

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 5TH APRIL 2018

title: RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND 2014-2020

submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

principal author: CRAIG MATTHEWS

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To receive an update regarding the Rural Development Programme.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions – The Council recognises the importance of securing a diverse, sustainable economic base for the Borough. The work of the Rural Development Programme aims to support this.
- Community Objectives – The issues highlighted in this report will contribute to objectives of a sustainable economy and thriving market towns.
- Corporate Priorities - Delivery of services to all.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), also referred to at European level as LEADER, is jointly funded by the European Union and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The aims of the programme are to safeguard and enhance the rural environment, improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and foster sustainable and thriving rural businesses and rural economies across England.

2.2 The LEADER scheme is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is also partly funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The aim of LEADER is to create jobs and help businesses grow, which will then benefit the rural economy. LEADER is a French acronym, which roughly translates as 'Liaison among Actors in Rural Economic Development'.

2.3 In the previous Rural Development Programme, there were 28 Ribble Valley businesses and other local organisations that received financial support, and the Councils' Regeneration Team worked with Lancashire County Council and other Lancashire Districts on the current RDPE strategy, which will run up to 2020.

3 INFORMATION

3.1 The RDPE provides money for projects to improve agriculture, the environment and rural life. Funding goes to schemes to such things as improving the environment, increase the productivity of farming and forestry and growing the rural economy.

- 3.2 To meet European Commission requirements, programme delivery in sub-regional areas such as Lancashire is overseen by Local Action Groups (LAGs). In Lancashire, as with the previous programme, 3 LAGs have been established to manage the RDPE programme of activity, with other elements also being delivered by Natural England and the Forestry Commission:
- **Lancashire North & Bowland** - (includes the rural areas of Lancaster, Ribble Valley, part of Pendle and part of Wyre).
 - **Lancashire West** - (includes the rural areas of Fylde, West Lancashire, Preston and parts of Wyre).
 - **Lancashire Pennine Moors** – (includes the rural areas Chorley, South Ribble, Blackburn with Darwen, Rossendale, Hyndburn, Burnley and part of Pendle. Also contains the adjacent Greater Manchester rural populations of Bolton, Bury, Wigan and Rochdale).
- 3.3 The Lancashire LEADER website which is hosted by Lancashire County Council, continues to receive enquiries and can be found at www.lancashire.gov.uk/rural-development. A database of over 800 groups, businesses, stakeholders and partners has also been created to receive regular updates about the programme.
- 3.4 The last meeting of the Lancashire North & Bowland LAG was held on Wednesday 7th March 2018 in the Tithebarn at Browsholme Hall in Ribble Valley. To date there have been 18 businesses benefitting from the scheme (10 based in Ribble Valley) along with another 11 projects awaiting decision for approval from the LAG. There are also a further 18 projects currently in development.
- 3.5 A copy of the Lancashire North & Bowland LDS is in the Members Room on Level C in the Council Offices. Each LAG area has different characteristics; therefore, the calls for projects for each theme may differ slightly depending upon the geographical area. Further details explaining these can be found on the Factsheet attached at Appendix A to this report along with a map showing the Lancashire North & Bowland LAG area at Appendix B.

CRAIG MATTHEWS
REGENERATION OFFICER

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Craig Matthews, extension 4531.

LEADER Lancashire

Rural Funding *fact sheet*

What is LEADER?

LEADER (a French acronym that translates as 'Liaisons among actors in the rural economy') is an EU programme that aims to provide funding for businesses and organisations looking to begin or expand their operations in rural areas. What separates it from other funding programmes is that it is delivered locally rather than nationally, with decisions on how and where the grant money is spent being made by an appointed Local Action Group (LAG) of key representatives from various organisations in the local area. Your Lancashire LEADER Team and LAGs benefit from a wealth of experience in a range of sectors and are here to help you with your application process.

As with any grant funding programme, the language and rules surrounding it can be daunting, but we hope this fact sheet goes some way towards helping you understand the programme's requirements, which in turn will help you when submitting an outline application.

LEADER Themes

LEADER funds must support one or more of the following themes:

- Increasing Farm Productivity
- Micro/Small Enterprises & Farm Diversification
- Rural Tourism
- Rural Services
- Culture & Heritage
- Increasing Forestry Productivity

A proportion of each LEADER area's funding has been allocated to a priority, to ensure a fair spread of funding across all types of organisations in the area.

The Local Action Group

As LEADER is intended to be a locally-delivered grant

funding programme, all funding decisions are made by elected members of the Local Action Group, or LAG Executive. The LAG Executive consists of a range of local representatives from each of the LEADER priorities, as well as a spread of expertise from both public and private sectors.

Though a project may successfully pass through the outline application procedure, it is ultimately up to the LAG Executive to decide which projects to fund on the basis of value for money and the benefits they will bring to the local area. While a project may be fully eligible, the LAG's duty to ensure that the funding goes as far as possible means that no project is guaranteed to receive funding.





When Funding can be Claimed

Grant funding can only be claimed in arrears, so you must be able to pay for your project in the short-term, as grant payments will only be made once the work being claimed for has been completed and paid for. If you are claiming grant funding for items purchased using a hire- or lease-purchase agreement, you must have made all outstanding payments against the items and own them outright before any grant money can be paid.

Grant Rates

These vary depending on the organisation applying for the grant and the LEADER Priority under which their project sits, but the typical grant amount available is 40% of the total eligible project costs, with the rest of the money coming from other private sources – it cannot come from other public sources.

However, non-profit organisations may find that a greater amount of their eligible project costs can be covered – please ask the Lancashire LEADER Team for guidance.

Eligibility

Not every cost associated with a project will be eligible for LEADER funding, but your Programme Manager will work with you to assess which of your costs are eligible and which are not. As a general rule, LEADER funding is intended for immovable, capital items and it cannot be used for salaries, printed marketing materials, licences or in-kind contributions to the project.

You also cannot apply for funding to fulfil legal obligations of an existing operation – for example, an existing café could not request funding purely to

build an accessible WC, but a completely new build project that included an accessible WC as part of a project, would be eligible.

The rules around eligibility can be complex and will vary depending on which LEADER Priority your project falls under, but a full list of ineligible costs will be included in the LEADER Applicants' Handbook and the Lancashire LEADER Team will be happy to advise you. Projects must be located in an eligible rural postcode.

Please contact the LEADER Team to check the postcode.



Application Process

One of our Programme Managers will work with you to help develop your project and complete an Outline Application, and if successful you will be invited to submit a full application. If your full application is eligible, it will then be presented to the LAG and a decision will be made within 40 working days of the closing date of your submission.

Jobs

The success of the LEADER programme is primarily measured on the jobs that are created as a result of the funding. These jobs are quantified by the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions created, which are defined as jobs requiring at least 30 hours per week. However, part-time jobs can be counted e.g. two 15-hour roles would constitute one FTE position.



Grant Amounts

The LEADER programme has a minimum grant amount of at least £6,000, for details on individual themes minimum grant amounts please check the relevant handbook for further information.

Each LAG has allocated the funding to the different priorities according to their local area. Each LAG also has outputs to achieve and again the outputs are slightly different in each geographical area. Further details are available overleaf.



Notional funding allocations

Lancashire West	Lancashire North and Bowland	Lancashire Pennine Moors
Farming Total budget (approx.) £384,498 Average Grant size £48,062 Number of projects x 8	Farming Total budget (approx.) £201,031 Average Grant size £40,206 Number of projects x 5	Farming Total budget (approx.) £175,840 Average Grant size £43,960 Number of projects x 4
Enterprise Total budget (approx.) £512,664 Average Grant size £25,633 Number of projects x 20	Enterprise Total budget (approx.) £536,083 Average Grant size £26,804 Number of projects x 20	Enterprise Total budget (approx.) £527,522 Average Grant size £26,376 Number of projects x 20
Tourism Total budget (approx.) £128,165 Average Grant size £42,721 Number of projects x 3	Tourism Total budget (approx.) £268,041 Average Grant size £29,782 Number of projects x 9	Tourism Total budget (approx.) £234,454 Average Grant size £39,075 Number of projects x 6
Culture & heritage Total budget (approx.) £64,083 Average Grant size £64,083 Number of projects x 1	Culture & heritage Total budget (approx.) £134,020 Average Grant size £26,804 Number of projects x 5	Culture & heritage Total budget (approx.) £58,613 Average Grant size £58,613 Number of projects x 1
Basic Services Total budget (approx.) £128,165 Average Grant size £64,082 Number of projects x 2	Basic Services Total budget (approx.) £134,020 Average Grant size £22,336 Number of projects x 6	Basic Services Total budget (approx.) £117,227 Average Grant size £39,075 Number of projects x 3
Forestry Total budget (approx.) £64,083 Average Grant size £64,083 Number of projects x 1	Forestry Total budget (approx.) £67,010 Average Grant size £22,336 Number of projects x 3	Forestry Total budget (approx.) £58,613 Average Grant size £29,306 Number of projects x 2

We have been awarded the funding in Euros. Each year we will be allocated an amount based upon the exchange rate that year. Therefore the funding could increase or decrease depending upon the exchange rate.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the Lancashire LEADER programme, please do not hesitate to e-mail ruralfunding@lancashire.gov.uk or call Karen Lawrenson on

01772 538797 or Louise Kite on **01772 534134**

www.lancashire.gov.uk/rural-development



Lancashire North and Bowland

Lancashire North and Bowland
 Total Population: 118,440
 Rural Population: 93,240
 Urban Population: 25,200

-  Lancashire Market Towns
-  LAG Areas
-  Urban
-  Areas of outstanding natural beauty
-  Lancashire Market Towns (Urban)
-  Lancashire West
-  Lancashire North and Bowland
-  Pennine Moors