Local Development Strategy
(Summary)

“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.”
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1) Introduction

The Local Development Strategy (LDS) sets out the approach to delivering the LEADER Programme (2015 to 2020) in North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth. This document provides a summary of the LDS, and includes key information on:

- consultation and background analysis
- geographic coverage
- key strengths and challenges
- alignment with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP)
- strategy – priorities, measures and outputs
- delivery structure and Accountable Body

The strategy reflects an innovative approach to grassroots rural economic development, enabling untapped cross-border synergies to be realised.

The programme will deliver the following outputs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs created</th>
<th>Jobs safeguarded</th>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
<th>Potential additional overnight stays</th>
<th>Additional Ha woodland actively managed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>500 p.a.</td>
<td>150 Hectares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 1)

2) Consultation and Background Analysis

In total, over 600 businesses, agencies and organisations were consulted:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Engagement</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Selected Key Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused events</td>
<td>Farming and forestry event</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Country Landowners Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Local farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arthur Rank Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community and voluntary sector event</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North Warwickshire CAVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local business event</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Coventry University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MIRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middleton Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warwickshire Rural Hub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one interviews</td>
<td>Key organisations</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Federation of Small Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National Farmers Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coventry and Warwickshire CDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hinckley and Bosworth Tourism Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local businesses</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Local accommodation providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired interviews</td>
<td>Youth Clubs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Business postal survey</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Packington Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business telephone survey</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Leicester Federation of Small Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business electronic survey</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Various methods were used to communicate with stakeholders, including the distribution of a business survey. The survey was used to capture more in-depth views and information, and focused on identifying the main challenges, strengths and opportunities associated with operating a business in the area.

An analysis of relevant research has also been drawn from a number of sources including:
- LEP Strategic Economic Plans and ESIF strategies
- North Warwickshire Socio-Economic Profile
- ACRE Access to Rural Services Report for North Warwickshire
- Leicestershire Rural Economy Evidence Base (LREEB) and the ONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder face-to-face survey</th>
<th>37</th>
<th>North Warwickshire and Hinckley College WiRE CW Chamber of Commerce CWRT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business networking event</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Coleshill Post McD Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing organisations /groups</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Northern Warwickshire Tourism Association Heritage Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Warwickshire Community Partnership</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Midland Professional Development Midlands Studio Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP sub-groups</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>SME Access to Finance and Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough and County Council</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Warwickshire County Council Leicestershire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAG networking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local LAG meetings</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5 LAG meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional LAG meetings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>West Midlands LAGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider LAG engagement</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>East Durham LAG Northumberland Uplands LAG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 2)
3) Geographic Coverage

The LEADER area combines two local authority districts – North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth in Leicestershire; two counties straddling two regions joined at the A5 corridor.

![Map of LEADER area](image)

(Figure 1)

The eligible area covers a total population of 121,470 inhabitants, which includes a rural population of 80,274. The area has a varied business base of some 7,250 businesses of which the overwhelming majority are micro-enterprises – over 80% of those in rural areas.

4) Key Strengths and Challenges

Key Strengths

- Distinctive rural heartland
- A diverse local economy
- A cross-border area with untapped synergies
- Good links to major motorways and regional airports
- A range of small and micro businesses with potential for growth and development
- Proximity to major developments in high value manufacturing and, in particular, the MIRA Technology Park Enterprise Zone
- Important initiatives (such as the Twycross Life Sciences Park European Excellence Centre) offering substantial potential for visitor growth and benefits to the local economy
- Forecasted growth in producer-services sectors such as information and communication
- Significant visitor potential with attractions such as the National Forest looking to attract 10 million day visitors by 2024
- A growing craft-based sector
- Potential to promote farm diversification
- Substantial expertise within key industries
- A commitment to continue to develop social enterprises as a potential source of jobs
Commitment by local councils to improve the rural economy
Existing funding support available
A strong, locally-focused community and voluntary sector with a track record of delivering rural initiatives
A successfully delivered LEADER Programme developed over the 2008 to 2013 period in part of the target area

Key Challenges

- No strong external identity
- No single means of communication to businesses
- Limited connections within the business community
- A lack of venues for home-based micro-businesses to meet and network
- Limited access to superfast broadband, particularly in remote areas
- A need to promote environmental improvement and sustainability through the use of renewable energy
- A need for support with farm productivity and capital works
- Poor public transport with implications for getting to work and for the visitor economy
- Largely undeveloped visitor base and a need for a stronger interpretation and marketing of local attractions.
- Lack of coordination in the tourism sector
- Barriers to innovation, including limitations on start-up support
- Recruiting skilled staff
- Maintaining and enhancing existing skills
- Lack of suitable workspace to allow business growth
- Lack of investment for equipment, new technologies or energy-saving actions
- Relatively high unemployment, especially amongst young people, in parts of the area
- Young people unable to access job experience opportunities
- Support and mentoring is less accessible for village and small-town based businesses
- Relatively poor take-up of rural business support in previous initiatives
- Limited focus on the rural economy in local and regional strategies
- Only modest resources available to promote the area as a business and visitor base

5) Aligning with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

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

Close attention has been paid to the priorities of both LEPs through the analysis of relevant strategies, including the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Strategy. Taken together these various sources provide a profile of rural priorities:
- Rural business growth and improved productivity, with a focus on innovation and technology across agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, and services.
- 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.
- Increased business-to-business collaboration.
- The commercialisation of new products and processes involving rural businesses.

LEADER will play an important role in engaging with the “hard to reach” businesses that do not normally engage in this type of activity, and will endeavour to fill gaps and coordinate activity with programmes delivered through the LEP.

LEP representatives were involved in developing the LDS and endorsed the final document.
6) Strategy – priorities, measures and outputs

Within the overall theme, seven strategic priorities have been developed;

**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%  Indicative maximum grant rate: 40%*

**Outputs:**
- Total number of projects: 10
- Number of jobs created: 3

**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%  Indicative maximum grant rate: 40%*

**Outputs:**
- Total number of projects: 40
- Number of jobs created: 47

**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%  Indicative maximum grant rate: 40%*

**Outputs:**
- Total number of projects: 9
- Number of jobs created: 11

**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 allocation of total grant: 10%  Indicative maximum grant rate: 100%*

**Outputs:**
- Total number of projects: 6
- Number of jobs created: 4.5
It is proposed that an umbrella small grants fund will also be set up to provide awards of between £600 and £5,000 (40% maximum grant). It is expected that whilst the LAG will retain full decision making powers, a simplified option for applications will be used depending on the amount of investment needed.

### 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage allocation of total grant: 10%</th>
<th>Indicative maximum grant rate: 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Outputs:**
- Total number of projects: 5
- Number of jobs created: 3

### 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage allocation of total grant: 5%</th>
<th>Indicative maximum grant rate: 40%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Outputs:**
- Total number of projects: 4
- Number of jobs created: 1.5

### 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.

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.
7) **Delivery Structure and Accountable Body**

The delivery structure will be as follows;

![Diagram showing delivery structure and accountable body]

**Local Action Group (LAG)**

- Independent Chair
- Two members from each priority area:
  - Farming and forestry
  - Tourism and heritage
  - 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**

**Local Action Group**

The Local Action Group (LAG) consists of a range of businesses, covering all relevant sectors, the community and voluntary sector and appropriate public sector organisations.

It will review its membership and elect key positions on an annual basis, allowing new members to come forward at regular intervals. It is intended that the Chair will remain as a non-statutory sector member.

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 approvals. Following an initial period of more frequent meetings, it will meet on a quarterly basis.

**Rural Appraisal Panel**

The LAG will be supported by a Rural Appraisal Panel (RAP). This 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.

They will be fully trained on appraisal techniques and will appraise both the outline application and the full application form using standardised scoring criteria. This will reflect a combination of technical and quality criteria.

**Programme Team**
The Programme Team, consisting of a Project Manager and a Development Officer, will be responsible for the overall delivery of the programme. The team will be supported by officers from both local authorities to ensure compliance with the separation of duties. Their main responsibilities will include:

- raising the profile and awareness of LEADER
- providing a package of support to projects
- progressing projects through the process
- maintaining effective communication between the LAG and RAP
- signposting ineligible projects to alternative sources of funding
- developing a training programme to enable members to effectively undertake their role
- checking project claims
- monitoring projects to ensure compliance and to measure success

**Accountable Body**
North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) will serve as the Accountable Body and 18% of the allocation has been allowed for this purpose. They will be responsible for the recruitment and management of the programme team.

**Receiving Applications**
The flowchart below illustrates the process from initial enquiry through to application approval;
8) Conclusion

The timescale for the programme has been set as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Recruit and train new LAG/ RAP members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2014 – October 2015</td>
<td>Recruit Project Manager and Development Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2014 – June 2015</td>
<td>Ensure relevant staff at the Accountable Body and the delivery partners are trained in management and administration requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2014 – June 2015</td>
<td>Review guidance within the National Operations Manual and develop effective and efficient processes for publicity, applications, claims, routine monitoring procedures and recording outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2014 -</td>
<td>Work with Defra/ RPA to establish an umbrella project for small grants of between £600 and £5,000 (40% maximum grant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2014 -</td>
<td>Identify suitable LAGs for potential cooperation projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2015 – December 2019</td>
<td>Programme launch and Core Programme delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2016 and annually thereafter</td>
<td>Programme review including LAG membership and communications and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>Interim programme evaluation report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>Complete programme evaluation report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 3)

As part of the strategy development, 27 project proformas were submitted and additional project outlines came through telephone and face-to-face interviews. The Project Manager and Development Officer will follow-up these project ideas and support the completion of applications on commencement of the programme. It is anticipated that the initial tranche of projects will be worked up from those listed in the table below. A cooperation project will also be developed in the initial programme period in response to an anticipated call for proposals from Defra.

Anticipated actions within each Priority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Indicative actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1</td>
<td>Capital grants to support productivity improvements. Proposals include: the purchase of new equipment for milking parlour improvements; animal health, to improve animal comfort and welfare support; energy efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm productivity</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td>Business support for start-ups and existing businesses, including grants for young entrepreneurs and adoption of new technologies. Proposals include: Recycling and upcycling initiative; App development for on-line shopping; and improvements to workspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro and small businesses and farm diversification</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 3</td>
<td>Website and destination marketing coordination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural tourism</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attraction enhancements to extend the visitor season, including education centres and disabled facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 4</th>
<th>Cultural and Heritage Activity 10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural services 10%</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wheels to work projects or similar to enable rural young/ those who cannot afford a car to access training or employment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 5</th>
<th>Forestry productivity 5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forestry and forest product development – processing and marketing.</td>
<td>Provision of woodland advisory services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood fuel supply chain developments.</td>
<td>Small grants scheme for equipment e.g. wood storage and wood chippers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venison production.</td>
<td>(Table 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Table 4 for details)
A wide range of additional projects have been proposed and these will be developed over the programme period. Proposed initiatives include the following:

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

(Table 5)
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