

Northumberland Uplands



Northumberland Uplands LEADER
Local Development Strategy
2014-2020

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In presenting this Local Development Strategy, NULAG is grateful for generous support from our partners, especially Northumberland County Council (NCC), Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA), other stakeholders and many individual residents in the Northumberland Uplands. We all coalesce around common goals for the economic, environmental and social well-being of our community and look forward to working together within the bottom-up, place-based LEADER approach.

Dagmar Winter Chair NULAG

on behalf of Northumberland County Council

Introduction

The Northumberland Uplands run from the River Tyne in the South through some of England's most remote and sparsely populated deep rural areas to the Scottish border in the North. The table below illustrates how low the population density is in the Uplands, compared with other parts of Northumberland, the North East and England as a whole.

The Uplands refers to the whole of the Northumberland Uplands area throughout this strategy.

		Uplands	N'land	North East	England
Total	Population	55,271	316,028	2,596,886	53,012,456
	Area	3,232	5,013	8,573	130,278
	Population Density	17	63	303	407
Urban	Population	11,388	170,932	2,119,213	43,668,600
	Area	11	141	1,068	20,070
	Population Density	1,049	1,215	1,985	2,176
Rural	Population	43,883	145,096	477,673	9,343,856
	Area	3,221	4,872	7,506	110,208
	Population Density	14	30	64	85
Area is given in km ² Density is number of people per km ²					
Source: ONS, 2011 Census, Usual Resident Population					

The area covers the whole of the Northumberland National Park, which includes the most dramatic parts of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. It also includes the dark skies of the whole National Park area, including Kielder Water & Forest Park. The area is characterised by the moors and grasslands of the Cheviot Hills, with their ancient hill forts and pure rivers and the wild valleys of the North Tyne and Redesdale. The small and isolated Uplands communities are resourceful. In addition, there are the growing communities along the Tyne Valley. The whole area is rich in history and culture.

Between 2008 and 2013, NULAG used the LEADER approach to promote bottom-up, place-based decision making and development. The place-based approach should ensure that development is appropriate for the area. LEADER sees local people as the main asset of rural areas and empowers them to decide what best suits their aspirations, needs, environment, culture, traditions and skills.

As an established Local Action Group, NULAG knows its area well. Between 2008 and 2013 NULAG supported 79 projects, distributed almost £2 million of LEADER funding, drew in £2.3 million of matched funding, created 40 new jobs and helped 22 micro-businesses start up. In this round of LEADER, we intend to support a slightly smaller number of projects, but create nearly twice as many new jobs.

Between 2008 and 2013 NULAG invested in a broad range of projects, including micro-enterprises, land management initiatives, community buildings, skills and training, tourism projects, local arts, community shops, and wood fuel programmes. Innovation and sustainability were two fields that NULAG focused on. Many of the projects we supported were unique to the area, and, in some cases, the UK.

Our website <http://www.nuLEADER.eu/projects> showcases projects that NULAG supported and shows how small amounts of funding help make a difference to rural communities. But there is much to do. So we are ready to operate as soon as our 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy is approved. Our extensive engagement/consultation work to develop the LDS has highlighted a number of emerging projects which the LAG will be ready to act on early in the programme, ensuring full compliance with the national framework, and conducting economic, environmental and social sustainability assessments throughout.

1. The Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group Partnership

1.1 Membership

NULAG will be responsible for the management and strategic direction of the Local Development Strategy. The group will meet on a monthly basis at community venues throughout the Uplands. We have 20 members, drawn from a cross-section of the community, from every part of the Uplands area and bringing to the LAG a wide range of skills and experience. Between 2008 and 2013, members gave some 16,000 hours of their time to the work of the LAG, the equivalent of rather more than 2 full-time posts.

NULAG intends to refresh its membership for the next round of LEADER. The current LAG membership includes representation from public sector rural services, infrastructure organizations, private businesses, culture and heritage organizations, farming, forestry, tourism, as well as our local communities. There are employed, self-employed and retired members spread across the NULAG area and we will proactively seek young people's representation for the forthcoming LEADER round.

NULAG is the decision making body for all LEADER projects in the Northumberland Uplands programme. We have invited the rural lead of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership to join NULAG. The relationship with the LEP will be robust.

We will also engage with the North East Farming and Advisory Network – NULAG's chair is a member of this network. NULAG's future recruitment will reflect the 70% economic/30% community balance required in the DEFRA guidance, from January 2015. As our former host body, NNPA will continue to play an important role.

A **Partners Support Group** will be established to ensure there is effective collaboration. This Group will also be used to help NULAG secure funding and support for those priorities that cannot be funded through LEADER. NULAG also intends to work closely with contiguous LAGs on cross boundary projects. Partners who will support NULAG in the next funding round are:

- Northumberland County Council (as Accountable Body)
- Northumberland National Park Authority
- Forestry Commission
- National Farmers Union
- Northumbrian Water
- Glendale Gateway Trust
- Northern Farmers and Landowners Group
- Newcastle University Institute for Social Renewal
- Northumberland Tourism
- Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust
- North East Farming and Rural Advisory Network

NULAG has an Executive Group, comprising the Chair, Vice Chair, Communications Champion and two other LAG members representing the North and South of the area. They will be supported by representatives from Northumberland County Council and the Newcastle University Institute for Social Renewal.

1.2 Structure and decision-making processes

The constitution of the Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group is the framework that defines the structure and decision-making processes of the group. The document outlines the group aims and objectives, the functioning of the group, roles of members and procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest. Declarations of interest are given at the beginning of each meeting and, where appropriate, members who declare such an interest do not vote. Section 4.2 sets out how expressions of interest will be sought.

The constitution is subject to regular review. The LAG promotes improvement in its activities by continually reviewing its procedures and a broad spectrum of projects. The LAG finds it beneficial to function with an executive group and operating procedures have been tried and tested over the period from 2008 to 2013.

By following the constitution, the LAG ensures that its activities are aligned with the objectives of the Local Development Strategy, are undertaken in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner and avoid any risk of conflict of interest.

NULAG will operate within the DEFRA national framework and is keen to retain best practice from the previous LDS. We will retain the requirement for personal presentations by potential projects sponsors and make full use of the expertise of volunteers who support the development of projects in the Northumberland Uplands. NULAG's staff and volunteers will maintain continuous contact with sponsors, from the initial contacts made before an expression of interest is ready, throughout the application process and post approval.

1.3 Local Action Group staff, numbers and job descriptions

The ceiling of 18% for programme management and administration costs has required both the LAG and Accountable Body to review resources and arrangements for the 2014-20 programme to ensure delivery of a compliant programme. Although budgets cannot be finalised until the allocation is confirmed, as a minimum there will be 1 full time LAG Programme Officer and a part time Administration Officer to support the LAG. These staff will be integrated within the Corporate Programmes and External Funding Team of the Accountable Body, which has responsibility for the delivery of the LEADER and other externally funded programmes within the Accountable Body. This arrangement will ensure that the overall delivery of LEADER (ie both the LAG and Accountable Body responsibilities) is integrated and co-ordinated to gain maximum efficiencies and benefits.

Both staff will be employed by Northumberland County Council who will have responsibility for all employer's functions, liabilities (eg pay, appraisal, training etc) and line management. As well as working with the Accountable Body, the LAG staff will work closely with the LAG Executive. In order to have a shared understanding and ownership of work priorities and issues, a monthly management meeting will be held between the LAG Programme Officer, LAG representative (likely to be the Chair) and line manager within the Accountable Body.

The staff will be accommodated in County Hall Morpeth, but will be equipped with mobile technology to enable them to work from a network of hot desks throughout the

LAG area.

The operational arrangements will be set out within an SLA and Statement of Arrangements between the LAG and Accountable Body

The Accountable Body and LAG have developed an implementation plan which will enable staff and operational arrangements to be in place from January 2015.

The role of the Programme Officer will be to:

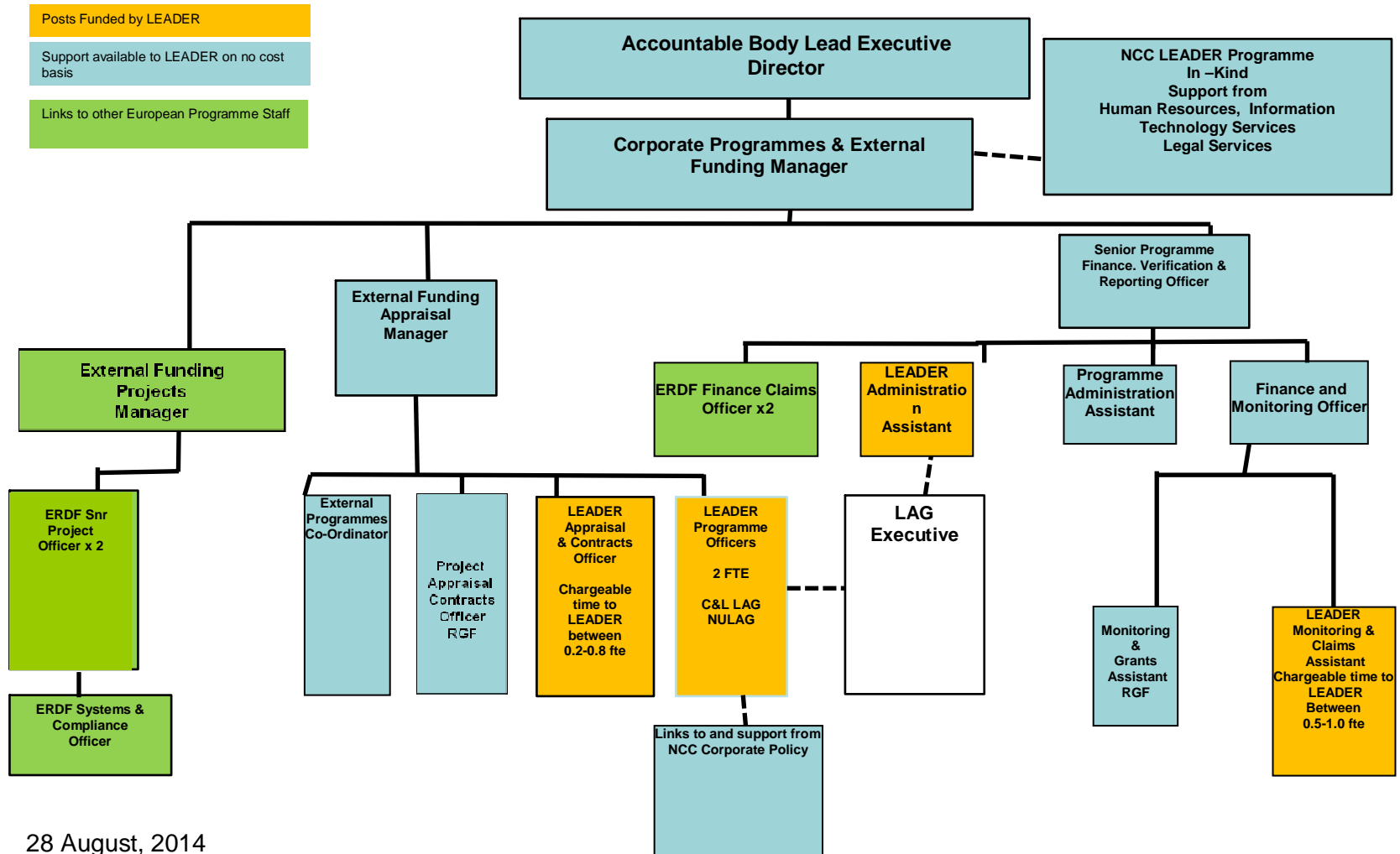
- Support the LAG and LAG Executive to coordinate, monitor and manage the implementation of the LDS.
- Alongside the AB and in accordance with the national operating manual implement procedures for the application, appraisal, selection, monitoring and follow-up of beneficiary projects.
- Undertake animation within communities within the LAG area.
- Provide advice and guidance to project applicants to develop innovative and eligible projects.
- Provide a sign-posting service to other funding sources for both LEADER applicants and, as far as possible, organisations not eligible to access the programme.
- Ensure that the Programme is properly publicised and promoted including issuing project calls and developing briefs for procurements.
- Act as the main point of contact for all projects both pre and post approval.
- Contribute to the technical and Strategic appraisal of projects and support the LAG in its decision-making process.
- Review project performance, undertake monitoring visits and provide regular updates to the LAG.
- Facilitate the development of partnership working by the LAG.
- Support and deliver training activities for LAG members which enable them to maximise their input into the delivery of the LDS.
- Ensure that the Programme takes account of the opportunities available through establishing links with other LAGs within the UK, and where appropriate transnational links.
- Ensure that equality and sustainability are embedded in the Programme.
- Contribute to LEADER networks.
- Promote the profile of LEADER within the Accountable Body and other organisations within Northumberland.

The role of the Administrator will be to:

- Organise and support LAG and LAG Executive meetings;
- Establish, maintain and archive project files
- Collate and process LAG related expenditure (eg travel claims, venue hire etc)
- Co-ordinate the communications process;
- Support the Officer in the preparation of documents, publicity materials, etc.
- Maintain the LAG website.

If budgetary restrictions require it some of the above tasks (eg organisation of LAG meetings) will be undertaken by LAG members on a voluntary basis.

DRAFT Staffing Structure for LEADER 2014-20



1.4 Equalities statement

The LAG will operate in full compliance with the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that people are not discriminated against by virtue of their age; disability; sex; race; religion and belief; sexual orientation; pregnancy and maternity; and gender reassignment.

Specifically, the LAG will:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Remove or minimise disadvantages within LAG activities and projects suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups within LAG activities and projects where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in LAG activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

1.5 Involvement of the community and consultation activity undertaken

NULAG emphasized community consultation in the development of this Local Development Strategy. This was intended to:

- Engage and inspire people and organisations through four participatory drop-in sessions and a survey questionnaire, to capture the opinions of residents on the specific needs and priorities of people living and working in the Uplands. We were keen to reach out to young people and those who find it difficult to make their voices heard.
- Capture vital information that would inform our Local Development Strategy, as well as Northumberland National Park Authority's new Management Plan and Northumberland County Council's Economic Strategy.
- Allow businesses, community groups and organisations to give their opinions on the nature of the Northumberland Uplands, the challenges they face and their development priorities.
- Capture information on the emerging priorities in the North-East Local Enterprise Partnership's development strategies and the priorities in DEFRA's Rural Development Programme for England.

Given the size of the Northumberland Uplands area, the sparsity of the population, and the indicative budget, we used a three-pronged approach. This comprised an online survey together with on-site interviews and targeted doorstep surveys in our main towns and remote villages.

Based on the bottom-up principle of LEADER, we recruited and trained four Northumberland Uplands residents to undertake the survey interviews.

We organised a partners' focus group meeting in July 2014, attracting 20 partner agency representatives. We included feedback from four focus groups with farming interests across the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership, which includes the Uplands.

The outcomes from these consultations form the basis for our strategy, which thus reflects the needs and aspirations of the people who live and work here. Our extensive consultations provide the strongest possible evidence base for our strategy.

1.6 Training requirements

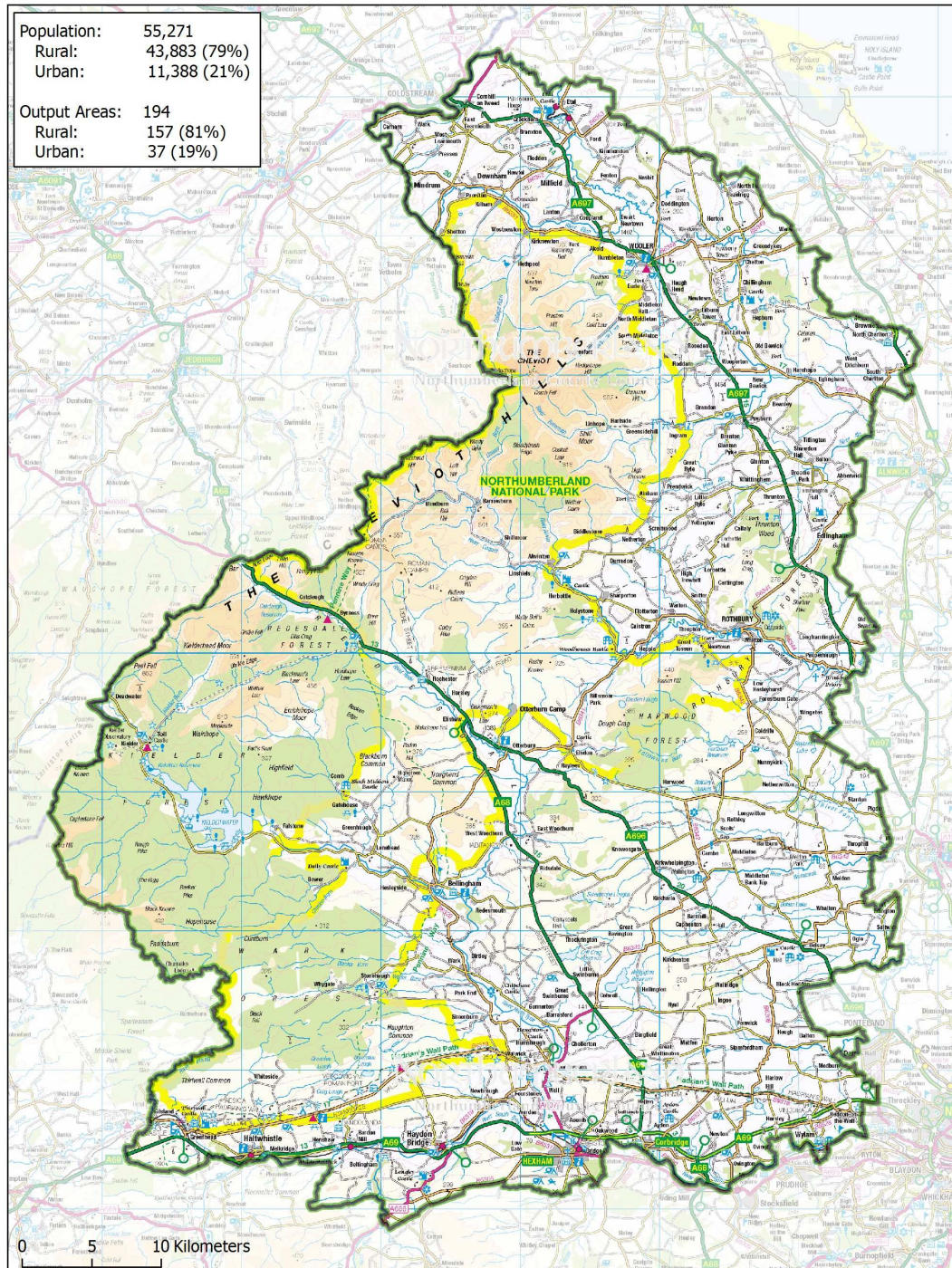
NULAG together with Northumberland County Council will recruit a LAG Programme Officer and, subject to budget, administrative support. Drawing on their experience in the previous LEADER round NULAG and Northumberland County Council (as the employer) will ensure that new staff members have the necessary competences, skills and resources by developing and delivering a training plan for them. Training will also be developed and delivered for all LAG members that reflects the requirements of the national operating manual. We will also adopt new policies and procedures for the support of volunteers.

2. The Northumberland Uplands Area

2.1 Map of the area

The agreed Northumberland Uplands LEADER area for 2014-2020 is shown below. This is a larger area and population than that covered between 2008-2013. (see the Table at Page 2). It now includes a boundary with the North Pennines LEADER area, meeting Northumberland County Council's aim of achieving 100% coverage by LEADER of the rural parts of the County.

Northumberland Uplands Leader Map 2014 - 2020



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2.2 Rural population covered

The extended Northumberland Uplands LEADER area has over 55,000 residents, 79% of whom live in rural communities. Our community survey was carried out across the 2008-13 LEADER area (before agreement of the new area). A statistically valid sample, it showed that:

- The average length of residence is 28 years – around twice the national average.
- 25% of the population have lived in the Uplands all their life.

- Well over 33% of residents rent accommodation from a private landlord, housing association or estate.
- 60% of people are in full, part-time or self employment; one third are retired.
- 36% of households include children.
- 20% of adults have a long-term limiting illness, health problem or disability.
- 93% of the adult population are satisfied with their quality of life.
- More employment and training opportunities is the second most important priority for residents of the Uplands. (The first priority is better public transport)
- 43% of the adult population feel they have some influence over decision-making about the Uplands.
- 45% of 16-34 year olds want more opportunities to get involved in community events, activities and decisions.

Information from the 2011 Census for the Northumberland Uplands area shows that:

- Nearly 10,000 people, 20% of the population, aged 16+ have no qualifications.
- 30% of people in employment work part-time.
- Nearly 2,000 people work in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors.
- 11% of residents provide regular unpaid care.

3. Our Local Development Strategy

3.1 SWOT analysis and outcome of consultations

447 residents from across the Uplands participated in a sample community survey during May and June 2014. A further 208 residents then attended four drop-in events in the four main Uplands towns. 22 Parishes completed SWOT analyses, along with five special interest groups, including the Young Northumberland Network. Two summary SWOT analysis tables are attached as Annex 1.

Our Local Development Strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities. Their priorities, based on the extensive consultation and engagement programme described above, are:

Strengthening the local economy of the Uplands by supporting our two main economic land uses - farming and forestry – creating jobs, increasing productivity and diversification and encouraging the growth of micro-businesses, particularly those providing essential rural services and tourism.

Improving the connections between people and places, primarily through improvements to public transport for people who are unable to travel by car or find the cost of fuel prohibitive. There are few fuel stations in the Uplands and road fuel prices are often 20% higher than in urban areas. Safe cycle routes are also a priority in the Uplands.

Managing the land sustainably and in harmony with the Upland's landscape and cultural heritage. Testing and piloting new approaches to sustainable land and water management will help maintain viable communities in the Uplands, enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area, and maximise the employment opportunities and environmental services derived from land and water.

Exploiting the Uplands' tourism potential by managing our cultural and heritage assets better, providing tourist-friendly facilities, marketing our skills and talents better and focusing on activity hubs to co-ordinate and support collective responses

to new opportunities. Tourism is the area's largest private sector employer and quality and authentic tourism products are services that are a regional priority.

Investing in our communities, maintaining thriving and sustainable communities in the Uplands by retaining, co-ordinating and diversifying local community facilities and services, particularly in remote villages, while extending broadband and mobile phone coverage to meet the needs of isolated people and rural businesses.

Supporting and retaining our young people through investment in young business potential, promoting the succession arrangements on Upland farms, the provision of affordable starter homes and better connections between Uplands businesses (particularly farming and forestry) and local schools/colleges. We need to encourage young people to help shape the future of the Uplands. The previous LEADER programme demonstrated that a different approach as required to engage young people in benefitting from LEADER resources.

NULAG knows that some of these needs and aspirations cannot be met through LEADER. We will work with our partners, through our Partners Support Group, to deliver projects and funding from other programmes to achieve them.

3.2 Complementing the Local Enterprise Partnership strategy

NULAG's strategy complements and enhances Rural Development Programme money for business support and tourism within the North East LEP. The strategy also complements the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and other European funding programmes administered by the LEP.

We will ensure that any projects supported by LEADER compliment the emerging activities from within the LEP's ESIF and the Rural Growth Network. We expect our Partners Support Group to play a key role in helping us achieve this.

We will work alongside and align our work to the Farming and Forestry Productivity Scheme, to help improve innovation, competitiveness and efficiency in these sectors.

3.3 NULAG local priorities

Our Local Development Strategy draws together the needs and aspirations of our communities with the Government's priorities for LEADER. This has not been a straightforward process; many of the outcomes of our engagement programme do not fit easily into the six policy priorities in the National Delivery Framework guidance. Consequently some of our future projects will rely on other programmes for funding and delivery. These are clearly marked in **green** in the following tables.

Our six themes, which reflect national priorities, are:

- **Increasing farm productivity**
- **Micro and small enterprises and diversification**
- **Rural Tourism**
- **Provision of rural services**
- **Cultural and heritage activity**
- **Increasing forestry productivity**

NULAG has a number of potential projects within these themes which will enable us to make an early start on programme delivery once full DEFRA guidance is ready. Some of the projects listed in the following tables are very specific to underscore the

depth of our grassroots engagement and are thus indicative rather than a binding plan of action.

THEME 1: Increasing farm productivity

NULAG's vision involves us continuing to work closely with farmers, landowners and other land-based businesses managing enterprises, based on the sustainable use of natural resources, landscape and cultural heritage of the Uplands, providing jobs and essential services to the local and regional economies.

Our priorities within this theme are:

1. To help make farming in the Uplands more profitable by identifying opportunities for business expansion, by capitalising on our good environment and by exploiting the latest research and technology.
2. To enhance the ability of individual farmers to develop their businesses by creating new opportunities for training and sharing best practice.
3. To extend collaboration between farm businesses by supporting farmer networks and producer groups.
4. To enable more women to participate in development of farm businesses by supporting the expansion of childcare provision in remote areas of the Uplands.
5. To support bio-security measures in order to keep cattle and wildlife TB-free.

Potential new projects within this theme are set out in Table A below.

Table A: Potential NULAG projects for Theme 1

Support for increasing farm productivity
Production of combined farm business and farm environment plans coordinated by farmer networks in the Uplands to identify opportunities for farm business expansion including investment in infrastructure and improved efficiency
Capital grants for improvement in farm infrastructure identified in combined farm business and farm environment plan
Grants to improve animal health and improve business performance, including improved farm bio-security
Creation of research partnerships between groups of Uplands farmers and local Universities to develop new ways of improving productivity, leading to increased profitability
Training programme coordinated by farmer networks covering new technology including 'Digital by Default', genetic progression and use of EID equipment
Creation of a young farmer mentoring network and investment in apprenticeships
Development of after-school clubs in remote areas
Pioneering sustainable technology to reduce the high energy costs faced by many Upland farm businesses.

THEME 2: Encouraging and supporting micro/small enterprises and farm diversification

NULAG's vision involves us continuing to work closely with farmers, landowners and other land-based businesses to promote new micro enterprises, particularly in rural business hubs. Northumberland produces more red meat than any other county in England. This is something NULAG aims to build on.

Our priorities within this theme are:

1. To create rural business growth through the provision of grants for small enterprises and micro-enterprises, especially for young people entering business.
2. To increase the resilience of farm businesses by supporting development of innovative on-farm renewable energy generation efficiency and effectiveness.
3. To increase the value of agricultural produce by developing a joint marketing and branding campaign based on environmental assets.
4. To promote new on-farm business ventures by creating a Micro Enterprise Grant Scheme to provide small grants for innovative projects.
5. To create more opportunities for young people on farms in the Uplands by supporting measures to promote succession.

Potential new projects within this theme are set out in Table B below.

Table B: Potential NULAG projects for Theme 2

Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
Provide grants for rural business establishment, growth and development and bring underused premises into use to provide flexible and cheap space for new micro businesses as part of a rural business hubs and business clusters, offering support and advice throughout the Uplands
Investment in community asset development to bring broad economic benefit (eg through a network of village fuel pumps)
Investment in auction marts and the red meat supply chain, to provide local outlets for farmers
Development and administration of a Micro Enterprise Grant Scheme by farmer networks in conjunction with public and/or private sector organisations
Support setting up an advisory service to facilitate collaborative investment in renewable technology to create local energy networks e.g. by developing small hydropower projects, community heat and power schemes and anaerobic digestion plants
Expansion of existing marketing/branding schemes and creation of new initiatives where opportunities exist; eg Northumberland Uplands Beef and Lamb
Creation of an advisory network administered by farmer networks to enable farmers in the Uplands to develop and promote succession arrangements and increase apprenticeships

THEME 3: Rural Tourism

NULAG's vision involves an expansion of the tourism infrastructure and diversifying the Uplands offer to encompass a wider range of tourist activities. This would boost the Uplands economy and help to make tourism a year round activity.

Our priorities within this theme are:

Investing in our tourism infrastructure

1. To expand the existing network of quality cafés, restaurants, the retail offer and the range of tourist accommodation, particularly in the more remote parts of the Uplands.

2. To build on the success of the International Dark Sky Park status and increase the number of tourists visiting this part of the Uplands, especially in the winter months.
3. Support the development of supply side services and infrastructure across the Uplands to meet the high and increasing demand resulting from Northumberland's unique position in Europe. This will provide a more rounded visitor offer across the Uplands and significantly
4. To enhance the quality of visitor information and infrastructure, including enhancing access for all.

Strengthening the Uplands tourism marketing

1. To attract more people into the Uplands through co-ordinated marketing initiatives.
2. To draw more people into the Uplands by supporting innovative events and activities which attract younger people and new audiences

Promoting and supporting new leisure activities in the Uplands

1. Encouraging cycling and outdoor adventure sports.

Potential new projects within this theme are set out in Table C below.

Table C: Potential NULAG projects for Theme 3

Investing in our tourism infrastructure	Strengthening the Uplands brand and tourism marketing	Promoting and supporting new leisure activities in the Uplands
Support new restaurant and café start-ups, as well as expanding existing provision of local food, focusing on locally produced produce, with measures to improve quality, eg customer service, for existing businesses	Support new social and economic activities which reflect the tranquil and remote nature of the Uplands	Encourage the development of outdoor adventure activities, including sports, cycling and fields sports in the Uplands
Introduce a 'Starbus' service to transport people to Kielder Observatory as part of an innovative transport scheme (see Theme 4)	Improvements to entry signs to the villages	Where possible, re-instate disused railways as cycle paths, to expand and link up with the existing network
Set up 'star camps' throughout the Uplands as part of the 'dark sky park', to incorporate small star gazing pavilions	Provide support for agricultural shows in the Uplands	Establish an e-cycle hub in the Uplands
Re-provision of publicly accessible toilets at key tourist locations		Establish an indoor adventure activities venue in the Uplands to extend the season

THEME 4: Provision of rural services

NULAG's vision is to sustain and expand rural services in the Uplands, some of which are under threat, to ensure that local communities and businesses are sustainable and that both new and existing services can be delivered on a cost-effective basis. NULAG's experience is that good community facilities and services produce sustained economic activity as well as social benefits.

Our priorities within this theme are:

- 1. Sustaining and expanding our essential rural services.**
- 2. Creating, expanding and diversifying our community infrastructure.**

Potential new projects within this theme are set out in Table D below.

Table D: Potential NULAG projects for Theme 4

Sustaining and expanding our rural services	Creating, expanding and diversifying our essential community infrastructure
Support an innovative transport scheme to improve public transport from remote communities into the Uplands hubs	Support the provision of super-fast broadband coverage across the whole Uplands area
Promote a car sharing scheme	Support mast sharing by providers to expand mobile phone coverage across the Uplands
Support a feasibility study to secure the provision of new affordable homes for local people across the Uplands	Explore the potential for community self-sufficient renewable energy projects
Supporting an Uplands I.T support business run by young people, to assist older residents attain IT skills and access social media	Support the diversification of village halls and shops to provide a wider range of locally-delivered services as local hubs
Support the reopening of railway stations	Develop inter-generational support projects which serve social cohesion

THEME 5: Cultural and heritage activity

NULAG's vision is to bring together the rich and varied culture and heritage of the Uplands, focusing on support for hubs and improved coordination/sharing between facilities and activity sponsors, to broaden their appeal, improve their marketing and attract more visitors to the area.

Our priorities within this theme are:

- 1. New investment in the Uplands rich and diverse culture and heritage.**
- 2. Co-ordinating the marketing of existing cultural and heritage activities**
- 3. Supporting the development of community buildings as hubs for arts, crafts, music and heritage.**

Potential new projects within this theme are set out in Table E below.

Table E: Potential NULAG LEADER projects for Theme 5

Investing in the rich and diverse community culture and heritage of the Uplands	Co-ordinating the marketing of existing cultural and heritage activities	Supporting the development of appropriate community buildings as hubs for arts, crafts, music and heritage
Promote and support new outlets for high quality Uplands food and drink – and arts and crafts - elsewhere in the region not just in the Uplands – to help develop businesses and attract new visitors	Facilitate collaborative groupings of cultural and heritage shows and festivals to encourage shared resources and services	Delegated grants scheme to promote and support pop-up seasonal projects, festivals, agricultural shows e.g. in catering, music and performance
Establish an Uplands children's theatre/fringe festival	Develop a non-competitive craft forum or co-op to market traditional Upland crafts	Work with community venues, particularly village halls, to diversify their cultural and artistic offer
Support new and an expansion of existing businesses linked to the unique culture and heritage of the Uplands.		A delegated grants scheme to expand traditional skills to young people to disseminate within the wider community.

THEME 6: Increasing forestry productivity

Our priorities within this theme are:

1. To enhance the capacity to extract and process timber and timber products by supporting equipment-sharing and investment in new machinery.
2. To increase investment in biomass heating systems by stimulating local markets and tackling supply chain obstacles.
3. To support the expansion of forestry businesses in the Uplands by providing more apprenticeship opportunities.
4. To improve the quality of timber produced in the Uplands by combating the spread of pests and diseases.
5. Support the development of more added value woodland products using local woodland products as opposed to lower quality non-native species.

Potential new projects within this theme mirror the Confor 'Roots to Prosperity' Action Plan (2014) and are set out in Table F below.

Table F: Potential NULAG projects for Theme 6

Support for increasing forestry productivity
Support a collaborative project to channel investment in new equipment and establishment of an equipment-sharing network
Support the creation of a Mutual Ownership structure to provide advice and finance for installation of domestic and commercial biomass heating systems
Provide both hard and soft skills which contractors and other supply chain actors require to better manage the resource and improve productivity
Encourage and support the intake of new entrants and apprenticeships
Training in pest and disease control including support for control of deer and grey squirrels and virulent tree diseases
Advisory service for supply chain and processing actors to improve skills and knowledge of the management of undermanaged and sensitive woodland sites.
Improve the management of private woodlands and use of their timber for wood-based community enterprises

3.4 Targets, outcomes and outputs

The 2014-2020 LEADER programme in the Uplands will deliver long-term outcomes which build on the area's strengths and secure a steady expansion of enterprise, innovation and community initiative across all our communities. NULAG is particularly keen to support local outputs that secure the growth and development of micro-enterprises throughout the Uplands, particularly those that enable young people to gain experience, take up apprenticeships and secure jobs in our communities. Retaining our young people is one of the keys to the sustainability of the Uplands.

The table below sets out NULAG's anticipated targets, outcomes and outputs from the above projects. Based on national benchmarking figures, we aim to deliver 69 projects and generate 74 new jobs in the Uplands over the lifetime of the LEADER programme. This compares with our outturn figures of 79 projects and 40 jobs in the last LEADER round. Average grant size is expected to be £25,821, compared with £24,000 in the last round of LEADER. The average cost of each job created is expected to be £22,716.

Outputs Submission Table

Local Action Group:	Northumberland Uplands
Accountable Body:	Northumberland County Council

LEADER Policy Priority	RDPE expenditure per FTE job created (£)	Average RDPE grant size (3)	Relevant CMES output indicators for LDS application	End of programme forecast (by December 2020)
Support for increasing farm productivity	61,011	29,884	Total RDPE expenditure	252,150
			Number of projects supported	8
			Jobs created (FTE)	8
Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification	11,931	19,951	Total RDPE expenditure	588,350
			Number of projects supported	30
			Jobs created (FTE)	42
Support for rural tourism	32,477	31,764	Total RDPE expenditure	336,200
			Number of projects supported	10
			Jobs created (FTE)	10
Support for culture and heritage activity	55,991	28,165	Total RDPE expenditure	168,100
			Number of projects supported	6
			Jobs created (FTE)	3
Provision of rural services	33,272	23,378	Total RDPE expenditure	252,150
			Number of projects supported	11
			Jobs created (FTE)	7
Support for increasing forestry productivity	77,045	21,788	Total RDPE expenditure	84,050
			Number of projects supported	4
			Jobs created (FTE)	4
			Total RDPE expenditure	1,681,000
			Number of projects supported	69
			Jobs created (FTE)	74

3.5 Sustainability appraisal

NULAG has considered the core sustainability issues as far as they affect the LDS. A summary of these considerations is provided below.

Economic

The focus of the LDS is on making a contribution to the sustainable development of the economy in the Northumberland Uplands. This will be achieved through:

- Ensuring a future for the key economic activities that sustain and enhance the fabric of the area.
- Helping businesses to expand the scale and types of activity that they undertake, contributing to long-term growth.
- Identifying new ways that additional economic activity can be brought into the area.
- Focusing LEADER support on activities that have a long-term future, and are not grant dependent in the medium term.

The LAG intends to act as a catalyst for the introduction of further resources in addition to LEADER to promote the development of the area.

Environmental

The area has rich environmental resources in the Northumberland National Park, Hadrian's Wall, Kielder Forest Park and Northumberland International Dark sky Park. All initiatives through the LEADER programme will aim to work with and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area. Most of the private sector economic activity (agriculture, field sports and tourism) is dependent on maintaining and enhancing the high quality environment.

There is a balance to be maintained between economic growth and environmental sustainability. The productivity gains that are intended to result from the Programme, especially over land use, will therefore be focused on the more effective harnessing of resources to reduce costs and increase efficient working.

We will also seek to encourage live/work activities, including rural growth hubs, that contribute to a reduction in commuting times and distances, which are higher in the Uplands than they are in both England and Northumberland as a whole.

Additionally, an important focus of the LDS is on ways in which the exceptional natural resources of the Northumberland Uplands can be best used to contribute to the economic development of the area. It is therefore essential that the positive aspects of this environment are protected while new initiatives are introduced, and this will be an active part of the consideration of projects.

Clearly, some projects, such as renewable energy, will also make a direct contribution to the mitigation of climate change, as will the responsible husbandry of woodlands.

Social

The LEADER approach is about helping rural communities to thrive and prosper through the injection of resources at grass roots level. Importantly, its contribution towards the maintenance of essential local services and wellbeing of communities means that rural communities will continue to support a socio-economic mix, capable of supporting a range of local activities.

Our LAG structure will also help to ensure wider participation in the development processes, involving as wide a range of businesses, individuals and organisations as possible, contributing to the development of local civil society.

3.6 Proposals for co-operation activity

NULAG has agreed the following wording with LEADER Linne which will be used in their Local Development Strategy.

From May 2010, NULAG and LEADER Linne in Småland, Sweden have had a partnership agreement and have collaborated, with great benefit to both partners, on many projects. These have included youth exchanges, links between community-run village shops, LAG exchanges and a joint visit to Brussels to increase our knowledge and contacts in the EU, fishing, and exchanges between hippotherapy, forestry, tourism and basketry businesses. Both LAGs are keen to build on this and their excellent working relationships in the next round.

There were few examples of transnational collaboration in the previous LEADER round. The Linne/NULAG partnering is a shining example of what this form of collaboration can deliver. LEADER Linne and NULAG would like to renew our partnership agreement, share our experience of trans-national co-operation with other LAGs and explore the possibility of jointly co-operating with third country LAGs.

The two LAGs have identified the following areas for further co-operation:

Young people

Both LAGs agree that the future of their areas belongs to young people. Exchanges have up-skilled over 50 young people from both countries through training and work placements and enabled some to secure jobs. We aim to continue this work, focussing on the agricultural and forestry sectors, food production and processing.

Renewable energy

We shall promote lifestyle changes in order to reduce the waste of natural resources and promote their optimum use by recycling, permaculture, bio-energy and local food production. This will need animators and links to expert advisors in the 2 countries to drive the programme.

SMEs and micro-businesses

Links between SMEs and micro-businesses could benefit both areas through the exchange of ideas and best practice. This would build on previous work and extend into new rural business sectors.

Tourism

Special interest tourism in outdoor activities eg bird-watching, cycling, fishing, walking holidays could be encouraged through a joint forum between Småland and Northumberland. This would focus on achieving longer stays and improving visitor welcome practices.

Broadband

Investigate how the use of broadband in service delivery in our areas could improve the lives of rural residents eg by delivering healthcare, supporting isolated elderly people and making it easier for people to work from home.

Fuel supplies

The cost and availability of fuel and private transport in rural areas is a considerable drain on residents' budgets. In the New LEADER round, NULAG part funded an unmanned fuel pump at Kielder. There is a 'village pump' movement in Sweden, promoted locally and nationally by the national body 'All Sweden Shall Live'. NULAG and other British LAGs could learn from the Swedish experience. NULAG would like to work with other LAGs on this, as well as in Northumberland.

Elderly people

Both the old and the young can be isolated in remote rural areas. We would like to encourage inter-generational projects which promote understanding and social cohesion.

NULAG will build on the existing good working relationships with the adjoining Coast & Lowlands LAG, North Pennine Dales LAG and the Scottish Border LAG, to deliver best value from LEADER investment through joint projects and programmes. We also look forward to working with other UK LAGs as appropriate and where it is beneficial.

4. Management and Administration

4.1 NULAG's Accountable Body

Northumberland County Council (a unitary Local Authority) will undertake the role of Accountable Body for both the Coast and Lowlands and Northumberland Uplands LAG's. Having undertaken this role within the 2007-13 LEADER programme it has developed considerable experience, capacity and processes which will be utilised to ensure delivery of a compliant programme in 2014-20. In order to maximise efficiencies the Accountable Body will be responsible for the employment and management of all staff working on the LEADER programme. The staff referred to within the NDF as LAG staff (LAG Programme Officer and Administration Officer) will be integrated within the Councils Corporate Programmes & External Funding Team, along with other staff supporting the LEADER programme,.

Northumberland County Council will be responsible for the delivery and successful conclusion of the programme on behalf of the LAG. Operating in compliance of the National Operating Manual it will ensure that systems and processes are implemented and adopted within the LAG, Grant Beneficiaries and the Council to ensure that financial propriety and compliance is observed in the delivery of the programme.

Although the LAG's within Northumberland are not currently constituted legal entities, the Accountable Body and LAGs have agreed to develop and enter into an SLA and Statement of Arrangements which will set out the respective roles, responsibilities, behaviours and working arrangements required of both organisations.

The functions of the Accountable Body will include:

- Employment and management of all staff working on the LEADER programme.

- Entering into the legal funding agreement with DEFRA/RPA.
- Supporting the LAG to deliver its LDS through developing project proposals and animation within their communities.
- Ensuring that project appraisals are undertaken and that the LAG has all required information to enable it to make compliant and consistent approval decisions.
- Issuing Grant Offer Letters in its name to approved projects.
- Receiving, checking, verifying and recommending claims for payment.
- Undertaking monitoring and inspection visits.
- Acting as the primary point of contact with DEFRA/RPA for the delivery of the programme.

The Accountable Body and LAG have agreed a draft budget for management and administration (i.e. the 18%) which allow for delivery from January 2015 – December 2020. These budgets are considered to be the minimum required for delivery of the programme and are being subsidised by the Accountable Body which is providing essential functions and facilities on a no cost basis. The budgets cannot be finalised and finally agreed until the LAG LEADER allocation is confirmed by DEFRA, and the salary grade for the LAG Programme Officer is confirmed by NCC HR. If confirmed allocations are insufficient to meet the budget required, further discussions will be needed between the Accountable Body, DEFRA and the LAG to agree how the programme can be delivered.

4.2 Project development and assessment procedures

Project development and assessment processes will take account of the requirements within the National Operating Manual especially for separation of duties and conflict of interest.

The LAG will be led and supported by the LAG Programme Officer to undertake animation within their area. This should bring forward either ideas or projects for consideration for LEADER funding. The LAG Programme Officer and LAG members (following training) will provide advice and support to applicants to enable them to complete the Expression of Interest (EOI) form. This will be assessed at a high level by the LAG Programme Officer for eligibility, fit with LDS and deliverability within the programme period. EOI's will be considered by the LAG, and if endorsed will be invited to submit a full application. For unsuccessful EOI's the LAG may undertake a signposting role to other funding schemes and delivery mechanisms.

The LAG Programme Officer will provide advice and support to applicants on the completion of the application form and LEADER requirements once approved, this may include sign posting to potential match funding. It will remain the applicant's responsibility to develop the project and complete the application form, which should ensure separation of duties and conflicts of interest in respect of the role of the LAG Programme Officer.

Upon submission of the application, the LAG Programme Officer will undertake a completeness check and undertake the strategic fit element of the appraisal. The remaining technical appraisal and due diligence will be undertaken by a specialist appraisal officer within the Accountable Body.

The completed technical appraisal will be submitted to DEFRA for their decision on whether the project can be supported by the LAG.

The LAG Programme Officer will prepare a summary report for consideration by the LAG which includes key points within the Technical Appraisal and any comments from the Accountable Body. The final decision to support the project will be made by the LAG, which will develop and agree their decision making process prior to the start of the programme.

4.3 Claims and payments

The Accountable Body will undertake the checking and verification of claims for the LEADER programme. This will adhere to the requirements of the National Operating Manual, which it is hoped will include requirements which are proportionate to the project value. Following verification, the Accountable Body will submit a payment recommendation to the RPA to enable payment directly to the project organisation.

The Accountable Body will be responsible for identifying all irregularities, reporting these to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and if required by the programme regulations applying financial penalties.

Due to the reduced staff resource available and to maximise efficiencies the Northumberland County Council would like to discuss with the RPA the potential to stagger the claim and reporting periods for projects.

The majority of projects will submit claims on a quarterly basis; however in exceptional circumstances monthly claims will be offered to projects. As ROD and CAP-D do not have the functionality to produce and issue appropriate claim, monitoring and progress reports to projects, Northumberland County Council will use an existing customised database HANLON for this purpose.

All expenditure on the management and operation of the programme, including direct expenditure for the LAG (i.e. the 18%) will be recorded within the Council's revenue ledger accounts which will be auditable to bank statement level. Quarterly budget reports will be provided to the LAG for information.

4.4 Communications and publicity

NULAG will develop a communication strategy and plan for the duration of the new programme, based on its previous successful strategies.

Our communication aims and objectives will reflect the priorities of the Local Development Strategy and the plan will evolve and support the specific activities as they develop across the programme years. We will encourage quality applications to NULAG; create greater awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the value and potential of the work of NULAG, its partners and stakeholders and DEFRA and stimulate local development by celebrating and sharing the success of the RDPE programme in the area.

We will define our target audiences and key messages and our communication methods will be carefully targeted, given the resources available to us. Our methods will include:

- Regular social media activity, continuing with our existing Twitter and Facebook accounts and an up-to-date website, including the migration of the current website materials.

- Regular e-bulletins shared with the wider community through key partner organisations and parish councils.
- LAG members actively sharing and promoting key messages through their own networks; social media, local magazines, etc.
- Distributing press releases developed by NULAG, applicants and stakeholders in line with a PR plan.
- Individual or group meetings with key stakeholders.
- Open forum meetings with the general public.

This activity will be influenced by the Programme Officer, coordinated by the NULAG Executive and led by the Communications Champion.

5. The NULAG Financial Plan

5.1 Profiling rationale

Our proposed expenditure for each year, by measure, is included in the financial profile on the following page. We have profiled our proposed expenditure to fit with our priorities and with the LEADER expenditure profile within the Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020.

The programme is currently profiled to be delivered over a 6 year period from January 2015 to December 2020. This has mainly been determined by the resource requirements for delivery and management and the period in which the available management and administration can sustain this. Once allocations are awarded, the actual length of the programme will be confirmed.

In determining the programme period, NULAG looked at a number of options. Based on our experience from the 2008-2013 programme, which was successfully delivered over 6¼ years from October 2008 (including transition), it was felt that 6 years was a realistic balance between available resources and the time required to implement the LDS.

5.2 Overall funding profile

LEADER 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy Application Financial Profile



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

1. Applicant Details

Local Action Group:	Northumberland Uplands
Accountable Body:	Northumberland County Council

2. Financial Profile - Note profile based on payment by RPA

Policy Priority	Expenditure Forecast (£)							Total programme
	Financial Year							
	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	
Support for increasing farm productivity	0	25,215	37,822	63,038	75,645	37,822	12,608	252,150
M4: Investments in Physical Assets	0	15,129	22,694	37,822	45,387	22,694	7,564	151,290
M6: Farm & Business Productivity	0	10,086	15,128	25,216	30,258	15,128	5,044	100,860
Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification	0	58,835	88,253	147,088	176,505	88,253	29,418	588,350
M4: Investments in Physical Assets	0	41,185	61,777	102,961	123,554	61,777	20,592	411,845
M6: Farm & Business Productivity	0	17,651	26,476	44,126	52,952	26,476	8,825	176,505
Support for rural tourism	0	33,620	50,430	84,050	100,860	50,430	16,810	336,200
M4: Investments in Physical Assets	0	13,448	20,172	33,620	40,344	20,172	6,724	134,480
M6: Farm & Business Productivity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M7: Basic Services & Village Renewal in Rural Areas	0	20,172	30,258	50,430	60,516	30,258	10,086	201,720
Provision of rural services	0	25,215	37,822	63,038	75,645	37,822	12,608	252,150
M4: Investments in Physical Assets	0	5,043	7,564	12,608	15,129	7,564	2,522	50,430
M7: Basic Services & Village Renewal in Rural Areas	0	20,172	30,258	50,430	60,516	30,258	10,086	201,720
Support for cultural and heritage activity	0	16,810	25,215	42,025	50,430	25,215	8,405	168,100
M7: Basic Services & Village Renewal in Rural Areas	0	16,810	25,215	42,025	50,430	25,215	8,405	168,100
Support for increasing forestry productivity	0	8,405	12,608	21,013	25,215	12,608	4,203	84,050
M4: Investments in Physical Assets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M6: Farm & Business Productivity	0	4,203	6,304	10,506	12,608	6,304	2,101	42,025
M8: Investments in Forest Area Development and Improvement of the Viability of Forests	0	4,203	6,304	10,506	12,608	6,304	2,101	42,025
Minimum Running costs and animation required for delivery of programme to Dec 2020 (equates to 19.7% of mid point indicative)		80,628	73,973	75,633	70,935	61,628	49,616	412,413
Adjustment to M&A to bring within 18% of Indicative Mid Point Allocation								-43,413
Grand Total	0	248,728	326,123	495,883	575,235	313,778	133,666	2,050,000

5.3 Use of grants, procurement or other types of financial support

NULAG will use both grants and where appropriate procurement to deliver the programme. If procurement is used, the Accountable Body will undertake these on behalf of the LAG.

NULAG will explore opportunities to work with other LAGs to deliver joint initiatives. If procurement is the most appropriate way to deliver these, one Accountable Body will be agreed to undertake the procurement on behalf of all the LAG's involved.

NULAG very much welcomes the opportunity to work with DEFRA to develop and explore opportunities for the use of a delegated grants type fund. Given the restrictions on management and administration costs which directly impact on the number of projects which can be managed within the programme, a delegated delivery method is seen as essential if a number of smaller grants (under £10k) are to be delivered efficiently.

ANNEX 1 – Outcomes from the NULAG SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Our Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly people & good neighbours • Community spirit • Small, proactive community • Good networking capacity • Active retired residents who possess local knowledge • Regular social events - coffee mornings, lunch club & shopping trips, • Clubs e.g. youth clubs, young farmers club. scouts as well as Yoga, exercise classes, W. I., Bowls & Leek Club • A mixed age community including young families – good intergenerational relationships • Good community cohesion • Good community assets (library, shops, post offices, village halls, pubs, churches, public toilets, play areas, allotments) • Mobile services such as a butcher, Ringtons and a Fish Van • Lots of active local volunteers • Very little crime • Active Parish Councils • Village shows and music festivals that bring the community together and generate local revenue • Local heritage <p>Environment and Local Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picturesque landscape, varied- hills, forest, moorland, rivers • National Park is an area of unspoilt beauty • Remoteness allows a lot of freedom for people living here • Tranquillity • 'Real' places, not full of holiday homes • Diverse wildlife inc. red squirrels • Strong farming community, appropriate farming • St Oswald's Way • Lovely beaches • Unique position on Hadrian's Wall • Dark sky Initiative • Good range of outdoor pursuits- walking, climbing, cycling, fishing, shooting, mountain biking, kayaking, golf <p>Other Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Trust - gives good support to new ideas and to the volunteers • High quality local food production • Proximity of market towns • Mains drainage • Resurgence in traditional crafts • Communications: Vale News, Notice Boards, computers • Bus services including school buses are available 	<p>Transport and Connecting people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation due to high fuel prices and no nearby petrol stations. • Lack of high speed broadband and mobile connection in certain areas – makes working from home impossible for some people • A lack of parking in the villages is a deterrent for tourists • Prolonged road closures e.g. the closure of B6341 • Public transport is poor and expensive to use. Especially lacking in the evening. • Lack of communication about local opportunities, training, support and guidance • Distances across rural areas make it difficult to move products to marketing opportunities • Traffic speeding in the villages <p>Our Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divided community with an ageing population • Lack of care homes for the elderly • Lack of activities/facilities for disabled • Isolation and loneliness • Underperforming shops and village halls • Lack of employment opportunities • Small and inward looking population • Invisible men folk (many have to work away from home) • Lack of a weekly doctor's surgery locally and a lack of defibrillators • Lack of police presence <p>Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of jobs for young people • Lack of social activities for children & young teens <p>Environment and Local Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor road maintenance e.g. potholes • No mains gas in some areas • Lack of affordable housing • Lack of community toilets • Large lorries drive on verges and spoil drainage <p>Managing the Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable housing, especially for younger people • Poor drainage • Large housing developments on Greenfield sites without improved infrastructure • Lack of affordable/social housing to buy or rent • Lack of space to expand industrial facilities <p>Local Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel Poverty • Impoverished councils withdrawing services • Lack of cash points/banks • Lack of good quality hotels/beds is bad for tourism

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Our Local Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new tourist destinations and facilities (spas/cottages/tea shops/local produce restaurants/cash points/toilets/Dark Skies camps & pavilions) • Improve tourism marketing • Develop a business hub and a coordinated approach to local business support and development • Open a craft centre to sell local wares • Set up a community run business e.g. bakery • More effective use of natural resources to improve the local economy e.g. sheep's wool <p>Transport and Connecting people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small businesses need improved broadband connection, Wi-Fi, and improved mobile signals • Set up a Community Transport Scheme • Develop a network for electric bikes / cars / people carriers • Improve cycle paths, roads and pavements • Increase parking provision to enhance tourism opportunities <p>Managing Our Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow Community access to private gardens for allotments. Give more people access to fresh vegetables. <p>Environment and Local Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a community energy project e.g. woodchip heating/hydro. • Water bottling- a local farm diversification project • Establish solar panels for a community project, providing electricity for the grid. Money generated could set up a heritage centre for the local community & tourists. <p>Our Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade village halls • Establish more residential homes as well as social groups/lunch clubs for elderly, lonely people • A community worker for village is needed, they could set up projects to connect people • Set up a mental health project combining crafts, gardening, and a green gym. • Develop non-competitive craft forums/co-ops • Support Existing Community Services and festivals • Set up a community run travelling shop. This could travel around the uplands selling local produce, basic goods, crafts. <p>Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a co-ordinate youth group connecting young people throughout the uplands. • Improve play and youth facilities • Child care improvement 	<p>Managing the Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large wind farms with no community benefit • Second home culture is destroying communities, lots of empty properties turns places into 'ghost' towns • No investment in infrastructure • Inappropriate developments in the countryside • Lack of affordable housing • Digging & building restricted on archaeological grounds • Use of agriculture land for housing <p>Local Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased fuel costs • Public sector cutbacks & closure of local shops, businesses, health services (doctors surgeries) • Lack of support for voluntary organisations • Lack of <u>core</u> funding for organisations/charities/voluntary groups/SME's • Road closures affecting tourism • Too much tourism • Supermarkets threaten smaller businesses • Seasonal and 0 hour contracts <p>Our Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime from travelling criminals • Social isolation • Lack of venues to sell crafts • Ageing population • Westminster has no concept of rural life up here • Health risks to teenagers who smoke • Job Centre is far away and gives no help and has no consideration for its clients. • Volunteering fatigue • Economic migration <p>Transport and Connecting people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of mobile phone signal and removal of phone boxes • Poor broadband <p>Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of employment forcing young people to move away from the area <p>Environment and Local Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of roads i.e. pot holes • Environmental threats, e.g. grey squirrels, litter, alien species, habitat loss, drainage problems • Flooding • Falling trees • Poor weather affects tourism and small businesses <p>Other Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asda/Tesco/Sainsbury deliveries • Scottish independence

ANNEX 2 LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Beith, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

21 August 2014
Our Ref: AJB/MK

Dear Sir,

As one of the two MPs for the Northumberland Uplands area, I wish to express my support for Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group and I look forward to working with NULAG again. They have achieved remarkable success in the last round of LEADER and I am impressed with their understanding of the sparsely populated Northumberland Uplands communities and businesses, and the way they are preparing their strategy for the next LEADER round.

Commenting on Section 5.3, I support NULAG's aim to maximise the effectiveness of their funding. The nature of the Northumberland Uplands means that a comparatively small grant can bring a big economic benefit; however, the current funding regime makes small grants prohibitively expensive. I therefore urge that Defra should allow for a fast track scheme or the option of bundling smaller projects into one with a Delegated Grant Scheme which would save on management & administration costs and make an enormous difference to the area. A restriction to large grants alone would disadvantage large swathes of the Uplands where large grants are either inappropriate or not likely to draw in relevant match funding.

On training, the Defra policy priorities for LEADER (2014 to 2020) include support for increasing farm and forestry productivity. It is of great concern in the Uplands that funding for essential training in these sectors, required by law, e.g. chainsaw training, has been explicitly excluded. While I understand other funding streams apart from LEADER are earmarked for training, to date this excludes such essential training. In order to promote jobs and growth, I ask that Defra look into this issue, and if not allowing this kind of funding through LEADER, activates other funding streams to this end.

Yours sincerely
Alan Beith

Please reply to: Constituency Office, 54 Bondgate Within, Alnwick NE66 1JD
Tel. 01665 602901

GUY OPPERMAN MP

- Protecting the Green Belt
- Championing our NHS
- Fighting for rural services
- Supporting the Living Wage



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



As one of the two MPs for the Northumberland Uplands area, I wish to express my wholehearted support for Northumberland Uplands Local Action Group and I look forward to working with NULAG again. They have achieved remarkable success in the last round of LEADER and I am impressed with their understanding of the sparsely populated Northumberland Uplands communities and businesses, and the way they are preparing their strategy for the next LEADER round.

Commenting on Section 5.3, I strongly support NULAG's aim to maximise the effectiveness of their funding. The nature of the Northumberland Uplands means that a comparatively small grant can bring a big economic benefit; however, the current funding regime makes small grants prohibitively expensive. **I therefore urge that Defra should allow for a fast track scheme or the option of bundling smaller projects into one with a Delegated Grant Scheme which would save on management & administration costs and make an enormous difference to the area.** A restriction to large grants alone would disadvantage large swathes of the Uplands where large grants are either inappropriate or not likely to draw in relevant match funding.

Furthermore, I would like to comment on training. The DEFRA policy priorities for LEADER (2014 to 2020) include support for increasing farm and forestry productivity. It is of great concern in the Uplands that funding for **essential training in these sectors, required by law, e.g. chainsaw training, has been explicitly excluded.** While I understand other funding streams apart from LEADER are earmarked for training, to date this excludes such essential training. In order to promote jobs and growth, I suggest that Defra urgently addresses this and if not allowing this kind of funding through LEADER, activates other funding streams to this end.

*Guy Opperman M.P.
for Hexham 18/8/14*

Working hard for Hexham, Prudhoe, Ponteland and Tynedale

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