To: **The Deputy Leader and Members of the Community and Environment Board.**
(Phillips, Barber, Fowler, Freer, Lewis, B Moss, M Moss, Pickard and Smith).

For the information of other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact Jenny Price, Democratic Services Officer, on 01827 719450 or via e-mail jennyprice@northwarks.gov.uk.

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

The agenda and reports are available in large print and electronic accessible formats if requested.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD AGENDA

20 October 2014

The Community and Environment Board will meet in The Committee Room, The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1DE on Monday 20 October 2014 at 6.30pm.

AGENDA

1 **Evacuation Procedure**.

2 **Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**

3 **Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

4   **Request for discussion of En Bloc items and approval of remaining En Bloc items.**

5   **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to ask questions or to put their views to elected Members. Participants are restricted to five minutes each. If you wish to speak at the meeting please contact Jenny Price on 01827 719450 or email democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

PART A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

6   **Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 21 July 2014** – copy herewith, to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7   **Presentation by Frith Resource Management on the Council's TEEP Assessment.**

8   **Presentation by Healthwatch Warwickshire** – Chris Bain.

9   **Budgetary Control Report 2014/2015 Period Ended 30 September 2014** - Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources).

Summary

The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2014 to 30 September 2014. The 2014/2015 budget and the actual position for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board.

The Contact Officer for this report is Nigel Lane (719371).

10   **Health Improvement Action Plan – Update on Progress** - - Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the progress being made in respect of delivery of the actions identified in the approved three-year Health Improvement Action Plan.

The Contact Officer for this report is Jaki Douglas (712492).

11   **North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy** - Report of the Assistant
      Director (Leisure and Community Development)

      Summary

      This report informs Members of progress in respect of delivery against the
      priorities set out in the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy.
      Corresponding actions are being advanced through Year 7 of the Strategy's
      supporting Action Plan.

      The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

12   **Leisure Facilities 2015 / 16 Bank Holiday Closures** - Report of the
      Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

      Summary

      This report seeks the Board's approval for the Bank Holiday closure of leisure
      facilities during 2015 / 16 and additionally informs Members of a partial
      closure of the fitness suites at Atherstone Leisure Complex and Polesworth
      Sports Centre in order to facilitate the replacement of fitness equipment.

      The Contact Officer for this report is Peter Wheaton (719257).

13   **North Warwickshire LEADER Programme and Transition Fund**– Report of
      the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

      Summary

      This report provides the Board with background information on the LEADER
      programme in North Warwickshire and updates Members on the "transition"
      activity that has taken place in 2014. It also provides the Board with a
      summary of the priorities in the new Local Development Strategy, which has
      been submitted to DEFRA for consideration to be included within the LEADER
      programme commencing in January 2015.

      The Contact Officer for this report is Rachel Stephens (719301).

14   **Development of New Indoor Leisure Facilities in Coleshill** – Report of the
      Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

      Summary

      This report updates the Board on progress in respect of the development of
      new indoor leisure facilities in Coleshill.

      The Contact Officer for this report is Simon Powell (719352).

PART B – ITEMS FOR EN BLOC DECISIONS
(YELLOW PAPERS)

15   **Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April – June 2014** - Report of the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive.

Summary

This report informs Members of the progress with the achievement of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Community and Environment Board for April to June 2014.

The Contact Officer for this report is Robert Beggs (719238).

JERRY HUTCHINSON
Chief Executive

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD   **21 July 2014**

Present: Councillor Phillips in the Chair.

Councillors Barber, Fowler, Freer, Lewis, B Moss, Pickard, Smith and Winter.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M Moss (Substitute Winter).

7   **Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Councillor Fowler declared a Non-Pecuniary interest in Minute 10 – Development of New Indoor Leisure Facilities in Coleshill by reason of being a Governor at The Coleshill School.

8   **Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on 17 March 2014 and 20 May 2014**

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 March 2014 and 20 May 2014, copies having been previously circulated were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9   **Budgetary Control Report 2014/2015. Period Ended 30 June 2014**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources) reported on the revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10   **Development of New Indoor Leisure Facilities in Coleshill**

The Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) updated the Board on progress in respect of the development of new indoor leisure facilities in Coleshill.

Resolved:

That the progress being made in respect of the development of new indoor leisure facilities at The Coleshill School, be noted.

11 **Recycling – Commingled Collections and Technical, Environmental and Economical Practicability (TEEP)**

The Assistant Director (Streetscape) updated Members on the Waste Framework Directive and the measures which the Borough Council must now take following the publication of further advice and guidance from the government and other agencies on the implementation of national Waste Regulations as they relate to the collection of waste for recycling.

Resolved:

a   That the contents of the report be noted; and

b   That the actions taken so far in relation to the implementation of the current kerbside recycling service and the TEEP assessment being undertaken, be endorsed.

H Phillips
Chairman

**Report of the Assistant Director
(Finance and Human Resources)**

**Budgetary Control Report
2014/2015 Period Ended 30
September 2014**

1   **Summary**

1.1   The report covers revenue expenditure and income for the period from 1 April
2014 to 30 September 2014. The 2014/2015 budget and the actual position
for the period, compared with the estimate at that date, are given, together
with an estimate of the out-turn position for services reporting to this Board.

> **Recommendation to Executive Board**
>
> **That the report be noted and that the Board requests any further
> information it feels would assist it in monitoring the budgets under the
> Board's control.**

2   **Consultation**

2.1   Councillors Phillips, Lewis and Barber have been sent an advanced copy of
this report for comment. Any comments received will be reported verbally to
the Board.

3   **Introduction**

3.1   Under the Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP), services should be
charged with the total cost of providing the service, which not only includes
costs and income directly incurred, but also support costs relating to such
areas as finance, office accommodation, telephone costs and IT services. The
figures contained within this report are calculated on this basis.

4   **Overall Position**

4.1   The actual expenditure for budgets reporting to this Board as at 30 September
2014 is £2,526,313 compared with a profiled budgetary position of
£2,468,098; an over spend of £58,215 over the period. Appendix A to this
report provides details of the profiled and actual position for each service
reporting to this Board, together with the variance for the period.

4.2   Where possible, the year-to-date budget figures have been calculated with
some allowance for seasonal variations, in order to give a better comparison

2014/BR/007728

with actual figures. Reasons for the variations are given, where appropriate, in detail below.

4.3 Leisure Facilities

4.3.1 There is an overall under spend of £6,104 against the profiled budget. This is due to increased direct debit income at Atherstone Leisure Complex and Polesworth Sports Centre, partially offset by reductions in income across other areas of leisure centre income. The overall additional income has been partially offset by increases in employee costs, utility costs and maintenance costs.

4.4 Waste Management

4.4.1 The overall increase is £115,713 with the largest variance being employee expenditure; this is due to the need for two additional rounds in response to the increased demand levels seen since the new service was rolled out in October 2013. There is also an increase in transport costs due mainly to repairs and maintenance. There is also a loss on income on the cesspool service against the profile budget. The trade waste income has seen a small improvement over the profile budget along with increased bulky waste and sale of bins income.

4.5 Amenity Cleaning

4.5.1 The current underspend of £26,728 is mainly due to employee under spends and transport costs, partially offset by increased spend on bought in services (asbestos and hazardous waste removals).

4.6 Corporate Policy

4.6.1 The current underspend of £9,984 is mainly due to timing differences on payment of grants to third parties.

4.7 Support to Voluntary Organisations

4.7.1 There is an under spend of £5,490 on the Local Community Project Fund budget to date.

4.8 Community Development – Young People and Integration

4.8.1 There is an overspend relating to overtime costs, grant payments and bought in services, which will be met from grants that will be received later in the year.

4.9 Parks, Playing Fields and Open Spaces

4.9.1 The current underspend relates to lower vehicle fuel and maintenance costs and lower spend on pitch renovation works during the summer months.

4.10   **Others**

4.10.1 There are a small number of other variances that are worth noting which are shown below.

Underspend on supplies and services within Play Areas	(4,063)
Underspend on contractor costs on Unadopted Roads	(2,809)
Reduced business rates at Atherstone Market, to reflect the fact that it is only used as a market two days a week, the remaining five days are charged to the car park budget.	(2,288)
TOTAL	**(9,160)**

5   **Performance Indicators**

5.1   In addition to the financial information provided to this Board, when the budgets were set in February, performance indicators were included as a means of putting the financial position into context. These are shown at Appendix B.

5.2   In summary, the majority of the Performance Indicators are comparable with the profiled position.

6   **Risks to the Budget**

6.1   The key risks to the budgetary position of the Council from services under the control of this Board are:

- Deteriorating condition of assets, particularly the leisure centres, and further economic pressure affecting the generation of income
- Further reduction or cessation of grants received and the possibility of redundancy costs for those staff affected by withdrawal of funding for given projects.
- A loss of trade waste customers
- Increasing bin replacement rates
- Expected savings from Refuse Collection and Recycling changes not materialising
- Pressure on services from current and future housing developments

7   **Easy Line Studio at Atherstone Leisure Complex**

7.1   The table below shows the projected financial performance of the Easy Line Studio at Atherstone Leisure Complex relating to the 2014/15 financial year:

	Original Budget 2014/15 £	Profile to end September 2014 £	Actual to end September 2014 £
Staff Expenditure	3,880	1,940	1,940
Contribution to Replacement Fund	2,000	1,000	1,000
Income	(6,510)	(3,164)	(2,369)
Net Expenditure	**(630)**	**(224)**	**571**

7.2 This shows that the Studio is presently running at a small loss, which is as a result of the loss of DD members. It is believed that this down turn in memberships was a result of Studio users gaining more confidence with the gym equipment and thus having the ability to use the more physically exerting equipment in the main gym.

8 Estimated Out-turn

8.1 Members have requested that Budgetary Control reports provide details on the likely out-turn position for each of the services reporting to this Board. The anticipated out-turn for this Board for 2014/15 is £5,115,550, as detailed in the table below:-

	£
Approved budget 2014/15	**4,940,550**
Additional costs of Refuse and Recycling based on additional participation rates and volumes of recycling	200,000
Saving on Amenity Cleaning budget relating to reduction in employee cost and vehicle fuel and maintenance costs	(25,000)
Expected Out-turn 2014/15	**5,115,550**

8.2 The figures provided are based on information available at this time of the year and are the best available estimates for this Board, and may change as the financial year progresses. Members will be updated in future reports of any changes to the forecast out turn.

9 Report Implications

9.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

9.1.1 The Council's budgeted contribution from General Fund balances for the 2014/15 financial year is £595,460. As can be seen above, an increase in the net expenditure of around £175,000 is expected to date from the services within this Board. Income and Expenditure will continue to be closely managed and any issues that arise will be reported to this Board for comment.

9.2 Environment and Sustainability Implications

9.2.1 The Council has to ensure that it adopts and implements robust and comprehensive budgetary monitoring and control, to ensure not only the availability of services within the current financial year, but in future years.

The Contact Officer for this report is Nigel Lane (719371).

2014/BR/007728

North Warwickshire Borough Council
Community and Environment Board
Budgetary Control Report 2014/2015 as at 30 September 2014

Cost Centre	Description	Approved Budget 2014/2015	Profiled Budget September 2014	Actual September 2014	Variance	Comments
3072	Polesworth Sports Centre	162,810	65,321	73,113	7,792	See 4.3
3073	Polesworth Hi-Tech	(34,800)	(18,885)	(27,556)	(8,671)	See 4.3
3074	Arley Sports Centre	190,410	102,151	103,330	1,179	See 4.3
3075	Coleshill Sports Centre	313,110	156,436	163,140	6,704	See 4.3
3076	Coleshill Hi-Tech	(61,220)	(27,329)	(23,547)	3,781	See 4.3
3077	Atherstone Leisure Complex	681,400	345,091	357,265	12,174	See 4.3
3078	Atherstone Hi-Tech	(157,430)	(75,593)	(98,839)	(23,246)	See 4.3
3082	Memorial Hall (Sports)	127,320	69,811	63,974	(5,838)	See 4.3
3083	Memorial Hall (Cultural)	(2,050)	(78)	758	836	See 4.3
4002	Public Health Services (Commercial)	297,410	140,656	142,179	1,523	
4003	Public Health Services (Domestic)	100,140	50,070	50,092	22	
5000	Refuse Domestic Collection	801,650	385,189	438,898	53,709	See 4.4
5002	Refuse Trade Collection	(20,250)	(97,957)	(101,388)	(3,431)	See 4.4
5003	Cesspool Emptying	(44,660)	(26,277)	(18,040)	8,237	See 4.4
5004	Recycling	551,570	327,511	384,709	57,198	See 4.4
5010	Amenity Cleaning	646,360	334,065	308,190	(25,875)	See 4.5
5013	Unadopted Roads	12,010	6,525	3,716	(2,809)	See 4.10
5014	Drain Unblocking and Land Drainage	20,480	10,240	10,240	0	
5015	Street Furniture	8,170	4,085	3,890	(195)	
5016	Atherstone Market	5,420	4,140	1,791	(2,350)	See 4.10
5019	Parks, Playing Fields and Open Spaces	522,400	311,662	307,135	(4,527)	See 4.9
5020	Play Areas	202,710	80,155	76,092	(4,063)	See 4.10
5021	Public Health Act 1984 Burials	2,930	1,465	988	(477)	
5022	Sustainable Communities	2,860	-	-	-	
5023	Consultation	19,000	5,840	5,840	(0)	
5025	Corporate Policy	58,570	33,891	23,907	(9,984)	See 4.6
5030	Rural Regeneration	44,210	22,720	21,527	(1,192)	
5034	Landscape	10,330	9,605	9,340	(265)	
5040	Marketing and Market Research	14,130	7,065	6,896	(169)	
5044	Support to Voluntary Organisations	97,370	50,905	44,960	(5,945)	See 4.7
5051	Young People and Intergeneration	76,680	40,330	44,883	4,553	See 4.8
5052	Community Development Environment	64,680	32,360	32,567	207	
5054	Social Inclusion and Sport	66,950	33,590	33,345	(245)	
5055	Health Improvement	57,380	40,454	39,712	(742)	
5056	Safer Communities	93,970	38,400	38,724	324	
5064	Queen Elizabeth School - Artificial Green Pitch	(70)	168	168	-	
5059	Allotments and Biodiversity	8,600	4,315	4,315	-	
7856	High Street Innovation Grants	-	-	-	-	
7890	LEADER - Baxterley Play Area	-	-	-	-	
	Total Expenditure	**4,940,550**	**2,468,098**	**2,526,313**	**58,215**	

Original Budget	4,989,610
Vired Training Budget	13,100
Vired Recruitment Budget	4,420
Vired Superannuation budgets	(66,580)
Approved Budget	**4,940,550**

Key performance Indicators for Budgets Reporting to the Community and Environment Board

performance as at 30 September 2014

	Budget	Profiled budget	Acttual
Polesworth Sports Centre			
Cost per Visit	£4.73	£4.20	£4.11
Income per Visit	£2.89	£2.87	£2.86
Subsidy per Visit	£1.84	£1.33	£1.26
Arley Sports Centre			
Cost per Visit	£5.28	£5.44	£5.92
Income per Visit	£1.80	£1.73	£1.89
Subsidy per Visit	£3.48	£3.71	£4.03
Coleshill Leisure Centre			
Cost per Visit	£5.04	£4.93	£5.22
Income per Visit	£2.66	£2.48	£2.44
Subsidy per Visit	£2.38	£2.46	£2.78
Atherstone Leisure Complex			
Cost per Visit	£5.99	£6.18	£5.97
Income per Visit	£2.91	£3.01	£3.05
Subsidy per Visit	£3.08	£3.17	£2.92
Memorial Hall			
Cost per Visit	£10.13	£10.45	£9.51
Income per Visit	£2.52	£2.03	£2.10
Subsidy per Visit	£7.61	£8.42	£7.41
Refuse Domestic Collection			
Number of Households	27,101	27,101	27,187
Costs per Household	£29.58	£14.21	£16.04
Maximum missed collections per 100,000 users	25	25	Not available
Refuse Trade Collection			
Number of Trade Bins	497	497	569
Gross cost per bin collected	£369.64	£237.94	£211.50
Net cost per bin collected	-£10.74	£171.60	£118.57
Cespool Emptying			
Number of emptyings	1,560	780	681
Gross cost per emptying	£91.81	£93.33	£108.02
Net surplus per emptying	-£28.63	-£27.92	-£19.88
Recycling			
Cost per household	£20.36	£12.10	£14.01
Tonnes of recycled material collected - green waste	6,125	3,063	5,086
Tonnes of recycled material collected - red box	5,185	2,593	2,677
% of waste recycled	50.0%	50.0%	Not available
Parks, Playing Fields and Open Spaces			
Number of Pitches	24	24	20
Number of Teams	17	17	16
Number of Hirers	24	24	20
Income per Team	£581.76	£570.00	£571.56
Play Areas			
Cost of maintenance per play area	£3,583.87	£1,040.48	£904.02
Number of play areas (meeting the safety, DDA and Play Value standard)	31 (28)	31 (28)	31 (28)

Report of the
Assistant Director
(Leisure and Community Development)

Health Improvement Action Plan –
Update on Progress

1   **Summary**

1.1   This report provides Members with an update on the progress being made in respect of delivery of the actions identified in the approved three-year Health Improvement Action Plan.

Recommendation to the Board

That Members note the progress being made in respect of delivery of the actions identified in the approved Health Improvement Action Plan (2014 to 2017).

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2   **Consultation**

2.1   The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson for the Community and Environment and Resources Boards and the Safer Community Sub-Committees, together with Members with responsibility for Health, Well-being and Leisure and Young People, have all had an opportunity to comment on the content of this report. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3   **Background**

3.1   At its meeting held in January 2014, the Board received a presentation from Warwickshire's Director of Public Health, within which he outlined the content of his 2013 Annual Report, the 2013/14 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and details of the local profile in respect of long-term chronic health conditions, the impact of lifestyle choices upon individual and collective health and well-being, life expectancy, disability, safeguarding and dementia. At its next meeting, held in March 2014, a report was presented to the Board that detailed the framework of health activity taking place across North Warwickshire.

3.2   Improving the health and well-being of the local population is a corporate priority and it is a priority that is shared by the local Community Partnership. Additional and localised health priorities have also been identified through the North Warwickshire Community Partnership, including the needs to:

- Halt the rise in obesity amongst children and reduce the number of adults who are obese
- Reduce the number of pregnant women who are smoking at the time of delivery
- Improve the quality of life for people with a mental illness, with a particular focus on people suffering with dementia
- Reduce alcohol-related harm

In part, these priorities are addressed through the Northern Warwickshire Delivery Group, which has been established in conjunction with Public Health and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. As the Board will be aware, the Authority has been making a focused and sustained contribution to local health improvement for many years. This activity is undertaken across the Borough Council, including within the Leisure and Community Development Division, which also co-ordinates a variety of interventions undertaken in conjunction with partner agencies.

3.3   In recognition of the Authority's health improvement work, the County Council's Public Health department (formerly the Primary Care Trust) provides funding to support intensive, targeted local interventions that are consistent with countywide priorities.

4   Health Improvement Action Plan

4.1   In an effort to establish a coherent, effective and focused approach to future health improvement work, a three year (2014 to 2017) Health Improvement Action Plan has been developed. This Plan, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A, was approved by the Board in March 2014. The Plan has been developed in conjunction with Public Health during the negotiation of a two-year funding agreement, which carries with it the option for a 12 months extension.

4.2   The Action Plan includes a commitment to undertake a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness and sustainability of the One Stop Health Shop in Atherstone, to carry out a review of health-related school programmes, to actively engage in the countywide review of the Exercise on Referral Scheme and a commitment to promote enhanced and active use of local open spaces. It is also proposes that work will continue to be undertaken with partner agencies to tackle alcohol related harm and to reduce the number of people smoking, most especially pregnant women.

4.3   Members are familiar with the countywide commitment to "Make Every Contact Count" (MECC). From 2014 to 2016, the Borough Council is pursuing the aim of having all appropriate front line staff trained to highlight health and other concerns to members of the public and to have the knowledge to provide a signposting advice service. Both e-learning and face to face training will be provided to fulfil this requirement, thus enabling managers and staff to choose the most appropriate training method to suit individual work circumstances.

4.4 The approaches through which to measure success against the delivery of Action Plan commitments are being determined on a project by project basis, although generic performance measures detailed in the contract include:

- Number of interventions delivered
- Quality of interventions (measured as a satisfaction rating from participants)
- Number of participants
- Number of participants reporting an improvement in their health

5 Divisional Health Activity – 2014/15

5.1 Whilst staff capacity within the Division has reduced, high priority health improvement work has continued, albeit through a restricted project programme.

5.2 The review of the One Stop Health Shop was completed and the service was closed over the summer months to allow time to react to the review recommendations and refresh the programme content accordingly. A session was held with previous participants of the scheme to notify them of the changes, to inform them of the start date of the new scheme and, where eligible, to welcome them on to the new programme. Following discussion with the Consultant for Public Health, the service was re-named "Choose to Change" and was re-launched on 13 October as a weight loss support programme. Promotion of the new service was undertaken with support from Atherstone Co-op, where advisors delivered health MOTs and signed up participants new to the project.

The main changes to the scheme are as follows:

- Participants must be overweight to qualify for the scheme (BMI over 25)
- 12 week programme in line with behaviour change timescales (it is no longer a drop-in service)
- Focus on weight management through behaviour change
- One to one support built into each session

The new scheme will aim to deliver the following outcomes:

- Engage 15 people per 12 week programme
- 60% of participants undertaking 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week
- 25% of participants achieving 3% weight loss in the course of the programme
- 90% of participants stating that the scheme has helped them make a positive change to their lifestyle
- 60% of participants reporting a tangible health improvement i.e. a reduction in levels of medication taken

5.3 Health walks continue to be established across the Borough. The "North Walks" programme has been extended, with two new walks having been developed, in Coleshill and Kingsbury, to complement those established in Old Arley, Atherstone, Austrey, Dordon, Grendon, Hartshill, Mancetter, Middleton and Ridge Lane. Work is also taking place to develop additional walks in Corley / Fillongley and Hurley. The programme is led by a trained "Walking for Health" Scheme Co-ordinator, who supports each walk for 12 weeks. Within this period of time potential volunteer Walk Leaders are identified and trained, thereby ensuring sustainable, cost effective succession planning. North Warwickshire currently has 62 volunteer Walk Leaders in the eleven active groups, which have a combined total of 234 registered walkers. Walking is recognized as an effective way for people to get and stay fit. Of those people currently registered on the North Walks programme, 67% have a diagnosed health condition (such as heart disease, asthma, etc.). Whilst a detailed scheme evaluation is currently being undertaken, anecdotal evidence suggests that participants' general health and well being has improved since their involvement in the programme. Walking in a group environment also offers social interaction, helps to reduce isolation and provides encouragement for participants to stay active.

5.4 For those wishing to exercise at a faster pace, running groups are also being developed. The first, which is co-ordinated from Atherstone Leisure Complex, has been so successful that it has been expanded to include two beginner sessions and an intermediate group. Plans are underway to develop similar schemes at each of the Authority's leisure facilities.

5.5 Divisional staff continue to support the work of the Smoking Cessation Officer, particularly in respect of the "Stoptober" campaign and National No Smoking Day. Mental health and dementia are priorities for the Northern Warwickshire Health Delivery Group and in response, the option of providing training for all appropriate Borough Council staff is being investigated. Additionally, the Authority supported Dementia Awareness Week (18 to 24 May 2014) by distributing posters, wrist bands, bookmarks and leaflets through a number of public outlets, including:

- The Council House One Stop Shop
- Borough Care (distributed material to customers)
- Housing (which displayed material within its 22 Community Rooms)
- All four Borough Council Leisure Facilities in Arley, Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth
- The One Stop Health Shop in Atherstone
- Walking Groups
- Community Hubs

5.6 The Borough Council also supported Warwickshire County Council Public Health Department's "Big Day Out", within which activity took place at Long Street Recreation Ground, Dordon, where the community was encouraged to enjoy the extensive recent improvements that have taken place at this site. The next event is due to take place on Sunday 26 October at Old Arley

Recreation Ground, where celebrations will take place to recognise the site's designation as a QEII Playing Field. Additional events encouraging use of the Council's open spaces have taken place at Abbey Green Park in Polesworth and Sycamore Road in Kingsbury.

6   Wider Health Action Plan Activity

6.1   In addressing issues of obesity, financial inclusion and access to services, the Community Development Officer (Health Improvement) works closely with other Divisions in the Borough Council. The delivery of Food Co-ops is now organized in conjunction with the development of Community Hubs. Throughout the Borough, approximately 40 affordable bags of fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables are provided to local people each week. The Co-ops are currently operating daily in Atherstone and weekly at the Community Hubs in Baddesley Ensor, Birchmoor and Coleshill. An extension of the Food Co-op scheme into other Community Hubs is currently being investigated.

6.2   Community cooking programmes continue to be delivered at various locations throughout the Borough. New groups are being provided with a Community Cooking Tool Kit and a Service Level Agreement in order that scheme participants understand the level of commitment required to ensure future sustainability. A scheme has also been developed with the Bromford Learning Disability Hub, which, after delivery of the initial programme by Borough Council staff, will deliver its own cooking programmes. Additionally, "Cook It", a ten week community cooking programme, was delivered at Queen Elizabeth School in Atherstone. This programme took referrals of people who were in need or who were Food Bank users, and taught them cooking skills, primarily using food supplied by Fairshare and the Food Bank.

6.3   Warwickshire County Council's Public Health Department is currently in the process of commissioning Structured Family Weight Management and Exercise on Referral services across Warwickshire. The Leisure and Community Development Division is involved in discussions with potential partners (including the five District / Borough Councils and the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sport Partnership) to ensure that relevant services are provided to the residents of North Warwickshire in a cost effective and efficient manner.

7   Conclusion

7.1   As reported at the Board meeting held in March 2014, North Warwickshire has approximately 14,000 obese adults. 7.2% of Reception aged children are also obese. More than 22% of the local population aged over 18 years are smokers. 17.3% of pregnant women smoke at the time of delivery. More local young people than ever before are drinking each week (10.5%). 6% of the Borough's population is reported to be in "bad" or "very bad" health. The actions that have been initiated as identified in the Health Improvement Action Plan are the first stage in beginning to coherently address these concerns. It will take considerable time and effort to realise sustainable progress, but the Authority is committed to tackling these issues with and

within the community for the benefit of individual and collective health and well-being.

8   Report Implications

8.1   Finance and Value for Money Implications

8.1.1   The health improvement services detailed within the main body of the report and those identified in the Action Plan are, and will continue to be, funded either through approved revenue budgets or secured external funding. Warwickshire County Council's Public Health department is providing a grant of £17,000 to the Council in 2014/15 and 2015/16 to support related activity. Partnership led health promotion projects and interventions are a cost effective way of improving the nation's health and well-being.

8.2   Safer Communities Implications

8.2.1   Tackling evident health-related problems in society, such as alcohol and drug misuse, seeks, amongst other things, to make communities safer places in which to live, work and visit.

8.3   Environment and Sustainability Implications

8.3.1   The immediate and wider environment in which people live have a direct impact on individual and collective health. Good quality housing and focused health improvement interventions, therefore, positively impact upon people's environment and their well-being. If people are in good health they are more likely to live longer, independent lives and to make a positive contribution to their community, thereby improving quality of life for everyone.

8.4   Health, Well-being and Leisure Implications

8.4.1   The current and proposed activity identified within the main body of this report is designed to positively impact upon individual and collective health and well-being, with the aims of helping people to live longer, healthier lives and to reduce health inequalities in society.

8.4.2   There is a clear and evident link between good quality leisure provision and the positive health and well-being of participants. Programmes of work, therefore, will include increasing the quality and extent of leisure provision, most especially in targeted locations within the Borough.

8.5 **Risk Management Implications**

8.5.1 There is no direct risk consequent upon the services identified within this report. The activity that is included within the draft Action Plan, however, will be risk assessed and appropriate controls put in place, where appropriate.

8.6 **Equalities Implications**

8.6.1 Hard to reach communities are often those that are most in need of health and well-being advice and support. Interventions are, and will continue to be, targeted at specific communities identified as being most in need of related services.

8.7 **Links to Council's Priorities**

8.7.1 Health and well-being activity positively impacts across all of the services provided by the Borough Council and, therefore, links to each of its corporate priorities:

- Public services and Council tax
- Local employment
- Environment
- Recycling
- Crime and disorder
- Countryside and heritage
- Housing
- Access to services
- Consultation and communication
- Health and well-being

8.7.2 Health improvement activity also directly links to all three Sustainable Community Strategy priorities of:

- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skill levels
- Developing healthier communities
- Improving access to services

The Contact Officer for this report is Jaki Douglas (712492).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Warwickshire County Council	Warwickshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	2012/13
2	Warwickshire County Council	Joint Health and Well-being Interim Strategy	Feb 2013

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
DELIVERY AGAINST THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY					
In accordance with the key priority of the North Warwickshire Community Partnership – to aid a reduction in under 75 mortality rates from Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) and Cancer by: 1 – Halt the rise in obesity in children and reduction in adults who are obese	Review and evaluate the Atherstone One Stop Health Shop and, if required, identify options that better meet the identified needs Consideration of amended OSHS delivery options (including possible extension request to embed and review new delivery model). Implementation of agreed OSHS delivery options and monitoring.	April 2014 May 2014 September 2014	Staff time Staff time Possible funding requirement for extension	Partnership & Development Manager (PDM)/ Community Development Officer (Health Improvement) (CDO[HI])	Completed New programme 'Choose to Change' developed Scheme launched 13 October
	Along with School Nursing Teams, to identify services/ provision available to schools relating to health education (what is being delivered/ can be delivered) Review health data to identify priority topics and target communities Target priority area schools with required services. To undertake an evaluation of the school plan	May 2014 May 2014 June - March 2015 March 2015	Staff time Staff time Staff time and possible funding requirement Staff time	PDM/ CDO(HI)	Being progressed through the Warwickshire North Delivery Group.

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Continued – 1 – Halt the rise in obesity in children and reduction in adults who are obese	To undertake activities that increase exercise participation levels including: 1 - To develop North Warwickshire as a walking borough by supporting the current walking groups and developing two new groups in priority communities (then review locations) 2 – To develop two new running groups (then review locations)	March 2015 March 2015	Staff time Staff time	CDO(Social Inclusion & Sport) (CDO[SI&S]) CDO(SI&S)	Completed Two new walks developed, total of 11 currently on offer. Two additional walks being worked on. Atherstone completed and highly successful. Coleshill to be developed following opening of the new facility at Coleshill School.
	To develop two new measured miles	March 2015	Staff time, possible funding requirement	CDO(SI&S)	Progress underway for a measured mile in Abbey Green Park, Polesworth. External funding bid submitted for additional support.
	To deliver activities as part of Warwickshire County Council Public Health's 'Big Day Out' and National 'Love Parks' week.	6 April 2014 25/07–03/08/14	Staff time Staff time	PDM PDM	Big Day Out delivered at Dordon, Long Street Recreation Ground and a further one will take place in Old Arley on 26 October. Love Parks event took place at Sycamore Road, Kingsbury on 3 August.

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

	Deliver key health promotion and education messages relating to healthy eating and increasing exercise, including: 1 – Promotion of Five-A-Day 2 – Change for Life programmes	Ongoing	Staff time	CDO(HI)	Being delivered through Community Cooking programmes.

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Continued – 1 – Halt the rise in obesity in children and reduction in adults who are obese	To support and develop the borough's fresh Fruit and Vegetable Coop scheme, prioritising Community Hub venues	March 2015	Staff time	CDO(HI)	Four schemes currently operating with approximately 40 bags of fresh fruit and vegetables being delivered on weekly basis.
	To develop community cooking sessions at Community Hub locations	March 2015	Possible funding requirement	FIO	Community Cooking taking place through Bromford Housing and via Queen Elizabeth Secondary School.
	To deliver a healthy eating message to schools at the 2014 and Beyond event at Coombe Abbey	18 – 20 June 2014	Staff time	CDO(HI)	2014 event cancelled

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Continued – 1 – Halt the rise in obesity in children and reduction in adults who are obese	Deliver the Exercise on Referral Scheme at the Borough Council's Fitness Suites.	Ongoing	Staff time, funding from Public Health via CSWSP	Leisure Facilities Manager	Scheme continuing
	Assist in the review of the Exercise on Referral Scheme and implement improvements as necessary and as resources permit	April 2014 – March 2015	Staff time, funding from Public Health via CSWSP	LFM	Review did not take place – Leisure and Community Development Division is, however, engaged with the commissioning of this service and Structured Family Weight Management
	Continue to develop the access for juniors (young people aged 12 and 13 years of age) by training Fitness Suite staff	Ongoing	Staff time and within current budgets	LFM	Offering the Exercise on Referral Service to people aged from 13 to 16 years is potentially to be included in the new specification for the commissioned service.

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
In accordance with the key priority of the North Warwickshire Community Partnership – to aid a reduction in under 75 mortality rates from Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) and Cancer by: 2 – Reduction in alcohol related harm	Support the Warwickshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) to deliver identified partnership work as it relates to North Warwickshire, including: 1 - Delivering key health promotion and education messages relating to Alcohol Awareness Week 2 – Further action to be confirmed	 November 2014/15/16 April 2014	 Staff time Unknown	 CDO(HI) TBC	No action required to date, however, delivery of theatrical productions in schools is being considered.

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
In accordance with the key priority of the North Warwickshire Community Partnership – to aid a reduction in under 75 mortality rates from Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) and Cancer by: 3 – Reduction in smoking status at time of delivery	Deliver key health promotion and education messages relating to smoking including: 1 - Work with Smoking Cessation Officer on National No Smoking Day awareness 2 - Work with Smoking Cessation Officer on 'Stoptober' campaign	March 2015/16/17 October 2014/15/16	Staff time (NHS provide resources) Staff time (NHS provide resources)	CDO(HI) CDO(HI)	No action required to date Support provided on 16 September in Atherstone Market Square (front page of Atherstone Herald 02/10/14).
	Following clarity from the DAAT, to deliver identified partnership work as it relates to North Warwickshire (particularly in relation to reducing smoking status at time of delivery)	Clarity of other work by April 2014	Unknown	PDM (initially)	No action required to date

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Adoption and implementation of Making Every Contact Count (MECC)	To engage in the MECC Partnership Group, to:	Ongoing	Staff time	PDM	
	1 - Develop a MECC Implementation Plan for the Borough (including looking at the single point of access referral pathway and consideration of dementia awareness)	May 2014	Staff time	PDM	The provision of e-learning (via the Borough Council's training portal) and face to face training is being coordinated with Human Resources.
	2 - Identify and train all appropriate 'front line' Borough Council staff	May 2014 - March 2016	Staff time (Public Health will provide free training)	PDM/ Human Resources	(see above note)
	3 - Identify and train appropriate Hub volunteers	March 2017	Staff and volunteer time (Public Health will provide free training)	PDM/ FIO	To be addressed when NWBC training has been clarified.

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Responsible Officer	Progress
Working in targeted communities to collate evidence to understand their priority needs, aspirations and makeup and work collaboratively with partners and the communities to respond to and deliver services to meet those needs	To identify priority communities (to be agreed at Community and Environment Board)	October 2014?	Staff time	PDM	Partnership meeting taking place on Wednesday 24 September to discuss Social Inclusion priorities – and to identify target communities.
	To work in and with priority communities to identify their makeup, aspirations and health needs.	March 2015 – Ongoing	Staff time	PDM/ CDO(HI)	
	Feed evidential information into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	Ongoing	Staff time	CDO(HI)	
	Review the evidence and information and work with partners and the identified communities to, where possible, respond to and deliver services that meet the needs.	Ongoing	Staff time and possible requirement for additional funding for service deliver or improvements to access arrangements	PDM/ CDO(HI)	

Report of the   North Warwickshire Green Space
Assistant Director   Strategy Progress Report
(Leisure and Community Development)

1   Summary

1.1   This report informs Members of progress in respect of delivery against the
         priorities set out in the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy.
         Corresponding actions are being advanced through Year 7 of the Strategy's
         supporting Action Plan.

Recommendation to the Board

a   That progress in respect of the implementation of the
         provisions of Year 7 of the North Warwickshire Green Space
         Strategy Action Plan be noted;

b   That the proposal to dedicate the informal open space at
         Sycamore Crescent in New Arley as a Village Green be
         referred to Resources Board for approval;

c   That the proposed capital allocations of £30,000 to each of the
         Play Area Development Programme projects in Atherstone and
         Coleshill, as identified in section 4.6 of the report, be
         approved; and

d   That £25,000 of Section 106 funding, earmarked for green
         space enhancements in Atherstone, be allocated for
         improvements to Meadow Street Gardens.

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2   Consultation

2.1   The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson for the
         Community and Environment and Resources Boards and the Housing and
         Safer Communities Sub-Committees, Members with responsibility for Health,
         Well-being and Leisure and Young People, together with appropriate Ward
         Members, have all had the opportunity to comment on the content of this
         report. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3   **Introduction**

3.1   The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy (2008 to 2018) was formally adopted by the Executive Board at its meeting held on 8 December 2008. At that meeting, the Board also considered the supporting Action and Funding Plan, which it approved in principle, pending the need to consider each phase of the Plan within the context provided by the Council's overall capital and revenue requirements.

3.2   The Action Plan, which is rolled forward annually, directs the work of the Landscape Management Section within the Leisure and Community Development Division but depends, for its successful delivery, on extensive partnership working both within and outwith the Authority. Progress in respect of the implementation of the Action Plan was last reported to the Board at its meeting held in March 2014. A summary of overall performance to date is attached at Appendix A.

3.3   The Green Space Strategy sets out a number of policy and service priorities, a set of area-based priorities and policies in respect of resources and monitoring and development. Progress in those areas of activity that has been made since the last report to the Board is set out in sections 4 to 6 below.

4   **Service Priorities**

4.1   **Maintenance and Cleanliness**

4.1.1   A key priority in this section of the Strategy is to "review current grounds maintenance arrangements to ensure coherent and appropriate work programming and adequate allocation of resources". Progress in this respect, and proposals for new ways of working, are the subject of a separate report elsewhere on this Agenda.

4.1.2   Another of the key priorities of the Strategy is to explore opportunities for alternative maintenance arrangements for certain sites, such as through partnership working with other providers. This is currently being advanced in two areas in particular – the maintenance of Local Nature Reserves and the management of a number of sports facilities. More details in this regard are set out below.

4.2   **Safety and Security**

4.2.1   The Green Space Strategy identifies a commitment to investment in basic service improvements by improving site infrastructure. A programme of related is prepared annually within the context of available revenue, capital and external funding resources. In 2014/15 those resources have primarily been directed towards the implementation of Green Space Management Plans, which are realising significant improvements to a number of sites, as set out in section 5 below.

4.3   **Biodiversity and Climate Change – Local Nature Reserves**

4.3.1   The Green Space Strategy sets out a number of priorities in respect of the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through habitat creation and management, to which the ongoing Local Nature Reserves project (the Wild:LIFE Project) is making a significant contribution.

4.4   **Partnership Working**

4.4.1   In recognising the important role that other providers have in delivering green space provision across the Borough, the Strategy commits the Authority to supporting partners where their green spaces have been identified as Area Priorities.

4.4.2   Progress in respect of projects with Atherstone and Coleshill Town Councils is reported in section 4.6 and with Baddesley Ensor, Shuttington and Polesworth Parish Councils in section 5 below.

4.5   **Outdoor Sports**

4.5.1   Subsequent to the Board's approval, at its meeting held in May 2014, of the proposed terms of a long-term sub-lease of Hurley Daw Mill Recreation Ground to Hurley Kings Football Club, details have been forwarded to CISWO for the preparation of the necessary Licence to Underlet. In the meantime, the Club has, to date, successfully secured funding offers totalling £115,000 from Sport England and will be submitting an application for a further £150,000 from the Football Foundation. The funding will enable the Club to improve site security, provide changing facilities and carry out much-needed pitch improvements. Officers are now assisting the Club to prepare and submit the necessary planning application for the works.

4.5.2   Further to the Board's approval of the proposal to lease the bowling green in Abbey Green Park to Polesworth Bowls Association, it is expected that this arrangement will be in place from October 2014.

4.6   **Children and Young People**

4.6.1   The Strategy recognises the vital role of green space in helping children and young people to develop skills through play and social interaction and commits the Authority to supporting the development of a strategic network of play facilities across the Borough. The Play Area Development Programme aims to meet this commitment through delivery of an action plan (attached at Appendix B). Members will be aware that £120,000 has been allocated in the capital programme to support phase three of the programme, which is currently being advanced.

4.6.2   A brief for the refurbishment of the play area at Boot Hill in Grendon was prepared following consultation with children and young people and tenders were invited through an ESPO framework contract, which was won by the play company Hags-SMP. A bid for match funding was submitted to Veolia

Environmental Trust, towards the project costs for both the new play provision and for the renewal of boundary fencing to the adjacent Recreation Ground. Unfortunately the bid for financial support was unsuccessful. The Trust indicated that this was due to having received an overwhelming number of applications in this round for the limited funds available, which very much reflects the current financial climate. In order to ensure that an appropriate facility of good play value is installed it is, therefore, proposed to allocate £60,000 from the capital allocation, plus £6,000 from the Play Areas revenue budget, to the project, although it has been necessary to make some minor amendments to the design in order to keep within this budget.

4.6.3 Progress in respect of the provision of play facilities at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground in Ansley Common, is set out in section 5 below.

4.6.4 Further to the Board's approval of the proposal to work in partnership with Atherstone Town Council, to improve the play facilities at Westwood Road, the first stage consultation with children and young people is due to take place in October, further to which designs will be commissioned from Hags-SMP. It is expected that the second stage consultation, to choose the preferred option, will take place in November and that installation will be completed by spring 2015. Given that implementation of this scheme will facilitate the removal of the Borough Council's play equipment at Minions Close, with an attendant reduction in maintenance liability, it is proposed that the Borough Council should contribute £30,000 to the project, which, together with the Town Council's own funds, will provide a working budget of £50,000.

4.6.5 Similarly, further to the Board's approval of the proposal to work in partnership with Coleshill Town Council to improve play provision at its Memorial Park, discussions are now underway to prepare proposals as part of an overall site management plan. In this instance, as well as facilitating the removal of the Borough Council's play equipment at Brendan Close, this will help to deliver against the key priority of the Green Space Strategy to "support Coleshill Town Council to develop a management plan for Memorial Park, with a view to achieving Green Flag standard". A provisional allocation of £30,000 towards the project is proposed.

4.6.6 Officers are also assisting Polesworth Parish Council in the refurbishment of its play area at Warton Recreation Ground, more details of which are set out in section 5 below.

4.7 **Customer Engagement**

4.7.1 The Green Space Strategy acknowledges the value of open space to local communities and seeks to encourage people to use their local spaces and to take pride in their development.

4.7.2 The Wild:LIFE project actively engages local people in the development and management of local nature reserves and is supporting the establishment of "Friends Groups". Similarly, local communities are consulted during the preparation of site management plans and to inform proposals for the

refurbishment of play facilities. Ansley Common Residents' Association and Warton Community Association, as noted in section 5 below, are taking particularly active roles in this respect.

4.7.3 The Partnership and Development section has run a number of successful green space events this year. These included participation in Public Health Warwickshire's "Big Day Out" in April, with a celebration at Long Street Recreation Ground in Dordon, following completion of the refurbishment project, and events in July and August to mark the dedication of Abbey Green Park in Polesworth and Sycamore Road Recreation Ground in Kingsbury as Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields. The event at Polesworth, which was held in conjunction with the Polesworth Carnival, also highlighted the work of students at Polesworth School to create the Local Nature Reserve Sculpture Trail and a graffiti project in the skate area, through which they successfully achieved Silver and Bronze Arts Awards.

4.7.4 The Authority is continuing to support the North Warwickshire Allotment Federation through an annual Service Level Agreement. The Federation, which is run by volunteers, seeks to bring together representatives from allotment associations and groups across North Warwickshire and holds regular events, including an annual awards competition, aimed at developing and promoting allotments.

5   **Area-Based Priorities**

5.1   **Coleshill Area**

5.1.1 As referred to in section 4 above, officers are now liaising with Coleshill Town Council as it advances the preparation of a management plan for Coleshill Memorial Park. The Town Council has appointed landscape consultants who have produced initial site survey and opportunities/constraints plans and are currently progressing community consultation with user groups and local residents, which they expect to have completed early in 2015.

5.2   **Arley and Whitacre Area**

5.2.1 Plans have now been prepared, in consultation with the local community, for the implementation of further improvements at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground, including the installation of junior play equipment. In addition to £30,000 allocated to the scheme in the capital programme, a further £10,000 has been provisionally identified through potential contributions from the Housing and Streetscape Divisions towards improved parking provision on Bretts Hall Estate, which it is hoped can be effected at the same time. Following a tendering exercise, the cost of the currently envisaged project is approximately £110,000. Assuming a landfill tax bid of £40,000 to support the project, albeit with some caution in the light of recent experience, this leaves a shortfall of £30,000 on the budget. Officers are reviewing both the scheme and the budgetary position to see whether this shortfall can be addressed, with a view to submitting an application for grant support in the current funding round, which is open until November 2014.

5.2.2 Work with the Authority's landscape consultants, Arthur Amos Associates, to prepare a management plan for Old Arley Recreation Ground has now resumed, with two particular priorities already identified for the site. Firstly, consultation following the installation of junior play facilities through the Playbuilder Programme in 2011 has shown that more provision needs to be made for toddlers play. Secondly, the surface of the Multi-Use Games Area, which is managed by the Leisure Facilities section, is nearing the end of its useful life, as demonstrated by falling income levels, (from £7,360 in 2007/08 to £1,228 in 2013/14). There is currently no budgetary provision to advance a project at the Recreation Ground, but the preparation of management and business plans will enable a report to be brought to a future meeting of the Board to advise Members of a preferred way forward and of the likely associated resource implications.

5.2.3 Members will recall that there has been some discussion with Arley Parish Council as to the desirability of affording protection to the informal open space at Sycamore Crescent in New Arley. A proposal in reports to this Board and the Resources Board, in October and November 2013 respectively, that, given the Parish Council's concerns, it should be offered the opportunity to purchase the land was approved. Members of the Resources Board, however, remained concerned that the land could still be vulnerable for development in the future and that any sale should be conditional on safeguards being put in place. Further to advice from the Legal section it has become apparent that the only effective way to achieve this is by dedicating the area as a Village Green, which can be done as easily by this Authority as by the Parish Council. It is now proposed, therefore, that the Resources Board be asked to approve such a course of action by the Borough Council, in preference to selling the land.

5.3 **Atherstone and Mancetter Area**

5.3.1 Since progress in respect of the Green Space Strategy was last reported to the Board, officers have been approached by Owen Street Community Arts (OSCA) with a request to work together to improve Meadow Street Gardens, which adjoin the Arts Centre. The site provides a small but valuable green space in the heart of Atherstone, in an otherwise predominantly residential area. It also provides a popular pedestrian link to the town centre. There has been no investment in the site for many years, which is of poor quality and consequently uninviting as an open space. Outline proposals have been drawn up for its improvement, which are attached at Appendix C, and cost estimates are in preparation.

5.3.2 There is no capital funding currently available for this project. However, £25,000 is expected from a Section 106 Agreement in respect of the redevelopment of the site of the former Police Station and Magistrates' Court in the town. It is proposed that this funding, which is expected to be received on first occupation of the houses, should be earmarked to support improvements at Meadow Street Gardens.

5.4 **Polesworth and Dordon Area**

5.4.1 As previously reported, implementation of the landscape works at Long Street Recreation Ground in Dordon and at Abbey Green Park in Polesworth were completed in March 2014. A twelve months defects period is now in place during which any necessary remedial works will be undertaken. Both schemes have been very well received in the local communities.

5.4.2 A modest improvement scheme has been prepared for Kitwood Avenue Recreation Ground in Dordon, which will be tendered shortly for scheme implementation during the coming autumn / winter season. This will complete all of the projects being supported by funding from the Birch Coppice S106 Agreements.

5.5 **Baddesley and Grendon Area**

5.5.1 Improvements at the Parish Council's Recreation Ground in Speedwell Lane and at the grounds to the Church and Community Hall, both in Baddesley Ensor, were successfully completed in May 2014.

5.6 **Newton Regis and Warton Area**

5.6.1 Detailed proposals for Alvecote Recreation Area, including much-needed new play provision, have now been prepared and the Parish Council is being assisted to source external funding in order to advance the project to tender stage. The outcome to a funding bid to the County Council is expected at the end of September.

5.6.2 As referred to in section 4 above officers are assisting Polesworth Parish Council to prepare proposals and a funding bid for the improvement of the recreation ground in Warton. The Partnership and Development section has helped a group of residents to set up a Community Association, which has been actively fundraising for the project and has achieved its target of £2,000 in just three months. The Borough Council also has £5,000 set aside in earmarked reserves for the project, the last sum to be spent from the £40,000 Green Space Strategy Fund originally set up in 2009/10 and allocated in accordance with the outcome of consultation through the Area Forums.

6 **Resources, Monitoring and Development**

6.1 **Resources**

6.1.1 The Green Space Strategy acknowledges the value attached to green spaces by the community for many forms of recreation and aims to ensure that the Authority's investment priorities reflect this, albeit within a challenging financial climate.

6.1.2 The establishment of the temporary post of Landscape Officer enabled a number of projects to move forward. This post, however, is now vacant, with

an inevitable adverse consequent impact upon capacity through which to deliver landscape initiatives.

6.2 Monitoring

6.2.1 The Green Space Strategy Action Plan includes sections setting out a suite of performance indicators against which progress in delivering the priorities in the Strategy is measured. The list of indicators is necessarily long, reflecting the complexity of issues being addressed through the Strategy. Both the Strategy and the supporting Action Plan are dynamic, evolving documents through which to advance the sustainable provision of green space into the future. As such, they are under constant review and revision and should never be considered as "finished". Whilst some actions are discrete and can be completed, others will always be on-going undertakings. Performance, therefore, is measured by both the percentage of actions completed and of those in progress.

6.2.2 The targets for performance in Year 7 (2014/15) are 52% of actions completed and 3% of proposed actions in progress. As can be seen from the summary in Appendix A, 35% of actions have been completed and 8% are in progress to date.

7 Report Implications

7.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

7.1.1 It is proposed that £25,000 of Section 106 monies, secured in respect of the redevelopment of the site of the former Police Station and Magistrates' Court in Atherstone, be earmarked to fund improvements to Meadow Street Gardens. Capital allocations for proposed Play Area Development Programme projects in Atherstone and Coleshill are also identified in section 4.6 above.

7.1.2 There are otherwise no new financial implications arising directly out of this report in respect of delivery of the Green Space Strategy Action Plan, as this is being advanced within the context provided by approved capital and revenue budgets and through approved earmarked reserves and external grant aid.

7.2 Safer Communities Implications

7.2.1 Projects advanced through the Green Space Strategy contribute to community safety by providing well-managed recreation areas that afford opportunities for positive activity

7.3 Legal and Human Rights Implications

7.3.1 Projects advanced through the Green Space Strategy are compliant with all relevant legislation.

7.3.2 Dedication of land at Sycamore Crescent, New Arley, as a Village Green will protect the site from development, or use other than for recreation, in perpetuity.

7.4   Environment and Sustainability Implications

7.4.1 Delivery of priorities identified in the Green Space Strategy contributes directly to environmental improvements, enhancement of biodiversity and mitigation of the effects of climate change. It also helps to build sustainable communities.

7.5   Health, Well-being and Leisure Implications

7.5.1 Appropriate management of the Borough Council's green spaces has a positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals and communities by providing opportunities for outdoor leisure and recreation activities and by contributing to an improved quality of life.

7.6   Risk Management Implications

7.6.1 The risks associated with this report have been identified within the context of the corporate risk management process. The risk implications of all projects advanced through the Green Space Strategy are considered as part of effective project management.

7.7   Equalities Implications

7.7.1 The provisions of the Green Space Strategy are targeted at reducing inequalities in access to good quality green space provision. The equalities implications of all projects advanced through the Strategy are considered as part of the project management process.

7.8   Links to Council's Priorities

7.8.1 The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy has direct and positive links to the corporate priorities in respect of:

- Public services and council tax
- Local employment
- Environment
- Crime and disorder
- Countryside and heritage
- Access to services
- Consultation and communication
- Health and well-being

7.8.2 The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy contributes directly to the following priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skill levels
- Developing healthier communities
- Improving access to services

The Contact Officer for this report is Alethea Wilson (719212).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Proposed Sale of Informal Open Space at Sycamore Crescent, New Arley)	October 2013
2	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Resources Board (Land at Sycamore Crescent, New Arley)	November 2013
3	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy Progress Report)	March 2014
4	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Proposal to Underlet Hurley Daw Mill Sports Ground)	May 2014
5	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development), Assistant Director (Streetscape) and Assistant Director (Housing)	Report to Community and Environment Board (Grounds Maintenance Services)	October 2014

PI Ref	Action	Key Priority	Target Date	Overall Target	Completion Target 2014/2015	Progress @ 30/03/2014	In Progress Target 2014/2015	Progress @ 30/09/2014
Policy / Resources / Monitoring and Development Priorities								
GSS PI 01	Four-year Action and Funding Plan adopted by Council	PP2/RP1	December 2008	1	1	1	-	-
GSS PI 02	Four-year Action and Funding Plan reviewed and rolled forward	MP1/MP4	Annual	9	7	7		
GSS PI 03	Divisional and Corporate Plans informed by the Green Space Strategy	MP4	Annual	9	7	7		
GSS PI 04	Performance targets set out and reported against	MP2	Annual	9	6	6		
GSS PI 05	Customer satisfaction survey carried out and reported	MP2	Annual	9	4	3		
GSS PI 06	Progress in delivery of the Green Space Strategy reported to Board	MP3	Annual	9	7	6		
GSS PI 07	Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document adopted by Council	PP1/RP3	September 2011	1			1	
GSS PI 08	Protocol established to ensure compliance with OSSR Study and Green Space Strategy in the Planning process	PP1	September 2011	1			1	
GSS PI 09	Briefings held to ensure compliance with OSSR Study and Green Space Strategy in the Planning process	PP1	Annual from September 2011	7			1	
GSS PI 10	Protocol established to ensure compliance with OSSR Study and Green Space Strategy in any review of land holdings and any proposals for adoption or disposal	PP3	October 2011	1	1			
GSS PI 11	Briefings held to ensure compliance with OSSR Study and Green Space Strategy in any review of land holdings and any proposals for adoption or disposal	PP3	Annual from October 2011	7	1			
GSS PI 12	Landscape Officer post established	RP2	March 2018	1	1			
GSS PI 13	Interim review of PPG17 Study and Green Space Strategy completed	MP5	December 2013	1	1			
GSS PI 14	Full review of PPG17 Study and Green Space Strategy completed	MP5	December 2018	1				

PI Ref	Action	Key Priority	Target Date	Overall Target	Completion Target 2014/2015	Progress @ 30/03/2014	In Progress Target 2014/2015	Progress @ 30/09/2014
	Service Priorities							
GSS PI 15	Initial benchmarking of parks and open spaces service	SP1/RP2	November 2008	1	1	1	-	-
GSS PI 16	Annual benchmarking of parks and open spaces service completed and reported to Board	SP1/RP2	Annual	9	4	3		
GSS PI 17	Grounds maintenance base data verified	SP1	July 2010	1	1	1	-	-
GSS PI 18	Revised grounds maintenance specification prepared and approved by Board	SP1	January 2011	1	1	1	-	-
GSS PI 19	Budget profiles for the grounds maintenance service revised	SP1	March 2012	1	1			1
GSS PI 20	Value for money review of parks and open spaces service completed and reported to Board	SP1	March 2012	1	1			
GSS PI 21	Service Level Agreements in place between Grounds Maintenance Service and internal clients	SP1	March 2012	4	4			4
GSS PI 22	Review and revision of Internal Grounds Maintenance Service arrangements completed	SP1	Annual from January 2013	5				
GSS PI 23	Revised Service Level Agreements with external clients in place	SP1 / RP2	March 2012	20	20			
GSS PI 24	Review and revision of Grounds Maintenance Service arrangements with external clients completed	SP1 / RP2	Annual from January 2013	5				
GSS PI 25	Annual Green Space Improvements Programme prepared and reviewed	SP4	Annual	10	7	7		
GSS PI 26	Green Space Improvements Programme implemented	SP4	Annual	10	7	6		1
GSS PI 27	Tree Management Policy adopted by Council	SP5 / SP19	March 2012	1			1	
GSS PI 28	Officer capacity increased to one FTE to support implementation of the Tree Management Policy	SP5	March 2012	1	1			
GSS PI 29	Six sites designated as Local Nature Reserves	SP6	March 2018	6	4	4		
GSS PI 30	Budget to support biodiversity established	SP6	Annual	9	3	3		
GSS PI 31	Local communities enabled to participate in the development of Local Nature Reserves	SP6	March 2018	6	4	4		
GSS PI 32	Community Green Spaces Development Fund established and promoted	SP10 / SP8	Annual	9	1	1		
GSS PI 33	Consultation completed with schools and other providers to inform the preparation of a Playing Pitch Strategy	SP11	May 2010	1	1	1	-	-
GSS PI 34	Playing Pitch Strategy adopted by Council	SP12	October 2010	1	1	1	-	-
GSS PI 35	Play Area Business Plan adopted by Council	SP13	March 2012	1	1			1

PI Ref	Action	Key Priority	Target Date	Overall Target	Completion Target 2014/2015	Progress @ 30/03/2014	In Progress Target 2014/2015	Progress @ 30/09/2014
GSS PI 36	Play Area revenue budget reviewed to ensure appropriate allocation of resources in the context of the Play Area Business Plan	SP13	March 2012	1	1			1
GSS PI 37	Appropriate investment made into the Play Area Replacement Fund	SP13	Annual	10	6	6		
GSS PI 38	Community Play Area Development Fund established and promoted	SP14	Annual	9				
GSS PI 39	Friends groups established as a key action of the development of site management plans	SP16	March 2018	2	1			
GSS PI 40	Friends groups established as a key action of the development of Local Nature Reserves	SP16	March 2018	6	2	1	2	2
GSS PI 41	North Warwickshire Allotments Federation established	SP17	March 2009	1	1	1	-	-
GSS PI 42	North Warwickshire Allotments Federation supported to implement small-scale projects	SP17	Annual	10	7	7		
GSS PI 43	Allotment Associations established	SP18	March 2018	2	2	2	-	-
GSS PI 44	Allotment sites established and in use	SP18	March 2018	2	2	2	-	-
GSS PI 45	Allotments Policy Statement adopted by Council	SP18	March 2010	1	1	1	-	-
GSS PI 46	Parks and open spaces promoted in publicity and on the website	SP19	Annual	10	3			1
Area Priorities								
GSS PI 47	Areas where informal open space has been developed for alternative green space uses	AP5/AP35/AP39	March 2018	3	1	1		
GSS PI 48	Areas where open space has been released for development to secure funds to develop existing green spaces	AP11/AP26/AP40/AP55	March 2018	4	3	3		
GSS PI 49	Areas with long-term provision of specific open space needs secured	AP42/AP50	March 2018	2			1	1
GSS PI 50	Areas protected from the loss of publicly accessible open space	AP12	March 2018	1	1			
GSS PI 51	Areas with resources specifically targeted to improve the quality of green spaces	AP18/AP41	March 2018	2	2	2		
GSS PI 52	Areas with improved access to rights of way, green spaces and the countryside	AP16/AP17/AP24/AP32	March 2018	4	1	1		1

PI Ref		Action	Key Priority	Target Date	Overall Target	Completion Target 2014/2015	Progress @ 30/03/2014	In Progress Target 2014/2015	Progress @ 30/09/2014
GSS PI	53	Costed management plans prepared for Borough Council recreation sites	AP1/AP22/AP27/AP36/AP38	March 2018	5	6	2		4
GSS PI	54	Management plans being implemented at Borough Council recreation sites	AP1/AP22/AP27/AP36/AP38	March 2018	5	4	2		1
GSS PI	55	Parish councils and other providers supported to prepare management plans for recreation sites	AP2/AP6/AP13/AP14/AP15/AP23/AP28/AP37/AP46/AP49/AP51/AP53	March 2018	14	2	2		2
GSS PI	56	Management plans being implemented at parish council and other providers' recreation sites	AP2/AP6/AP13/AP14AP15/AP23/AP28/AP37/AP46/AP49/AP51/AP53	March 2018	14	2	1		1
GSS PI	57	A formal destination park developed	AP29	March 2018	1				
GSS PI	58	Existing Borough Council play facilities renewed	AP19/AP31/AP43	March 2018	8	7	5		3
GSS PI	59	Parish Councils supported to improve existing play facilities	AP7/AP13/AP14/AP20/AP25/AP44/AP47/AP52	March 2018	9	4	3		1
GSS PI	60	Areas with new sites identified and developed for play provision	AP3/AP8/AP10/AP45/AP48/	March 2018	5				
GSS PI	61	Areas with parish councils and other providers meeting demand for more community access to sports pitches	AP9	March 2018	1			1	
GSS PI	62	Areas with schools meeting demand for more community access to sports pitches	AP4/AP21/AP33	March 2018	3	1	1	1	
GSS PI	63	A sports hub developed	AP30	March 2018	1				
GSS PI	64	Provision of a Synthetic Turf Pitch supported	AP34	March 2018	1	1	1		
					306	160	107	9	25
				Progress		52%	35%	3%	8%

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
DELIVERY AGAINST THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE GREEN SPACE STRATEGY					
In accordance with key priority SP013 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy ensure all Borough Council play facilities offer good play value, meet current safety standards, are accessible, are secured by design and support the objectives of the North Warwickshire Play Strategy	Develop a Play Area Business Plan to determine the action to be taken at those Borough Council play areas still awaiting improvement	March 2012	Staff time	LM	Project plan prepared for the implementation of Phase 3 of the Play Area Development Programme.
	Establish a play area replacement fund to replace equipment at Borough Council sites in the long-term	On-going	Revenue budget - £3000 per play area per annum	LM / AD(L&CD)	Fund established – provision made in respect of all Borough Council projects completed to date.
	Ensure all Borough Council play areas are subject to routine inspection and maintenance and to annual independent inspections	On-going	Staff time, revenue budget	LM	Staff training undertaken. Routine inspection and maintenance schedules in place and annual independent inspections undertaken. Supporting paperwork revised to ensure clear, auditable systems in place.

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
DELIVERY AGAINST THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE GREEN SPACE STRATEGY *continued………*					
In accordance with key priority SP014 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy support the development of a strategic network of play facilities across the Borough and assist other providers to deliver improvements through partnership working	Where appropriate include other providers' sites in the Play Area Development Programme	Ongoing	Staff time External funding Revenue budget	LM	Parish Council sites at Hartshill, Baddesley Ensor, Kingsbury and Fillongley improved through the programme and projects in progress in Alvecote, Atherstone, Coleshill and Warton.
	Facilitate events for other providers to raise awareness of current thinking on the provision of outdoor play opportunities	Ongoing	Staff time\n\nRevenue funding	PDM / LM	Events held in March and November 2010 and September 2011.
	Develop and implement a more supportive play area inspection service for parish councils	April 2012	Staff time\n\nRevenue income	LM	Service currently provided to 12 parish councils.\n\nTraining for Parish Councils carried out in 2008, 2011, 2013 and 2014.

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
PHASE 1 SCHEMES **Piccadilly Recreation Ground** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities **Coleshill Cole End Park / Coleshill Memorial Park** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities / teen kickabout **Austrey Hollybank** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities **Polesworth Abbey Green Park** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities **Ansley Common Bretts Hall Phase 1** Provision of new teen facilities **Corley Church Lane** Provision of extra equipment to increase play value for juniors / toddlers **Hurley Brick Kiln Lane** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities **Wood End Johnson Street** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities **Water Orton George Road** Provision of fencing and extension to hard surface **Hartshill Snowhill Recreation Ground (Parish Council)** Provision of junior / toddler & teen facilities **Hartshill Grange Road Recreation Ground and Moorwood Estate** Removal of equipment **Mancetter Recreation Ground** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities **Dordon Kitwood Avenue Recreation Ground** Provision of additional junior / toddler facilities **Atherstone Royal Meadow Drive** Provision of family play facility **Atherstone St George's Road** Removal of inappropriately sited play facility					All Complete

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
PHASE 2 SCHEMES **Kingsbury Church Lane Recreation Ground (Parish Council)** Provision of junior /toddler facilities **Ridge Lane Recreation Ground** Provision of junior /toddler facilities **Baddesley Ensor Recreation Ground (Parish Council)** **Old Arley Recreation Ground** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities **Kingsbury Sycamore Road Recreation Ground** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facility **Fillongley Church Lane Recreation Ground (Parish Council)** Provision of junior /toddler facilities **Polesworth Sunset Close** Removal of redundant equipment and reinstatement of open space **Baxterley Recreation Ground** Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities & new teen facilities					All complete
PHASE 3 SCHEMES **Dordon Long Street Recreation Ground** Renewal of junior / toddler facilities and provision of teen facilities **Polesworth Abbey Green Park** Provision of skate facilities **Atherstone Warwick Drive** removal of redundant equipment					All complete

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
PHASE 3 SCHEMES *continued………*					
Alvecote Recreation Area (Parish Council)					
Renewal of junior / toddler facilities	Community consultation				Complete
	Preparation of design proposals				Complete
	Funding search	Autumn 2014	Staff time	LM / Parish Council	In hand
	Preparation of tender documentation	To be confirmed	Revenue funding	Consultant	
	Tender period and tender assessment	To be confirmed	Staff time	LM/ Consultant	
	Submission of funding application	To be confirmed	Staff time	Parish Council	
	Confirmation of funding	To be confirmed		Funding Body	
	Contract let	To be confirmed	Staff time	Parish Council	
	Installation on site	To be confirmed	Capital funding	Contractor	
	Opening celebration	To be confirmed	Staff time	PDM/Parish Council	

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
PHASE 3 SCHEMES *continued………*					
Ansley Common Bretts Hall Phase 2					
Provision of further play facilities in conjunction with improvements to the recreation ground and adjacent allotment site	First consultation with young people and local residents	March 2014	Volunteer time	ACRA	Complete
	Preparation of two design options	March 2014	Revenue budget	Consultant	Complete
	Consultation Play Safety consultant	March 2014	Staff time	PDM/LM	Complete
	Second community consultation event	March 2014	Staff time	ACRA / PDM	Complete
	Preparation of the final design, specification and cost estimates	April 2014	Consultation	Consultant	Complete
	Confirmation of final design with the Community	April 2014	Staff time	ACRA / PDM	Complete
	Preparation of tender documentation	May 2014	Revenue budget	Consultant	Complete
	Tender period	June-July 2014	Staff time	LM / Consultant	Complete
	Submission of funding application	August 2014	Staff time	LM	Rescheduled for November 2014
	Confirmation of funding	December 2014	None	Funding Body	Revised to March 2015
	Contract let	December 2014	Staff time	LM	Revised to March 2015
	Installation on site	January – March 2015	Capital Funding	Contractor	Revised to May - June 2015
	Opening celebration	Easter 2015	Staff time	ACRA/PDM	Revised to summer 2015

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
PHASE 3 SCHEMES *continued………*					
Atherstone Minions Close / Westward Road (Town Council)					
Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities at Westwood Road	Consultation with Atherstone Town Council to consider options	February 2014	Staff time	AD (L&CD) / LM	Complete
	First consultation with young people and local residents	October 2014	Staff and Volunteer time	PDM / ATC	
	Preparation of two design options	October / November 2014	Revenue budget		
	Consultation Play Safety consultant	November 2014	Staff time	LM	
	Second community consultation event	November 2014	Staff time	PDM / ATC	
	Confirmation of the final design, specification and cost estimates	November 2014	Consultation	Play Company	
	Contract let	December 2014	Staff time	ATC / LM	
	Installation on site	January – March 2015	Capital Funding	Play Company	
	Opening celebration	Spring 2015	Staff time	ATC / PDM	
Removal of play facility at Minions Close	Removal of equipment and restoration to informal open space	Spring 2015	Revenue budget	LM	

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
PHASE 3 SCHEMES *continued………*					
Grendon Boot Hill					
Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities	First consultation with young people and local residents	March 2014	Staff time	PDM	Complete
	Preparation of tender for two design options	March 2014	Staff time	LM	Complete
	Tender period and tender assessment	March-April 2014	Staff time	LM	Complete
	Second consultation with young people and local residents	April 2014	Staff time	PDM	Complete
	Consultation with Play Safety consultant	April 2014	Staff time	PDM/LM	Complete
	Confirmation of final design and cost estimates	April 2014	Staff time	LM/Play Company	Complete
	Submission of funding application	May 2014	Staff time	LM	Complete
	Confirmation of funding	September 2014	None	Funding Body	Funding bid unsuccessful. Design and budget revised.
	Contract let	October 2014	Staff time	LM	
	Installation on site	October-November 2014	Capital funding	Contractor	
	Opening celebration	December 2014	Staff time	PDM	

Lead Officer: Simon Powell

Objective	Action	Timescale	Resource	Lead	Progress
PHASE 3 SCHEMES *continued………*					
Coleshill Brendan Close / Memorial Park (Town Council)					
Provision of replacement junior / toddler facilities	Consultation with Coleshill Town Council to consider options	February 2014	Staff time	AD (L&CD)	Complete
	Progress meeting with Coleshill Town Council	September 2014	Staff time	AD (L&CD)	Complete
	Progress meeting with Coleshill Town Council and landscape consultants	October 2014	Staff time	AD (L&CD)	
PROJECT MANAGEMENT					
Ensure effective delivery of and accountability for the Play Area Development Programme	Carry out post project evaluation of the delivery of Play Area Development Programme Phase 1 Schemes	April 2010	Staff time	AD (L&CD) / LM / PDM	Complete
	Carry out post project evaluation of the delivery of Play Area Development Programme Phase 2 Schemes	Summer 2013	Staff time	AD (L&CD) / LM / PDM	Consultation completed
	Carry out post project evaluation of the delivery of Play Area Development Programme Phase 3 Schemes	Autumn 2014	Staff time	AD (L&CD) / LM / PDM	
	Monitor revenue budget	On-going	Staff time	LM	Monthly finance reports in place
	Monitor capital budget	On-going	Staff time	LM	Monthly finance reports in place
	Report to Members	Ongoing	Staff time	AD(L&CD) / LM	Report to be presented to C. & E. Board in October 2014

AD (L&CD) – Assistant Director (Leisure & Community Development Division)   LM – Landscape Manager   PDM – Partnership & Development Manager
ACRA – Ansley Common Residents' Association
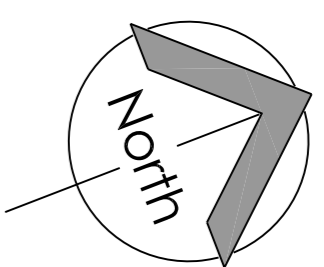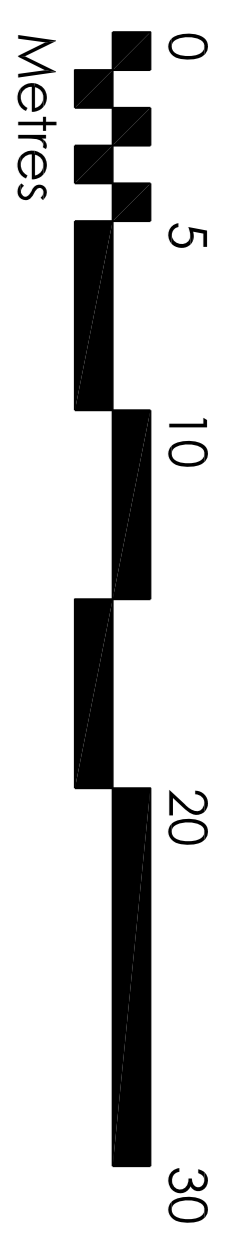
Paving

Seating

Lighting

Interactive Designs

OWEN STR

MEADOW STREET

Way marker lighting set in to surface.

Open grass space retained for recreational use.

Proposed circular walkway increasing interest for walkers and providing alternative path from seated route.

New feature trees.

New feature trees.

Surfaces carried through from gardens.

New hedge to maintain tidy edge and emphasize enclosure.

Ramp access from performance space into park.

Seated Areas sheltered by existing vegetation.

Lighting Bollards

Legend

Existing

Trees to be retained

Vegetation to be retained

Proposed

Trees; Semi-matures

Amenity Shrub Planting

Hedge

Amenity Grass

Report of the   **Leisure Facilities – 2015 / 16**
Assistant Director   **Bank Holiday Closures**
(Leisure and Community Development)

1   **Summary**

1.1   This report seeks the Board's approval for the Bank Holiday closure of leisure
        facilities during 2015 / 16 and additionally informs Members of a partial closure
        of the fitness suites at Atherstone Leisure Complex and Polesworth Sports
        Centre in order to facilitate the replacement of fitness equipment.

┌───┐
│ **Recommendation to the Board**   │
│   │
│ **That the schedule of leisure facility closures, as set out in**   │
│ **paragraph 4.1 of this report, be approved.**   │
└───┘

2   **Consultation**

2.1   The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson for the
        Community and Environment Board and the Safer Communities Sub-
        Committee and Members with responsibility for Health, Well-being and Leisure
        and Young People, have all had the opportunity to comment on the content of
        this report. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3   **Background**

3.1   In previous years, the Authority's leisure facilities have closed for eight statutory
        and four extra statutory days each calendar year. These closures have been
        organised to coincide with periods when public demand and income levels are
        likely to be relatively low and, conversely, open when the demand for access is
        higher. Historically, the schedule included an extended period of closure over
        the Christmas / New Year period in order to allow an opportunity for
        maintenance work to be undertaken. This practice was amended by the Board
        in order to allow the facilities to open for two extra days, initially over Christmas
        2013 / New Year 2014, and it will be repeated over the forthcoming festive
        period. In order to ensure that affected staff did not incur any loss of annual
        leave or other entitlements, adjustments were accordingly made to their leave
        allowances.

3.2   Usage and income patterns will continue to be monitored in order to ensure the
        on-going sustainability of the service, including during the increased hours of
        opening over the Christmas / New Year period.   Subject to the continued

success of this initiative, however, it is proposed to continue with the increased hours of opening at this time of year, although the schedule will be affected by the Bank Holiday on 28 December 2015. Consequently, it is suggested that the schedule of closures identified in paragraph 4.1 below is approved by the Board. In this regard, it is proposed that the extra statutory day in May 2015 be transferred to 24 December 2015 and that the extra statutory day following the late summer Bank Holiday be transferred to 31 December 2015.

4   **Proposed Leisure Facility Closure Schedule**

4.1   The proposed 2015 / 16 leisure facility closure schedule is as follows:

1	Good Friday	03 April 2015
2	Easter Monday	06 April 2015
3	May Day	04 May 2015
4	Spring Bank Holiday	25 May 2015
5	Late Summer Bank Holiday	31 August 2015
6	Extra Statutory Day	24 December 2015
7	Christmas Day	25 December 2015
8	Boxing Day	26 December 2015
9	Bank Holiday	28 December 2015
10	Extra Statutory Day	31 December 2015
11	New Year's Day	01 January 2016

4.2   In addition to the proposed schedule of closures identified above, there is a need to partially close the fitness suites at both Atherstone Leisure Complex and Polesworth Sports Centre for three days (Monday 24 to Wednesday 26 November 2014) in order to facilitate the required replacement of fitness equipment at the sites. The timing of the project, which is part of an approved scheme that also includes the introduction of new fitness equipment at Coleshill Leisure Centre, has been co-ordinated with the supplier to cause the least amount of disruption possible to service users. Account will be taken of an anticipated slight fall in income receipts within the process of setting revised budgets and will be reported to the Board at its meeting to be held in January 2015.

5   **Report Implications**

5.1   **Finance and Value for Money Implications**

5.1.1   Proposed budgetary provision for 2015 / 16 will provide for the extent of closure indicated in this report. The proposed schedule will also enable the facilities to minimise the impact of the closures and remain open during periods of higher customer demand. The implications of the short and partial closure of both Atherstone Leisure Complex and Polesworth Sports Centre will be reported to the Board in January 2015 within the context provided by the revised budget process.

5.2   **Safer Communities Implications**

5.2.1   The Authority's leisure facilities contribute to community safety by providing well-managed recreation services that afford opportunities for positive activity and, therefore, a creative alternative to potential criminal or anti-social behaviour.

5.3   **Environment and Sustainability Implications**

5.3.1   There is a judgement to be made on the balance between the likely low level of demand for the services on the proposed days of closure and the potential benefits for the health and well-being of a relatively small number of customers who may wish to use the facilities on these days. If the facilities are open during peak periods of demand this will maximise the potential health benefits for customers.

5.4   **Health, Well-being and Leisure Implications**

5.4.1   Leisure facilities have a positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals and communities by providing opportunities for formal and informal recreation and by contributing to an improved quality of life.

5.5   **Human Resources Implications**

5.5.1   None, other than the proposed closures will afford the opportunity to meet the leave entitlement of staff at times that are consistent with the priorities and objectives of the Borough Council.

5.6   **Risk Management Implications**

5.6.1   The risks associated with the proposed Bank Holiday closure of leisure facilities have previously been reported to the Board. Changes to facility opening hours impact upon levels of customer demand. This has, however, been considered within the context provided by the proposals contained in the report and the risk is felt to be minimal, given that the proposed closures are scheduled for the periods of lowest customer use.

5.7   **Equalities Implications**

5.7.1   Opening hours are monitored in relation to demand. It is not believed that these opening hours, or the proposed closures, disproportionately affect any particular groups or members of the community and it is not considered that the report proposals will adversely affect the Council's drive to ensure equalities in all aspects of service provision. An Equalities and Impact Needs Assessment associated with the proposed Bank Holiday closure of leisure facilities has previously been reported to Board. The Assessment has been reviewed and remains unchanged.

5.8 **Links to Council's Priorities**

5.8.1 The proposals contained in this report have direct links to the following corporate priorities:

- Public services and Council tax
- Crime and disorder
- Access to services
- Consultation and communication
- Health and well-being

5.8.2 Additionally, the Borough Council's leisure facilities contribute directly to the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy to:

- Raise aspirations, educational attainment and skill levels
- Develop healthier communities
- Improve access to services

The Contact Officer for this report is Peter Wheaton (719257).

Report of the   North Warwickshire LEADER
Assistant Director   Programme and Transition Fund
(Leisure and Community Development)

1   **Summary**

1.1   This report provides the Board with background information on the LEADER
         programme in North Warwickshire and updates Members on the "transition"
         activity that has taken place in 2014.   It also provides the Board with a
         summary of the priorities in the new Local Development Strategy, which has
         been submitted to DEFRA for consideration to be included within the
         LEADER programme commencing in January 2015.

         ┌───┐
         │ **Recommendation to the Board**   │
         │   │
         │ **a   That the Board notes the transition activity undertaken   │
         │   in 2014; and**   │
         │   │
         │ **b   That Members note the priorities contained within the   │
         │   Local Development Strategy, submitted to DEFRA as part   │
         │   of the application process for inclusion in the next   │
         │   LEADER programme (2015 to 2020).**   │
         └───┘

2   **Consultation**

2.1   The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson for the
         Community and Environment and Resources Boards, the Safer Communities
         Sub-committee and Members with responsibility for Health, Well-being and
         Leisure have all had an opportunity to comment on the content of this report.
         Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3   **Background**

3.1   Members will recall that North Warwickshire successfully applied for funding
         from the previous LEADER programme (2009 to 2013), within which the
         Borough Council acted as the local "Accountable Body".

3.2   LEADER is a community-led development programme that is jointly funded by
         DEFRA and the European Union, as part of the Rural Development
         Programme for England (RDPE).

3.3   Within the former programme, 27 projects from across North Warwickshire received funding support, with a cumulative value of £738,925. The money was distributed to a variety of community-focused initiatives, ranging from improvements to village halls and other community facilities to youth projects, counselling services and environmental improvement schemes.

3.4   It was widely agreed by project organisers, partners and the Local Action Group (LAG) that the funding made a significant difference to local people and the communities within which they live. Even relatively small sums of money were believed to have made a positive impact to projects and their beneficiaries (for example at Ansley Village Church Hall, which received £2,976 to make the facility safe and secure for its users). This view is further evidenced in the final LEADER Evaluation Report, a copy of which is attached
…   at Appendix A.

4   **Transition Activity**

4.1   As previously reported to the Board, and following the successful completion of the former LEADER programme, North Warwickshire was awarded funding from DEFRA to explore the possibility of its inclusion in the next programme, which is due to commence in January 2015. The transition funding of £29,190 paid for the retention of the project's Monitoring Officer for a further 12 months and the appointment of specialist consultants; Localecon Associates. Their joint role was to research the current issues facing people living and working in North Warwickshire and to produce a new Local Development Strategy (LDS), highlighting the priorities on which to base future LEADER activity.

4.2   The national focus of the new programme will be on the creation of jobs and the growth of the local economy. This is very different to the previous programme, hence the need for the specialist economic development knowledge provided by the consultants in the production of the new LDS. The consultants were also able to provide focus and strategic direction to the process, thereby ensuring that the resultant LDA remained independent of the Borough Council and accurately and realistically reflected the related needs and aspirations of North Warwickshire.

4.3   Following the initial collation of existing desk-top research evidence, the work focused on the collection of more in-depth and locally relevant data and information that would support the production of the LDS. Significant consultation activity has been undertaken, and the views of as many appropriate people and organisations as possible have been taken into account in the production of the new document. This work has included three consultation events with business, community and farming / land-based representatives, one-to-one meetings with businesses and stakeholder organisations, a widely-publicised business survey, and attendance at networking meetings (including the Northern Warwickshire Tourism Association, the North Warwickshire Heritage Forum, the Local Enterprise

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Partnership, the "Pride in Atherstone" Town Centre Partnership and the "B46" business networking group).

5   Approach to the New LEADER Programme

5.1   Local Development Strategy (LDS)

5.1.1   The new Local Development Strategy has been based on the outcomes of the consultation activity and the thorough review of existing research data and evidence. It provides an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and the priorities for future action, and it provides a series of potential solutions through the identification of possible project ideas and initiatives.   It also provides an overview of the potential delivery and management mechanisms to be employed locally within the new programme. The Strategy now serves as the formal application for inclusion within the programme. It was submitted to DEFRA on 5 September 2014 and a copy is attached for information at Appendix B.

5.2   LEADER Area

5.2.1   In the previous programme, the Borough boundary served as the LEADER area for North Warwickshire. During discussions with representatives from DEFRA it became apparent that seeking to operate North Warwickshire as a distinct area was not a feasible option that would secure funding support. The maximum population size for the new programme, set by the European Commission, is 150,000, but it is understood that the average population size for future delivery is to be in the range of 80,000 people. The population of North Warwickshire, therefore, would be considered to be too small (with the eligible rural population being just 46,426).

5.2.2   In order to meet the population criteria, initial investigation centred on linking with activity in "Central Warwickshire".   Central Warwickshire covered the districts of Rugby and Warwick in the previous LEADER programme and has now extended into the district of Stratford-upon-Avon.   Whilst this initially seemed to be the most logical partnership for North Warwickshire, given that it conforms with the county boundary, the feedback received from the local consultation suggested that the business community and the people living in the Borough felt little connection with the remainder of Warwickshire and, in fact, consider that Coventry serves as a geographic division between the north and south of the county.   This view was further reinforced at the business and community consultation events, where attendees expressed concern that they felt distanced from activity taking place on a county-wide basis.

5.2.3   Instead, it emerged that a more locally preferable and sustainable option was to link in with the neighbouring area of Hinckley and Bosworth. It is apparent that a clear synergy exists between the two areas, not only in terms of geography, but also in terms of their rurality and business base. This pairing of areas also builds on existing work being undertaken through the Cross-border Partnership, which focuses on employment and skills.   The Local

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Development Strategy, as agreed by the Local Action Group (LAG), therefore, has focused on the district areas of North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth. This area has a combined total population of 121,470, of which 80,274 people are from areas defined as "rural" and 41,198 from "hub towns" or built up areas.

5.3 Indicative Funding Allocation

5.3.1 In May 2014, potential LEADER areas were required to submit mapping information to DEFRA, in order that it could provide an indicative allocation of funding to potentially qualifying areas.

5.3.2 Based upon the combined rural population of the two districts (with the areas considered by DEFRA to be "urban", such as Hinckley, excluded from the calculation), the funding potentially available to the local LEADER programme is in the region of £1,352,000 to £1,697,000. The range is dependent on the division of the total budget available to the national LEADER programme, and will vary according to how many LEADER areas are approved for funding support.

Allocation if all 86 areas are funded (£000s)	Minimum allocation if 70 areas are funded (£000s)	Maximum allocation if 70 areas are funded (£000s)
1,352	1,493	1,697

5.3.3 Whilst the population data for certain smaller built-up areas, such as Atherstone, has been excluded from the allocation calculation, they are considered to be "hub towns" and projects from these areas will still eligible for funding support. Unfortunately, a very small part of Hartshill remains excluded from applying for funding within any local programme, by virtue of its close proximity to the urban area of Nuneaton.

5.4 Key Strengths and Weaknesses

5.4.1 The local consultation and review of research data revealed a number of key strengths and weaknesses, which have informed the development of the priorities identified in the new LDS. They can be summarised as follows:

Strengths
• A well-connected external transport profile with good links to major motorways and airports
• A range of small and micro businesses with potential for growth and development
• Proximity to areas where there are major developments in high value manufacturing
• Important initiatives that offer substantial potential for visitor growth, capacity building and spin-off benefits
• Forecasted growth in the producer services sector, such as

information and communication
• Visitor potential in the area, partly linked to access to urban markets
• A growing craft-based sector
• Potential to promote farm diversification
• Some success in nurturing social enterprises and a commitment by the community and voluntary sector to develop this area of job potential
• A strong, locally-focused community and voluntary sector with a track record of delivering rural initiatives

Weaknesses
• No strong external identity or sense of branding
• No single definitive means of communication to businesses and within the business community
• Lack of venues for home-based micro-businesses to meet and network
• Limited access to superfast broadband
• Need to promote environmental improvements and sustainability through the use of renewable energy.
• Need for support with farm productivity and capital works
• Poor public transport
• Co-ordination of tourism activity is not mature
• Barriers to innovation, including limitation on start-up support
• Recruiting skilled staff and maintaining and enhancing skills
• SMEs lack suitable, fit-for-purpose workspace to enable managed growth, or access to investment for equipment, new technologies or energy-saving actions
• Relatively high unemployment, especially amongst young people
• Job experience for young people is difficult to access
• Relatively poor take up of rural business support
• Modest resources available from local agencies
• Limited focus on the rural economy in local and regional strategic approaches

5.5 Primary Objective

5.5.1 The overarching objective of the proposed new LEADER programme for the area, encompassing the overall vision for the future of the local economy, is identified as:

> To foster an integrated rural economy that is stronger, more resilient and sustainable and that recognises and responds to challenges and opportunities in the rural domain, whilst contributing to wider local economic aspirations.

5.6 Strategic Priorities

5.6.1 The priorities for the local LEADER area have been developed according to the needs identified in the consultation process and are consistent with those defined by DEFRA at a national level. They also align closely with the priorities of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) and those contained within the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Strategy. Percentage allocations of funding have been identified for each priority, which reflect the needs of the local area.

Priority 1: Strengthening and increasing farm productivity (15%)

To strengthen and increase the potential of participant farm businesses by supporting productivity improvements and, as a consequence, enhancing the growth potential and sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Priority 2: Building and reinforcing micro and small enterprise and supporting farm diversification (40%)

To build and reinforce the growth and sustainability of rural micro[1] and small[2] businesses and to support initiatives that will lead to farm diversification and a more sustainable agricultural sector.

Priority 3: Enhancing the rural visitor economy (20%)

To enhance and help to grow the rural visitor economy and to build and consolidate its contribution to sustainable rural economic growth.

Priority 4: Building rural services for a stronger local economy (10%)

To support the sustained presence and improvement of rural services – in particular, multi-use facilities with a business element, transport, IT and energy infrastructure – to nurture and sustain a strong rural economy.

Priority 5: Support for cultural and heritage activity (10%)

To support the strengthening of the cultural and heritage base of the LEADER area through initiatives focused on enhancement, conservation and celebratory activities.

Priority 6: Increasing forestry productivity (5%)

To increase the productivity of forestry activities and to build a strong and vibrant forestry sector that is able to contribute more fully to the local rural economy.

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[1] A micro business employs less than 10 people and has a turnover of €2 m or less

[2] A small business employs less than 50 people and has a turnover of €10 m or less

Priority 7: Fostering co-operation through projects linking LEADER areas and challenges (This priority is subject to a separate funding process)

To stimulate improvement through co-operation between rural areas, and the exchange and sharing of knowledge and expertise in rural economic development.

5.7 **LAG Structure**

5.7.1 As in the previous programme, strategic management of LEADER will be undertaken by a Local Action Group. It will be responsible for overseeing the programme, directing activity and ensuring that the funding is awarded to projects that contribute to the fulfilment of the LDS objectives. The LAG will consist of a representative from each of the key sectors in each district, specifically business, farming, tourism and forestry, together with representatives from the borough and county councils, the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the community/ voluntary sector. One member of the LAG will be elected as its Chairman and one as its Vice-chairman on an annual basis.

5.7.2 In addition to the LAG, a further group of people will serve as the Rural Appraisal Panel (RAP). Its role will be to receive and appraise funding applications and to make a recommendation to the LAG, prior to it making a final funding decision. This group will mainly consist of professional staff working for stakeholder organisations, who can legitimately contribute their time to the LEADER programme. This will avoid any reliance on volunteers and reduce the pressure on LAG members, encouraging them to remain active on the group for a longer period of time than has previously been experienced. LAG members will be sought from across North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth to ensure consistency and avoid any bias created by separating the group geographically.

5.8 **Accountable Body and Staffing**

5.8.1 Given past experience and its accumulation of knowledge of the LEADER programme, it was considered that North Warwickshire Borough Council would be the most appropriate partner to continue to undertake the role of Accountable Body.

5.8.2 It is proposed that a temporary full-time Project Manager will be appointed, using LEADER funding, to manage the project throughout its duration. They will be responsible for the overall delivery of the programme, including overseeing the function of the LAG and its appraisal panel, managing the finances and output data, progressing applications through the appraisal process, marketing the programme, monitoring project outputs and providing data to DEFRA.

5.8.3 In addition, a temporary part-time Development Officer, also funded through the LEADER programme, will be appointed for three years to undertake

related work across the LEADER area. Project development will be independent of the Project Manager's role to ensure compliance with the DEFRA requirement for a "separation of duties". The Development Officer will have a base in both Borough Council offices.

5.8.4 The Project Manager and the Development Officer will be managed by the Partnership and Development Manager and will be supported by the Community Development Officer (Rural Regeneration) and the Principal Economic Regeneration Officer at Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

6   Next Steps

6.1 The Local Development Strategy serves as the formal application for LEADER funding, and it was submitted to DEFRA for its consideration on 05 September 2014. Local DEFRA staff evaluated the contents of the LDS prior to a Lead Panel meeting, which took place during the week commencing 06 October. It is anticipated that decisions on all new programme funding applications will be announced in early November, to enable the delivery of activity to commence in January 2015.

6.2 Following the submission of the funding application, transitional activity has continued in the form of LAG development and training, networking and early stage project development. If successful, it is also anticipated that the process of recruitment will begin in order to have staff in place at the start of the new LEADER programme.

7   Report Implications

7.1   Finance and Value for Money Implications

7.1.1 The outline funding implications of involvement in the new LEADER programme are identified in the main body of the report. Should the funding application be successful, the Authority will incur indirect expenditure in its capacity as the Accountable Body for the programme through providing management time and officer support for related activity.

7.2   Safer Communities Implications

7.2.1 Any future LEADER funding will be used to create jobs and grow the local economy, which should have a positive impact upon levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. There is potential for the Leader Programme to support the work on reducing rural crime and business crime currently being developed by the North Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership and the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner. Both of these crime themes are current priorities for the partnership and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

7.3   Environment and Sustainability Implications

7.3.1 There are no direct environment and sustainability implications arising from this report. However it should be noted that the LEADER programme

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supports sustainable rural regeneration, and encourages the design and delivery of economic projects that help regenerate and sustain local communities.

7.4   Health, Well-being and Leisure Implications

7.4.1 LEADER will help to create a stronger sense of place and improve health and well-being through actions that support communities and could enhance the rural environment by providing new leisure and recreation opportunities.

7.5   Human Resources Implications

7.5.1 The current LEADER Development Officer's position comes to an end on 31 December 2014. If the LAG is successful in its bid for future funding the position could continue beyond this date and the knowledge and experience of the current worker could be retained. Additional human resource implications are identified in the main body of the report.

7.6   Risk Management Implications

7.6.1 The risks associated with the LEADER programme are already monitored through the Divisional Risk Management process.

7.7   Equalities Implications

7.7.1 The research and consultation work that has been carried out has provided opportunities for the local community to influence the production of the new LDS. This consultation has included groups and individuals defined by the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. An updated EIA Summary is appended to this report.

7.8   Links to Council Priorities

7.8.1 The LEADER programme could financially support projects that directly link to the following corporate priorities:

- Public Services and Council Tax
- Local Employment
- Environment
- Crime and Disorder
- Countryside and Heritage
- Access to Services
- Consultation and Communication
- Health and Well-being

7.8.2 Additionally, projects funded by the LEADER programme will positively impact upon at least one of the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy, which are to:

- Raise aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- Develop healthier communities
- Improve access to services.

The Contact Officer for this report is Rachel Stephens (719301)

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Community and Environment Board Report	June 2011
2	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Community and Environment Board Report	March 2012
3	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Community and Environment Board Report	March 2013
4	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)	Community and Environment Board Report	January 2014

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Equality Impact Assessment Summary Sheet

Please complete the following table summarised from the equality impact assessment form. This should be completed and attached to relevant Board reports.

Name of Policy / Procedure / Service	NW LEADER
Officer Responsible for assessment	Partnership and Development Manager

Does this policy /procedure /service have any differential impact on the following equality groups /people

   (a) Is there a positive impact on any of the equality target groups or contribute to promoting equal opportunities and improve relations or:

   (b) could there be a negative impact on any of the equality target groups i.e. disadvantage them in any way

Equality Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	Reasons/Comments
Racial			N/A
Gender			N/A
Disabled people			N/A
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people			N/A
Older/Younger people			N/A
Religion and Beliefs			N/A
People having dependents caring responsibilities			N/A
People having an offending past			N/A
Transgender people			N/A

If you have answered **No** to any of the above, please give your reasons below

> The evaluation of the 2007/13 LEADER programme has helped to identify its actual impact on the groups defined by the protected characteristics identified above.
>
> Throughout the transition period checks have been made to ensure that consultation has been undertaken with groups defined by the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Where there were identified gaps, these groups have been targeted directly.

Please indicate if you believe that this document should proceed to further Impact assessment

The original LEADER-related EIA Summary will need to be reassessed, taking into account the evaluation results drawn from the 2007/13 programme.

13/11

North Warwickshire LEADER Programme

"To nurture a better connected and better serviced rural North Warwickshire"

Contents

Abbreviations

AWM	Advantage West Midlands
DACS	Domestic Abuse Counselling Service
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EOI	Expression of Interest
LAG	Local Action Group
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
NHS	National Health Service
NWBC	North Warwickshire Borough Council
PEV	Project Engagement Visit
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
WCAVA	Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action

Tables and Figures

1. Executive Summary

The evaluation of the North Warwickshire LEADER Programme has highlighted some very positive impacts that have happened as a result of the funding, and identified a number of key lessons learnt.

Delivering the Local Development Strategy (LDS) - The LEADER approach is a bottom up initiative which allows communities to apply for grants to address the issues identified in the LDS. The challenge was to ensure that there were adequate skills and knowledge in the community to address the self-prescribed issues, and to ensure that projects were able to come forward and apply for funding. Going forward, it is recommended that subgroups be formed under the Local Action Group (LAG) to drive, tackle and develop local solutions to these challenging issues. This will ensure that projects deliver the objectives highlighted in the LDS.

Performance of LEADER as a community-led approach – The LEADER Programme was in itself innovative for North Warwickshire, bringing people together that would not have otherwise come together. The community-led approach has been embedded within the delivery of the programme, with the community and voluntary representation remaining consistent throughout. These core enthusiastic members will be able to share their knowledge and experience with new members in future programmes. The LAG and Accountable Body recognise that there have been challenges meeting all elements of the programme and particularly the value of undertaking a cooperation project.

Local Action Group performance and effectiveness – The LAG has been a true representation of the North Warwickshire rural community. Members have remained committed and enthusiastic about delivering the objectives and improving the lives of people and communities. There have been some very useful conclusions drawn from the feedback and analysis, including;

- To increase LAG membership, ensuring representation from a variety of sectors including community, voluntary and business.
- To retain a large pool of appraisers to relieve the pressure on a small number of people
- To continue formal training and development in which joint training opportunities could be identified with other regional LAGs

- To consider options to make the meetings more accessible and rewarding. This could include paying travel incentives, moving meetings around the borough to reduce travelling distances or providing training and personal development opportunities.
- To involve the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in any future group
- To introduce a mentoring scheme to pass skills on to new members, and raise levels of confidence
- To retain a LAG which remains local and empowers community members
- To ensure that linkages are made and communication is maintained across the County

LEADER projects success and wider impacts – Overall, this report demonstrates that the projects funded through LEADER have been highly successful in delivering the objectives, reaching the target beneficiaries, building local capacity and delivering value for money. The sustainability of the projects has provided the greatest legacy of the funding, which will impact on local communities for years to come. From the feedback received, it may be useful to consider how unsuccessful projects are contacted and to make sure they are fully aware of the reasons behind the decisions made.

Accountable Body performance and effectiveness – It is acknowledged that in the beginning, inexperience led to delays. However, the diligence at this initial stage ensured processes and procedures were correctly followed. The Accountable Body has provided an excellent service, showing understanding of the needs of the local community. The option of advanced payments for community groups was extremely valuable. Without this the programme would not have been so successful. In addition, the most important element is the value for money which has been provided. Keeping management and administration costs to a minimum has allowed the funding for projects to be maximised. There have been some difficulties highlighted with capacity in the finance department but this role has been reflected upon by programme staff. It is recommended that in future a specific dedicated worker be funded and assigned to the role of finance. Throughout the programme the Accountable Body has maintained good relationships with DEFRA and the LAG, and is positive about the experience.

Programme staff performance and support – An overwhelming number of surveys from grant recipients, LAG members and staff highlighted the valuable support provided by programme staff. The partnership arrangement with WCAVA to provide project development was highly successful and instilled a sense of community into programme delivery. On the other hand, grant

recipients were dissatisfied about the grant application and claim processes. The elements which scored low were:

- Time taken to complete
- Ease of preparation and completion

This feedback has been taken on board and although there is very little opportunity to influence the process and the amount of evidence that is required, there will be a commitment to make the process as simple as possible by offering grant recipients training on project planning, project management, step-by-step instructions and examples of claim forms.

2. Introduction

Rationale

In 2009, North Warwickshire applied for and was successfully awarded just over £1m of LEADER funding. The LEADER Programme in North Warwickshire came to an end in December 2013 and all parties with an interest in LEADER, especially those who have provided financial commitments and resources, will be keen to understand how the programme faired against the original implementation strategy.

About North Warwickshire

The North Warwickshire area, in which the local authority is North Warwickshire Borough Council, is fundamentally made up of market towns, villages and hamlets which are surrounded by rural settlements of individual farms and other private residences. The total population is just over 62,000 with the largest settlements being Atherstone, Coleshill, Polesworth, Kingsbury and Hartshill. These larger towns or settlements form hubs for the surrounding rural areas and are important in terms of service provision.

Much of North Warwickshire is designated green belt land and commercial or domestic development is restricted. The area borders several large towns and cities including Birmingham, Coventry, Nuneaton and Tamworth. The whole borough of North Warwickshire was incorporated into the LEADER target area.

LEADER

LEADER is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) which is jointly funded by DEFRA and the European Union, and is managed by DEFRA. It is a unique, bottom-up approach which aims to improve the quality of life in rural areas and encourage diversification of the rural economy through the implementation of the Local Development Strategy (LDS). The RDPE is built around 4 axis (objectives) in which the LEADER approach is specific to axis 3 and 4 (See Annex 01). Under each of the axis there are a set of measures in which the outputs are used to ascertain the success of the programme (See Fig. 1 for details about the measures

specific to North Warwickshire). LEADER is implemented on a local level by Local Action Groups (LAGs).

LEADER in North Warwickshire

Extensive research and consultation was carried out prior to the allocation of LEADER funds to identify the needs and aspirations of the local community. An essential part of LEADER is the value it places on community knowledge and providing local people with the opportunity to make decisions that will positively impact upon them. The analysis considered socio-demographics, employment and skills, business and enterprise, and age. The results demonstrated that North Warwickshire had:

- A lower proportion of people under the age of 45
- A significant disadvantaged group of young people
- A high proportion of people living in rural areas
- A higher than average number of employees in manufacturing and construction
- A lower proportion of people in services such as, administration, education, health and hospitality
- A lower proportion of people with NVQ Levels 1, 2 and 3 qualifications
- A substantial amount of small and micro-businesses
- Poor access to broadband, mobile phone coverage
- Limited, high cost public transport
- Lack of networking opportunities
- Poor access to core services such as Post Offices, banks and business support
- A higher level of claimants for unemployment benefits
- A high proportion of people with debt issues

The results from the local consultation and research were used to inform the Local Development Strategy (LDS), and highlight the local issues. The overall aim of the strategy was to sustain and enhance North Warwickshire's rural communities. The two objectives and the measures under which they were deployed are identified below;
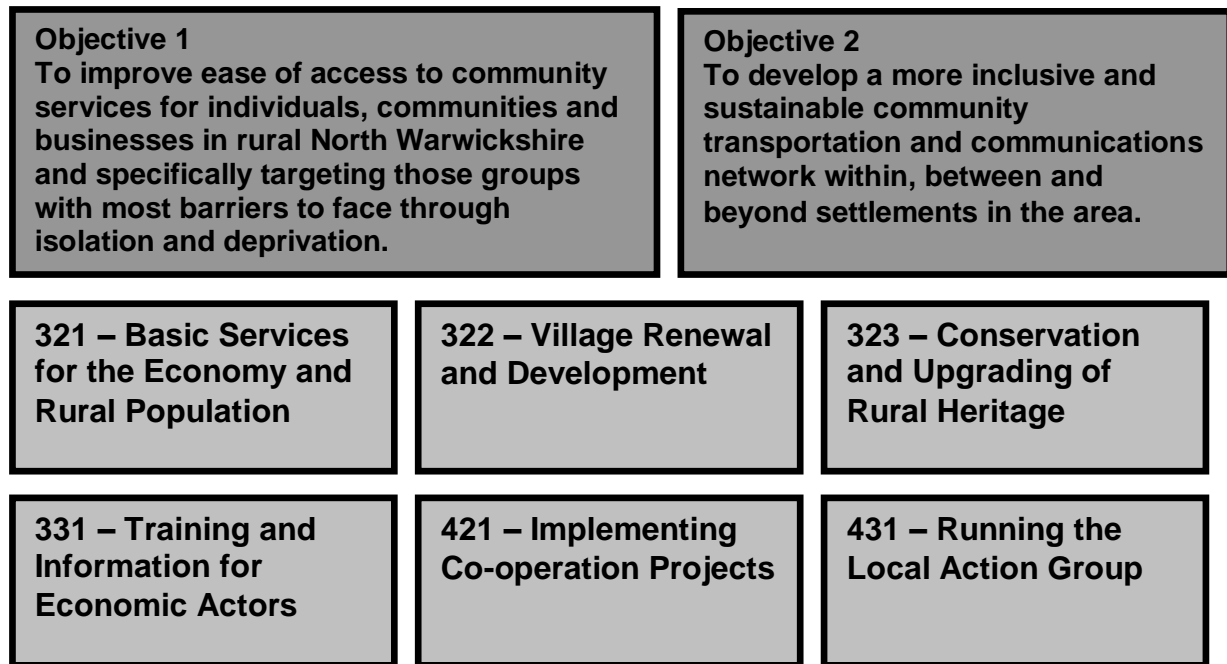
Objective 1	Objective 2
To improve ease of access to community services for individuals, communities and businesses in rural North Warwickshire and specifically targeting those groups with most barriers to face through isolation and deprivation.	**To develop a more inclusive and sustainable community transportation and communications network within, between and beyond settlements in the area.**

321 – Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population	**322 – Village Renewal and Development**	**323 – Conservation and Upgrading of Rural Heritage**
331 – Training and Information for Economic Actors	**421 – Implementing Co-operation Projects**	**431 – Running the Local Action Group**

Fig. 1

Measures 321, 322 and 323 contribute to objective 1:

- Substantially improving places – community buildings, or rural attractions such as walking and cycle trails - to physically meet, recreate and communicate.

- Supporting the devolution of service delivery by encouraging projects to come forward through local organisations such as Parish Councils or the voluntary sector.

- Directly investing in the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to help develop and maintain community groups.

- Helping to create a stronger sense of place, health, well-being, and security through actions that support the recognised communities within the area, and, in enhancing the rural environment by improving buildings or, for example, providing new leisure and recreation opportunities, enhancing the satisfaction of local people with their environment.

- Fostering a positive culture of enterprise and economic purpose by supporting businesses operating within the area.

Measures 321 and 322 contribute to objective 2:

- Supporting enhanced communication opportunities both across the North Warwickshire area and within individual settlements.

- Stimulating local Parish Councils and the community and voluntary sector to actively engage in grassroots development and thus strengthening their role in participative governance.

- Growing the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to maintain and extend its activities in the area with IT and other support.

- Improving access to information about the availability of affordable housing and other housing schemes.

- Assisting the development of a strong sense of place, health, well-being, security, and demonstrable satisfaction with the area by promoting an improved exchange of information and interaction between communities. This should generate opportunities for joint activities between village and town communities.

- Promoting a positive culture of enterprise and economic purpose through major enhancements to the communications infrastructure of the area that will be readily accessible to businesses.

3. Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the North Warwickshire LEADER Programme and identify any improvements that could be made in any future activity. This evaluation has been divided into six specific areas:

- Delivering the LDS objectives
- Performance of LEADER as a community-led approach and achievement of seven key factors
- LAG performance and effectiveness
- LEADER projects success and wider impacts
- Accountable Body performance and effectiveness (including providing value for money)
- Programme staff performance and support (including communication and efficient administration)

4. Methodology of Evaluation

This report aims to provide a thorough assessment of the programme and present a final position statement in respect of finances and outputs.

Financial information and project details have been collated and analysed to provide a factual representation of the programme. This includes details of programme cost, project funding and outputs that serve as a primary gauge of its success.

However, the real success of the programme can only really be determined by obtaining the views of a range of stakeholders (See annex 02). The Monitoring Officer and Community Development Officer (Rural Regeneration) have undertaken consultation with;

- Successful applicants - who received funding
- Unsuccessful applicants - who expressed an interest but withdrew or were declined at either the expression of interest or full application stage
- Local Action Group members
- Programme staff
- Other Accountable Body staff
- Project beneficiaries
- DEFRA personnel

Although, the surveys will produce quantitative data to measure LEADER success against the numerical outputs, some qualitative data will also be used to specifically identify the soft outcomes and the wider impact of the programme.

5. Evaluation Results

5.1 Delivering the Local Development Strategy (LDS) Objectives

The LDS allowed projects to meet the aims through six measures. However, during the course of the programme two of the measures, 331 and 421 were removed from the target outcomes.

Measure 331 Training and information for economic actors

Objective: To support actions to enhance access to training for local businesses, their actual/potential employees, young people in relevant skills to support the rural economy and potential business starters from the local community.

Outcome: Although training was incorporated within other projects, there was no specific training project funded under this measure. One of the key factors preventing applications was the requirement for projects to contribute 30% cash towards the cost of the entire project, which had to come from the training participants themselves. Recipients were also restricted and it could not include any form of training already being provided by other secondary and higher level education providers. It was therefore agreed early in the programme that this measure would be removed.

Measure 421 Implementing Cooperation Projects

Objective: This measure is to support inter-territorial and transnational cooperation to exchange experience and ideas.

Outcome: Although significant exploratory work was undertaken, in seeking an appropriate partner, a project did not materialise and the decision was made to remove the measure from the programme and reallocate the funds. It became apparent that the amount of money allocated to the measure was insufficient to plan and deliver a project of the scale expected by partners. The time involved in project development was considered disproportionate to the anticipated outcome. When LEADER funding was reduced due to the Central Government Comprehensive Spending Review it was agreed that this measure would be removed.

The remaining measures which related to project activity were accomplished or exceeded as detailed in the graph below (Fig. 02) The target was to fund eleven projects under measure 321 and six projects under measure 322. These were both exceeded. The target of four projects under measure 323 was reached (See annex 03 for a comprehensive list of projects by measure).

| **321 – Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population (13 Projects)** | **322 – Village Renewal and Development (10 Projects** | **323 – Conservation and Upgrading of Rural Heritage (4 Projects)** |

Target and actual number of projects achieved under each measure
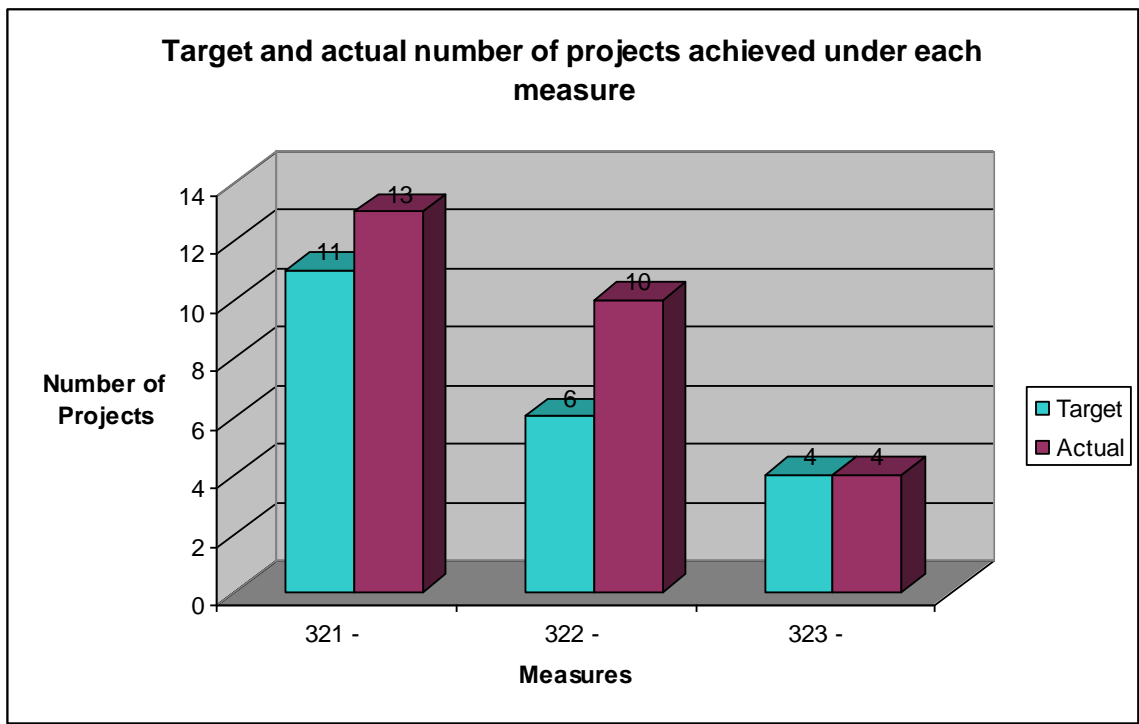
Fig. 02

The Final measure, 431, relates to the running the LAG:

Objective: This measure incorporated all the elements needed to effectively and efficiently run the Local Action Group (LAG).

Outcome:

Staffing - In order to effectively manage the programme it was necessary to appoint a LEADER Development Officer. The Officer, who worked on a part time basis, was responsible for working with groups to develop their project ideas and guide them through the application process

through to the point of contracting. It was agreed that this person would be based at WCAVA, to strengthen the links with the community sector independent of the Borough Council. A tripartite agreement between North Warwickshire Borough Council, WCAVA and the LAG was created to identify the responsibilities and liabilities of each partner and ensure expectations were met.

Although at the outset of the programme the intention was to appoint a LEADER Monitoring Officer, the post was put on hold and was subsequently undertaken by an existing officer at the Borough Council. This aspect of the work was significantly supported by North Warwickshire Borough Council Officers, who contributed officer time (in-kind) both to the management and delivery of the programme. This enabled money allocated to this measure to be reduced, and made available to projects. The LEADER Monitoring Officer was employed at a later stage, which achieved the 1.5 posts stated in the original outputs.

Training of Staff - Since 2008, staff have attended key training events/activities to improve and enhance their knowledge of programme delivery. These activities include a 2-day course on EU Programme Management, state aid training, appraisal training, attendance at a European LAG conference and specialist development worker training (See table 01 for a summary of outputs achieved).

Training of Local Action Group members

In June 2010, nine LAG members attended appraisal training. The training was delivered by Rebecca Miles, the then Contract Manager at Advantage West Midlands (AWM), and concentrated on effective reading and scoring of applications. All of the attendants found the training useful and felt more confident in being able to provide a fair and considered assessment of applications. However, it is noted that the number of training days and participants is below the amount that was originally expected. The culmination of the late start of the programme and the fact that LAG members stayed throughout the entire programme meant that a reduced amount of formal training was required.

Indicator	Target	Outputs achieved
Number of training days received by participants	50	10 ¼ days (82 hours)
Number of participants that successfully ended a training activity	25	14 individuals (22 courses undertaken)
Employment creation	1.5	1.5

Table 01

The LAG commented that overall they were satisfied that the LDS objectives had been met between the measures and with good geographical coverage. However, on further investigation, through the focus group, it was highlighted that LAG members believed that objective one[1] of the LDS was more successful than objective two[2]. Although there were many outstanding improvements to facilities, improvements to access and services that contributed to the fulfilment of objective one, only one project directly related to objective two. All staff believed the key objectives had been met but further comments suggested a disparity between objectives.

> *"Overall I think the projects delivered met the LDS priorities/ RDPE objectives. Obviously we fell short on the ones relating to transport and did not manage to deliver a cooperation project, but overall I think we managed to deliver a balanced programme (against the targets) and delivered well geographically across North Warwickshire." (Programme staff)*

The main difficulty was getting projects with a transport focus to come forward and apply for the funding. Although, the LDS highlighted the priorities there were inadequate skills and knowledge in the community to address these self-prescribed issues. The transport project that received funding made a significant step forward in identifying some of the transport issues and the Project Manager has established a working group looking at innovative ways to address some of the challenges faced. The recommendation is that subgroups will be formed under the Local Action Group to drive, tackle and develop local solutions to the issues in the LDS. This will ensure that projects deliver the objectives highlighted in the LDS. It is also important to recognise that since the development of the LDS, the economic climate has changed

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[1] To improve ease of access to community services for individuals, communities and businesses in rural North Warwickshire and specifically targeting those groups with most barriers to face through isolation and deprivation.

[2] To develop a more inclusive and sustainable community transportation and communications network within, between and beyond settlements in the area.

significantly and has uncovered different issues for rural communities that may have not been originally exposed.

Objectives that were not directly met by projects were reached indirectly. For example, transport and communication issues identified within objective two were incorporated as a cross-cutting theme across many of the projects. As transport proved a challenging issue, communities developed more creative ways to improve their accessibility to local services. Community HUBS were not in the original plan for local communication but the development of the HUBS has provided a significant step forward for communicating in the borough. They have also reduced the need for people to travel around the borough to access services.

> *"The indirect outcomes from the different projects have contributed towards achieving the overall objective (for example communication has emerged from a number of projects as a secondary benefit)." (Programme staff)*

The LAG also acknowledged that a decrease in the budget had a negative effect on the number of projects that could be approved.

> *"The only gap that couldn't be avoided was the reduction in available spend, which I think reduced the available capital and therefore the amount of projects that would subsequently benefit." (LAG member)*

5.2 Performance of LEADER as a community-led approach and achievement of the seven key factors

LEADER is more than a grant scheme. It is a unique approach to funding which allows local individuals, organisations and businesses to participate in the decision making process. The seven key factors which make up the LEADER methodology must be present simultaneously in order for it to remain different from other funding programmes.
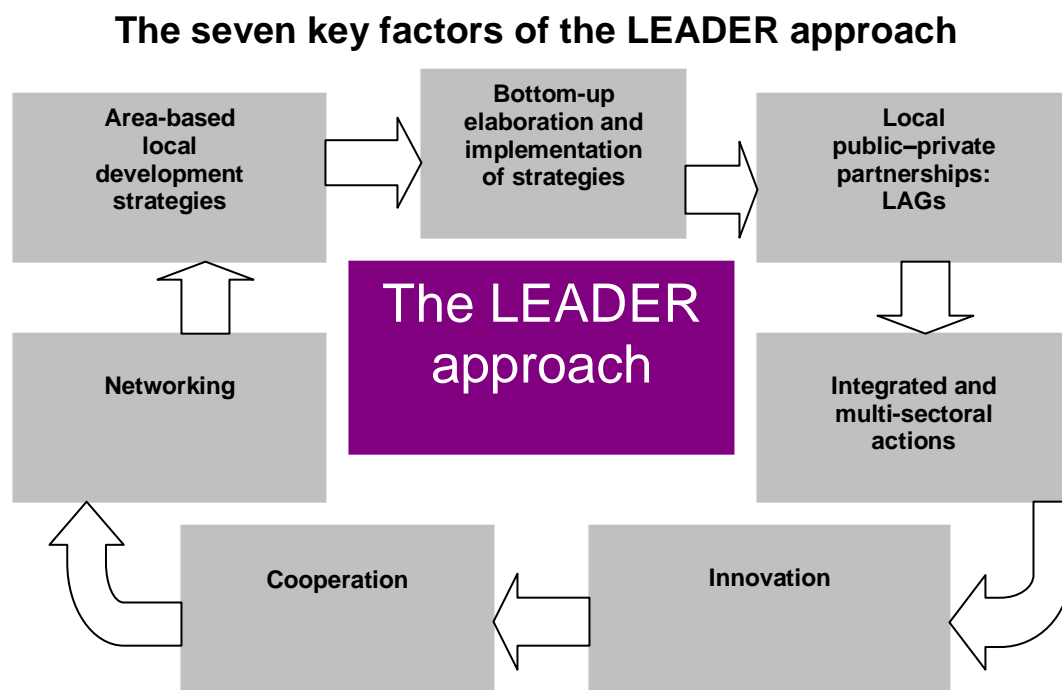
The seven key factors of the LEADER approach

Fig. 03

- **Bottom-up approach - means that local people participate in decision making about the strategy and in the selection of the priorities to be pursued in their local area**

In the early days of the programme, the number of community and voluntary sector representatives remained consistently high. This was crucial in developing the strategy and making sure that local people had the opportunity to input into decisions about their future. The consultants putting the Local Development Strategy together used a variety of methods,

including public meetings, questionnaires, and focus groups, to capture the information and involve as many people as possible.

As the programme progressed the makeup of the group changed and the number of community and voluntary groups started to diminish. This was partly due to members own self-interest in receiving funding and their unwillingness to remain on the group once the project had received consideration.   This did become an issue and on occasions reaching the 50% target was not achievable and meetings had to be re-arranged. However, even with a smaller pool of people to draw on it was essential to enforce minimum levels in order to maintain the ethos of LEADER.

- **Cooperation – goes further than networking. It involves undertaking a joint project with another LEADER group.**

The LDS identified the requirement to undertake one project at interterritorial level and one at transnational level. This unfortunately was not achieved. Despite investigation by the LAG it was determined that there was insufficient resources and budget allocated to this measure to make it feasible to deliver in the timescale. The LAG however does recognise the value of undertaking a cooperation project and have stated that in any future activity it would be made more of a priority.

- **Integrated & multi-sectoral actions – actions & projects should be linked and coordinated as a coherent whole – economic, social, cultural and environmental sectors involved.**

The fact that LEADER did not have the same primary focus on the economy, as many funding streams, was beneficial and allowed projects to be more creative in their thinking. Projects were able to combine the various different sectors to develop projects and create imaginative solutions to overcome community issues.

- **Innovation – new responses to specific rural problems.**

Innovation is a key component underpinning LEADER. The programme itself has proved innovative in its' approach, by empowering and involving the local community in the process.

Every effort has been made to encourage innovation, and applications have been judged on it as part of the appraisal process. The Development Officer, as part of her role, worked with potential applicants to think about innovation and to consider alternative technologies and practices as part of their idea formulation. Although the projects were not necessarily ground-

breaking, many of them provided things that were new to the area or which offered a new way of working that had not been tried previously.

- **LAG - Has the task of identifying & implementing an LDS, making decisions about the allocation of its financial resources and managing them.**

The Local Action Group (LAG) is the decision-making body for LEADER and is responsible for delivering the programme in-line with the Local Development Strategy. The local partnership element of the approach was achieved through ensuring a well-balanced representation of rural North Warwickshire. The representation of community and voluntary sector organisations at LAG meetings remained at 50% or greater. Where meetings did not achieve this ratio the meeting was cancelled or re-arranged to a more convenient date. This was particularly important where decisions on projects were being made, to ensure that the bottom-up approach remained a dominant feature of the programme.

- **Networking – transferring good practice, disseminating innovation and building on lessons learned. Forge links between people, projects and rural areas to overcome the isolation faced by some rural regions.**

Networking was maintained at both a local and regional level throughout the entirety of the programme. Regional meetings with the different programme staff were held on a regular basis and provided a vital source of information and knowledge. This was particularly important in the early days when programme staff were increasing their knowledge and understanding of LEADER. Several of the other areas had delivered the programme previously and provided much needed support and guidance. A good working relationship was also developed with Central Warwickshire LEADER, which despite delivering a very different programme, was able to offer mutual support and guidance.

- **Area Based – area characterised by common traditions, a local identity, a sense of belonging or common needs and expectations**

The whole of North Warwickshire was incorporated into the programme, as it was felt that the same or similar issues affected residents across the borough. All of the settlements in North Warwickshire are considered rural and all residents experience issues of rural isolation to some degree.

It was decided that Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth, would not be considered as priority areas due to other funding being available specifically for market towns. Projects in these locations were not prevented from applying but were required to identify how more isolated residents would benefit from the project. This obviously did prevent a number of projects proceeding as they were unable to justify why the location of facilities/services were needed in the market towns as opposed to smaller more rural settlements.

The LEADER Programme was in itself innovative for North Warwickshire, bringing people together that would not have otherwise come together. The community-led approach has been embedded within the delivery of the programme, with the community and voluntary representation remaining consistent throughout the programme. There have been challenges meeting all of the key factors, and the LAG and accountable body recognise the value of undertaking a cooperation project and will consider the appropriate level of finance and resources to achieve this prior to the start of the next programme. Overall, the evidence supports the LEADER approach and the ethos that community-led engagement brings.

5.3 LAG performance and effectiveness

Overall there have been 21 members on the LAG with an annually elected Chair and Vice Chair. The group is responsible for funding decisions, including approving projects and ensuring project activity is aligned with the LDS. The membership of the LAG has varied over the course of the programme. Numbers were high in the beginning and started to diminish as the programme progressed. This has been partly attributed to self-interest and commitment to meetings. However, it is also believed that this challenge was overcome by remaining dedicated to the community-led approach of the LEADER Programme.

A more committed LAG member commented by stating:

> *"The constraints are always people with agendas (and always will be) but on the whole, the Group (because of its bottom up approach) managed to overcome these." (LAG member)*

LAG relationships - When asked, Programme staff and DEFRA all agreed that the relationship between the LAG and the Accountable Body had been a successful, consistent working relationship, with good communication and information sharing mechanisms in place. The relationship has developed over time and confidence has grown. Similarly the relationship between DEFRA and the LAG has been practical. DEFRA has committed its' time to all LAG meetings and the communication channels are open. However, it is acknowledged that going forward it would be beneficial for the LAG to develop its relationship further to gain a better understanding of regional activity.

> *"The LAG has a very good relationship with the Borough Council. LAG has been supported by the Council, has received training for appraisal and approval processes which they found helpful. The officers have provided regular updates on finances and outputs." (DEFRA representative)*

Strengths –The LAG has been a true representation of rural North Warwickshire and the group has understood the needs and relevance of the projects that have been approved. The group members have experienced first hand the impact the funding has had to the borough. There is an apprehension that if the group were extended to be a Warwickshire-wide LAG, this would lose the local ownership and it would not get the same level of representation, particularly if

significant travel to meetings was involved. Programme staff would be promoting the need for key individuals to have regular joint meetings with other LAGs, namely Central Warwickshire and to keep the local bottom-up approach to the LEADER Programme through the established group in North Warwickshire.

There were several key members from community and voluntary organisations who attended LAG meetings frequently and remained committed and enthusiastic. Even with their own workloads, members turned around appraisals at an exceptional rate. Confidence of the whole group developed over time and the different Chairs were effective in their role.

Constraints - Conversely, staff did feel that there were constraints that impacted on the ability of the LAG to carry out its role in full.
- Time (specifically affecting business members)
- Responsibilities distributed between a selected few
- Amount of paperwork
- Bureaucracy

Self-evaluation - In order to establish a reflective view of the LAG, all current and past members were invited to attend a focus group to share their view and thoughts. The meeting was attended by 10 members, who actively contributed to the discussion. This was followed-up by a questionnaire (annex 04) to explore issues and encourage further comment.

The meeting focused on the 'Effectiveness of the LAG' and the discussion can be summarised as follows:

Structure of the group
- It was generally felt that some people joined because of self-interest, and as soon as they got the money they left the group.
- Members need to have substitutes, as some organisations were often not represented at the meeting
- When people left the group, membership by the organisation went with them.
- The group needs extending to include a broader range of people and more members from the voluntary and business sector.

Barriers to membership
- Many members could not commit to the 2 hour meetings.
- The timings of meetings and long distances to travel may be an issue, as is the cost of printing out the paperwork.
- Community members may feel intimidated by the use of acronyms and the formal nature of meetings.
- Once established it is hard for new members to get into the meetings

Appraisal Process
- The requirement for projects to present their applications in front of such a large number of people is very daunting.
- The process of directing any questions through the Chair worked well.

The LAG decision making - North Warwickshire LAG considered 58 project proposals[3], of which;
- 27 were approved and completed
- 7 failed the eligibility check
- 12 were withdrawn by the applicant at the EOI stage
- 12 were rejected by the LAG Executive Committee (1 of which was rejected at the full application stage)

This level of assessment demonstrates that the system of approval worked effectively and fulfilled the requirement for the selection process to be competitive. The seven projects which failed the eligibility check were not subjected to further paperwork and this did not impact on LAG time. Those projects which were rejected by the LAG, as they did not meet the criteria set out in the LDS, did not continue to waste their time completing the full application form.

> *"…with the support of the Accountable Body they (the LAG) feel equipped and have gained in confidence to make decisions on investment applications." (DEFRA representative)*

However, not all the feedback received about the LAG decision making was positive and one of the unsuccessful applicants believed that the LAG scoring and final decision making was

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[3] See annex 05 for a detailed breakdown of project proposals

unsatisfactory. It should be pointed out that this was just the view of one organisation, and was not a recurrent comment in the evaluation.

"There was a complete disconnect between what seemed like a professional appraisal process and the final decision making process by the LAG……, It was never made clear to us exactly why the proposal at the last hurdle was rejected given that it had scored well throughout the appraisal process." (Unsuccessful applicant)

5.4 LEADER projects success and wider impacts

One hundred per cent of successful projects returned questionnaires and provided valuable feedback about the programme. The responses demonstrated that all projects required LEADER funding to make their project happen, with 78% stating that without LEADER their project would not have happened. A further 9% of projects would have gone ahead but on a smaller scale and 13% would have gone ahead but taken more time.

The graph below (Fig. 04) indicates that the majority of successful projects were from the charitable, community and voluntary sectors. This confirms the need for funding and shows that LEADER in North Warwickshire has engaged effectively with this sector. Although historically these organisations have found it difficult to access funding, the outcomes show that even a small amount of support made a sizeable difference.
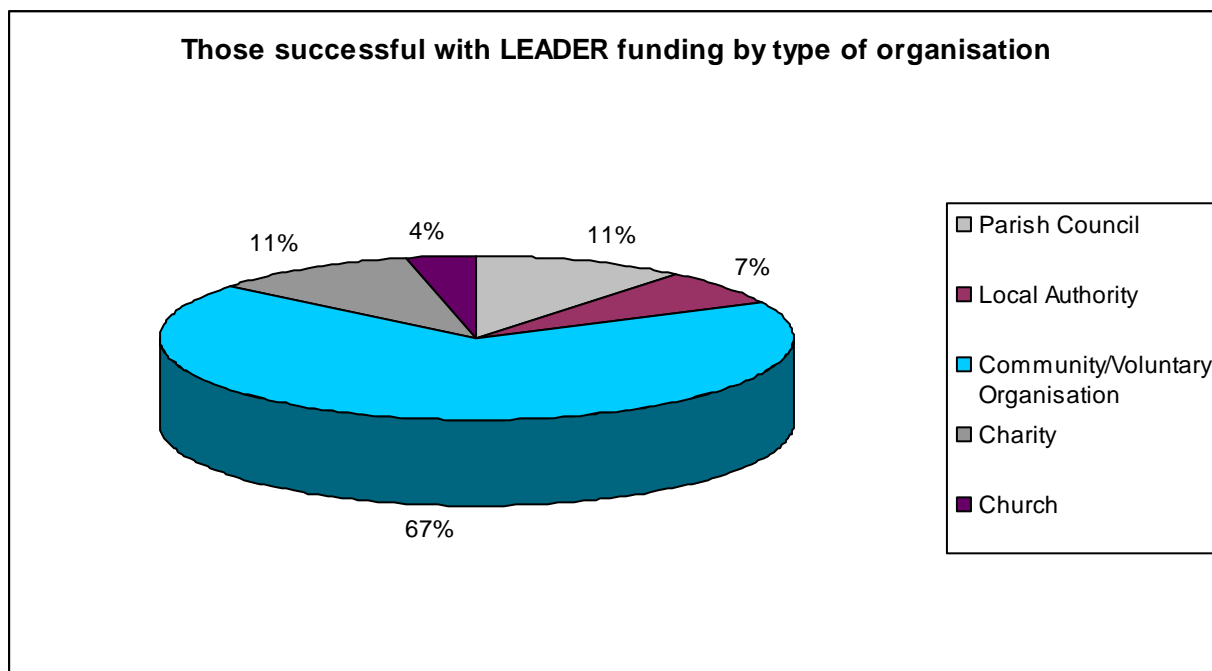
Those successful with LEADER funding by type of organisation

11%   4%   11%
7%
67%

Legend:
- Parish Council
- Local Authority
- Community/Voluntary Organisation
- Charity
- Church

Fig. 04

Beneficiaries - All 28 successful projects questioned, felt that their project had achieved what it had set out to. Sixty five per cent of projects successfully reached beneficiaries living in the surrounding local community, whilst the remaining 35% reached beneficiaries across the whole borough. The guiding principles of the LAG were to prioritise projects which particularly addressed the needs of young people, older people, women and the disabled. Young people

and older people were a particular concern in North Warwickshire as the people most affected by isolation, social exclusion and other barriers to service provision.   Table 02 (below) demonstrates that there were many projects with a specific focus on engaging both the young and the old.

Target Beneficiaries	Related Projects
Young people	Directly: • 3 Villages Rural Youth Project • Mancetter Youth Futures • Baxterley Play Area • Hartshill Pavilion • Multi Use Games Area and Skate Facility • Water Orton Library • Water Orton Tennis Club Indirectly: • Access to Domestic Abuse Counselling Service • Ansley Village Church Hall • Dordon Church Hall • Beeline Community Transport • Fillongley Village Hall • Baddesley Village Hall room refurbishment • Maxstoke Village Hall • The Old Barn Centre
Older people	Directly: • Beeline Community Transport • Austrey Archery Group • Curdworth Adult Exercise Equipment • Parish Pathways Baddesley Community HUB Indirectly: • Shustoke Village Shop • Support for North Warwickshire Village Volunteers • Ansley Village Church Hall • Fillongley Village Hall • Baddesley Village Hall room refurbishment • Maxstoke Village Hall • The Old Barn Centre
Women	Directly: • Access to Domestic Abuse Counselling Service
Disabled	Directly: • Dordon Church Hall • Hurley Village Hall Rescue • Water Orton Tennis Club Indirectly: • Beeline Community Transport

Table 02

> **"Although not innovative, village hall improvements were a key area of spend and have had a very positive impact on local communities." (DEFRA representative)**

As part of the application process all projects were asked to submit baseline data, in the form of current number of users/beneficiaries. This was used to calculate a target number of beneficiaries to achieve in a given timeframe. This was set in conjunction with the applicant and agreed as a realistic and achievable target. Revenue projects were asked to record beneficiaries during the life of the project, whilst capital projects were asked to record the number of beneficiaries in the 12 months following completion of work. The data was then analysed and used to measure the success of the project against the target agreed at the outset.

Table 03 shows that all projects have exceeded their agreed targets. The LAG supported this by stating that all funded projects had been extremely successful and had made a significant difference to North Warwickshire.

Project Reference	Project Title	Target beneficiaries	Beneficiaries reached
NW03	Dordon Church Hall	1073	1,287
NW04	Maxstoke Village Hall	450	1,838
NW07	Hurley Village Hall Rescue	730	2,484
NW09	Hartshill Pavilion	500	876
NW10	Hartshill Community Centre	300	1,393
NW12	Rural Youth Project	114	150
NW15	Astley Castle Heritage Trails	1500	2,291
NW21	Baddesley Village Hall Room Refurbishments	80	285
NW22	Mancetter Youth Futures	89	144
NW24	Baddesley Village Hall Community HUB	200	310
NW26	Access to DACS	150	226
NW28	Accessing Community Transport	100	260
NW29	Community House Development	100	2030
NW30	The Old Barn Centre	475	1,016
NW31	Boudica's Last Battle	720	1,842
NW34	Shustoke Village Shop/HUB	600	830
NW35	Improving Access to Linear Park, Kingsbury	150	458
NW36	Water Orton Library	50	412
NW39	Improving Access to Whitacre Heath SSSI	100	140
NW40	Baxterley Play Area	335	335
NW41	Fillongley Village Hall	1800	6,161
NW43	Support for North Warwickshire Village	40	360

	Volunteers		
NW48	Ansley Village Church Hall	100	3,388
NW49	Curdworth Adult Outdoor Exercise Equipment	1150	2,290
NW54	Austrey Archery Group	45	92
NW55	Water Orton Tennis Club	356	1,979
NW57	Provision of MUGA and Skate Facilities	2500	1,900 (1 quarter remaining*)
Total			32,956 (note *)

Table 03

As with all figures, they do not fully represent the impact of the project. It is believed that if a more detailed set of outcomes had been devised at the start, they could have been used to measure added value and to evaluate the wider social, economic and environmental impacts. In order to compensate for this, qualitative data has been analysed and recorded to support the soft outcomes that have been achieved.

Social impacts:

- Renovations to village halls have improved community cohesion
- Community buildings have supported the development of Community HUBS
- Social and recreational activities have been enhanced in outdoor spaces, parks and nature reserves
- Opportunities have been developed to learn about local history
- Youth projects which have focussed on overcoming issues of social inclusion – raising aspirations

Domestic Abuse Counselling Service, client feedback:

"Counselling has helped me cope with leaving a Women's Refuge, starting up a new home, getting a job and all my Court Cases. I would not have been able to do this without DACS, thank you so much."

"Counselling has helped me in more ways than one, it has helped me to be a better person and take control of my life and made me realise I'm a good person. I think what you do for people like me is amazing."

"I was in a very dark place at the start. Family and friends were supportive, but I found the counselling more helpful as it was a person who did not know me and I could be more open and honest without being judged or criticised and felt a burden had been lifted after each session."

"Counselling has helped me to understand that it was not my fault and helped me to come to terms with everything that happened. I now feel much stronger and more confident. I have managed to move back into my own home with my children due to being helped with dealing with all that happened there."

Domestic Abuse Counselling Service, case study:

"Gail is a 34 year old mother of 3 children. Gail is a repeat victim of domestic abuse. She has experienced two abusive intimate relationships. When she came to DACS she had no faith in agencies that were supposed to help her. She was given a personal counsellor and a contract of 10 sessions at a time and location that was suitable and convenient for her. Where she would not spent a lot of time travelling or needing child care.

When she had established a trusting relationship with her counsellor they made an individual plan for therapy that would help her make practical and emotional decisions that would make a positive difference to her life and the safety of her children.
Through therapy Gail realised that she had escaped a violent physical perpetrator for a psychological, sexual abuser.

Gail was empowered to maintain her independence, increase her confidence and self esteem and through goal setting went on to access a home independent of her perpetrator. DACS maintained Gail through the dynamics of change where she became an independent single parent and her ending to therapy was staggered to ensure that Gail's recovery and new life is sustainable."

Comments from Grant recipients:

"The project has brought our local area to the attention of others nationwide, and may well result in collaborative projects with others sharing the same research interests, which in turn should bring numbers of tourists and visitors to the area. Collaboration with similar groups in neighbouring Leicestershire is possible again raising the profile of our area."

"We knew domestic violence counselling service was desperately needed in North Warwickshire. Especially as we go out into rural communities reducing the block of travel to towns and bus fares and childcare etc. We are now under pressure to stay and maintain our service by the many professionals and other services that have benefitted from our presence in North Warwickshire."

"We developed meaningful relationships with other youth work agencies in the area and have been able to recruit and train youth workers and volunteers who will use their skills and knowledge to benefit young people in the future."

Youth Project:

"Young people in rural villages find it difficult to access advice and support. This was an issue which we planned to address by bringing some of these services to the young people. We knew that from our initial research, rural young people were also more likely to face issues of isolation and much of this is caused by the lack of access to social activities which the Rural Youth Project would also address.

Over the lifetime of the project there have been many success stories, including the progress made by one young person who suffered from depression. The youth worker supported him and his family intensively through a tough time and gave him opportunities to progress. At times he felt suicidal and wanted to end his own life. His mother was so grateful for the help that she had received, she wrote a thank you letter:

Before the youth club my son would always be in his bedroom, he went out for school but he never had the confidence to mix with other teenagers. I would worry about him and it would break my heart that he had a poor attitude on life and thought that there was no point.

Within a few weeks of starting youth club he started making friends and has started to smile, I have seen his confidence grow. He wants to be a youth worker now like the youth workers that have saved and gave my son a new life."

Environmental impacts

- Village hall renovations making them greener and more cost effective
- Green and open spaces have been enhanced, improving biodiversity and wildlife habitats

Economic Impacts

- Supporting the local economy through increasing the usage and income of village halls
- Promoting and selling locally sourced goods and services in the village shop
- Creating more opportunities for visitors to enjoy
- Encouraging tourism in the area by creating trails and heritage walks
- Creating jobs beyond the end of the LEADER
- Increasing skills and opportunities into employment through volunteering opportunities
- Provided Youth Worker volunteer training

Increasing skills and confidence – A high percentage of projects reported an increased confidence and enthusiasm following their success with LEADER funding, encouraging them to continue to apply to other funding sources. One project in particular was so motivated that they raised their own funds to complete the renovation project. This shows that LEADER funding has enabled communities to develop and grow.

> *"This has made people think about fundraising. Independently, members of the organisation have initiated other fundraising events and have painted walls or paid for this, paid for new toilets, boilers, a heater, floor coverings, and now have almost raised £5000 to have our large back kitchen completely renovated. The LEADER work has kick started all this." (Grant recipient)*

- 87% of projects feel more confident in applying for funding in the future
- 86% would apply for LEADER funding in the future
- 89% would recommend LEADER funding to others

Sustainability - One successful aspect of the North Warwickshire LEADER Programme has been the way in which projects have the capacity to continue into the future. The much needed capital funding for village halls, community buildings and other spaces will have a positive impact on residents and future generations beyond the life of the funding. It has not only made a significant difference now but has also provided a legacy that will continue to evolve into the future.

> *"Long after completion we continue to receive praise for the new fresh look to the Hall both from existing and new users of the Hall. Attendances at events has increased and a greater interest in private hires." (Grant recipient)*

> *"Wider added value in terms of Village halls funded has proved to be very important to the venues and the local communities. There is a wide range of evidence that the funding given to these types of projects has been a benefit to the community and the buildings usage has increased as a result." (DEFRA Representative)*

Even some of the projects which were predominately revenue-based have been given the opportunity to learn and develop their service, enabling them to move forward and continue to provide a service in North Warwickshire.

> *"The knowledge gained about other community transport initiatives has been very valuable and we hope will have long term benefit for the residents of North Warwickshire." (Grant recipient)*

Other projects have been able to sustain part of the project on a smaller scale after LEADER funding has ceased.

> *"The project set up through LEADER has been sustained on a smaller scale and continues to benefit young people in North Warwickshire. It has also bought three villages closer and more willing to work together." (Grant recipient)*

Projects delivering value for money - Grant applicants were required to undertake a prescribed process of procurement. Three written quotes were needed for all services and equipment, ensuring that projects actively sought good value for money.

Many of the projects in North Warwickshire required smaller amounts of funding, enabling the money to be divided up amongst a larger number of groups. It was clear from talking to the Project Managers that even small amounts of money make a big difference to the lives of local people.

There are clearly difficulties in demonstrating whether the grant awarded provided value for money in terms of the 'community value' that was gained. The 'value per head' is much easier to demonstrate by dividing the grant amount received by the number of beneficiaries (see Table 04).

- £0.88 was the lowest value per head gained
- £580.20 was the highest value per head gained
- On average projects spent £73.86 per head

Project Ref	Project Title	Grant amount	Cost per head
NW03	Dordon Church Hall	£30,722.00	£23.87
NW04	Maxstoke Village Hall	£22,590.00	£12.29
NW07	Hurley Village Hall Rescue	£48,805.98	£19.65
NW09	Hartshill Pavilion	£44,999.98	£51.37
NW10	Hartshill Community Centre	£19,695.00	£14.14
NW12	Rural Youth Project	£87,029.52	£580.20
NW15	Astley Castle Heritage Trails	£14,544.14	£6.35
NW21	Baddesley Village Hall Room Refurbishments	£4,375.00	£15.35
NW22	Mancetter Youth Futures	£49,165.74	£341.43
NW24	Baddesley Village Hall Community HUB	£29,901.67	£96.46
NW26	Access to DACS	£60,619.26	£268.23

NW28	Accessing Community Transport	£9,448.00	£36.34
NW29	Community House Development	£5,064.79	£2.49
NW30	The Old Barn Centre	£18,130.56	£17.85
NW31	Boudica's Last Battle	£12,019.10	£6.53
NW34	Shustoke Village Shop/HUB	£24,940.00	£30.05
NW35	Improving Access to Linear Park, Kingsbury	£4,860.00	£10.61
NW36	Water Orton Library	£46,688.87	£113.32
NW39	Improving Access to Whitacre Heath SSSI	£10,875.00	£77.68
NW40	Baxterley Play Area	£36,345.00	£108.49
NW41	Fillongley Village Hall	£7,805.00	£1.27
NW43	Support for North Warwickshire Village Volunteers	£16,460.00	£45.72
NW48	Ansley Village Church Hall	£2,976.80	£0.88
NW49	Curdworth Adult Outdoor Exercise Equipment	£10,357.00	£4.52
NW54	Austrey Archery Group	£5,719.99	£62.17
NW55	Water Orton Tennis Club	£4,965.00	£2.51
NW57	Provision of MUGA and Skate Facilities	£109,806.40	£43.92

Table 04

The evidence shows that youth projects cost significantly more per head than capital improvement and renovation projects such as, village halls and nature parks. However, it could be argued that the social impact that these projects have had on local communities has justified the amount spent. For example, a young person who needs to be referred to NHS Mental Health Services or a Family Planning Clinic would cost more than the continued support they received from the youth club. It is the same with other revenue projects that were funded, such as the Domestic Abuse Counselling Service.

Match Funding - Table 05 shows that the total amount of acknowledged project match funding was £188,709.37 or 20%. However, taking account of wider project costs raises this amount considerably to 83% of the project cost[4]. This demonstrates that whilst the acknowledged match funding appears low there was a considerable amount of 'hidden' match funding that benefited the local community. For example, the Astley Castle Heritage Trail Project received £24,266.14 to provide improved access and interpretation to encourage local people to learn about the historic site surrounding Astley Castle. Whilst LEADER formed approximately 60% of the cost,

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[4] See annex 06 for complete table of match funding costs

this was only a small element of a much larger £2 million project to restore Astley Castle. Taking this into account LEADER contributed just over 0.6% to the overall success of the project.

Total LEADER Project cost	Total of acknowledged match funding	Percentage of match funding for whole programme	Total of wider project costs	Percentage of match funding including wider project costs
£738,925.03	£188,709.37	20%	£3,004,683.31	83%

Table 05

Unsuccessful applicants - The information received from unsuccessful applicants demonstrates the need for funding. Without funding these projects will not happen or will happen on a smaller scale or over a longer period of time.

- 60% of projects, which were unsuccessful with gaining LEADER funding, were unable to deliver their project, with the majority stating that, "the project has not happened"
- The remaining 40% were able to carry out their projects, with half happening on a smaller scale than original planned and the other half taking more time
- None of the unsuccessful projects were able to carry out the project as detailed in their LEADER applications
- Four out of five however have gone on to apply to other funding sources after their unsuccessful application with LEADER

5.5 Accountable Body performance and effectiveness

North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) was new to LEADER when it received an award in 2008. It has been acknowledged that due to the inexperience of staff, the programme was slow to start and it took a considerable amount of time to understand the processes and administration involved in running this complex programme. However, on reflection the diligence taken to set up the programme ensured it ran effectively and efficiently. It is expected that the experience and learning gained this time round will be of considerable benefit for any future LEADER Programme.

Advance payments - NWBC provided projects with the opportunity to request an upfront loan of funding in advance of a claim. This allowed projects without savings to receive the money into their bank account from NWBC (on receipt of an invoice) to enable them to pay the supplier direct. They were then required to submit a claim in the usual way, to enable the money to be recouped.

During the focus group, the LAG agreed that the option for projects to receive money upfront to pay invoices was a key element of the success of the programme. Small organisations and groups who predominately received the loan did not have the cash flow to pay large invoices upfront and await reimbursement at a later stage. The LAG thought that without this option many of the projects would not have taken place.

Responses from grant recipients demonstrate the need for this payment option:
- 75% stated that without this option their project would not have happened
- 2 of the projects would have continued but it would have taken more time
- Only 1 project would have been able to go ahead as planned

> *The advance payment option was useful, it would be helpful if: "invoices could be sent directly to NWBC for payment, so we don't have to fund through own cash flow and wait for reimbursement." (Grant recipient)*

Payment of claims - Programme staff have acknowledged some difficulties in capacity which have impacted on the payment and submission of claims. According to the data analysed, only 25% of claims were paid within the 30 day time period. In the majority of cases, this can be

justified as these claims were put on hold as further information and evidence was required from the recipient. This ensured that only claims with eligible expenditure were paid.

- 70% of grant recipients questioned stated that the time it took to pay claims was good or excellent

> *"The project ran like clockwork from start to finish thanks mainly to the input of the staff from North Warwickshire Borough Council." (Grant recipient)*

Accountable Body relationships - When asked about the relationship with DEFRA, programme staff commented that in the beginning the frequent changes in staff, did make communication between the Accountable Body and the then managing body, Advantage West Midlands (AWM), difficult. However, the allocation of an Operations Manager and an Area Lead by DEFRA, resulted in a more stable relationship, with improved levels of communication, understanding and trust.

Accountable Body delivering value for money - Administration costs under measure **431** came in at under £98,808.70. The comparison between administration costs and project costs can be seen in Fig. 05. Only 12% of the programme was spent on administration, which was considerable lower than the 20% permitted by DEFRA. Remaining funds were therefore maximised and distributed between project measures.

> *"This was a smaller programme compared to other LEADER groups and it was resource intensive in terms of the level of Accountable Body staff involved, however, this was supported by the Borough Council with M&A claimed at less than 15%." (DEFRA representative)*

> *"There have been several staff working on the programme and their time has not all been allocated / funded from the LEADER budget. This means that a greater proportion of the LEADER funding has gone to the local community than other programmes." (Programme staff)*
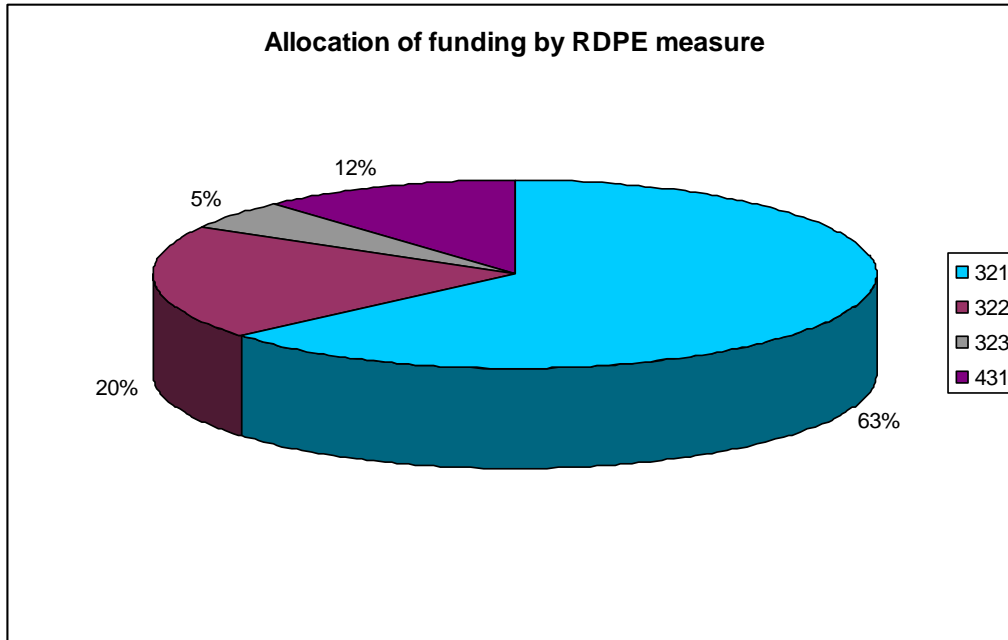
Allocation of funding by RDPE measure

Legend:
- 321
- 322
- 323
- 431

Values shown: 12%, 5%, 20%, 63%

Fig. 05

When asked, LAG members were firm in their belief that the Accountable Body, North Warwickshire Borough Council, had delivered excellent value for money contributing far more than was expected of it. Programme staff also reported that the officer time needed to undertake LEADER was considerably more than was reimbursed.

Costs which were absorbed by North Warwickshire Borough Council include:

- Staff (Senior Finance Officer)
- Staff (Community Development Officer)
- Staff (Community Development Manager)
- Promotion and publicity
- Printing
- Room Hire
- Desk Space
- Stationary
- I.T. Support
- Telephone and calls

"The work required by the Accountable Body was significantly more than was initially anticipated, and required a considerable amount of officer time beyond that paid for through LEADER." (Programme staff)

5.6 Programme staff performance and support

The programme staff were responsible for the daily administration, communication, planning and support for the programme[5]. Activities included:

- publicity
- promotion
- communication with stakeholders
- monitoring claims
- spend and project activity
- administration throughout the programme
- liaison with finance
- liaison with projects
- communication with the LAG and administration of their meetings

The performance of staff has been excellent and stakeholders highlighted the support they were given in the feedback received.

> *"The application guidance and the continuous communication with the LEADER Team at NWBC throughout the process was much appreciated." (Grant recipient)*

Marketing and promotion - As LEADER was a unique concept for North Warwickshire, it was important to raise awareness and knowledge of it on a regular basis throughout the entirety of the programme. Initially it was important to inform local people/organisations about the funding, and then to encourage potential applicants to come forward. It was presented in a range of news and promotional releases and through the production of a leaflet.

The recorded feedback from grant applicants shows that the WCAVA newsletter was the most successful in reaching those people who applied for funding (See Fig. 06). This demonstrates the benefits of partnership working and encouraging all partners to promote activities in order to reach the target audience.

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[5] See annex 07 for the flow chart showing the application process.

Successful methods of promotion

17%
3%
3%
7%
14%
21%
35%

Word of Mouth ■ WCAVA Newsletter ■ LEADER Publicity ■ NWBC Website ■ Area Forum ■ LAG ■ Previous LEADER applicant
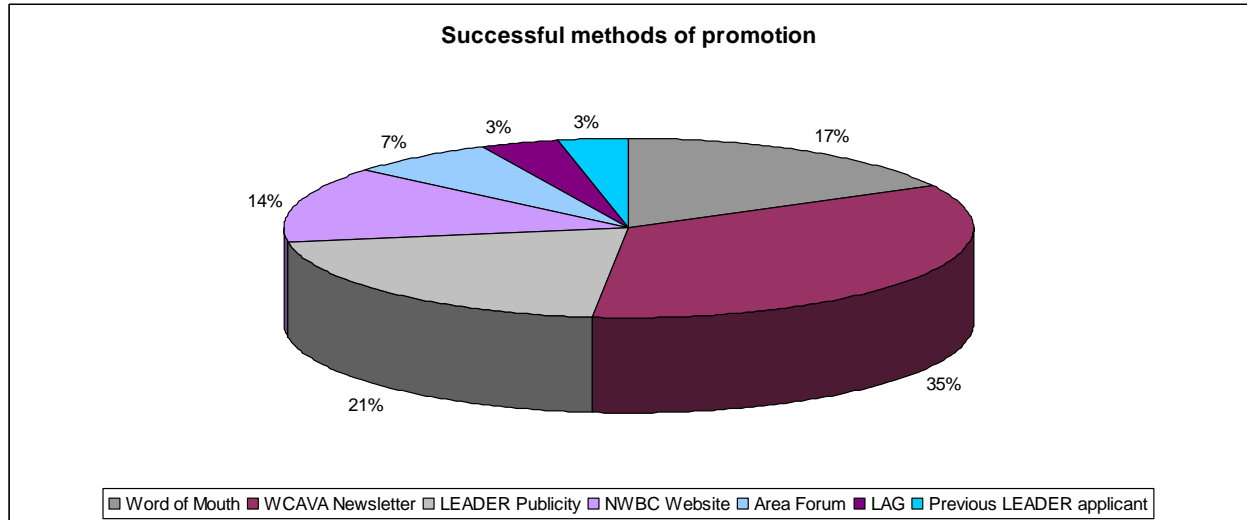
Fig. 06

Communication and support - Only one project, out of those that responded, felt that they did not understand the role of the LAG. 100% of projects understood the aims of the North Warwickshire LEADER Programme and 92% were aware of other projects funded by LEADER.

- 85% of those questioned described the first contact or request for information as satisfactory or excellent
- 100% of those questioned described the support given to them during the application process as good or excellent
- Out of those who responded, successful and unsuccessful, only 1 project believed that the notification period at either expression of interest or full application stage was unreasonable
- 91% described the communication and support provided by staff when dealing with claims as good or excellent

Project development - An agreement was formed with WCAVA to provide project development as an independent organisation. Project development activity included:

- Advising projects about eligibility and fit with LDS
- Supporting projects with sources of information and project ideas
- Supporting projects with form completion
- Undertaking the EOI initial assessment

- Liaising with projects regarding appraisal decisions
- Providing administrative support
- Liaising with LAG and appraisers

Partnership working with WCAVA has been highly successful and it is acknowledged that the project development is best placed within an organisation that supports and works with community organisations. There were minor issues with information sharing but these have been easily overcome with regular meetings.

Administration of the application process - The application process for LEADER grants is comprehensive, and requires applicants to submit several documents, including:

- Expression of Interest (EOI)
- Full application
  - Quotes for services and capital goods
  - Baseline beneficiary data
  - Risk log
  - Sustainability appraisal
  - Three years of accounts
  - Letters of support

The EOI and full application forms are checked by programme staff and are appraised by two external appraisers before submission to the LAG and DEFRA for approval. The programme staff informed the applicant about the decision. Overall, questionnaires identified that applicants felt the process was challenging. The amount of time, the ease of preparation and completion of the form was the prime discouraging factor. It was felt that the process was disproportionate to the amount of grant requested. The intensive process was the same for the smallest grant award of £2,976.80 and the largest of £87,029.52.

When projects were asked to describe the time taken to complete the grant application process, projects replied negatively.
- 41% of projects described the time taken to complete the grant application process as neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory.
- 7% described it as excellent

- 11% described it as poor

When asked to comment on the ease of preparation for the application
- The majority, 41%, believed the ease was poor or below satisfactory
- Only 7% described completion as excellent

Programme staff commented via the questionnaire that the administration process and the level of efficient recording undertaken by staff. Overall, it is believed that the administration of the programme has been carried out to a high standard, with all records and documents being kept according to audit and DEFRA requirements. Although there have been some barriers and challenges along the way, including the introduction of the electronic recording system (ROD) and changes in staff, NWBC staff have worked extremely hard to overcome them.

In hindsight, project files should have been 'closed' as they finished rather than doing them all at the end, which proved to be very time-consuming. It is important that the experience and knowledge that has been gained from the programme is not lost, and that there is an efficient transition into any future programme.

> *"Has gone well, even with several changes of staff and new systems (ROD) being brought in part way through the programme." (Programme staff)*

The claim process - Projects were provided with a claim form and completion guidance during the initial Project Engagement Visit (PEV). At this point the claim forecast was discussed and agreed. In spite of this preparation, a number of grant recipients required significant assistance in completing claim forms, to the point where some needed the form to be completed for them. This validates the feedback received from grant recipients, who were divided in their responses to the claim completion process:

- 23% stated that the claim process was excellent
- 23% stated that it was good
- 23% were neither satisfied or unsatisfied
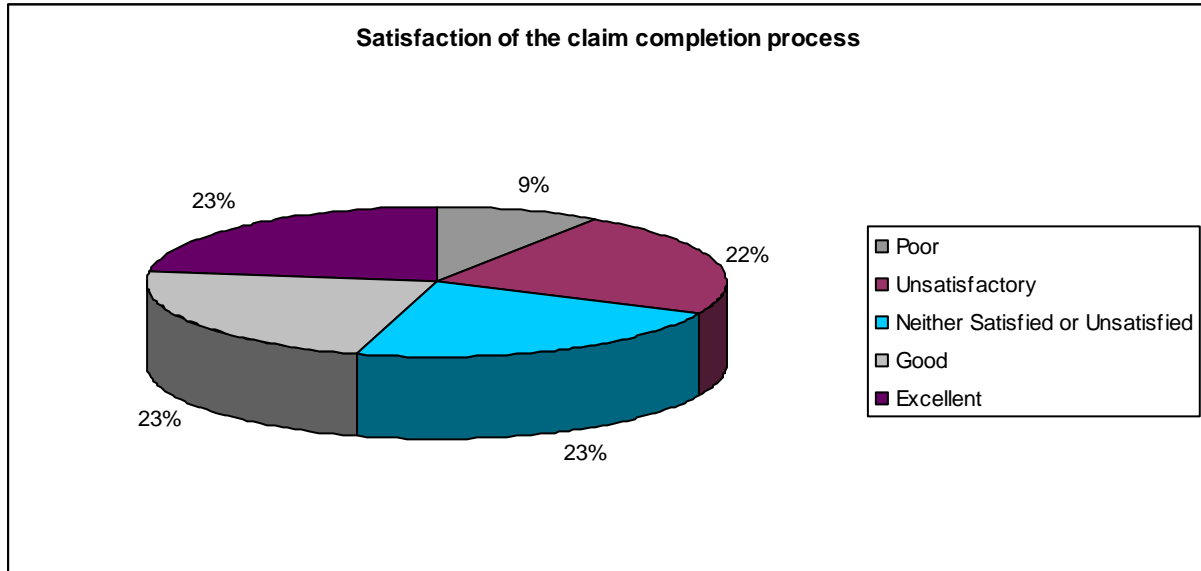- While 31% also stated that it was below satisfactory or poor

Satisfaction of the claim completion process

Fig. 07

Conversely, when asked to describe the communication and support provided the percentage of those who were satisfied rose to 46%, demonstrating the issue was one of bureaucracy and not communication or support.

> *"Possibly one of the most complex claim forms I have ever filled out and that is reflected across other LEADER projects." (Grant recipient)*

Grant recipients were unsatisfied with the claim process because of the amount of time to complete forms, difficulty in understanding the claim forms, the high level of bureaucracy and waiting to be reimbursed. Some projects described the claim form as 'highly complex and daunting to complete'.

> *"I would recommend the funding, but would also make sure they were aware that they have to wait to be reimbursed and that they would probably need help filling in the paperwork - but also let them know that the staff are helpful and supportive." (Grant recipient)*

> *At times it did feel quite daunting and complicated, especially the paper work, and without the encouragement of the LEADER staff, past and present, I think we would have given up." (Grant recipient)*

Monitoring - Due to a variety of reasons there were numerous staff changes during the programme. Although this posed a potential challenge in terms of management and continuity, the standard of service provided remained consistently high and the overall delivery of the

programme remained unaffected. The monitoring role has been described as quite onerous, and not necessarily the part-time role that was envisaged. The monitoring of projects relies heavily on the Project Manager supplying the data required. Trying to extract the information can be very time consuming, especially where projects have finished. Once the project has happened and they have received the money they do not feel obliged (despite the funding agreement) or have a sense of urgency to submit the information on time.

- All but one of the projects thought that their project was adequately monitored

Contract variations - There were a total of 23 contract variations (See Table 06) completed during the programme. The majority of these variations were required to extend the end date of the project. The smallest grant increase was 0.80p while the largest sum was £15,000. On average, projects were given an increase of £185 and this was primarily granted close to the end of the project completion date.

The largest time extension granted was seven months and the shortest one month. On average, the most frequent extension period was two months showing that most of the date extensions were for a short amount of time. Although projects generally kept to plan, it was the completion of the final claim and the collection of associated documents that took longer than anticipated.

On reflection, the time it took to finalise projects; complete final routine monitoring forms and pay final claims was underestimated. There has been a great deal of learning about the claim process and setting dates which are realistic and achievable.

Contract variation	Total number of variations	Number of projects
Contract variations for grant increase	8	7
Contract variations for grant decrease	2	2
Contract variations for end date extension	12	8

Table 06

6. Recommendations and Actions

The following recommendations have been proposed in order to streamline the operational functionality of the programme, to ensure that it remains efficient, effective and appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the local community.

Local Action Group

- To increase LAG membership and encourage multi-sector partnership working and networking locally and regionally

- To develop a number of sub-groups of the LAG to drive, tackle and develop specifically themed local solutions to the identified issues within the LDS

- To continue the development and training of the LAG, including joint training with county and regional partners, to ensure they have the appropriate skills and knowledge to lead and develop any future activity.

- To consider the timings/locations of the LAG meetings, to ensure the inclusion of all sectors of the community

- To encourage all LAG members to provide substitutes if they are unable to attend to ensure that organisations are consistently represented

LEADER Ethos

- To continue to develop the community-led approach which has been ingrained within the North Warwickshire LEADER Programme

- To retain local input into the programme and ensure the needs of the community remain a priority

- To exploit the pan-European nature of the programme through the sharing of knowledge and best practice between national and international LAG regions. Due to

the cost and time restraints experienced in the last programme, this would be best accomplished through early exploration and development of opportunities prior to the start of the next programme.

Application Process

- To consider the level of detail provided to unsuccessful applicants about decisions made, to offer constructive feedback and to restore confidence for future submissions

- To consider the training needs of grant recipients, to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to administer their programme, complete claim forms effectively and collect the required beneficiary data in an accurate and timely manner

- To ensure that potential applicants have the necessary skills and confidence to successfully apply for funding, through the provision of professional advice and training where necessary

- To review the literature and forms for grant applicants to ensure it is simplified process which offers straightforward instruction

Contracting Process

- To be more realistic when setting the final end date for projects, and not to under-estimate the time needed to collect the supporting documents

- To consider other measures of success, in addition to quantitative data, which takes account of social, economic and environmental impacts

- To introduce some form of penalty, which discourages grant recipients from submitting beneficiary data on an ad hoc basis or deviating from the requirements of the funding agreement once their project has ended.

Operational matters

- To provide a dedicated worker to be funded and assigned to the role of finance

7. Annexes

Annex 01

RDPE Axis and Measures

Axis 3 – Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

Measure 321 – supporting new and innovative ways of providing services for the community and businesses such as through funding support for community groups, the delivery of financial advice on an outreach basis, or new leisure developments through features such as cycle or walking trails, potentially designed and developed by the local community.

The projects will substantially enhance the provision of a range of sustainable services identified as being underrepresented, in need of improvement, or offered to only a limited extent within the North Warwickshire LEADER area by 2013, supporting up to 10 sets of actions, reaching over 100 community groups and involving more than 20 villages, to deliver new and improved service opportunities to the community and local businesses.

Measure 322 - investing in and supporting projects to enhance and improve community buildings, including church halls and village halls, so that local services can be delivered at the local scale and the community revitalised through the provision of enhanced local facilities. In addition, actions to upgrade recreation and other leisure areas especially for young people.

By 2013 the sustainability of communities in the North Warwickshire LEADER area will be enhanced through support for investment in community infrastructure leading to the development, refurbishment or improvement of 5 village halls, church halls or other community buildings.

Measure 323 – conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage through support for new or innovate ways of developing heritage sites or institutions, assisting the development and sustainability of business systems and developing the employment opportunities created in the sector

Following the community consultations that were undertaken to contribute to development of this strategy, existing partnership groups working on the North Warwickshire sustainable community strategy have identified emerging projects that could deliver benefits to the rural population within the Borough as well as visitors from beyond the boundary.

Measure 331 - supporting actions to enhance access to appropriate training for local people and businesses.

The projects will help to build a stronger knowledge and training infrastructure for the North Warwickshire LEADER area by 2013, supporting up to 5 actions to deliver new and improved training opportunities for businesses and employees from the community and involving 50 economic actors.

Axis 4 –
Building local capacity for employment and diversification
Technical assistance – Implementation of the LEADER approach

Measure 421 – with a cooperation project focused on exchanging experience and challenges around how other LEADER areas have developed their communication networks within and beyond the rural area, providing information about, and for the local community and businesses.

The project will embrace the learning process, exchanging experience with that of similar LEADER areas both within and outside of the UK. In this way, the North Warwickshire LEADER area will benefit by 2013 from an exposure to ways of working and solutions to the challenges of communication in other areas, supporting up to 2 cooperation projects, one transnational and one interregional.

LAG support and enhancement through Measure 431

Measure 431 will be used to train LAG staff and Programme participants in skills to support and promote the implementation of the Local Development Strategy and to promote its activities. This will help to build capacity within the area by training members of the community and other LAG participants.

Annex 02
Evaluation stakeholders

Who?	Numbers engaged?	How?	Response rate?
Grant recipients (Those who received funding)	23 questionnaires were sent out (4 project managers delivered two projects)	Email survey (option of telephone call or visit)	All 23 questionnaires were returned
EOI/ Full application withdrawn or declined	26 questionnaires were sent out (31 were declined or withdrawn but 5 were project managers of existing projects)	Email survey	5 questionnaires returned
Accountable Body and programme staff (past and present)	Questionnaires sent to 8 personnel	Email survey	4 questionnaires returned
DEFRA	Questionnaires sent to 3 personnel and transition pre-applicant assessment	Email survey	0 questionnaires returned 1 member of staff attended the assessment (comments from the report have been used)
LAG	Focus group and questionnaire sent to previous LAG members	Focus group for current members at NWBC Email for past members	10 LAG members attended the focus group 1 previous LAG member returned a questionnaire
Project beneficiaries	Monitoring Officer visited 8 completed projects	Focus groups and one to one interviews	From the 8 focus groups or interviews 50 project beneficiaries were engaged

Annex 03
Overview of projects by measure and LDS objectives:

Project Name and Reference Number	Measure 321	Measure 322	Measure 323	Objective 1	Objective 2
NW03 Dordon Church Hall		o		o	
NW04 Maxstoke Village Hall		o		o	
NW07 Village Hall Rescue, Hurley		o		o	
NW09 Hartshill Pavilion	o			o	
NW10 Hartshill Community Centre		o		o	
NW12 Rural Youth Project	o			o	
NW15 Astley Castle Heritage Trails			o	o	
NW21 Parish Pathways Room Refurbishment		o		o	
NW22 Mancetter Youth Futures	o			o	
NW24 Parish Pathways Community Hub	o			o	
NW26 Access to DACS Project	o			o	
NW28 Accessing Community Transport	o				o
NW29 Community House Development		o		o	
NW30 Old Barn Centre		o		o	

NW31 Boudica's Last Battle			o	o	
NW34 Shustoke Village Shop/Hub	o			o	
NW35 Linear Park Meadow			o	o	
NW36 Water Orton Community Hub	o			o	
NW39 Access and Interpretation at Whitacre Heath SSSI			o	o	
NW40 Baxterley Play Area	o			o	
NW41 Fillongley Village Hall		o		o	
NW43 Support for North Warwickshire Volunteers	o			o	
NW48 Ansley Village Church Hall		o		o	
NW49 Curdworth Adult Outdoor Exercise Equipment	o			o	
NW54 Austrey Archery Club	o			o	
NW55 Water Orton Tennis Club		o		o	
NW57 MUGA and Skate Facilities	o			o	

North Warwickshire LEADER Programme

1. In your opinion, has the NW LEADER Programme delivered the key objectives in its Local Development Strategy (LDS) and the objectives of the RDPE?

YES   NO

Please explain including identification of any gaps:

2. Overall, do you feel that the NW LEADER project has been successful?

YES   NO

Please explain:

3. Do you think the seven key features of the LEADER approach were successfully incorporated into the programme?
* Bottom-up   * Cooperation   * Integrated &multi-sectoral actions
* Innovation   * Networking   * Local public-private partnerships
* Area-based

YES   NO

Please explain:

4. Considering the NW LEADER funded projects, have they provided value for money?

                          YES   NO

Please explain:

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North Warwickshire LAG

5. As a member of the LAG, do you feel that the group has performed well and undertaken its role successfully?

                          YES   NO

Please explain, including details of any constraints?

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6. Are there any aspects of the NW LAG performance which you think could have been improved?

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7. Do you feel that the group contained the right mix of people?

                          YES   NO

Please explain:

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8. Were there any barriers which prevented people from getting involved in the group?

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Accountable Body

9. Considering the role of the Accountable Body, please comment on the following areas of work, referring specifically to;

- **performance**
- **constraints**
- **improvements**

Administration and recording	
Finance	
Project Development	
Monitoring	

9. Do you feel that the accountable body has provided value for money?

<div align="center">YES   NO</div>

Please explain:

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└──────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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10. How would you describe the nature and effectiveness of the working relationship between DEFRA, the Accountable Body and the LAG?

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐
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│                                              │
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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your views are important to us. Please return to the email address provided.

Contact:	Emma McKay/ Rachel Stephens
Address:	The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1DE
Telephone:	01827 719301
Email:	leaderproject@northwarks.gov.uk

Annex 05
Complete list of Projects and LAG Decision making

Project REF.	Project Title	Decision made
NW01	Health 4 Life	Rejected at EOI
NW02	Kingsbury Leisure Partnership	Rejected at EOI
NW03	Dordon Church Hall	Approved
NW04	Maxstoke Village Hall	Approved
NW05	Financial Inclusion in North Warwickshire	Rejected at EOI
NW06	Connecting North Warwickshire	Withdrawn at EOI
NW07	Hurley Village Hall Rescue	Approved
NW08	Hartshill School Community Minibus	Rejected at EOI
NW09	Hartshill Pavilion	Approved
NW10	Hartshill Community Centre	Approved
NW11	The Willing Hands Community Project	Withdrawn at EOI
NW12	Rural Youth Project	Approved
NW13	Outreach Advice Services	Rejected at EOI
NW14	Community HUBS	Rejected at EOI
NW15	Astley Castle Heritage Trails	Approved
NW16	Owen Street Community Arts Centre (OSCA)	Withdrawn at EOI
NW17	LEADER Transport Action Group	Failed Eligibility
NW18	Village Agents	Failed Eligibility
NW19	Community Buildings Small Works	Rejected at EOI
NW20	Community House Development	Withdrawn at EOI
NW21	Baddesley Village Hall Room Refurbishments	Approved
NW22	Mancetter Youth Futures	Approved
NW23	North Warwickshire FLARE	Withdrawn at EOI

NW24	Baddesley Village Hall Community HUB	Approved
NW25	Garden Maintenance Social Enterprise	Rejected at EOI
NW26	Access to DACS	Approved
NW27	Access to Learning Through Local Natural Heritage	Withdrawn at EOI
NW28	Accessing Community Transport	Approved
NW29	Community House Development	Approved
NW30	The Old Barn Centre	Approved
NW31	Boudica's Last Battle	Approved
NW32	Sustainable Food Communities	Rejected at EOI
NW33	KSA Changing Room Re-Development	Failed Eligibility
NW34	Shustoke Village Shop/HUB	Approved
NW35	Improving Access to Linear Park, Kingsbury	Approved
NW36	Water Orton Library	Approved
NW37	Community Transport Initiative	Withdrawn at EOI
NW38	Kingsbury Community HUB	Withdrawn at EOI
NW39	Improving Access to Whitacre Heath SSSI	Approved
NW40	Baxterley Play Area	Approved
NW41	Fillongley Village Hall	Approved
NW42	Arley Calendar of Events	Rejected at EOI
NW43	Support for North Warwickshire Village Volunteers	Approved
NW44	ASPIRE	Withdrawn at EOI
NW45	Victory Hall Restoration Fund	Failed Eligibility
NW46	Credit Union Services	Failed Eligibility
NW47	Promoting Economic and Financial Inclusion in North	Rejected at Full

	Warwickshire	Application
NW48	Ansley Village Church Hall	Approved
NW49	Curdworth Adult Outdoor Exercise Equipment	Approved
NW50	Ansley Church Car Park	Failed Eligibility
NW51	Maxstoke Village Hall Extension	Failed Eligibility
NW52	Arley and St Michael's Community Centre: Access to Mezzanine	Rejected at EOI
NW53	St. John's Church Hall Ansley Common	Withdrawn at EOI
NW54	Austrey Archery Group	Approved
NW55	Water Orton Tennis Club	Approved
NW56	Roof for Corley Bowling Club Pavilion	Withdrawn at EOI
NW57	Provision of MUGA and Skate Facilities	Approved
NW58	Shustoke Tea Rooms	Withdrawn at EOI

Annex 06

Measure	Output	Contracted Project Name/Reference	LEADER funding	Match Funding	Total LEADER Project Cost	LEADER Funding	Match Funding	Total Wider Project Cost
321		Number of initiatives to improve access to services						
		NW 09 - Hartshill Pavilion	45,000.00	143,823.37	188,823.37	45,000.00	143,823.37	188,823.37
		NW 12 - Rural Youth Worker	87,000.00		87,000.00	87,000.00	5,000.00	92,000.00
		NW 22 - Mancetter Youth Futures	49,166.82		49,166.82	49,166.82	10,000.00	59,166.82
		NW 26 - Access to DACs Project	60,632.00		60,632.00	60,632.00		60,632.00
		NW 34 - Shustoke Community Shop/ Hub	24,940.00		24,940.00	24,940.00		24,940.00
		NW 40 - Baxterley Play Area	36,345.00	8,130.00	44,475.00	36,345.00	12,946.45	49,291.45
		NW43 – Support for N.Warks Village Volunteers	16,460.00		16,460.00	16,460.00		16,460.00
		EOI - NW 57 - Multi-Use Games Area and Skate Facility	109,806.40		109,806.40	109,806.40	506,916.07	616,722.47
		NW49 - Curdworth Outdoor Exercise Equipment	10,359.00		10,359.00	10,359.00	5,000.00	15,359.00
		NW 54 - Austrey Archery Club	5,720.00		5,720.00	5,720.00		5,720.00
321		Number of initiatives to improve service access or communication						
		NW 24 - The Parish Pathways Project	29,938.20		29,938.20	29,938.20	2,000.00	31,938.20
		NW 28 - Accessing Community Transport	9,448.00	9,996.00	19,444.00	9,448.00	9,996.00	19,444.00
		NW36 - Water Orton Library & Community Centre	46,688.87		46,688.87	46,688.87	13,500.00	60,188.87
322		Number of villages where actions take place in terms of: minor improvements to community buildings*; local environmental upgrading actions						
		NW 03 - Dordon Church Hall Refurbishment	30,722.00	3,000.00	33,722.00	30,722.00	3,000.00	33,722.00
		NW 04 - Maxstoke Village Hall	22,590.00		22,590.00	22,590.00	3,000.00	25,590.00
		NW 07 - Hurley Village Hall Rescue	48,805.98	5,000.00	53,805.98	48,805.98	5,000.00	53,805.98
		NW 10 - Hartshill Community Centre	19,695.00		19,695.00	19,695.00	463,146.00	482,841.00
		NW 21 - Parish Pathways - Baddesley Village Hall Room	4,375.00		4,375.00	4,375.00		4,375.00
		NW 29 - Community House Development	5,066.79		5,066.79	5,066.79		5,066.79
		NW 30 - The Old Barn Centre	18,130.56	9,038.00	27,168.56	18,130.56	9,038.00	27,168.56
		NW 41 - Fillongley Village Hall	7,805.00		7,805.00	7,805.00		7,805.00
		NW 48 - Ansley Village Church Hall	2,976.00		2,976.00	2,976.00		2,976.00
		NW 55 - Water Orton Tennis Club	4,965.00		4,965.00	4,965.00		4,965.00
322		Number of actions to improve signage and directional aids						
					0.00			
323		Number of rural heritage actions supported - natural environment						
		NW 35 - Linear Park Access	4,860.00		4,860.00	4,860.00	16,933.49	21,793.49
		NW 39 - Improving Whitacre Heath SSSI	10,875.00		10,875.00	10,875.00	2,300.00	13,175.00
323		Number of rural heritage actions supported - historical or built environment						
		NW 15 - Astley Castle Heritage Trails	14,544.14	9,722.00	24,266.14	14,544.14	2,300,000.00	2,314,544.14
		NW 31 - Boudica's Last Battle	12,000.00		12,000.00	12,000.00		12,000.00
421		Number of supported cooperation projects at, interterritorial level; and, transnational level						
					0.00			
421		Number of cooperating LAGs through, direct exchange of experience; and, involvement in dissemination activities						
					0.00			
		TOTALS	£738,914.76	£188,709.37	£927,624.13	£738,914.76	£3,511,599.38	£4,250,514.14

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Flow chart of project application and approval procedure

Project Enquiry
Development Officer advises on eligibility of project idea and sources of support for completing application.

→ | **Project Ineligible** Signpost to more appropriate funding |

↓

Expression of Interest (EOI)
Form completed by an applicant from an eligible group/organisation. The form provides general information about the proposed project.

↓

Initial Project Assessment
EOI is assessed against the checklist by the Programme Team (Development Officer, Compliance Officer and Finance Officer) to identify basic eligibility & fit with Local Development Strategy (LDS).

↓

EOI Appraised
Appraisal Panel (3 members plus AWM rep) appraise EOI against the scoring sheet.

↓

EOI Passed
Project meets/exceeds minimum 'score'. Applicant invited by the Development Officer to complete full application and given comments from the Appraisal Panel.

→ | **EOI Failed** Development Officer to inform applicant with full reasons |

↓

Full Application
Form completed by the applicant with advice/guidance from the Development Officer. Comments on the EOI from the Appraisal Panel sent to the applicant.

↓

Application Appraised
Appraisal Panel (3 members plus AWM rep) appraise full application form & make recommendation to the Executive Group. The panel can recommend to – approve, approve with conditions, defer for further development or reject

↓

Final Decision
Executive Group (15 members – quorum of 7) makes the final decision on project application. The group can agree to – approve, approve with conditions, defer for further development or reject.

| **Application Rejected/Deferred** Development Officer to inform applicant with full reasons |

↓

Application Approved
Development Officer notifies the successful applicant (informing of any conditions) and the accountable body issue offer letter and contract.

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Local Development Strategy

"To foster an integrated rural economy that is stronger, more resilient, and sustainable and that recognises and responds positively to challenges and opportunities in the rural domain whilst contributing to wider local economic aspirations."

Introduction

This Local Development Strategy sets out the proposed approach to delivering the 2015 to 2020 LEADER Programme in North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth.

It provides details of;
- the Local Action Group (LAG)
- the background analysis and consultation undertaken
- alignment with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP)
- the strategy - priorities and measures
- the actions
- the outputs, targets and results
- the management and delivery of the programme

The programme will deliver the following outputs:

Jobs created	Jobs safeguarded	Number of Projects	Potential additional overnight stays	Additional Ha woodland actively managed
70	82	74	500 p.a.	150 Hectares

(*Table 1*)

1.   The Local Action Group

The Local Action Group (LAG) has been established to deliver a programme of LEADER interventions based on the challenges, opportunities and impetus to local economic improvement through jobs and growth.

1.1   Membership

The newly formed LAG takes account of the shift in programme focus. It consists of a range of interested and committed businesses, covering all the relevant business sectors, the community and voluntary sector and appropriate public sector organisations. New members were recruited during the consultation process, which served to gauge initial interest and gain early commitment. It also contains a small number of members who were involved in the North Warwickshire Programme (2008 to 2013) and this provides a sense of continuity.

It will review its membership and elect key positions, such as Chair and Vice Chair on an annual basis, allowing new members to come forward at regular intervals.   The elected Chair at the time of writing the strategy is Richard Bailey from NFU, with Carol Musgrave from Citizens Advice Bureau serving as the Vice-Chair. It is intended that the Chair will remain as a non-statutory sector member.

All those who have signed up to the LAG are committed to the development of the area and see LEADER as an exciting opportunity to make a difference to rural communities. There is a strong commitment from members to ensure that innovative ideas and projects come forward to access funding and all are keen to promote and facilitate the process. The skills and experience of the partners show a high level of resonance with the themes of the programme in building a stronger, resilient and more sustainable local rural economy.

1.2 Structure and decision-making process

Taking account of the needs of the programme, and the importance of full sector involvement, the delivery structure will be as detailed in Figure 1;

Local Action Group (LAG)

Independent Chair

Two members from each priority area:
- Farming and forestry
- Tourism
- Other business
- Local Enterprise Partnership (from both LEP areas)
- Community and voluntary sector (representing specific target groups, such as young and disadvantaged people)
- Borough and County Councils

Thus ensuring that 50% of the votes are not public authority and avoiding potential risk of conflict of interest

Rural Appraisal Panel (RAP)

DEFRA/RPA

Programme Team

Project Applicants

(*Figure 1*)

The LAG will be responsible for the operation of the programme, and will make decisions on applications, ensuring that approved projects contribute to the successful delivery of the strategy. It is recognised that the Defra/RPA representative will hold the power of veto on all project approvals. Following an initial period of more frequent meetings, it will meet on a quarterly basis.

The LAG will be supported by a Rural Appraisal Panel (RAP), which will consist of a pool of people, predominantly paid staff, from stakeholder organisations who can legitimately contribute their time to the programme. They will be responsible for using their local specialist knowledge to appraise applications, and make recommendations to the LAG accordingly.

Full details of decision-making processes involving the LAG are set out in sections 4.2-4.4.

A protocol and terms of reference have been developed and all members of the LAG are required to sign up to them. The protocol sets out the role and responsibilities of all LAG members and the essential and desirable criteria sought. The terms of reference contain the details about the membership of the LAG, election of the Chair and Vice-Chair, operating procedures and legal and financial management. Protocol details are set out on the programme website which can be found at: www.englandsruralheart.org

1.3 Local Action Group - staff and job descriptions

A Programme Team, consisting of a Project Manager and a Development Officer, will be responsible for the overall delivery of the programme. The team, who will work in conjunction with the Finance Officer from the Accountable Body, will be supported by officers from both local authorities to ensure compliance with the separation of duties. The Project Manager will be employed for the entirety of the programme period, whilst the Development Officer will be employed on a four day a week basis for the first three years.

A summary of the two job roles being proposed together with a small snapshot of the activity to be undertaken is provided below;

LEADER Project Manager
Duration: Part-time position (4 days a week), for entirety of the programme

Job Purpose:
The Project Manager will be responsible for the overall management of the programme, ensuring that the Local Development Strategy is successfully and cost-effectively delivered to time and budget.

Main Duties:
•   To coordinate the activities of the LAG and RAP
•   To serve as the main point of contact for all enquiries and requests for information, representing the area at local, regional and national networks
•   To monitor progress against targets, both in terms of the strategy and project delivery
•   To assess and manage any risks to the programme, and reduce or eliminate where possible
•   To implement financial control and manage finances to ensure compliance with regulations
•   To work in conjunction with the LEADER Development Officer and assist in directing their work plan
•   To undertake the contracting of projects

(Figure 2)

LEADER Development Officer
Duration: Part-time position (4 days a week) for the first 3 years of the programme

Job Purpose:
The Development Officer will work across the combined LEADER area to promote the programme, and work with applicants to develop a range of good quality projects that contribute to the successful delivery of the objectives contained within the Local Development Strategy.

Main Duties:
•   To actively promote LEADER, and seek applications from relevant organisations and agencies
•   To provide advice and guidance in the development of project ideas and the formulation of applications, including the development of business planning where appropriate
•   To identify potential sources of match funding to maximise the value of the programme
•   To signpost applicants to alternative sources of funding where it is considered to be more appropriate

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(Figure 3)

1.4 Equal opportunities statement

The North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth LAG is committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and disadvantage. It is also committed to achieving the highest standard of service delivery and employment practice. Equality of opportunity for all sections of the community and workforce is an integral part of this commitment.

It will not discriminate directly or indirectly through applying conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified. It will ensure that no employee, job applicant, LAG member, project applicant or LEADER funded service/project user receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of age, class, colour, disability, employment status, ethnic or national origin, marital status, race, religious beliefs, responsibilities for dependants, gender, sexual orientation, economic status or unrelated criminal convictions.

The LAG seeks to provide a positive role model for other organisations in the community and raise awareness of the importance of equal opportunities in both employment practice and service delivery.

The responsibility for the effective implementation of the policy rests with the Programme Team. Comprehensive monitoring will be undertaken in the areas of recruitment and project selection.

In addition, the accountable body, North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC), has a Corporate Equality Policy, which the LAG will refer to when developing and monitoring its own policy.

Copies of both Councils' Equality Policies are available for consultation.

1.5 Involvement of the community and consultation activity undertaken

In total, over 600 businesses, agencies and organisations were consulted during the development phase of the strategy and these have been summarised in Table 2.

Stakeholder Involvement

Method of Engagement	Activity	Number	Selected Key Stakeholders
Focused events	Farming and forestry event	26	Country Landowners Association Local Farmers Arthur Rank Centre
	Community and voluntary event	43	Citizen's Advice Bureau WCAVA Volunteer Centre
	Local businesses event	42	Coventry University MIRA Middleton Hall Warwickshire Rural Hub
One-to-one interviews	Key organisations	24	Federation of Small Business NFU CWCDA H&B Tourism Association
	Local businesses	38	Local accommodation providers
Paired interviews	Youth Clubs	4	Young people
Surveys	Business postal survey	126	
	Business telephone survey	5	Packington Estate Leicester FSB
	Business electronic survey	4	
	Stakeholder face-to-face survey	37	North Warwickshire and Hinckley College WiRE CW Chamber of Commerce CWRT
Presentations	Business networking event	40	Coleshill Post McD Recruitment
	Existing organisations /groups	76	Northern Warwickshire Tourism Association

			Heritage Forum
	North Warwickshire Community Partnership	40	Midlands Professional Development Midlands Studio Schools
Meetings	LEP sub-groups	27	SME Access to Finance and Funding
	Borough and County Council	76	Warwickshire County Council Leicestershire County Council
LAG networking	Local LAG meetings	53	5 LAG meetings
	Regional LAG meetings	9	West Midlands LAGs
	Wider LAG engagement	21	East Durham LAG Northumberland Uplands LAG

(Table 2)

A business survey was developed to capture more in-depth views and information on a number of aspects relating to the programme. These included;

- the main challenges associated with the location of businesses (for example, access to other businesses and the availability of services);
- transportation costs;
- awareness of what is going on locally;
- the strengths of the area as a business location;
- the importance of aspects such as high quality office/ work space, superfast broadband, mobile phone coverage, access to business advice, access to suppliers and customers, access to potential employees, access to other business services (such as finance; marketing), and networking opportunities;
- elements, such as skills, IT support, access to marketing opportunities or transport, preventing the business from growing and/ or creating new jobs; and,
- what could be done locally to help the business to grow and/ or create new jobs.

Potential applicants were asked to complete a project proforma which provides an indication of proposed activity, including a brief description of the project, partners, an estimate of cost, sources of match funding, timescales and an indication of how it will lead to jobs and growth for the area.

In addition to direct consultation, awareness of the process of formulating a LEADER strategy was widely publicised through local authority networks, business organisations, and the press.

1.6   Training requirements

Feedback from the 2008 to 2013 North Warwickshire LAG members highlighted the importance of good guidance and training for new LAG members from the outset. In addition, the current LAG has suggested the facilitation of workshops which will allow all members to understand the issues which are faced over all the priorities (such as farming or forestry) and not just within their own area of expertise. Where possible, delivery of training will be pooled with other LAGs to ensure consistency and effective use of the training budget. A training programme will be put in place which will enable LAG and RAP members to commence effective delivery from January 2015.

The Accountable Body will be responsible for ensuring that LAG members receive training appropriate to the programme and their experience. The Accountable Body will take part in Defra's pre-programme training on the National Operations Manual.

2.   The LAG area

The eligible area covers a total population of some **121,470** inhabitants (See annex 1). This is made up of a **rural population of 80,274,** and the remaining population comprises the two Rural Hub towns of Atherstone and Earl Shilton and the non-built up urban areas of Hartshill, Kingsbury and Groby (NOMIS 2011 Census Data).

The LEADER area combines rural Output Areas (OAs) from two local authority districts – North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth in Leicestershire; two counties straddling two regions joined at the strategically important A5 corridor. This represents an innovative approach that reflects the natural synergies of this functional rural area where the East and West Midlands meet. This functionality is evidenced in existing and previous joint developments in farming, tourism, tertiary education, cross-border initiatives, liaisons over the Motor Industry Research Association (MIRA) Technology Park and a range of other sectorial relationships such as joint marketing and promotion, business collaborations and cross border partnership groups.

The LAG area is criss-crossed by major roads – the A5, M42, M6, and the M1. This has attracted many logistics companies, sometimes it has been felt to the exclusion of other more knowledge-based sectors, and these are some of the largest employers. Large urban areas – Birmingham, Leicester and Coventry are accessible travel to work areas by car, but public transport, both externally and within the LEADER area, is severely lacking. Networking and development opportunities are drawn towards these cities, and their universities, but for many rural-based businesses the extended travelling time and resultant "time away from the real work" means that they do not participate. This lack of networking can lead to clustering benefits being lost. The Warwickshire Rural Growth Network (WRGN) pilot has also identified a seeming lack of confidence in businesses preventing them from aiming for growth.

Nevertheless the area has a varied business base of some 7250 businesses of which the overwhelming majority are micro-enterprises – over 80% of those in rural areas. The area has an essentially rural settlement structure built around market towns, villages, hamlets and individual farm and other dwellings. In this case it represents a rural heartland of small settlements bounded by a number of market towns and large villages, including Atherstone, Coleshill, Polesworth, Hinckley, Market Bosworth and Earl Shilton. The LEADER area is shown on Figure 4.

North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth LEADER area
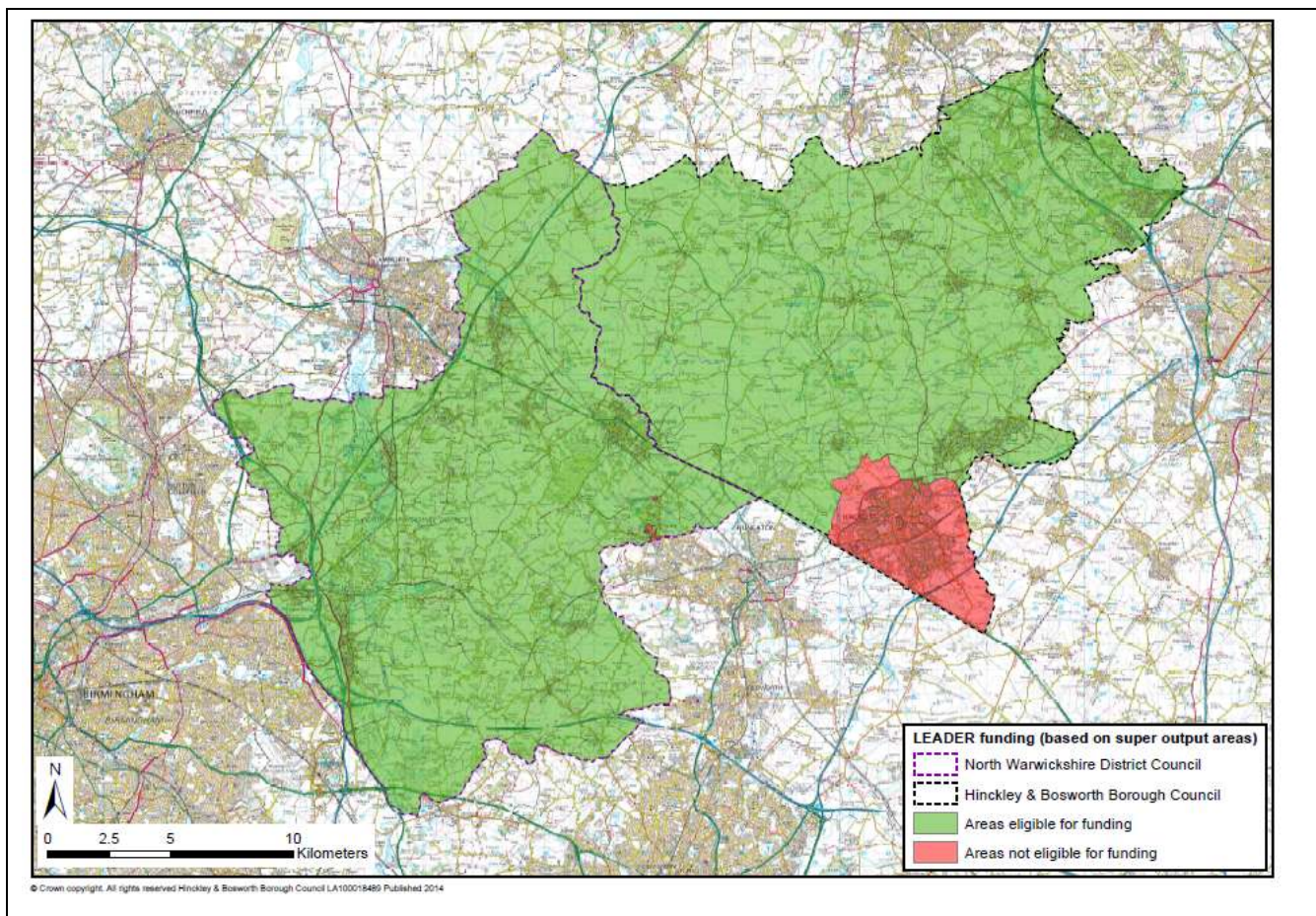
(Figure 4)

An analysis of relevant research has been drawn from a number of sources including;
- LEP Strategic Economic Plans and ESIF strategies;
- North Warwickshire Socio-Economic Profile (NW SE) (produced by Warwickshire County Council (WCC));
- The ACRE Access to Rural Services Report for North Warwickshire;
- Leicestershire Rural Economy Evidence Base (LREEB) and the ONS; and,
- Further consultation (as set out in section 1.5).

The data reveals that although the area has significant local economic potential there are a number of challenges confronting the rural economy:

- Rural SMEs, and especially micro businesses, with a poor growth record (C&W ESIF) including a falling rate of employment growth amongst new start-up businesses (NW SE Profile)
- Low take-up of potential support and grants via regional and sub-regional programmes, for example recently through the WRGN)
- Market failure in the supply of suitable rural business sites (LREEB). In addition, there is scope and a need to grow the rural economy around the encouragement of home workers.
- Persistent low productivity with low and falling GVA (Gross Value Added) per worker in the rural areas (C&W ESIF; LLEP).
- Low employment rates, in the case of North Warwickshire below the EU 2020 target (C&W ESIF).
- Relatively high unemployment, and especially amongst young people (C&W ESIF).
- Limited access to public transport and other services, especially in the more remote areas, public transport-poor areas and higher proportions of households without access to a car compared to rural regional and national averages (ACRE AS).
- Continuing economic imbalance between urban and rural areas, at least in North Warwickshire (C&W ESIF).

In contrast to these challenges, research and consultation shows resilience amongst rural 'signature' sectors – including agriculture, forestry and tourism – with scope for an increase in jobs and growth, as well as opportunities to collaborate with developments such as the National Forest (LREEB). The land use throughout the area is predominately agricultural, largely in extensive estates and farming is still of major importance to the local economy and underpins the rural scene. Consultations confirm that there is a substantial and committed farming sector that is confronted by funding challenges and a visitor economy with genuine potential but a need for development support and coherent branding.

These issues generate both challenges and opportunities and the innovative SCOPE analysis set out in section 3.1 builds a view of potential LEADER interventions.

3. The Strategy: developing LEADER 2015 to 2020 priorities

This section demonstrates how priority areas for intervention have been built from local consultations, evidence from economic and social indicators, analysis from other research and in the light of feasibility checks. The strategy has therefore been designed to:
- build on the existing strengths of the area where these can help to respond to challenges in the rural local economy;
- recognise the actions and achievements of the 2008 to 2013 LEADER programme and build from these; and, most important,
- respond to, and align with, the needs and aspirations of businesses and the community.

In addition, the strategy;
- supports the priorities of the Coventry and Warwickshire, and Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnerships, and also fill any gaps with regard to the needs of the rural economy;
- recognises and builds on pre-existing initiatives focused on the rural business sector; and where appropriate;

- acknowledges and builds on the evaluation and experience of previous LEADER interventions both nationally and in comparable geographical areas.

3.1 The strengths, challenges and opportunities for LEADER in the North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth area

A strengths, challenges and opportunities enhancement (SCOPE) analysis has been conducted as part of the development of the LEADER strategy for 2015 to 2020. This approach, a modification of the conventional SWOT analysis, focuses on strengths and challenges in the target area and how these may be viewed as or linked to opportunities. This enables priority themes and proposed interventions to be matched to genuine needs emerging from the critical analysis and from issues recognised by the business community, essentially reflecting a bottom-up process.

SCOPE components are presented under the heading of strengths (Table 3) and challenges (Table 4), and broadly in terms of the area, infrastructure, the local economy and governance and policy, linked with opportunities as alerts for the LEADER LDS.

SCOPE components	
Some major STRENGTHS of the LEADER area	**Implications as OPPORTUNITIES for the LEADER 2015 to 2020 Strategy**
Distinctive rural heartland encompassing parts of North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth that is bordered by market towns and with a diverse local economy.	Recognise and reinforce the attractiveness of the rural area as a location for economic activity and develop initiatives through LEADER that support its sustainable development.
A cross-border area that offers an opportunity to realise untapped potential synergies.	Take the opportunity to initiate cross-border projects in areas of potential such as the visitor economy and farm diversification as part of the suite of LEADER actions.
A well-connected external transport profile with proximity and good links to major motorways and regional airports such as East Midlands and Birmingham	Build actions that promote the external accessibility of the area as representing an attraction for new businesses seeking a desirable rural and connected operating environment.
A range of small and micro businesses in sectors such as digital technology, gaming, design and professional services, as well as in specialised engineering products, with potential for growth and development.	Develop LEADER actions that support the growth and sustainability of existing, as well as starter, small and micro businesses. Working in liaison with the existing support structure, this could be in areas such as business-to-business collaboration, accessing employees through transport initiatives, and fostering growth.
Proximity to areas where there are major developments in high value manufacturing and, in particular, the MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone.	Develop some priority areas that will both support MIRA-based firms/activities and help businesses in the area to benefit from association with the Park.
Important initiatives such as the Twycross Life Sciences Park European Excellence Centre which offer substantial potential for visitor growth, capacity building, and spin-off benefits in the rural economy.	Recognise the potential importance of landmark initiatives and ensure that LEADER actions benefit from the opportunities for rural growth that they will create.
Forecasted growth in producer-services sectors such as information and communication.	Recognise this as an area of potential in attracting and supporting start-ups in the LEADER area.
Visitor potential in the area, as evidenced by the National Forest which expects to attract 10 million day visitors by 2024 and numerous other attractions and accommodation establishments with links to urban markets.	Support growth in the tourism sector which will help the rural economy to diversify and become more resilient.

A growing craft-based sector.	Consider projects that could support a network of craft activities in the villages, most of which would be micro-businesses.
Potential to promote farm diversification.	Working with farming groups to ensure sustainability, develop a set of farm diversification initiatives, and help to build a stronger and more resilient local farm economy.
Parts of the LEADER area are within the boundary of the National Forest and there is substantial expertise that could be mobilised.	Review the opportunities to link more with the National Forest and to support forestry productivity in areas both within and adjacent to the forest through liaisons with existing forest development schemes.
Some successes in nurturing social enterprise in, for example, childcare provision, renewable energy, and leisure facilities, and a commitment on the part of both the community and voluntary sector and some existing businesses, to develop this area of job potential.	The LEADER programme could develop, alongside other partners, a social enterprise nurturing scheme. As part of this, community groups could be encouraged to transform into sustainable social enterprises.
Local councils committed to rural economic improvement but with only limited ability to fund actions.	LEADER will provide a vehicle for funded actions and thus meet an unfulfilled need.
Existing funding and support for the rural economy through, for example, the Defra Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the Farming and Forestry Productivity Scheme (FFPS), the European Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF), WRGN and other sources such as the Portas-Plus High Street Innovation Fund.	Ensure that LEADER initiatives supplement and build on these existing, and any future, funding schemes. If appropriate, consider building on the approach and achievements of the WRGN Pilot which is due to end in Autumn 2015.
A strong, locally-focused community and voluntary sector with a track record of delivering rural initiatives.	Engage the community and voluntary sector in identifying economic opportunities in the area.
A successfully delivered LEADER Programme developed over the 2008 to 2013 period in part of the target area.	Make full and effective use of the previous LEADER achievements and, where possible, endeavour to build a local economy element from these.

(Table 3)

Some of the major CHALLENGES for the LEADER area	Implications as OPPORTUNITIES for the LEADER 2015 to 2020 Strategy
The LEADER area does not have a strong external identity or sense of branding.	The presence of LEADER will help to build an identity with projects to promote the area for visitors, business, and inward investment.
No single definitive means of communication to businesses and limited connections within the business community.	LEADER could fund initiatives that build a strong and effective communications network, for example through the development of websites and business networks.
A lack of venues for home-based micro-businesses to meet and network in some parts of the area	The LEADER project could support the creation or upgrading of community hubs to create fit-for-purpose work spaces.
Access to superfast broadband is limited, particularly in some remote parts. This presents a distinct disadvantage for existing and potential new business start-ups.	The Superfast Rollout Programme and EAFRD Growth Fund is available to support access to superfast broadband but there may still be gaps which LEADER activities could fill.

There is a widely-recognised need to promote environmental improvement and sustainability through the use of renewable energy.	LEADER could help initiatives in this area by supporting small-scale community or cooperative renewable energy projects.
Farm consultations suggest a need for support with farm productivity and capital works (such as buildings, accommodation, and change of use, as well as cold storage and processing to improve supply chain potentials).	Whilst these needs could be potentially met by the Farming and Forestry Productivity Scheme (FFPS), it is suggested by the farming community that LEADER could work together with the LEP to support this work at a local level and address the gaps.
Poor public transport with implications for getting to work, particularly for young people and those without access to a car, and for the area's visitor economy.	Consider the development of a sustainable transport project to build stronger accessibility for the area and strengthen local employment opportunities.
The visitor base is largely undeveloped and there is a need for a stronger interpretation and marketing of local attractions. Coordination of tourism is lacking.	Initiate a tourism project that could build an integrated visitor attraction system to enhance and promote existing facilities and rural job opportunities. Consider how LEADER could, in conjunction with other funding opportunities, finance improved coordination.
There are barriers to innovation, including limitations on start-up support.	The LAG should look to LEPs, the WRGN and other relevant partners to provide support to applicants as this is not within LEADER measures.
Recruiting skilled staff and maintaining and enhancing existing skills.	Although knowledge transfer and skills is covered by ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and LEP interventions, there may be scope for LEADER-initiated actions to supplement and add-value to these.
Rural SMEs lack suitable fit-for-purpose workspace enabling managed and sustainable growth, or access to investment for equipment, new technologies or energy-saving actions.	Support development in this area, working in close association with EAFRD, LEP or WRGN growth initiatives.
Relatively high unemployment, especially amongst young people (almost 40% in NW), in parts of the target area.	Where possible, target LEADER actions on ameliorating local, rural unemployment levels.
Inability of young people to access job experience opportunities, despite a desire to do so.	Consider the potential to initiate a job experience scheme in conjunction with the development of business networks. Investigate the potential for rural-based apprenticeships.
Business support and mentoring is less accessible for village and small-town based businesses.	Develop actions, where possible in liaison with rural support services such as the WRGN and Leicestershire Rural Partnership, to improve access to support and mentoring.
There has been a relatively poor take-up of rural business support in past initiatives, including the WRGN and European funding schemes.	In deploying a grassroots approach, LEADER will seek to mobilise business and act as an instrument for further funding initiatives and demonstrate how involvement will strengthen and build their sustainability.
Limited focus on the rural economy in local and regional strategic approaches.	A stronger focus should be capable of mobilising latent opportunities in the local economy.
Only modest resources are available from local agencies to promote the area as a business and visitor base.	A suite of LEADER initiatives focused on the local economy would act as a trigger and catalyst for change.

(Table 4)

3.2   Aligning with wider LEP activity

The North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth LEADER area is represented by two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs): -
- Coventry and Warwickshire
- Leicester and Leicestershire.

It is important for the proposed LEADER actions to support, as far as feasible, a combination of both LEP priorities. The strategy-building process has paid close attention to these key elements through the analysis of relevant strategies and the involvement of LEP representatives. Discussions have taken place with members of both LEPs, and presentations have been given at two sub-group meetings. Communication and collaboration with the LEPs is crucial to the success of the programme and therefore, a member of the SME Sub Group of the CWLEP sits on the LAG and it is envisaged that the LAG will have the same representation from LLEP. Both LEPs have endorsed this strategy and the bid to Defra; letters of support are available in annex 2 and 3.

It is important to note that LEP priorities are based on areas much wider than the rural domain. There is, of course, a rural dimension to the approach of each LEP and this will be captured in the summary that follows.

Given the complexity of summarising two sets of priorities, this section sets out broad, recognised priorities with the caveat that these may not always be applicable to each part of the LEADER area. Summary priorities are drawn from a number of sources, including each Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Strategy.

A number of key priorities are replicated between the LEPs. This is not surprising as the economic complexion of these neighbouring areas is, in many ways, similar. These high level priorities are:
- Support for innovation in areas where there is a competitive advantage.
- The promotion of SME start-up and growth including enhanced competitiveness.
- Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies.
- Increasing productivity.
- The promotion of quality, high value employment and the reduction in unemployment.
- Sustainability in economic growth.
- The promotion of a transition towards a low carbon and high value economy.
- The promotion of social inclusion and the reduction of poverty and disadvantage.
- Investment in education, skills and lifelong learning.

Drawing from both areas, priority sectors particularly relevant to LEADER are seen as:
- The key importance of maintaining a global hub in advanced manufacturing and engineering (the MIRA Technology Park located on the Hinckley/ North Warwickshire border is seen as critical to each LEP area, indeed the LEPs are working in partnership on this 'transformational' priority).
- Food and drink manufacturing (LLEP).
- Digital technologies (C&WLEP).
- Intelligent mobility and health and social care (C&WLEP).
- Tourism and hospitality, including business tourism (C&WLEP; LLEP).
- New sector development in environmental and low carbon technology (LLEP).

Some potential LEADER activities, such as those related to cultural heritage, are not directly or overtly connected to LEP priorities but in many cases will contribute indirectly to local economic goals. For example, actions to improve cultural heritage will add to the appeal of villages creating more attractive places in which to do business or visit.

Leicestershire LEP has a more definitive rural dimension which is set out within the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy (ESIF), and has a cross-cutting Rural Growth Programme. Whilst incorporated to a lesser extent in Coventry and Warwickshire the rural domain is recognised in the ESIF vision with rural challenges and the importance of the growth and performance of SMEs and the rural economy highlighted. Clearly, it

is also covered by the Innovation Programme for Rural Growth and supported initiatives such as the WRGN. Taken together these various sources provide a profile of rural priorities. These are:

- Rural business growth, as well as improved productivity, with a focus on innovation and technology across agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, and services including tourism.
- Growth in ICT, low carbon and environmental technologies.
- Closer links between rural businesses and the skills and resources of universities, other research organisations and rural hubs (in Warwickshire this means the RGN).
- Increasing business-to-business collaboration.
- The commercialisation of new products and processes involving rural businesses.

The LLEP priorities include the notion of supporting rural areas to contribute more to growth and to assist with the development of balanced, inclusive and sustainable economies.

In summary, these various strategic elements represent a set of priorities for the LEPs that fit the LEADER area well although with some bias towards the more urban areas.

The LEADER programme will play an important role, through its 'bottom-up' approach, in engaging with the "hard to reach" businesses that do not normally engage in this type of activity. This is also necessary to boost growth in this rural area which lags behind that of urban areas. (Leicestershire Rural Evidence Base, CW SEP) As such LEADER will fill gaps, for instance around business start ups, business growth for homeworkers and under capitalised enterprises where small grants can make a significant difference. Whilst, access to targeted business support has also emerged as a strong priority for businesses, it is recognised that LEADER may not be able to fund this and work will be undertaken with the LEPs to co-ordinate programmes delivered through their ESIF plans, and with WCC to integrate LEADER activities with the WRGN. The latter will offer wider start-up and business support until the ESIF programmes are launched.

3.3 The strategic priorities and the programme of activity

Based on consultations with businesses and the community, and in the context of LEP activity, this section sets out the broad strategy theme and specific strategic priorities.

The primary objective of the Local Development Strategy
The primary objective of the Local Development Strategy is:

> **To foster an integrated rural economy that is stronger, more resilient, and sustainable and that recognises and responds positively to challenges and opportunities in the rural domain whilst contributing to wider local economic aspirations.**

Within this overall theme, seven strategic priorities have been developed in response to local consultations and in the light of guidance on the 2015 to 2020 approach; the seventh priority relates to cooperation projects. The LAG approach is to concentrate attention and actions on building a stronger rural economy through each of these priority areas. The LAG has considered the 70/30 split between projects which provide a direct and indirect impact on the local economy and it is envisaged that this will be achieved through the described priorities. As shown in section 1.5, a wide range of consultation has taken place with businesses, the local community, farming, tourism and other key sectors.

Although priorities are set out here as discrete and distinctive clusters of actions, there are links between them, with clear synergies. For example, actions to improve farm or forest productivity will safeguard jobs and create new opportunities and, via the supply chain, a sustainable land sector will support small local businesses. It will also help to sustain the viability of smaller rural settlements. Rural tourism initiatives will create direct jobs and support indirect exports into the local rural and market town economy thus having a positive knock-on effect. It will also help to sustain related businesses in service provision, retail, accommodation and attractions.

It is envisaged that an umbrella small grant scheme will be created with a simplified application process. The budget allocation for this element will be formed from each of the priorities. Feedback from consultations shows that small grant amounts can provide a valuable boost across all sectors. For instance, the Forestry Commission reports that in the under-capitalised woodland sector a relatively cheap piece of equipment can improve efficiency. At the other end of the scale it is recognised that LEADER funds are limited and need to fit with other funding sources via LEP ESIF strategies and other RDP programmes such as the Farming and Forestry Productivity Scheme. The maximum grant will therefore be set at €70,000, but larger grants will be considered in extenuating circumstances.

Strategic priorities
Priority 1: Strengthening and increasing farm productivity

> **Objective**: to strengthen and increase the potential of participant farm businesses by supporting productivity improvements and, as a consequence, enhancing the growth potential and sustainability of the agricultural sector in the LEADER area.

Percentage allocation of total grant: 15%   £208,731.   Indicative maximum grant rate: 40%

Farming and forestry businesses are the dominant rural business type in Hinckley and Bosworth and the second largest type in North Warwickshire (ONS). Together accounting for almost 400 enterprises. support for farm productivity will enable agricultural holdings in the LEADER area to build a more sustainable business and to safeguard and support local jobs.

Consultation with the farming sector revealed the need for support, particularly where improvements are not covered under the Farming and Forestry Productivity Scheme. The local land-based organisations such as the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the Country Landowners Association (CLA) felt that there is a need for capital grants to improve efficiency, animal health and welfare and training support (for example pesticide spraying certification). Other needs that were cited included: farmer collaborations, on-farm technology initiatives, and on-farm supply chain facilities such as storage and processing.

Most farmers who were consulted welcomed the possibility of funding support to improve the overall performance and sustainability of agricultural holdings, as well as to support processing, marketing and the development of agricultural products. LEP priorities recognise a need to support growth in rural areas (LLEP) and to encourage cooperation between agriculture, food and forestry sectors and to develop and implement innovative projects through the setting up of operational groups involving farmers, researchers and advisors (CWLEP).

Priority 2: Building and reinforcing micro and small enterprise and supporting farm diversification

> **Objective**: to build and reinforce the growth and sustainability of rural micro and small businesses and to support initiatives that will lead to farm diversification and a more sustainable agricultural sector in the LEADER area.

Percentage allocation of total grant: 40%   £556,616. Indicative maximum grant rate: 40%

Investing in the micro and small business sector will recognise its growth potential, generate jobs, and help settlements to survive. It will also support and contribute to economic development in associated areas such as the market towns.

Both the CWLEP and LLEP strategic documents stress the importance of supporting, sustaining and expanding the micro and small business sector which is viewed as both dominant, especially in the rural areas, and critical to growth. Across the area over 80% of businesses are micro-sized (ONS) but these enterprises tend to be less resilient due to their size so growth should be encouraged. The lack of growth within rural micro-businesses is cited by CWLEP whilst the LLEP

stresses the need for capital grants for small and medium-sized businesses. Indeed, in Hinckley and Bosworth some 70% of small businesses have growth plans but need support to fulfil their aspirations.

As the SCOPE analysis concludes, businesses in rural locations find it more difficult to access business support and quality business premises are not easy to find. Given the cluster of small enterprises there is an opportunity to build a stronger and more extensive employment base by supporting sectors such as tourism (based on the growth ambitions of both Twycross Zoo and the National Forest), design and specialised manufacturing (for instance playing to local strengths in plastics and rubber manufacturing or creative design) (WCC/LLEP), as well as farm businesses and some retail outlets. This could be in the form of support for exploring new markets as well as the setting up of workshops or other operating premises. Sectors such as ICT and finance have growth forecasts of 3.9% and 2.3% respectively by 2025 (WCC) and these should be encouraged.

Support for diversification will be hugely beneficial for agriculture as margins are tight and there is an impetus, evidenced through consultations with local businesses and organisations such as the Coventry and Warwickshire and Leicestershire Chambers, and Coventry and Warwickshire Community Development Association (CWCDA), for diversification into new products, the visitor economy, farmers' or craft markets, or simply to improve competitiveness. Business networking and the encouragement of collaborations, for instance with the universities, to build a more joined-up business community may also be beneficial in supporting jobs and economic growth-minded businesses.

Consultation also suggests that a drive for social enterprise would prove beneficial in supporting the local economy, providing jobs that will benefit those on the margins of the work force. In general, the commercialisation of businesses based on the natural and/ or cultural environment could be enhanced with positive outcomes for the economy.

Priority 3: Enhancing the rural visitor economy

> **Objective**: to enhance and help to grow the rural visitor economy in the LEADER area and to build and consolidate its contribution to sustainable rural economic growth, and to support the strengthening of the cultural and heritage base of the LEADER area through initiatives focused on enhancement, conservation and celebratory activities.

Percentage allocation of total grant: 20%   £278,308. Indicative maximum grant rate: 40%

Whilst the tourism sector has emerged over recent years, consultation evidence suggests that its potential has not, as yet, been fully tapped. Business tourism provides a firm foundation with scope for growth, especially in the west of the area around Coleshill near the NEC and airport. There is also the potential to build a stronger visitor attraction system by exploiting heritage opportunities in areas such as Roman Mancetter and the Bosworth Battlefield (with renewed interest in Richard III), and supporting initiatives at a range of other attractions including Twycross Zoo and farm diversifications.

In addition, the area's position within and alongside the National Forest is a strength waiting to be exploited. The National Forest Company (NFC) is proposing a Growth Acceleration Scheme aiming to achieve an additional 2 million visitor days by 2024 creating the potential for an additional 1,500 FTE jobs by 2020 and around 2,800 by 2025. The NFC has identified a need for further overnight accommodation with demand for self-catering being strong. There is also scope to improve the quality of accommodation and support those aspiring to 4* status. Twycross Zoo would also, potentially, double its present 500,000 per annum visitor base.

As identified in the SCOPE analysis, overall the tourism sector is somewhat underexploited. The Northern Warwickshire Tourism Association and the Hinckley and Bosworth Tourism Partnership, both verify evidence from local tourism businesses that actions focused on more coordinated marketing and promotion, and improvements to the visitor 'offer' will undoubtedly generate new employment opportunities, increase visitors and ultimately attract income into the area. Tourism in the area is closely aligned with its culture and heritage and the two priorities support each other.

Of course, part of the potential for rural visitor growth connects with farm diversification as consultations show that there is substantial scope and active plans within the farming community for this type of development.

Priority 4: Building rural services for a stronger local economy

> **Objective**: to support the sustained presence and improvement of rural services – in particular, multi-use facilities with a business element, transport, IT and energy infrastructure – to nurture and sustain a strong rural economy.

Percentage of total grant allocation: 10%   £139,154.   Indicative maximum grant rate: 75%

Rural services directly and indirectly support the local economy. Without adequate public transport businesses find it difficult to recruit staff and potential employees are disadvantaged in their job search and access areas.   Transport emerges strongly from the consultation, as does the opportunity to nurture and promote green infrastructure.

Coordinating and enhancing sustainable transport initiatives, for both residents and visitors, where feasible involving greenways, support for cycling initiatives and a car sharing scheme focused on the more remote locations, will safeguard jobs and stimulate growth and new employment opportunities.

All community and voluntary organisations, including the Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC), Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA), and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), support interventions to strengthen rural services with a clear economic benefit. Delivery of these may often rely on the availability of community buildings. For example, community and voluntary sector consultation identified scope for improvements to the Community Hubs (funded through the previous North Warwickshire LEADER programme) to incorporate facilities and even operating spaces for starter businesses. This links in with CWLEP and LLEP priorities to nurture and support small businesses in the rural areas, stimulating growth amongst existing firms and supporting start-ups and early development. In addition, hubs to serve as visitor and community information points helping to service the needs of tourists. The Hubs have recently been Highly Commended in the Municipal Journal awards.

Other areas for potential intervention suggested in the consultations include fuel poverty and low carbon energy schemes involving group buying and internet connectivity. Poor broadband speeds, and to a lesser extent, mobile phone coverage were also identified as restricting business growth.

Priority 5: Support for cultural and heritage activity

> **Objective:** to support the strengthening of the cultural and heritage base of the LEADER area through initiatives focused on enhancement, conservation and celebratory activities.

Percentage of total grant allocation: 10%   £139,154. Indicative maximum grant rate: 50%

As the Arts Council states, the arts and cultural sector can help deliver economic ambitions. Cultural events and festivals, based on themes such as music and the area's industrial heritage could add a positive dimension to the visitor product and help to support the self-sustainability of the local community. There is a self-reinforcing nature here where actions in one part of the visitor economy will stimulate demand in others (for example, events and attractions improve and a growth in accommodation and catering needs occurs thus stimulating jobs).

Enhancement, restoration and upgrading work involving the partial refurbishment of village buildings, has been recognised by the Heritage Society, Civic Society and similar organisations. Supporting these types of initiative, can potentially help to create jobs as well as to maintain the viability of structures which serve as venues and attractions. Linked to this, events built around the cultural and heritage arena can not only strengthen rural settlement vitality and viability but also generate economic benefits in the attraction of visitors or the multiple uses of buildings for

community and business purposes. The National Forest Company (NFC) intends to use events to drive forward visitor numbers. This is an example of the integrated nature of anticipated projects in that investments in this priority will be expected to support the visitor economy.

Priority 6: Increasing forestry productivity

> **Objective**: to increase the productivity of forestry activities in the LEADER area and to build a strong and vibrant forest sector that is able to contribute more fully to the local rural economy.

Percentage of total grant allocation: 5%   £69,577. Indicative maximum grant rate: 40%

With part of the LEADER area in the National Forest, and a number of traditional agricultural estates with woodland, forestry has a secure place within this strategy.   As the Forestry Commission states, and local consultations reveal, forestry provides important growth and employment opportunities.   The demand for timber is very strong and around 50% of the woodlands in the LAG area are not currently actively managed. There are opportunities within the forestry sector, many of which are under capitalised micro businesses lacking capacity and skills, to provide support for start up and development, including: timber extraction and processing; transport, handling and storage facilities; wood-fuel and biomass. There is also a strong local food sector of farm shops and farmers markets bringing opportunities in the transport, handling, processing and marketing of venison. Investment will lead to; additional timber and venison being brought to market, previously undermanaged woodlands providing environmental, social and economic benefits, job creation in rural areas, and support for environmental improvements.

LEADER interventions in the area of forestry productivity and development are very much supported by the Forestry Commission as well as organisations such as the Wildlife Trusts. Within the LEADER area there are over 4,900 ha of forestry land, of which over 50% is unmanaged. As such, there is potential and an opportunity to grow the forestry sector

There is strong recent and local evidence that small and targeted investments and interventions produce significant financial returns, increased employment and productivity in the sector. The LAG aims to work with the NFC to utilise their expertise and spread that to the LEADER area outside of the Forest.

Priority 7: Fostering cooperation through projects linking LEADER areas and challenges

Cooperation between rural areas, and the exchange and sharing of knowledge and expertise in rural economic development is accepted as a highly valuable and stimulating device for improvement. The North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth LAG is committed to fostering cooperation, supporting and learning from other LEADER areas and will endeavour to develop a cooperation project as part of the 2015 to 2020 programme. There is a potential initiative in forestry development with local LAGs in the East Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Bolsover North East Derbyshire, which covers the National Forest, Sherwood Forest and the Peak District, that will need further consideration. It is also anticipated that co-operation projects around tourism and support for micro and small enterprise will be developed with the close neighbouring LAG in Central and South Warwickshire when Defra opens calls for cooperation projects.

Initiatives would help to build economies of scope and scale for the area through collaboration, cooperation and the exchange of expertise. The outcome would be stronger, more informed sectors, enhanced growth and more job opportunities.

Innovation in the Local Development Strategy approach

Across the range of proposed priorities and interventions this LEADER strategy reflects an innovative approach to rural economic growth. The cross-border nature of the LAG, enabling untapped synergies to be realised, is a key underpinning feature. Beyond that, the nature of the SCOPE analysis – relating challenges and opportunities as potential LEADER actions, represents an innovative variant of the conventional SWOT analysis and a valuable tool for ensuring a tight, relevant and effective focus to the programme. Finally, and most important, as shown in section

3.4, the array of initially proposed project areas reflect an innovative approach to grassroots rural economic development in some of the projects that either build on previous LEADER interventions (the hubs) or offer a unique set of activities focused on the signature rural activities. It is envisaged that LEADER will support project applicants who wish to develop new methods of working, new approaches or new products.

3.4 Action Plan: translating indicative proposals into actions

This section describes how the high level objectives and priorities set out in section 3.3 will be translated into deliverable actions within the LEADER programme, (Table 5).

Whole programme actions

Timescale	Action
July 2014 – March 2015	Recruit and train new LAG/ RAP members
November 2014 – January 2015	Recruit Project Manager and Development Officer
November 2014 – March 2015	Ensure relevant staff at the Accountable Body and the Delivery Partner are trained in M&A requirements
November 2014 – January 2015	Review guidance within the National Operations Manual and develop effective and efficient processes for publicity, applications, claims, routine monitoring procedures and recording outputs
November 2014 -	Work with Defra/ RPA to establish an umbrella project for small grants of between £600 and £5,000 (40% maximum grant)
November 2014 -	Identify suitable LAGs for potential cooperation projects
January 2015 – December 2020	Programme Launch and Core Programme delivery
December 2015 and annually thereafter	Programme review including LAG membership and communications and marketing
January 2018	Interim Programme Evaluation report
December 2020	Complete programme Evaluation report

(Table 5)

As part of the preparation of the strategy, 27 project proformas have been completed and additional project outlines have come through telephone and face-to-face interviews. Those expressing an interest in applying for funding are presented as indicative projects below. Once the six year programme has been approved, the LAG will require the LEADER Project Manager and related staff from the two local authorities, to contact these potential recipients, support the completion of applications, and again promote the opportunity to bid. This process is set out in detail in sections 4.2 and 4.3. As this shows, initially, project leads will be encouraged to bid for support by completing detailed project proposals using the application form that will be developed.

In Year 1 it is anticipated that the initial tranche of projects will be worked up from those listed in Table 6 to commence delivery around the established priorities. All have emerged from the in-depth consultations held during the programme development period. The programme will also be extensively promoted to offer the opportunity to apply to as many businesses as possible.

Anticipated actions within each Priority

Priority	Indicative actions
Priority 1 Farm productivity 15%	Capital grants to support productivity improvements. Proposals received during the programme development period include: the purchase of new equipment for milking parlour improvements; animal health, to improve animal comfort and welfare support; energy efficiency
Priority 2 Micro and small businesses and farm diversification 40%	Business support for start-ups and existing businesses, including grants for young entrepreneurs in the LEADER area and adoption of new technologies. Proposals include; Recycling and upcycling initiative; App development for on-line shopping; and improvements to workspace

	Farm diversification support such as the development of on-farm food processing, distribution and direct sale, and new product development. Proposals include; farm shop and butchery development; The development of a rural innovation centre in collaboration with partner organisations. Business networking and the encouragement of collaborations to build a more joined-up business community. Support for the MIRA/ Birch Coppice industrial park/ Zoo visitor transport project.
Priority 3 Rural tourism 20%	Website and destination marketing coordination. Attraction enhancements to extend the visitor season, including education centres and disabled facilities. Building capacity in existing accommodation facilities particularly focused on farming businesses through small capital grants for refurbishment or new facilities. Proposals include: Children's Farm attractions; self-catering and disabled camping facilities; and Village Hall tearoom extension proposals. Feasibility study for a Roman Mancetter Museum/ Visitor Centre and linked visitor trail development. 'Connecting' visitor facilities into a visitor attraction system (including villages) focused on the Bosworth Battlefield, Roman Mancetter, and the Tudor History, including Visitor Information Centre coordination support, signage and interpretation support. Enhancement, restoration and upgrading work involving the partial refurbishment of village buildings. Enabling small accommodation and restaurant providers to capitalise on business tourism opportunities.
Priority 4 Rural services 10%	The development of existing community hubs to add an additional hot desk and business facilities function as spaces for starter businesses and wider business networking and collaboration in village centres. A feasibility study on the potential for coordinating and enhancing sustainable transport initiatives, focused on bus links, support for cycling initiatives as well as including a car sharing scheme focused on remote locations. Wheels to work projects or similar to enable rural young/ those who cannot afford a car to access training or employment.
Priority 5 Cultural and Heritage Activity 10%	The establishment of a local craft network with events and distribution linked to the visitor economy. The development of a festivals and events programme. Linking and upgrading for sites of heritage for the visitor economy and possible farm diversification.
Priority 6 Forestry productivity 5%	Forestry and forest product development – processing and marketing. Wood fuel supply chain developments. Provision of woodland advisory services. Small grants scheme for equipment e.g. wood storage and wood chippers. Venison production.

(Table 6)

In order to ensure that benefits to the rural economy are maximised, project delivery will be closely and regularly monitored by the Programme Team.

A wide range of additional projects have been proposed (Table 7) and these will be developed over the programme period. Proposed initiatives include the following:

Farm productivity	Access enhancement. Livestock welfare. New agricultural buildings.
Micro and small businesses and farm diversification	Coordinating and enhancing local food production, local food networks and marketing.
Rural tourism	Canal related initiatives, some potentially in collaboration with other LAGs. Twycross Zoo transport consortium and development support.
Cultural and Heritage	Cultural events for local people and visitors.
Rural services	Encouragement of local bus services within the LEADER area to serve the tourism economy as well as local people. Support for small-scale community/cooperative renewables projects.
Forestry productivity	Support for the introduction of new forest technologies.

(Table 7)

Given the comments of businesses during the various consultations, and evidence of demand from the WRGN, it is proposed that an umbrella small grants fund will be set up to provide awards of between £600 and £5,000 (40% maximum grant) and this, alongside larger-scale project delivery, will form the basis of the programme. It is expected that this approach will allow the LAG to retain full decision making powers on project applications yet applicants will have a simplified option for application depending upon the amount of investment needed.

In order to ensure genuine additionality and thus avoid problems of deadweight (funding activity that would happen in the absence of the support) and minimise displacement (funding an activity that would happen in another area), for example with regard to craft activities and events, guidance on this will be developed as part of the appraisal process – section 4.2.3.

A cooperation project will be developed in the initial programme period in response to an anticipated call for proposals from Defra.

3.5 Targets, results and outputs

Each priority relates to one or more of the Measures, and National Delivery Framework (NDF) policy priorities and outputs have been calculated below. Overall, these reflect positively the value for money indicators released by Defra in August (See annex 4 for output table per priority) However, as shown here, we expect to establish a small grants fund which, by its nature, should increase the number of projects/businesses benefitting and lead to more jobs being safeguarded. This may result in slightly fewer jobs created but this is difficult to forecast without knowing the minimum grant amount that will be allowed.

Outputs	CMES Output Indicators	Target
Priority 1/Measure 4	**Support for increasing farm productivity**	
Investments in on-farm physical assets	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£130,000
	Number of projects	5
	Number of agricultural holdings receiving investment support	5
	Jobs created FTE	2.5
	Jobs safeguarded	10
Results	Number of agricultural holdings with enhanced physical assets	5
	Number of agricultural holdings with improved performance and sustainability	5

Priority 1/Measure 6		
Support for improvements to farm productivity	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£78,731
	Number of projects	5
	Number of agricultural holdings receiving investment support	5
	Jobs created FTE	0.5
	Jobs safeguarded	6
Results	Improved performance and sustainability of the agricultural holdings	5

(Table 8)

Outputs	CMES Output Indicators	Target
Priority 2/Measure 4	**Support for micro and small enterprise and farm diversification**	
Investments in physical assets	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£281,616
	Number of projects	23
	Number of existing businesses receiving investment support	10
	Number of new businesses receiving investment support	10
	Jobs created FTE	24
	Jobs safeguarded	10
Results	Number of businesses with enhanced physical assets	20
	Number of businesses with improved growth performance and sustainability	20
Priority 2/Measure 6		
Support for improvements in farm and business productivity	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£275,000
	Number of projects	17
	Number of businesses receiving investment support	14
	Jobs created FTE	23
	Jobs safeguarded	14
	Individuals benefitting	120
Results	Improved performance and sustainability of the recipient businesses	14

(Table 9)

Outputs	CMES Output Indicators	Target
Priority 3/Measure 4	**Support for Rural Tourism**	
Investments in physical assets	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£125,000
	Number of projects	4
	Number of existing tourism activities supported	2
	Number of new tourism activities supported	2
	Potential additional overnight stays	200 p.a.
	Jobs created FTE	6
	Jobs safeguarded	8
Results	Number of tourism businesses with improved performance and sustainability	4
Priority 3/Measure 6		
Support for improvements in business productivity	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£123,308
	Number of projects	4
	Number of existing tourism activities supported	2
	Number of new tourism activities supported	2
	Potential additional overnight stays	300 p.a.
	Jobs created FTE	4
	Jobs safeguarded	8
Results	Tourism businesses benefitting	4

Priority 3/Measure 7		
Basic services and village renewal in rural areas	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£30,000
	Number of projects	1
	Jobs created FTE	1
	Jobs safeguarded	2
Results	Improved services for visitors	1

(Table 10)

Outputs	CMES Output Indicators	Target
Priority 4/Measure 4	Provision of rural services	
Investments in physical assets	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£89,154
	Number of projects	4
	Number of businesses benefitting	4
	Number of villages/communities benefitting	10
	Jobs created FTE	3
	Jobs safeguarded	8
Results	More resilient communities	10
Priority 4/Measure 7		
Basic services and village renewal in rural areas	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£50,000
	Number of projects	2
	Jobs created FTE	1.5
	Jobs safeguarded	3
Results	Number of villages with improved services	7

(Table 11)

Outputs	CMES Output Indicators	Target
Priority 5/Measure 7	Support for cultural and heritage activity	
Basic services and village renewal in rural areas	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£139,154
	Number of projects	5
	Jobs created FTE	3
	Jobs safeguarded	6
	Businesses benefitting	30
Results	Number of more vibrant communities	18

(Table 12)

Outputs	CMES Output Indicators	Target
Priority 6/Measure 4	Support for increasing forestry productivity	
Investments in physical assets	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£35,000
	Number of projects	2
	Number of forest/woodland holdings receiving investment support	2
	Jobs created FTE	0.5
	Jobs safeguarded	4
Results	Number of businesses with enhanced physical assets	2
	Number of businesses with improved performance and sustainability	2
	Increased hectares of woodland in active management	50

Priority 6/Measure 6		
Support for improvements in business productivity	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£18,951
	Number of projects	1
	Number of forest/woodland holdings receiving investment support	1
	Jobs created FTE	0.5
	Jobs safeguarded	2
Results	Improved performance and sustainability of the recipient businesses	1
	Increased hectares of woodland in active management	50
Priority 6/Measure 8		
Investments in forest and area development and the improvement of the viability of forests	Total RDPE grant investment in £	£15,626
	Number of projects	1
	Number of forest/woodland holdings receiving investment support	1
	Jobs created FTE	0.5
	Jobs safeguarded	1
Results	Improved performance and sustainability of the recipient businesses	1
	Increased hectares of woodland in active management	50

(Table 13)

Outputs in summary (Also see annex 4)**:**

Priority	Total investment £	Total number of projects	Number of jobs created
Priority 1 – Farm Productivity	£208,731	10	3
Priority 2 – Micro and small business	£556,616	40	47
Priority 3 – Rural tourism	£278,308	9	11
Priority 4 – Rural services	£139,154	6	4.5
Priority 5 – Cultural and heritage	£139,154	5	3
Priority 6 – Forestry productivity	£69,577	4	1.5
Total	**£1,391,540**	**74**	**70**

(Table 14)

3.6 Sustainability appraisal

A sustainability appraisal of the economic, environmental, and social effects of the proposed LEADER actions has been completed and this is available for inspection. Taking into account the output from the SCOPE analysis, this maps sustainability criteria – a series of economic, social and environmental, as well as viability elements – against the proposed priority actions.

The outcome, judged against the theoretical absence of LEADER intervention, is that the actions proposed are, given the stringent sustainability-aware appraisal criteria that will be applied, expected to have either a positive or neutral impact on the sustainable development of the LEADER area, with few sustainability and programme viability threats.

3.7 Initial proposals for cooperation activity

Consultation suggests that there are a number of areas where cooperation with other LEADER areas could be fruitful. These include forestry or tourism-related areas and will be developed

further at a later stage of the LEADER programme. It is anticipated that cooperation projects with LAGs in Central Warwickshire and also Staffordshire (National Forest) will be explored.

4.   Management and administration

4.1   Accountable Body

North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC), the Accountable Body, has successfully completed a LEADER Programme from 2007 to 2013. It has previous experience of delivering EU regulatory control requirements and the capacity to successfully complete another programme.

A sum of 18% of the indicative allocation, which equates to £305,460 over the six year programme has been allowed for this purpose. However, it should be noted that the management and administration cost of the previous programme totalled just 12% due to the in kind support provided by NWBC and its partners. It is hoped that this reduction may be repeated enabling more funding to be diverted to project beneficiaries. NWBC will liaise closely with its delivery partner, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and both councils will offer office space at no cost to the programme.

The Finance Officer at NWBC will compile and submit M&A claims to the RPA at scheduled intervals throughout the programme. The Finance Officer alongside the Programme Manger will monitor these costs continuously and ensure that they are providing value for money.

4.2   Project development and assessment procedures

The LAG is keen to encourage high quality and innovative project ideas to come forward. The procedure for applying for funding will be as streamlined and straightforward as possible (See Figure 5) and support and guidance will be offered to all applicants, particularly smaller enterprises. A number of project proformas were submitted during the consultation phase and these will be followed up and developed.

4.2.1 Support for project development

After an initial assessment, the Development Officer will provide a comprehensive package of support to those projects deemed eligible for funding. This support will be tailored according to business need but will include assistance with completing the forms, preparing a business plan, seeking training and identifying match funding. The possibility of working with local partners to deliver training alongside LEADER will be explored in more depth by the LAG.
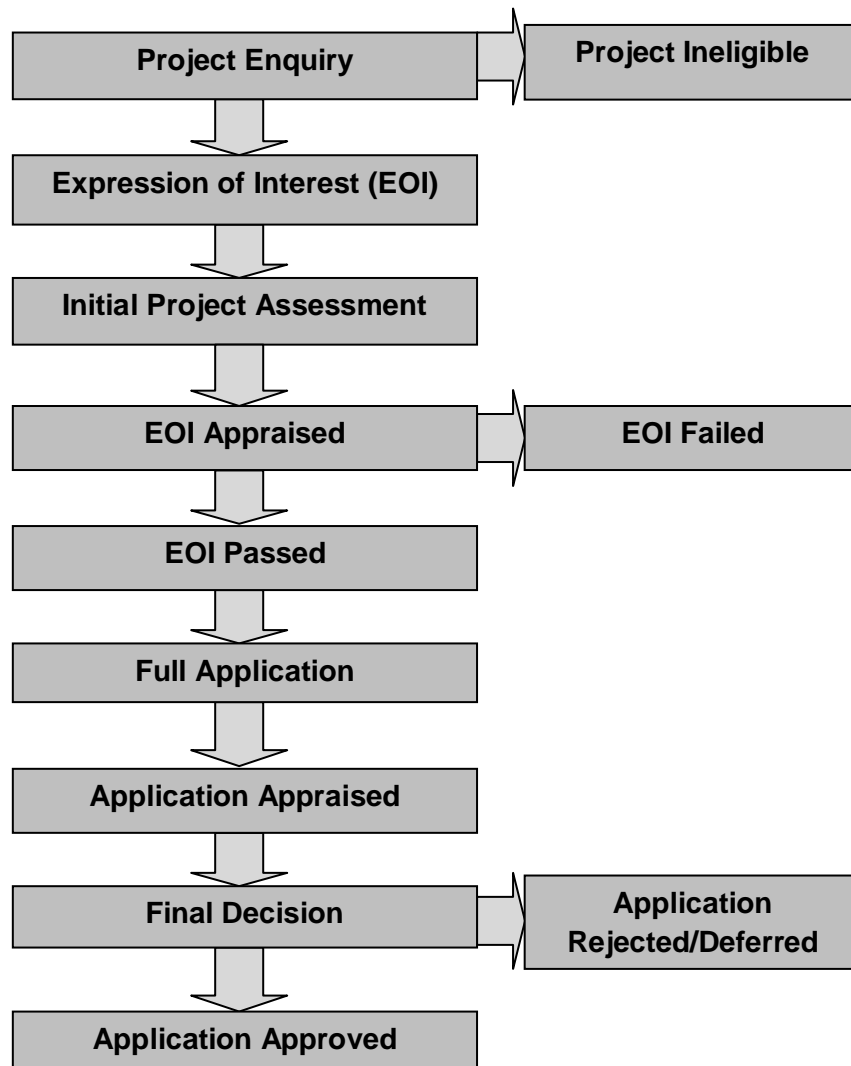
If necessary, the Officer will also signpost applicants to other sources of support. They will have extensive knowledge of other support available and will work closely with key partners, including LAG members, the LEPs (through programmes such as The Growth Hub and WRGN), the Chambers of Commerce, WCAVA, VAL and CWCDA).

4.2.2 Receiving applications

The application form and guidance will be available in various formats, including as printed documents and on the North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth LEADER website. It will also be available in different languages and font sizes as necessary. The Communications and Publicity Strategy sets out how the LEADER Programme will be promoted. All LAG members have a responsibility to raise awareness of the programme and the opportunities that are available.

Project applicants will be encouraged to return applications via email or the website to promote environmental sustainability, with the final signatory page to be returned as a hard copy. However, one of the key issues identified in previous consultation work shows that some smaller groups and farms have limited access to and limited knowledge about using IT facilities. Where this is judged to be the case, hard copies of applications will be accepted by the Programme Team.

Figure 5 illustrates the process from initial enquiry through to application approval;

```
┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Project Enquiry     │───────▷│    Project Ineligible   │
└─────────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Expression of Interest (EOI) │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Initial Project Assessment │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
│      EOI Appraised      │───────▷│       EOI Failed        │
└─────────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│       EOI Passed        │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│    Full Application     │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Application Appraised  │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Final Decision      │───────▷│       Application       │
└─────────────────────────┘        │   Rejected/Deferred     │
             │                      └─────────────────────────┘
             ▽
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Application Approved   │
└─────────────────────────┘
```

(Figure 5)

4.2.3 Project Appraisal - responsibility and procedure:

All RAP members will be fully trained on appraisal techniques before their commitment to the role. They will appraise both the expression of interest (EOI) form and the full application using standardised scoring criteria. This will reflect a combination of:

- Technical criteria, for example:
    - consistency of proposed actions with eligible scope;
    - whether all necessary permissions and consents have been obtained;
    - whether the applicant has the capacity to deliver the project;
    - whether the need for grant aid is clearly demonstrated; and,
    - whether the proposed actions are State Aid compliant.

- Quality criteria, for example:
    - the extent to which the project targets LEADER priority groups;
    - the extent to which the project contributes to key local and regional themes and integrates or complements activities covered by other relevant initiatives;
    - the extent to which the project responds to identified need and is supported by evidence of prospective demand; and,
    - the degree of innovation within the project.

In addition, the LAG will develop its own local criteria to ensure that the objectives of the strategy are addressed. This is to be agreed, but is likely to include elements such as:

- the degree to which the ethos, objectives and, in particular, priorities of the Strategy are served by the proposed actions and activities;
- the extent to which the priority sectors and areas, and target groups will be assisted; and, taking into account deadweight and displacement considerations,
- the added value of the project.

Members will score applications on an individual basis, in advance of a panel meeting to discuss and agree scores.

4.3 Project Approval
Following appraisal, a recommendation will be made to the LAG, who will make the final decision. Defra/ RPA will hold the power of veto. A minimum of five members are required to be quorate, with at least 50% of those being from non-statutory organisations. Each member will have one vote and in the event of a tied vote, the Chair (a non-statutory sector member) will have the casting vote. Members will be required to declare conflicts of interest and, if this arises, they will not be permitted to be involved in decisions on that application.

The Project Manager will be responsible for providing a high level of communication between the two groups, ensuring that they work effectively together.

The Project Manager will also inform the applicant of the decision, including any conditions. An offer letter will be sent out by the Accountable Body, which will form part of the contract.

4.3.1 Use of subgroups and delegated authority
To avoid duplication with what already exists and reduce the time burden on LAG members, it has been agreed that sub-groups will not initially be set up to look at developing project ideas. Existing groups and partnerships will be used as far as possible to encourage project ideas to come forward. This approach will be reviewed on a regular basis and sub-groups may be considered where there are considered to be gaps.

4.4 Claims and payments
An achievable claims schedule will be required before the contracting of any project. It will be the Programme Manager who is responsible for ensuring claims are received on time and that claims correspond to the claims forecasted. Initial checks of the claims will be carried out by the Programme Manager, ensuring that all relevant documents and evidence is attached. This will include the claim form, evidence of defrayal, receipts and progress reports. Claims will be thoroughly checked to ensure the project is meeting agreed targets for spend and outputs. Additional information in claims will be required depending upon the type of project and stage of project.

If all documentation is in place then claims will be passed to the Finance Officer, who the Programme Manager will work very closely with, for checks, recommendations and authorisation. The Finance Officer will submit claims to the RPA for payment either through a claims process or through a payment system, such as CAP-D.

The Programme Manager will be responsible for administration tasks relating to claims and the recording of all claims on ROD or another equivalent recording system. They will also establish an effective filing system within the Council House (in Atherstone) that will be available for auditing purposes.

4.5 Monitoring and evaluation
Monitoring of projects will be carried out as routine, for example once a claim is received or a project milestone has been reached. Every project in receipt of grant funding will also be visited by the Programme Management Team at least once. Those projects assessed to be "at risk" or in breach of conditions of the grant offer will be visited to explore the reasons for this and take such actions as deemed necessary. Monitoring of any kind will be recorded on the relevant IT system as instructed by Defra/RPA.

4.6 Communications and publicity

The aims of the communications and publicity strategy are:

- To raise the profile and awareness of the LEADER Programme to people, groups and organisations within North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth, with a view to encouraging project applications which will grow the local economy and create jobs and keeping residents and groups informed;

- To ensure that the benefits and opportunities presented by the LEADER Programme are promoted both within the LAG area and shared with other LAG areas nationally and transnationally throughout the lifetime of the Programme.

4.6.1 Raising the profile and awareness of LEADER

In order to ensure a high profile and level of awareness of LEADER, actions will include:

- Immediate media coverage on the announcement of the successful bid.
- Establishment of a LAG sub-group/ appointment of a LAG member with responsibility for promoting LEADER and developing links with other LEADER Programmes (nationally and transnationally), supported by the Programme Management Team.
- Liaison with LEP representatives to ensure they and other stakeholders are aware of LEADER funding and how it can fit with other funding streams for best overall economic impact.
- All LAG members are responsible for raising the awareness of the LEADER Programme at other appropriate meetings and events, including encouraging project applicants.
- Develop a programme of activities within the target area to promote LEADER, building on the list of those consulted in developing the LDS, produce a regular newsletter, press releases, public meetings, articles in local publications.
- Develop the www.englandsruralheart.org website and social media presence and update regularly and include a forum where people can exchange ideas and questions.
- Ensure that LEADER is acknowledged on all published materials and by all projects.
- Review the success of communication activities and revise according to feedback and lessons learnt and ideas gathered from networking with other LAG areas.

4.6.2 Maintaining and building the LEADER profile

In order to build and maintain an effective profile a number of actions and principles will be followed.

- The Programme Management Team will have overall responsibility for promotional activity, supporting the activities of the sub-group/ appointed LAG member.
- Ensure that all information produced is easily understandable and available in a variety of formats, including electronically, via the website, in different languages, large print and spoken word
- Ensure that there is a clear transparency in the application process, by providing clear information about the grants and funding programme and the criteria against which applications are evaluated
- Ensure that early project successes are well publicised in the local media and promoted through all available means.
- All minutes and notes of meetings will be available through the website and other means.
- Share information with other LAGs to pass on areas of good practice and learn from them.
- Promote the opportunities for the exchange of information and experience through exchange visits, publicising the outcomes to everyone.
- Produce an annual report, which will include information about grants awarded, successes achieved and priorities for the following year, which will be widely circulated.

- Review the Communications and Publicity Strategy on an annual basis and make the necessary amendments, to be agreed by the LAG Board.

## 5. Financial Plan

5.1 Expenditure by Measure

As shown in section 3.5, the funding for each priority area has been split according to the relevant measure. Table 15 shows this split identifying how much of the total funding has been allocated to each measure.

	Priority 1 Farm productivity	Priority 2 Micro and small business	Priority 3 Rural tourism	Priority 4 Rural services	Priority 5 Cultural and heritage	Priority 6 Forestry productivity	TOTAL
Measure 4 Investments in physical assets	£130,000	£281,616	£125,000	£89,154		£35,000	**£660,770**
Measure 6 Support for improvments in farm/business productivity	£78,731	£275,000	£123,308			£18,951	**£495,990**
Measure 7 Basic services and village renewal in rural areas			£30,000	£50,000	£139,154		**£219,154**
Measure 8 Investments in forest area development and improvement of the viability of forests						£15,626	**£15,626**
TOTAL	**£208,731**	**£556,616**	**£278,308**	**£139,154**	**£139,154**	**£69,577**	**£1,391,540**

(Table 15)

5.2 Overall funding profile

The Financial Profile Table, provided in Annex 5, provides a breakdown of the forecast expenditure over the programme period. The expenditure is split between the six priority areas against each financial year, and includes an estimate of the running and animation costs. Figure 6 depicts this expenditure profile, illustrating a relatively even split of funding across the programme including an allocation of spend in year 1.

Expenditure Profile
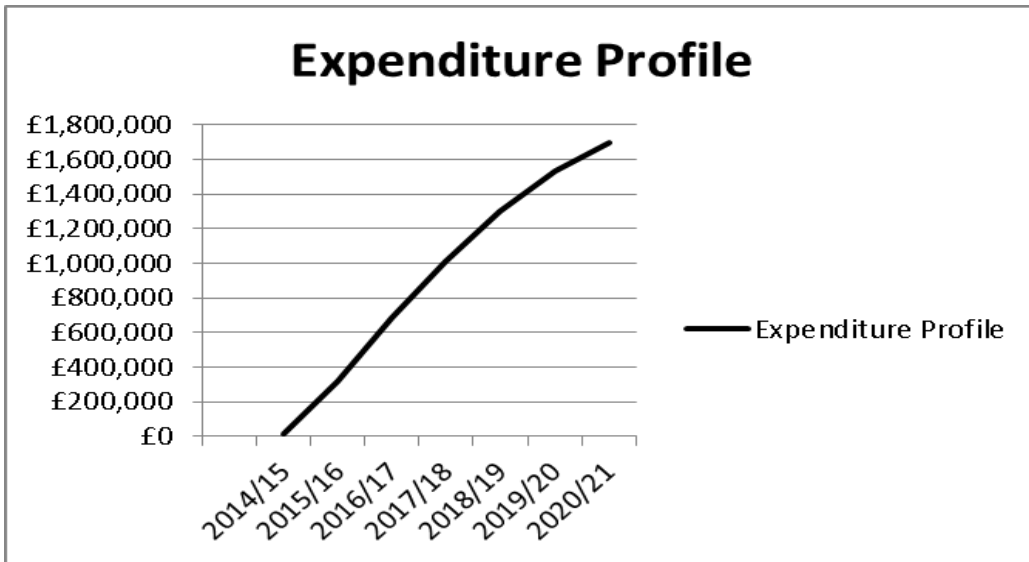
(Figure 6)

5.3 The use of grants, procurement or other type of financial support

The LAG are very aware of the need to maximise the impact of the LEADER funding, and are very keen to ensure that it serves to attract other sources of funding and financial support. Ongoing contact has been made with partners and the LEPs (including The Clearing House in Coventry and Warwickshire, which also includes Hinckley and Bosworth), to identify opportunities to incorporate other forms of financial support. The CWRT for instance offer loans within the LEADER area to businesses that are unable to apply for funding through normal channels such as banks. The Development Officer will be responsible for communicating this information, in ensuring that potential applicants are fully aware of their options and are not precluded from applying due to their own insufficient funds.

The LEADER programme will conform to established procurement regulations to ensure that proceedings remain transparent and accountable, legalities are observed, risks are reduced and best value is secured. Funding recipients will be encouraged to consider wider social, economic and environmental impacts and outcomes as part of the procurement process.

North Warwickshire Borough Council, the Accountable Body and the North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth Local Action Group would like to submit an application for LEADER funding for the period of 2015 to 2020.

Signed…………………………………………………………...Date:..………………………………
Print Name: Richard Bailey (Branch Manager - NFU Mutual)
Position: Chair of the LAG

Signed…………………………………………………………Date: ………………………………
Print Name: Carol Musgrave (Manager - Citizens Advice Bureau)
Position: Vice Chair of the LAG

Signed…………………………………………………………Date: ………………………………
Print Name: Simon Powell (Assistant Director (Leisure & Community Development))
Organisation: North Warwickshire Borough Council

Abbreviations/Acronyms

ACRE	Access to Rural Services Report
CAP-D	Common Agricultural Policy Delivery Programmes
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
CMES	Common Monitoring and Evaluation System
CVS	Community and Voluntary Sector
CWCDA	Coventry and Warwickshire Community Development Association
CWLEP	Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
FC	Forestry Commission
FFPS	Farming and Forestry Productivity Scheme
FSB	Federation of Small Business
GVA	Gross Value Added
HBBC	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
LAG	Local Action Group
LCC	Leicester County Council
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LLEP	Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership
LREEB	Leicestershire Rural Economy Evidence Base
M&A	Management and Administration
MIRA	Motor Industry Research Association
NDF	National Delivery Framework
NEC	National Exhibition Centre
NFC	National Forest Company
NFU	National Farmers Union
NW	North Warwickshire
NWBC	North Warwickshire Borough Council
NW SE	North Warwickshire Socio-Economic Profile
OA	Output Areas
RAP	Rural Appraisal Panel
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
RGF	Regional Growth Fund
RPA	Rural Payments Agency
SEP	Strategic Economic Plan
WCAVA	Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action
WCC	Warwickshire County Council
WRCC	Warwickshire Rural Community Council
WRGN	Warwickshire Rural Growth Network

Report of the   Development of New
Assistant Director   Indoor Leisure Facilities
(Leisure and Community Development)   in Coleshill

1   **Summary**

1.1   This report updates the Board on progress in respect of the development of
        new indoor leisure facilities in Coleshill.

┌───┐
│   │
│   **Recommendation to the Board**   │
│   │
│   **That the Board notes and comments upon the progress being made**   │
│   **in respect of the development of new indoor leisure facilities at The**│
│   **Coleshill School.**   │
│   │
└───┘

2   **Consultation**

2.1   The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson for the Special
        Sub-Group, the Community and Environment and Resources Boards, the
        Safer Communities Sub-Committee, Members with responsibility for Health,
        Well-being and Leisure and Young People and Coleshill Ward Members have
        all had an opportunity to comment on the content of this report.   Any
        comments received will be reported verbally to the Board.

3   **Background**

3.1   Further to previous meetings of the Board, Members are aware that the
        construction of replacement indoor leisure facilities commenced on site at
        The Coleshill School in November 2013. The Board is further aware that the
        capital funding available for the project is £4,301,366, including £2,815,000
        from the Borough Council, with the balance being made up of valuable
        contributions from the Education Funding Agency and England Squash and
        Racketball.

3.2   Account needs to be taken of the need to fund £154,000 of fees attributable
        to the project, thereby leaving a sum of £4,147,366 available to support
        project delivery (including all contingencies and provision for fitness
        equipment and furniture and fittings, etc.). The fees associated with the
        project have risen by £2,000 to take account of the costs associated with the

need to secure a sub-lease for the electricity sub-station, as a consequence of which the sum available for project delivery has reduced accordingly.

4   **Update on Progress – Construction Work**

4.1   Despite a slightly delayed commencement of on-site construction work, the overall project completion date is anticipated to be 24 October 2014, a week earlier than originally scheduled within the project timetable. The building programme had been approximately three weeks ahead of schedule, but this has now been reduced to around a week, as a consequence of the delay in securing an electricity supply to the Leisure Centre. The construction of the building is essentially complete. Whilst a considerable amount of detailed work remains to be undertaken, much of this relates to the mechanical and electrical testing and commissioning programme, internal joinery and decoration, external works, including tarmacking and landscaping, and the "snagging" process. The project's Clerk of Works visits the site on a regular basis and currently no substantial items in need of redress have been brought to the attention of Wates Construction.

4.2   As previously reported, any client design changes incur a need to adjust the project cost accordingly. In this regard, Members have been informed of a number of changes that have impacted on the cost, both positively and negatively. A verbal report on the most recent client and / or partner changes to the project will be presented to the Board at its meeting. The associated costs of any changes are being monitored and scrutinised on an on-going basis in conjunction with colleagues in the Finance and Human Resources Division, however, in order to ensure that the client instructions being issued to the contractor are affordable within the sum available for project delivery.

5   **Update on Progress – Financial Position**

5.1   Wates Construction is required to provide its Target Cost and Actual Cost forecasts on a monthly basis. The Project Manager, who is very carefully scrutinising all costs on behalf of the Borough Council, is required to produce a monthly Funding Position Statement a week thereafter. These forecasts and statements are subject to regular meetings between the Authority, the Project Manager and Wates Construction. The most recent of these meetings was held on 16 October 2014.

5.2   At the time of writing this report, the Project Manager's latest Funding Position Statement is awaited, further to Wates Construction's anticipated submission of its twelfth project invoice. The Funding Position Statement will be presented to the Borough Council in advance of the Board meeting and, therefore, Members will receive a verbal report on this matter at that time.

5.3   Currently, approximately £3.55 million has been paid to the contractor. Invoices totalling just over £1.2 million have been issued to The Coleshill School in order to draw down Education Funding Agency support for the project and a further invoice will be issued to The School this month. The £25,000 grant from England Squash and Racketball has been received in full.

6   Update on Progress – Other Matters

6.1   The Board will recall that at the meeting of the Special Sub-Group held in April 2014, it approved the content of the draft Joint Use Agreement between the Borough Council and The Coleshill School, through which the facility will be managed and used. The final wording of the Joint Use Agreement was determined in early August and the document has been signed by the Borough Council. Final completion by The School is awaited, subsequent to its content will be made publicly available.

6.2   Wates Construction's programme for engaging the community was advanced through an Open Day held on 3 October, during which tours of the building were held for Councillors, Borough Council staff, students and staff from The Coleshill School, St. Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School and Woodlands School, and the general public. The Open Day was generally felt to have been very successful, with approaching 500 people having visited the site.

6.3   With "practical completion" of the building currently anticipated on 24 October, it is hoped to be able to open the new Leisure Centre for use on 17 November 2014, subject to the successful installation of fitness equipment and client furniture and fittings, the completion of a staff induction and training programme and receipt of an Occupation Certificate from Building Control. Arrangements are being made to hold a formal opening ceremony, followed by an Open Weekend of activities, during December 2014.

7   Report Implications

7.1   Finance and Value for Money Implications

7.1.1   In addition to those previously reported to the Board, the headline financial implications associated with the construction of the new Coleshill Leisure Centre will be reported verbally to Members at the meeting.

7.2   Safer Communities Implications

7.2.1   The provision of good quality leisure facilities and services has profound and positive implications for the development of safer communities and a reduction in the likelihood of criminal and / or anti-social behaviour.

7.3   Legal and Human Rights Implications

7.3.1   The future replacement of Coleshill Leisure Centre will have direct and positive implications for the Authority's ability to meet the requirements of Equalities and other legislation and on its determination to enhance access to good quality services for the local community.

7.4 Environment and Sustainability Implications

7.4.1 The proposed investment of resources is required if the Council is to maintain and enhance the quality, consistency and sustainability of its indoor leisure provision in Coleshill. The services provided through the new leisure facility will make a positive and lasting impact on individual and collective quality of life within North Warwickshire.

7.5 Health, Well-being and Leisure Implications

7.5.1 Leisure facilities have a positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals and communities through the provision of opportunities for formal and informal recreation and by contributing to an enhanced quality of life in the Borough. The project is also compliant with, and helps to deliver against, the priorities identified in the Warwickshire Health and Well-being Strategy and the supporting Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

7.6 Human Resources Implications

7.6.1 There is no immediate human resource implication arising directly from this report.

7.7 Risk Management Implications

7.7.1 The condition and future replacement of Coleshill Leisure Centre have been the subject of a detailed risk assessment, a copy of which was presented to the Community and Environment Board in July 2012.

7.8 Equalities Implications

7.8.1 The scheme to replace Coleshill Leisure Centre has been designed to positively impact on the corporate priority to protect and provide access to Council services. An Equality and Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) has been carried out and was presented to the Community and Environment Board at its meeting held in July 2012.

7.9 Links to Council's Priorities

7.9.1 The undertaking to replace Coleshill Leisure Centre has positive and direct links to the following corporate priorities:

- Public service
- Crime and disorder
- Access to services
- Consultation and communication
- Health and well-being

7.9.2 The future replacement of Coleshill Leisure Centre with a new development at The Coleshill School has positive implications for the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities to:

- Raise aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- Develop healthier communities
- Improve access to services

The Contact Officer for this report is Simon Powell (719352).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Wates Construction	Client Meeting Report 2	January 2014
2	Coventry City Council	Clerk of Works Report 2	January 2014
3	Coventry City Council	Client Meeting Notes (16 January 2014)	January 2014
4	Coventry City Council	Client Meeting Notes (26 February 2014)	Feb 2014
5	Wates Construction	Client Meeting Report 4	March 2014
6	Wates Construction	Client Meeting Report 5	April 2014
7	Wates Construction	Client Meeting Report 6	May 2014
8	Wates Construction	Client Meeting Report 7	June 2014
9	Wates Construction	Client Meeting Report 8	July 2014
10	Wates Construction	Client Meeting Report 9	August 2014
11	Coventry City Council	Clerk of Works Report 9	August 2014
12	Wates Construction	Client Meeting Report 10	Sept 2014
13	Coventry City Council	Clerk of Works Report 10	Sept 2014

2014/BR/007734

Community and Environment Board

20 October 2014

Report of the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive

Progress Report on Achievement of Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator Targets April – June 2014

1 **Summary**

1.1 This report informs Members of the progress with the achievement of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets relevant to the Community and Environment Board for April to June 2014.

> **Recommendation to the Board**
>
> **That Members consider the performance achieved and highlight any areas for further investigation.**

2 **Consultation**

2.1 Consultation has taken place with the relevant Members and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3 **Background**

3.1 This report shows the first quarter position with the achievement of the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicator targets for 2014/15. This is the first report showing the progress achieved so far during 2014/15.

4 **Progress achieved during 2014/15**

... 4.1 Attached at Appendices A and B are reports outlining the progress achieved for all the Corporate Plan targets and the performance with the local performance indicators during April to June 2014/15 for the Community and Environment Board.

4.2 Members will recall the use of a traffic light indicator for the monitoring of the performance achieved.

Red – target currently not being achieved (shown as a red triangle)
Amber – target currently behind schedule and requires remedial action to be achieved (shown as an amber circle)
Green – target currently on schedule to be achieved (shown as a green star)

5   **Performance Indicators**

5.1   Members will be aware that national indicators are no longer in place and have been replaced by national data returns specified by the government. A number of previous national and best value indicators have been kept as local indicators as they are considered to be useful in terms of managing the performance of our service delivery corporately.

5.2   The current national and local performance indicators have been reviewed by each division and Management Team for monitoring for the 2014/15.

6   **Overall Performance**

6.1   The Corporate Plan performance report shows that 87% of the Corporate Plan targets and 64% of the performance indicator targets are currently on schedule to be achieved. The report shows that individual targets that have been classified as red, amber or green. Individual comments from the relevant division have been included where appropriate. The table below shows the following status in terms of the traffic light indicator status:

Corporate Plan

Status	Number	Percentage
Green	13	87%
Amber	2	13%
Red	0	0%
Total	15	100%

Performance Indicators

Status	Number	Percentage
Green	7	64%
Amber	1	9%
Red	3	27%
Total	11	100%

7   **Summary**

7.1   Members may wish to identify any areas that require further consideration where targets are not currently being achieved.

8 **Report Implications**

8.1 **Safer Communities Implications**

8.1.1 There are a number of Safer Communities related actions highlighted in the report including the provision of diversionary activities, leisure provision, play strategy and green space strategy.

8.2 **Legal and Human Rights Implications**

8.2.1 The national indicators were specified by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. They have now been ended and replaced by a single list of data returns to Central Government from April 2011.

8.3 **Environment and Sustainability Implications**

8.3.1 Improvements in the performance and quality of services will contribute to improving the quality of life within the community. There are a number of specific actions and indicators included within the report which contribute towards improving the environment and sustainability including the carbon management plan, green space strategy and refuse and recycling.

8.4 **Risk Management Implications**

8.4.1 Effective performance monitoring will enable the Council to minimise associated risks with the failure to achieve targets and deliver services at the required performance level.

8.5 **Equalities**

8.5.1 There are a number of equality related actions and indicators highlighted in the report including developing access to community services, tackling health inequalities and inter generational work.

8.6 **Links to Council's Priorities**

8.6.1 There are a number of targets and performance indicators contributing towards the priorities of environment, recycling, access to services, health and well being, public services and Council Tax and local employment.

The Contact Officer for this report is Robert Beggs (719238).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships	Department for Communities and Local Government	Statutory Guidance	February 2008

	Action	Priority	Reporting Officer	Update	Status	Direction
NWCP 016	In conjunction with partner agencies, continue to work with individuals and communities to help raise levels of aspiration, attainment and skills, and report on progress by March 2015	Local Employment	Powell, Simon	Twenty students from Polesworth School received a Silver or Bronze Arts Awards after designing and commissioning four wooden sculptures for Abbey Green Park and helped to organise and deliver an arts event in the Park in conjunction with the Polesworth Carnvial.	Green	
NWCP 017	To continue to take action to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and carbon emission in the Borough, in accordance with the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and to report annually in March on progress. This will include acting on any Government led inititatives for domestic properties.	Environment	Maxey, Steve	The Council's new buildings (Civic Offices and Coleshill Leisure Centre) have a number of energy efficiency measures included within these programmes. Work on the Green Deal continues and the Council has made a bid to the Department of Energy and Climate Change to develop district heating schemes from sustainable sources	Green	
NWCP 018	To maintain a very high standard of street cleanliness (95%) throughout the Borough and target those areas of highest community value to deliver as efficient and cost-effective a service as possible	Environment	Dobbs, Richard	Street cleanliness has improved significantly in the first quarter of 2014/15 with litter levels at 6% (down from 8% last year) and detritus falling from 26% in 2013/14 to only 5% this year	Amber	
NWCP 019	The Council will continue to promote waste minimisation and increased recycling, as well as raising awareness of the problems of litter, fly-tipping and dog fouling using suitable enforcement measures, where appropriate, and report quarterly	Environment	Dobbs, Richard	The Council continues to work closely with colleagues across the county to promote environmental issues	Green	
NWCP 022	To implement phase 7 of the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy in accordance with its revised Action and Funding Plan and corresponding Management Plans for Parks and Recreation Grounds, where appropriate, and report by March 2015	Health & Well-being	Powell, Simon	Consistent progress is being made in respect of delivery of phase 7 of the approved Green Space Strategy.	Green	
NWCP 024	In conjunction with key partners, to ensure completion of the project to replace Coleshill Leisure Centre with a new facility that is accessible by the community on the site of The Coleshill School by November 2014	Health & Well-being	Powell, Simon	Development of the new Coleshill Leisure Centre has been good, with the build programme two weeks ahead of schedule at the end of June 2014. Practical completion of the project is expected in October 2014.	Green	

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	Action	Priority	Reporting Officer	Update	Status	Direction
NWCP 028	To continue to co-ordinate the sustainable mulit-agency development of Wellness Matters, including its further progression into targeted outreach communities, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and raising levels of physical activity, in particular for children and young people, report by March 2015	Health & Well-being	Powell, Simon	A review of the One Stop Health Shop has resulted in a change of focus. The scheme will support people to lose weight through sustainable behaviour change. There will be a 12 week delivery programme, enabling contact with more residents, and a small charge will be introduced.	Green	➡
NWCP 029	Ensure compliance with the Council's statutory responsibilities as a partner and Compact signatory within the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board, including the need to undertake a review of the Child Protection Policy, and the Council's Section 11 Audit Action Plan, and, where appropriate, to co-ordinate all related activity alongside the need to safeguard adults and other vulnerable people in the community	Health & Well-being	Powell, Simon	The Child Protection Policy review is almost complete. The "Strategic and Organisations Self Assessment Tool" relating to North Warwickshire Borough Council's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people has been completed and returned to WCC and an action plan developed. The four Borough Council Level 1 Awareness Trainiers have been re-trained and trainng dates for 2014/15 have been set.	Green	➡
NWCP 055	To report annually on progress on the Customer Access Strategy, including the development of existing Community Hubs and the ongoing provision of welfare support together with partners	Access to Services	Trahern, Bob	This report is made to the March meeting. The Community Hub project was recognised at the Municipal Journal awards ceremony in June when it was Highly Commended in the category "Excellence in Community Engagement". The County Council have recentky reviewed the WLWS scheme for 2015/16 and we hope to make some bids to it to support ongoing financial inclusion work	Green	
NWCP 069(1)	To continue to improve the manner in which the Council consults and engages with and secures the involvement of children, young people and their families within the development, management and delivery of services throughout 2014/15	Health & Well-being	Powell, Simon	Investigations are taking place regarding the Council taking part in the Children Commissioner's National Take Over Day in November 2014.	Green	➡
NWCP 081	To review and enhance the new refuse and recycling service introduced in October 2013, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service and to increase the Council's recycling rate to at least 45% and report by March 2015	Recycling	Dobbs, Richard	Improvements to the operational efficiency of the new service continue to be made with a wider review currently being undertaken to identify areas for more significant future improvements. The Council's overall recycling rate has now exceeded 50%.	Green	➡

	Action	Priority	Reporting Officer	Update	Status	Direction
NWCP 086	In accordance with approved Management Plans, implement improvement at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground in Ansley Common	Health & Well-being	Powell, Simon	It had been hoped to complete planned improvements at Bretts Hall Recreation Ground by Easter 2015. The need to secure external funding for the project, however, has resulted in the project completion date being moved back to June 2015. Ward Members have been informed accordingly.	🟠 Amber	➡
NWCP 090	In partnership with the Local Action Group, ensure the successful undertaking of North Warwickshire's approved LEADER Transition Fund programme, including the production of a renewed Local Development Strategy and Business Plan	Access to Services	Powell, Simon	A draft Local Development Strategy and Business Plan have been produced and it is anticipated that a bid for inclusion into the next round of LEADER funding will be made in September 2015.	⭐ Green	➡
NWCP 091	To integrate the Job Centre Plus operation into the existing One Stop Shop environment and implement any operational changes required by September 2014	Access to Services	Trahern, Bob	Achieved and completed on budget and in advance of the deadline. The service opening hours and rebranding of the service has bedded in well to date since it opened on 23 June 2014. It will officially be opened on 7 August by the Mayor	⭐ Green	➡
NWCP 093	Complete delivery of the Play Area Development Programme with the replacement/refurbishment of equipment at Minions Close in Atherstone, Boot Hill in Grendon and Brendan Close Close in Coleshill	Health & Well-being	Powell, Simon	Proposals are well advanced for the development of a new play space at Boot Hill in Grendon and proposals are being developed in conjunction with the respective Town Councils for new play provision in both Atherstone and Coleshill.	⭐ Green	➡

Ref	Description	Section	Priority	Year End Target	Performance	Traffic Light	Direction of Travel	Comments
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Ref	Description	Section	Priority	Year End Target	Performance	Traffic Light	Direction of Travel	Comments
NWLPI 007	The percentage of food premises inspections that should have been carried out that were carried out for high risk premises.	Env Health (C, L & HP)	Health and Well-being	100	81	Red	(red down)	The situation is normal for this time of year as staff catch up on the backlog of re-visits that had been postponed to ensure that last years inspection programme was completed. There should be no difficulty in completing these inspections.
NWLPI 157	The percentage of food premises interventions that should have been carried out that were carried out for low risk premises	Env Health (C, L & HP)	Health and Well-being	100	90	Red	(red down)	The situation is normal for this time of year as staff deal with the backlog of re-visits that had been postponed in order to complete last years work programme. there should be no difficulty in completing these inspections.
NWLPI 085	Swimming pools and sports centres: The net cost per swim/visit	Leisure Facilities	Health and Well-being	1.90	1.74	Green	(red down)	Whilst it is relatively early in the financial year, the net cost per visit figure is promising
NWLPI 086	Leisure Centres - Total income per visit	Leisure Facilities	Health and Well-being	2.47	2.47	Green	(green up)	Income performance within the leisure facilities has been good within the early months of the financial year, which is likely to be a consequence of the new pricing structure agreed by Members
NWLPI 119	Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste (former BV88)	Refuse & Recycling	Recycling	125	163	Red	(green up)	This figure is based on logged complaints only - it takes no account of bins which have been wrongly reported (e.g. resident was late putting the bin out, put the bin out on the wrong day or had a second bin which was not emptied) so the actual number of missed bins is likely to be lower than the reported figure.
@NW:NI192	The percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the Authority for reuse, recycling, composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion.	Refuse & Recycling	Recycling	45	53.3	Green	(green up)	
@NW:NI195a	The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level.	Streetscape	Environment	5	4	Green	(green up)	Litter levels have improved since last year while at the same time, detritus levels have improved significantly since sweeping operations were brought back in-house (now 3%)

Ref	Description	Section	Priority	Year End Target	Performance	Traffic Light	Direction of Travel	Comments
NWLPI 163	Number of projects/programmes being delivered	Partnership & Development	Health & Well-being	50	37	⭐ Green		At the end of June 2014, 37 projects / programmes had been delivered, 25 as part of the production of the LEADER Local Development Strategy, the One Stop Health Shop, a Big Day Out event at Dordon Recreation Ground and ten weekly walking groups. Additionally, an event celebrating Abbey Green Park's status as a QEII Field has been held.
NWLPI 165	Number of people engaged on projects/programmes	Partnership & Development	Health & Well-being	1600	742	⭐ Green		Attendance figures have been promising, with 270 people participating in the LEADER events, 275 attending the Dordon Big Day Out and 178 people attending walking groups.
NWLPI 166	Percentage of people who are 'better off'	Partnership & Development	Health & Well-being	75	74.07	🟠 Amber		Of 81 people surveyed, 60 have claimed to be better off. Relatively poor figures relating to weight loss through the One Stop Health Shop have resulted in a review of the service and adjustments being made to the programme.
NWLPI 167	Satisfaction with service delivered	Partnership & Development	Health & Well-being	90	100	⭐ Green		Currently, all Partnership and Community Development services have recorded a 100% "Good" satisfaction rating (from a choice of Good / Average / Poor).