Rural Development Programme for England (2014 – 2020)

LEADER Delivery Plan 2016-17

Name of Local Action Group (LAG)	Lancashire West
Name of Accountable Body (AB)	Lancashire County Council
Date of LAG endorsement of this delivery plan	Agreed via written procedure April 2016.
Signature of LAG Chair (please also print name)	Greg Mitten
Accountable Body countersignature (please also print name)	Sean McGrath
Date previous delivery plan was submitted.	April 2015
LAG total funding allocation (including projects and RCA) in Euros	€1.953

The LEADER Accountable Body must ensure that each LAG approves and submits an annual Delivery Plan, reporting on progress for the previous year and setting out plans in detail for the coming year, and in outline for the remainder of the programme.

The Delivery Plan (which comprises this form and the associated annexes) must be approved through the LAG's agreed decision-making processes before submission.

The Accountable Body must submit by **15 April** each year:

> An Attestation Report and Attestation Certificate

> A Delivery Plan for each LAG for which it is responsible

> Any supporting documentation

Together these form the annual Delivery Plan and Attestation submission, which will be reviewed by the RPA and followed up with the annual Performance Monitoring Inspection.

This must be submitted in electronic format to the Rural Development Relationship Manager by the due date, with any required signatures as a PDF. Signed hard copies should follow within 5 working days.

1. Progress report for the year ending 31 March 2016

Describe your activities in the preceding year. Include activities to publicise the programme, and any consultation, research or evaluation activities.

Compare this to the milestones and activities set out in the Delivery Plan for this period, and explain any differences between what was proposed and what actually took place.

In the 2015-16 Delivery Plan we had planned to open for business on 1st September 2015, with the first applications being considered at an Executive meeting in January 2016. It was our intention to open a call for Farming and Enterprise applications, as this was where we had proven demand, where most of our funding is allocated and where the majority of jobs and growth outputs will come from.

As there was a delay to the programme Nationally, in addition to concerns from LCC regarding the increased risk resulting from new processes and procedures, the launch of LEADER in Lancashire did not commence until 14th December 2016. The short delay has had an impact upon our meeting dates schedule. The first LAG Executive meeting to consider applications was re-scheduled to 27th April 2016 giving applicants just over 15 weeks to work through the two stage application process.

On 14th December we issued a call for outline applications for Farming and Enterprise projects to be submitted by 31st January 2016. The reason we decided to launch the Enterprise and Farming themes first was because we had received 78 registers of interest from businesses/organisations in Lancashire West, most of which were Farming and Enterprise projects. As there are currently just two members of staff delivering the funding across three LAG areas we wanted to ensure their efforts were more focussed on getting these two themes up and running and partially allocated before making decisions on the remaining four themes.

In terms of marketing the programme we have a new web site, which has been extremely well received. We also issued our first newsletter on 14th December 2015 to announce that we were open for business, the newsletter was emailed to almost 700 organisations, stakeholders, partners and businesses across Lancashire. In addition, the LEADER funding has been promoted via organisations such as the NFU, Lancashire West CVS, One West Lancashire, the Local Authorities and Napthen's Solicitors. LCC used their Twitter account to promote the funding and this was also picked up and shared by a number of partners. We are hosting our annual joint LAG event on 16th March 2016, which is open to anyone who lives, works or has an interest in the rural areas of Lancashire.

We had intended to issue the newsletters on a quarterly basis with the next newsletter being due for publication in March 2016 but it is likely that we will wait until May/June before we issue the next one. The reason for this is that we currently do not have any additional news to share with

our partners and stakeholders. However, will have more information regarding the number of approved projects following our LAG Executive meetings at the end of April. Local elections are taking place in May 2016 which means we will not be able to conduct any marketing activity during the Purdah period.

We intend to discuss the other four priorities (Tourism, Culture & Heritage, Basic Services and Forestry) as agenda items at the LAG Executive meetings, this again will likely be based upon evidence of demand. Therefore we are actively encouraging projects that fall within these four priorities to complete our initial registration document to give us a more detailed picture of the local demand. It is unlikely that we will launch the any of the priorities until late 2016 or early 2017. Based upon the number of full applications issued we believe that the April 2016 meeting will have a packed agenda discussing applications so it is doubtful we would have time to discuss the other priorities at this meeting. We will aim to discuss which priority to launch next at the June 2016 meeting.

Given that 70% of the total budget allocation for Lancashire West is via the Enterprise and Farming priorities we want to concentrate our efforts on allocating the majority of the funding this year if possible. With this in mind we have arranged three LAG Executive meetings for Lancashire West this year.

We received 20 Outline Application forms, of those two withdrew and the other 18 have been invited to Full Application. The window for receiving applications is quite short, just two months but being mindful of that we scheduled an additional LAG Executive meeting just two months later ensuring that those who miss the 30th March deadline don't have to wait too long until the next meeting.

Please also complete this table

No of Outline Applications received	20
No of OAs endorsed to submit Full Applications	18
No of Full Applications received	
No of Full Applications approved	
Value in £ of grant in FA's approved	
No if Funding Agreements returned by beneficiaries	
Value in £ of claims paid to beneficiaries	

2. Activities from 1 April 2016 onwards

Complete the **Delivery Plan Tables** (Excel spreadsheet – 5 tabs)

For Tabs 1 and 2 - Budget by LEADER Priorities and Outputs
Copy the figures from last year's delivery plan into the first table.
If you are proposing any changes to these, complete the second table, and explain the changes in section 2.1 below.

If you do not insert any information into the second table on either of these tabs, the information from the 2015/16 Delivery Plan will remain in force for 2016/17.

On Tab 1 Include also your projected project expenditure based on when you forecast the claims will actually <u>be paid</u> i.e. submitted + up to 30 working days for processing a completed claim. This should be the sum of claims across all priorities – there is no need to forecast this expenditure by priority.

Tab 3 Milestones
Complete the milestones table. This should include at least three milestones for 2016/17 by which you will be able to demonstrate that you are making satisfactory progress towards meeting your delivery targets. It should also include as a minimum any of the prepopulated milestones that have not already been achieved e.g. mid-term evaluation, final RCA claim submitted.

Tab 4 RCA Claim Profile
Copy the profiles submitted last year into the first table.
If you are proposing any changes to these, complete the second table, and explain the changes in section 2.1 below.
Each Accountable Body needs to complete this tab only once, covering the aggregated RCA claim profile for all LAGs for which it is accountable.

Tab 5 Membership
List the membership of your main decision-making body. If members have joined, left or changed roles during the year, please indicate this in the final column.

2.1 Programme Overview

Are you proposing any changes to the **objectives and priorities** set out in the last delivery plan, including any changes of greater than plus or minus 10% to the proposed distribution of funding between the six priorities? If so, please give the rationale for this.

No, it is too early to make any judgements regarding any changes. However, we believe that the allocation of funding across the six priorities is a fair reflection of what is needed in Lancashire West.

Are you proposing any significant variations to **expenditure profiling** compared to the previous delivery plan – changes of greater than plus or minus 10% in the overall expenditure in any one year? If so, please give the rationale for this.

No, we do not believe that there is a need to change the expenditure profiles, as these were always based on project spend occurring in 2016/17. The first applications will be considered at the April 2016 meeting with a number of applicants proposing that they start their projects in June 2016. There may be limited claims in July-September 2016 but we anticipate that there will be a number of claims in October – December 2016 and also January – March 2017.

Explain any proposed changes in **lifetime output totals** from the previous delivery plan.

Although we do not want to make any changes to the outputs at this stage we may need to review our outputs next year. The level of grants requested has been much higher than anticipated therefore the number of projects funded may need to be reduced in both Enterprise and Farming. However, the job outputs should remain the same.

Based on the OA's received it would seem that the majority of applicants are seeking between £50k-£100k. For a total of £512,664 we are expected to fund 20 projects with an average grant of £25k so the project sizes are much larger than anticipated. The £25k average project size was given to us by RPA as a guidance when we completed the first Delivery Plan, this figure was based on a national average from the ROD database but on a local level the average project size in the last programme was approximately £40k. We have invited 10 projects to full application and they are requesting a total of £381,126, however it is unlikely that all 10 projects will submit a full application.

Explain any slippage of **milestones** from those set out in the previous year's delivery plan.

Project Officer role was due to be recruited by December 2015 but will not start until 3rd May 2016.

Explain any changes to **RCA claims profile.** (This needs to be completed just once for each Accountable body, covering expenditure for all LAGs for which it is responsible)

Need to complete

2.2 Attestation Year 2016 - 17

Set out your **investment priorities** for the year 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017.

Will you be accepting outline applications throughout the period, or running particular calls for activity with specified deadlines? If the latter, please describe them.

Enterprise (40%) and Farming (30%)

We launched both themes in December 2015. The first meeting to consider applications will take place on 27th April. The call is a rolling call until the funding is fully allocated. We have set deadlines based on which LAG Exec meeting date the applicant wishes to aim for. So, for those applicants wanting to be considered at the April meeting, they must have submitted their full application by the 30th March 2016. If they miss this deadline they will automatically be put forward to the next meeting date, which is 28th June 2016. We are continuing to accept outline applications and the closing date for outline applications for the June meeting is 31st March 2016. We also have a meeting planned for October 2016 and the deadlines for submission are available on our web site.

Tourism (10%)

Although there is little demand for tourism funding in Lancashire West there is high demand for Tourism funding in Lancashire North and Bowland. It will be up to the Exec whether they decide to ensure consistency across Lancashire and issue a call for Tourism projects in line with Lancashire North. Alternatively when the time comes to make a decision regarding funding we will consult our database of enquiries and see where the demand lies. We are encouraging enquiries via our newsletters as without the evidence of demand it is difficult to make decisions.

Basic Services (10%)

There is very strong voluntary and community sector representation in Lancashire West. Our Chair is Chief Officer of West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Services and we also have representation from Community Futures who support the provision of services to support, develop and sustain community life, the Wildlife Trust and Preston Community Transport. So, we have a wealth of experience and knowledge which should hopefully give us the potential to develop some excellent projects via the Basic Services theme. We may choose to launch this before the Tourism theme but again it will depend on evidence of demand.

Culture and Heritage (5%)

As this is a small budget we will likely leave this theme until early 2017. However, it might be more appropriate to launch it at the same time as the Tourism theme. Again we would like to see evidence of demand before we make any decisions. The Canal and Rivers Trust and Wildlife Trust both sit on the Executive so we will use their knowledge and expertise to guide us and we will use our networks to encourage more enquiries to come forward.

Forestry (5%)

Again unless we have evidence of demand this is likely to be the last theme to be launched.

Explain your plans for **publicising the programme** over this period. How will you ensure that you reach the target groups for the types of activity that you are proposing to fund?

Enterprise

When we closed the RPDE Programme in 2013 we began collating a database of interested project applicants. Since the first newsletter issued in December 2015 we have issued 10 Full Application packs to Enterprise projects. Whilst not all of those projects will submit a full application it is an excellent start to the programme. Before we actively promote the Enterprise theme we would like to see what the outcome of the first meeting is as there are likely to be a number of larger projects requesting a higher proportion than the average project size of £25k. Therefore we would to see how much funding is allocated at this meeting, as well as how many applications are approved before we commence any marketing activity. Once the first projects are complete we will work with our communications team to issue a press release and we will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to identify appropriate marketing opportunities.

Farming

We have worked closely with the NFU to promote the funding to the farming community and we also have a number of private sector consultants with whom we work closely. Our total budget for farming is £384,498 and we are required to fund 8 projects, we have invited 6 projects to full application and those projects are seeking £362,001. Other farming enquiries have been received since the programme was launched in Lancashire therefore we will not actively promote this funding as it is likely to be fully subscribed by the end of the year.

Tourism

So far, we have had just four tourism specific enquiries in Lancashire West. In terms of targeting existing businesses we will work closely with Marketing Lancashire to promote the funding. We have liaised with Anna Izza – Head of PR and Communications who suggested we promote the funding via their monthly newsletter, on the web site and also via Twitter. It is likely that we will initially ask for projects to register an interest prior to issuing a call as the handbook lists a wide range of eligible activity and our budget is relatively small. We are also awaiting the publication of the Destination Management Plan, which is due at the end of April.

In order to target any new businesses we will continue to promote the funding on our web site, via our Communications Team and via partners and stakeholders.

Basic Services

As explained earlier we have a very strong voluntary and community sector within Lancashire West, we also have the benefit of voluntary and community sector representation on the LAG Executive and these members have a wide network of contacts through which we can promote the funding. Again we would like evidence of demand before we issue a call as there is only a small amount of funding available and we would like to ensure that we use the funding effectively.

Culture and Heritage

We have just £64,083 available via the Culture and Heritage theme and our proposed outputs indicate that we will fund one project and create 1 job. It is too early to tell at this stage whether we will be able to achieve this as it may be that the demand indicates more small scale projects rather than one large one.

We will aim to promote the funding to Community Groups, Parish Councils and County Councillors via targeted emails.

Forestry

Again the forestry theme has an allocation of just £64,803. We will be reliant upon the Forestry Commission for advice and guidance and we will work with them to target forestry projects. There is limited forestry activity in the Lancashire West LAG.

Please list the dates of **project decision making meetings** that are scheduled for the year. If these are not yet fixed, then give either the months in which you expect them to take place, or the

planned frequency.

27th April 2016

28th June 2016

4th October 2016

Please give an indication of your **expected levels of activity** over the year. *This is to assist with RPA workforce planning, and will not be regarded as a performance target for the LAG*

	Q1 Apr – Jun	Q2 Jul – Sep	Q3 Oct –Dec	Q4 Jan - Mar
No of outline applications received	10	10	10	10
No of full applications received	10 (20 OA rec'd in March)	5	5	8
No of projects approved	10	5	5	8
Value of funds committed	£300k	£150k	£150k	£200k

2.3 Structures and Processes

LAG Membership Complete tab 5 of the Delivery Plan tables with reference to your main decision-making group. Briefly describe the breadth of experience represented on this group, and how it relates to the LAG's priority areas for investment. Are there any shortages in skills or experience, and if so how do you intend to address these?

We have a wide range of experience on the LAG Executive covering all six priority areas. Forestry only has one representative but given that the forestry priority has only 5% of the total budget available this seems to be a fair representation. Enterprise and Farming are particularly well represented as these priorities have 70% of the total allocation. Tourism and Culture and Heritage have a fair representation given the level of funding available for each priority.

Greg Mitten our LAG Chair in both the current and the previous programme, brings seven years LEADER experience. A third of the Executive members were involved in the previous programme.

Terms of Reference Are you proposing any changes to the Terms of Reference submitted with the previous delivery plan, including any of the processes contained within it? If so, explain the proposed changes and the reasons for requesting them here, and attach a copy of the original ToR with the changes shown as tracked changes.

No, the Terms of Reference have not been changed.

Delivering the LDS Explain your arrangements or plans for reporting progress against the LDS and against milestones and targets to the LAG (and to the decision-making body if this is different). How will progress be monitored to ensure that at least 70% of all projects deliver direct economic growth, and the remaining 30% make a contribution to the rural economy? How will you manage and mitigate against any risks to delivering the programme and achieving targets?

Explain your procedures for discussing and agreeing changes to the LDS, your delivery strategy or structures should these become necessary.

The LAG is open to anyone who lives, works or has an interest in the eligible rural LAG area. In the previous programme this was a fixed entity and towards the end of the programme there was very little attendance from LAG members. Therefore, this time we have opened the LAG up to anyone who wishes to attend at that time as peoples interest in the programme will vary according to their interests and needs. The LAG meets on an annual basis, the next LAG meeting will take place on 16th March 2016 at the NFU offices in Skelmersdale. Given that we have such a small team and that budgets are tight we have arranged a joint meeting for all three LAGs. At the meeting we will provide an update on progress for far against the LDS, the Delivery Plans, Cooperation and EAFRD.

Our targets and outputs reflect the 70/30 split and whilst we plan to report on this in 2017 we are unable to provide progress on outputs at the March 16 meeting, as the first LAG Executive meetings to approve projects only take place at the end of April.

The LAG Executive are the decision making body. The Exec is made up of 6 public, 6 private and 5 third sector representation. We have arranged to meet three times per year and the Exec will be informed of progress against targets and outputs at each of the meetings, as this will obviously be a contributing factor when considering project applications. We have an internal system where we can measure how we are performing against outputs, which will highlight if there are any issues or risks. Any issues and risks will then be discussed with the LAG Executive and dealt with accordingly.

Any changes to the LDS would be discussed at the full LAG meeting, as this is the group with whom we consulted to develop the LDS. At present, there are no changes to the LDS although the amount we applied for in the LDS was higher than the amount that we were eventually awarded therefore the level of outputs have been reduced in the Delivery Plan to reflect this. These changes were agreed at the last full LAG meeting in February 2015. We discussed updating the actual LDS document but as this is an historic document and the Delivery Plan is our delivery document we have decided that the changes are adequately reflected in the Delivery Plan.

Engagement and Co-operation Explain the steps you are taking to ensure good communication with other regional partners, funding programmes and neighbouring Local Action Groups. Specifically, explain the arrangements that are in place to engage with the LEP (or LEPs) that cover the LAG area.

Karen Lawrenson sits on the LEG and is also involved in a cooperation task and finish group whose aim is to develop an application process for cooperation activity. The LEG meets twice per year and presents and excellent opportunity to network with LAGs across England. Following each LEG meeting Karen arranges catch up meetings with all NW colleagues to disseminate the minutes of the LEG meeting and to discuss any common issues or ideas. In addition, Karen hosted a cooperation event in April 2015, which was attended by 15 LAGs from across England.

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was involved in the development of the LAG LDS via Lancashire County Council, who act as the lead authority for the Lancashire LEP. The submission of the three Lancashire LDS's were considered and endorsed by the LEP board. Ann Turner, Principle of Myerscough College is the LEP rural lead. Karen Lawrenson and Louise Kite meet with Ann on an ongoing basis to ensure that she is kept informed of developments.