RoseRegeneration LEADER

The Yorkshire Dales
LEADER
PROGRAMME
2008 -2013

Yorkshire Dales LEADER Programme Evaluation

facts, statistics and headline findings

- The Yorkshire Dales LEADER area is very sparsely populated – it has a population of 65,500 people and covers 2973 km2.

- The population of 65,500 makes it one of the smallest LEADER areas by population – there is scope for LEADER to cover areas with a population of up to 150,000.

- The LEADER programme is overseen by a Local Action Group, project development and animation is delivered by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and the Accountable Body for the programme is North Yorkshire County Council.

- The programme activities are linked to delivering social outcomes within Axis 3 of the RDPE, supported by some very modest cooperation work under Axis 4 of the programme.

- The focus of the programme is on: Creating stronger communities, Capitalising on the environment and Encouraging economic growth and employment.

- The programme has funded 122 projects between 2008 and 2013.

- It has exceeded all the targets set in its Local Development Strategy.

- The programme has spent £2,757,824, its administration costs have been 14% of this total (considerably below the 20% allowed) and it has generated overall leverage from the projects it supported of 51%.

- The programme has delivered 25.9 full time equivalent jobs.

- 175 businesses have benefitted from new services.

- 320 villages have been involved in the programme.

- 36 public sector organisations have benefitted from the programme.

- 163,637 people-based benefits have been delivered from the programme, three times the population of the area.

- The programme has not generated any significant negative deadweight or displacement effects and overall leakage (i.e. the impact of local circumstances in reducing the effectiveness of the programme) is unlikely to have been greater than the national norm for LEADER of 15%.

- The programme has delivered a number of projects generating significant social return on investment. The evaluation identified three projects as case studies, two of which offered more than £5 of social value for every £1 of project funding.

- The programme has delivered good added value and innovation and a majority of stakeholders feel it has made the Yorkshire Dales more sustainable.

- There is widespread enthusiasm for the continuation and possible geographical extension of the programme.

background

This report sets out the findings from the evaluation of the Yorkshire Dales LEADER Programme 2008-2013. It was prepared between June and September 2013 by a team led by Rose Regeneration, working with associates Rocket Science and Terry Carroll.

content

The evaluation follows the good practice set out in both the EU Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) and HM Treasury Magenta Book.

This short report summarises the outcome of the full evaluation which is available as a separate document.

The evaluation approach follows a logical path through the evidence. It begins by looking at the research which was undertaken to write the Local Development Strategy (LDS), it then considers how the plans to take action and tackle the issues identified were developed. The things achieved by the programme (its outputs) are then considered. We then examine whether some of the programme achievements would have happened anyway (deadweight) and whether they provided competition for similar activities funded without LEADER support (displacement). We also look at how the LEADER delivery teams and the Local Action Group (LAG) designed the programme, taking account of local issues and using their skills to make things work effectively (Strategic Added Value). We then consider whether some of the wider social benefits arising from a few example projects can be worked out as an indicator of the broader benefits of the programme, using an approach called Social Return on Investment. Finally key learning and recommendations for the future are put forward at the conclusion of the evaluation.

summary

approach

The evaluation commission for this work set the following objectives:

(a) To examine the success of the programme in meeting its aims and objectives and targets as stated in the LDS – set out in the following sections of the full report and summarised below in the following areas: Baseline, Logic Model, Outputs and Outcomes.

(b) To demonstrate its impact on all stakeholders – set out in the following sections of the full report and summarised below, with references throughout the report, in the areas considering: Outputs, Outcomes and Stakeholder Triangulation.

(c) To consider the success / impact of the LEADER geographical area of delivery –set out in the following sections of the full report and summarised below in the following areas: Outcomes, Social Return on Investment and Conclusions.

(d) To evaluate the 'bottom up' approach of the programme – set out in the following sections of the full report and summarised below in the following areas: Outputs, Strategic Added Value and Conclusions.

(e) To identify successes, areas for improvement, conclusions and provide clear recommendations for the future programme – set out in the following sections of the full report and summarised below in the following areas: Outputs, Outcomes, Social Return on Investment and Conclusions.

The methodology agreed to undertake the evaluation - along with the data collection approaches - is set out in the table below:

COMPONENT	KEY EVIDENCE SOURCE	DATA COLLECTION	INFORMATION COLLATED/ ANALYSED
1. Characteristics	National Comparison	Desk Research	Benchmarking material based on spend profiles and geographical configuration from the National Review of LEADER
2. Baseline	Local Statistics/Data	Desk Research	Key documents and reports of activities which informed the development of the Local Development Strategy
3. Logic Model 4. Target	Local Development Strategies	Telephone and Face to Face Interviews Desk Research	Discussions with the LAG, LEADER Stakeholders, Project sponsors (including E Survey evidence), and consideration of activity reports
5. Outputs	Monitoring Reports	Desk Research	LAG reports and direct output records prepared for Defra monitoring
6. Displacement 7. Deadweight	Broader Strategic Context	Telephone and Face to Face Interviews Desk Research	Direct discussions with the LAG and project sponsors (including E Survey evidence), consideration of LAG minutes and agendas
8. Strategic Added Value	Systems Audit	Telephone and Face to Face Interviews Desk Research	Direct discussions with the LEADER team, the Accountable Body team and the LAG. Audit of administrative systems and approaches
9. Outcomes	Change Attributable to LAG/ LDS	Triangulation Telephone and Face to Face Interviews Desk Research	Direct discussions with the LAG, project sponsors (including E Survey evidence), and beneficiaries, wider stakeholders, monitoring and project reports
10. Key Learning Points - including case studies	1-9 Above	Triangulation Telephone and Face to Face Interviews Desk Research Social Return on Investment analysis	Direct discussions with: LAG, LEADER teams, project sponsors (including E Survey evidence), stakeholders, accountable body staff, Social Return on Investment analysis, consideration of LAG minutes/agenda, monitoring records, project files and output data

baselines

The baselines element of the evaluation considers what research was undertaken to develop the programme and how it informed the targets which were addressed. Our findings are:

1. The selected LEADER area is predominantly upland and within the boundaries of North Yorkshire. This boundary was chosen to reflect people's perceptions of what constitutes the 'wider Yorkshire Dales'.

2. The LEADER programme was new to the Yorkshire Dales, with a Steering Group established to develop the Local Development Strategy (LDS) and apply to Yorkshire Forward for funding.

3. Yorkshire Forward set the parameters for activity within which the programme was allowed to operate.

4. Regional, sub-regional and local strategies and data informed the production of the LDS. The resultant nine priority themes proposed were relatively broad in their scope so as to help achieve these strategic aims whilst reflecting the needs of local areas and supporting innovative initiatives.

5. Substantial community consultation took place, including two wider LAG meetings and three interactive community workshops. Recommendations from the consultation included: the need for cooperation between groups and projects, representation of the tourism and skills sectors on the LAG Management Board, and a focus on sustainability and legacy of the programme.

6. Output indicators were set out in a timeline, covering the number of funded projects under each RDPE Measure and the level of funding available, but not any specific outputs in terms of activity.

7. The LDS acknowledged the potential for establishing links with neighbouring LEADER areas as well as with National and Transnational projects.

logic model

The Logic Model element of the evaluation considers how the actions established to address the challenges in the baselines were developed. Our findings are:

1. The LDS sets out what is to be achieved very clearly – although due to the structural design of LEADER in Yorkshire and the Humber the overt linkages between the challenges identified and the outputs anticipated are limited.

2. The programme of activities proposed within the logic model do fit the analysis of the challenges faced by the area and there is evidence that the LEADER Coordinator has sought to focus actions as effectively as possible to follow through on the analysis in the LDS.

3. There are some straightforward outcomes described in the LDS albeit they are high level in nature and not location specific.

4. There is a strong commitment to taking a "bottom up" approach to delivering the impacts identified in the LDS within the LAG, which has supported projects on a wide ranging and in a number of cases non-prescriptive basis.

summary

outputs

Our findings are:

1. The programme has overachieved in terms of its target outputs.

2. It has delivered a number of additional very useful economic outputs notwithstanding its focus as a social programme – these include 25.9 full time equivalent jobs and 175 businesses benefitting from new services.

3. The programme has achieved an overall leverage rate of 51%.

4. Administration costs have represented very good value for money at 14% of total programme costs albeit there are indications that at times programme management has been stretched/challenged by the level of resource available.

5. There is limited evidence of deadweight or displacement and overall leakage is at least in line with national norms at around no more than 15%.

6. The call for bids approach led by the LAG has helped focus the allocation of LEADER resources to the areas identified by the LDS and represents good practice.

outcomes

Our findings are:

1. The programme is deemed by its projects and wider stakeholders to have been particularly successful in: getting more people involved in their community, improving the environment and increasing local prosperity.

2. The programme is considered by its stakeholders and projects to have delivered particularly good practice in relation to: recreational infrastructure, the use of modern technology, training and skills and access to services.

3. The programme is considered by stakeholders and projects to have been particularly innovative in relation to: recreation and leisure, thriving communities, tourism and conservation activities.

strategic added value

Strategic added value considers specific and insightful refinements to standard modes of LEADER delivery adapted by those running the programme to respond to local circumstances. Our evaluation has highlighted:

1. The programme has benefitted from the strategic role Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust plays in terms of its broad range of work across the area.

2. The programme has been as innovative as possible, within the challenge of not compromising the scope for bottom up project encouragement, in allocating its funding.

3. The programme has been managed in such a way that it has been able to generate economic as well as social project outputs.

4. The programme has successfully supported some very small but locally significant village-based projects around parish caretakers and village renewal and development.

social return on investment

We found:

1. The programme can clearly be shown to have supported projects which have delivered considerable social return on investment in terms of their wider outcomes.

stakeholder views

As part of the evaluation representatives of organisations involved in the strategic and local environment within which the programme operates were interviewed. Their views are as follows:

1. Stakeholders are generally enthusiastic about the achievements of the programme and fully committed to it.

2. Stakeholders feel that whilst the programme was constrained in its focus by the rules set by Yorkshire Forward at its outset, it has delivered a very wide range of useful outputs and outcomes.

3. There is a strong view that many of the outputs and outcomes delivered by the programme will be sustainable in the long term.

4. There is a general view that the programme has run effectively but could benefit from a more joined up approach across its constituent delivery bodies in terms of animation and management.

5. The geography for the programme is seen to have worked but there is some interest in widening it and in bringing market towns more effectively into it.

6. Stakeholders feel that economic growth and relationships with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will be key future themes for any follow-on LEADER Programme.

final conclusions

The commission for this evaluation asked for the evaluation;

(a) **To examine the success of the programme in meeting its aims and objectives and targets as stated in the Local Development Strategy** – this evaluation has established that these have been met, with the basic targets for activity and spend being exceeded and a number of clear quantifiable additional outputs being demonstrated. A number of these are economic, including for example jobs and bode well for the evolution of the programme under transition.

(b) **To demonstrate its impact on all stakeholders** – we have worked with the LAG, project beneficiaries and wider organisational stakeholders to consider the impact of the programme. There is a clear conviction amongst all categories of stakeholders that the programme has delivered more than just a list of outputs. Using Social Return on Investment methodologies we have been able to demonstrate some examples of broader outcomes and impacts. We have also established that it has operated efficiently from a running cost point of view and that it has not been unduly guilty of funding deadweight or displacement. Indeed we can conclude that the majority of its outputs have been additional and have no qualms in identifying them to be at least as good as the national norms identified for LEADER of 85% of gross outputs.

(c) **To consider the success / impact of the LEADER geographical area of delivery.** There is a broad consensus amongst stakeholders that the geography for the area has worked effectively. There is some enthusiasm to include peripheral settlements and market towns excluded from the current programme but generally the current boundaries appear to be un-controversially supported for the future.

(d) **To evaluate the 'bottom up' approach of the programme.** The programme has supported a wide range of community supported projects from the bottom up. Indeed the ethos inherited by the programme of concentrating on volumes of activity and spend have created a climate which is conducive to supporting projects in a very flexible and non prescriptive way. Notwithstanding the merits of such an approach the LEADER Coordinator and LAG have also sought to rise to the challenge of providing some strategic direction for the programme. This is important in relation to staying true to the principles of an LDS which seeks to shape the programme to an analytical approach to tackling the needs of the area. The call for projects and more detailed commissioning activities undertaken in this context have been important. Going forward with the concentration on growth and alignment with other funding activities this experience of focusing the resources of the programme is a useful skills set for the LEADER administration and LAG to build on.
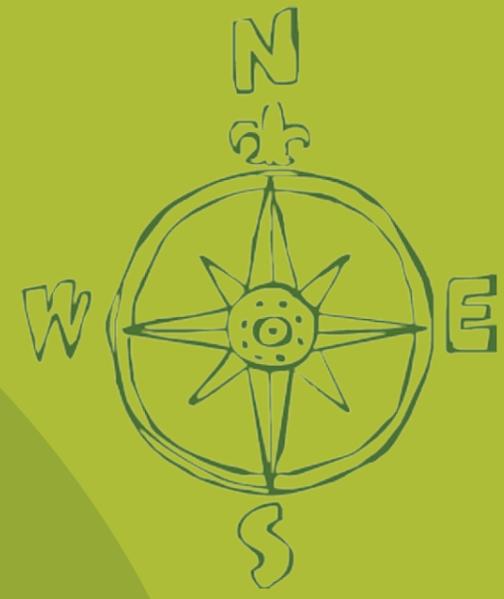
(e) **To identify successes, areas for improvement, conclusions and provide clear recommendations for the future programme.** The programme has been particularly successful in terms of: identifying a strategic framework to translate a very general operational framework into successful outputs and outcomes, over-achieving on its outputs and managing its spending effectively, delivering a number of economic outputs, particularly jobs and engaging very widely across many of the key communities in the Yorkshire Dales. There is evidence to suggest some aspect of its projects may have touched the life of every single resident in the area based on its reported beneficiaries.

Areas for improvement/development include: the development of a tighter integration between the project animation and accountable body aspects of LEADER programme management, consideration of greater scope for development of partnership projects with the North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER area – should that programme continue - and work to build on the very good relationships with key stakeholders such as local authorities bringing the officer support group and LAG even closer together in any future delivery arrangements.

Recommendations for the future include: focusing more directly on growth, without losing the ability to support the wider development of rural communities, reviewing the operational boundaries of the area, taking into account dynamics such as the possible extension of the National Park and the incorporation of market towns, reviewing the membership of the LAG to ensure it has the skills base to support the new economic growth priority facing the programme, entering a renewed dialogue with North Yorkshire County Council about overall programme management to bring project animation and administrative management closer together.

yorkshire dales leader area 2008 - 2013

N
W — E
S

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

Area of Natural Beauty

Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

...nd Area of ...eauty

North
Yorkshire County Council

geo-dales

This project came about through a small project that was run in cooperation with the South Pennines LEADER area developing organisational options for improving conservation of geodiversity.

The aim of the project has been to create site-based action plans at sites of geodiversity significance in the Yorkshire Dales and Nidderdale. This has involved volunteers and community groups working with professionals carrying out management tasks enhancing site condition, improving access, creating interpretation and providing public and tailored events.

'The area is blessed by fabulous geological features and a fascinating ancient past which has created them. This project has involved an extraordinary mix of individuals, charities, local voluntary groups and businesses which have all got involved in exploring that story and connecting it to the public though a good blend of activities, events, trails, exhibitions and new technology. It sets a solid foundation for further work and unlocking the past over a larger area for a wider audience.'

D Tayler, project officer.

burren study tour 2012

Networking and co-operation is at the heart of the Yorkshire Dales Local Development Strategy. In 2012 the Yorkshire Dales LEADER Local Action Group led a Study Tour to the Burren, County Clare to meet with Burren farmers, communities and Burren Farming for Conservation Project staff.

""I learned a great deal from the Irish Farmers, in that they made the most of the natural resources they had available. This along with the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme ... is bringing about an improvement to biodiversity and a viable low input cattle system. While there are fundamental differences in climate and land-type, I still think there are several principles that we can bring back home to apply to our own farming system."".

Study Tour participant, 2012

dales countryside trainee scheme

"My colleagues on the LAG and I are delighted that this project has been such a success. Talking to the trainees individually I was struck by how focussed they all were and what a difference the project has made to each of their lives. On behalf of LEADER I wish every one of them all the best in their chosen careers."

K Lancaster, Chair, Yorkshire Dales LAG.

The Dales Countryside Trainee Scheme was another life-changing project to secure hands-on work placements for young people with local employers in countryside skills, complemented by a Level 2 Qualification in Environmental Conservation at Craven College. Many of the trainees also completed a variety of specialist training courses and are now certified in chainsaw and brush cutter use, off-road driving, habitat surveying and tree surveying, to name just a few. The majority of the Countryside trainees have now gone on to further training or employment, some with their placement employer.

"Before this apprenticeship I had a job that wasn't very rewarding and didn't seem to be going anywhere. Nearly two years later and it's the polar opposite. I love my job and look forward to going to work. I've picked up lots of new skills and important experiences and I'm looking forward to using them to forge a new career."

D Todd, Dales Countryside Trainee.

heritage volunteering project

The aim is to build the capacity and commitment of local volunteers to champion the conservation and enhancement of their heritage environment throughout Nidderdale and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has connected young people and communities to skilled heritage professionals and has been dynamic in response to community demand for training in traditional heritage skills and surveys.

case studies

parish caretakers

Between £2,000 and £5,000 was awarded to 21 parish councils under the LEADER Parish Caretaker Scheme.

The Parish Caretaker is seen as a mix of traditional 'Parish Lengthsman' with a very strong environmental and heritage focus. The concept of a "Lengthsman" (outside that applying to the railways and river ways), dates from the early 1880's when it became common for day-to-day maintenance of main parish roads to be given to a number of men, each appointed to maintain their length of road.

The caretaker duties are decided by members of their own community, and include things like managing verges, repairing benches, clearing snow and road sweeping.

"Having the Parish Caretaker has meant that so much more has been done than was expected – roadside trees have been trimmed back, a dying tree in the cemetery removed and snow cleared from paths around the school – all following a single phone-call!"

Yorkshire Dales parish clerk.

developing community facilities

St Oswald's Church was one of four churches in the Yorkshire Dales LEADER area to get assistance in developing community facilities to enable wider use of the community building. With the provision of kitchen, toilets or social meeting areas these important community buildings can expand the range of services available to the community locally and they are already being used by Mother and Toddler groups, Play groups, Luncheon Clubs, as concert venues and for exhibitions.

case studies

consultees

We would like to thank the following individuals for their support in the development of this evaluation

Key Stakeholders:

Isobel Hall	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
James Farrar	York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership
Liz Scott	Defra
Andrew Laycock	Craven DC
Paul Burgess	Nidderdale AONB
Genevieve Gillies	Harrogate BC
Adrian Shepherd	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Project Officers:

Rima Berry	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

Local Action Group Representatives

Kevin Lancaster	Chair
Peter Stockton	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Rachel Allen	Community representative
Mike Keeble	Heritage/Culture representative
Jill Armstrong	Environmental representative
Katy Penn	Nidderdale Plus
Colin Bailey	North Yorkshire Work & Skills Partnership
David Smurthwaite	Craven District Council
Isobel Hall	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
Rima Berry	LEADER Coordinator
Peter Charlesworth	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Rita Lawson	former LEADER Programme Manager, North Yorkshire County Council

lower wensleydale aiming high

This project is a business led initiative that has raised the profiles of Leyburn, Middleham and their hinterlands, both for "locals" and for visitors, through branding and promotional activity.

In 2013 the project started a pilot "Rural Trades Register" to better connect skilled workers in search of work with established business, improve business to business and business to customer relationships and experiences.

"The Live Like a Local initiative has been a real hit with visitors, residents and businesses. The A5 booklet has been sent all over the world to family and friends and sent instead of Christmas Cards by a number of businesses."
R Sanderson, Chair, Leyburn and Mid Wensleydale Business Association.

glossary

AB	Accountable Body		LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty		LNP	Local Nature Partnership
BC	Borough Council		NPV	Net Present Value
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy		NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council
CMEF	Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework		NYMCH	North York Moors Coast and Hills
CMI	Compliance Monitoring Inspection		RAY	Rural Action Yorkshire
CVS	Council for Voluntary Services		RDA	Regional Development Agency
DC	District Council		RPA	Rural Payments Agency
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs		RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development		ROD	RDPE On Line Database
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund		SAV	Strategic Added Value
EOI	Expression of Interest		SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
EU	European Union		SROI	Social Return on Investment
GVA	Gross Value Added		YD	Yorkshire Dales
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund		YDMT	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
LAG	Local Action Group		YDNP (A)	Yorkshire Dales National Park (Authority)
LDS	Local Development Strategy			
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Dévelopement de l'Économie Rurale			

For more information about the Evaluation results, projects or the LEADER Programme please contact:

Project Co-ordinator - LEADER, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Old Post Office, Main Street, Clapham. LA2 8DP.

Phone: 01524 251002
Fax: 01524 251150
E-mail: rima.berry@ydmt.org

Also on www.twitter.com/ydmtleader
www.yorkshiredalesleader.wordpress.com
www.yorkshiredalesleader.co.uk

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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

LEADER

North Yorkshire County Council

YORKSHIRE DALES MILLENNIUM TRUST