



South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership LEADER Programme 2007-13

Evaluation

November 2015

Lanarkshire LEADER Programme

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This document has been prepared by the Rural Development Company and Rural Development Trust.



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Background

LEADER provides rural communities in the EU with a method for involving local people in steering the future development of their areas. The approach is based on the premise that development strategies are more effective and efficient if decided and implemented at a local level by local partnerships. In South Lanarkshire this approach has been managed by the South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership (SLRP).

The name LEADER is a French acronym “Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale” and as this suggests, it aims to link actions between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of rural development. A key aspect of the approach is the way in which it encourages and supports the development of projects in a hand-on manner. This differentiates it from other support programmes which do not have this ‘animation’ element. The animator works with the applicant to develop the project and an application for financial support comes in towards the end of this process rather than being the starting point. LEADER also has a strong emphasis on trying out new ideas and learning from each other through collaboration and co-operation between areas, communities, businesses and organisations.

In Scotland the LEADER Programme is one of the delivery strands of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). At a local level it is used as the mechanism for implementing the South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership’s , ‘Working Towards Sustainable Rural Communities’ Local Development Strategy.

This strategy focused on five themes:

- Developing local communities
- Enhancing environmental assets
- Improving rural transport
- Growing business and
- Promoting the rural area [tourism]

SLRP was initially awarded £1.47M in LEADER funding from the SRDP Programme to deliver actions on the ground in rural South Lanarkshire in the period 2007-2013, although this was eventually increased to £1.98 million. Between 2007 and 2013 LEADER funding has levered in over £3,765,500 to support projects to the total value of £5,745,587 in South Lanarkshire.

Introduction

The Rural Development Company Ltd was commissioned by the South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership to carry out an Evaluation of 2007-2013 LEADER Programme in early 2014. This was designed as a forward looking evaluation to review and analyse the progress of the LAG and its Local Development Strategy to date and to draw conclusions, highlight pertinent issues and make recommendations for the future delivery of LEADER under the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme. The evaluation was intended to include a review of all monitoring data for completed projects however the central focus related to establishing the added value which LEADER delivers in rural South Lanarkshire. This was to take particular account of the added value delivered through how things are done as what is achieved.

This work was designed to take place alongside the development of the proposals for the new 2014 – 2020 LAG and the new Local Development Strategy. The commission therefore included two main work stages, a technical assistance element and the formal evaluation.

Technical Assistance (TA)

The Technical Assistance element was to be focused on appraising and developing appropriate delivery mechanisms based on an assessment of current delivery arrangements drawing on RDC's highly developed and well informed technical expertise and knowledge. Support was provided directly to the LAG manager and the accountable body, South Lanarkshire Council via meetings, by telephone and by email, this was provided on a call off basis. The TA was to be focused on ensuring that South Lanarkshire could incorporate this thinking into their first draft Local Development Strategy (LDS) submitted to the Scottish Government in March 2014.

Provision was also made for further TA to be provided throughout the remainder of the evaluation to ensure that the whole process remained reflexive and iterative throughout.

The evaluation

The evaluation was designed to utilise a suite of different tools to enable a rounded perspective on the design and implementation of LEADER in South Lanarkshire to be developed. In addition to evaluating the strategy the commission set out to assess:

- The delivery approach;
- The extent of wider strategic integration;
- The context within which LEADER was delivered;
- The relevance and feasibility of the LDS and delivery approach; and through this
- Assess the wider impact.

The main research tools to be deployed included desk research and analysis, project and key informant interviews, case studies and workshops, these tools were designed to integrate with the TA elements.

Case studies

The inclusion of five case studies through which lessons regarding the effectiveness of different practices could be drawn was a critical element and was based on emerging EU, Scottish and World Bank experience. These cases were designed to pick up the effects of the distinctive way in which LEADER has been delivered in South Lanarkshire. This would be done by exploring and illustrating what was actually happening on the ground and demonstrating the interaction between the different elements of the LEADER approach and the needs and communities which they target. The aim was to identify ways in which this could be built upon and improved for the delivery of the future programme.

Modified approach

The work was designed to develop on a broad front with a number of work packages developing in parallel. In the early stages this included the desk research analysis of programme data, initial consultations, case study design and Stage 1 TA. It quickly became evident from these early elements of research, the need for further progress on project delivery and data provision and in particular the stage of LDS and Business Plan development that the provision of enhanced technical assistance was the priority. The early elements of evaluation research therefore directly fed in to this work.

The need for this was then further reinforced by limitations on the available LDS development resource, LDS feedback from the Scottish Government and the inclusion of parts of North Lanarkshire within the LAG area. It was therefore decided that the focus of the commission and the resources applied should shift to concentrate on these elements.

As case study work was already underway and because of their design as coherent and stand-alone elements the focus of the remaining evaluation research was therefore concentrated on the completion of the package of case studies.

The case studies

Purpose

The purpose of the case study approach was to explore and illustrate what is actually happening on the ground providing timely snapshots of the interaction between the different elements of the LEADER approach and the needs and communities which they target. We investigated what the actual impact has been for projects from the LEADER partnership and approach and where there has been added value. We explored issues such as the wider impact of LEADER, how projects have/or have not built community capacity and the sustainability of projects funded. We gave direct consideration to the effects on the different forms of community capital which the approach addresses.

In addition the case studies provided the opportunity to explore what the strategic objectives of the LEADER strategy mean at project level and how well project outputs and outcomes have been addressed. One key part of the case studies was to explore the added value, the leverage that projects have achieved, not just in finance but also in time and effort of project sponsors and LAG members.

Design

A group of five case studies were carefully selected and agreed through discussion with the client on a purposive basis to help demonstrate any added value of the LEADER approach as applied in South Lanarkshire. This was done using the following criteria:

- Type of project sponsor (e.g. public sector, private sector etc.);
- Size of project in terms of total project costs and proportion of LEADER funding;
- Main LEADER fund or scheme;
- Sector or type of activity; and
- Geographic location.

The case studies involved elements of primary and desk research and were structured to contain the following elements:

- Needs; what these were, who was involved, how they were addressed etc.;
- Working with LEADER; awareness of LEADER and the approach, the LDs, the effects of this on the project etc.;
- Activities and impact; the objectives sought, activities undertaken, what was achieved in terms of 'capitals' and what influenced this etc.;
- Legacy; the lasting effects now or anticipated, changes in capacity, new partnerships, threats, possible improvements etc.

A copy of the case study guide is appended at Annex 1.

The cases

The case studies chosen include both individual projects and 'umbrella schemes', strategic initiatives developed by the LAG which support multiple small interventions. The following projects were selected as case studies:

- Developing Local Communities Fund (DLCF)
- Rural Capital Grant Scheme
- Rural Community Heritage Fund

- St Brides Centre Acquisition and Development Project and St Brides Centre Co-ordinator (2 projects)
- Castlebank Horticultural Training Facility

Case 1 Developing Local Communities Fund (DLCF)

Introduction

The Developing Local Communities Fund (DLCF) is operated by The Rural Development Trust under the South Lanarkshire LEADER programme. It is a small grants scheme established to assist rural communities improve their quality of life and economic prosperity and focuses on helping small-scale community based projects that aim to provide local solutions to local problems. A maximum £5,000 grant award is available for capital projects where costs are of a one-off non-recurring nature. The fund is focused on helping local people to participate in or benefit from projects that;

- Improve their living standards
- Develop local opportunities for education and learning
- Provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation or leisure activities
- Promote local heritage or conserve important natural assets
- Promote healthy living
- Improve the environment
- Promote renewable energy or save energy
- Assist in addressing the impacts of climate change
- Enable local people to become more involved in their community
- Encourage co-operation between local communities, groups and people
- Benefit young people, women or the under-employed
- Encourage cross-generational work

This case-study draws on conversations with;

- Yvonne Howley, The Rural Development Trust (<http://www.ruraldevtrust.co.uk>)
- Mary McLellan, New Beginnings
- Gordon McGregor, Paradvatures (www.paradvatures.org.uk)
- Maureen Potter, Access Path Renewal Langlands Moss (<http://www.folm-ek.org/news.html>)

The need for investment

DLCF aims to pump-prime small grant projects and to help LEADER applicants access mainstream LEADER funding. Originally launched as The Local Grant Scheme in 2005 under Leader+, between 2008 and 2014 DLCF supported 104 projects.

South Lanarkshire Council manage funds obtained from wind farm developments through the Renewable Energy Fund (REF). The Rural Development Trust (RDT) allocate 30% of the REF through the DLCF, while the Council use the remaining 70% to fund larger projects. Through the DLCF the LEADER approach is used to manage non-LEADER as well as LEADER applications, i.e. the application process, reporting, monitoring and animation are common for all applications. The REF funding has allowed the RDT to either match-fund against LEADER funds or support projects from outside the LEADER area, e.g. in East Kilbride.

By way of an example of project need, the 'Access Path Renewal Langlands Moss' project was developed to increase access to a 20 hectare wetland site that had previously been largely inaccessible to visitors. Following work to prevent the bog drying out, funded by the South Lanarkshire Council's Countryside and Green Space team, the National Lottery and Scottish National Heritage, the group were keen to enable visitors to access the wetland. Other projects, such as Paradventures, New Beginnings and Biggar Theatre Workshop, needed more sustainable business structures (discussed below).

Working with LEADER

Networking has been a particular benefit of LEADER for New Beginnings. Yvonne Howley, the DLCF Development Officer at The Rural Development Trust, signposted Mary McLellan from New Beginnings to a new social enterprise which repairs furniture, and the two groups now plan to work together in one premises, working with the unemployed and people with mental health challenges. The RDT also put New Beginnings in touch with The Hope Cafe in Lanark, who offer a listening and support service, and the two groups are now running joint training courses for volunteers, such as a suicide alert course and a cookery course for people on a small budget. Yvonne Howley has also assisted the group with several other funding applications.



Shelving built by New Beginnings

LEADER support enabled The Friends of Langlands Moss to bridge a funding gap, after South Lanarkshire Council were unable to fund the group's proposed 'Access Path Renewal' project. Yvonne Howley has subsequently supported the group with other funding applications. For example, after putting in the path a boardwalk was in a state of disrepair and was deemed dangerous, and Yvonne helped the group make a successful £30,000 application to the Renewable Energy Fund to make the necessary repairs.

Activities and Impact

The DLCF has developed broadly in line with expectations, with an anticipated focus on feasibility plans and capacity building. However anticipated support of renewable energy projects has not materialised, due in part to the availability of other support mechanisms, such as Feed-in Tarrifs.

Local governance impacts have resulted from working with organisations to develop more robust legal structure. For example, Biggar Theatre Workshop is now a company limited by guarantee, and LEADER supported the establishment of Paradventures in 2012, a charity born from the experience of Gordon McGregor, a volunteer with 30 years' experience of helping people with disabilities experience adventure in the outdoors. Funding has enabled the training of four volunteers to a 'Working Group Leader' qualification and the establishment of a small office. Networking has again been an added-value of LEADER for Paradventures, as a trainer contact passed on by RDT helped Paradventures develop a business plan, and RDT also sign-posted the group to other funding sources.

The Access Path Renewal at Langlands Moss has resulted in paths that are in near constant use. Recent initiatives related to butterfly restoration and the Scottish Government's Peat land Restoration Fund's 'Bog squad' launch could not have been achieved without the

access pathway. The group then utilised Community Payback, signposted by the Council's Green Space team, to put in paths.

The New Beginnings Lodge Refurbishment project has enabled 30 volunteers to support the recently homeless and impoverished, delivering social, economic and environmental outcomes. For example, volunteers include under-employed people, some of whom have moved on to paid employment elsewhere (economic impact), clients are often isolated (social) and the refurbishment has brought a previously disused building back into use (environmental). The organisation is now established as a charity following the identification of a need for a sustainable management and legal structure, and are being supported in the development of a business plan.

A further example of partnerships developed at the project level involves the Forth Community Resource Centre, a jobs club and pilot project that has developed a formal referral framework with local agencies. The pilot project went on to receive additional LEADER support.

Legacy and Sustainability

DLCF seeks to build the capacity of organisations, with the intention that a more robust voluntary sector will be established of organisations who are able to deliver bigger and better projects as a result of DLCF support. Where appropriate, applicant organisations are encouraged to grow and access mainstream funding.

An example of project legacy is The Friends of Langlands Moss Access Path Renewal project. The group have engaged young offenders through Community Payback, who have helped maintain paths, build four picnic areas and painted signs. Maureen Potter has spoken to various groups, from local schools to the Scottish Parliament, and has contributed to International Union for Conservation of Nature Peat land Restoration research.

The intention is that in the future LEADER will be used for animation, support and project development, while REF will provide grant funding. There continues to be a local need for project development and capacity building, and so DLCF will focus on developing robust projects that have a long-term legacy feeding into REF for capital implementation funding.

Networking, complementarity and leverage, used as a development tool, progression oriented, strategic in that respect

More information can be found at:

http://www.ruraldevtrust.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=11

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Case 2 Rural Capital Grant Scheme

Introduction

Managed by South Lanarkshire Council, the LEADER and Council funded Rural Capital Grant Scheme (RCGS) is a discretionary business grant scheme designed to assist start up and growing companies implement sustainable development and property improvements. Key sectors for support are tourism, rural lifeline services and social economy businesses. This case study considers three projects that have received RCGS support.

- An investment in additional table top structures and a portable heater has enabled John Hannah Growers to expand their operation of the only commercial strawberry grower in the Clyde Valley. Although the anticipated extension of the growing season is yet to be fully realised, production during the existing growing periods has increased as a result of the RCGS investment.
- Investment in a 'walk behind' tractor and chainsaw has enabled Duncan Arthur's Orchard Services to regenerate old orchards in the Clyde Valley, working closely with the Leader+ and LEADER funded Clyde Valley Orchard Group.
- An upgrade of self-catering accommodation at Craigend Bed and Breakfast has enabled Heather Scott to attract new clients.

The need for investment

Before the investment in 2013 John Hannah Growers marketed two strawberry crops, one between April and June and a later one in September. However there was a production gap in mid-summer, and the intention was for the RCGS investment in table top structures and a heater to enable an additional crop to serve existing and new customers during July and August. The RCGS funding requirement for letters of support from existing and potential customers helped establish demand for additional production.



Duncan Arthur set up Orchard Services in 2013 to replant and regenerate old orchards in Clyde valley, working closely with Clyde Valley Orchard Group. There is considerable demand locally to maintain old plum and apple orchards on steep slopes, and opportunity for orchard owners to access Clyde Valley Orchard Development support if they commit to appropriate orchard maintenance. A four wheel tractor is unable to handle such terrain and Mr Arthur witnessed walk behind tractors working effectively in vineyards in Italy and France.

Mrs Scott obtained RCGS support to convert a studio above a double garage into a small self-catering unit. The property is next to a large wind farm, and the identified need was to offer affordable self-catering accommodation to contractors working at the wind farm to complement Mrs Scott's four star Bed and Breakfast accommodation offer. As the only remaining accommodation provider in the area, the demand for affordable self-catering accommodation is considerable.

Working with LEADER

Mr Hannah heard about the RCGS through the Lanarkshire Business Gateway, and received assistance from Sandra Kinnon at South Lanarkshire Council in the preparation of his application. He was not aware of the Local Development Strategy and the LEADER approach did not change the way he planned or implemented the project, although the RCGS requirement for a detailed business plan with his application encouraged him to "have a proper look at the business".

Mr Arthur had previously worked with Chris Parkin through his close involvement with the Leader+ and LEADER supported Clyde Valley Orchard Project. Chris Parkin has been of great assistance to Mr Arthur, helping him formulate a fundable project and guiding him through the funding process. Without Chris's assistance Mr Arthur would not have known that a funding opportunity existed. Mr Arthur was familiar with the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership landscape restoration strategy, and designed Orchard Services to help meet the need for orchard maintenance identified in the strategy.

Mrs Scott first heard about LEADER through Lanarkshire Tourism Association. She accessed LEADER support to upgrade some bathrooms in 2010, and was advised that she would be able to apply again in subsequent years.

Activities and Impact

The table top structures and heater have allowed Mr Hannah to expand his business sooner than he would otherwise have been able to, as without RCGS support any expansion of the business would have resulted in the business experiencing cash flow challenges. To a small extent the investment has enabled Mr Hannah to address the previous gap in production between June and September, but the main benefit has been an increase in production during the existing growing seasons to better fulfil existing customer's demand rather than the anticipated lengthening of the growing season detailed in his RCGS application. The items were purchased towards the end of the 2013 growing season, and it will only be late 2014 that their impact on turnover can be calculated (the application had to be resubmitted which delayed the investment by several months), but Mr Hannah estimates turnover will increase by 15-20% as a result of the investment. Mr Hannah has benefited from support from Lanarkshire Business Gateway, to whom he was referred by LEADER following his initial RCGS application, who reviewed and commented on the business plan his accountant had prepared. He has been invited to seminars and meetings to network with other businesses but has been unable to attend as he works off-farm during the day. Mr Hannah spoke to Chris Parkin during the application process but his main contact has been Sandra Kinnon at South Lanarkshire Council.

The investment of a walk behind tractor and heavy duty chainsaw has allowed Mr Arthur to undertake ground clearing, cultivation and chipping in local privately-owned orchards as part of the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership project. The project has developed in line with expectations. There is considerable demand for Mr Arthur's services, including scrub clearance and cultivation. The investment will enable Orchard Services to deliver environmental impacts (better upkeep of orchards and biodiversity safeguarded), economic impacts (protecting employment and assisting the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership in the development of an apple press business through the replanting of trees,

with 700 apple, plum and damson trees planted so far), and social and cultural impacts (members of the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership can now see orchards being replanted following years of discussion).

The Craigend Bed and Breakfast project has enabled the business to offer affordable self-catering accommodation to new customers. The project was held up as it took nine months to obtain a building warrant. The contractor identified in the initial RCGS application was then unavailable, and so Mrs Scott had to resubmit her application and a completion certificate was not received until April 2014. This meant that the main self-catering booking period for 2014 was missed. However, Mrs Scott is optimistic the new self-catering will lead to increased turnover, and customers have so far been different customers to Bed and Breakfast customers, i.e. additional trade rather than displacement.

Legacy and Sustainability

The LEADER investment will enable John Hannah Growers to become amore sustainable business. The intention is that as the business grows it will attract new customers both locally and further afield and provide part-time employment. As production increases, Mr Hannah intends to work with another company who produce tomatoes to jointly attend farmers markets. It is anticipated that by year three the additional income from the increased output and resulting sales to local retailers and farmers markets will allow the company to rent additional land from an adjacent farm for the purpose of erecting further poly tunnels which will result in a significant increase in yield. It is hoped that in 2015 a part-time job will be created and by 2016 either one full-time or two part-time jobs will have been created. Threats to business sustainability include larger growers who flood the market in mid-season, but Mr Hannah is confident he will continue to find a market for all produce.

Mr Arthur is well connected through his involvement with the Clyde Valley Orchard Project, established under Leader+ to help local people to restore and develop orchards in the Clyde Valley. Many small orchard owners are unable to manage their orchards independently, but can apply for a Clyde Valley Orchard Development grant to contract Orchard Services to regenerate their orchard with new trees, conduct sward maintenance, hedge cutting and fruit pruning. The RCGS application process was straight forward although time consuming to complete.

The new self-catering accommodation at Craigend has expanded the business's accommodation offer. However, threats to sustainability include the development of a new wind farm very close to Craigend which will have a detrimental visual impact and may deter potential customers. Indeed Mrs Scott is currently collecting signatures to draw attention to the potential detrimental impact on turnover of recent planning decisions, citing another accommodation provider whose business closed following the construction of a wind farm locally. While LEADER support through the RCGS is appreciated and provides a unique offer to tourist businesses, retrospective claims against project spend are often difficult for small businesses, and Mrs Scott had to borrow funds to pay the contractor before RCGS funding could be accessed.

More information can be found at <https://www.ruralgateway.org.uk/gd/node/493>

Case 3 Rural Community Heritage Fund

This case-study draws on consultations with Chris Parkin (Rural Development Trust), Mike Burgess (Strathaven Town Mill), Roger Lee (Adams Community Trust), Jane Masters (New Lanark Trust) and Anne Carruthers (Forth Community Resource Centre).

Introduction

The Rural Community Heritage Fund (RCHF) was established to assist with the sustainable development and implementation of local natural or cultural heritage and environmental projects. Grants of up to £7,500 have been available for activities associated with project planning and community consultation, and up to £10,000 has been available for works associated with the creation of heritage facilities. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) have provided match funding through a block funding allocation over a three year period to allow the Trust to ring fence funding for natural, cultural and heritage activities. (SNH do not fund management and administration costs so funding is not on a 50:50 basis).

This case study includes the following four projects, drawn from a total pool of 21 projects supported through RCHF;

- New Lanark World Heritage Site Public Search Room
- Allison Green Regeneration Phase 2
- Strathaven Town Mill Design and Feasibility Study
- Inspiring Landscapes

The need for investment

The RCHF was formed in response to the recognition that many funders (such as the Heritage Lottery Fund) do not fund feasibility work. As such it has often been difficult for community organisations to develop ideas into fundable projects. The RCHF has therefore sought to 'pump prime' cultural and heritage projects in light of the recognition in the Local Development Strategy (LDS) that heritage and culture is an under-utilised asset in rural South Lanarkshire. The fund builds on a pilot programme funded by Leader+ which had similar objectives, but has been much more focussed on enabling community organisations to develop their own projects.

By way of specific project examples of needs, Adams Community Trust's Allison Green Regeneration Phase 2 was developed in recognition that important local resources need to be preserved for future generations, and to identify priorities a process of community consultation needs to take place. New Lanark Trust's New Lanark World Heritage Site Public Search Room was developed in response to the need to catalogue and make available to the public an extensive range of material that had been donated or found on site during the mill's restoration. Forth Community Resource Centre Wall Hanging group's Inspiring Landscapes project is a Community arts project which has sought to interpret the local landscape and connect people to the environment through art. The first part of the project



*New Lanark World Heritage Site
Public Search Room*

was part-funded by LEADER, Creative Scotland and the Renewable Energy Fund and involved establishing what interested members of the community actually wanted to do. Through a consultation process it was decided to base the project on a local wind farm, to work through mediums of tapestry, digital photography and creative writing, and exhibit at local art centres, Scottish Parliament and botanical gardens.

Working with LEADER

LEADER's electronic application process includes a short project outline. When applications are received the team at the Rural Development Trust (RDT) allocate them to the most relevant fund. In common with the other LEADER supported funds in South Lanarkshire, the team act as animators and work with RCHF applicants to develop an action plan to turn project ideas into fundable projects. The vast majority of RCHF proposals have been funded, although some projects did not receive LEADER support either because the applicant was unable to obtain match funding for a privately owned building or decided that grant audit requirements were too strenuous. Without RCHF support some projects may have happened eventually but many would have faced long delays and died before they received implementation funding.

All of the organisations consulted with had worked with LEADER previously, for example Forth Community Resource Centre first worked with Leader+ in 2004. Adams Community Trust had previously been supported by the Market Towns Initiative and have been supported by LEADER several times over the last five years in the development of feasibility studies. LEADER support ('a knowledgeable local contact who knew who we should speak to') was of particular value in facilitating relationships with relevant South Lanarkshire Council staff, who now respect the Trust's good reputation. Financial support to flesh out project needs saved time and effort fundraising. The previous chair of the MTI steering group is now chair of Adam's Community Trust providing linkages at a strategic level.

There was a 12 month gap between Leader+ and LEADER, however this was not a huge issue for heritage projects as the Renewable Energy Fund supported Local Capital Grant Scheme (now the Developing Local Communities Fund) helped fill the gap.

Activities and Impact

Although the impact of RCHF feasibility work is not aggregated at the programme level, most feasibility studies have (or will) lead to implemented projects. For example;

- Strathaven Arts and Heritage group's Strathaven Town Mill Design and Feasibility Study has enabled a £500,000 application to be submitted to the recycling company Veridor for part of the mill's refurbishment, resulting in a new cultural facility for the local community. (The overall cost of the refurbishment is £2 million.) The application is currently on a shortlist of projects, and if successful would require 10% match funding. The group have received LEADER support at various times, including a grant in order to repair a boiler in 2013. Chris Parkin has facilitated several valuable networking opportunities for the group, including visits to St Brides in Douglas and Biggar Corn Exchange to share ideas on maintaining project momentum. The group's recent achievements include building a partnership with a local museum group which resulted in two exhibitions about the mill and successful lobbying to get the mill included in the Council's town conservation area. LEADER support (financial,

moral and practical support from Chris Parkin) has been a contributing factor in revitalising the group's management committee, which now has 16 members from across the local community.

- Adams Community Trust's Allison Green Regeneration Phase 2 has involved a feasibility study that has helped the Trust to consult with the community, establish demand and list nine tiers of projects by priority. A specialist consultant helped compile project specifications for the two projects identified as highest priority in order to enable capital funding applications to go forward. The first project will replace an old bridge with a more appealing alternative which will encourage people to come and enjoy the area and surrounding green space. The second is for a Church spire's lighting which will help portray Alison Green in a more attractive way and help make people feel safer and more comfortable in the dark and improve the look of the area. Both projects will help make the area more appealing and easier to utilise which will hopefully have a positive economic impact. Adams Community Trust have worked with LEADER previously, and Chris Parkin has acted a project consultant, helping to 'oil the wheels' with South Lanarkshire Council, especially in earlier capital funding applications.
- Opened in March 2013, the New Lanark World Heritage Site Public Search Room has sought to enhance the experience for visitors, from academic researchers to family visitors. The project has involved a lengthily cataloguing process by project volunteers, which itself required the development of a volunteer training programme to train volunteers to the UK national standard, and the purchase of furniture, PCs, and specialist archive materials. Volunteers are able to specialise in areas of interest to them; of the three current volunteers, one is interested in family history, another architectural drawings, and up to ten volunteers are provided with on the job training at any one time. Three volunteers who have been supported through the project have found jobs partly as a result of volunteering, one as an educational assistant for the New Lanark Trust. In the first year 150 people used the search room. LEADER funding has also enabled participation in themed exhibitions, the first of which was in February and was themed on homecomings. As a result of the project the Trust now loan material to local organisations such as Lanark Library for joint exhibitions, and have developed stronger research links with Glasgow University and Historic New Harmony, in Indiana. Without LEADER funding the project wouldn't have happened, and without broader support other LEADER group visits which have raised awareness and promotion wouldn't have taken place, and match funding would have been more difficult to source.
- Forth Community Resource Centre Wall Hanging group's Inspiring Landscapes project has had a positive governance impact. Participation in the project steering group's sub-groups has raised participants' confidence and ambition for future projects. The development worker at Forth Community Resource Centre has worked with each sub-group to try and obtain funding for their project ideas. For example, one sub-group has accessed Awards for All funding to develop stone and wood bench carvings and positioned them on a satellite walk to encourage walking. Inspiring Landscape's structured workshops have also had a positive social impact as participants travelled and worked together. Although an assessment of LEADER's impact needs to allow for the fact that Creative Scotland were the main project funder and provided a mentoring service which has had the most significant influence on

project planning and deliver, LEADER's 25% match funding allowed the project to go ahead and the focus on community consultation complemented the way Creative Scotland worked.

RDT staff believe that a connection to the LEADER programme is an important leverage tool with external funders for any community organisation. If a feasibility study is supported through the RCHF or Developing Local Communities Fund (DLCF), even if the identified project doesn't obtain LEADER capital funding, often the organisation successfully obtains funding for other projects through their LEADER experience. The organisation benefits from strong animation and networking opportunities, for example links with the funding team at South Lanarkshire Council.

Legacy and Sustainability

Looking to the future, the team at RDT believe that most RCHF supported feasibility studies will lead to implemented projects, although some organisations are yet to source funding. Forth Community Resource Centre Wall Hanging group's Inspiring Landscapes project has a more subtle legacy, namely enhanced organisational capacity to celebrate heritage. Looking to the future, the team at RDT feel that ring fencing particular elements of the Local Development Strategy is still an appropriate way to deliver funding and that their capacity to run a scheme effectively that meets both European Regulations and Audit Scotland requirements has increased significantly. The exit strategy for the fund is to signpost to the local renewable energy community benefit funds, the only interim funding that is able to provide a bridge between LEADER programmes.

In terms of new partnerships and relationships, the Inspiring Landscapes project has worked with Forth Community Transport to access a mini-bus to take participants to the wind farm where workshops have taken place, and through working with Scottish Power have been able to hold workshops on site as well as in Forth. South Lanarkshire Television recorded school children enacting a Covenanting play, as the site contains a Covenanting monument. However there has not been any networking with other projects as there are few if any comparable projects locally. The Allison Green Regeneration Phase 2 has tried to encourage other local community groups to learn from their experiences but have found it difficult to network with time-poor volunteers from other projects.

When discussing possible improvements to LEADER, one stakeholder explained that their organisation had almost folded several times and that a 'route map' suggesting how sustainable community organisations can be successfully established would be helpful. He had not found Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire a user friendly organisation, but had found RDT staff to be both approachable and pragmatic, although suggested that awareness amongst some other community groups of LEADER support is limited. Another issue identified is the delays often experienced between feasibility work and successful applications for capital funding; Adams Community Trust asked a feasibility study consultant to include a list of potential capital funders to approach but the resulting options were disappointing. Assistance to smooth the links between the feasibility and implementation processes would be helpful.

By way of an example of project sustainability, New Lanark World Heritage Site Public Search Room has very few ongoing costs. The project has increased the capacity of both

volunteers and staff, and other projects at the New Lanark Trust now engage volunteers proactively as a result of the success of volunteer capacity building. The Trust is currently developing a new website which will help to promote the search room even more.

More information can be found at

http://www.ruraldevtrust.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8&Itemid=11

3

Case 4 St Brides Centre Acquisition and Development Project and St Brides Centre Co-ordinator (2 projects)

This case-study draws on consultations with Karen Gillon, St Brides Centre Co-ordinator, and John Gold, secretary of Douglas St Brides Community Group's Management Board.

Introduction

St Brides Centre is now a thriving community facility in the village of Douglas, owned and managed by Douglas St. Brides Community Group, a registered charity.

In 2008 LEADER supported the purchase, upgrading and resurfacing of the car park in front of the St Brides Community Hall, to enable it to be adopted by South Lanarkshire Council. The provision of car parking facilities was part of an essential first phase of a larger development project that would see the hall taken into community ownership and facilities improved. This first stage involved community consultation, options appraisal, business planning, car park acquisition and upgrade.



St Brides Community Hall Car Park

In late 2011, following £1.2 million investment from a range of funders including the Big Lottery Fund, the car park had been upgraded and resurfaced, a new biomass boiler had been installed and the hall's refurbishment was nearing completion. Further LEADER support then enabled Douglas St. Brides Community Group to engage in the fourth stage of the project, namely the employment of a co-ordinator to administer the centre and develop the local market for a two year period, from which point a cash flow forecast suggested that income would be able to cover employment costs.

The need for a car park and centre co-ordinator

The Douglas community is geographically isolated; Lanark is 12 miles away (a bus trip costs over £5) and there is no public transport to Coalburn. There is a particular problem locally of young people leaving school with no qualification and poor employment prospects.

The local communities' desire to develop St Brides Community Hall had previously been established through the Southern Upland Partnership's 'Communities on the Edge' project process of local networking and animation. In January 2008 a detailed feasibility study was conducted to consider the potential development the Hall, followed by the completion of a Business Plan later that year. An immediate priority was the lack of a car park to service the Hall, Church and bowling centre; it had fallen into disrepair over a number of years and been closed by the council due to safety concerns. The lack of access to the three community facilities was having a major impact on the local community, especially older people and people with disabilities for whom walking any distance was a challenge.

The fourth phase of the development involved the employment of a Centre Co-ordinator in 2011. The shift from a village hall to a community facility meant a coordinator was required to promote and manage the facility (including space hire and managing events, the gym and cafe) and animating local community groups and assist them in funding applications.

Working with LEADER

The Management Board of the charity are well connected locally. John Gold, in particular, is well aware of LEADER, having previously worked as project manager on the Southern Uplands Partnership and as Market Town Initiative co-ordinator for The Rural Development Trust alongside Chris Parkin.

As one might expect, the distinctiveness of LEADER is more apparent when considering the coordinator role than the new car park, which was in essence a prerequisite for broader community engagement during the later stages of the Hall's development. John Gold's experience and networking through his previous roles have been valuable, and the development would look very different had it not been for the networking and animation involved in the Leader+ funded Southern Upland Partnership's 'Communities on the Edge' project. This project led to a process of community engagement and a focus on self-help that was different to the community's previous experience of top-down service delivery. When the Community Hall was identified as a priority, the focus was on facilitating the community to enable it to happen.

LEADER funding was pivotal in the appointment of a centre coordinator, as options to match fund BIG lottery in meeting staff costs were very limited. While the process driver was BIG lottery as they were the source of the majority of funding, LEADER helped fill a funding gap towards the end of the process.

LEADER support was also instrumental in securing match funding for the centre's community biomass project in 2010. The project was part funded by Community Energy Scotland, but £200k match funding was proving difficult to find. South Lanarkshire Council had a surplus budget to utilise at short notice, and Chris Parkin put the Centre's management board members in touch. If LEADER had not existed match funding may not have been obtained.

Activities and Impact

Forming key components of the overall development of the facility, the development of the car park and appointment of a co-ordinator helped to meet the project's aim of enhancing the vibrancy of the local community by;

- Providing car parking facilities;
- Securing perpetual ownership of the building and surrounding land;
- Developing and enhancing the building and establishing it as a sustainable community asset;
- Creating a multi-functional space, including leisure facilities, meeting the needs of all in the community and contributing to better health; and
- Generating a sustainable income for the centre.

The project worked to deliver three outcomes based around improved access to services and amenities for Douglas residents, more opportunities for the community to be self-reliant through increased income streams, and opportunities for local people to enhance their skills, knowledge and confidence through participating in activities at the centre.

As a result of the redevelopment of St Brides Centre the residents of Douglas and surrounding area have increased and sustainable access to services and amenities that better meet their needs. These activities include provision of a community cafe with internet access, fitness facilities, childcare facilities and increased opportunities for health promoting organisations. Without LEADER support for a new car park access to the building would have remained poor and phase one of the project may not have been possible, or at the very least would have been delayed. A lack of LEADER financial support to match fund BIG Lottery fund's support for the co-ordinator role would have also presented significant challenges, as without a coordinator the facility would be less well utilised, would have a lower profile locally and community groups would not have access to support for their funding applications.

As one would expect with a project of this size, there have been many unexpected twists and turns along the way. The coordinator role was fully funded for the first year, and then half funded for a second year, with the expectation that rental income would make the role self-sustaining. However, while income has increased month on month over the last two years, the role remains unsustainable without external support, largely due to high costs resulting from a series of ongoing issues with a faulty solar heating system.

The coordinator role facilitates and organizes the centre's activities. The centre is utilised every evening, whether for brownies, cubs, beavers, karate, yoga, dancing, art, zumba, boxing, IT, Tia-Chi, or Photoshop classes. The coordinator helps 'plug the gaps' by identifying local needs and helping to put on classes to meet those needs. The coordinator also helps local groups access funding to make classes more affordable for local people. The LEADER approach has made a difference to the way the co-ordinator works; her role is one of facilitation, signposting and helping groups to help themselves. For example rather than writing funding applications for groups she helps them to write their own. From the start the ethos has been one of local ownership and self-help.

The main impacts of the project are social and economic. There is a problem locally of young people leaving school with no qualification and to an extent courses held at the centre have helped enhance participant's self-esteem and employability. The co-ordinator plans to develop a monitoring system to supplement anecdotal evidence of improved skills, knowledge and confidence amongst course participants. Environmentally the centre may on occasions have reduced some local people's travel to other facilities.

In terms of impact on local governance, there are ten volunteers on the centre's management board and over 30 other volunteers involved in the running of the Centre. However, board member engagement with the LEADER approach is described as highly variable as some members are more accustomed to top down service delivery.

Legacy and Sustainability

Over recent years representatives from many other local projects have visited St Brides. Groups from Strathaven Town Mill and Glenboig have visited recently, for example, and John Gold has spoken at South Lanarkshire Council's Rural Partnership events.

The last two years of ongoing problems with the centre's heating system have presented considerable challenges to the Management Board's enthusiasm and have caused disengagement amongst some board members. Capacity of those involved has not changed to any significant degree due to LEADER. However, there remain opportunities for new faces to be involved in the centre's management and several younger members of the community are keen to engage.

Those consulted believe that while LEADER 'packs above its weight', at times it remains a small voice fighting against stronger forces, especially amongst those on the Board who do not fully grasp the implications of a bottom-up approach. There is a feeling that those who are used to more traditional top-down delivery are unlikely to change their perspective, and such entrenched views continue to present management challenges as the centre works towards a sustainable financial position.

Those consulted believe that for LEADER the challenge locally is for the programme to be more visible to increase awareness amongst the community. The opportunity for LEADER support is not as well-known as it might be, and some groups and individuals have benefited more than once while other groups may be unaware of the programme. At times there is an over reliance on 'knowing the right people'.

More information can be found at <http://www.stbridescentre.co.uk/>

Case 5 Castlebank Horticultural Training Facility Implementation

Consulted with Sylvia Russell, Chairperson of Lanark Community Development Trust.

Introduction

Lanark Community Development Trust has been supported in the building of a new Horticultural Training Facility as part of the regeneration of Castlebank Park, Lanark. Phase one started in October 2013 and finished in February 2014, with the centre opening in May 2014. (Phase two, the planned conversion of a saw mill building, is yet to obtain funding.) LEADER financial support of £63,000 was received in two stages, the second of which was £13,170 to address a funding shortfall.

The need for a training facility

The need to improve Castlebank Park was identified in 2004 when a local newspaper organised a petition to draw South Lanarkshire Council's attention to the park's poor condition and collected over 2000 signatures.

Following its establishment in 2007 and incorporation in 2009, Lanark Community Development Trust's first project was the Lanark Town Centre Study, which sought to establish community priorities and needs through a community consultation and engagement programme supported by external facilitators. Through this process the Trust engaged widely with local businesses, community groups, public agencies and the wider local community through a series of interviews and community workshops. The outcome of this work was a prioritised Action Plan and the document has since guided the Trust's activity. Following on from this study the Trust were successful with a £1.2 million Heritage Lottery application to renovate the entire Castlebank Park, but funding was conditional on a commitment from South Lanarkshire Council which unfortunately was not forthcoming due to the cost of repairing the park's terraced gardens, and so the whole project was withdrawn.



Castlebank's new facilities facility

The Castlebank Horticultural Training Facility Implementation project is in essence part of the original Heritage Lottery project, specifically repairing a derelict saw mill building and converting a disused tennis court into an accessible growing area. Lanark Community Development Trust have successfully negotiated with the council to lease the building and tennis court on a 20 year lease and received over £200,000 funding from the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) to establish a growing area and employ a Horticultural Education Officer for an 18 month period. However the CCF do not fund work on leased buildings, and having been turned down by the National Lottery's Community Spaces Fund in February 2013 the project was again facing severe difficulties. LEADER filled a funding gap created by a need to restructure the full funding package for the facility and the tendered costs coming in significantly over estimate. LEADER enabled the project to proceed in a sustainable form, specifically with toilet and washing facilities, as without these it would obviously have been very difficult to offer horticultural training courses and thus the viability of the entire project was under threat.

Working with LEADER

In Spring 2013, Sylvia Russell met with Chris Parkin and explained the funding shortfall. Chris suggested that LEADER may be able to fund the toilet block, with support also received from the Renewable Energy Fund (REF). However the Trust's involvement with LEADER predates this meeting, as Chris was instrumental in setting up Lanark Community Development Trust in conjunction with South Lanarkshire Council in 2007 (formally incorporated in 2009). He also helped secure funding for John Gold, Market Town Initiative Development Officer, who supported the Trust for four years from 2007 to 2011 by helping secure funding, including LEADER, for a wide range of other projects. The Trust held board meetings in LEADER offices and Sylvia Russell was also aware of LEADER through her involvement with Lanark Air-show Centenary Committee.

One of the impacts of LEADER support for the Castlebank Horticultural Training Facility has been the opportunity for LCDT members to participate in LEADER network activities, including speaking about the Castlebank project at the annual Rural Partnership Conferences, and participating in the 'Transnational' project, Community Led Tourism including visiting in the Camargue in the south of France along with other community group representatives in September 2013. The trip was very inspiring and the LCDT participants brought back many new ideas that they are now looking to transfer into new LCDT projects.

Activities and Impact

The Castlebank Horticultural Training Facility aims to offer hands on training courses to a range of community groups. The facility is accredited to deliver Royal Caledonian Horticultural (RCH) courses and is currently working with four primary schools. The Horticultural Education Officer employed through the project, is developing links with secondary schools and Castlebank is one of only three facilities in Scotland able to offer Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) level one and two courses. The aim is for children who might otherwise leave school without a qualification to have an opportunity to gain a horticultural certificate, and therefore enhance their chances of employment in local garden centres. The RHS course, which costs circa £500 per person for level one, will also be available to the general public.

The project has a particular youth focus, specifically school children who are likely to leave school without qualifications. The Trust have also been working with young offenders for specific tasks through the engagement of Community Payback groups, such as painting railings which saved almost £2,000 in contractor charges. There are regularly a group of three or four adults with learning disabilities who come and work with the Education Officer, referred through Social Services. Prince's Trust young people also work in the growing area for a week at a time, forming part of a 12 week course, and mental health support groups also participate on a regular basis.

The growing area includes a child welfare area inside a log-cabin, a facility was not part of the original phase one plan. This was needed to enable RHS approval, and includes lockers, table and chairs and electricity. The lockers were made by Community Payback.

Management of phase one of the project has been far from plain sailing. Retrospective funding has been a challenge for the organisation's cash flow, and the building contractor cannot be paid until REF and LEADER grants have been received. Furthermore the Building

Control Inspector failed wheelchair access to the toilet block and the gravel in the growing area is too large for wheelchairs. Both issues were eventually addressed satisfactorily.

As well as the positive social and environmental impacts discussed above the project has also delivered positive impacts on local governance. For example the project has engaged a large pool of volunteers through 'Lanark in Bloom' who use a polytunnel on site.

Without LEADER animation support the project would probably not have happened at all, and without LEADER capital funding for the project's implementation, the growing area would have been able to establish an income stream from training. Without broader support the Trust would have found it difficult to submit a funding application to LEADER and representatives would not have benefited from learning opportunities during transnational events.

Legacy and Sustainability

While the Trust only lease a small horticultural area and building they have permission from South Lanarkshire Council to use the rest of the park. The group's confidence to do that can be attributed in part to LEADER support. The intention is that Phase Two will see the remaining derelict building converted to a classroom, gallery, cafe, shop and changing rooms. A building warrant application has been submitted, and providing asset transfer is granted from South Lanarkshire Council a funding application to the National Lottery will be submitted. Meanwhile the Trust is exploring with the Home Town Foundation how horticulture and agriculture training courses could be offered jointly. The Trust are working with Climate Challenge to restore the terraced gardens and build a Japanese water garden in a disused pond with voluntary help, including utilisation of Community Payback help, and a local garden centre have donated £250 worth of plants. The Clyde Walkway long distance footpath passes through the park and the Trust intend to create a sculpture trail and arboretum in the park to encourage visitors to enjoy their surroundings.

A 'Friends of Castlebank' group has also been established with 91 members who contribute £10 a year. Lanark Garden Club have taken over a terrace in the park to restore and 'Wild about Lanark', a group who work with children, helped host a recent open day.

Upon the completion of Phase two the Trust intend to generate income by renting out the facility. Although alternative potential funding for the Education Officer's employment costs are being identified for the medium-term, in the longer-term it is intended that course and rental fees will cover employment costs. Clearly the centre's future sustainability will be reliant on the successful marketing of training courses and the completion of Phase two.

Although not exclusively attributable to LEADER support, phase one of the project has enabled partnerships to be developed with the LEADER funded Orchard project, Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership and New Lanark Trust. Although LEADER's policy of retrospective funding has presented a significant challenge for the Trust's cash flow, other than that all involvement with LEADER and the RDT has been positive.

Negotiating solutions, providing and supporting development pathways, the art of the possible and providing a significant role beyond the funding are achievements of LEADER, however there is a need to avoid any perception that LEADER is simply gap filling and care

should be taken to articulate how the project is consistent with the community development and community ownership priorities of the Local Development Strategy.

More information can be found at <http://www.lanarktrust.co.uk/category/projects/castlebank-park/>

Key points/findings

Umbrella schemes

The umbrella schemes managed by the LEADER team are adapted to a range of needs, although their scope is wide ranging they have a central strategic purpose which is pursued through the provision of integrated support. The support provided could be characterised as incremental, i.e. it is at the right scale to help the applicants move their projects to the next level without imposing undue administrative burdens. The means of delivery also enables the development and implementation of links to other organisations and sources of support. The LAG staff play a key role in this particularly in maintaining the focus and through their cross awareness of other support and policy priorities, there is considerable evidence of adaptability and innovation in their approach to achieving the overall objectives. This has resulted in a large volume of small scale assists.

The umbrella scheme approach has enabled the LAG and funding partners to work together effectively in addressing shared priorities, this is particularly evident in the use of blocks of match funding e.g. SNH, Renewable Energy Fund etc. On the down side there is some evidence of a range of delays but by and large these appear to be addressed either through direct or indirect means.

Stand alone projects

LEADER linked support to individual projects has taken a number of different forms and in the case study examples is linked to different stages of project development. This appears to have been sustained between generations of LEADER in some cases. However in some cases e.g. the case of St Brides the roles and effects of this range of involvement are not always clear, notwithstanding the fact it was actually two projects. This suggests a need for greater recognition that LEADER support may not be best targeted at stand-alone one off projects, rather the approach here has been more towards a more programmed form of support with local development partners. LEADER support could perhaps become more 'strategic' and be more clearly planned, defined, coordinated and demonstrated leading to stronger local recognition of its contribution and potential.

In Conclusion

From the examples considered it appears that LEADER in South Lanarkshire demonstrated a considerable ability to address projects across a wide range of scales and scopes. The strategic approach to delivery seems to have focused on an enabling role. The LEADER process has been deployed as a development tool. There is also evidence of a sustained approach with continuity from Leader+. This has resulted in LEADER playing an important local development coordination role contributing particularly to project quality and sustainability enhancements, the leverage of additional funding support and development activity (in some cases by creating the conditions where support can subsequently be accessed), along with strengthened community engagement and involvement.

An important area of potential improvement will be to strengthen beneficiary and community understanding of the LEADER process and associated timelines. The LAG or LAG team

could also usefully provide feedback to other funders re difficulties beneficiaries are facing (e.g. where LEADER has stepped in to address a blockage).

On the basis of the case studies considered here it appears reasonable to conclude that LEADER 2007 – 2014 will contribute a significant and substantial legacy to local development in rural Lanarkshire in terms of increased community participation, capacity and confidence that change can be effected. At the end of the Programme there are a significant number of more effective and enabled organisations than at its start.

Summary of Local Development Strategy Outputs

The local development strategy [Working Towards Sustainable Rural Communities] aims to:

- Increase community involvement
- Conserve, enhance and protect the area's environmental assets
- Increase the use of public transport
- Increase business productivity and
- Increase visitor expenditure
- Tackle rural disadvantage

In order to implement these aims, five strategic themes were identified which in turn linked to the Community Planning objectives. The outcomes set out what the SLRP aimed to accomplish with LEADER [the investment objectives] and the outputs show the quantifiable project achievements and activities.

Theme 1 Developing Local Communities

This theme sets out to help local communities within the LEADER area help themselves. It aims to build new and strengthen existing relationships in order to collaborate with local communities in developing and implementing local solutions that address local priorities. This included support for the preparation of community level regeneration plans and physical improvement programmes alongside building community capacity through learning and knowledge transfer.

Summary of Theme Aims / LEADER Outcomes [what we aimed to do]

- To help communities to help themselves.
- To improve the quality of rural life
- To support rural services and infrastructure through support for local facilities
- To build new and strengthen existing relationships in order to collaborate with communities in developing and implementing local solutions that address local priorities
- To be proactive in supporting the development of community owned assets
- To encourage one stop rural service delivery
- To encourage youngsters to make a greater contribution to rural communities

Achievements /LEADER Outputs [what we have achieved]

1. 158 community groups receiving financial support from LEADER
2. 75 community led capital investment projects supported
3. 101 projects supported that established new facilities/services
4. 55 feasibility studies/ audits/ surveys undertaken
5. 19 community action plans developed
6. 119 community capacity building events held
7. 63 community consultations undertaken
8. 3982 young people supported through a LEADER project
9. 1704 people with support needs supported through a LEADER project

Theme 2 Enhancing Environmental Assets

This theme aimed to conserve and enhance the area's natural and cultural assets and to expand access to and an understanding of the countryside. It recognised that rural South Lanarkshire has a wealth of built, natural and cultural heritage that is currently under- utilised in terms of providing social and economic benefit to local communities

Summary of Theme Aims / LEADER Outcomes

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural assets of the rural area
- To promote public enjoyment of the countryside, raising awareness, facility development and promoting community involvement in environmental and land management
- To increase public knowledge and understanding of environment
- To improve the biodiversity and landscape value of the managed countryside
- To improve opportunities for access and understanding of the rural area
- To develop an understanding and awareness of the natural and cultural assets of rural South Lanarkshire.

Achievements /LEADER Outputs

10. 48 projects supported aimed at environmental enhancement
11. 14 access improvement projects supported
12. 39 outdoor recreation projects supported
13. 12 interpretive materials produced

Theme 3 Improving Rural Transport

This theme recognised that the accessibility of rural transport for all members of the community was a key priority.

Summary of Theme Aims / LEADER Outcomes

- To improve the accessibility of rural transport
- To promote and facilitate partnership working and sustainable and innovative methods of delivery

Achievements /LEADER Outputs

14. 4 rural transport projects generating 6892 additional passenger journeys

Theme 4 Growing our Rural Economy

This theme focused on supporting the promotion of sustainable business, skilled employment and training initiatives building on the strengths of the rural environment to link training opportunities to business growth.

Theme Aims / LEADER Outcomes

- To promote sustainable business growth and establish a diverse economic base
- To support jobs creation and generate employment opportunities
- To assist residents improve their skill levels
- To provide an attractive environment in which to live and work

- To add wider value to rural goods and services, encouraging the development of businesses, including tourism, that capitalise on the high quality of the natural and historic environment
- To build capacity in local communities, through training and skills development and through support for the creation of micro and social economy businesses
- To encourage a culture of learning and skills development to encourage entrepreneurship

Achievements /LEADER Outputs

15. 176 small / micro businesses advised
16. 59 small / micro businesses receiving financial support from LEADER
17. 12 new businesses established
18. 64 social enterprise led projects receiving financial support from LEADER
19. 103 jobs created
20. 479 jobs safeguarded
21. 39 individuals returning to work as a result of services provided by a LEADER project
22. 166 individuals gaining a qualification through a LEADER supported project
23. 1429 individuals gaining new skills or re-training through a LEADER supported project

Theme 5 Promoting the Rural Area

This theme aims to improve the quality and range of the tourism product.

Theme Aims /LEADER Outcomes

- To improve the quality and range of the tourism product
- To improve the marketing of the tourism product
- To encourage community involvement in visitor information provision

Achievements /LEADER Outputs

24. 45 tourism projects supported
25. 73 promotional/marketing activities undertaken
26. 55 events and festivals held

Finally.....

The achievements of the South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership 2007-13 LEADER Programme are significant set against the strategic aims established at its commencement. These are summarised below:

Increase community involvement:

With almost 160 community groups receiving financial support from LEADER, 19 community action plans developed and over 100 community capacity building events being held there is clear evidence of an increase in community involvement in project development and delivery by community based organisations. This, however, should not lead to complacency as there is also evidence that the ability to access and absorb resources is weakest where the needs are greatest and targeted ongoing support will be required in these areas.

Conserve, enhance and protect the area's environmental assets:

Almost 50 projects have been implemented that were aimed at environmental enhancement, including 14 access improvement projects. Much preparatory work has been done through support for feasibility studies and project planning, which will help to ensure a robust and sustainable end product. Complimentary strategic initiatives, such as the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership, have been developed in an integrated manner alongside and with LEADER support and the impact of these in both financial (£1.9 million of Heritage Lottery Fund investment) and impact terms (700 new fruit trees planted as part of work to regenerate the Clyde Valley orchards) should also be recognised.

Increase the use of public transport:

The rural community continues to identify that the biggest barrier to accessing employment, training and services is the poor accessibility of rural public transport. It is recognised that this is difficult to address through a single range of interventions given the issues associated with deregulation, service procurement and sector capacity. There are a limited number of community organisations with the experience and capacity to deliver projects of this nature and therefore the number of projects supported is low although the additional passenger journeys generated is significant at 6892.

Increase business productivity:

This is difficult to quantify in the short term given that productivity needs to be measured over a period and LEADER business impacts are collected at the end of the capital investment prior to increases in growth occurring. That said, the impact of the investments has been significant with 59 small businesses receiving financial support, 103 jobs being created at a cost per job of just over £3,000 and for every £1 of LEADER investment just over £3 in additional private sector funding being levered.

Increase visitor expenditure:

This is measured at a South Lanarkshire level through the STEAM and DREAM® figures provided to the Lanarkshire Tourism Partnership. These figures do not allow for a separate 'rural' expenditure analysis however the South Lanarkshire figures show a positive trend in visitor expenditure over the Programme period. Much of the tourism offer in South Lanarkshire is rural and it is not unreasonable to assume that a similar pattern is occurring across both rural and urban visitor expenditure profiles.

Tackle rural disadvantage:

In order for this to be measured effectively we need to be able to identify a qualitative change or improvement from the baseline statistics present in the area before the involvement of LEADER. This can be measured through an analysis of SIMD statistics,

however the basis for these has changed and comparisons should therefore come with a health warning. Changes are evident within the rural area, some positive and some negative. It is clear that there are still significant variations in the well-being of individual communities. A significant percentage of the total population of some rural communities are classed as Income Deprived (SIMD 2012). There are some deeply disadvantaged areas, which include many of the formerly mining-dependent communities. The level of LEADER funding available over a 6 year period will not effectively address these fundamental issues. However, a strong community sector with community organisations at the heart of social and cultural action in rural communities is fundamental to rural wellbeing. The achievements of the South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership 2007-13 LEADER Programme can be clearly seen as making a significant contribution to equalising opportunity and addressing disadvantage, in all its forms.