

Lancashire North and Bowland Local Development Strategy



LEADER Team
Economic Development Service,
Lancashire County Council
2nd Floor, Christchurch Precinct
County Hall
Preston
PR1 8XJ

Karen.kerrigan@lancashire.gov.uk

Tel: 01772 538797



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



Lancashire
County
Council 

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Economic and Geographic Profile	4-5
3. Priorities for Activity	
3.1 Alignment with LEP activity	6-7
3.2 SWOT analysis	8
3.3 Local priorities for intervention & outputs	9
4. The Local Action Group Partnership	
4.1 Membership	14
4.2 Structure and decision making process	15
4.3 Training requirements	16
4.4 Equality Opportunities Statement	17
4.5 Community involvement and consultation activity	17
5. Management and Administration	
5.1 Accountable Body	23
5.2 Local Action Group staff, numbers and job descriptions	23
5.3 Project development and assessment procedures	24
5.4 Claims and payments	25
5.5 Programmes of activity	26
5.6 Proposed cooperation activity	26
5.7 Sustainability appraisal	26
5.8 Communications and publicity	26
6. Financial Plan	
6.1 Expenditure for each year, by measure	29
6.2 Overall funding profile	N/A
6.3 Use of grants, procurement or other type of financial support	29
References	

1. Introduction

The Lancashire North and Bowland Local Action Group (LAG) is based upon a coherent socio economic and geographic area linking the uplands in the north of Lancashire (including two AONBs). This is a different area to the previous Lancashire North LAG and the rationale for the change is based upon the geographic coherence of the area, quality and type of landscape as well potential for Visitor Economy growth and the commonalities within the farming sector.

The Lancashire North and Bowland LAG is seeking £2,060,000 of resource to deliver the LEADER programme and six Defra themes. The priorities for delivery are based upon the LEADER methodology of a bottom up approach, utilising information gathered during consultation that has supported the identification of the particular needs / priorities of the LAG area. This is supported by independent research commissioned by the Lancashire LEP.

The allocation requested for the LAG is the optimum level to be able to make a significant impact upon the local economy and allowing for flexibility in delivering larger projects, as well as being able to continue to support smaller projects with more localised impacts. We have also analysed data from the previous programme including processes, procedures, performance and marketing to identify areas of strengths and those for development.

The proposed budget is based upon the maximum level of funding available, as indicated by Defra, which is considered to be the appropriate level to make a real difference to the Lancashire North and Bowland economy:

- Total - £2,060,000
- Direct to business / organisation grants – £1,751,000
- Management and animation – £309,000

The proposed outputs will be:

- 55 jobs
- 91 jobs safeguarded
- £4 million total investment
- £2 million increase in GVA
- Minimum of 35 businesses assisted (average project size in previous programme was £47,695, we expect the number of businesses assisted to be significantly higher if we are able to run a small grant scheme)

Our proposed outputs are based upon experience of delivery of the previous Lancashire LEADER Local Action Groups and programme evaluation.

The Strategy has been developed by the Economic Development Service, Lancashire County Council on behalf of local partners.

2. Geographic and Economic Context

The Lancashire North and Bowland Local Action Group (LAG) area consists of the rural parts of the Lancashire Districts of Lancaster, Pendle (part), Ribble Valley, Wyre (part). The total population within this area is 118,440 including the eligible population of the market towns of Clitheroe and Barnoldswick and includes the Forest of Bowland and Arnsdale and Silverdale (part) AONBs. The proposed area incorporates the Bowland Fells and Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill National Character Areas. The rationale for the change to the LAG is based upon the coherence of the area in terms of landscape character and commonalities within the agricultural sector and wider rural economy.

The Lancashire North and Bowland LAG area has a distinctive character, with two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), coastal areas along Morecambe Bay linking to Cumbria in the North (and through the Lune Valley) and the Fylde Coast in the South and sites of special scientific interest. In demographic terms Ribble Valley, Wyre and Lancaster are in top 5 in Lancashire of most rural Districts and over two-thirds of the LAG area landscape is designated as 'uplands'. The management of the landscape has a wider impact given the implications of climate change and the need to mediate against the adverse impacts of flooding from the areas main water catchments.

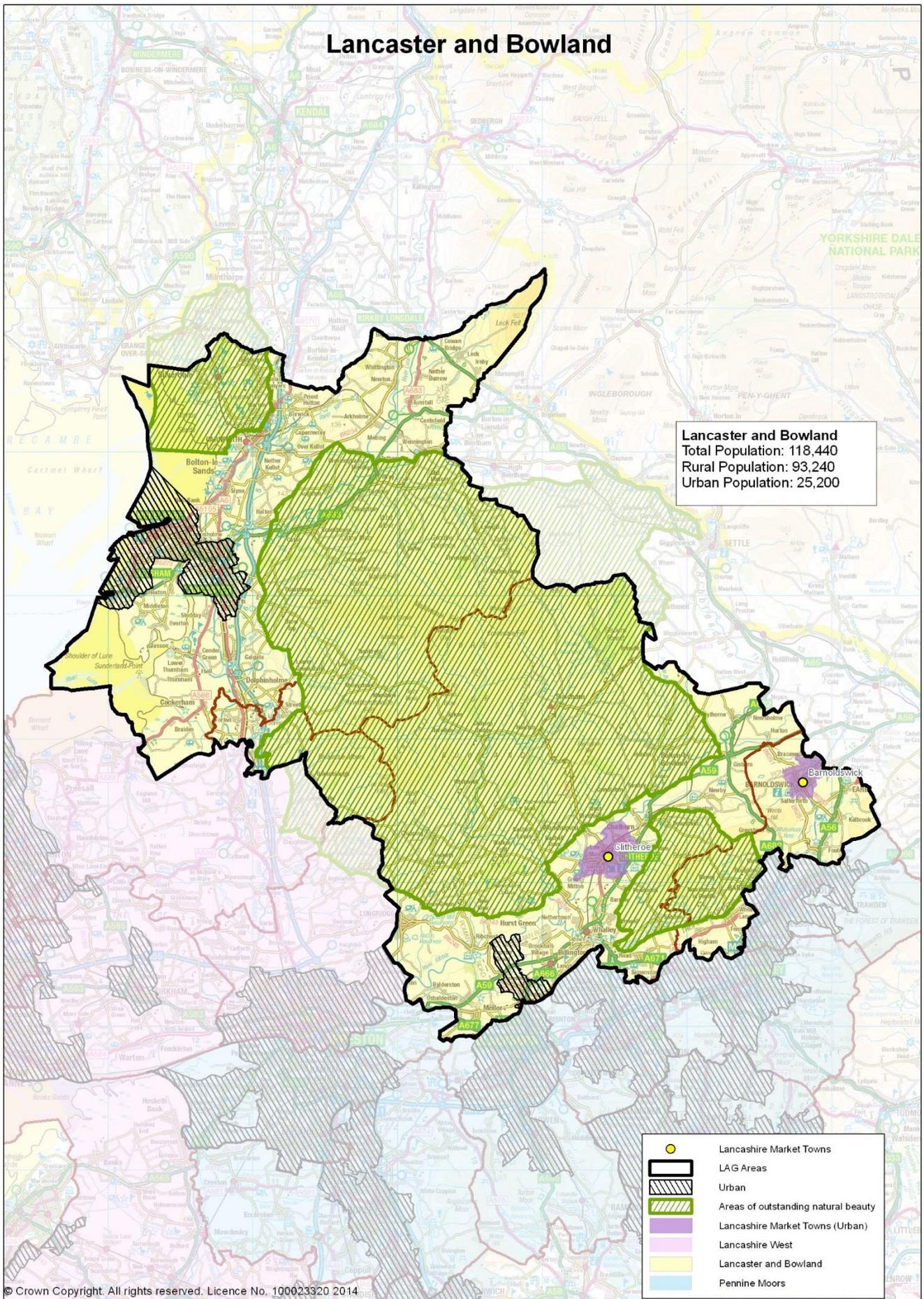
With a rural population of over 93,000 the LAG area is home to two Rural Hub Towns in Clitheroe and Barnoldswick, as well as smaller market towns such as Carnforth. The market and hub towns act as vital local service centres for surrounding villages, as well as centres of employment and with a strong Visitor Economy.

The agricultural sector is most highly concentrated in the Forest of Bowland AONB compared to the rest of rural Lancashire and is characterised by expanses of open moorland and estate-managed landscapes on the moorland fringe merging into the transitional landscapes to the lower lying river valleys. Agricultural land in the LAG area is mainly classified under Grades 3 to 5 with sheep and beef farming dominating the upland areas and dairy farming the major land use in the valleys in the north around the River Lune. Local food is gaining a national reputation and plays a key role in supporting tourism in the area.

As well as the agricultural sector the LAG area economy is characterised by strengths in the visitor economy, with a strong tourism and heritage offer, manufacturing and services, particularly hospitality and accommodation. The area's economic activity rate is significantly higher than other parts of Lancashire averaging 95% plus which is probably down to the higher than average rates of self-employment. As the LAG areas contains the most isolated rural in Lancashire it also contains the areas with highest levels of self-employment and entrepreneurship (there being a direct link between them).

The coherent nature of the LAG geography and growth opportunities within the local economy will support our ability to build on existing strengths, in particular the well-established partnerships and networks, to help diversify the areas rural economy. The LAG will also need to develop cross border work with similar initiatives in Cumbria and North Yorkshire. The SWOT analysis contained in the Strategy provides more detail on the specific issues to be addressed. The LDS will support diversification through new ways of using the land, developing tourism facilities and other enterprises, such as business workspaces.

Lancaster and Bowland



3. Priorities for Activity

3.1 Alignment with LEP activity

The draft Lancashire Rural Growth Strategy identified key opportunities for rural growth and prioritises them in the context of the Lancashire Growth Plan. It will provide the context for LEADER and will influence the direction of the Lancashire European Structural and Investment Funds including the LEP indicative allocation for EAFRD resources. This LDS will be formally considered by the Lancashire LEP on 9th September 2014.

The European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy prepared by the LEP for prioritising activity and investment has been drafted as a basis for negotiations with Government. The strategy is required to be based upon the themes of the Common Strategic Framework and support the national Growth Programme. The Strategy has been drafted to support the objectives of the LEP's Growth Plan and sets out the LEP's key aims and objectives for funding over the period. It will provide investment to deliver key activities as part of an integrated approach to developing Lancashire's economic potential.

Lancashire's priorities for European Structural and Investment Funds are set out as 6 key themes:

- Investing in strategic infrastructure, development and environmental resilience
- Boosting business growth and innovation
- Promoting growth sectors and supply chains
- Encouraging inward investment and marketing
- Driving the skills for growth
- Creating opportunities for disadvantaged communities/groups.

Rural Lancashire hosts a number of indigenous features which will help maintain current activity and support further sustainable growth. Priorities for growth in rural Lancashire link across the LEP Growth and ESIF Programme, the Rural Growth Strategy and LEADER. It is intended that projects and activities will be commissioned strategically and will be mutually supporting to maximise the total potential investment available across the full range of funding streams.

Sector Development

Sector Development	LEP Growth Programme/ESI Priorities	Rural Growth Strategy Priorities	LEADER Priorities
Food and Drink			
	Promoting growth sectors and supply chains	Focus on food clusters and key markets	Supporting and growing local food producers and food networks
		Growing food exports	Supporting diversification Supporting high quality products and local provenance
	Smart specialisation	Agri-tech smart specialisation	Supporting technology to increase primary production Supporting precision farming
Visitor Economy			
	Increasing productivity and value. Attractions, accommodation and infrastructure. Key priorities being identified by Marketing Lancashire	Marketing Lancashire Key rural and cross cutting visitor economy priorities	Supporting diversification Supporting rural tourism Support for cultural and heritage activity

Meeting Business Needs

Business Need	LEP Growth Programme/ESI Priorities	Rural Growth Strategy Priorities	LEADER Priorities
Skills Development and Business Support			
	Lancashire Boost	Based on Boost, identified tailored rural support	Not directly eligible but led by other programmes, and linked where relevant to LEADER Enterprise and Rural Services priorities
		Roll out of virtual business support network following Wyre example	Not all activity directly eligible, but led by other programmes and linked where relevant to LEADER Enterprise and Rural Services priorities. Sustaining Lancashire Farmer Networks (if eligible).
	Superfast Broad Band business support services	Specific support for rural areas aligned with Lancashire's Strategic Framework for Digital Inclusion	Not directly eligible, but led by other programmes and linked where relevant to LEADER Enterprise and Rural Services priorities
Premises and Sites for Employment			
	Strategic sites for employment	Establish viability of rural business hubs to support business needs	Incubator premises for new start businesses if need and viability established.
Natural Capital, Land Management and Building Natural Resilience			
	Energy and Environment	Land management to build resilience. Management of energy resources	Land management schemes, in particular for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Support forestry businesses and forestry management schemes

In seeking to commission activity at a Lancashire level, the LEP will work to complement activity undertaken by LEADER and in particular, undertake more strategic activity with pan Lancashire significance.

3.2 SWOT Analysis

During the consultation events and the focus groups a number of local issues were identified, which resulted in the following SWOT analysis:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><u>Enterprise</u>: - High number of micro enterprises and high levels of self-employment, Farm diversification, Land management through established landowners and estates, Superfast broadband rollout</p> <p><u>Farming</u>: - Significant Dairy and red meat sectors, good selection of cheese producers with a growing national and international reputations Management of landscape supports other activities and has a positive impact upon the environment</p> <p><u>Tourism</u>: - Historic city and Market Towns with a range of museums and attractions, Environment quality and natural beauty of the countryside, Forest of Bowland/Arnsdale and Silverdale AONBs, Mountain biking at Gisburn, High spending tourists compared to other parts of Lancashire</p> <p><u>Forestry</u>:- Managed forests at Beacon Fell, Dunsop Valley, Longridge Fell, Gisburn Forest, Grindleton Fell. Also, managed woodlands within Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB</p> <p><u>Rural Services</u>:- strong community identity, track record of project delivery, exemplar projects e.g. community resource centres</p> <p><u>Culture & heritage</u>: - strong traditions and heritage, particularly with the canals/waterways & industrial heritage, rich farming heritage and natural landscape with several prominent historic houses (already worked together on the Lancashire Heritage Tourism Initiative)</p>	<p><u>Enterprise</u>: - Unable to attract younger workforce, Access to finance to support business support and advice, Access to training, Disparities in superfast broadband provision, Small and micro businesses accessing wider economies, Connections to competitive skills base</p> <p><u>Farming</u>: - Poor quality agricultural land (grades 3-5) – reliance upon the dairy sector / beef and sheep farming, Lack of skills/training support, Difficulty in attracting young people into farming particularly hill sheep farming</p> <p><u>Tourism</u>: - Limited serviced accommodation, Shortage of quality budget accommodation i.e. bunkhouses, campsites, glamping and not enough overnight stays</p> <p><u>Forestry</u>: - Disparate with low percentage woodland cover, many woodlands/forests unmanaged or undermanaged, lack of capital for businesses to invest, low skills levels</p> <p><u>Rural Services</u>: - Local authority cut backs, lack of affordable housing</p> <p><u>Culture and heritage</u>:- lack of tourism destination awareness and profile at a national level, under-investment into conserving and enhancing the landscape, skills shortage to manage the landscape e.g. hedging, dry stone walling, coppicing</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p><u>Enterprise</u>: - Start-up companies and expansion of existing small enterprises, Business support and training opportunities, Linking rural growth with wider economies, Superfast broadband take up. Higher rate of self-employment, Growth opportunities along the A6 and A59 transport corridors</p> <p><u>Farming</u>: - Local food and drink, availability of redundant farm buildings, managing land to provide environmental resilience</p> <p><u>Tourism</u>: - To enhance the tourism offer in terms of quality and provision, build on reputation for sustainable tourism development in key destinations e.g. Forest of Bowland/Morecambe Bay/Lune Valley Support growth of 'alternative' accommodation, e.g. the <i>Piggeries</i> Camping Pods, Wennington</p> <p><u>Forestry</u>: - Unmanaged woodland opportunities (nearly 50%) Development of community based wood fuel and wood products social enterprises</p> <p><u>Rural Services</u>: - To take on non-statutory services and facilities through local enterprise</p> <p><u>Culture & heritage</u>: - Economic opportunities provided by environmental & heritage/cultural assets, Link with major Heritage Lottery Fund programmes, increasing habitat quality in rivers/canals, increasing and improving access to rivers/canals, interpretation of heritage all related to employment growth</p>	<p><u>Enterprise</u>: - lack of business finance, Business support & marketing, Ability to maximise use of superfast broadband, Growing comparative gap in access to skills, business support and key infrastructure (not just restricted to enterprise)</p> <p><u>Farming</u>: - Foreign imports, Feed / fuel / energy prices and outmoded production systems</p> <p><u>Tourism</u>: - Planning constraints for new developments/expansion</p> <p><u>Forestry</u>: - Lack of management, Disease, lack of skills</p> <p><u>Rural services</u>: - Might not be economically viable to take over the provision of services previously funded via local government due to economies of scale</p> <p><u>Culture and heritage</u>: - Not taking advantage of the opportunities presented, loss or degradation of natural environment, water quality / quantity in rivers, habitat quality / connectivity in rivers</p>

3.3 Local Priorities for intervention & outputs

Based upon extensive consultation and the SWOT analysis of the areas the proposed priorities and outputs for the for the LAG are (indicative local outputs in italics)

Themes	Sector Consultation Summary	Lancashire North and Bowland Priorities	Outputs
Support for increasing farm productivity in ways which enhance natural capital			£262,600 (15%)
Measure 4: Investments in physical assets Measure 6: farm and business productivity	Much of the discussion focused around training, in particular ICT, broadband and marketing including social media. Support for networking was identified as an important area for sharing ideas, including knowledge transfer. We will explore farmer networks as part of our cooperation activity by looking at other more experienced networks to learn from best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in technology to increase primary production – <i>including support for precision farming and enhancing competitiveness through the implementation of new ways of working</i> • Adding value to produce – <i>with a focus on local production and diversification</i> • Projects which seek to reduce the business impact on the environment / reduce energy consumption – through addressing fuel/energy costs by improving efficiency as well as protecting local resources • Projects creating jobs or increasing productivity – <i>whilst job creation should be considered it was noted that investments in technology often resulted in the replacement of jobs therefore productivity was perhaps a more important focus</i> 	7 projects supported <i>5 Holdings benefitting</i> <i>5 businesses benefitting</i> <i>10 individuals benefitting</i> 7 jobs created (based on £40k per job as productivity more likely under this Measure) <i>10 jobs safeguarded</i>
Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification			40% £700,400
Measure 4: Investments in physical assets Measure 6: farm and business productivity	Discussion focused on support for business planning and providing support for and removing obstacles to growth. The main consultation events highlighted a number of issues and market failures which could not be addressed by LEADER but potentially could be addressed by other funding streams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging new business start-ups – <i>particularly projects linked to the food and drink industry/the relationship with the Visitor Economy and in support of sustainable jobs growth. Other areas to focus on to include businesses building upon improved access to Superfast Broadband and environmental technology/ niche manufacturing</i> • Development of existing small & micro enterprises – <i>linked to significant job creation / increase in turnover based upon higher than average levels of entrepreneurship.</i> • Use of redundant buildings to create incubator type premises for new start businesses – <i>to be linked to activity detailed above and based upon local demand and supply</i> 	28 projects <i>4 holdings benefitting</i> <i>15 businesses benefitting</i> <i>30 individuals benefitting</i> 46 jobs created <i>65 jobs safeguarded</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprises – especially those providing essential rural services and linked to social enterprise support under the ESIFs Strategy and related Social Inclusion activity 	
Support for rural tourism			20% £350,200
<p>Measure 4: Investments in physical assets</p> <p>Measure 6: farm and business productivity</p> <p>Measure 7: basic services and village renewal in rural areas</p>	<p>Marketing Lancashire invited key tourism businesses from across Lancashire to add to the priorities already raised at the consultation events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation upgrades & provision of new accommodation where there is a proven demand – • Use of IT and e-booking systems – <i>To enhance the competitiveness of local businesses and improve access to services provided and new/growing markets</i> • Shops, Catering services, Restaurants & Cafes – <i>particularly those utilising local food and drink and/or supporting employment growth/visitor spend e.g. Good Food guide No.1 Pub in Country at Wiswell</i> • Improving and upgrading access to the countryside – <i>cycle paths, bridleways, tramper trails and canal paths amongst others to enhance visitor access, improve the attractiveness of the area and ensure appropriate management for different types of visitors</i> • Development of tourism product offer – <i>new/improved visitor attractions, food and drink trails, electric bike networks building upon existing local assets</i> • Support for tourism business network development – <i>co-ordination and capacity-building activities to support brand awareness and promote local businesses as a 'destination'</i> • Support for events and festivals – <i>new only or operating in a different manner in order to support innovation and additionality – this will enhance local food and drink producers access to key retail markets as well as providing additional attractions for Visitors.</i> 	<p>11 projects</p> <p>10 FTE jobs created</p> <p>6 existing tourism activities supported</p> <p>2 new tourism activities supported</p> <p>600 potential additional overnight stays</p>
Provision of rural services			10% £175,100

<p>Measure 4: Investments in physical assets</p> <p>Measure 7: basic services and village renewal in rural areas</p>	<p>A wide range of discussion took place reiterating some of the common issues that arose at the general consultation events including broadband, mobile phone coverage and access to skills and training. One of the main issues related to capacity building and a communities ability to recognise a need and access funding to address the need. Whilst we cannot fund training per se we may be able to offer more of a hand holding role to these groups once the funding is launched.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital grants for community buildings especially where the project benefits the whole community – a number of village halls are seeking support with a view to becoming more sustainable and we will work with local partners, i.e. Community Futures, to develop support packages for existing and new facilities including how to market the facilities, target marketing, social media, managing bookings, pricing structure etc. as well as developing a range of uses. • Supporting young people – provision of services / facilities for younger people – in particular around after school care and holiday provision, transport to work schemes (though not sure if eligible??) in support of greater economic activity and employment • Support for services for more members of the community to engage with services to support greater economic activity Provision of ICT support – offering targeted support to enable communities (particularly business start-ups) to access and effectively utilise broadband, enabling take up, ensuring equal access to technology linked to local social/economic hubs. • Community activities – especially those aimed at younger / older members of the community supported training and employment 	<p>7 projects</p> <p>3 businesses benefitting</p> <p>4 villages/communities benefitting</p> <p>5 jobs created</p> <p>6 jobs safeguarded</p> <p>1000 Population benefitting</p>
<p>Enhancing natural and cultural heritage</p>			<p>10% £175,100</p>
<p>Measure 4: Investments in physical assets</p> <p>Measure 7: basic services and village renewal in rural areas</p>	<p>Contributions to the culture and heritage theme were received from a range of organisations who participate in / contribute to the cultural and heritage of Lancashire and linked into business support and Visitor Economy themes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for conservation and appropriate restoration and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage features – key landscape features and natural heritage sites • Support for events and information to help local communities, businesses and visitors to connect with the area's landscape and countryside – events, cultural activities, signage and interpretation 	<p>3 projects</p> <p>3 facilities benefitting</p> <p>6 jobs created</p> <p>5 jobs safeguarded</p> <p>750 Population benefitting</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital grants for enhancements to visitor facilities – <i>key gateway sites for countryside visits</i> 	
Support for increasing forestry productivity in ways which enhance natural capital			5% £87,550
<p>Measure 4: Investments in physical assets</p> <p>Measure 6: farm and business productivity</p> <p>Measure 8: Investments in forest area development and improvement of the viability of forests</p>	<p>In addition to the theme specific consultation and general events FC have kindly provided a research paper to assist the LAGs to develop the forestry sector in Lancashire as well as attending a theme specific focus group along with forestry businesses.</p> <p>One of the priorities identified related to skills support which is required across all sectors but having been advised by DEFRA that we cannot fund these as they will be funded nationally. However we will seek to support Leadership and Management activity where this supports LEADER outputs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business start-ups & development of existing businesses <i>– woodland owners need the services of reliable and professional contractors to undertake operations in their woods</i> • Capital investment in and out of the wood – LEADER groups to consider supporting the capital investment in machinery appropriate to the woodland types and terrain of the local area. Individuals whose machinery will be deployed across many land ownerships have the potential to deliver greater economic impact. • Support for development of community-based wood fuel and wood products social enterprises • Supporting the construction of access points, stacking areas and loading bays particularly where these can serve several woodlands – <i>consider supporting the construction of access points, stacking areas and loading bays particularly where these can serve several woodlands.</i> • Invest in developing local venison markets through support of the transport, handling, processing and marketing of venison – <i>invest in developing local venison markets through support of the transport, handling, processing and marketing of venison.</i> • Development of commercial tourism offers related to woodland through investment in infrastructure, structures and equipment – <i>development of commercial tourism offers through investment in infrastructure, structures and equipment.</i> • Helping services that deliver co-operative working, such as woodland associations and timber marketing groups - <i>consider helping services that deliver cooperative working, such as woodland associations and timber marketing groups.</i> 	<p>3 projects</p> <p>3 forests /woodlands/holdings benefitting</p> <p>1 jobs created</p> <p>5 jobs safeguarded</p>

- **Woodland management plans** – for all in the supply chain including community led groups

Targets, results and outputs

The following targets are based upon previous experience of the delivery of economic development and employment growth projects whilst also being mindful of the DEFRA guidance on costs per job. These are scalable according to final budget settlement (M&A currently 15% but would increase to up to 18% should the allocation be reduced)

Leader Policy Priority	RDPE expenditure per FTE job created	Average RDPE grant size	Relevant CMES output indicators for LDS application	End of programme forecast
Support for increasing farm productivity	£40,000	£45,000 (Average grant in previous programme was £66,432. This has been reduced to improve project performance)	Total RDPE expenditure Number of projects supported Jobs created FTE	£262,600 7 7
Support for micro and small enterprises/farm diversification	£15,000 (Average in previous programme was £16,400 per job created. This has been reduced to increase project performance)	£25,000 (Average grant in previous programme was £36,113. This has been reduced to increase project performance)	Total RDPE expenditure Number of projects supported Jobs created FTE	£700,000 28 46
Support for rural tourism	£32,477	£31,764	Total RDPE expenditure Number of projects supported Jobs created FTE	£350,200 11 10
Support for culture and heritage activity	£55,991	£28,165	Total RDPE expenditure Number of projects supported Jobs created FTE	£175,100 3 6
Provision of rural services	£33,272	£23,278	Total RDPE expenditure Number of projects supported Jobs created FTE	£175,100 7 5
Support for increasing forestry productivity	£77,045	£21,788	Total RDPE expenditure Number of projects supported Jobs created FTE	£87,550 3 1
Total Programme			Total RDPE expenditure Number of projects supported Jobs created FTE	£1,750,500 61 65

Percentage split between themes

Theme	Percentage	Rationale
Enterprise	40%	In the previous programme the Enterprise Measure had the highest demand and we had to vire funds from other Measures to satisfy demand. In the new programme a 40% allocation will enable us to achieve a high proportion of the jobs and growth targets via direct to business grants. Discussions at the consultation events have also clarified this.
Farming	15%	In the previous programme the Lancashire North LAG struggled to spend their Adding Value funding, which was due to the fact that the farming sector in this area focusses on beef/sheep/dairy and there is little that can be done to add value as many businesses have already made the investments required. However an allocation has been made to ensure we are able to take advantage of any opportunities that arise.
Tourism	20%	The demand for tourism funding again was higher in the previous programme than anticipated and funding had to be moved from other Measures to satisfy demand. The Visitor Economy is a priority for the Lancashire LEP and the LAG are has significant assets that can be enhanced and built upon through this measure we will seek to complement other activity.
Rural Services	10%	In the previous programme the allocation for rural services was approximately 10%. Discussions at the consultation events indicated that this was an acceptable allocation
Forestry	5%	The majority of forestry projects could potentially be eligible to apply for funding via the Enterprise theme therefore it was felt that a 5% allocation specifically was adequate. However, once the LAG Executive is in place there may be a need to discuss the potential to increase the percentage given the scope of forestry to create jobs and growth from an untapped resource
Culture & heritage	10%	Culture and heritage is particularly important to the Lancashire North and Bowland area, with potential for these assets to be significantly enhanced to support the rural economy, hence the rationale for the 10% allocation

4 The Local Action Group Partnership**4.1 Membership**

Building upon the lessons learned from the evaluation of the 3 previous Lancashire based Local Action Groups we have already started to engage with partners and develop interest in being a member of a Local Action Group from the outset of the development of the programme. We believe that in previous programmes one of the reasons membership may have declined was due to the lack of effective communication between the Delivery teams and the wider LAG members as well as too much of focus on administration instead of achievement of Local Development Strategy objectives.

We have already implemented more effective lines of communication by identifying a wider range of stakeholders and issuing a quarterly newsletter, which has been positively received. We have also asked local recipients of LEADER grants to become involved as this will help with the spread and level of expertise in the LAG. This has been supported by the consultation process.

Whilst we would like to retain the knowledge and expertise of some of the previous LAG Executive members we need to be mindful that the Lancashire North and Bowland LAG is based upon a different geography and needs to be inclusive of different partners. For example in the previous programme the Forestry sector was represented on each LAG but as an observer rather than a voting member. Given that forestry is now a theme it would make sense to have a voting forestry sector representative.

We would like to retain the knowledge and expertise of some of the previous LAG Executive members but we also to recruit new members according to the skills and knowledge required to deliver the priorities within each theme (as highlighted through the evaluation of the previous programme).

4.2 Structure and decision making process

Local Action Group

It is proposed that the LAG will meet once or twice a year and that the role of LAG members will be to:

- Set the strategic vision and direction of the Programme
- Enable a locally led approach to rural development
- Consider, oversee the implementation of and review the Local Development Strategy
- Promote and raise awareness and understanding of issues affecting the rural economy
- Promote the funding to their wider networks

LAG Executive Group

The LAG Executive will usually meet 4-6 times per year although this may be more frequent at the start of the programme. The role of the LAG Executive will be to:

- Initiate calls for projects to delivery LDS objectives and where appropriate develop project ideas
- Recommend projects for approval – personal and prejudicial interests of any LAG Executive member will be noted prior to any decision being made using a written policy based on that used previously under the 2007-2013 RDPE Programme
- Ensure spend and output targets are achieved and scrutinise all elements of LDS delivery
- Report to the LAG on progress of the RDPE programme and individual projects on a regular basis.
- Assist the Development Officer with technical knowledge and expertise

All activity will of course be in accordance with the National Operational Manual, which is due to be produced by DEFRA prior to the new LAGs becoming operational. At Executive meetings in the previous programme LAG Executive members were provided with an Investment Decision form for each application presented, which was a summary documents of the full application. It was agreed at the outset that members did not need to view the full application, business plan and associated documentation. We already have processes and procedures in place from the previous programme covering Terms of Reference, a Conflict of Interest Procedure (including a Declaration of Interest form) and Quorum.

These procedures will be built upon and/or amended using the results of a questionnaires that Executive Members in the previous programme were asked to complete. The questionnaire focused on their assessment of what worked well and what areas could be improved upon in the delivery of the programme. A key issue arising from this was the fact that LAG members preferred to meet to discuss applications rather than having to consider them in isolation via Written Procedure (which was used either for urgent applications or when LAG Executive meetings had not been quorate). We have also undertaken a skills audit of previous LAG Executive members and this will be refreshed when the new Lag Executive is formed. The majority of existing LAG Executive members have expressed their interest in remaining on the LAG Executive

It is proposed that the LAG Executive Membership consist of:

- 5-6 public sector

- 4-5 x community / voluntary sector
- 5-6 x private sector
- Non-voting members – Accountable Body and DEFRA

In establishing the Executive we will be mindful of the Public Sector Equality Duty and seek to ensure that it is reflective of the local residents and businesses re that there is a balance of age and gender.

4.3 Training requirements

As previously mentioned all Executive members were asked to complete an online questionnaire. One particular question related to the training requirements and many of the current members are keen to renew their knowledge on the decision making process and the application and appraisal process. Once Defra have confirmed that we have been awarded funding we will organise training workshops to address this. We anticipate that workshops will be held in early 2015 once we have received the confirmation of funding.

We are currently reviewing the National RDPE website and if any appropriate events come up we will notify LAG members so that they are able to attend if they wish, however this was not a real priority. We have already arranged two joint events in 2014 involving the three Lancashire LAGs and plans are underway to host a joint LAG events with a number of Northern LAGs in early 2015 , which meets with members requirements to undertake further networking activity. The proposed training activity is as follows:

Lancashire County Council – Internal training

Appraisal Training - All staff undertaking project appraisals will be required to undertake appraisal training. The training will be delivered by an experienced LAG Officer and will include a detailed breakdown of the appraisal questions using projects from the previous programme as live examples.

Project Development - Any new staff members will undertake training by shadowing an experienced Development Officer on site visits.

Claims Processing and Monitoring - Anyone undertaking the processing of claims or monitoring visits will also receive training and support via an experienced Project Officer.

Local Action Group Training - External

Decision Making Process including appraisal and approval – LAG Executive Members

All new LAG Executive members will be required to undertake training regarding the decision making process. Some existing members have also expressed an interest in this training. As previously mentioned the Lancashire LAGs do not provide members with the full application details. At the Executive meeting members are given an Investment Decision form, which is a summary document of the full application and appraisal. The aim of this workshop will be to:

- Discuss the application process step-by-step;
- Go through the appraisal questions using a live example from the previous programme to demonstrate how rigorous a process it is;
- Highlight the queries that might arise from the appraisal and the steps we put in place e.g. special conditions;
- Detailed discussion around their role at the Executive meetings. The aim is to approve the project rather than re-appraisal;
- What happens following approval e.g. offer letter issues, offer letter accepted, claims, outputs etc.

Applicant Business Planning and Application Training – External

In the previous programme we found that the business plans varied immensely in quality. Also, if applications were prepared by external consultants we found that in some cases applicants were not clear on what they had signed up to in terms of record keeping, outputs and special conditions. Although there will be some

applicants who will recruit a consultant we believe that all applicants should be provided with the opportunity to put together their own business plan and application. Although each applicant is provided with one-to-one support and advice from the Development Officer it would be impossible to go into this level of detail with each applicant therefore we propose to hold business planning and application workshops. The workshops will be held bi-monthly or quarterly depending upon demand. If possible, to minimise costs, the Development Officers will run the workshops. However, if workload dictates that this is not possible we will follow due process and recruit externally. The workshops will include:

- How to complete an application form
- Information to be provided within the business plan
- Procurement
- The types of questions asked at appraisal
- What happens at the LAG Executive Meeting
- The offer letter including milestones, special conditions etc.

Claims Workshop for applicants – external

- How to complete a claim form
- When to submit claims
- Audit trail and record keeping
- Monitoring visits
- Exit reports

4.4 Equal opportunities statement (Public Sector Equality Duty)

In order to understand the impact of the Local Development Strategy on the community, we will be undertaking a full equality analysis using the principles of the Lancashire County Council Equality Analysis Toolkit. The toolkit has been devised to ensure that due consideration has been given to groups sharing certain protected characteristics such as age, race, gender etc. when strategies are developed. The analysis will consider, for example, the information gathered to support the development of the strategy, stakeholder engagement and consultation and the impact, positive or negative, of the strategy on various groups within the community. As part of this, consideration will also be given to any activity required to mitigate the potential negative impact of strategies.

Involvement of the community and consultation activity undertaken

We have undertaken a wide range of consultation activity and from this 'bottom up approach' we have determined the priorities for spend in the new programme. In partnership with existing stakeholders we identified a further list of new potential stakeholders and will continue to do so as the LAG develops. We have now been in contact with over 300 individuals and organisations, as well as a number of partner organisations who are able to share the information through their networks. All our events have been promoted via:

- NW Livestock Programme
- Creative Lancashire
- National Farmers Union
- Lancashire County Council mail out to 90 Commercial Agents
- CVS Central Lancashire and West Lancashire
- Myerscough College
- Local Authorities
-

In preparation for the new Rural Development Programme four rural consultation events were held across Lancashire. The aim of the events was to capture the views of local businesses, organisations and residents to ensure that the Local Development Strategies reflect a bottom up approach. The information obtained at

the four events has been collated. The top five priorities from each event are listed under each theme, in addition we have also included other discussion points. Where there were common priorities raised at more than one event we have highlighted the background, for example below you will note that business support and advice were listed in the top five priorities at all four events and this has been highlighted in yellow. Marketing and promotion were raised at three out of the four events and this has been highlighted in green.

Enterprise

Priority	Enterprise – Pennine (Grindleton Pavilion)
1	Flexibility in programme – delivery in urban but supporting rural / prescriptive nature of activities
2	Business support through the application process e.g. Boost
3	Broadband – any would be good
4	Different ways of promoting the programme
5	Mechanism to allow better connectivity with other funding and Lancashire wide agencies (innovation)
Priority	Enterprise – North (Old Holly Farm)
1	Extend into tourism activities – e.g. camping pods
2	Sustainable transport links for employees
3	Greater understanding of the range of funding and advice available
4	Work with planners to bring back redundant buildings
5	Support for marketing / social media workshops
Priority	Enterprise – West (Mere Sands Woods)
1	Improve business support offer – including retail/awareness of SE options. Business start-ups and scale ups
2	Capital investment – manufacturing/machinery (spin offs)
3	Employment support – recruitment, up skill, apprenticeships, transport, housing
4	Added value existing businesses – café, incubators
5	Tap into Corporate Social Responsibility of some of the larger local companies
Priority	Enterprise – Brockholes
1	Business support – improving awareness of Boost gateway, delivery based on lower level rather than high level support
2	Marketing – awareness raising, signposting, direct grants to support, training
3	Access to finance – still an issue, especially capital. Need to broaden support to include rural and non- high growth businesses
4	Networking – physical and online, knowledge and information transfer
5	Access to new markets, local, national and export

Business support and marketing are the key issues affecting rural businesses. There does not appear to be anywhere for rural businesses to access free independent advice and support unless they qualify for support under the Boost programme, which is aimed at high growth sectors.

Other issues which arose are:

- Incubator premises for rural areas – use under-utilised rural businesses
- Support planning process
- Awareness of social enterprise, marketing/awareness – support through the process
- Business start-up and scale ups – support through process, mentoring, handholding
- Community groups in transition phase – social enterprise and trade
- Transport schemes to support apprenticeships

The RDPE budget will be significantly reduced compared to the previous programme therefore there would not be enough funding available to deliver this type of support in addition to capital grants especially when considering the need to create jobs and growth. However, although we will not be able to fund this activity the issues raised will be fed into the Rural Growth Strategy.

Farming

Priority	Farming – Pennine (Grindleton Pavilion)
1	Help farmers produce more and increase primary production by investing in new technology
2	Group activity and knowledge transfer
3	Joint marketing activity
4	Sharing apprentices
5	Services to farmers – admin and advice
Priority	Farming – North (Old Holly Farm)
1	Training for staff – including train the trainer and creation of mentoring programme across relevant sectors.
2	Support for Marketing and development marketing plans
3	Independent advisory service – to address both general business advice but also specialist areas such as soil balance testing and animal welfare
4	Lab testing for soil and slurry linked to reducing fertiliser use and run off effects to water course
5	Investment to improve bio security – e.g. double fencing
Priority	Farming – West (Mere Sands Woods)
1	Rural business support/skills training – direct to farmers & foresters
2	Strengthening the business and making it competitive rather than 'innovation'
3	Adding value to produce e.g. washing potatoes
4	Small scale forestry extraction and processing equipment
5	Security initiatives/measures for rural businesses in remote locations
Priority	Farming – Brockholes
1	Capital grants for investment both small – £1-5K and larger grants
2	A comprehensive one stop shop for independent advice on general business development and specific support for grant application
3	Skills programme to address a range of business skills including marketing, IT and basic skills
4	Support for development of marketing and promotion plans and to fund the initial costs
5	Specific farming sector succession planning programme addressing all options to support older / retiring farmers and new / younger farmers to enter the sector.

A number of common themes arose at each of the events particularly around increasing and improving productivity, business support/training/knowledge transfer and marketing activity. However, other issues raised include:

- Investment in flood defence and drainage
- Support for precision farming
- Grants and project development support
- Improved broadband / mobile coverage
- Animal welfare and nutrient management programme for Lancashire farmers
- Support to meet best practice standards for the diary sector – i.e. stocking rates – links to possible export markets
- A mobile phone text service to get key info to the farming community as many farmers tend to be IT illiterate and unable to access email but they are used to using mobile phones therefore this is a very effective way to communicate with the hard to reach farmers.
- Support to development and extent the Lancashire farmers network
- Apprenticeships in horticulture

Forestry

Priority	Forestry – Pennine (Grindleton Pavilion)
1	Investment in forestry equipment to support the growth of the processing sector
2	Support, training and equipment for small woodland management covering all three forestry types broadleaf, mixed and coniferous
3	Creation / support for better working & cooperation between small woodland owners to develop joint management and felling
4	Support to develop and extend supply chain demand for timber from Lancashire Woodland
5	Support for planting new and re-planning felled woodland
Priority	Forestry – North (Old Holly Farm)
1	Creation of a micro forest programme get owners of small unviable forest to work co-operatively to joint manage and develop woods
Priority	Forestry – West (Mere Sands Woods)
1	Rural business support/ skills training – direct to farmers & foresters
2	Strengthening the business and making it competitive rather than 'innovation'
3	Adding value to produce e.g. washing potatoes
4	Small scale forestry extraction and processing equipment
5	Security initiatives/measures for rural businesses in remote locations
Priority	Forestry – Brockholes
1	Access to Finance and support
2	New entrants, existing assets
3	New entrants, new people, locating Growth Business
4	Communication and transport links
5	New technology investment

Cooperation and supply chain were common discussion points. There are lots of unmanaged woodlands in Lancashire which could be better utilised if cooperation activity were encouraged and promoted. Capital investments to support extraction and processing were also topical as was skills training. Other ideas included:

- FSC registration and affiliation
- Transport
- Advisory service – advice on support
- Access to finance, with relationship management support
- Communication and transport links into rural areas
- Routes to market – disconnect, connections
- Case studies, demonstrations
- Technologies
- Issues around certification, registration
- Facilitation
- Replanting →restocking
- Mapping and engagement at school level and beyond, bringing young people into the sector, apprenticeships programmes

Tourism

Priority	Tourism – Pennine (Grindleton Pavilion)
1	Marketing – signage & social media (training in)
2	Targeted business support and networking opportunities
3	Cash flow
4	Spread of accommodation provision (presume in terms of quality?)

5	Pump priming organisation i.e. Bowland Experience – make the public purse go further by running 'visitor giving' schemes
Priority	Tourism – North (Old Holly Farm)
1	Improved marketing and publicity – social media "sense of Lancashire" branding – identify key offers
2	Ways of bringing people in from further afield and encouraging them to spend more – raising the profile of the area
3	Broadband and mobile coverage
4	Destination management – advice, training, support , marketing (including social media)
5	Infrastructure – transport – sustainable routes – extension of Lune Track
Priority	Tourism – West (Mere Sands Woods)
1	Capital Investment – both conversion of current buildings and new builds - majority of funding allocated here
2	Development of consortium to pull together tourism attractions / activities / events in a small locality. Offer visitors the opportunity for money off vouchers etc.
3	Schools education programmes for tourism attractions
4	Signage / brown signs
5	Internet connection / SFB
Priority	Tourism – Brockholes
1	Capital – priority for funding. Funding into a couple of large projects that will have the largest impact rather than in to lots of small projects
2	Marketing a destination – themes "heritage" "food" "cycling" "eco" someone to facilitate bringing it all together in a joined up approach
3	Promoting Lancashire as an all year round destination – improving existing jobs moving away from zero hour contracts and creating new jobs.
4	Training for social media / one central location (portal) for businesses to see what training is on offer – i.e. via the BOOST website
5	Specialist Advice – pre application stage

Again marketing and promotion were a common theme and was mentioned as a priority at all four consultation events. Training and advice is another common issue as Marketing Lancashire no longer provides the same level of support and advice to tourism businesses. Capital investment was one of the key priorities mentioned at two of the events.

Rural Services

Priority	Rural Services – Pennine (Grindleton Pavilion)
1	Community infrastructure : assets and services as a platform / catalyst for other activity
2	Building on and fully utilise Super-Fast Broadband resource
3	Cash flow / development funding
4	Support for accessing and drawing down match funding
5	Capital funding for voluntary and community based buildings
Priority	Rural Services – North (Old Holly Farm)
1	Transport – key links with other themes including the provision of scooters for loaning to young people to enable them to access employment and training, access to services and access to leisure facilities for visitors
2	Supporting young people – provision of facilities for younger people and as above
3	Energy / Renewables – made mention of community renewables schemes for isolated communities currently reliant upon oil filled systems
4	Village Agent – who could provide support for a wide range of services to the over 50s
5	Broadband
Priority	Rural Services – West (Mere Sands Woods)
1	Place/ownership/value

2	Multi-use of existing buildings
3	Digital inclusion/broadband & mobile signals
4	Transport
5	Countryside education and asset maps
Priority	Rural Services – Brockholes
1	Transport – insofar as it can support residents in rural areas to travel out to access services, but also using transport to bring services into communities.
2	Services – in a general sense. This could mean different things in different communities – a post office in one, shop in another, affordable childcare elsewhere, but provided in such a way that groups of villages may have complementary services.
3	IT communications – enhanced broadband and mobile phone coverage principally for the 3% of the population who have poor provision, mainly in rural areas.
4	"Support workers" – individuals responsible for identifying and promoting details of services which are available within rural communities and employed to cover a wide geographic area. An understanding of the demographics of different communities would be a key part of this.
5	Village Halls as Community Hubs – for the provision of services. Again, this could mean different things in different communities, but would probably involve making investments which refurbished these community facilities in ways which improved their overall usability.

The rural services theme encouraged the most discussions and the most diverse range of issues and ideas. Some of the discussion points not captured within the top five priorities above are captured below:

- IT advice centre – drop in facility where villagers can access support to complete online forms or access online information
- Visiting services e.g. banks, NHS services
- Community activities
- Access to renewable energy
- Shared and community transport initiatives
- Collaboration between community assets
- Fostering good relations between recent residents and families who lived in the area for generations
- Transport within areas to more major shopping, transport hubs
- Combatting social isolation – older people, children and families
- Mixed Community services – benefiting whole communities
- Funding not retrospective
- Rural workspace
- Delivery of IT - Access / Maintaining & support
- Modernisation of Community buildings – and conversation e.g. closed schools
- Improved facilities for young people in rural areas
- Improved access to funding to enable community cohesion - many village inhabitants use it as a place to sleep not a place to live.
- Bigger share of funding to voluntary organisations
- Easier controlling funding (cash flow)

There was a discussion around the kinds of benefits which can be brought about when communities get to know each other and the benefits that can accrue by getting people to "care" about each other. Improved communication – possibly through the "support workers" detailed above – could be one way of achieving this, but need not be the only way.

Signage – to facilities, services and businesses was also discussed with the feeling that take-up would be increased if it was easier to get permission for signage within rural areas.

Rural energy generation was also discussed. The benefits of ground source heat pumps were the main area of discussion as well as other sources which reduced the reliance on coal and oil.

Culture and Heritage

Priority	Culture & heritage – Pennine (Grindleton Pavilion)
1	Local events
Priority	Culture & heritage – North (Old Holly Farm)
1	Use of apps
2	Interpretation and protection of rural historic features
3	Training of craftsmen
4	Improved signage and information
5	
Priority	Culture & heritage – West (Mere Sands Woods)
	Not discussed
Priority	Culture & heritage – Brockholes
	Not discussed

The culture and heritage discussions were relatively limited as discussions tended to be linked to other themes. However, we approached a range of industry specialists and local authority representation and asked for their opinions. Detailed information was provided by the Ribble Trust, Browsholme Hall, Hoghton Tower, Forest of Bowland AONB and Bowland Revealed. Key priorities around the preservation of our historic houses, the quality improvement of our waterways and preserving the AONBs within Lancashire were identified.

5 Management and Administration

5.1 Accountable body

Lancashire County Council has agreed that it will put itself forward to be the Accountable Body of the Lancashire Pennine Moors LAG based upon its previous LEADER experience and financial capacity/experience as a County Council. The County Council, in addition to experience of managing LEADER programmes, has extensive financial expertise and supporting system and is in an ideal position to be Accountable Body. However, this offer is contingent upon a clear understanding of the functions of the Accountable Role including operational and financial delineation between DEFRA/RPA and the County Council. As a result this offer is dependent upon further detail of the functions to be undertaken by a LEADER Accountable Body as described in the LEADER Operational Manual.

5.2 Local Action Group staff, numbers and job descriptions

Staffing support for the Local Action Group will be based upon a shared administrative and financial service within Lancashire County Council delivering efficient and effective programme management. This service will support all three Lancashire based LAGS (the others being Lancashire Pennine Moors and Lancashire West). The service will be based upon the model used successfully in the previous LEADER programme in Lancashire. The shared service will comprise a LEADER Programme Officer and a LEADER Finance Officer (FTE). We have a strong track record in delivering not only RDPE funding but also a wide range of other funding streams, such as the European Regional Development Fund and the Growing Places fund and as a result we have robust financial and programme management systems in place. Lancashire County Council also has its own internal audit capacity which will be used to ensure that the systems used to support LEADER are as effective and efficient as possible.

In order to support the Local Action Group itself, undertake project animation/marketing and support for businesses the Local Action Group will be allocated a dedicated member of staff at Senior Project Officer.

Previous LEADER experience has indicated that this is the most effective way of ensuring the correct level of support for the delivery of the programme. The implementation of Local Development Strategies and management of LEADER resources across the three Lancashire based Local Action Groups will be overseen by a Head of Service within the County Council.

In addition training will be undertaken for Lancashire County Council staff and partners in order to undertake appraisals and provide expert advice, such Business Planning or in specific sector, as appropriate. This will be separate from LAG membership in order to manage conflicts of interest (in support of previous recommendations from the North West RDT) and release capacity to support project and LAG development.

The County Council is currently undergoing a restructure process and as a result the Job Descriptions for the posts indicated above will not be available until later in the year. However, it is envisaged that job and salary levels will be at a level to those currently delivering the LEADER Transition projects across Lancashire

5.3 Project Development and Assessment Procedures

The proposed process for developing, approving and managing projects will be;

Initial Enquiry – interested parties telephone or email to check eligibility in terms of location and type of project. We have already started to encourage potential applications to complete an online enquiry form in anticipation of the new programme, and where appropriate we are visiting those potential applicants to encourage them to begin activity which will aid their application e.g. market research, competitor analysis, obtaining planning permission, thinking about procurement.

Expression of Interest – as stated above we have already begun to invite expressions of interest but once Defra release the documentation for the new programme all future applicants from that point on will be required to complete an Expression of Interest form which will enable us to formally assess eligibility. The EoI is assessed internally and an EoI assessment form is completed and placed on the applicants file. On completion of the EoI applicants are invited to proceed to full application. Note that the initial enquiry sifts out non eligible applicants and activity.

Development Officer Visit – all applicants benefit from a one-to-one support visit to discuss the project in more detail, discuss the application procedure and to answer any questions the applicant may have.

Full application and business plan - we will create a pack of support to assist applicants to complete their own business plan and application. A Business Planning information pack already exists from the previous programme however we can add further value to this to create a useful toolkit with templates for the following:

- Cash flow forecast
- Procurement strategy
- Risk assessment
- How to write a tender document / written specification of requirements
- How to present the information e.g. in a ring binder with file separators

Development Officer Feedback – the applicant provides a draft copy of the application usually electronically but occasionally a site visit will be required. The Officer reviews the information and makes appropriate recommendations. The applicant then amends accordingly and submits a final application.

Appraisal – the application will be appraised by a team of appraisers from Lancashire County Developments Limited. All appraisers will be chosen for their business support experience and they will also undergo rigorous training. The appraiser will direct any queries resulting from the appraisal to the Development Officer who will liaise directly between the applicant and the appraiser. Once all queries have been addressed the appraiser will make a recommendation, which will be to approve, defer or reject the application. The application can then be presented to the LAG Executive.

LAG Executive – the meetings are usually set at the beginning of the year. An Investment Decision Form for each applicant is usually emailed to the Executive 1-2 weeks before the meeting along with an agenda and other appropriate documentation. The Executive considers each application using their knowledge of the area and also any specialist knowledge or expertise relating to a particular application. Normally decisions are made on the day however in some circumstances we may be required to go back to the applicant for clarity.

Minutes and offer letter – following the meeting minutes and an offer letter are produced. The offer letter contains detailed information regarding milestones, outputs, amount offered, special conditions and legal obligations.

The applicant is sent two copies of the application, one to retain and one to return to the LAG within 30 days of receipt.

Claims workshop – all applicants are required to attend the claims workshop. At the workshop they are provided with a file with file separators detailing the documentation they need to retain for audit purposes.

Monitoring visit – all projects receive at least one monitoring visit prior to the processing of their final claim. However, the number of visits depends upon the financial risk associated with the project. Therefore the higher the grant awarded the higher the financial risk.

Exit and evaluation report – the exit and evaluation report is usually conducted at the point where the applicant has stated they will have reached all their targets and outputs. For example, a self-catering business may be physically built by January 2016 but it will take a further twelve months for them to obtain accreditation, build up their bookings, and have their first annual set of accounts. In order to evaluate the success of the project we need to have all this evidence in place.

5.4 Claims and payments

Businesses will need to submit their individual claims as per their timetables in their contracts. It would be envisaged that the claims be on a quarterly basis so the finance team can plan this work into their timetables. The claims are submitted to a dedicated RDPE finance officer who has extensive RDPE experience. Original invoices/evidence needs to be submitted and verified. Also each invoice is clearly marked with the following statement: ' This invoice has been used for RDPE purposes, date and signature' this is to ensure that the same invoice is not submitted twice, thus causing confusion and double funding. All original evidence is then copied and certified and returned to the business.

There will be a two way checking process of the claims. A first check will be carried out by a finance officer who will ensure all evidence is eligible and can be verified and the claim actually adds up: and a second check will be carried out by the RDPE finance officer to give assurance that all finances are eligible and accountable. Once these second checks have taken place the claim will be signed off by the second officer and submitted to the RPA for payment. Copies of the claims are held in the individual business file.

The M & A claim is completed by an experienced finance officer within the shared LEADER service. These claims will be submitted as per the contract on a quarterly basis. All evidence is pulled together and a financial claim is built on all eligible defrayed expenditure. All original invoices and bank statements are seen, copied, and certified. The County Treasurer will sign off all M & A claims. The finance officer will keep all M & A claims together and once the project is completed an independent audit will be arranged by the finance officer who will then issue a certificate of verification.

The M & A claims file will be archived within the finance archive but is always readily available for inspection. Previous RPA inspection on the last programme was very complementary on our systems, hence the same system will be followed for the new programme.

5.5 Programmes of activity

A LAG Executive panel will be selected prior to the end of the transition period to ensure that we are in a position to launch at the earliest opportunity. In addition we will also schedule a launch event for early 2015. The activity will be as follows:

Timescale	Activity
December 2014	Recruitment of LAG staff & training
Ongoing	Recruitment of LAG members
November / December 2014	Recruitment of Executive Members
December 14/January 2015	Training of Executive members
November 2014 onwards	Implementation of the communications strategy including launch events commencing in early 2015 – calls for projects are detailed within the communication strategy

5.6 Sustainability appraisal

Lancashire County Council is committed to ensuring a better quality of life by providing, developing and promoting a healthy, safe, diverse, clean and attractive environment for residents and businesses. This will be achieved by a focus on legislation, climate change, natural resources and waste, landscape, wildlife and heritage and education implementation and monitoring. Activities under each of these strands include ensuring LCC meets its environmental legislative and regulatory requirements, monitoring and minimising the Council's use of energy, minimising the amount of waste produced by the Council and encouraging greater reuse and recycling. Other activity includes the conservation, restoration and re-establishment of habitats and wildlife on land managed by the County Council and also a number of initiatives around education and implementation including the consideration of environmental factors in County Council decisions and activities and the development of environmental objectives and targets to reduce environmental impacts.

Based upon experience of the previous LEADER programme, and feedback from partners and from DEFRA, the Lancashire North and Bowland LAG has been designed to ensure that the programme is managed effectively over the full life cycle of the project, is able to maximise the impact of LEADER resources by leveraging other funds and encourages and sustain partner engagement in both project development, approval and monitoring.

5.7 Proposed cooperation activity

In anticipation of the new programme Lancashire has undertaken joint discussions with a number of other English Local Action Groups to discuss potential cooperation activity including a joint meeting with 19 other prospective Local Action Groups. As result of the meeting the following proposals were put forward for collaboration activity; Visitor payback schemes. Development of farming networks and food trails and supply chain activity. This will be in addition to joint activity undertake with neighbouring Local action Groups in Lancashire, Cumbria and Yorkshire.

5.8 Communications and publicity

Activity	Timescale
LAG Meetings including joint LAG events	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meeting of all the Lancashire LAGs was held to provide members with an update of the 2009-2013 RDPE programme. 	4 th Feb 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meeting of all the Lancashire LAGs was held to provide an update on the transition period 	11 th June 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meeting of the local LAG to formalise Executive membership and discuss next steps 	November/December 2014

Consultation	
North Lancashire – Old Holly Farm	19 th June 2014
Pennine Lancashire – Grindleton Pavilion	19 th June 2014
Lancashire West – Mere Sands Woods	26 th June 2014
All Lancashire - Brockholes	3 rd July 2014
Tourism specific consultation	31 st July 2014
Forestry specific consultation	7 th August 2014
Enterprise specific consultation	5 th August 2014
Rural Services specific consultation	29 th July 2014
Farming specific consultation	30 th July 2014
Culture and heritage consultation	Via email
Newsletters	
Issue 1	April 2014
Issue 2	July 2014
Issue 3	September 2014
Issue 4	December 2014
Further issues	March 2015 (then quarterly)
Web site	
Online enquiry form – has been actively promoted via our newsletter, at all our events and via partner organisations. All enquiries are assessed and, if appropriate site visits are conducted to discuss potential applications for the new programme	Ongoing from March 2014
Update on the previous programme – summary document highlighting the types of activity funded via the 2009-2013 RDPE programme	Ongoing from March 2014
Newsletters – added to the website once they are published	Quarterly
Consultation events – promoted prior to the events taking place. The results of those consultation events and also the theme specific consultation will be added to the web site following completion	August 2014
Tweeting – the consultation events were tweeted on the LCC web site. Further tweets will follow when we launch the programme	Ongoing from March 2014
Press releases	
Good news stories from the previous programme will be used to promote the good work undertaken from 2009-2013, which will also generate interest in the new programme e.g. Box Tree Farm – Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence. Will also promote the new projects as and when appropriate	Ongoing
Launch events – to be held in the New Year to promote the programme.	July 2014
Call for projects – not all the themes will be launched at the same time. Some may be open calls whilst others may be called within a specific timeframe. All calls will be promoted via the press.	Early 2015
	Ongoing 2015
Networking & events	
Networking – working with stakeholders to identify any networking opportunities where we can promote RDP funding.	Ongoing 2014
Events/meetings – presentations at appropriate events and meetings to promote the programme. Or if a presentation is not possible having a presence by way of a stall/stand. E.g. Farmer Network meetings, NFU meetings, Made in Lancashire etc.	Ongoing 2014
Launch events	
A high profile launch event will be held early in the new year to launch the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise 	Early 2015

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Farming <p>The following themes will be launched in 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Services • Forestry • Culture & heritage <p>The events will be promoted via our stakeholders, press releases, via appropriate networking opportunities and via our web site. We have already begun to take enquiries from all sectors and some applicants are in the process of developing their applications in preparation of the new programme.</p>	Likely to be early 2016 but will confirm with LAG Executive once in place
Training	
<p>LAG Member Training – workshops looking at the appraisal and approval process and the decision making process need to be arranged</p> <p>Internal Training – for LCC staff involved in any of the processes e.g. LAG Development Officer, Appraiser, Finance (Claims)</p> <p>External Training – for project applicants e.g. business planning workshop, claims workshop</p>	<p>Early 2015</p> <p>Early 2015</p> <p>Early 2015 and then ongoing</p>
Project Visits	
<p>Site visits to projects that have benefitted from RDPE funding. Available to LAG members and potential project applicants. Minibus to be arranged from County Hall to one or more projects over a half/full day. Also invite members of the press if appropriate.</p>	Annual or bi-annual dependent upon demand

6. Financial plan

Lancashire North and Bowland £2,060,000, however should we be allocated a lesser amount the programme will be scaled down accordingly.

6.1 Expenditure for each year, by measure

Policy Priority	2014/2015	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Enterprise - 40%	£0	£100,000	£200,000	£200,000	£100,000	£100,000	£400	£700,400
Farming - 15%	£0	£50,000	£100,000	£100,000	£12,600	£0	£0	£262,600
Tourism - 20%	£0	£50,000	£100,000	£100,000	£95,000	£5,200	£0	£350,200
Rural Services - 10%	£0	£0	£50,000	£50,000	£47,500	£25,000	£2,600	£175,100
Forestry - 5%	£0	£0	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£12,550	£0	£87,550
Culture & heritage - 10%	£0	£0	£50,000	£50,000	£47,500	£25,000	£2,600	£175,100
M & A – 15%	£25,750	£51,500	£51,500	£51,500	£51,500	£51,500	£25,750	£309,000
Total	£27,750	£251,500	£551,500	£551,500	£439,000	£212,000	£28,750	£2,060,000

6.2 Overall funding profile

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

In order to enhance the flexibility of the Local Action Group to maximise the impact of resources it would wish to allocate resources through a mixture of direct grants and , where appropriate, direct commissioning of activity on key activities.

References

Draft Rural Growth Strategy, Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership (2014)

Rural priorities, Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership (2014)

Economic analysis of Lancashire North and Bowland, Lancashire West and Lancashire Pennine Moors Local Action Group Areas and Strategic analysis of Lancashire's Rural Areas, EKOSgen (2014)

National Characteristic Areas Summaries (Natural England)

Consultation input from over 140 organisations and individuals (list available upon request)