities to maximise mutual economic benefits by working together.

The 3 LEPs have endorsed the LEADER Strategy and activity proposed (see attached letters of support), the reporting structure and strategic overview is in place to ensure ongoing and effective communication as part of future delivery e.g. LAG representatives are proposed on SCR's new Rural Advisory Group



and sit on D2N2's existing Rural Reference Group. LEADER objectives have also been endorsed by the Derbyshire Rural & Farming Network and Business Peak District.

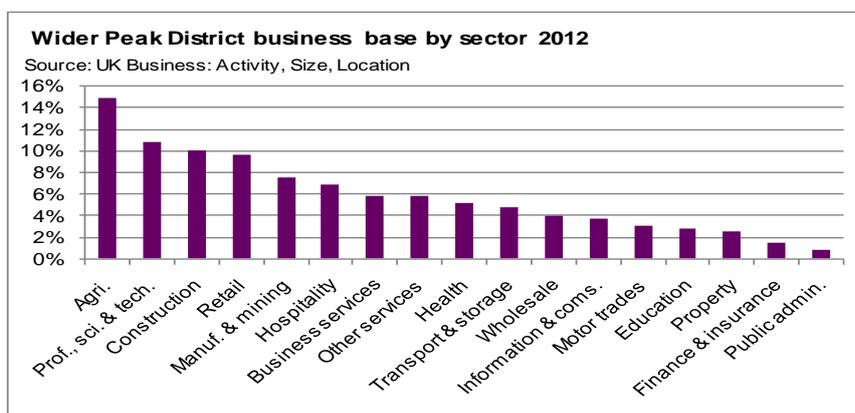
We feel strongly that there is a 'gap in the market' for the programme working at a local level suitable for the LEADER target community below support provided by LEP delivered schemes. Micro and small businesses will be able to access support through LEADER which may then lead onto further growth with support from LEPs.

3.3 Local Priorities

Support for increasing farm productivity

Priority and Measure	%	£	Key Outputs
Increasing Farm Productivity M:4 and M:6	20%	287,492	No of Projects: 18 Holdings Benefitting (improving GVA): 18 Jobs created: 5

The agriculture sector is a key underpinning sector for the area's economy and its communities. The sector maintains and enhances the landscape, which is one of the area's key assets. The landscape and associated industries support wider production and service supply chains, as well as indirectly adding value to the wider business base.



The largest proportions of businesses in the area are in the agriculture sector (15%). In employment terms the agricultural sector is a fairly small sector (5,600) however opportunities have been identified locally to improve GVA on farms.

The majority of the agricultural land in the Peak District LEADER area is designated as Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) with nearly all of the remaining area as Disadvantaged Area (DA) and included in the list of Less Favored Areas (LFA). These designations reflect the upland and in places moorland topography, length of the growing season which lessen overall farm productivity. The longer period of winter housing required for cattle and a similar longer period where sheep require supplementary feed or have to be away wintered increases production costs. However, livestock quality is high with store cattle and sheep, where they are not able to be finished on their home farms, sought after by buyers at Bakewell & Leek markets. Although dairy farm numbers have fallen for many years the LEADER area is still a significant milk field with one or two farms now coming back into milk production. All farms have to keep reinvesting if they are to compete in what is an increasing globally driven market and there is demand for new technology that will bring about cost savings and improve animal health and welfare. There is also a need to reduce the spread of Bovine TB, the biggest disease problem in the LEADER area at present, particularly in the south west of the area.

The area profile has demonstrated the need to support the Agricultural sector, important in the LEADER area for its jobs, environmental management of the area and for the opportunities that agriculture and its products have for increasing farm productivity, linking producer, environment, tourism and the consumer. Adding value to food production through processing and marketing of products and services from farms is a growth area and will provide an additional income stream to farms to improve sustainability and to expand their markets. The area has a number of exemplar projects which will assist in bringing forward additional farm holdings to develop the area offer.

Improving GVA within the sector is vital to retain the skills on farm and to attract young people into farming. An integrated approach will be taken with the main programme and other funding streams and organisations that support the farming sector, to ensure support is provided in a streamlined manner and LEADER is used where gaps in provision are evidenced. Training in a number of areas has been identified as a need within the area and support for this will be sought through the main training providers and skills strategies that will be delivered through other organisations. As the programme develops the option of small scale grants or `umbrella` projects alongside standardised costs will be considered. The NFU, CLA, National Park Authority, Natural England, MAS, Business Advisors and UKTI all offer support and guidance to farming and will be involved in animation activity and to ensure no duplication of funding is taking place.

To ensure the baseline of farming is retained and developed within the area, effective land management has been identified as a driver of the economy and supporting the farming sector to develop and expand in a sustainable way will improve the economy of the area. Providing support to the current farming community is important, however the key for sustainability is to look to future generations and engagement with the young farming community will be a focus for the LAG.

The Fresh Start Academy Programme operational in the area has identified a group of potential new entrants to farming and this has informed the inclusion of support for new entrants to farming in particular the young farmers. It is acknowledged that support will be available through FFPS and it is the intention to work with the local RDT team to develop complimentary support. Innovation and new techniques will be encouraged however it is recognised that to move farming forward, the basic requirements of running a successful and sustainable holding must be met.

Information from previous RDPE programme where delivery of this Measure has taken place has identified that job creation is lower through intervention than direct micro enterprise support therefore it is accepted that improving the sustainability of the farm and maintaining jobs will be the key output.

Peak LEADER Objective: To enhance the viability and longer term economic performance of the core farming business and encourage more young people into the industry

Activities to be supported include:

- *New non-standard (for the Peak area) farm improvements that deliver clear economic benefits through job creation/safeguarded and/or improve the turnover of the business (GVA) through energy savings and other improvements*
- *Adding value to food products through improving or installing new production techniques, marketing and developing products (linked to diversification strand)*
- *Collaboration between farm businesses, both capital costs and revenue costs*
- *Demonstrate an environmentally sustainable approach e.g. through resource efficiency, minimising waste or utilising renewable energy solutions where appropriate*
- *Capital funding infrastructure for animal housing and equipment where it is related to preventing animal disease*
- *Innovation in farm techniques to improve productivity. Support will be available for capital elements of trial techniques such as recording/ analysis tools and equipment.*
- *Capital start-up costs for new entrants to farming*
- *Improving bio security on farms*
- *Encouragement of young and new farmers involvement in farming*

Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification

Priority and Measure	%	£	Key Outputs
Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification M:4 and M:6	45%	646,857	No of Projects: 29 Jobs created: 52

To stimulate new micro-business development and enable the growth of micro / smaller business with particular emphasis on businesses and sectors with growth potential and to maximise supply chain opportunities.

The high proportion of small and micro-enterprises characterises the area's business base. A high proportion of which are very small i.e. with 0-4 employees. Self-employment remains high, particularly in the Derbyshire Dales (21%) and levels of home-working are higher than in the surrounding LEP areas and particularly so amongst the self-employed (over half). A number of rural businesses tend to be family run and can often be less mobile due to their nature and place within the local community.

Within the area, there is a history of innovation in manufacturing and engineering with businesses that make and design products ranging from machine parts and innovative guttering solutions for the construction industry through to rotational mould design and local food and drink products. Some activity is also linked to the farming industry – for example manufacturing of food packaging materials, and farm vehicle engineering. LEADER will help the next generation of innovative engineering and manufacturing micro businesses to develop and grow.

As identified the area's economic structure and position (surrounded by conurbations) offers significant supply chain opportunities e.g. developing and growing micro enterprises that are part of the food and drink supply chain, bespoke engineering solutions for medium sized enterprises; and small part manufacturers. Emphasis will be placed on encouraging businesses to become more outward looking, to help widen their customer base by supplying to urban markets as well as locally.

Furthermore, as well as remaining integral to developing the visitor offer, the exceptional landscape and high quality of life creates a unique offer for smaller scale knowledge based business, and for stimulating the growth of creative and cultural businesses. There are already a number of professional cultural and creative businesses in the area, some of which have an impressive client base including large national companies and there is the potential to unlock further growth within the sector as broadband/mobile access is improved through the County Councils Broadband delivery programmes. Already creative clusters at Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site/ Wirksworth, Leek and other rural locations are being formed and can be the catalyst for future growth. There is also emerging evidence of micro businesses developing in the digital creative sector linked to Media City in Manchester (within 20 miles of the Peak LEADER area) and the growth of the gaming industry. In addition, a key number of TV and film productions have been made in the LEADER area in the last few years which is leading to new opportunities to supply and work with this sector.

The area has also seen some growth in high tech and very innovative science and research focused micro businesses in recent years. Although still small in number, the area is becoming increasingly attractive for highly skilled graduates seeking to establish businesses linked to Universities in the surrounding conurbations or existing scientific and research employers such as Peakdale Molecular or the Health & Safety Laboratories. The LEADER programme will aim to help more of these high tech and research focused businesses to start up and grow in the area.

The ongoing demand for locally sourced food products with environmental credibility continues to provide business development opportunities. There are a number of small scale

producers ready to take the next step and take on additional employees and expand into workspace but need initial capital either to purchase new equipment or refurbish/upgrade facilities enabling them to grow.

The LAG recognises that not all small and micro-enterprises in the area wish to or indeed have the potential to grow. Whilst emphasis through LEADER will be on those businesses with the potential to create jobs and growth, those providing important services to the local community (including those business which are able to grow) will be considered for support under the Provision of Rural Services priority.

Farm diversification has proved an excellent method of spreading risk on farms from ice cream makers, meat producers and joiners through to rental income derived from making buildings fit for other economic uses. Diversification often opens up opportunities for the extended family to stay and work on the farm premises rather than leaving the area for work. To encourage ideas for farm diversification, exemplar farms will be promoted as best practice such as Ashford Artisans where a building has been given a new lease of life through development into workspace units providing grow on and start up space and through co-operation activities.

Evaluation of the Peak LEADER 2008-2013 identified that given appropriate support, micro and small businesses have the ability to adapt and grow, reinforced by low deadweight and the high success rate of new start and expansion businesses. Many of the businesses supported were unable to access mainstream loans in part due to the risk averse approach of traditional lenders in awarding credit to small businesses and often an assumption that growth businesses are usually urban based.

The Peak LEADER Objective: To stimulate new micro-business development and enable the growth of micro / smaller business with particular emphasis on businesses and sectors with growth potential and maximising supply chain opportunities. Enabling farm diversification.

To provide grant support to both new start and existing micro and small enterprises (EU definition 2005) which create new jobs, with particular priority given to the identified growth sectors of manufacturing (particularly higher value activities), food and drink, creative/cultural and digital, and the knowledge economy. Start-up businesses with early growth potential and those brought forward by harder to reach groups e.g. younger people will be particularly encouraged. Proposals offering the potential to develop specialist and niche rural businesses will also be considered.

Activities to be supported include:

- *Start-up costs for businesses with growth potential – including both capital e.g. for equipment and revenue towards initial running costs*
- *R&D and product development support e.g. to cover the cost of testing facilities*
- *Capital costs associated with growing the business e.g. adaptation of existing premises, engineering and utility works, plant and machinery and investments to make business processes more efficient and production more resilient in the longer term e.g. investments to reduce energy overheads*
- *Initiatives which enhance innovation within the supply chain to enable growth*
- *Developing new workshop (light industrial) space in rural areas and refurbishing redundant space for new business use*

New employment opportunities generated through businesses supported will help to retain young people in the area and benefit those facing career changes, either through choice or other circumstances e.g. redundancy. Support will also help develop the network of businesses in the area, increasing the potential for peer to peer learning and supply chain opportunities which would be difficult for micro/start-up businesses to otherwise access.

The Business Peak District Branding toolkit – ‘Inspired by the Peak District’ launched last year will be promoted as a free on line marketing tool to all businesses supported by LEADER, alongside pro-actively encouraging businesses to operate in an environmentally friendly way. There is growth potential within the export market in particular with food and drink and manufacturing business and the LAG will direct businesses to the LEP Growth Hubs to access support, including from UKTI and MAS as appropriate.

Ensuring the necessary skill sets are available amongst the workforce and able to be developed is important to assisting growth. The LAG will work with LEPs and training bodies delivering programmes across the area to help businesses access the training and employees with the skills they need to enable growth.

Support for rural tourism

Priority and Measure	%	£	Key Outputs
Support for rural tourism: M4: M:6: M7	11%	158,120	No of Projects: 11 Jobs created: 11

The visitor economy is not defined by standard industrial classification (SIC) codes. In line with the definition used by the LEPs, the figures used have defined it as hospitality (hotels and restaurants), attractions, museums, sporting facilities and travel agencies and tour operators. 12%¹ of people within the area are employed within the sector with over half of employment (55%) in the sector in part-time employment, compared to the area average of 39%, and although data is not available for the wider Peak District, nationally average earnings in the sector are around half of the average of all sectors.

The visitor economy in a rural area such as the Peak District with significant visitor numbers incorporates many non-direct businesses and services such as retail and public transport – many of whom would not flourish without the tourist spend. Small independent stores in some rural locations have shown to be reliant on visitor spend for a significant proportion of their turnover. For example in the main Peak District town of Bakewell research in 2011 indicated that traders considered 40% of their annual turnover was from visitors.

The location of our area attracts in excess of 11 million visitors (STEAM Data), however many of these are day visitors and have a relatively low visitor spend. We will focus activity on actions which increase visitor spend and extend the length of their stays. We have seen a growth in the outdoor activity market through the Peak District Walking Festival, the Peak District Summer of Cycling and l’Eroica which in the case of cycling is attracting higher spending visitors to the area; this market can be further developed² alongside new outdoor activity markets. The importance of local food and drink is a growth area within the tourism sector and activity which develops this will be encouraged and we will develop networks within businesses to ensure local supply chains are used where possible building on the success of the LEADER funded Peak District Trade Fair 2014.

We have iconic visitor destinations such as Chatsworth House, Alton Towers, Haddon Hall attracting visitors from across the globe; these are acting as inspiration for new small scale visitor attractions to encourage longer, higher spending stays to extend the season. Where new attractions are identified that support and do not displace activity, these will be supported.

Buxton Crescent which is due for completion in 2016 will act as a catalyst and provide opportunities for further investment by local entrepreneurs within the area and add to the hub towns’ importance as a rural service centre for the area. Gateways to the area such as Leek and Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site have the potential to attract and maintain new

¹ Growing the Rural Economy: Evidencing the Case for the Peak District, EKOSGEN January 2014

² D2N2 Colliers Rural Tourism Impact Report 2014

and return visitors with appropriate interventions, new businesses developments at these sights will be supported. The tourism base will also be widened through natural/cultural heritage promotion e.g. Lathkill Dale NNR, Arbor Low, Castleton, Eyam.

General upgrading of the accommodation stock within the area will not be supported. However specific identification of a gap within accommodation provision suitable for disabled/older visitors is a priority for the area. There is currently little provision of accommodation suitable for visitors with limited mobility and other disabilities, support will be given to businesses wishing to develop their accommodation to provide for this market.

A number of commercial online booking systems are available to tourism businesses (e.g. Guest link, Super Control and www.holidaylettings.co.uk) so this area will not be developed through the bid. Cycling tourism is a priority for developing outdoor recreational opportunities. In addition to the local economic impact from visitors, it benefits both residents and visitors from a health and wellbeing perspective. There is on-going investment in green cycle ways from the Pedal Peak 2 Project however to maximise the benefits from these, new routes will be supported which add attractions or utilise the assets where they meet the objects of the wider Peak District Cycling Strategy. Sustainable transport initiatives could be supported to compliment the local public transport network e.g. bike carriers, inclusive bikes (e.g. side by side bikes for the visually impaired), E-bikes and cycle hire. Building on this investment through supporting cycle friendly places could take the form of small scale public realm improvements or support to businesses to create a better cyclists welcome and increase local spending.

Support will be further available to develop an understanding of the realities of rural tourism development by continued engagement with community leaders and tourism businesses and to enhance community tourism development by documenting case studies, innovative practices and sharing throughout the Peak District. There will be provision for multi objective proposals to develop delivering new job creation, improved economic outputs, tourism initiatives, community services and assisting in developing the cultural and heritage offer.

Festivals and events are a key attractor for both niche and wider markets. Bids will be welcomed from visitor focused events which develop sustainable tourism and attract day and staying visitors to increase spend in local businesses such as food and drink, arts and crafts.

Peak LEADER Objective: To develop the visitor offer to enhance the quality, value and further growth potential of tourism to the local economy.

Activities to be supported include:

- *Provide new and improve existing visitor attractions, activities and services which will add to (not duplicate) the overall visitor offer*
- *Contribute to or use the environment as a sustainable asset to deliver new jobs/business growth and/or increase GVA*
- *Increase the outdoor activity market where it can be linked to jobs and improving GVA through capital investment and local marketing*
- *Invest in tourism supply chain activity using local products*
- *Investment in key visitor hubs where clear economic benefit can be shown*
- *Disabled visitor accommodation: 4* or above where it is required to fill a specific gap in the market*
- *Promote the Inspired by the Peak District brand*

Provision of rural services

Priority and Measure	%	£	Key Outputs
Provision of rural services M4: M7	15%	215,619	No of Projects: 14 Jobs created: 14

Rural Services are the lifeblood of rural communities providing essential services for people without private transport or experiencing prohibitive fuel costs. They also provide a useful

social function and meeting place helping to reduce social isolation particularly through community centres/shops and pubs. The Peak LEADER area has an increasing elderly population who will find it harder to access services delivered purely in main hub towns; therefore, innovative solutions are required to develop and maintain our communities as active centres for fostering development both in terms of developing social cohesion and improving economic activity through rural service delivery support. Effective rural service provision in a dispersed area such as the Peak needs to be varied and responsive to meet the needs of populations that are in close proximity to service centre hub towns and those that live in the uplands and farming communities. Many services are in decline with local shops and pubs particularly at risk from supermarket competition, online sales and a widening residential retail spending radius.

An estimated 30 social enterprises are known to operate in the Peak District area, often established to help safeguard key local services such as village shops / Post Offices. The Strategy aims to encourage more communities to deliver local services, including co-located activities through social enterprise activity. The services needed by our rural population are wide ranging and include; care services for elderly, disabled and people with long term health conditions, access to affordable accommodation, transport solutions that are appropriate for a dispersed population, fast, reliable broadband for rural residents and rural businesses, access to affordable food and other domestic goods, access to affordable credit, advice and help to manage money. Business solutions to gaps in social needs will be highlighted and supported.

Staffing these services is already an issue for Peak District communities. Some care work is low paid and people on low incomes struggle to afford the Peak District housing costs, therefore new ways of delivering services will be encouraged. Services provided by the public and voluntary and community sectors are currently under threat as public spending is curtailed at a time when the need for those services in the Peak District is set to increase. The elderly make up one section of the community requiring support however another key group is younger people. In order to enable young people to remain in the rural areas and still be economically independent help is needed to access training and job opportunities. By enabling all age groups to thrive in a rural setting we can mitigate the impact of rural isolation. There is a growing danger that the Peak District will become the preserve of affluent retirees whose families (and therefore their support networks) are elsewhere. This will disadvantage all age groups as young families are required to move out of the area and lose contact with their family and friend support networks. The retired generation will struggle as they become older and less independent to find the home care services they need. It is evidenced that the area has high rates of volunteering in particular in Derbyshire Dales, which is to be encouraged; however we want to encourage those services that can be developed into business opportunities. The importance of volunteers to the area is not underestimated and this is both an important factor of social cohesion but also for many can be a route into new work or alternative employment or self-employment.

It is well documented that living expenses are higher in all rural areas, this is further exacerbated in the Peak District by the significantly higher accommodation costs not only in home ownership but also in rental properties. The high quality of the environment and tourism increases the competition for housing and consequently the prices which makes it difficult for those on low incomes to afford to live in the Peak District. It also presents a barrier to many younger people looking to remain in the towns and villages and prevents our young graduates from returning to the area following training. People and businesses have to travel further to access shops, training and services of all kinds which adds to the cost of living.

People without their own transport have limited work options as public transport cannot hope to meet the demands of such a widely dispersed population, travelling to a wide range of destinations, therefore innovative transport solutions are required to assist in keeping communities of all ages engaged. As evidenced the home working sector in the area is

growing and these business people are increasingly requiring local access to goods and services, this is an opportunity which can be further exploited and developed.

The 2008-2013 programme supported three community shops which have proved successful and provide best practice cases for further communities. Communities often have underused shops, pubs and village halls which can be utilised with support by local activists to develop into sustainable businesses or social enterprises. We will provide a network to enable communities to see what can be possible and to access support both financial and mentoring opportunities to develop specific services either at risk or not in evidence within their locality. Co-location of services will be encouraged as this has proved successful in some of our communities to date and best practice service centres will be promoted to provide examples of new ways of delivering a wide range of services. The area has had support over the past 10 years to assist in developing local plans and we will not therefore prioritise the creation of village plans. The renewable energy sector is acknowledged as a developing sector however limited LEADER funding will not be used for this action as the potential within the area is limited activities that form part of solutions to service delivery will be considered. Proposals will be signposted to agencies with specific responsibility to deliver support for the renewable energy market.

We will work closely with our voluntary sector partners in supporting rural service delivery to ensure the knowledge from partners is shared and appropriate support is given to communities and businesses wanting to expand and create new solutions to service delivery.

Peak LEADER Objective: To enable communities to provide services to maintain and enhance our rural areas as vibrant places for people to live and work in.

Activities to be supported include:

- *Start up support for local service delivery where gaps are evidenced and have a longer term sustainability such as development of care and support services for the vulnerable where there is the potential to create jobs.*
- *Delivery of new jobs/jobs safeguarded/volunteering placements though enhancement or expansion of existing services to deliver additional services or products eg developing co location of services through service centres.*
- *Innovative local transport solutions where gaps are evidenced and needed such as exploring the mainly urban based Sharing Economy Business Centres which could provide a platform for innovation in transport delivery in the Peak area.*
- *Support for existing and new providers to provide services to particularly isolated or vulnerable people where it is above average cost to deliver to these beneficiaries such as exploring the use of the Peer to Peer Market Place Method of service provision.*
- *Review broadband and mobile provision in 2016 to assess where/if gaps in provision remain*

Support for cultural and heritage activity

Priority and Measure	%	£	Key Outputs
Support for cultural and heritage activity M7	4%	57,499	No of Projects: 11 Jobs created:

There is already a significant cultural and creative offer within the wider Peak District, with a relatively large number of small businesses and social/community groups, operating across the area. The cultural and creative sector, often interlinked within our area, is very valuable to the area, and is expected to be an important source of potential exports in future years. Work with UKTI to assist this sector to access overseas markets will be part of the delivery of the priority.

Many of the existing cultural and creative businesses within the Peak District could be classified as lifestyle businesses and may not offer significant growth potential (although they do play an important role in business to business mentoring and business opportunities, enhancing the retail offer, attracting visitors and providing a market for business services companies within the Peak District – including accountants, administrative services etc). Within the sector however research has identified there are a number of professional cultural and creative businesses, some of which have an impressive client base including large national companies. There is the potential to unlock growth within the sector as Digital Broadband programmes continue the roll out to enhance broadband access to unlock appropriate support, sites and premises can be provided, such as the Creative Cluster at Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage site and Leek.

Funding for this measure is relatively low, new start businesses and developing businesses will be able to access funding through the micro enterprise and tourism priorities, therefore this measure will focus on small scale community led tourism related investment in the built heritage assets and events.

Peak LEADER Objective: To enhance, restore and upgrade the cultural and natural heritage of our rural communities especially activities that will support increased visitor spend.

Activities to be supported include:

- *Small scale capital investment in heritage assets to enhance community, environment and business benefits.*
- *Small scale investment to enhance venues, events and activities which enhance local culture and heritage*

Support for Increasing Forestry Productivity

Priority and Measure	%	£	Key Outputs
Support for Increasing Forestry Productivity M4: M6: M8	5%	71,873	No of Projects: 7 Jobs created: 2

In the area there is 14,023.4 hectares of woodland, ¹. Almost 6,000ha (52%) of this woodland remains under-managed and is not realising its potential in providing economic and other benefits; yet the UK is the third biggest importer of timber next to Japan and China. There is potential within the area (see table below) to increase activity and support the existing businesses working within the sector to increase their productivity and create new jobs, alongside promoting opportunities for new young entrants to the sector. We will explore the potential with businesses to increase productivity and develop local and national markets for products.

Estimated yield						
Total Estimated potential yield (m3 per year)	Estimated potential yield from 2/3rds of woods (m3 per year)	Estimated potential yield of conifer saw logs	Estimated potential yield of broadleaved saw logs	Estimated potential yield of wood fuel	Estimated energy value of wood fuel (MWh/yr)	Equivalent quantity if heating oil (Litres)
69,334	46,177	11,725	2,639	31,812	66,764	6,676,396

The sector has not previously been directly supported through LEADER funding however research with partner assistance has identified over a 100 businesses already engaged and registered as working within the sector in the area (Forestry/fencing contractors/Hedge laying contractors and Tree surgeons). This high level research does not take into account

¹ Total area of woodland (Derived from latest Forestry Commission Forest Inventory)

anecdotal information on larger numbers of self-employed and part time workers within the sector who are difficult to identify without specific targeted animation. Micro enterprises in this sector have experienced difficulty in attracting funding support under previous programmes and consultation with partners has identified scope for increasing the growth within the sector.

Additional support for start-up aid and new workshop space or refurbishment of existing workshop space can be supported under the Micro Enterprise and Farm Diversification priority. The funding allocation to this priority has taken into account the small scale nature of many of the businesses and their potential to access match funding and the level of animation that will be required to stimulate demand. Support for the sector will be provided following consultation with the main programme delivery to compliment activity and support gaps in provision through capital support and providing network development opportunities.

Following local discussions with the Forestry Commission, there is significant interest from East Midlands based Local Action Groups to explore the potential of a coordinated response to supporting the forestry sector. It is anticipated that this approach could benefit from a single point of contact for the forestry commission (alleviating capacity requirements of working across a number of LAGs), joint branding and promotional events / activity, shared technical knowledge, common eligibility criteria and the encouragement of collaborative activity across LAG boundaries (such as machinery rings, and joint storage facilities). Due to the diverse and specialist nature of the sector it is considered that this type of 'umbrella' approach could add value and potentially deliver efficiencies above and beyond that of a number of smaller programmes being developed in relative isolation.

Peak LEADER Objective: Develop the sector locally to increase productivity and assist producers to add value to woodland products.

Activities to be supported include:

- *Small scale capital investment to increase the supply chain and add value to products through activities not supported through the main RDPE programme*
- *Deliver new jobs and improve GVA and sustainability*
- *Small scale timber harvesting, extraction and primary processing equipment*
- *Processing and marketing of products*
- *Support the development of wood fuel supply chains*

Once LEADER funding becomes available, the Forestry Commission have offered to provide project technical assessment to the LAG should this be required in the future.

3.4 Grant rates and intervention rates

Grant will be provided at an intervention level to be agreed once final guidance is issued by Defra, however best value will be sought and interventions will be used to maximise the value of investment.

A lower grant rate of £2,500 will be operational, however applications will be considered at lower levels if offering exceptional value for money at the discretion of the LAG. No higher grant rate will be issued as the LAG does not want to stifle innovation and expansion plans. Larger applications will be considered if it can be demonstrated that other funding sources, including those available from LEPs, have been exhausted and projects offer strong economic outputs.

The assessment process will draw on local knowledge of the area to confirm markets for proposed products and services and avoid displacement. Alongside direct economic impacts and sustainable job creation (consideration will also be given to wider economic impacts e.g. proposed local purchasing), environmental sustainability will be a priority in the assessment of projects.

3.5 Action Plan for Delivery of the Strategy:

- **November/December 2014** - LAG meeting on receipt of Defra decision and signing of contract – schedule of meetings agreed. Training plan implemented.

- **1st December 2014** - Recruitment of Officers to be completed.
- **January 2015** - Meetings with other delivery and support sector partners to agree a programme of animation and signposting mechanisms with a particular focus on hard to reach sectors. Convene partners involved in the expression of interest and appraisal stages
- **January 2015** – Formal launch of the new programme
- **31st January 2015** – First call for projects and implementation of project schedule
- **April 2015** – First contracts issued
- **January 2015 and on-going** - Implementation of communications plan to publicise the availability of grants and the priorities to the sectors including developing and using existing and new case studies so there are tangible examples of indicative actions
- **January 2015 and on-going** – partnership working agreements in place
- LAG Officer supports development of submissions
- Annual review of LAG membership, sustainability appraisal, marketing strategy - activities and objectives, implementation of any changes identified
- Implementation of the Strategy – Annual review

3.6 Targets, results and outputs for 2014 to 2020

- December 2015 - 1 Local Action Group established and developed, Staff recruited.
- January 2015 - Mentoring/appraisal/E of I Networks convened
- January 2015 – Schedule of calls for projects and LAG meetings implemented with annual reviews in place
- 31st January 2015 – First call for projects
 - 2021 - Total RDPE Expenditure - £2,232,000
 - 2021 - LEADER project funding - £1,830,240
 - 2021 - LDS implemented
 - 2021 - Total number of projects supported – 117
 - 2021 - Total number of FTE Jobs created - 111

3.7 Sustainability appraisal

A sustainability appraisal has taken place through consultation with the LAG and this will be evaluated on a bi-annual basis or more frequently if outside economic or social circumstances identify major changes within the area or the delivery of LEADER.

Integrating environmental sustainable development principles into LEADER activities will be addressed at two levels. The first is the overall context in which the LEADER approach is taking place. The LEADER Local Development Strategy is set in the wider context economic development within the area. The second level is the inclusion of equal opportunities and environmental sustainability considerations at the individual project level to ensure that projects are aware of and maximise their contribution to sustainable development.

3.8 Proposed co-operation activity

Co-operation activity both locally and with neighbouring LEADER areas is planned, with outline discussions on areas of joint activity having taken place. Joint farming initiatives through sharing of best practice visits and development visits are planned along with developing the LAGs knowledge and experience base.

Co-operation across the UK is planned to link with areas of similar topography and economic bases. Initial discussions having taken place with regard to improving the links in upland areas. The LAG has experience of delivering project proposals within Europe and during this programme will seek to cooperate across the EU with possible initiatives around the food, drink and tourism sector to develop supply chain links and to share knowledge across the tourism sector. Linkages between farming in the uplands of the UK and across Europe offer substantial opportunities for joint working and these will be

explored alongside linking Fresh Start Academies in England with similar projects across the EU. As the programme progresses we will look at the developing markets outside of the EU with the possibility of wider LEADER activity internationally, LEADER is now well established in the European Community and opportunities could be beneficial across the wider Continental spectrum.

A cooperation scheme to encourage active management of woodlands currently under-managed or partially managed by linking landowners with contractors, increasing links to the wood supply chain to add value. Project ideas can work across multiple LEADER areas for example, Staffordshire LEADER area and the Peak LEADER area including the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership and Dane Valley HLP project which lies across the two areas and has an active woodland advice project run by the RSPB. The aim would be to stimulate the local market and show the economic benefits of active woodland management to produce a long term impact potentially working with other East Midland areas.

4 Management and Administration

In line with Derbyshire County Council Financial Memorandum, the appointed Finance Officer will represent and report accordingly to the Council Director of Finance as appointed Section 151 Officer.

Revised Terms of Reference for the LAG to be agreed at first meeting

Governance - Derbyshire County Council will be the contract holder on behalf of the LAG. The decision making protocol will be through the LAG reporting decisions to the DEP Board and Rural and Farming Network. The Project Manager will report progress to the DEP Board on a quarterly basis and report directly to DCC Head of Economic Regeneration.

Financial management - Derbyshire County Council will be responsible for the financial performance of the contract and have robust processes in place to ensure compliance with Operational Guidance and EU regulations. Derbyshire County Council has extensive experience of managing significant European grant funding programmes. DCC will be the employing body of the LAG Manager and comply with Local Authority Employment regulations.

DCC will ensure the following is implemented:

Animation activity, communications strategy, openness and transparency in the design of project selection criteria, analysis of project proposals, selection of projects, issuing of contracts following decisions taken by the LAG and input from RDT in line with Defras Operational Guidance. Internal audit will check to ensure the correct procedures are in place at all operational levels, monitoring to identify possible weaknesses or risks in the operation of projects, checking claims, inspections to monitor project progress, routine and targeted inspections. Issue variations to contracts within operational guidelines, report irregularities, apply financial penalties in line with National Operational Manual. Records will be kept in accordance with the National Operational Manual for a minimum of 7 years from the end date of the project. A copy of the IT information systems policy will be made available.

The programme will by default operate under de minimis unless activity falls within activity covered by an existing block exemption (ie. export aid). In relation to de minimis, businesses as part of their application will be asked to provide details of any state aid that they have received in line with Commission Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006. State Aid eligibility will be fully tested as part of the appraisal process (based on the legal status of the applicant business) and grant recipients will be required to complete a declaration stating the amount of aid received over the standard three year rolling period. This will be monitored by DCC upon post-completion to ensure state aids are not breached.

4.1 Accountable Body

Derbyshire County Council has a strong and impressive track record of delivering Programmes of activity such as Objective 2, RDPE, LEADER, ERDF, ESF and recently RGF funding successfully. DCC have the expertise available to ensure all audit and financial

regulatory requirements are met alongside the skills to ensure full compliance with the LEADER Operational Manual. DCC have provided this service for the previous programme and were fully compliant with all contractual obligations the LAG and DCC worked in cooperation and no issues have been identified that require changes to the process.

4.2 Project development and assessment procedures

A review of the processes for development and assessment of 30 LAG areas has been undertaken alongside the recommendations from the external evaluation of our area to inform the decision structure on the development and assessment procedures. The LAG has a wide range of stakeholders and working co-operatively within the area is in the DNA of both Public Sector officers and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The LAG Manager will work with partners to lead development of proposals and provide animation support within the area through information dissemination and technical support.

To provide a structure for businesses and communities to work to, calls for projects will be utilised. These will be well published and annual dates promoted taking into account sectorial or seasonal trends. These procedures have worked well in previous LEADER Programmes and ensured spend profiles could be adhered to. During the consultation process a group of 90 + individuals have put forward their names as being willing to be involved in future LEADER activity. This group will form the beginning of a new stakeholder group to assist in disseminating information on LEADER throughout the area, the group will be engaged through electronic means and provide a test bed for ideas coming through the LAG networks.

Previous applicants supported through LEADER have been consulted and will form a mentoring network for proposals coming forward. Applicants will have the opportunity to contact the network for advice and guidance as they move through the process, this will provide an opportunity to strengthen networks and promote joint working within the area.

Animation will be encouraged and developed through joint working with local Public/Private and Voluntary/Community partners throughout the area. The LAG Manager will lead on this activity fully supported by a proactive LAG to ensure dissemination of LEADER is widespread and accessible by all. The previous programme highlighted the success of partnership working and this will be replicated in the new programme.

To support the work of the LAG and LEADER Manager and provide separation of duties, sub groups will be established to undertake project assessment, recommendation functions and technical advice: *Process Chart - Appendix 3*:

Project Appraisal Team – a “pool” of trained project appraisers (min 5) will be established drawn from supporting partner organisations to undertake the scoring and appraisal of projects. This group comprises several partners with experience of assessing projects. It is proposed to include appraisal training as part of the induction process and discussion will take place with Defra regarding the process and requirements to ensure all appraisers are adequately equipped to undertake the role. A register of interests will be kept of project appraisers and forms will be required to be signed to ensure there is no conflict of interest prior to undertaking scoring and appraisal. The intention is to develop capacity amongst business and community representatives to undertake the process as the programme develops. Projects will be scored against agreed eligibility/selection criteria based on the LDS priorities and operational guidance to ensure projects of sufficient quality are progressed. Electronic scoring will be completed independently, the panel comments and scores will be submitted to the LAG Manager for collation and a moderated score arrived at. The LAG will consider the Eols and recommendations on each project add further comments and make a decision to approve or reject Expressions of Interest and Applications.

A training session on completing the application and the on-going contractual requirements will be offered to applicants to assist in developing quality applications and to develop capacity among applicants. The mentoring network details will be available to applicants at this stage to engage with previously recipients of LEADER funding.

On receipt of full project applications, the LEADER Manager will allocate applications to individuals on the appraisal panel with no development role / interest in the project (declaration of interest forms will be completed with each application). Full applications/appraisals will be circulated electronically to the LAG for consideration prior to a full Board meeting. LAG members will be required to declare any conflict of interest during this process and should there be conflict of interest they will take no part in the process for that project. If required, sector `experts` may be asked to attend meetings to inform the LAG on technical details. To assist the process and to ensure a procedure is in place to facilitate a high number of small scale projects coming forward or projects that would benefit from a `quick` turnaround time. A LAG project approval panel with delegated authority will be formed to consider applications below £20,000. The Approval panel will be chaired by the LAG Chair and decisions will be reported to the full LAG Board at the following meeting. In the event of a conflict of interest, the Vice Chair of the LAG will have delegated authority to sign off appraisals. To ensure a clear separation of functions, whilst some organisations may be involved at different stages of the process, the same individuals will not be involved in conflicting roles i.e. both project development and appraisal; or both project appraisal and approval. A summary of projects and decisions taken will be reported to the RFN and the DEP Board to ensure linkages are maintained between the LAG, LEPs and wider partnerships in the area.

Following LAG decisions, grant offer letters (setting out any approval conditions) will be issued by DCC as the accountable body on behalf of the LAG. A formal appeals process will also be in place to deal with any grievances in line with operational guidance. The applicant would be required to set out in writing their reasons for appeal.

4.3 Claims and payments

Each applicant will be registered with the RPA in order to receive grant payments direct in accordance with the operational guidance.

Claims will be profiled in following discussion with the applicants to ensure the viability of the business is not affected and to ensure the programme meets contracting profiles. In order to compile claims and to ensure separation of duties the LEADER Monitoring Officer will check claims provided by applicants for accuracy, completeness and evidence of defrayed expenditure.

Claims will be signed off on behalf of the LAG by DCC and submitted to the RPA for payment. The LEADER Manager and Monitoring Officer will compile the M&A claim and co-operation activity claims for approval and signing by DCC before submitting to the RPA for payment.

4.4 Communications and publicity

A communications plan has been prepared and will be implemented and reviewed by the LAG. In brief this will ensure those hardest to reach in business and communities are made aware of the opportunities a range of publicity is planned such as: LAG Manager/LAG members' attendance at local business (including farming) networks/events, use of social media, press releases using existing LEADER best practice case studies. The communication strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure effectiveness.

5 Financial Plan and Overall Funding Profile

To meet the advised high spend profile in the early years, a full complement of staff is required from the outset to ensure that separation of duties is met and claim processing is dealt with expediently. The profile submitted requires funding to appoint a Full time LEADER Manager and a part time Monitoring Officer. Reduction in the M & A budget would require a re profile of the spend trajectory.

In Kind Match funding is being provided by the Accountable Body to meet Defra contractual requirements and by partners in provision of Officer support for animation, scoring of expressions of interest and appraisal process.

5.1 Private sector match funding will be profiled in following confirmation of intervention rates by Defra. Using the previous programme as a base line a figure of 1,830,240 private sector would be an initial target for additional income.

As with previous LEADER delivery the profile will ensure the LAG meets and exceeds the recommended Defra profile of above 70% of grant to be used towards direct economic development.

5.2 Use of grants, procurement or other type of financial support

As the programme develops and full operational guidance is received, the LAG will review the use of grants and consider `umbrella` funds to support small scale proposals alongside opportunities that may arise to use loan funds and procurement/commissioning activity. The LAG membership has the skills and experience of managing a range of funding over previous years such as RDA Single Pot, Defras Rural Pathfinder funds, Objective 2 funding streams, and Environmental funds. Standardised cost options will also be welcomed and considered if appropriate. As the LEP develops activity through the new EU funding and growth programmes we will be well placed to assist in the delivery of other funding as opportunities arise, minimizing costs and maximizing impact at a local level. CLLD and additional EAFRED funds would be a welcome addition to the area.