



Findings and Recommendations

There is a substantial range of excellent outputs and outcomes achieved by the Programme which should be celebrated. The Evaluation has concluded that:

- a. The social and community aims and objectives of the Programme have been met; with the targets for activity and spend exceeded.
- b. Project applicants and stakeholders have had a positive engagement with the Programme and want LEADER to continue. They identified particular strengths around how the Programme has supported communities by making investments that are truly sustainable and long term.
- c. The LEADER area has no single administrative unit and has been based upon three geographical/natural areas. This has been important for building upon an already strong partnership ethos to delivery among the National Park, Local Authorities, voluntary sector bodies and community groups. There is broad consensus that the area covered by the Programme has worked well.
- d. The LEADER Approach, as set out by the European Commission, has been at the heart of how the Programme has operated; with funding used to support projects driven by communities.
- e. Build on the successful LEADER delivery process and continue to develop the positive relationship between the Programme Lead Partner (the North York Moors National Park Authority) and the Accountable Body (North Yorkshire County Council) to ensure complementarity between the two roles and ensuring this is clear but responsive and flexible for the next Programme.
- f. Undertake co-operation activities with other LEADER areas and explore the potential for trans-national working where it might add value to the area.
- g. Clearly establish measureable outputs at the start of the Programme and work with project applicants to ensure these are reflected in applications for funding.
- h. Consider the potential role of market towns within a future NYMCH LEADER Programme.
- i. Increase the usage of strategic and commissioned projects to deliver activity.
- j. Consider how the next LAG can secure other sources of funding, including European Structural Funds which would be allocated by the LEPs, to deliver a Programme that will achieve a wider range of outcomes for the area.

The Evaluation has made a series of recommendations and considerations for the future, including to:

- a. Review membership and governance structures of the Executive Group and LAG.
- b. Focus more on economic growth by developing a strong partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to align the new LEADER Local Development Strategy with LEP Growth Plans and deliver more economic outcomes and outputs such as more jobs, employment, better skills and training opportunities.

"Most communities have been touched by LEADER in one way or another... a lot of things show signs of real sustainability."

(LEADER Project Applicant)



Looking To The Future

The Programme is extremely keen to build on its positive experiences by continuing to strengthen the partnership and look to the future. There are huge opportunities for the next LEADER Programme to help more communities and businesses, and deliver an even greater range of activity.

The 2014-2020 round of European and Defra funding has not yet been fully determined however discussions and consultations are currently underway. To plug the gap between the current Programme ending and the start of a new Programme, transition funding has been secured from Defra for the NYMCH LEADER area to maintain the enthusiasm and momentum of what has been achieved so far. The transition period gives the Programme an opportunity to consult with the LAG, local communities and other stakeholders to provide the basis for a new Programme; and will require the Programme to consider how LEADER can align with the strategies of the LEPs giving LEADER a greater economic focus in the future.

"The transition is a period to reflect and looking at making the next Programme more challenging... they've seen what's possible on the ground now the groundwork's done there's an opportunity to see more strategic focus and connections and make a difference." **(Defra representative)**

The full report is available as a separate document and can be downloaded from **www.moorscoastandhills.org.uk**

If you would like to be an Executive Group member, LAG member and/or get involved in helping to develop the next LEADER Programme (2014-2020) for our area please contact Programme staff on **01439 772700** or email **leader@northyorkmoors.org.uk**

"[LEADER has made a] huge difference... helped people who had capacity to do something but not the knowhow. Lots of groups now working together that wouldn't have otherwise... Even unfunded projects go through a lot of development work to move forward."

(Scarborough Borough Council representative)

North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Programme

Evaluation Summary and Celebration

This short report summarises the findings of the evaluation of the North York Moors, Coast and Hills (NYMCH) LEADER Programme undertaken between June and September 2013, and celebrates the achievements and successes of the Programme.

LEADER stands for 'links between the rural economy and development actions' and is a "bottom up" community led approach to rural development. The NYMCH LEADER Programme operated between 2008 and 2013 across administrative boundaries and covered the North York Moors National Park, the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, East Cleveland, and the northern part of the Vale of Pickering. The Programme was allocated a budget of £2.6 million from the European Union and Defra to support activity that met the priorities of the Programme, with a total programme value of £5.3 million when match funding is considered.

Based on extensive community consultation and baseline research in 2008, the vision of the Programme has been to:

"Develop thriving rural and coastal communities and landscapes by improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors and by using our unique landscape and traditions as a foundation to provide appropriate rural development opportunities and address rural social exclusion needs."

Twelve priorities for activity were developed for the NYMCH area which fitted within three Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Measures: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population, Village Renewal and Development, and Conservation and Upgrading of Rural Heritage.

LEADER Programmes in the Yorkshire and Humber region were restricted to the use of these social measures and therefore economic development and parts of the vision around the agricultural and forestry sectors could not be directly addressed. Community development rather than wider business and agri-environment was therefore the emphasis of the Programme.



"The last five years have been both exciting and exhilarating. The bottom up approach has helped so many organisations across the whole LEADER area to bring groups together, achieve their goals, and attract further funding for the benefit of their communities. The LAG, Executive Group and all staff have worked with great commitment and must be congratulated on all that has been achieved. Since the new LEADER Programme will have a clear focus on economic outputs, we must now focus all our thoughts on how we will achieve this."

Peter Spencer, North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Programme Executive Group Chair

"We've learned a new way of working by getting LEADER money... this idea of working from the bottom up. We've worked with local communities regularly in the past... but asking them what they'd like to see and then being able to use LEADER to do this was really good."

(LEADER Project Applicant)

Supporting Small Businesses and the Tourist Economy

Tourism is an important part of the economy of the North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER area which the 'Moors and More' local distinctiveness project sought to support. LEADER funding was provided to establish a network of support for local businesses already involved in tourism as well as those looking to engage with a new market, offer new services and products, or start a new business venture. Within 15 months the project has established a vibrant network, has engaged with more than 200

local businesses, produced a marketing toolkit and held a series of workshop events all designed to encourage businesses to use, promote and benefit from all the area has to offer.

Instances of collaborative working between existing businesses to create new packages and visitor experiences, businesses better marketing and promoting themselves, individuals becoming more confident about how to build their businesses, and business expansion opportunities are already starting to emerge.

Programme Activity

The success of the Programme has been built on the strength of our partnership. The NYMCH Programme has been managed by an Executive Group (elected representatives from the community, voluntary and public sectors) who made decisions on project applications and provided a strategic steer. Support was provided to the Executive Group by a wider Local Action Group (LAG), Programme staff at both the National Park Authority and North Yorkshire County Council, as well as community groups and residents. Many people have volunteered their time and expertise to ensure the Programme has been a success.

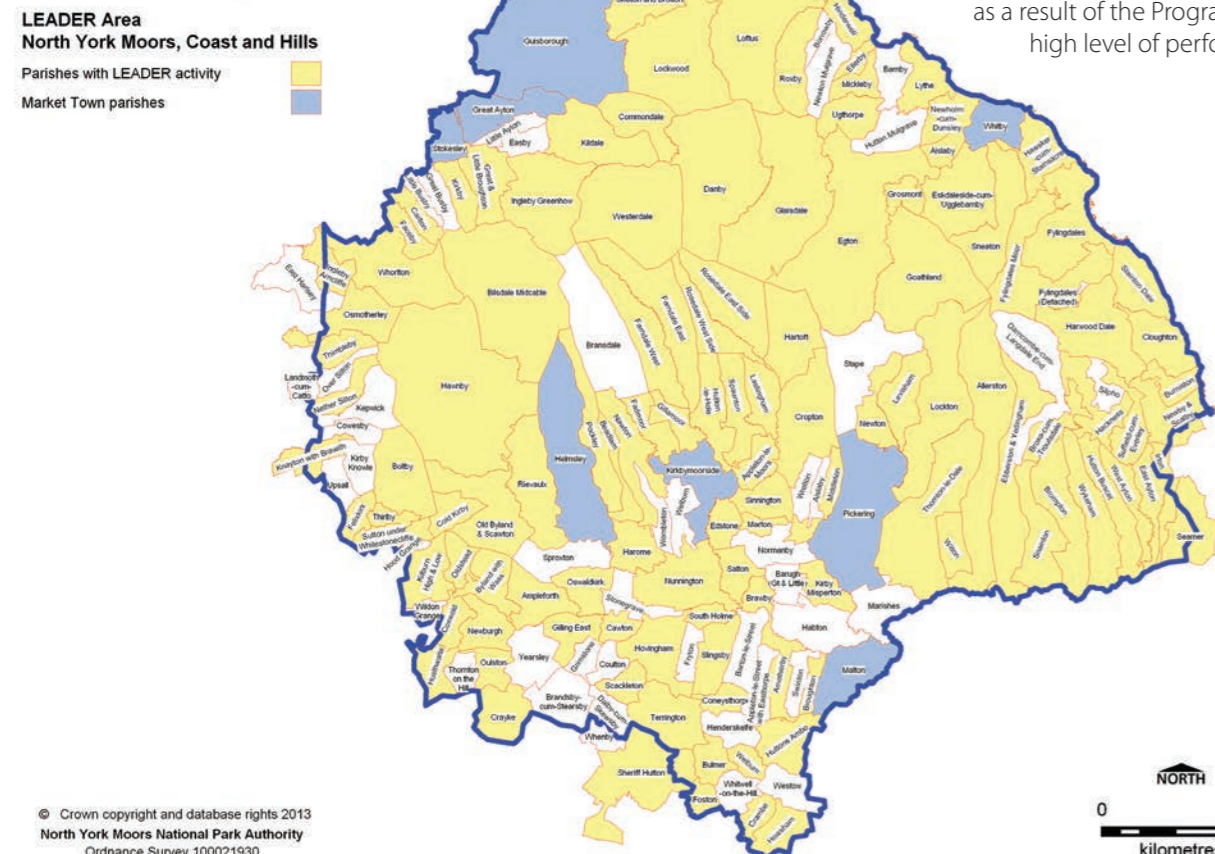
The original consultation process identified a number of small scale improvements that communities wished to see take place. The North York Moors National Park Authority was central to developing the Programme's flagship project the Small Scale

Enhancements (SSE) Scheme, and established the first SSE Scheme in the National Park. This was later followed by similar schemes in Ryedale, Scarborough Rural, East Cleveland and Hambleton. In total 65 projects have been supported through the main Programme across the three measures, and a further 251 through the SSE Schemes.

Co-operation project activity is traditionally a core component of LEADER Programmes. Whilst formal co-operation activity was not included in the current Programme, activity has still taken place through the 'Creative Coast' project which brought together five LAGs from along the North Sea Coast to support groups involved in delivering arts and heritage events and festivals.

The ability of the NYMCH LEADER Programme to effectively plan and implement a strategy for spend on an annual basis means the full budget of £2.6 million has been spent to profile and was an important contributing factor in Defra's decision to award the Programme with additional funding. Between May 2012 and May 2013 a further £322,000 was received as a result of the Programme's high level of performance.

North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Programme



Offering Apprenticeships to Young People

The Yorkshire Moors Agricultural Apprenticeship Scheme (YMAAS) is a group of farmers offering apprenticeships to young people aspiring to be upland farmers. Apprentices gained an agricultural qualification and practical work experience over the 18 month course.

Following the completion of their apprenticeship:

- Apprentice 1 started working for a local fencing contractor part time and on a local farm part time. He also bought his own small flock of Swaledale sheep and undertook an NVQ Level 3 in Agriculture.
- Apprentices 2 and 3 moved on to work in a local slaughter house.
- Apprentice 4 continued to work part time on his host farm as well as being self-employed and undertaking local contract work.
- Apprentice 5 also continued to work 1 day per week for his host farm and secured a new job on a farm near Bedale.



- Apprentice 6 secured further employment in the agricultural / farming sector.
- The final apprentice (7) no longer works in agriculture but moved to employment in the construction trade.

YMAAS was cited as a case study of good practice in Defra's Uplands Policy Review.

The North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Programme at a Glance: Facts and Figures

The following facts and figures illustrate the exciting range of projects and positive outcomes the Programme has delivered.

- The LEADER area operates across administrative boundaries to reflect the people and landscape covered by National Character Areas.
- 172 settlements in the LEADER area have been supported or have benefitted in some way from the Programme – that's 86% of the total area.
- 10 apprenticeships and 24 work placements (of 6 months or more) have been created by the Programme.
- The distribution of expenditure indicates that the Programme has been successful in engaging local communities to undertake activities that provide social benefit (e.g. improvements in community facilities and community capacity building).
- 47 community buildings have received LEADER funding to improve the quality of provision and the range of services / activities for the local community.
- 20 listed structures have received much needed restoration / repair work.
- Practical conservation / habitat improvement work has taken place at 27 sites.
- 63 features of the built environment / village streetscape have been restored (e.g. water pumps, war memorials, church clocks, telephone kiosks, gate piers, pinfolds and trods).
- NYMCH has been recognised as 'high spend' by the National LEADER Evaluation (i.e., committing and spending 75-89% of its budget or more when benchmarked with all LEADER areas across England) and was one of the best performing Local Action Groups (LAGs) nationally in respect of this.



Outputs

It is very clear that the NYMCH LEADER Programme was intended to be bottom up, grassroots and community led – investing in individuals as much as projects themselves. It should be made clear that at the outset formal outputs were not a requirement of the Programme by Defra. Targets for the Programme were set and mostly exceeded:

Output Measure	Basic Services	Village Renewal	Conservation & Heritage	NYMCH Total To June 2013
Projects Planned – contract offer letter	40	55	48	143
Projects Actual – Main Programme	20	27	18	65
Projects Actual – Small Scale Enhancement Schemes	14	65	172	251
Total Number of Projects Supported	34	92	190	316

As a result of the lack of opportunity to incorporate targeted economic activity within the Programme, the approach taken was to invest in social / community led projects that could be deemed sustainable in the longer term. However, the Programme has delivered a number of notable economic achievements:

- 2.1 FTE jobs were directly created as a result of LEADER funded activity with further indirect job benefits.
- 242 businesses directly benefitted from LEADER activity.
- 1,198 hours of business support activity was delivered directly to businesses.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests businesses which engaged with the 'Moors and More' local distinctiveness project are starting to expand their businesses, work collaboratively and re-focus the direction of their business to become more economically viable.

- 10 apprenticeships and 24 long term work placements (6 months) were created.
- Low level support provided to community buildings has helped to generate additional economic activity. For example, a new kitchen at Hovingham Village Hall is used to generate revenue by the community at each Farmers Market which is then re-invested in village events, activities and facilities. To date this has raised in excess of £18,000.

"They've [the Executive Group] always looked at the sustainability of each project... A number were rejected for not being sustainable. The work that [names of LEADER staff] have done [has] always prompted sustainability and it's now become embedded philosophy."

(Hambleton District Council representative)

The Added Value of LEADER

Social Return On Investment (SROI) is a framework for measuring and accounting for value that moves away from financial transactions (i.e. the amount of money a project has received from LEADER) to take account of less tangible social, environmental and economic factors. This process was undertaken with three projects: the East Cleveland Minibus Brokerage Scheme, the Cleveland Ironstone Mining Museum and Cold Kirby Community Project.

Serving the small communities of Cold Kirby, Scawton and Old Byland, the Cold Kirby Community Project was taken on by a new committee of volunteers with plans to bring the hall to the centre of village life once again. SROI analysis shows that £13.14 of additional investment is secured for every £1.00 given in grant funding to the project which greatly exceeds the average expected return on revenue projects which is approx. £6.00.

Cold Kirby Community Project

