

East Leicestershire LEADER

Local Development Strategy 2014-2020

350
Businesses
benefitting

72
Jobs created

72
Jobs
safeguarded

25
Farm Holdings
supported

We are
bidding for
£1.7m

Our Mission statement

Working with communities and businesses to nurture a growing and prosperous rural economy which will provide access to, and support the development of: local jobs, local services and local products, whilst retaining and enhancing our local heritage and environment.

Our priorities

Well connected and innovative land-based businesses supported to improve their productivity and exploit diversification opportunities

1

A growing food and drink sector producing and promoting high quality local foods

2

Networked home-based businesses and micro enterprises with confidence to grow

3

A thriving short-stay destination for people interested in: fine food and drink, culture and heritage, field and outdoor pursuits

4

Active and inclusive communities that are able to help provide local services

5

Vibrant rural towns underpinning a thriving economic hinterland

6

Contents

Section	Page
1 Introduction	
- East Leicestershire LEADER area	2
2 The Local Action Group Partnership	
- Membership	3
- Structure	4
- Decision making process and terms of reference	5
- Local Action Group grants panel	5
- Leader Advisory Network	6
- Operational arrangements	6
- Local Action Group – staff, numbers and job descriptions	6
- Equal opportunities statement	8
- Involvement of the community and consultation activity undertaken	8
- Training requirements	9
3 East Leicestershire LAG Area	
- Map of the area	9
- Rural population covered and broader statistical profile	9
- Survey results	11
- Rural workspace study	13
- Tourism accommodation study	13
4 The Strategy	
- Strategic alignment with LLEP activity	14
- Alignment with other local strategies	16
- SWOT analysis of the local area	17
- Local priorities and programmes of activity	20
- Mobilisation / action plan	25
- Sustainability appraisal	26
- Proposed cooperation activity	27
5 Management and Administration	
- Accountable Body	28
- Project development and assessment procedures	28
- Monitoring and evaluation	29
- Finance – claims and payments	29
- Communications and publicity	30
- Signature and contacts	31
APPENDICES	
A Finance profile	
B Output profile	
C LLEP letter of support	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Local Development Strategy (LDS) outlines our approach to delivering sustainable rural development within East Leicestershire. Over the six years of the programme we will work with new and existing local businesses to deliver good quality employment opportunities whilst empowering local communities to shape services that will ultimately support growth within the local rural economy. The mission statement of the Local Action Group is:

Working with communities and businesses to nurture a growing and prosperous rural economy which will provide access to, and support the development of: local jobs, local services and local products, whilst retaining and enhancing our local heritage and environment.

- 1.2 The Local Action Group will contain a cross-sector group of specialists in the rural field, but will also utilise the expert knowledge of Leicester and Leicestershire's Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) and the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) to ensure that the priorities within this LDS are delivered. In addition, consideration has been given to the wider strategic context of the area and as such this LDS will also make a significant contribution to delivering the economic vision for Leicester and Leicestershire as set out in the Strategic Economic Plan 2014-2020:

'To create a vibrant, attractive and distinctive place with highly skilled people making Leicester and Leicestershire the destination of choice for successful businesses'

And the 2026 vision for rural Leicestershire as set out in the LRP Rural Framework:

'In 2026 rural Leicestershire will be made up of thriving, cohesive and safe communities, which have access to a choice of high quality and sustainable employment opportunities, a mix of housing and essential local services.'

East Leicestershire LEADER area

- 1.3 East Leicestershire is a hidden gem in central rural England with a strong heritage of mixed agriculture which typifies its picturesque rolling countryside. It is home to a number of iconic food and drink brands including Stilton Cheese and the Melton Mowbray Pork Pie (both with protected status). The nationally recognised brand of the Vale of Belvoir, home to Belvoir castle, supports a range of locally produced products as Belvoir Brewery and Belvoir Fruit Farms.
- 1.4 The area is serviced by two main rural hub towns: Melton Mowbray, known for its food and drink and nationally significant Cattle Market; and Market Harborough, one of England's finest market towns with a strong independent retail offer and good train connections to London.
- 1.5 The LEADER area runs east from the M1 through Harborough and Melton districts and has a dispersed pattern of very small service centres and only effectively 3 larger service centres, Lutterworth, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray. It comprises a small number of settlements in the east of Charnwood and Blaby districts. Five adjoining larger settlements are also very important to the economy of the area: Leicester, Loughborough, Corby, Oakham and Grantham.
- 1.6 The area has lower wages than the national average, which have declined in relative terms (compared to the national average) since the recession in 2008. It does however have a higher skills base than the national average. These two factors combined suggest that a significant proportion of those who commute out of the area for work have higher skills levels.

- 1.7 The area is well endowed with centres of excellence and expertise in land based industries in the context of the Allerton Project based in Harborough and Melton Brooksby College in Melton, and innovation in terms of PERA in Melton Mowbray. The Harborough Innovation Centre in the south of the area provides a thriving hub for rural businesses to access advice and share knowledge, in the north there are also plans to develop a Food Enterprise Centre to support small and micro businesses in the food processing and manufacturing sector.
- 1.8 Overall the area provides clear scope for intervention through LEADER to deliver jobs and growth across all of the LEADER priorities. It has a relatively buoyant agricultural sector with other dynamic associated food and tourism businesses, a skilled workforce and a nationally significant stock of homeworkers.

2. The Local Action Group Partnership

- 2.1 The Local Action Group (LAG) is the responsible partnership for the LDS and will be charged with its overall management and strategic direction. It will work closely with two existing partnerships: the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) to ensure programme activity is aligned and expertise shared.

Membership

- 2.2 The LRP which is acting as sponsor for this LEADER proposal has a long tradition of over 20 years coordinating rural development activities in the county. To oversee the development of this LDS the LRP has developed a Shadow LAG selecting members to provide good coverage of the East Leicestershire area and emerging themes. The Shadow LAG held its inaugural meeting on the 16th June 2014, and has had two subsequent meetings providing challenge and expert advice ensuring a robust and deliverable LDS. Details of attendees of the shadow LAG are listed below:

Table 1: Shadow LAG Membership

Name	Title	Organisation	Sector
Cllr Pam Posnett	Chair	Leicestershire Rural Partnership*	Partnership
Mary-Louise Harrison	EU SIF Coordinator	Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership*	Partnership
Tom Purnell	Assistant Chief Executive	Leicestershire County Council*	Public
Lynn Aisbett	Chief Executive	Melton Borough Council*	Public
Norman Proudfoot	Corporate Director	Harborough District Council*	Public
Cat Hartley	Development Strategy Manager	Blaby District Council*	Public
David Hankin	Economic Regeneration	Charnwood Borough Council*	Public
Jeremy Prescott	Chief Executive	Rural Community Council* (Leicestershire & Rutland)	VCS
Maxine Aldred	Development Manager	Federation of Small Businesses*	Private
Martin Peters	Chief Executive	Leicestershire Promotions Ltd (DMO)*	Private
Carol Puddephatt	LNR County Adviser	National Farmers' Union*	Private
Kevin Ross	Manufacturing Consultant	PERA (deliverer of Growth Accelerator and Manufacturing Advisory Service)*	Private

Pev Manners	Managing Director	Belvoir Fruit Farms Country Land and Business Association*	Private
Stephen Vickers	Managing Director	Buckminster Estate Country Land and Business Association*	Private
Richard Harvey	Managing Director Partner	Manor Farm Feeds (Owston) Ltd RH & PA Harvey Farms	Private
Andrew Granger	Partner	Andrew Granger & Co Estate Agents	Private
Paul Waberski	Partner Chairman	Brown and Co (Land Agents) Melton Mowbray NFU	Private
Julia Hawley	Owner	Hall Farm, Brentingby	Private
Chris Ball	Principal	Brooksby Melton College	FE

* Letters of support have been received from these organisations

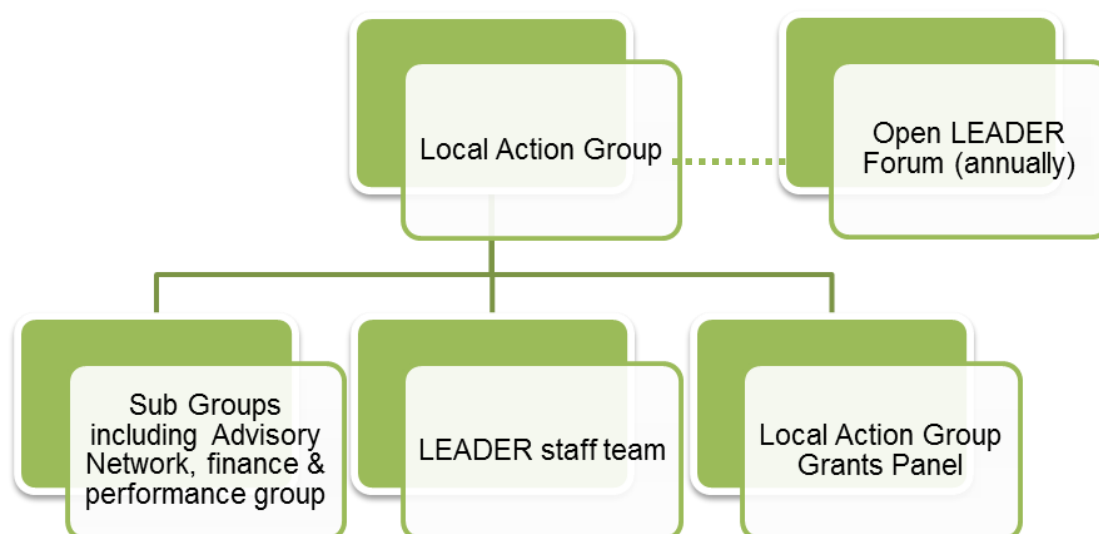
- 2.3 Discussions have been held via the LLEP Board with local HE institutions including Loughborough University and the University of Leicester*, with a commitment to a having HE representation on the LAG. Many Parish Councils have been engaged through the consultation process and through the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils; a place would be available for a Parish Council representative on the LAG.
- 2.4 Once funding is confirmed the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) will oversee recruitment of the Local Action Group, drawing members from the public, private and Voluntary / Community sector (VCS). Consideration will be given to ensuring that: at all meetings quorum is achievable (including greater than 50% from non-public bodies); experts are recruited across all six LEADER policy priorities; and our equalities statement is actioned. Membership will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains a dynamic model and is fit for purpose with any new emerging themes or changing local / regional structures. Once the Local Action Group is established a chair and vice-chair will be elected. Elections for these positions will be undertaken every two years.

Structure

- 2.5 Our potential overall structure for the LAG process (see Chart 1) includes:
- A LAG of up to 18 individuals, which is representative of the LDS sectors. The group will meet quarterly to govern the programme.
 - Delegated authority will be given to a grants panel of up to 6 LAG members to undertake appraisal and approval of projects that clearly meet the priorities and eligibility criteria set by the LAG. Decisions on all grants will be reported to the LAG and final sign-off will be undertaken by the LAG chair. This will enable LAG meetings to focus on driving-up performance and the strategic direction of the LDS. The grants panel will meet every 6-8 weeks.
 - Sub-groups will be established to monitor finance and performance, as well as programme development work on behalf of the LAG; they will be chaired by a suitable LAG member. Sub-groups may also include members from outside of the main LAG group to contribute specialist expertise and local knowledge. They will include a standing network of individuals with recognised areas of expertise, working as a remote "Advisory Network"¹.
 - An open LAG forum to be held annually to support the programme more widely.

¹ All LAG associated groups will have >50% private sector representation at meetings

Chart 1: LAG Structure



Decision making process and terms of reference

- 2.6 The LAG is the responsible partnership for the LDS and is charged with the overall management and strategic direction of the LDS. It will monitor the progress of the programme locally. The value of the group comes from its role in bringing local people together to stimulate ideas and co-produce projects which would not otherwise have happened, or would have been much more difficult to develop, had the partnership group not been there.
- 2.7 The main functions of the LAG are: to ensure the LDS is implemented effectively and that it delivers on its priorities; achieves its target outputs; liaises with partners; develops and oversees strategic projects and ensures financial probity. It will also advise the LEADER programme team on the development of bids and proposals, help monitor overall programme progress and support the development and implementation of the evaluation and monitoring framework.
- 2.8 The LAG members will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:
- To contribute to strategic development and decision-making.
 - To ensure that effective management arrangements and an effective team are in place.
 - To help to clarify which decisions are reserved for the LAG and then ensure that the rest are clearly delegated to the sub groups and staff team.
 - To hold management to account for its performance in meeting agreed goals of the LDS.
 - To ensure that financial information is accurate and that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible.
 - To live up to the highest ethical standards and comply fully with the Code of Conduct and Equalities Statement outlined in this LDS.
 - To be proactive by assisting in developing, monitoring and mentoring projects.
 - In addition LAG members should be able to demonstrate experience and understanding of: East Leicestershire, LEADER and the EU funding; all 6 LEADER themes; sustainability.

Local Action Group grants panel

- 2.9 The duties of the Grants Panel will be to develop approaches to the stimulation of applications, to complete a thorough assessment and appraisal of applications, approve applications, providing feedback to successful and unsuccessful applicants. They will also monitor project progress against expenditure and outcomes and mentor projects to ensure successful delivery. Membership of the

Grants Panel will be drawn from individuals with particular expertise in the LEADER priorities for the 2014-20 programme (see Section 5 for more information on the grant approval process).

LEADER Advisory Network

- 2.10 Membership of the virtual Advisory Network will comprise at least one representative from each of the key strands within the LDS. These individuals, separate from members of the other groups associated with the programme and the decision making process, will provide a reality check and sounding board which is fresh and challenging.
- 2.11 The role of the advisory network will be to:
- Advise the LEADER programme team on the development of bids and proposals.
 - Advise the LEADER programme team at the EOI stage of the key strengths, weaknesses and scope for refinement of project proposals.
 - Advise applicants, where appropriate, who are unsuccessful in the first instance on the process of refreshing their proposals.

Operational arrangements

- 2.12 **Quorum:** At any meeting of the LAG there must be a minimum number of 7 partners present, with greater than 50% being from no-public bodies. If a quorum is not present 30 minutes after the time set for the start of the meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned to another time or to another date. Partners can identify a named substitute to attend meetings when the nominated representative is unable to attend.

Chairpersons: At all meetings of the LAG, the elected Chairperson, or Vice-Chairperson, shall preside over the meeting. If both are absent, partners will choose a member to preside.

Special meetings: Special meetings may be called at any time if the LAG or secretariat receives a request from Partners setting out the purpose of the business to be considered at that meeting.

Declarations of interest: Where an interest has been declared from a group member as the applicant, then they should withdraw from the meeting while the item is discussed. For clarification, match funders, if they are not the applicant, are eligible to participate and vote on the discussions relating to the application. Where a LAG member organisation shares board members, directors or other senior officials with an applicant organisation, and the LAG representative is aware or is made aware of such a connection, that representative should declare the connection as an interest. Where it is felt that this would not unfairly favour or prejudice the application, the remaining members present at the meeting may decide that the organisation declaring the interest need not abstain from the discussion of, and decision on, the relevant item.

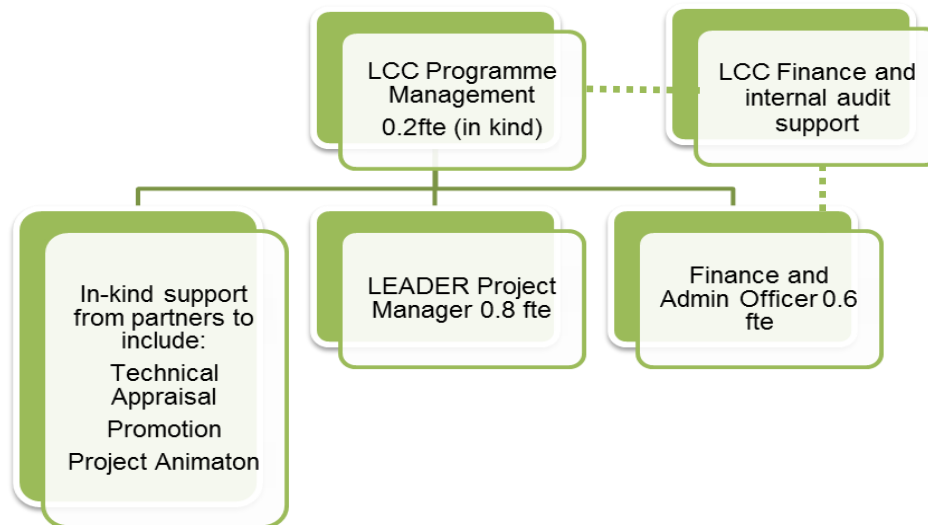
Voting: Subject to compliance with the LEADER guidelines as laid down by the European Commission, all questions coming or arising before the meeting will be decided by a majority of the members present. Views from partner organisations submitted in writing or by e-mail prior to the meeting will be accepted and included as part of the decision making process. A vote may be taken by a show of hands. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson will have a second or casting vote.

Local Action Group – staff, numbers and job descriptions

- 2.13 LEADER staff will be employed by LCC as the Accountable Body and will include 1.4 FTEs funded through LEADER, with in-kind support in terms of programme management, technical appraisal of projects and finance (see Chart 2). LCC, Melton Borough Council and Harborough District Council have all committed in-kind officer time of at least 1 day per week per authority to support the development and implementation of the programme. This will enable a clear separation of duties

between the following functions: project animation / appraisal / approval, claim recommender, claim authoriser and monitoring visits; this will be adhered to and recorded for each project.

Chart 2 – LAG Staff Structure



Programme Management (in-kind support), roles and responsibilities to include:

- line management of LEADER Project Manager and Finance / Admin Officer;
- responsibility for financial and compliance management to ensure robust delivery;
- alignment with LEP Strategic Plans and national funding programmes;
- an effective, inclusive and transparent programme responsive to the needs of the area and meeting the LDS aims and objectives;
- a robust programme of monitoring and evaluation that meets Defra and EU Audit requirement.

LEADER Project Manager – roles and responsibilities to support the above and:

- develop and strengthen relationships with national and EU actors, including liaising with the RDPE Network;
- guidance and support to the LAG, its Chair and members;
- create a strong partnership of private, public and voluntary sector players by creating communication channels and opportunities for networking;
- establish an effective communication strategy (see Section 5)
- engage with programme funding applicants - provide advice and guidance to projects.

Finance / Admin Officer (supported by LCC Finance Team) – roles and responsibilities to include:

- be responsible for providing comprehensive support to programme beneficiaries;
- administer and record project claims, liaise with Internal Audit and finance team to ensure that claims are fully eligible and compliant; process all financial information relating to grant funding
- collate information for board meetings and presentations;
- implement and manage a programme of monitoring and evaluation;
- design training locally around project and financial issues and EU monitoring requirements for all applicants and other training areas as required;
- ensuring compliance with state aid rules and National Operating Manual once released.

Technical Appraisal of projects - A virtual team of individuals will be pooled from LCC and partner organisations to undergo project appraisal training; this will provide a flexible resource to undertake technical appraisals of projects. There will be a clear separation of duties between those undertaking appraisals and those doing project animation or monitoring / finance of the programme.

Project Animation - Both Melton Borough Council and Harborough District Council have committed 1 day per week of officer time that will provide valuable support to the project manager to help project facilitation and animation within their districts.

Equal opportunities statement

- 2.14 In March 2011, Leicestershire County Council successfully achieved the 'Excellent' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government. As Accountable Body, the County Council will oversee an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment of the LDS which will consider whether there are any unintended consequences for each of the nine protected characteristics, in addition to other secondary or potentially vulnerable groups. Any actions arising from this process will then be implemented and monitored via an Equality and Human Rights Improvement Plan, owned by the Chief Executives Department.

It is a fundamental requirement of LCC's Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment and performance management processes to collect equality monitoring data on projects to develop a better understanding of customers and service users to design and deliver processes and programmes that meet the needs of all.

In allocating LEADER funds and throughout the process of application, selection and implementation the LAG will have due regard to the objectives listed in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty). The LAG will also be committed to incorporating in its decision-making processes the values inherent in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the community cohesion agenda.

The LAG will aim to be fully representative of the wider community and target specific groups addressed by the LDS. All members of the LAG and associated support staff will receive appropriate training to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and knowledge of the Human Rights Act 1998 and community cohesion agenda.

All approved projects, procured activity and partners will comply with equalities and human rights legislation through having appropriate policies and practices in place. Evidence of these policies and practices will need to be provided upon request.

Involvement of the community and consultation activity undertaken

- 2.15 Focus groups and wider stakeholder consultations, reaching over 300 individuals, have been held at a number of locations to ensure full coverage across the LEADER geography. Including:
- 2 x Leicestershire Rural Conference workshops
 - 4 x Focus groups (1. farming and forestry businesses, 2. Homeworkers, micro and small businesses, 3. Tourism, arts and culture, 4. Rural services).
 - 2 open public meetings (attended by 70+ people from communities and businesses).
 - LEADER e-survey (64 responses) and Rural Workspace e-survey (74 responses).
 - 22 property agents and 15 intermediaries engaged through the rural workspace study.
 - Meetings with key stakeholders including LLEP, NFU, Forestry Commission, Creative Leicestershire, Museums Service, Leicestershire Promotions, County Farms, Allerton Project.
 - Over 20 initial project ideas from businesses and communities have also been captured through this consultation.
- 2.16 Promotion of consultation activity has been through a range of channels including websites, local press, parish councils, social media, business & community networks, newsletters & e-bulletins.
- 2.17 Particular attention has been paid to reaching under-represented groups, with details of the LEADER consultation being circulated through the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group,

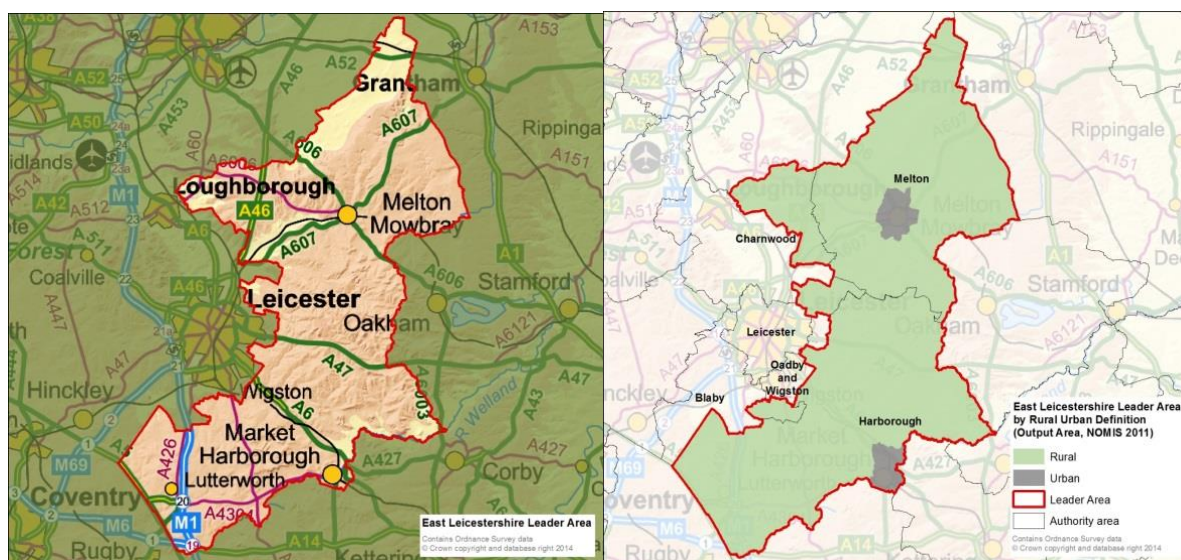
which includes over 30 organisations representing minority groups in Leicestershire. Details have also been circulated through the Young Farmers networks.

Training requirements

- 2.18 Staff and LAG members will be provided with mandatory training enabling them to effectively fulfil the roles and responsibilities laid out in their respective job descriptions. The programme will be reviewed six monthly and updated when new information is distributed. Staff and LAG attendance at both core and refresher events will be monitored to ensure all staff and LAG members receive training. In addition, LCC employed LEADER staff will be subject to Performance and Development Reviews which will identify required training and development opportunities.
- 2.19 Staff and LAG members will participate fully in the RDPE Network – this is important in developing relationships and sharing learning with other programmes in England and across the EU.

3. The East Leicestershire LAG Area

Map 1: LAG geographical coverage and coherent boundaries (Details on the census output areas have already been submitted and agreed by the local Defra team)



Rural population covered and broader statistical profile²

- 3.1 **Population (census- 2001-11)** - The population of the East Leicestershire Leader area is 146,416. 95,734 is classified as rural with 50,682 living in the rural hub towns of Melton Mowbray (27,420) and Market Harborough (23,262). The area experienced a significant growth in its more elderly population cohort (>64yrs up by 17% compared to 11% for England and Wales) and a relatively large decline in its younger population (<16yrs down by over 5%) compared to England and Wales which grew by 1% overall.

² This statistical profile set out below has been constructed wherever possible using Isoa /Coa data to provide as tight and authentic a match with the actual LEADER area of East Leicestershire as possible.

- 3.2 **Jobs and Sectors (BRES 2012)** - In 2012, there were over 55,300 jobs in the East Leicestershire LEADER area. Compared to the England and Wales average the area had a higher representation of employees in the following sectors: transport and storage, wholesale and associated activities and production.

Whilst relatively small in number, the area is strongly represented, with recent growth trends in the number of employees in activities such as food production, manufacture of timber products, tourism, arts and culture – collectively these sectors account for approaching 10% of all employees in the area. 7% of England and Wales butter and cheese production is also based within the area.

- 3.3 **Homeworking (Census 2011)** - The area has a nationally significant proportion of homeworkers (7.9%, almost 5,960 homeworkers) compared to the England and Wales average (5.4%).

- 3.4 **Business Numbers (BRES 2012)** - The area has a stock of 7,700 businesses units and more business units than the national average in terms of: construction, production, forestry and fishing.

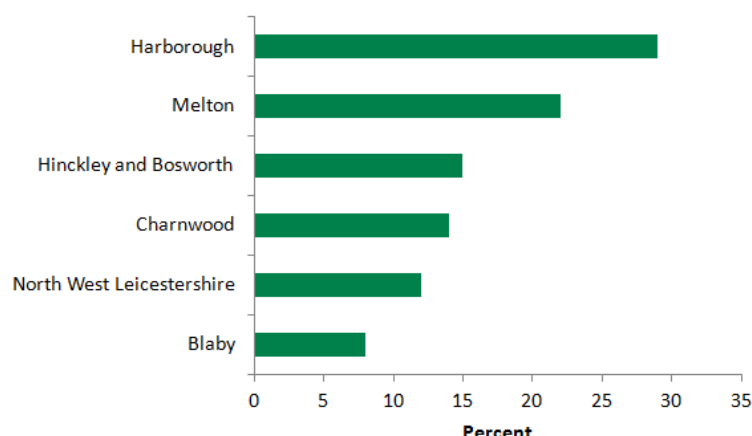
- 3.5 **Business Type/Size (BRES 2012)** - The area has moderately more small businesses than the national average and moderately fewer larger businesses, the figures are as follows:

No of employees in business	SME (1-249)	0-9	10-49	50-250	250-499
East Leicestershire	99.58%	86.68	10.8	2.1	0.27
England	99.55%	83.09	13.56	2.9	0.29

As the focus of LEADER will be on interventions with smaller businesses this demonstrates a significant cohort of micro businesses (over 6,500) to target.

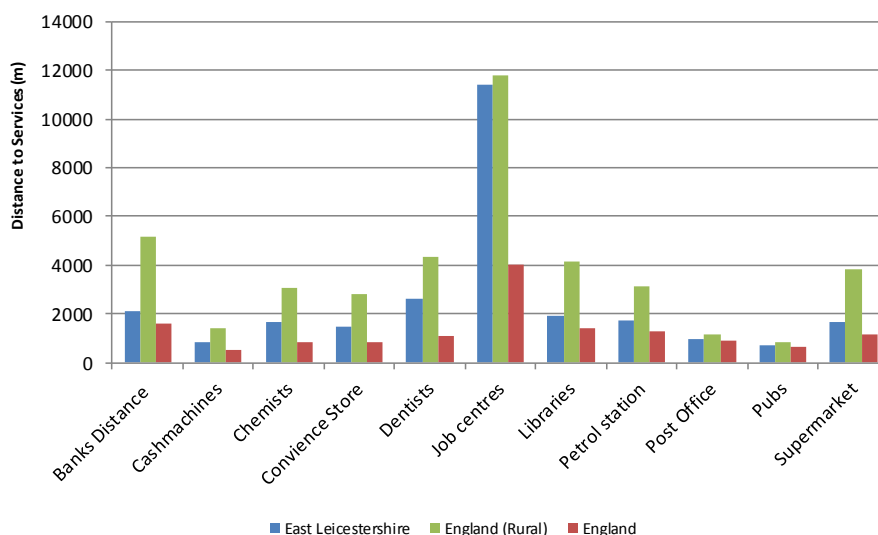
- 3.6 **Resident Earnings (ASHE 2008-13)** - The area has moderately lower resident earnings than the national average. All wages (including part time earnings) have grown more rapidly, since 2008, than the national average over the same period: 10% compared to 7.6%.
- 3.7 **Benefit Claimants 2008 – 2013 (ONS 2008-13)** - The area has a smaller proportion of all benefit claimants than the national average: 6.7% compared to 13.1% albeit this figure grew more rapidly since 2008: 2.6% compared to 1.9%. However, this situation is a relatively recent development, and for most of the period overall levels of benefit claimants have been higher than the national average.
- 3.8 **Qualifications (Census 2011)** - The area has a larger proportion of more highly skilled workers than the national average (NVQ4) 30% compared to 27% and a lower proportion of people with no qualifications 19% compared to 23%.
- 3.9 **Farming (Census of Agriculture 2007-10)** - In 2010, there were approximately 1,110 farms in the East Leicestershire area, cultivating 100,400 hectares of land and employing just over 2,800 people. Harborough and Melton Districts, which form the core of the area, have over half all the employees involved in agriculture in Leicestershire as a whole. As well as being a significant sector in the area, this provides good opportunities for job creation through diversification activities.
- 3.10 **Forestry (Forestry Commission 2013)** - The area has the following distribution of forestry: total woodland 4,921 hectares (4.2% of landmass), the vast majority of this forestry is privately owned, 4,819 hectares only 38.6% of this woodland is actively managed. The relatively limited amount of woodland in the area suggests considerable potential for further support of this sector through LEADER, which chimes well with the small but modestly growing number of forestry employees.

Chart 3 - Distribution of Farm Labour, 2010



- 3.11 **Access to Services (dft 2013)** - The area has relatively poor access to services; a number of settlements in Melton and Harborough east of the A6 are significantly challenged in this context. The inclusion of Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray as hub-towns in puts a more positive spin on the access to services figure than would otherwise be the case.

Chart 4 – Distance to Local Services, 2013



E-survey results

- 3.12 An e-survey was circulated to a wide range of stakeholders across the 6 priority groups identified by LEADER. 64 responses were returned.

Table 2: E-survey respondents

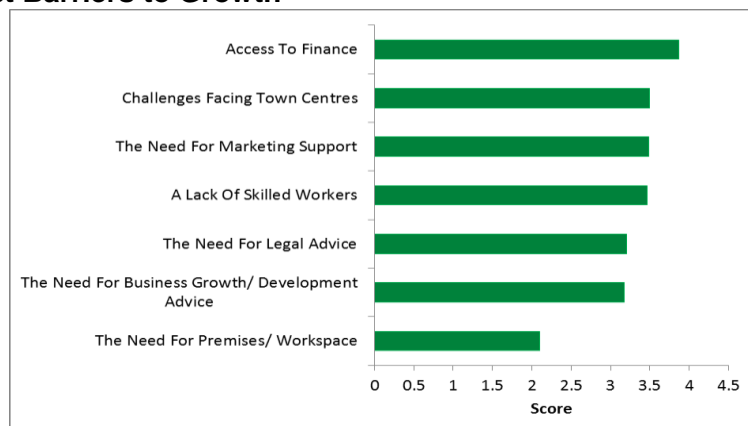
Priority Groups	Respondent %
Farming and Forestry	30.2%
Rural Services	19.0%
Micro-Businesses	34.9%
Arts and Culture	6.3%
Tourism	9.5%

- 3.13 **Barriers to growth** – respondents were asked about barriers to growth using a score rating of 1-5 where 5 represented the greatest barrier. Their responses were aggregated to give a composite score for the whole survey cohort.

The most eye-catching outcomes from these responses are the significant challenges identified around business finance and town centres and the low rating indicated around the need for workspace. This is qualified somewhat by the accommodation study (see below) which indicated that it was the quality and location of workspace (with too little mid-range provision available) which was the key challenge in terms of unmet demand.

Whilst other areas of support are available in terms of business finance, the survey response on this issue reflects the fact that there may be a significant number of under-capitalised small businesses in the area. The challenges around town centres indicate that the inclusion of the two hub towns in the area provides good scope for LEADER intervention.

Chart 5: Greatest Barriers to Growth

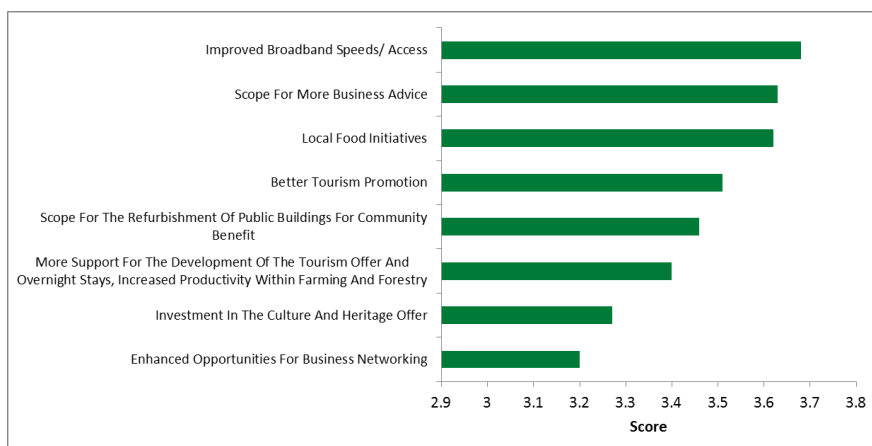


3.14 **Opportunities for growth** – following the same approach in terms of barriers to growth, respondents were asked to rate opportunities for growth; with 5 being the greatest opportunity.

A number of interesting reflections arise from this ranking process, whilst LEADER cannot support broadband or business advice, both are seen as very important by respondents in the LEADER geography. The referral of clients to the LLEP in this context will be important. The high rating given to support for local food and tourism promotion reflect the particularly strong potential the East Leicestershire geography has in relation to both these areas of activity.

In addition to rating barriers to growth and growth opportunities survey respondents provided a significant number of detailed comments about the jobs and growth agenda in East Leicestershire and these have informed the development of the SWOT (see later in this section).

Chart 6: Greatest Opportunities for Growth



Settlement analysis

- 3.15 Harborough District contains 3 main service centres (Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Broughton Astley) comprising 49% of its population. All are based in the south and west of the district. The rest of the district is very sparsely populated, particularly to the north and east of the A6. Melton Borough has 65% of its population based in its 3 service centres (Melton Mowbray, Bottesford and Asfordby). The largest settlement overall outside of Melton Mowbray is Bottesford which has a population of just 3,348. Melton Mowbray therefore performs a very important role as its only significant settlement.

Rural workspace study

- 3.16 In support of this LDS a rural workspace study was commissioned to better understand any identifiable trends and to provide reliable data for the current and future demand for rural workspace units (use class B1 and B2); including where this demand is not met by existing supply.
- 3.17 Of the 77 businesses surveyed, 62% began trading from home – with 16% from an industrial unit. When this is compared to where businesses are trading now, 40% are still trading at home – therefore a third of home based businesses eventually progress to having a property requirement. Of those businesses that subsequently require property, over half progress to industrial units.
- 3.18 A total of 43% of businesses identified that they may need to relocate within the next two years (including home based and premises based businesses). Of those seeking to relocate, 64% planned to remain in East Leicestershire. The main location factors were deemed to be good broadband (86%), value for money (84%), easy tenancy agreements (55%) and proximity to home (53%).
- 3.19 The study also found that:
- Whilst there is a private sector supply of workspace in East Leicestershire – it is either geared up to premium developments or at the very lower end of the market whereby small investments enable buildings to be used for storage (and therefore not creating any jobs).
 - There is a gap in the market for small units under 1,000ft² (B1 and B2) that are affordable and have good access to broadband – which is top of the shopping list for businesses when they seek a rural business location.
 - There is clearly a strong potential supply of additional workspace into the rural East Leicestershire market (based on responses to the Landowners survey, discussions with agents and the Leicestershire Rural Economy Study) and there is demand from the following potential occupants:
 - Businesses and entrepreneurs that want to graduate from home
 - Businesses and entrepreneurs who wish to travel within a 10 mile radius for work
 - Farm and rural diversification into fields such as tourism, food and drink and rural services
 - The main barrier to developing additional small scale workspace was financial, with projects unable to generate sufficient return on investment (especially in the current climate) or projects unable to raise the required investment.

Tourism accommodation study

- 3.20 To ensure investment through LEADER is effectively targeted for the tourism industry we have commissioned a tourism accommodation study which will review current and future demand for tourism accommodation and explore future trends and growth opportunities.
- 3.21 The findings of the study will be used to formulate a Tourist Accommodation Development Action Plan for East Leicestershire to be presented to the LAG for approval to be taken forward as part of the LEADER Programme.
- 3.22 An assessment of current provision alongside a review of rural tourist accommodation trends that has so far been completed suggests the following opportunities for tourist accommodation development:

- The expansion, development and upgrading of all types of existing tourist accommodation.
- Small boutique hotels and inns; including rural pub accommodation.
- Country house hotels, given suitable properties for conversion, including providing function facilities, spas, sport and leisure facilities and possibly cookery schools.
- Conversion of redundant farm buildings to self-catering holiday cottages and complexes.
- Some 'access exceptional' holiday accommodation (that is fully adapted for independent wheelchair users) and 'super' cottages (for large family and friendship get togethers).
- Eco lodges; Eco camping sites; camping pod developments; glamping sites.
- Further narrow boat holiday hire operations and possibly hotel boats.

3.23 The remaining phase of the study will focus on identifying entrepreneurs, developers, land and property owners that are interested in these types of development and understanding what support is needed through the LEADER Programme to facilitate and accelerate development to deliver additional accommodation supply and new jobs in the tourist accommodation sector.

Summary of key jobs and growth issues to consider from the above analysis

- the area has a declining pool of young people (employment opportunities for young people are a significant challenge in rural economies);
- it has a good representation of land based, food and tourism sectors (all potentially important sectors in terms of the LEADER priorities);
- the area has a sizeable stock of businesses with a higher than average number of micro businesses (a key target area for LEADER);
- it also has a higher than average distribution of homeworkers which suggests good levels of entrepreneurship and local working for LEADER to build on;
- the area has a relatively dynamic agriculture sector in terms of employees with the highest proportion of employees in the county in the two main districts, which it comprises and significant scope to bring more privately owned woodland into management. The area therefore has great potential for projects to address increases in farming and forestry productivity;
- finally it has a clear set of challenges from a service perspective around poorer access to services than the national average. These provide a clear agenda for action in terms of the deployment of resources to support service failure in the area.

4. The Strategy

Mission Statement

The Shadow Local Action Group for the area has adopted the following mission statement:

Working with communities and businesses to nurture a prosperous rural economy, which will provide access to, and support the development of: local jobs, local services and local products, whilst retaining and enhancing our local heritage and environment

Strategic alignment with LLEP activity

4.1 The East Leicestershire LEADER area resides within the rural-east of the LLEP sub-region. The development of this strategy has been led by Leicestershire Rural Partnership, which is a long standing (over 20 years) model of collaborative working with a strong track record in supporting the rural economy. A statement of joint working has been developed between the LLEP and the LRP to work together to support rural businesses; and as such the LRP has led on a number of activities for the LLEP including the development of the Rural Growth Network pilot application and the development of EAFRD priorities for the EU SIF. The LRP and LLEP also jointly commissioned the rural economic evidence base for Leicestershire.

- 4.2 Both the LRP and LLEP were involved in the initial agreement to pursue a LEADER proposal for the East Leicestershire area, and commissioned the LRP as the most appropriate partnership to lead its development. Throughout this process the LLEP has been kept fully engaged, including attendance at the shadow LAG, reports to the LLEP Board and one-one meetings to discuss alignment.

Alignment with the SEP, City Deal and EU SIF

- 4.3 The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Economic Plan 2014-2020 focuses on three themes: *investing in Our Businesses, Our People and Our Place*

Investing in Our Businesses - The core element to the LLEPs approach to business support will be the Flagship Business Growth Hub – *“which will facilitate a more cost effective coordinated approach to provide and signpost business support in the LLEP area by pooling local, central and other funding and resources”*. The LLEP (see letter of support) and County Council are both committed to ensuring that both LEADER and EAFRD activity is instrumental in the design of the Growth Hub and that promotion, signposting and support packages for rural businesses are seamless to the end user. Through the extensive experience of the LRP in supporting rural business and our consultation activity it is clear that LEADER has a depth of penetration into the rural business community that is not accessible with current LLEP programmes. Hence outreach through LEADER will increase business take-up of the Growth Hub and ultimately deliver job creation and growth in rural areas.

Investing in Our People – The core element to the LLEPs approach to equipping local people with the relevant skills that businesses need will be through the Flagship Employment and Skills Hub – *“which will deliver a seamless service to support young people to acquire the right skills and help them into work”*. Whilst we understand skills cannot be funded through LEADER we will use intelligence collated through our programme to help support development of this activity, and work with communities to ensure that the support available benefits young people living in rural areas.

Investing in Our Place – The LLEP has identified five Growth Areas and four Transformational Priorities– *“which will unlock key development sites and improve public realm and connectivity to enable the efficient transport of people and goods”*. The Growth Areas and Transformational Priorities predominate along the motorway corridors in the west of the county. As a result, there is substantial LLEP support for this proposed LEADER area as it provides a targeted focus on investment and rural growth in the east of the county.

The LLEP has also identified two county-wide growth programmes which will focus on market towns and rural areas, as well as rural workspace and cultural development; aligning LLEP and LEADER activity will be instrumental in supporting delivery of these within the east of the county.

- 4.4 To oversee delivery of the above themes the LLEP is establishing Business, People and Place Boards. The LRP and LAG will liaise with these boards to ensure that the required linkages are made
- 4.5 Through our e-survey **improved broadband speeds** was cited as one of the main opportunities for economic growth stimulation in rural areas, we will therefore work closely with the LLEP and Superfast Leicestershire project to ensure that current contracted superfast broadband deployment meets the needs of communities and businesses within East Leicestershire.
- 4.6 The LLEPs EU SIF 2014-2020 has identified the following priorities for EAFRD:
- Rural Tourism Development focussing on Green Tourism, Local Food and enhancing the accommodation offer
 - Outreach support for rural start-ups, small and micro enterprises (including non-agricultural diversification) to include specialist advice, grant support and links to mainstream programmes
 - Capital investment to increase the quality and availability of rural workspace and access to high-speed broadband.

In particular the outreach, support and advice for rural start-ups, small and micro businesses will add value to the LEADER programme, as currently under the Defra alignment of schemes this cannot be funded through LEADER. This element of support through EAFRD will enhance the Business Growth Hub to enable penetration and rural expertise to access the most hard to reach businesses. We would also envisage that LEADER will focus on smaller-scale investments with EAFRD funds targeting larger investment sites in rural areas.

Alignment with local strategies and plans

- 4.7 Leicestershire County Council and the four District Councils (Harborough, Melton, Charnwood and Blaby) are all agreed on the importance of LEADER in helping to deliver their respective local economic plans. LCC, MBC and HDC have all committed in-kind officer time to supporting LEADER if successful (see section 2).

Leicestershire County Council Enabling Growth Plan 2014-2020 – This sets out what the Council will do, and what it will invest, to improve the economic prosperity of Leicestershire. Its main themes mirror those as set out in the LLEPs Strategic Economic Plan (see above). The plan recognizes that its rural economy is a major asset and that the Council will support sustainable growth through working with the Leicestershire Rural Partnership and its commitment as the Accountable Body for LEADER.

Harborough District Council - Open for Business Prospectus (OFBP) 2014 – LEADER enables delivery of 3 out of 6 of Harborough District Councils main economic interventions as listed within the recently adopted Open for Business Prospectus. These include: *Ensuring access to appropriate business growth support; Strengthening quality of place; Realising rural vitality*. The OFBP identifies LEADER as being essential in ensuring that we are able to create ‘vibrant rural communities that make the most of sustainable development opportunities in villages and the countryside’.

Melton Borough Council – Economic Development Strategy 2012-2015 - LEADER Programme will support all four of Melton Borough Council’s Economic Development Strategic Priorities. These include: *Promoting Innovation and Enterprise; Enhancing Aspirations, Skills and Creating Economic Activity; Improving the Vitality of the Boroughs Town and Villages; Maximising Inward Investment and Tourism*.

Blaby District Council – Opportunity Blaby 2014-2017 – The strategy is based around four key themes where it can exert the most influence in order to foster a prosperous economy within the District of Blaby. These include: *Inward Investment; Support for business; Improving skills and training opportunities and Improving infrastructure*. There is specific emphasis on supporting rural businesses and ensuring that the infrastructure is in place to ensure a vibrant rural economy.

Charnwood Borough Council – Our Place 2012-2016 – key commitments under the priority theme “Our place to grow and prosper” are: *to promote physical and economic growth across the Borough; to support economic development and regeneration within the borough; and to help businesses prosper and develop vibrant towns and villages*.

In addition LEADER will work with the following plans and strategies to deliver shared priorities:

- Leicestershire Rural Framework 2014-2020
- Leicestershire Communities Strategy
- Carbon Reduction Strategy for Leicestershire 2014-2020
- Harborough District Blueprint for Tourism
- Melton Borough Blueprint for Tourism

We will also work with local parishes and communities to help support delivery of community-based plans and strategies.

Increasing farm productivity

4.8 **Strengths:**

- Strong agricultural sector (e.g. Melton Mowbray Livestock Market, Brooksby Agricultural College), entrepreneurial skills amongst the farming community and high quality beef and grassland production. Successful tradition of farming as a profitable endeavour. Links to tourism offer (e.g. Melton Mowbray 'rural capital of food'; Melton Mowbray Livestock Market "meet and greet" tour for visitors).

Weaknesses:

- A lack of new entrants in other sectors (e.g. farming – with county farms offering an important step into the industry).
- Some farmers are not maximising their core farm business.

Opportunities:

- Linking primary producers to artisan food, retail and tourism.
- Benchmarking and collaboration – farmers sharing production costs, gross margins, yields and prices to find improvements for farm businesses and animal health.
- Development and implementation of Agri-tech approaches to improve farm productivity.
- Renewable energy feasibility to help farmers navigate options for carbon reduction opportunities.

Threats

- Low awareness among some farmers about the change agenda and CAP reform (e.g. crop diversification; farm diversification should be concerned with 'adding value' not 'displacement').

Micro and small enterprises and farm diversification

4.9 **Strengths:**

- Key unique, established and successful brands within rural East Leicestershire – with clusters around food and drink (e.g. protected status for pork pies, blue stilton cheese; Melton Mowbray as the 'rural capital of food'); learning (e.g. PERA, Allerton Research Educational Trust) and cultural industries.
- Entrepreneurial, dynamic and proactive businesses within rural areas (higher than the national average) who seek opportunities for growth (e.g. Harborough Innovation Centre). More enquiries for business support from companies in rural areas compared to market towns – a higher proportion of home workers compared to the national average.
- Good understanding of the rural economy (e.g. Rural Framework 2011-2014, Rural Economy Evidence Base 2013). This supports decision-making, ensuring policy and practice are based on a sound, comprehensive understanding of current evidence.

Weaknesses:

- Broadband connectivity and mobile phone coverage in some rural areas in East Leicestershire is poor, affecting many businesses and their opportunities for growth: (i) lack of infrastructure/technology and (ii) limited take up and use of technology by some businesses. Superfast Leicestershire will deliver high-speed fibre broadband to 96% of homes and businesses by the end of March 2016, but this will still leave 'not spots' in East Leicestershire.
- Lack of workspace and enterprise space in rural areas for new and growing businesses – particularly incubator units with flexible terms; support for hobby and lifestyle businesses to grow; and live-work units.
- Lack of business support and advice.
- Lack of skilled workforce within certain sectors – with some people unwilling to travel to work in rural areas without access to other services (e.g. good public transport, a shop).
- Retail sector can be overlooked in other business-customer initiatives and funding schemes.

Opportunities:

- Growing the economic potential of start-up businesses, homeworkers, entrepreneurs and social

enterprises.

- East Leicestershire is in receipt of national programmes and there are businesses with private sector match – there is an opportunity to align schemes to provide a directional package of support to rural businesses.
- One-to-one business support, coaching – such as ‘jelly club’: an informal co-working event where freelancers, home workers and small/micro business owners bring their laptop or other work and work, chat and collaborate with other small business owners.
- Peer-to-peer mentoring.
- Digital marketing.
- Increasing the stock of premises for micro and small businesses; and support growing and developing businesses to build workspace in rural areas. This includes scope for serviced workspace (especially where it can be combined with sustainable rural settlements).

Threats:

- A high proportion of micro-businesses in a financial climate where it is difficult to access funding for growth
- A relatively limited stock of larger premises for business growth in the smaller settlements in the area.
- A congested and under performing stock of small workspace units with significant voids.
- Low awareness among some farmers about the change agenda and CAP reform (e.g. crop diversification; farm diversification should be concerned with ‘adding value’ not ‘displacement’).

Rural tourism/cultural and heritage activity

4.10 Strengths:

- Significant rural tourist attractions and joined-up tourism e.g. towns, villages and ‘things to do’ are well promoted and marketed; brand recognition of Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray (both have tourism blueprints).
- High quality, flat landscape – with canals and waterways, woodland and historic features.
- Centrally located within the heart of the country and easily accessible.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of high-end eating/restaurant facilities and food & drink experiences.
- Perceived as a destination for older people rather than family orientated.
- Lack of coach parking and drop-off points for visitors and tourists in Market Harborough.
- Lack of overnight accommodation (apart from some capacity in Market Harborough and Lutterworth).

Opportunities:

- Increase overnight stays – to meet existing demand from established business/conference venues (e.g. PERA/learning) and demand for high quality hotel space.
- Develop improved links between tourism and other sectors including food and drink, equestrian, heritage and land based (i.e., providing visitors with “hands on” experiences to see, touch, taste and buy; gourmet food breaks).
- Cycle ways and cross country heritage routes using Melton Mowbray and Market Harborough as hubs – with signposting panels and Apps covering the routes.

Threats:

- Many accommodation providers are looking to retire.

Rural services

4.11 Strengths:

- High levels of social capital and community capacity –a tradition of Parish Councils working with residents to address gaps in service delivery and residents in favour of Neighbourhood Planning (e.g. Broughton Astley Parish Council becoming the first village in the East Midlands to pass referendum).

Weaknesses:

- Low population density leading to a lack of critical mass for some areas of service delivery.

Opportunities:

- Join up social/community focus with economic/jobs and growth agenda – creating the conditions to make rural settlements more sustainable. Generating jobs around service delivery – building upon social capital and community capacity.
- Village infrastructure –enhancement of physical assets to drive economic growth by creating opportunities for cultural and heritage activity.
- Coordinated community transport schemes.

Threats:

- Ageing population and out migration of young people affecting the sustainability of rural settlements.
- Whilst rural areas are not generally amongst the most deprived in Leicestershire for overall (multiple) deprivation; rural areas are ranked highly for housing and services deprivation – East Leicestershire has a dispersed pattern of very small service centres and there are additional costs of delivering services within rural areas (“the rural premium”). Mainstream service provision may not reach those in most need.
- A lack of rural affordable housing.
- Access to transport – reduction/withdrawal of bus services and existing transport not connecting villages up.

Cultural and heritage activity

4.12 **Strengths:**

- Significant rural tourist attractions and joined up tourism offer = towns, villages and ‘things to do’ are well promoted and marketed; brand recognition of Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray (both have tourism blueprints).

Weaknesses:

- Limited local authority funding, which is declining for this sector
- Limited joining up of the promotion and management of cultural and heritage activity in the area
- Currently un-realised opportunities to maximise the economic potential of this sector

Opportunities:

- *Significant informal infrastructure of individuals and voluntary organisations engaged in cultural and heritage activities*
- *Real potential to link local food and heritage/cultural activities*

Threats:

- Currently limited action to address the potential of the sector
- Unrealised opportunities to link this sector with key economic themes including food production and tourism
- A diminished overall pool of funding to support these activities

Increasing forestry productivity

4.13 **Weaknesses:**

- 60% of woodland is currently not in active management

Opportunities:

- Capital investment in machinery.
- Construction of access points, stacking areas and loading bays.
- Development of wood fuel supply chains.

Threats:

- Low levels of active woodland management
- A limited overall profile for the potential offered by this sector in the area

Local priorities and programme of activity

- 4.14 6 local priorities have been identified from reflecting on: the statistical evidence base, consultation outcomes and SWOT to identify the most powerful means of addressing the jobs and growth challenge facing East Leicestershire. Our overall programme of activity is as follows:

Priority 1: Well-connected and innovative land-based businesses supported to improve their productivity and exploit diversification opportunities				
LEADER alignment: Farming and forestry productivity, Small and micro enterprises (farm diversification)				
RDPE expenditure FTE job created (£)	Average RDPE grant size (£)	Number of Projects	Number of Jobs (FTE)	End of programme forecast (by Dec 2020)
£34,218	£24,713	18	13	£444,833

4.15 Farming

- Projects to improve the overall performance and sustainability of agricultural holdings, including development and implementation of Agri-tech solutions.
- Projects to develop, market and process agricultural products.
- Collaborative / research projects to harness innovation and improve efficiency.
- Renovation of redundant farm buildings to commercial use including high quality tourism accommodation.

Forestry

- Equipment for the start-up and development of businesses in the sector, including equipment for timber extraction and processing.
- New or improvements to local handling and storage facilities.
- Projects to help support and grow the wood-fuel and biomass market.

Rationale

Farming – In 2010, there were approximately 1,110 farms in the East Leicestershire area, cultivating 100,400 hectares of land and employing just over 2,800 people, which has remained relatively stable over the last decade. This compares very positively with national trends, which have seen a greater pattern of decline, particularly in terms of employment. The robustness of this sector provides a sound basis to encourage diversification opportunities, which can help grow and diversify the local economy. The consultation and SWOT have identified the importance of local food and strengthening the links between agricultural production and processing as a key opportunity for jobs and growth in East Leicestershire. There are a number of centres of excellence including the Allerton Project and Brooksby Melton college, along with established initiatives around GPS use, increasing the protein content of local milk yields, demonstration farming, informal farm networking and a soils group to build on in developing initiatives around the farm productivity agenda.

Forestry - Charnwood, Melton and Harborough have 6,766.4 hectares of woodland, 38% of this is managed woodland, with significant potential to increase this percentage and help develop new and existing businesses in this sector. The SWOT and consultation activities identified that there was considerable scope, with the vast majority of woodland being in private ownership, for commercial activities around the development of wood-fuel, venison and cooperation in terms of forestry. There is real potential to support the purchase of equipment, networking amongst foresters and identification of new markets for forestry both in terms of its products but also in terms of tourism, heritage and culture.

Potential projects identified through consultation phase³:

- To radically improve the efficiency of machinery operations by using Real Time Kinematic (RTK) for field operations.
- The development of hard standing round wood storage facilities to sustain forestry operation through periods of wet weather.
- Expansion of agricultural recycling facility.
- Supporting on-farm top soil processing with the flexibility of outside contracting.
- Farm cooperative developing technological improvements to increase protein content in dairy.

Priority 2: A growing food and drink sector producing and promoting high quality local foods				
LEADER alignment: Small and micro enterprises (farm diversification), Rural Tourism, Cultural and heritage				
RDPE expenditure FTE job created (£)	Average RDPE grant size (£)	Number of Projects	Number of Jobs (FTE)	End of programme forecast (by Dec 2020)
£23,375	£23,375	10	10	£233,750

4.16 Programme activities

- Strengthen local food and drink supply chains – field to plate e.g. producer / retailer networking events, co-operative models, local food wholesale.
- To enhance the offer of local food through farms shops, retailers, restaurants and events.
- Development, marketing and processing support for food and drink businesses.
- Support for local food and drink networks / clusters.

Rationale

This theme provides fantastic potential to join up a number of LEADER priorities. The East Leicestershire area has an international reputation for its local food. The linking of primary production and food processing shortens the food supply chain and increases profitability for both producers and processes. It builds consumer confidence and reduces food miles. There is a very strong link between local food and tourism in the context of place and identity and a series of “stories” and traditions which link local food to the heritage and culture of an area.

Melton Mowbray is the “Rural Capital of Food” home to pork pies and Stilton cheese, with a growing food manufacturing and tourism sector in the surrounding rural areas. A feasibility study has recently evidenced the need for a Food Enterprise Centre in the Melton Mowbray area to support food and drink small and micro enterprises. Melton Mowbray is already home to the nationally significant livestock market, Melton Mowbray Food Festival, British Pie Awards and the largest Artisan Cheese Fair in England. Support for local food production, food heritage and development of food tourism is a key component of our proposed LEADER Approach.

The SWOT and consultation identified considerable enthusiasm to build on the current strong local food offer, with respondents identifying this as one of the most important and distinctive opportunities for additional jobs and growth in the context of LEADER funding. The statistical analysis showed good current growth (against national trends) in this area of activity suggesting a robust opportunity to build on a current strength in the area.

Potential projects identified through consultation phase:

- Diversification into horticulture including processing of secondary products
- Expansion of local farm-based cookery school, including providing a shared kitchen facility for

³ Through the consultation process we have captured a number of project ideas directly from businesses and communities, some of which have been referenced in this document. This will provide a head-start when developing the project pipeline and will be cross-referenced against eligibility criteria once the National Operating Manual is released.

commercial rural food producers.

Priority 3: Networked home-based businesses and micro enterprises with confidence to grow				
LEADER alignment: Small and micro enterprises				
RDPE expenditure FTE job created (£)	Average RDPE grant size (£)	Number of Projects	Number of Jobs (FTE)	End of programme forecast (by Dec 2020)
£12,698	£21,427	16	27	£342,834

4.17 Programme activities

- Projects to enhance the offer of rural workspace and support business expansion.
- Grants for start-up businesses and growing businesses for purchasing equipment, marketing.
- The development of networks and sector hubs (food and drink, creative, home-based).

Rationale

The area has 7,700 businesses, with 7,508 (97.5%) small and micro businesses (employing <50), the majority 6,674 (86.68%) employ less than 10 people. This is a higher proportion of small and micro enterprises than the national average (96.65%) and provides excellent scope for LEADER to work at a level which will differentiate its activities from the many of the higher level interventions linked to the FFPS and Growth Hub activities of the LLEP and Defra. The national review of LEADER identified the powerful potential impact it can have in supporting resilience and growth amongst small rural enterprises. On the basis of East Leicestershire's strong small business offer we feel the area is well placed to deliver the rural job outputs sought by the programme.

The total area has nearly 55,300 jobs (2012). East Leicestershire has a higher number of homeworkers (7.9%) than the national average (5.4%). Exploiting the home worker agenda will be a priority for us in seeking to maximise the potential of our rural economy.

The SWOT and consultation activities revealed that there were a number of clear barriers facing small businesses including broadband, access to finance and access to advice. Interestingly it also revealed, as did our premises demand study a complex and interesting series of issues around the availability and development of rural workspace. Whilst LEADER cannot work directly with businesses in terms of broadband and training it does have a clear role to play in supporting businesses to enhance their profitability and where appropriate employment. The areas of intervention highlighted above have been developed through a careful consideration of the needs and local context of micro-businesses in East Leicestershire.

Potential projects identified through consultation phase:

- The development of pop-up shops and galleries in market towns, local attractions and events to provide an outlet for home-based creative micro-enterprises.
- Expansion of small rural industrial units that are currently full to capacity.

Priority 4: A thriving short-stay visitor destination for people interested in: fine food and drink, culture and heritage, field and outdoor pursuits				
LEADER alignment: Rural tourism, Heritage and culture				
RDPE expenditure FTE job created (£)	Average RDPE grant size (£)	Number of Projects	Number of Jobs (FTE)	End of programme forecast (by Dec 2020)
£25,972	£29,219	8	9	£233,750

4.18 Programme activities

- Marketing and promotion of Melton Mowbray and its surrounding area as the Rural capital of food
- Grants to support tourism accommodation projects that will support new jobs.

- The expansion of joint marketing opportunities across businesses.
- Projects which promote the culture and heritage of the area e.g. support to local museums / events.
- Projects to support leisure access to the natural environment e.g. waterways, equestrian bridleways, cycle routes.
- Projects to maximise the economic potential of field sports which has a deep seated and extensive tradition and footprint in the area.

Rationale

National tourism forecasts⁴ project an average annual growth in domestic tourism in the UK of 3% from 2013 to 2025 and an annual growth rate of 6.1% in inbound tourism to the UK. With its central location in the country, East Leicestershire is well placed to capitalise on this tourism growth through the development of a stronger tourist accommodation offer, better marketing and further development of the area's cultural, heritage and outdoor activities offer. Evidenced by over 30 visitor attractions including castles, historic buildings and museums offering authentic English heritage, the growing reputation of Melton Mowbray as a food tourism destination, and the wide range of leisure activities on offer, including equestrian activities, village trails, walks, cycle routes and miles of fabulous canals.

The limited holiday accommodation on farms has been very successful (e.g. Eye Kettleby Lakes), as have Taste Leicestershire Short Breaks. The potential is high for creation of farm accommodation and local heritage based and food themed holidays.

The SWOT and consultation activities identified significant potential to widen recognition of the area's built assets, its small villages and distinctive pastoral landscapes. A number of commentators identified the scope to enhance coordination and marketing activities around attractions and accommodation providers in the area. Linkages with local food and drink were identified as very strong areas of potential development and interest.

Potential projects identified through consultation phase:

- Enhancements of a local windmill attraction
- Development of touring caravan and camping site at local fishing lakes.
- Conversion of farm buildings to holiday let accommodation.
- Development of a glamping site at an idyllic rural pub, which could link with the local food offer.

Priority 5: Active and inclusive communities that are able to help provide local services				
LEADER alignment: Rural services				
RDPE expenditure FTE job created (£)	Average RDPE grant size (£)	Number of Projects	Number of Jobs (FTE)	End of programme forecast (by Dec 2020)
£33,272	£23,378	4	3	£85,000

4.19 Programme activities

- Refurbishment of public buildings as community assets, which could have a commercial component, offering meeting space, IT hubs and even sessional work space.
- Work with micro and social-enterprises to address market failure in rural areas e.g. shops, pubs, libraries.
- Innovative approaches to increasing employability and retention of young people and reducing social isolation in the context of rural transport.

⁴ Tourism Jobs and Growth: The economic Contribution of the Tourism Economy to the UK, Deloitte/Oxford Economics, November 2013.

- Projects to address high energy costs and reduce fuel poverty.
- Projects to encourage more people to take responsibility for provision of local services, facilities and amenities.

Rationale

With 150 dispersed rural villages and a limited number of larger rural service centres; it is essential that young people, employees and small businesses have access to a range of services to enable them to effectively contribute to the rural economy. Local communities can also support the economy through promoting local heritage and tourism activities.

Our consultation revealed huge support and enthusiasm for community engagement with LEADER. In many cases they provided interesting opportunities to link: culture, heritage, tourism and economic development in the context of jobs and growth. Local built assets such as churches and village halls were identified as potential areas of economic growth and development.

In the SWOT and statistical analysis we identified real opportunities to address some of the rural services issues in East Leicestershire through interventions which respond to the jobs and growth agenda. These are in the context of activities around ideas such as: local provision of formerly discretionary services on a commercial basis by local businesses; local energy companies to address fuel poverty and the growth of the tourism and heritage opportunities in the area which will generate extra footfall and visitor spend which also benefits local people in terms of sustaining local shops and pubs.

Potential projects identified through consultation phase:

- Community-led economic development plans at a village level to support local job creation and provision of services (two communities have independently been developing this concept).

Priority 6: Vibrant rural towns underpinning a thriving economic hinterland				
LEADER alignment: Small and micro enterprises, Cultural and heritage				
RDPE expenditure FTE job created (£)	Average RDPE grant size (£)	Number of Projects	Number of Jobs (FTE)	End of programme forecast (by Dec 2020)
£10,483	£17,472	6	10	£104,833

4.20 Programme activities

- Enhancement of town centre networks to address the challenges facing retailers.
- Development of tourism signage and promotion of surrounding rural areas.
- Pilot programmes around new business activities in town centres.
- Support for local food, farmers markets, town based festivals and events.
- Appropriately targeted and scaled support for modest and value adding improvements to high street realm and distinctive commercial premises.

Rationale

If LEADER is to generate significant job growth it needs access to key sites and markets. Melton Mowbray and Market Harborough are very important service centres in this context due to their strong inter-relation with the surrounding rural areas. Retaining the distinctive nature and heritage of these rural market towns is also critical in attracting visitors and investment to the area.

The SWOT and consultation activities revealed significant concern about the challenges facing small and hub towns in the area along with a real enthusiasm and some strong ideas in the context to address these challenges, particularly in the context of business networking and around food and heritage themes. The inter-connected relationship between hub-towns and wider rural hinterlands is a vital component in sustaining the economic viability of the area in a mutually reinforcing way.

Potential projects identified through consultation phase:

- Interactive signage in town centres to promote the local heritage and surrounding area such as Geo-tagging and the development of town heritage and cultural “apps”.

Mobilisation / Action plan

4.21 As the current East Leicestershire area has not benefited previously from LEADER we are conscious of the need to have a mobilisation plan to enable us to hit the ground running once funding is approved.

Activity	Approach	Timescales
Develop a portfolio of potential projects to achieve good spend in year one of the programme	We have been working with the key infrastructure organisations on the Shadow LAG to prime their networks for the development of projects. We have also received a good number of unsolicited project ideas which provides a good basis on which to encourage formal applications for projects once LEADER begins.	First LAG meeting December 2014 – First project round January 2015, first projects approved February 2015
LEADER programme launch	A programme launch will be undertaken in the last quarter of 2014/15, this will be supplemented with a local media campaign and promotion through partner organisations, business and community intermediaries and networks. (See communications – section 5)	Last quarter of 2014/15
Establish staffing arrangements to underpin the implementation of the programme	We have already agreed the requisite operational arrangements to ensure we cover the accountable body requirements of the programme. We have developed job descriptions for the programme roles required to make LEADER work and are primed to advertise to fill these as soon as funding is agreed. Any shortfall in recruiting staff will be underpinned by the three local authorities engaged in the development of these proposals	LEADER roles advertised November 2014 – Interviews and Job offers December 2014, key staff in place January/February 2015 (if required Leicestershire CC staff (Leicestershire Rural Partnership Secretariat) supported by Harborough and Melton Districts, will progress things in the interim.
Put robust governance arrangements in place for the oversight and management of the programme	We have a Shadow LAG in place; it has met three times in the development of the LDS. We have a clear plan to establish a full LAG through recruitment and development activities in November and December 2014. The proposed structural and constitutional issues linked to the operation of the LAG are set out in the LDS	Formal recruitment and development of LAG November 2014. LAG in place and inaugural meeting December 2014.
Establish effective and compliant project management, bidding, approval, monitoring and evaluation systems	We have worked very closely with Rose Regeneration in the development of this LDS. We have drawn on their expertise from the national review of LEADER alongside the new approaches set out in the National Delivery Framework to develop our approaches to these issues. We have set them out in some detail in the LDS. We have significant experience of running other relevant rural grant schemes and a well-honed capacity to	LEADER operating manual issues November 2014. Key arrangements translated into local LAG delivery manual, enshrining principles set out in LDS and refined to take account of national Manual by December 2014 to be approved by inaugural LAG meeting.

	work in this context. We have also established strong networking links with other LEADER areas as a means of sharing experience and expertise including for example north Northamptonshire.	
--	---	--

- 4.22 Whilst East Leicestershire has not previously benefitted from LEADER, analysis of the outputs achieved in other LEADER areas (we have been supported by Rose Regeneration who undertook the National Review of LEADER 2007-13 for Defra) has enabled us to identify the following output areas and targets based on the scale of our programme. We have followed a process, which involves considering the key literature, consultation and economic research outlined above to derive these targets. Table 3 lists the indicative targets agreed by our Shadow LAG as well as stating the targets calculated using Defra 'job output and projects supported' benchmarks.

The baseline, which we have set for the development of these targets, will also be used to inform our approach to the evaluation of the programme drawing on the indicators within the key measure fiches set out in the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System.

Table 3: East Leicestershire indicative outputs

Outputs	Shadow LAG Target	Defra Benchmark Target
Projects supported	110	62
Farm Holdings supported	25	
Businesses benefitting	350	
Individuals benefitting	5000	
Jobs created	100	72
Jobs safeguarded	100	
Tourism activities supported	20	
Village/communities benefitting	80	
Facilities benefitting	15	
Forests/woodlands/holdings benefitting	10	

Sustainability appraisal

- 4.23 An independent sustainability appraisal has been undertaken using a checklist derived from those used in a number of local authority plans, the Planning Advisory Groups checklist, the sustainability used by the Ministry of Defence and evidence accounts in other LEADER Local Development Strategies.
- 4.24 The Sustainability Appraisal comprises an assessment of the process, economic, community / social, cultural and environmental effects of individual projects, and the strategy as a whole, to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development. A summary of findings include:
- The broad base of the membership of the East Leicestershire LAG meets **process** criteria for sustainability, as do the processes of consultation and involvement particularly in respect of bringing local people together to stimulate ideas and co-produce projects which would not otherwise have happened. The Governance and M&A arrangements also take account of sustainability in job roles and M&A policies and procedures.
 - The general involvement of the community and training requirements also develop well the process requirements of sustainable development and the **mission statement** is consistent with all of the main headings of the sustainability checklist.
 - In **economic** terms, increasing the stock of homeworkers conforms to both economic and community sustainability criteria. The relatively self-contained local economy will support local procurement and distribution and the SWOT analysis shows a strong history of partnership

working, consistent with both economic and social sustainability criteria.

- In **social** terms, issues of equality, diversity and social cohesion are fully accommodated in the equal opportunities statement. The development and support of micro-businesses in the strategy as a whole bodes well for social cohesion throughout the LDS area. There is also evidence in the strategy of co-ordinated community initiatives in the areas of transport, services and social enterprise, in some cases specifically to make communities more sustainable by retaining young people and caring for older people.
- There is evidence in the strategy that **cultural** assets are being used as an instrumental part of economic and social development for example in terms of brand identity in tourism and local foods
- Renewable energy opportunities within the SWOT analysis are consistent with **environmental** sustainability criteria, particularly in relation to wood fuel.
- In terms of **integration**, there is evidence in the LDS that a number of the items in the sustainability checklist are present in the **land-based** proposals of the strategy. The Allerton Project considers both environmental and economic factors, for example. **Tourism** too, is seeking to integrate a range of sustainability criteria with the integration of a number of sectors (food, heritage, equestrian) simultaneously.
- Finally, **the seven LEADER principles** (area-based local development, bottom-up implementation, local partnerships and action groups, integrated multi sectoral actions, innovation, co-operation and networking) sum to a sustainable development approach and have all been used as benchmarks in this application.

Proposed co-operation activity

- 4.25 East Leicestershire is new to LEADER. It has the opportunity to develop intra-national cooperation projects with other areas which have a strong representation of potential in the following areas: food and drink manufacture, field sports, dairy, tourism, high proportions of homeworkers. There are particularly strong opportunities for it work jointly in this context in relation to adjoining established and emerging LEADER areas – the proposed South Nottinghamshire area has a strong food offer and the Vale of Belvoir as a brand in common with East Leicestershire. We have established practical working links with the North Northants LAG around cooperation activities, although attempts to set up a joint administration system were not possible in the time available. Peterborough and Rutland share similar characteristics to the area in terms of agriculture and short-stay tourism opportunities.
- 4.26 At the trans-national level we anticipate opportunities to engage around all six LEADER priorities, the key theme of greatest interest will be around our powerful and distinctive local food offer and we intend to take early action to work with Defra to identify opportunities to access cooperation funding to link with other LEADER partnerships which have maximised the economic impact of the protected geographical designation status of their local produce.
- 4.27 As part of the development of the LDS we have also initiated a specific dialogue about a coordinated response to supporting the forestry sector with the Forestry Commission and other proposed LEADER areas in the East Midlands. It is anticipated that this approach could benefit from a single point of contact for the Forestry Commission (alleviating capacity requirements of working across a number of LAGs), joint branding and promotional events / activity, shared technical knowledge, common eligibility criteria and the encouragement of collaborative activity across LAG boundaries (such as machinery rings, and joint storage facilities). Due to the diverse and specialist nature of the sector it is considered that this type of 'umbrella' approach could add value and potentially deliver efficiencies above and beyond that of a number of smaller programmes being developed in relative isolation. Decisions about the level of funding directed at the sector and local nuances would be undertaken by the respective LAGs at a local level.

5. Management and Administration

Accountable Body

- 5.1 Leicestershire County Council (LCC) will operate as the *Accountable Body* for the Programme. It is fully competent in, and regulated by, national statute in terms of the financial and legal competence to perform this role as a statutory public body. It has developed a full understanding of the regulatory control requirements for LEADER project development and implementation, outlined in the National Delivery Framework, and will carry out all responsibilities in accordance with the National Operating Manual (when issued). The Council will be responsible for employing and hosting the staff team (HR, payroll functions). The Council is committed to sustainability in all of its practices including procurement and the promotion of green travel to all employees.

An internal audit team will check the correct project assessment and separation of duties procedures are being carried out, including conflict of interest between Accountable body and LAG and project inspections.

Project development and assessment procedures – *commissioning, procurement, small grants etc*

- 5.2 All project selection procedures will be non-discriminatory, open and transparent. *Interested applicants* will be able to contact the LEADER team informally for initial application. The team will be able to determine project eligibility at this stage. If projects meet the eligibility criteria for the programme an outline application form (EOI) will be sent out; if not, consideration will be given as to whether the Business Growth Hub or any national programmes could support the business, and they will be signposted accordingly. Initial assessment by the LEADER team will lead to either rejection or the sending out of a full application pack. We hope to develop a shorter full application route for projects under £5,000, and are keen to explore how a small 'umbrella' grants scheme could be delivered within the area.
- 5.3 When applicants fill out a *full application form* they will be eligible for help from the LEADER team, working where appropriate with support from the Advisory Panel. The *final submission* will be passed from the Leader Team to the Grants Panel who will score projects in advance of the meeting. A group scoring sheet will be used at the meeting to allow moderation in the light of discussion. The application will be accepted, rejected or deferred.
- 5.4 We will assess the project against the strategic priorities for the programme and will consider outputs, outcomes, project impacts and sustainability measures. We will assess the project against projects already approved to avoid duplication and to ensure maximum value added for the LDS as a whole. Deadweight and displacement effects also will be assessed. All of these assessment characteristics will be set in a comprehensive project evaluation proforma will be developed. Projects will be grouped into each of the 6 NDF themes to ensure some form of balance against these priorities; and consideration will be given as to whether they fall within the 70% of projects that will directly contribute to the rural economy. Only projects that clearly meet the LDS rationale for action will be supported.
- 5.5 A *grant offer letter* will be issued by the LEADER team to successful applicants who will be invited to a grant set-up and claim workshop (compulsory and run quarterly). Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback, and where applicable signposted to further support through the LLEP Business Growth Hub.
- 5.6 *Project calls* will be open at any time of the year. Grant panel meetings will be published well in advance to allow applicants to judge timescales. Individual calls may be targeted to areas of low take-up to ensure LDS priorities are met as far as possible.

- 5.7 An *appeals procedure* will be put in place for all applicants. We will ensure that all *conflicts of interest* are identified and managed effectively, and that the Programme is not compromised by undeclared or unmanaged conflicts of interest.
- 5.8 Any procurement of activity will be undertaken by the AB in accordance with the National Operating Manual and EU Procurement Regulations, wherever possible sustainability measures will be considered throughout this process.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 5.9 Successful applicants will be required to develop a baseline at the outset of their project, against which to measure the impact of the grant and its value added. This is separate from the programme level evaluation, which the LAG will commission separately. LEADER officers will make all evaluation requirements clear at the outset of projects.
- 5.10 All successful applicants will be asked to take part in learning and dissemination activity as a condition of the grant award. The LEADER team and Advisory Network will provide *virtual support* (regular e-bulletins and a dedicated web-site with useful information and tools), *one-to-one support*, with each project assigned a dedicated contact to offer advice and guidance to the project.
- 5.11 All projects will be required to complete quarterly *monitoring forms*, to assess project performance against contracted outputs and expenditure targets. If monitoring forms are not submitted in a timely fashion grant payment may be delayed or suspended. Projects will be required to deliver outputs specified in the grant offer letter.
- 5.12 We will seek to ensure that only critical data are collected so that the exercise does not become overly burdensome. An outcomes evaluation framework based on Social Return on Investment will be developed to capture wider social benefits and the relationship of the LDS to other plans such as those considered in section 4.

Finance - claims and payments, financial profile

- 5.13 The Accountable Body (AB) is responsible for processing claims for its Management and Administration costs and for the costs of projects. The AB will check claims for grants to be paid for projects, and request payments from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). Projects must maintain a register of assets in an approved form to cover all items funded or part funded by LEADER monies. Checks and inspections will be carried out in accordance with the National Operational Manual.
- 5.14 The AB will process payments using the RPA's CAP-D IT system, to ensure eligibility of financial claims submitted by project deliverers. Before release of payment, progress reports will be required from each applicant including delivery against agreed targets in the contract. Payment will come directly from the RPA.
- 5.15 Projects will not be recommended for payment if they are not being delivered satisfactorily or where the correct procedures have not been used. The AB will advise the LAG in these cases, with appropriate evidence. Defra will adjudicate if there is a difference of view between the AB and the LAG. Further details of these procedures will be made available once the National Operating Manual is published.
- 5.16 Expenditure forecasts are attached in the financial profile of this document. Whereby we consider these to be realistic and deliverable forecasts; we will need to review them to take in to account the guidance within the National Operating Manual when published.

Communications and publicity

- 5.17 This function will be led by the LEADER staff team with support from a range of intermediary business and community organisations. Specialist support will also be available from the local authority communications and public relations teams as required.

The Communications Plan

- 5.18 The purpose of the Communications Plan is to publicise and raise awareness of the LAG and the LDS aims and achievements, to stimulate the market and encourage eligible applications. It will also give partner organisations programme awareness. Successful applicants will be required to acknowledge LEADER funding in all publicity and materials produced, and use the programme branding guidelines; participate in press and PR events; provide information to the LAG for use in publicity materials, and participate in applicant workshops and 'showcase' events.

The plan will:

- help applicants understand the support available and what is required of them.
 - enable effective engagement with stakeholders and other funders.
 - demonstrate the success of programme funded work to businesses, communities and stakeholders in the LAG and beyond.
 - ensure businesses, local councillors, the public, communities and other funders understand what the programme is about.
 - provide appropriate information to Defra to support national communications and PR activity.
- 5.19 Through the work of the LRP external and internal relations with stakeholders and intermediary organisations are strong. Organisations and bodies that have already committed to supporting the promotion of LEADER, and where applicable animation of projects, include: local authorities, parish councils, local FE and HE institutions, Leicestershire Rural Partnership, LLEP, Stronger Communities Board, Creative Leicestershire, Rural Community Council, NFU, CLA, FSB, Leicestershire Promotions (DMO), Leicestershire Food Links, Food and Drink Forum, Melton and Harborough Tourism Partnerships, Local Nature Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, PERA.
- 5.20 For each target group we will carefully identify key messages, ensuring that communication is tailored, relevant and appropriate for each of the audiences. A clear protocol for authorisation and approval processes will be agreed by the LAG for liaison with the press. Named individuals from the LAG will be identified to speak with the press as required, and these will receive support from the LCC Communications team.

Key communications methods

- 5.21 A schedule of planned communication methods will be developed to ensure a proactive and coordinated approach. This will include:
- *Branding* to identify the EU focus, the LEADER programme and the Defra sponsorship (all via logos) on all information, materials and publicity related to actions funded by the LDS. An East Leicestershire LEADER brand will be developed to encourage awareness and recognition of the support available.
 - *Events* will include a press/media launch plus applicant workshops to promote LEADER to prospective bidders. In addition, LA officers and the LEADER Project Manager will attend local events, such as business and community group meetings, to ensure that there is wide understanding of the LEADER programme. These events will include an annual forum for all stakeholders, showcasing successful projects and facilitate networking and disseminate good practice. There will also be networking meetings and workshops for approved projects to share good practice both in relation to processes and practices.
 - A quarterly *e-news/letter* will be developed to share details of funded projects, a status update on



the Programme (funding committed to date, future application deadlines etc). The bulletin will be targeted at businesses, communities, stakeholders and applicants.

- *Networks* for cascading information are already well-developed with many partner intermediary organisations having well established business databases, business meetings / networking events as well as established social media practices such as twitter, facebook, linked-in.

5.22 The programme will be hosted on a discrete section of the well-established www.oakleaves.org.uk, which is managed by the LRP. This central resource will include: LDS; eligibility and application criteria; details of funded projects; access to all LAG documents (agendas, minutes, membership and joining opportunities); contact details for key staff; monitoring and performance information.

5.23 Each of the Local Authorities will also have a LEADER webpage linking to the main site. In addition, a key method of promoting opportunities to business will be through the LLEP's Growth Hub website.

Declaration and Signature - I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information in this application is true and correct.

Accountable Body and Lead Partner – Leicestershire County Council	
Print Name	Tom Purnell
Sign	
Position	Assistant Chief Executive
Date	04/09/14
East Leicestershire LEADER Programme Transition Steering Group Chair	
Print Name	Cllr Pam Posnett
Sign	
Position	Chair of Leicestershire Rural Partnership, LCC Cabinet Member, Deputy Leader of Melton Borough Council
Date	04/09/14



LEADER 2014-2020
Local Development Strategy Application
Financial Profile

1. Applicant Details

Local Action Group:	East Leicestershire
Accountable Body:	Leicestershire County Council

2. Financial Profile

	Expenditure Forecast (£)							
	Financial Year							Total programme
Policy Priority	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	
Support for increasing farm productivity	0	38250	45900	45900	45900	45900	33150	255000
Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification	0	94350	113220	113220	113220	113220	81770	629000
Support for rural tourism	0	45900	55080	55080	55080	55080	39780	306000
Provision of rural services	0	12750	15300	15300	15300	15300	11050	85000
Support for cultural and heritage activity	0	12750	15300	15300	15300	15300	11050	85000
Support for increasing forestry productivity	0	12750	15300	15300	15300	15300	11050	85000
Running costs and animation	8,400	48,380	50,550	51,000	51,500	52,000	32,950	294780
Grand Total	8400	265130	310650	311100	311600	312100	220800	1739780

LEADER Policy Priority	RDPE expenditure per FTE job created (£)	Average RDPE grant size (£)	Relevant CMES output indicators for LDS application	End of programme forecast (by December 2020)
Support for increasing farm productivity	61,011	29,884	Total RDPE expenditure	£255,000
			Number of projects supported	9
			Jobs created (FTE)	4
Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification	11,931	19,951	Total RDPE expenditure	£629,000
			Number of projects supported	32
			Jobs created (FTE)	53
Support for rural tourism	32,477	31,764	Total RDPE expenditure	£306,000
			Number of projects supported	10
			Jobs created (FTE)	9

Support for culture and heritage activity	55,991	28,165	Total RDPE expenditure	£85,000
			Number of projects supported	3
			Jobs created (FTE)	2
Provision of rural services	33,272	23,378	Total RDPE expenditure	£85,000
			Number of projects supported	4
			Jobs created (FTE)	3
Support for increasing forestry productivity	77,045	21,788	Total RDPE expenditure	£85,000
			Number of projects supported	4
			Jobs created (FTE)	1



Leicester & Leicestershire
Enterprise Partnership

Leicester & Leicestershire
Enterprise Partnership
C/O Leicester City Council
City Hall, 115, Charles Street,
Leicester, LE1 1FZ

tel 0116 454 2917
email admin@llep.org.uk
web www.llep.org.uk

Dear Defra RDPE team

Letter of support for East Leicestershire LEADER programme

I am writing to confirm our commitment and support for the East Leicestershire LEADER Local Development Strategy, as referred to within our Strategic Economic Plan. I can confirm that we have supported, and been involved in the development of the proposal since its inception, including the decision to pursue this LEADER area in Leicestershire, receiving reports at the LLEP Board and having a representative on the Shadow Local Action Group.

We have developed a statement of joint working with the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) to work together to support rural businesses; and as such are committed to working with the LRP and Local Action Group to ensure that our programmes are aligned, mutually beneficial and seamless to the end user.

Rural Leicestershire is a valuable asset for the LLEP area; it provides great potential for economic growth and job creation, as well as shaping our heritage, sense of place and landscape. We agree that the local priorities identified within the Local Development Strategy are correct and will contribute to our economic growth plans outlined within our Strategic Economic Plan.

We will ensure that the support available through LEADER is promoted via our Business Growth Hub and that alignment and synergy is considered as LLEP programmes, including EAFRD, are developed across rural areas. We recognise that LEADER, through its community-led approach, will be able to access otherwise hard to reach rural businesses that may also be eligible for LLEP programmes e.g. business advice and skills support, therefore providing a suite of support to assist rural businesses to succeed.

In summary, we look forward to being part of the Local Action Group to develop a successful LEADER programme in East Leicestershire that ultimately contributes to job creation and economic growth within the area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Corin Crane', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Corin Crane
Director, Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership