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## Mid-term Evaluation of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion

April 2019



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# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Executive summary .....  | i  |
| 1 Introduction .....   | 1  |
| 2 A brief overview of the LEADER approach and its implementation in Ceredigion .....                             | 2  |
| 3 Review of the Local Development Strategy & Expenditure, Outputs and Outcomes to date .....                     | 5  |
| 4 Review of the implementation of the LEADER approach .....  | 17 |
| 5 Supporting applicants & project and implementing the cross-cutting themes .....                                | 26 |
| 6 Project case studies .....   | 35 |
| 7 Conclusion and recommendations .....   | 38 |
| Appendix 1: An overview of the Ceredigion LDS priorities and objectives .....                                    | 42 |
| Appendix 2: A summary of the projects funded in Ceredigion to date .....   | 50 |
| Appendix 3: Performance indicators definitions .....   | 61 |
| Appendix 4: National well-being indicators that are relevant to the Ceredigion LDS priority and objectives ..... | 63 |

# Executive summary

This is the mid-term report of an evaluation of the implementation of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion.

LEADER is a local development method which has been used for over 20 years to engage local actors in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of their rural areas. Key elements of the approach include:

- Development of a multi-sector, integrated Local Development Strategy (LDS) for area;
- Implementation by a Local Action Group (LAG) of local stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sector;
- Staff working to 'animate' the local area - working to 'empower' local people and/or organisations and their willingness to face local challenges or opportunities through the development and implementation of projects;
- Supporting new and innovative approaches to rural development - based on the argument that doing "more of the same" is unlikely to enable an area to reach its full potential and that new solutions to existing problems should be sought; and
- Networking and the potential to work cooperatively with LAGs from other parts of Wales and across Europe.

If correctly applied, the implementation of the LEADER method is anticipated to lead to three types of outcomes:

- Improved local governance (e.g. more local cooperation, greater involvement in the development of ideas to address problems and opportunities);
- Improved social capital (e.g. increased skills and capabilities in the local area); and
- Better results (i.e. better projects being developed and then implemented)

In Ceredigion, LEADER is being implemented by the Cynnal y Cardi LAG with Ceredigion County Council overseeing the administrative and financial operations on their behalf. The total value of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion (2015-2021) is just over £3.45m with 75% being allocated to funding for projects.

## Progress to date

At the time of the analysis for this mid-term review, the LEADER programme in Ceredigion had supported 49 projects, committing just over 60% of the budget allocated to the implementation of projects. There is a substantial range in the value of the LEADER funding committed to projects from a low of just £1,540 to a high of £90,344; the average funding committed to the projects approved at the time of this report is £28,438.

## Key findings and recommendations

The evaluation has found that the priorities and objectives set out within the LDS for Ceredigion are very broad and wide ranging, with very little prioritisation. There has also been a very reactive approach to date with little 'strategy' apparent in the project selection process. There is an argument that this approach reflects the wide-ranging challenges facing the county and the need to cast the net widely in order to identify new and innovative projects and ideas. However, we believe that there is a stronger argument for greater prioritisation going forward to ensure that the remaining funding available is utilised as effectively as possible.

**Recommendation 1:** The potential to introduce greater prioritisation into the LDS to provide a clearer steer for the LEADER programme, the LAG and the animation team over the remainder of the lifetime of the programme should be considered. A clear action plan for the implementation of the LDS and the LEADER programme in Ceredigion should then be developed for the second half of the programme-period.

A limited number of indicators (and associated targets) are in place to monitor the performance of the programme providing limited data on the extent to which the LDS has been delivered and the performance of the programme, especially at an outcome level (most of the indicators are outputs; i.e. activities). There is therefore an argument for introducing additional indicators and a few suggestions have been made within this report.

There is also a disconnect between the ambitions and objectives set out within the LDS (high) and the targets that have been set (low). We would not be overly critical of this as setting targets for a programme such as LEADER (especially at an output level) bears little value and risks an over focus on the part of the LEADER team on achieving those targets as opposed to delivering the LDS or developing the best possible projects. However, the potential to introduce some further indicators to enhance our ability to assess the extent to which the LDS has been delivered should be considered.

**Recommendation 2:** Consideration should be given to the introduction of additional performance indicators for the implementation of the LDS in Ceredigion including both generic indicators and theme/priority specific indicators. The potential to increase the level of monitoring of the implementation of the cross cutting themes at a LAG level should also be considered including regular review and analysis of progress against the themes at a LAG level.

The limited number of programme level indicators and the wide variety in projects supported also means that the programme is dependent to a large extent on the monitoring and evaluation activities being undertaken by the projects to demonstrate its achievements. However, only half the projects interviewed for this mid-term evaluation reported having plans in place for the evaluation of their projects which is of some concern. The quality and robustness of those plans that are in place is also unclear.

**Recommendation 3:** The evaluation plans of the individual projects should be collated by the Lead Body for review by the evaluation team to assess the likely quality of the data that projects are likely to provide. Dependent on the findings of the review, evaluation workshops or training sessions should be provided to projects with a view to maximising the value of the evaluation data that is gathered at a project level.

The understanding of the LEADER approach at a LAG level seems to be generally good which is obviously positive. The relative complexity of the programme does however need to be acknowledged as does the need to ensure that LAG members attend meetings on a regular basis in order to ensure that they have a good working knowledge of the programme and the discussions that have taken place during previous meetings. There were also concerns amongst interviewees about the understanding, or indeed awareness, of LEADER and the role of the LAG amongst key stakeholders outside the LAG.

**Recommendation 4:** Continuity of members/attendance at LAG meetings is important to allow members to build up their knowledge of the programme and activities being undertaken. LAG membership should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that members have the capacity to fully commit to the LAG. Where members are not able to commit adequate time to the LAG, replacement members should be sought.

**Recommendation 5:** A briefing-pack on the LEADER programme and the role of LAG members has been produced and is available to LAG members. This should be used and referred to by LAG members (new and existing) on an ongoing basis to ensure that members maintain a comprehensive working understanding of the programme and the approach that it promotes. Summaries of the programme could be taken from the pack which LAG members could then use when sharing information about LEADER with colleagues and stakeholders.

**Recommendation 6:** In response to concerns about the level of awareness of the programme amongst some key stakeholders, the key role that LAG members in raising awareness of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion should be recognised. LAG members also have an important role in the animation of the local area. The potential to enhance the role of LAG members as ‘ambassadors’ for LEADER should be explored including representing the LAG at events or meeting, leading activities with particular sectors and so on. Members should also be encouraged to note/promote their role as LAG members within their existing networks and activities. The potential to develop a page on the Ceredigion LEADER programme website which lists (and provides contacts details, etc.) for LAG members and their role on the LAG should be considered.

Those interviewed were generally positive about the range of organisations and sector represented at LAG meetings although ‘young people’ and ‘private sector’ were identified as gaps. Those gaps are however, in the experience of the evaluation team, common amongst LAGs; they are not sectors which LAGs find it easy to engage with.

**Recommendation 7:** The LAG should assess whether there are gaps in its knowledge and understanding of the challenges and opportunities in rural Ceredigion (for example, by undertaking a skills audit). If gaps are identified actions to address those gaps (e.g. specific research or consultation activities) should be considered. Specifically, options for engaging young people and the private sector in LAG/LEADER activities (both identified as gaps during the evaluation interviews) should be explored including setting up sub-groups to the main LAG for specific groups (e.g. young people) or sectors (e.g. private sector).

The number of benefits of membership of the LAG identified by interviewees is important to note including the networking opportunity that membership of the LAG provides and the learning from the assessment of such a range of project ideas. Such benefits are an important outcome of the LEADER approach.

‘Amination of the territory’ is a key part of LEADER and the evaluation has found potential for LAG members to engage more fully in the direction of activities being undertaken by the LEADER team on their behalf; the LAG should take greater responsibility for the animation activities being undertaken.

**Recommendation 8:** Animation is a key element of the LEADER approach. Considering the updates to the LDS, there should be a greater focus on discussing, directing and monitoring of animation activities at a LAG level.

**Recommendation 9:** A key objective of LEADER is to foster local economic development. There should therefore be a focus within the animation process moving forward on engaging with and encouraging groups with limited or no previous experience of developing projects and applying for financial support.

**Recommendation 10:** Whilst committing funding is clearly important, care should be taken when committing further funding to ensure that adequate resource remains available to fund ideas and applications generated by animation activities to be undertaken during the next phase of the programme period.

The evaluation has identified the potential for further development in respects of the level of networking taking place both within and outside Ceredigion (especially at a LAG and projects level) and for increased awareness of other LEADER activities in Wales (and beyond) amongst LAG members.

# 1 Introduction

Wavehill have been commissioned to undertake the evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion as delivered by the Local Action Group for the area, Cynnal y Cardi. This is the second of three reports that will be produced as part of the evaluation.

The first report focused on introducing the LEADER approach, its delivery in Ceredigion and setting out how the evaluation will be undertaken. This mid-term evaluation report assesses the delivery of the programme within the county to date with a view to informing delivery over the remaining lifetime of the programme. The final evaluation report, scheduled for April 2021, will have a focus on assessing the outcomes, impact and added value of the scheme.

As well as a review of programme reports and monitoring information, data was collected for this mid-term evaluation from LAG members, the projects that have been supported by the programme to date and unsuccessful applicants for support.

Telephone interviews were undertaken with 17 LAG members and staff during November and December 2018. In addition, the lead researcher for the evaluation attended LAG meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018 (to observe discussions), the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 (to present and discuss emerging findings of the evaluation) and on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (for a workshop to review the Local Development Strategy).

Telephone interviews were also undertaken with 28 representatives of projects supported by the programme as well as 18 unsuccessful or withdrawn applications during November and December 2018 (44 interviews in total<sup>1</sup>). The purpose of those interviews was to explore satisfaction with the application process and the support received, perceptions of project outcomes (to date and in the future) and how those achievements will be demonstrated<sup>2</sup>.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides context for the discussion that follows with a brief overview of the LEADER approach and its implementation in Ceredigion;
- Chapter 3 reviews the Local Development Strategy, expenditure and performance to date;
- Chapter 4 reviews of the implementation of the LEADER approach in Ceredigion;
- Chapter 5 considers the application process and other administrative issues including the cross-cutting themes;
- Chapter 6 includes case studies for three projects funded by LEADER in Ceredigion; and
- Finally, Chapter 7 includes the conclusion and recommendations of this mid-term evaluation report.

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<sup>1</sup> This is more than the sum of the successful, unsuccessful and withdrawn applications as some interviewees had submitted multiple applications.

<sup>2</sup> 44 out of a total of 84 contacts for projects were interviewed (a response rate of 52%).

## 2 A brief overview of the LEADER approach and its implementation in Ceredigion

### Key points

- LEADER is implemented by applying 'community-led local development' and is built on several specific characteristics often referred to as the 'LEADER approach'.
- The total value of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion is just over £3.45m with 75% being allocated to funding for projects.

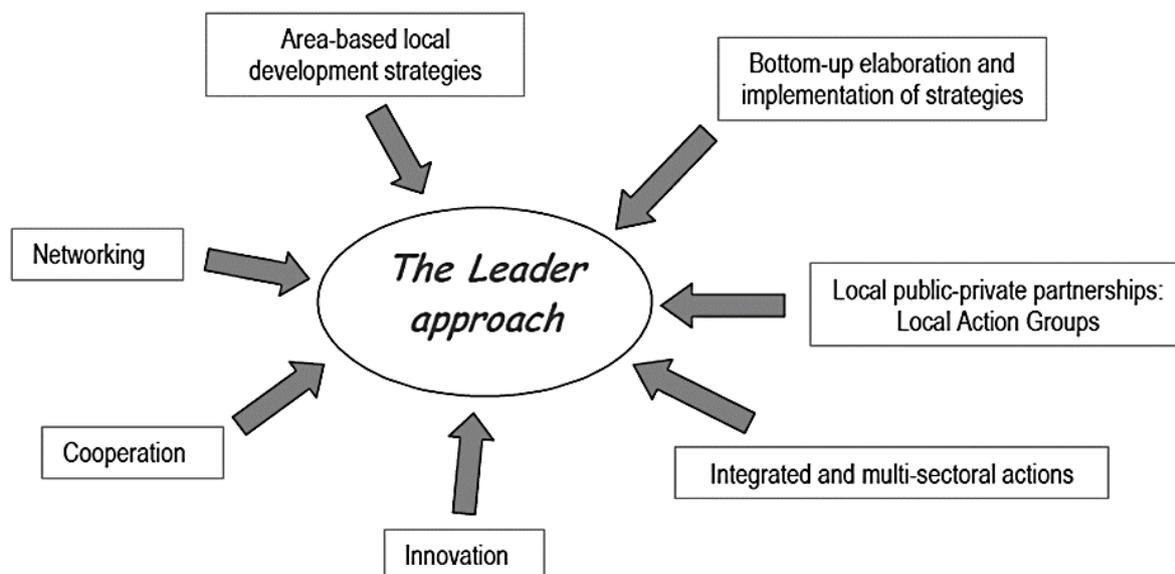
### 2.1 Introduction

For ease of reference and to provide context for the discussion that follows, this chapter provides a brief overview of the LEADER approach and its implementation in Ceredigion. For a more detailed description of the approach, please refer to Report 1.

### 2.2 Overview of the LEADER approach

LEADER is a local development method which has been used for over 20 years to engage local actors in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of their rural areas.

Figure 2.1: The LEADER approach



As a **Community Led Local Development (CLLD)** initiative, LEADER is an integrated development process designed to engage, enable, resource and empower local communities in undertaking their own local development. LEADER is built on a number of specific characteristics often referred to as the 'LEADER approach' as illustrated in figure 2.1 above.

LEADER is implemented by **Local Action Group (LAG)** activities, delivering a **Local Development Strategy (LDS)** that they have developed and animation/capacity building activities within the local community.

**Animation** is a key feature of LEADER (specifically the 'bottom up' element of the programme) and can include a range of activities, such as:

- working to 'empower' local people and/or organisations and their willingness to face local challenges or opportunities through the development and implementation of projects (linked to the LDS); and
- (not directly linked with the LDS or a specific project) working more generally in the local area and with the local population to, for example, enhance the awareness of local heritage.

**Innovation** is one of the original and fundamental strategic principles in LEADER. The focus on innovation is based on the argument that doing "more of the same" is unlikely to enable an area to reach its full potential and that new solutions to existing problems should be sought. The objective is to encourage and support new, forward looking and entrepreneurial approaches and solutions to local issues and to share and transfer that experience.

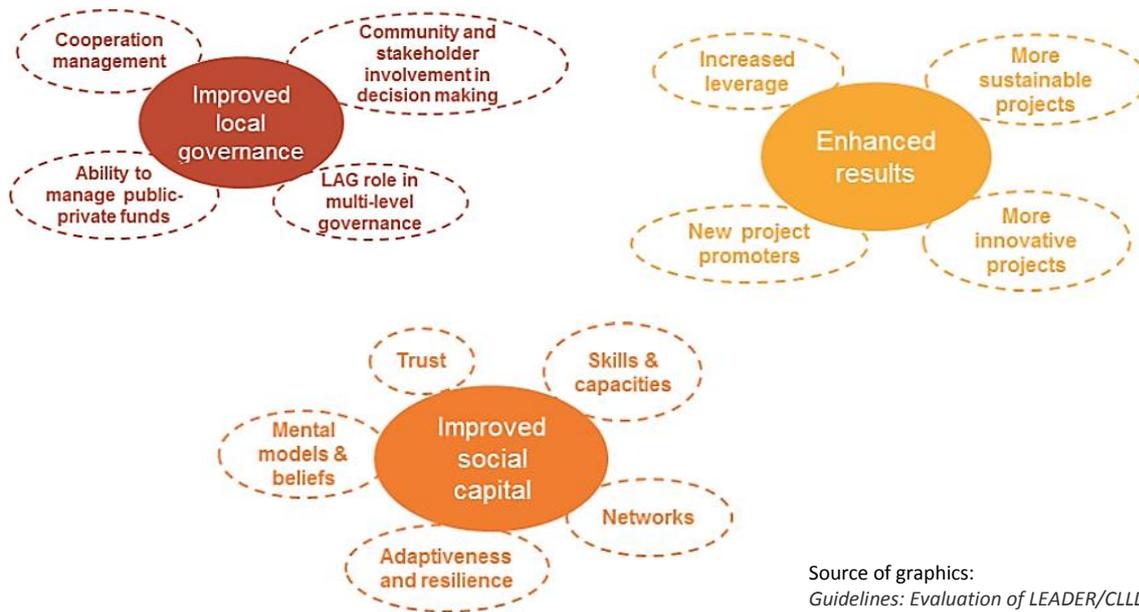
**Cooperation** is also a core LEADER feature. With LAGs across Europe the wealth of LEADER local development experience, knowledge and human capital is potentially substantial, and cooperation offers a means of capitalising on this resource. LAGs can make use of or contribute to this network to develop the group, to undertake joint projects or initiatives, to innovate, or to share or transfer knowledge and experience.

### 2.2.1 Added value of the approach

The LEADER approach is expected to add-value at a local level through:

- (1) **The implementation of the LDS** (i.e. its operationalisation in the form of projects and the results and impacts they produce);
- (2) **The LAG delivery mechanism** (i.e. the set of rules, procedures and administrative arrangements, which ensure that strategy objectives become concrete actions on the ground); and
- (3) **Capacity building support/animation**: The support provided to encourage and enable the beneficiaries (i.e. activities aiming to raise the awareness, readiness, cooperation and networking capabilities of local people to contribute to developing their area).

If correctly applied, the implementation of the LEADER method is anticipated to lead to three groups of outcomes, as illustrated by the graphics below:



Source of graphics:  
*Guidelines: Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD (2017)*  
European Network for Rural Development

## 2.3 The approach in Ceredigion

In Ceredigion, LEADER is being implemented by the Cynnal y Cardi LAG with Ceredigion County Council overseeing the administrative and financial operations on their behalf. The team delivering the programme are also employed by Ceredigion County Council. Their role includes the administration of the programme as well as the delivery of the animation activities.

LEADER projects in Ceredigion are identified and developed in one of two ways:

- Through a tender process where a specific activity is identified by the LAG and then procured; and
- Through 'open call' i.e. the process of inviting ideas and applications for the local community.

The total value of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion is just over £3.45m with 75% being allocated to funding for projects.

## 3 Review of the Local Development Strategy & Expenditure, Outputs and Outcomes to date

### Key points

- The LDS for Ceredigion sets out a very broad strategy with little prioritisation. As such, there is an inevitable risk that it can provide little guidance in a scenario where potential activities need to be prioritised, a key role for any strategy. However, it can be argued that the broad nature of the LDS also reflects the broad range of challenges facing Ceredigion.
- The LAG needs to be clear about what their objective for the LEADER programme in Ceredigion is. If the objective is to fund good or innovative ideas, regardless of their origin or strategic fit, a broad approach is appropriate. If, however the objective is to be more targeted at addressing specific challenges or opportunities, a narrower, more targeted, approach is necessary.
- The limitations that the state aid restrictions and the need for match funding place on the implementation of the LEADER programme need to be noted when considering the range of projects supported.
- The performance indicators/targets for the programme in Ceredigion have little value in terms of demonstrating the extent to which the LDS has been delivered. A range of potential additional indicators could however be introduced.
- As things stand, the programme is largely dependent on the quality of the information that will be collected and reported by the projects in respects of evaluating what has been achieved. However, only around half of the projects interviewed for this phase of the evaluation said that they have an evaluation plan in place for their project.

### 3.1 Introduction

The LDS is described within programme guidelines as the roadmap for LEADER implementation with the LAG selecting and supporting projects according to the contribution they make to the goals of the strategy<sup>3</sup>. This chapter reviews the LDS for Ceredigion and its implementation to date. It is important to note that it does not consider the way in which the LDS was developed which is outside the remit of the evaluation. Rather, the focus is on the coherence of the LDS as a strategy for guiding the implementation of the programme in Ceredigion and the extent to which it has been delivered via the projects supported to date. This chapter also considers the expenditure, outputs and outcomes of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion to date and then the potential for new indicators that can be collated to improve the monitoring of the programme over the remainder of its lifetime.

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<sup>3</sup> Guidance produced by the European Network for Rural Development on the development and implementation of the LDS can be found here: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd-guidance\\_lsd.pdf](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd-guidance_lsd.pdf)

## 3.2 Review of the strategy

The Ceredigion LDS sets out five overarching themes for the area, mirroring the themes that are identified within the Economic Regeneration Strategy for Ceredigion:

- Theme 1: Utilising the natural environment and landscape
- Theme 2: Building a knowledge-based economy
- Theme 3: Making the most of culture and heritage
- Theme 4: Adding value to our primary products
- Theme 5: Developing our people and organisations

Ten priorities are identified, as listed below, sitting beneath these themes, with several of the priorities feeding into more than one of the themes:<sup>4</sup>

1. To utilise the natural environment and landscape
2. To apply a Destination Management approach to tourism and sense of place in Ceredigion
3. To grow community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities
4. To adapt to Ceredigion's population change, with net out-migration of young people and net in-migration of those in middle adulthood
5. To facilitate a substantially knowledge-based economy to support new and innovative opportunities
6. To strengthen short supply chains to yield the optimum benefit for businesses
7. To increase opportunities for workforce development
8. To improve access to and exploitation of IT
9. To strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area
10. To reduce the impact of long term rises in living costs

These themes and priorities produce a very broad strategy with little prioritisation within LDS. As such, there is an inevitable risk that it can provide little guidance in a scenario where potential activities need to be prioritised, a key role for any strategy. However, it can be argued that the broad nature of the LDS also reflects the broad range of challenges facing Ceredigion.

The policy and strategy review within the LDS is comprehensive as is the analysis of the key statistical information about the county although both sections require updating on an ongoing basis (the statistical data has been updated as part of Report 1 of the evaluation).

The objectives set out are also consistent with the SWOT analysis, although this is clearly influenced by the broad nature of those objectives as discussed above. There is also no prioritisation within the SWOT analysis. From a strategy perspective, this is important as prioritising the issues being identified would allow a clearer analysis of which of the objectives and potential actions being identified are the most urgent.

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<sup>4</sup> The LDS also breaks down the priorities into several more detailed objectives (not listed here for brevity - please refer to Appendix 1)

### 3.2.1 The views of interviewees

Both LAG members and staff were generally positive about the LDS when asked to comment on its quality often referring to the comprehensive consultation undertaken during its development. There was however also a recognition that the strategy it sets out is very broad – designed to be so in order to allow as broad a range of activities as possible to be implemented over the lifetime of the programme. There was also a recognition that whilst there was reference to the priorities of the LDS during discussions about projects and applications for support, the level of guidance it provides to discussions and decisions was relatively limited.

Some interviewees were concerned about the potential for a more focused LDS being too prescriptive, emphasising the need to focus on implementing a ‘bottom up’ approach to rural development which supported ‘innovation’ and ‘good ideas’ from wherever they came. In most cases however, the need for a more strategic approach moving forward was prioritised by interviewees.

The key to this debate is that the LAG needs to be clear about what their objective for the LEADER programme in Ceredigion is. If the objective to fund good or innovative ideas, regardless of their origin a broad approach is appropriate. If, however the objective is to be more targeted at addressing specific challenges of opportunities within the county, a narrower, more targeted, approach is necessary.

## 3.3 The range of projects supported to date

At the time of the analysis for this mid-term review, the LEADER programme in Ceredigion had supported 49 projects<sup>5</sup>. Whilst many interviewees made positive comments, there were some concerns about the range of projects supported to date amongst LAG members for reasons that are discussed as this chapter progresses.

A review of the projects as they relate to the priorities identified within the LDS has been undertaken for this report (see Appendix 1). It is important to stress that the focus of the review at this stage (when projects are still active) has been on project objectives and activities as opposed to actual outcomes. The review however finds that projects have been funded that ‘deliver’ most of the priorities set out within the LDS (at a ‘priority’ rather than ‘objective’ level); the priorities shaded in green in the list below have project activities listed against them. But there are gaps, with no project activity against three of the priorities.

- 1. To utilise the natural environment and landscape**
- 2. To apply a Destination Management approach to tourism and sense of place in Ceredigion**
- 3. To grow community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities**
- 4. To adapt to Ceredigion’s population change, with net out-migration of young people and net in-migration of middle adulthood*

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<sup>5</sup> A summary of each of the projects funded can be found in Appendix 2.

- 5. To facilitate a substantially knowledge-based economy to support new & innovative opportunities**
- 6. To strengthen short supply chains to yield the optimum benefit for businesses*
- 7. To increase opportunities for workforce development**
- 8. To improve access to and exploitation of IT**
- 9. To strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area**
- 10. To reduce the impact of long term rises in living costs*

The positive interpretation of this review is that activities have been undertaken against most priorities identified within the LDS. However, although the review to date has been based on what the projects are doing as opposed to what the projects have achieved, the concern would be that the jam is being spread very thinly meaning that the potential for the investment being made to achieve a substantial impact (i.e. to address the opportunities and challenges being identified) is limited. In fact, the range of issues that are identified as objectives under each priority cannot possibly all be addressed by the range of projects being funded. Again however, the fact that LEADER is focused on piloting new and innovative approaches (as opposed to necessarily addressing the challenges or opportunities identified) to rural development should also be noted.

The restrictions that the state aid rules and the need for match funding place on the implementation of the LEADER programme at a local level also need to be noted when considering the range of projects supported to date. Funding from the LEADER programme in Wales cannot be used to provide aid or other assistance that would constitute state aid<sup>6</sup> in respect of a 'business', 'enterprise', 'undertaking' or 'economic operator' receiving such support. This means that LAGs cannot provide any kind of assistance that would reduce normal day to day operational running costs; subsidising staff salaries or giving financial support (directly or indirectly) towards rent, rates, energy costs, promotion, publicity, advertising and/or any other running costs or overheads. Further, LEADER in Wales cannot be used to provide capital or revenue grants or other forms of direct or indirect assistance to commercial businesses. The need to source match-funding also restricts a LAGs ability to develop and/or support innovative projects as other sources of funding may not have the same desire to support and develop innovative (and therefore higher risk) projects.

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<sup>6</sup> State aid is any advantage granted by public authorities through state resources on a selective basis to any organisations that could potentially distort competition and trade in the European Union. For further information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-aid>

### 3.4 Expenditure to date

The table below sets out the expenditure figures for the programme at the time of writing this report. 'Running costs' and 'animation' are budgets utilised by the Lead Body to undertake their activities, implementation is to support projects within the county whilst cooperation is for projects with other LAGs.

**Table 3.1: Funds approved, committed and claimed; LEADER programme Ceredigion. As of the end of December 2018**

|                | Approved (£)  | Committed (£) | To commit (£) | % committed |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Running costs  | £332,860.00   | £197,352.24   | £135,507.76   | 59%         |
| Animation      | £499,289.00   | £340,000.00*  | £159,289.00   | 68%         |
| Implementation | £2,121,978.00 | £1,322,889.12 | £799,088.88   | 62%         |
| Cooperation    | £374,467.00   | £214,064.27   | £160,402.73   | 57%         |

Source: Ceredigion County Council

\*estimate

Sixty two percent of the implementation budget is committed, at the mid-point in the lifetime of the programme. This gives the LAG some assurance of their ability to fully utilise the implementation funding available but also some flexibility for the remainder of the lifetime of the programme.

There is a substantial range in the value of the LEADER funding committed to projects from a low of just £1,540 to a high of £90,344; the average funding committed to the projects approved at the time of this report is £28,438. This illustrates the relatively small scale of the funding that is being provided.

### 3.5 Programme level performance indicators

The table below shows the data on the performance of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion against the targets agreed with the Welsh Government in terms of both the predicted final achievement and the numbers claimed to date.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that none of the achieved outputs to date have, at the time of this report, been 'claimed' as having been achieved within reports to the Welsh Government. This is because outputs can only be achieved once projects have been formally completed and closed.

**Table 3.2: Performance indicators for the LEADER programme in Ceredigion (overall), as of the end of December 2018**

| <i>Performance Indicator</i> <sup>8</sup> ↓                  | Target | Predicted | % Predicted | Claimed | % Claimed |
|--|--------|-----------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| <b>Number of jobs created</b>                                | 0      | 1.9       | n/a         | 0       | 0%        |
| <b>Number of feasibility studies</b>                         | 10     | 5         | 50%         | 0       | 0%        |
| <b>Number of networks established</b>                        | 8      | 14        | 175%        | 0       | 0%        |
| <b>Number of pilot activities undertaken/supported</b>       | 38     | 19        | 50%         | 1       | 3%        |
| <b>Number of community hubs</b>                              | 0      | 10        | n/a         | 0       | 0%        |
| <b>No of jobs safeguarded</b>                                | 1.5    | 19        | 1267%       | 0       | 0%        |
| <b>Number of information dissemination actions/promotion</b> | 122    | 277       | 227%        | 16      | 13%       |
| <b>Number of stakeholders engaged</b>                        | 350    | 1,307     | 373%        | 61      | 17%       |
| <b>Number of participants</b>                                | 473    | 1,793     | 379%        | 143     | 30%       |

Source: Ceredigion County Council

The programme is predicted to overachieve substantially against all but one of the targets that have been set including the introduction of two additional indicators not included originally (hence showing zero in the target column above). This suggests that either those targets were set too low to begin with or that performance is far better than anticipated. Most likely, it is a combination of those two reasons.

The range and level of targets set are however not substantial for a £3.45m programme. This is in line with the Welsh Government's change of approach for the current LEADER programme in response to criticisms of the previous programme which included a far longer list of performance indicators, leading to a very complex monitoring process. The much more limited number of indicators (most of which are outputs<sup>9</sup>) does however mean that the data available to judge the success of the programme, based on these performance indicators alone, is limited. This increases the reliance of the evaluation on the data collected by the individual projects, as discussed later in this chapter.

It is important to note that the performance indicators discussed above are reported to the Welsh Government for the programme in Ceredigion as a whole. The performance indicators are not reported per LDS objective meaning that they cannot be used to assess progress against those specific objectives.

<sup>8</sup> Definitions for the indicators can be found in Appendix 3.

<sup>9</sup> Illustrating the level of activity undertaken as opposed to results or outcomes of activities.

A review of the targets shows limited correlation between the performance indicators (which should be anticipating the achievements of the programme) and the aims and objectives set out within the LDS. Specifically, the achievements anticipated in the performance indicators would not allow the objectives, as set out in the LDS, to be achieved. Their usefulness as performance indicators for the LDS is therefore, again, limited. The information that the project can provide is therefore, again, very important.

### 3.6 Project level achievements to date

Progress monitoring forms are submitted by projects on a regular basis, depending on the nature of the project<sup>10</sup>. Projects are also required, at the end of their funding, to submit a project closure form which will include:

- A description of the results and benefits of delivering the activity
- A review of the lessons learnt
  - What went well?
  - What didn't go well?
  - What could have been done differently?
- Evaluation; the project is asked to specify any evaluations or case studies they have produced (and provide copies)

It is unclear at the time of writing, what the quality of the monitoring and evaluation data and evidence generated by the project closure form will be. The concern is however that the quality of the data and the analysis undertaken will vary from project to project and limit its usefulness as a source of data for the programme level evaluation. As such, this was an issue explored during the interviews with projects for this mid-term evaluation.

When asked how the success of their project should be measured, the majority of those interviewed for this mid-term evaluation said that their success should be assessed on the basis of the quantitative targets in place for their project; for example the number of volunteers they have, and/or the number of sessions delivered. In some instances, those interviewed said that the realisation of their project was evidence in itself of its success whilst others suggested their achievement would be evidenced through the skills they have embedded in communities. Projects that conducted feasibility studies through the LEADER programme suggested that the results of their feasibility study are clear measures of success. In short, a variety of criteria were identified. This supports the focus on assessing achievement on a project by project basis; the projects are so different it is difficult to put in place a single and uniform process for assessing success.

Of the 28 projects interviewed, 15 stated that they have an evaluation plan as part of their project. Whilst the quality of the evaluation plans in place cannot be assessed, the fact that only around half of those interviewed had evaluation plans in place is of some concern given the reliance on that data from an evaluation perspective.

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<sup>10</sup> More complex projects are required to report more regularly. Reporting is also guided by the amount of support a project requires.

When the projects interviewed were asked to assess their achievements to date, 13 of the 28 respondents felt that their achievements so far were what they had anticipated, 6 respondents felt their projects had achieved more than they had anticipated and 6 felt their projects had achieved less. Three respondents who were running more than one project felt that some of their projects had achieved more or the same as anticipated whilst others had achieved less. Essentially, the views expressed were mixed.

Where projects felt they had achieved less than they hoped to date, this was typically due to delays in delivering on certain aspects of their project. This could be due to contractor delays, changes to the project, staff changes or a delay in funding approval. One project felt they had achieved less than they would like to date due to a lack of engagement.

When asked what they hoped their project could achieve before it came to an end, 22 projects believed they were on track to deliver their project as expected whilst three said that their project either would or already had exceeded their expectations. Where projects felt they achieved more than expected, this was primarily due to a higher level of engagement with the project than anticipated.

Respondents who felt that their project would end up achieving slightly less than they originally anticipated typically suggested that this is a result of changes in what could be achieved becoming apparent during the delivery phase of the project, which is not unexpected given the pilot nature of projects supported by LEADER.

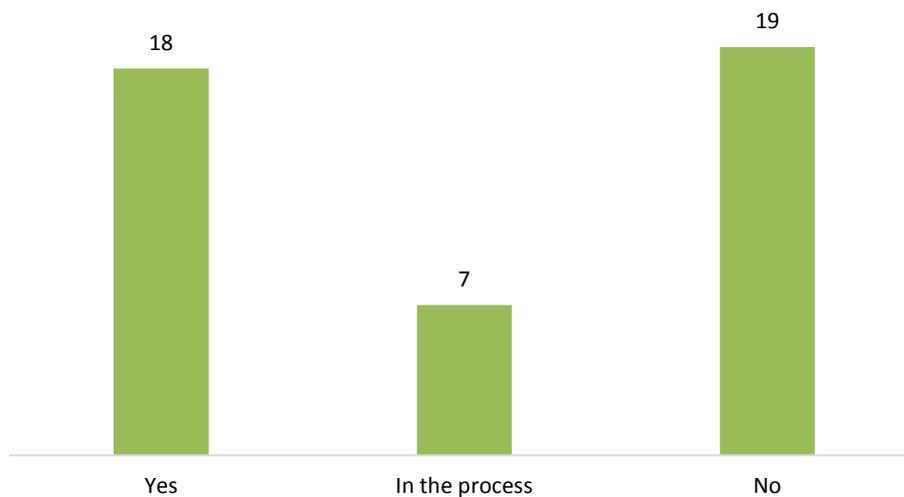
When asked what they believe the legacy of their project will be:

- Fifteen projects felt it provided an evidence base for future works
- Seven stated that their project will positively impact on local people's health and awareness of wellbeing
- Six projects described the impact of their training and upskilling
- Three projects felt their projects had created permanent networks or links between groups
- Four projects believed their legacy would be increased awareness or engagement with their environment, culture or heritage
- Four projects described how they envisioned the community being in control or taking ownership of their projects, or talked of uniting their communities
- Three projects felt they had added value to key economies in the county such as tourism and agriculture.

The envisioned legacies of these projects would suggest that these groups have successfully understood the key values of the LEADER approach in terms of improving the sustainability of rural communities and the importance of a community-led approach.

Building capacity within rural areas is a key objective of LEADER and so the projects interviewed were asked whether their organisation had applied for other financial support since their Cynnal y Cardi LEADER application. Just over half of the respondents (25/44) had either applied for further funding or were currently in the process of doing so. Nine respondents were applying for funding for unrelated projects, nine respondents were seeking to fund their projects that were either unsuccessful or withdrawn from LEADER and seven respondents were seeking funding for additional aspects or as a continuation of their LEADER project.

Figure 3.1: Have you applied for other financial support since (not just LEADER or RDP funding)?



When asked about whether they were developing any other ideas or projects that may require funding, twenty-five projects said they weren't currently, and this was primarily because organisations were busy focusing on the delivery of their current projects (19/25). It is also worth mentioning that four of these projects were looking to expand into other communities or regions suggesting a positive impact as a result of the LEADER supported project.

### 3.7 Potential additional performance indicators

As noted earlier in this chapter, the KPIs in place for the LEADER programme (as set by the Welsh Government) are output (activity) focused and relatively narrow. The evaluation has therefore considered the potential to introduce additional indicators to provide further data on the performance of the programme in Ceredigion. This builds upon a list of additional indicators which was included within the LDS:

- Number of communities engaged
- Number of groups engaged
- Number of young people participating in the project
- Number of women participating in the project
- Number of Welsh speakers participating in the project

- Number of elderly people participating in the project
- Number of individuals with disabilities participating in the project
- Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability
- Number of consultation exercises
- Number of cluster groups/informal networks
- Number of LAG members participating in training
- Number of staff participating in training

LAG members and staff were asked during interviews to comment on how the success of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion should be measured. Suggestions made included:

- The full utilisation of the funding available
- The stimulation of new and innovative ideas (“creating a spark”)
- Capacity building ‘soft’ outcomes such as confidence and a willingness to take-action
- The sustainability of projects supported by LEADER (their existence beyond the end of LEADER funding)
- The sharing of ideas/concepts developed via LEADER and their repetition in other projects/activities

As previously noted, a key challenge to the evaluation of a programme such as LEADER is that the projects and activities funded can vary substantially. This makes it challenging to develop a set of common indicators that can be used across all projects, especially in respects of capturing the outcomes of activities. Potential generic indicators that could potentially be used however include:

- The number of organisations applying for funding to deliver a regeneration project for the first time
- The number of those new organisations developing other or follow up project proposals (i.e. continuing their involvement in regeneration)
- The number (or percentage) of participants/stakeholders reporting that they have benefited as a result of their involvement in the project funded by LEADER.
- The number (or percentage) of participants/stakeholders reporting that they are more likely to get involved or continue to be involved in actions within their local community as a result of their involvement with the LEADER programme

The main weakness of these indicators is that they tell you nothing about the nature of the benefit, only that there has been one. It may however be that such an indication is enough with more detailed data and analysis being provided at a project level.

The most common theme in discussions with LAG members on this issue was the legacy of projects, whether they continue or evolve once the funding that has been provided by the LEADER programme has come to an end. This was considered by many to be perhaps the key indicator of the success of LEADER and is obviously consistent with the core objective of LEADER as a mechanism for piloting new and innovative approaches to rural development in Ceredigion.

Whilst accepting that not all projects will succeed is important (a key part of any intervention in support of new and innovative activities) the logic of indicators relating to legacy for a LEADER programme is clear. Potential indicators include:

- The number of projects still active 12 months post the end of the LEADER funding
- The amount of additional or funding drawn into Ceredigion by the project

Sharing of learning is also a key element of the LEADER programme. It may therefore be valuable to capture indicators of activities relating to that process as part of any set of 'legacy' indicators. For example:

- The number of case studies produced and the number of times they have been downloaded from the programme website
- Participants in activities to share learning from the LEADER programme (individuals and/or organisations)

As discussed in Report 1, Common Evaluation Questions (CEQs) are an important element of the EU Common Monitoring and Evaluation System of which the LEADER programme forms part and it is appropriate to consider them here. LAGs are required to report against the CEQs which are relevant to the Focus Areas their activities are aligned to. In Wales, all LAGs should address the CEQ related to Focus Area 6B: *'To what extent has the RDP intervention contributed to fostering local development in rural areas?'* The judgement criteria specified for this question are set out in the table below.

Table 3.3: Judgement criteria and indicators for Focus Area 6B: fostering local development in rural areas

| <b>Judgement criteria</b>  | <b>Indicators</b>   |
|--|---|
| 1. Services and local infrastructure in rural areas has improved               | • % of rural population covered by local development strategies                 |
| 2. Access to services and local infrastructure has increased in rural areas    | • Jobs created in supported projects  |
| 3. Rural people have participated in local actions                             | • % of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures       |
| 4. Rural people have benefited from local actions                              | <i>Additional information:</i>  |
| 5. Employment opportunities have been created via local development strategies | • Number of projects/initiatives supported by the Local Development Strategy    |
| 6. Rural territory and population covered by LAGs has increased                | • % of RDP expenditure in LEADER measures with respect to total RDP expenditure |

The indicators specified for Focus Area 6B are of relatively limited value at a local level in terms of assessing the outcomes of the programme. Many of the indicators suggested above are however relevant to the judgement criteria specified further supporting their potential introduction. The constraints created by the state aid restriction on the programme in Wales on the potential to achieve the 'jobs created' result does however need to be noted again here.

It is also important to consider the Well-being of Future Generations Act when considering programme level performance indicators for schemes in Wales. The Act puts in place legislation requiring public bodies in Wales to put long-term sustainability at the forefront of their thinking, and work with each other along with other relevant organisations (such as third sector groups) and the public to prevent and tackle problems<sup>11</sup>. Seven 'well-being goals' are set and a series of 46 'national indicators' have been put in place to allow progress towards those goals to be measured. The list is too long to include here<sup>12</sup> but several of the indicators are potentially relevant to the LEADER programme in Ceredigion as noted in the table in Appendix 4.

These indicators are however (as one would expect from national level indicators) very high level and long-term. Attributing any changes in these indicators to the LEADER programme will therefore be challenging to say the least. Being aware of these high-level indicators and considering them within the revision of the LDS will however be important.

**Based on the review in this section, we would propose that the introduction of at least the indicators noted below be considered:**

- a) The number of organisations applying for funding to deliver a regeneration project for the first time**
- b) The number of those new organisations developing other or follow up project proposals (i.e. continuing their involvement in regeneration)**
- c) The number (or percentage) of participants/stakeholders reporting that they are more likely to get involved or continue to be involved in actions within their local community as a result of their involvement with the LEADER programme.**
- d) The number of projects still active 12 months post the end of the LEADER funding**
- e) The amount of additional or funding drawn into Ceredigion by the project**
- f) Participants in activities to share learning from the LEADER programme (individuals and/or organisations)**

**These indicators are generic and not priority specific. Based on the review of the LDS previously discussed, the potential to introduce additional priority specific indicators should also be considered.**

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<sup>11</sup> More information about the Act is available here: <https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

<sup>12</sup> The full list can be found within this document: <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160316-national-indicators-to-be-laid-before-nafw-en.pdf>

## 4 Review of the implementation of the LEADER approach

### Key points

- Some concerns were expressed that the LAG was, at times, operating too much as a 'grants assessment panel', paying too little attention to the other aspects of the LEADER approach.
- There was some concern about the understanding of the role of the LAG (and indeed the LEADER programme more generally) amongst those not directly involved.
- Some gaps in LAG membership were recognised (specifically young people and the private sector) although the challenges of addressing those gaps were also acknowledged. The need to ensure that the membership of the LAG went beyond what some interviewees called the 'usual suspect' was also noted.
- LAG members identified several benefits generated as a result of their involvement with the group.
- LAG members were positive when asked to comment on the role undertaken by Ceredigion County Council and their staff in their capacity as the lead body for the LAG highlighting the effective way in which the role was being undertaken.
- Generally, LAG members could provide little comment on the implementation of animation activities within the area.
- While some interviewees expressed some disappointment, the general view was that there had been reasonable levels of innovation within the projects supported to date, *if* the definition was to pilot or test a service or way of working that had not been seen in Ceredigion previously.
- There is potential to further enhance the level of networking and cooperation activities being undertaken as part of the programme.

### 4.1 Introduction

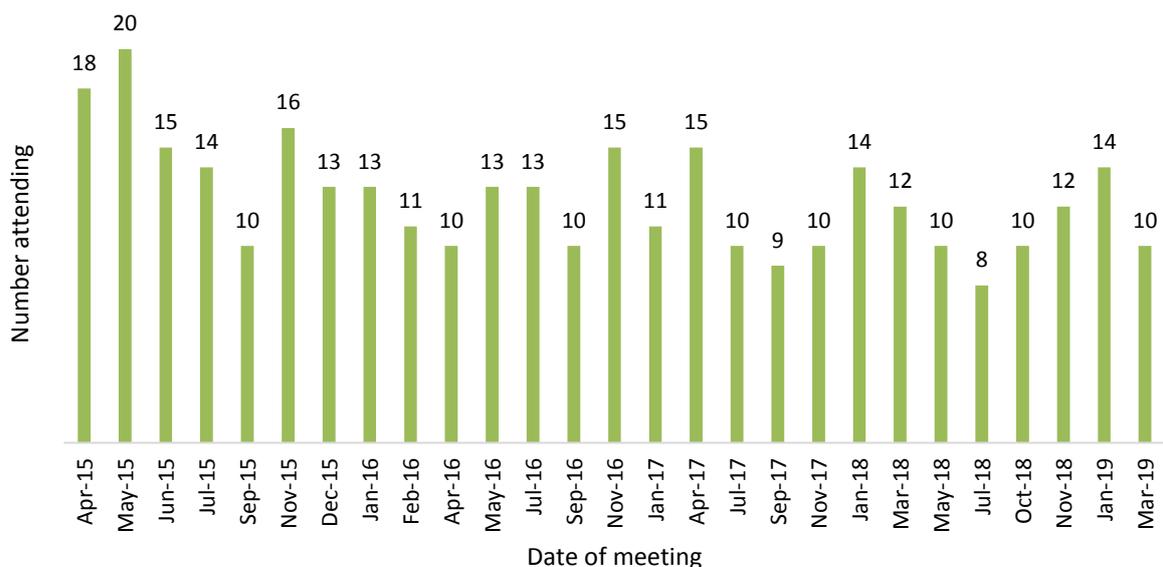
This chapter reviews the implementation of the LEADER approach in Ceredigion to date, other than the LDS which has already been discussed in the previous chapter. The discussion draws on data for activities undertaken to date, discussions with LAG members and staff as well as the interviews with applicants and projects supported by the programme.

## 4.2 The Local Action Group

The LAG is a key part of the LEADER approach designed to be a group which represents the local area and its population. It leads the development process with no interest group nor public authorities having a majority in the decision-making process.

### 4.2.1 Number of meetings and attendance

**Figure 4.1: LAG meetings and attendance**



Source: analysis of data provided by Ceredigion CC

The table above shows the number of LAG members attending meetings between April 2015 and March 2019 of which there have been 27. The average attendance has been 12 with a high of 20 for the second meeting in May 2015 and a low of 8 in July 2018. The higher attendance for the initial meetings is not unexpected given that they were to consider the design of the programme and therefore likely to be of greater interest to stakeholders. The fluctuation in attendance is however clear.

The importance of members attending LAG meetings on a regular basis was emphasised during interviews for this mid-term review with the need for continuity in respects of the discussions that took place across several LAG meetings being noted. The challenges of keeping members who did not attend on a regular basis ‘up to speed’ was also emphasised.

## 4.2.2 Understanding of the role of the LAG

LAG members were generally positive about their and fellow LAG members understanding of their role as a local action group explaining in relative detail their roles and responsibilities. The relative complexity of the LEADER programme (compared to a more standard grants scheme) was however recognised with the need for effective briefing if, and when, new members are recruited to the LAG (as has been the case) emphasised. In some instances, interviewees were also concerned that the LAG was, at times, operating too much as a 'grants assessment panel' paying too little attention to the other aspects of the LEADER approach, an issue discussed further, later in this chapter.

There was also some concern amongst interviewees when discussing their perception of the understanding of the role of the LAG (and indeed the LEADER programme more generally) amongst those not directly involved. Most respondents believed that there was a core group of individuals and organisations that were aware of the programme and its objectives but that awareness beyond that group could be limited. This was of concern to some in respects of ensuring that ideas and applications for support were received from as wide a group of organisations and communities as possible.

## 4.2.3 Views on LAG meetings

Views on the LAG meetings were generally positive although some negative comments about the earliest meetings during the lifetime of the programme were noted and should be acknowledged. The important role played by the Chair of the LAG in respects of managing what was always a very full agenda and maintaining progress during meetings was noted. The clear view of interviewees was that all LAG members were given the opportunity to comment on applications (and more generally) during the assessment process although it was noted that some members commented more than others (which is not unexpected).

Concerns expressed by a small number of respondents about the use of the Welsh language during meetings should also be noted. It is important to note that these comments were not critical in respects of the use of Welsh during meetings but related to the challenges of participating in what could be a very fast-moving discussion when dependent on the simultaneous translation provided at the meeting. The role of the Chair of the meeting in terms of ensuring that all members can fully participate was again noted.

There was some discussion during interviews about the decision-making process during LAG meetings with the challenge of finding the balance between the role of the LEADER team and the LAG as the decision-making body were noted. Whilst no major concerns were expressed, the challenge of maintaining this balance were (as they should be) recognised with some members expressing a desire for projects to be 'more developed' by the time they are discussed by the LAG and others wanting a clearer steer from the officers team. Others however emphasised the need to ensure that the role of the LAG as the decision-making body (a key part of the LEADER approach) was clear and maintained. There was also some reference to the very detailed discussions of some applications at a LAG level which, for some was a frustration.

Positive comments were made about the sub-group and the important role it played in looking at applications for support in greater detail ahead of its consideration by the LAG although the greater commitment that LAG members who were also members of the sub-group had to make was also recognised as was the need to not then repeat the same discussion at full LAG meetings.

#### 4.2.4 Perceived gaps in LAG membership

Interviewees were generally positive about the range of organisations and sector represented at LAG meetings although the challenges of ensuring a high turnout for meetings were also recognised (see the previous section on attendance at LAG meetings). Gaps identified included ‘young people’ and the ‘private sector’ both of which (in the authors experience) are frequently identified by LAGs as groups that are challenging to engage in a group of this nature. The need to ensure that the membership of the LAG went beyond what some interviewees called the ‘usual suspect’ was noted again with the underlying concern being that awareness of the programme was not broad enough. Specific suggestions made of organisations that could be useful to add to the LAG included Area 43 (a youth charity in Cardigan)<sup>13</sup> and Hiut Denim (a jeans manufacturer in Cardigan)<sup>14</sup>. There was also a suggestion that a greater representation from the two Universities within the County should be sought (Aberystwyth University and University of Wales Trinity Saint David). Both universities are identified as being key to the Ceredigion economy and its development. Further both are large and diverse organisations that cannot be effectively represented by a single LAG member. The challenge of securing regular attendance from members of staff within the Universities (who are often specialised and may only have an interest in certain projects or aspects of the work of the LAG) were however also recognised.

This discussion, together with the previous discussion on awareness of the role of the LAG and the LEADER programme more generally, led to the suggestion that a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise should be undertaken which could then be used as a basis for targeting both new members of the LAG and actions to raise awareness about the programme.

#### 4.2.5 Perceived benefits of being a LAG member

A range of benefits were identified when LAG members were asked to describe how, if at all, they benefited from being a member of the LAG. They included:

- *“It’s a way of giving something back.”* Social responsibility
- Networking
- Becoming aware of projects and activities – outside the individuals’ usual area of work
- Raising awareness about the organisation they represent
- Becoming more strategic in their thinking (due to awareness of other activities)

Such benefits are an important outcome of the LEADER approach and need to be considered alongside any discussion about outcomes achieved by projects funded by the programme.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.area43.co.uk/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://hiutdenim.co.uk>

## 4.3 The Lead Body

LAG members were positive when asked to comment on the role undertaken by Ceredigion County Council and their staff in their capacity as the Lead Body for the LAG highlighting the effective way in which the role was being undertaken. There was however criticism of the role that is being played by the Welsh Government in the administration of the scheme and specifically what was perceived to be a lack of support from the Welsh Government to the Lead Body. It is however important to note that this issue has not been discussed with anyone from the Welsh Government in order to gain their views on the matter.

In a few instances, there was some discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of a local authority undertaking the Lead Body role, in comparison to other parts of Wales where the role is undertaken by a third sector organisation<sup>15</sup>. Identified advantages included the infrastructure provided by a local authority and the links created with other programmes being delivered by the council. Disadvantages identified included what some interviewees described as the culture of working within a large organisation such as a Local Authority and how it differed to that of a smaller independent organisation, although the issue was not explored in depth during discussions.

The relatively high turn-over in staff within the Lead Body team was noted by some LAG members and staff recognised the challenges this had caused. Specifically, it has led to a lack of resources to deliver some elements of the programme such as the development of cooperative projects, an issue discussed further, later in the chapter. Animation is also a key element of the work of the Lead Body, which is also reviewed later in this chapter.

## 4.4 Analysing and understanding the needs and opportunities of the local area

Identifying the 'most urgent' needs of the local area is a key part of the LDS and, hence, a key part of the role of the LAG and the LEADER approach. That analysis and understanding comes primarily from two sources: the analysis undertaken for the preparation of the LDS (and subsequently updated) and the knowledge and experience of the LAG.

A comprehensive analysis of the needs and opportunities in rural Ceredigion was undertaken during the preparation of the LDS (see chapter 2) which has been considered by the LAG although there would not seem to have been any specific discussion of that analysis within LAG meetings subsequently. Nevertheless, discussions with LAG members on this issue suggest that there is a good understanding of the local area amongst individual members and, therefore, the LAG collectively.

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<sup>15</sup> Menter Môn in Anglesey and Gwynedd, Cadwyn Clwyd in Denbighshire and Flintshire and PLANED in Pembrokeshire.

Whilst interviewees often recognised that their expertise was in a certain sector, their view was that, as a whole, the level of understanding at a LAG level was good. The gaps in the representation on the LAG do however again need to be noted (specifically in terms of young people) which means that there is a risk that the level of understanding of that ‘sector’ is lower than it could or should be.

## 4.5 Animation and engaging with the local community

The LEADER approach includes the ‘animation’ of the local area to engage with the local community. That can include a range of activities including empowering or supporting local groups and organisations to develop and implement projects (in line with the LDS) or more general activities focused on the local area such as, for example, enhancing the awareness of local heritage and associated opportunities. Examples of the animation activities undertaken in Ceredigion include:

- Supporting with signposting to other sources of funding;
- Supporting local community groups with local community engagement through questionnaires, online surveys and community events; and
- Bringing sectoral groups together to engage, network and share best practice.

### 4.5.1 The views of LAG members

Several LAG members were unable to comment when asked about the “animation” activities within Ceredigion. This seems at least partly due to a lack of awareness and understanding of that terminology. However, it would also seem clear that animation is seen by LAG members as something that is left to the Lead Body team to implement without any clear guidance or oversight by the LAG.

As previously noted, a minority of LAG members expressed some concern that the LAG (and the LEADER programme as a whole) was operating too much “*like a grants assessment panel or scheme.*” An underlying theme in these comments was a lack of focus on the part of the LAG on the elements of the LEADER approach other than assessing and approving applications for support, including the animation of the area. Whilst this view was by no means universal, it is a concern that is supported by the lack of understanding and comments on animation activities, and needs to be addressed.

Concerns about a lack of awareness of LAG activities and the LEADER programme at a grass-roots level were also re-iterated during the discussions on animation activities. LAG members also proposed the need to consider the potential to hold further events designed to engage stakeholders, community groups, etc. in the programme. The potential for such events to be thematic and focused on developing project ideas was also noted. In summary, LAG members proposed the need to enhance the level of animation activities being undertaken over the second half of the lifetime of the programme.

The benefit of the support provided by the LEADER team to applicants when developing their projects/applications was however widely recognised by LAG members. Feedback from applicants about the support they received as well as the application process more generally is discussed in chapter 5.

## 4.6 Innovation

Innovation is a cross-cutting priority of the LEADER programme. The focus on innovation is based on the argument that doing "more of the same" is unlikely to enable an area to reach its full potential and that new solutions to existing problems should be sought. The objective is to encourage and support new, forward looking and entrepreneurial approaches and solutions to local issues and to share and transfer that experience.

The Ceredigion LDS states that:

*'In the context of this LDS, innovation means doing something new, different, smarter or better that will make a positive difference and creates something that works better, leads to better results and creates a better pathway forward.'*

All interviewees were clearly aware of the emphasis on innovation within the LEADER programme and described how the level of innovation within applications is always discussed; indeed, it is a criterion within the application assessment process.

While some interviewees expressed some disappointment and a desire (or hope) for a greater level of innovation within the applications for support being submitted, the general view was that there had been reasonable levels of innovation within the projects supported to date, if the definition was to pilot or test a service or way of working that had not been seen *in Ceredigion* previously. The fact that the programme was (in the main) reactive and reliant on the level of innovation within the applications submitted for support was also noted by several interviewees.

There was also reference in some discussions to the limitations caused by the fact that LEADER funding in Wales cannot be used to provide aid or other assistance that would constitute state aid<sup>16</sup> in respect of a business, enterprise, undertaking or 'economic operator' receiving such support<sup>17</sup>. This is considered a serious restriction on the potential to engage with businesses to support the development of new and innovative services, products and so on. No potential to overcome this issue is however apparent.

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<sup>16</sup> State aid is any advantage granted by public authorities through state resources on a selective basis to any organisations that could potentially distort competition and trade in the European Union. For further information, see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-aid>

<sup>17</sup> This means that LAGs cannot provide any kind of assistance that would reduce the normal day to day operational running costs of the business, enterprise, undertaking or 'economic operator' such as; subsidising staff salaries or giving financial support, directly or indirectly, towards rent, rates, energy costs, promotion, publicity, advertising and/or any other running costs or overheads.

The survey of projects asked respondents to describe how they believe their project is innovative. The most cited 'innovation' (9/28) was having a 'community led' approach whereby the beneficiaries decided on what features or services they would like to see. Six projects described their innovation as making information available in a way that it wasn't before whilst a number of projects explained that whilst their approach itself was not necessarily innovative, they were delivering services or projects that have not been seen in the area beforehand or are being applied to a different sector.

The generally accepted definition of innovation being used is the delivery or implementation of a project or activity in Ceredigion for the first time or in a way which hasn't been used previously. Whilst this view of innovation used is not incorrect, there is an argument that the definition of innovation which is being used in Ceredigion is too broad especially given that the focus on innovation within the programme is based on the premise that doing "more of the same" isn't enough and that new solutions to existing problems should be sought. Having a great focus on more genuinely innovation ideas in at least part of the programme going forward may therefore be appropriate. A range of approaches to this could be considered. As a starting point, we would recommend reviewing the various toolkits and guides available via the Nesta website<sup>18</sup>. The potential to explore the possibility of cooperation with other programmes and schemes in Wales designed to promote innovation should also be explored<sup>19</sup>.

## 4.7 Networking

Networking among actors inside the LAG's area, among LAGs and other public-private partnerships, in order to establish a stronger foundation for the transfer of knowledge, and exchange of experiences is also a key part of LEADER. Networking includes the exchange of achievements, experiences and know-how between LEADER groups, rural areas, administrations and organisations involved in rural development within the EU, whether or not they are direct LEADER beneficiaries. Networking is a means of transferring good practice, of disseminating innovation and of building on the lessons learned from local rural development.

Interviewees generally believed that there was ample opportunity for networking, at a LAG member level, within LAG members identifying networking as a benefit of LAG membership (see above). Less networking was however apparent to date at a 'project level' within the county although the potential value of networking at a project level had been less when projects would have been at a relatively early stage in their delivery. The value of networking at a project level would however increase as projects moved further into their delivery stages.

Looking outside Ceredigion, interviewees reported that some networking was taking place at an officer level with other LAGs with regular meetings of a group of LAG officers in South West Wales. The level of networking outside Ceredigion, *undertaken by LAG members*, is however seemingly very limited.

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<sup>18</sup> Nesta (<https://www.nesta.org.uk/>) is an innovation foundation. The organisation acts through a combination of programmes, investment, policy and research, and the formation of partnerships to promote innovation across a broad range of sectors.

<sup>19</sup> See: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/innovation/>

It seems clear from interviews that LAG members have limited awareness of activities and projects being undertaken by LAGs in other parts of Wales (unless as is the case in a few instances they are members of other LAGs). This is despite the existence of the Wales Rural Network (WRN) which shares information about projects being supported by LAGs on its website<sup>20</sup>. Opportunities also exist for LAG members and/or Lead Body staff to attend WRN events as well as networking events in other parts of the EU which are delivered as part of the LEADER programme although, to date, participation would seem to have been limited. The main reason for this would seem to be the limited time which LAG members are able to commit to participating in LEADER activities, with members struggling to commit any time other than that they already commit to reviewing LAG papers and attending meetings.

## 4.8 Cooperation activities

Cooperation is another core feature of LEADER. With LAGs across Europe the wealth of LEADER local development experience, knowledge and human capital is potentially substantial, and cooperation offers a means of capitalising on this resource. LAGs can make use of or contribute to this network to develop the group, to undertake joint projects or initiatives, to innovate, or to share or transfer knowledge and experience.

Interviewees were generally happy with the level of cooperation being undertaken highlighting the number of cooperative projects that were being funded/implemented with LAGs from other parts of Wales. No cooperative projects have however been developed with any LAGs outside of Wales to date which is potentially a significant missed opportunity to work with/learn from LAGs in other parts of the EU.

Staff members however highlighted the fact that constraints/pressure on their time limited the amount of attention they could pay to developing cooperative projects (which tend to be resource intensive). The gaps in the team at times during the lifetime of the programme to date were also noted which had compounded the time-restriction on staff. In such a situation, work has to be prioritised and development of 'local' projects had been prioritised above cooperative projects.

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<sup>20</sup> The Wales Rural Network is a forum to promote the exchange of expertise in rural development delivered by the Welsh Government funded by the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. See: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork/local-action-groups-and-projects>

## 5 Supporting applicants & project and implementing the cross-cutting themes

### Key points

- Most applicants interviewed had seen information about the programme in the local press suggesting that as an effective promotional channel.
- The feedback from applicants about the support they received during the application process, as well as the process in general, was generally positive.
- Feedback about the support and administrative process for approved projects was also generally positive.
- The feedback from unsuccessful applicants on the feedback that received was less positive.
- Processes are in place to address the Cross Cutting Themes (CCTs). However, there would not seem to be any specific reporting against the CCTs at a LAG level.

### 5.1 Introduction

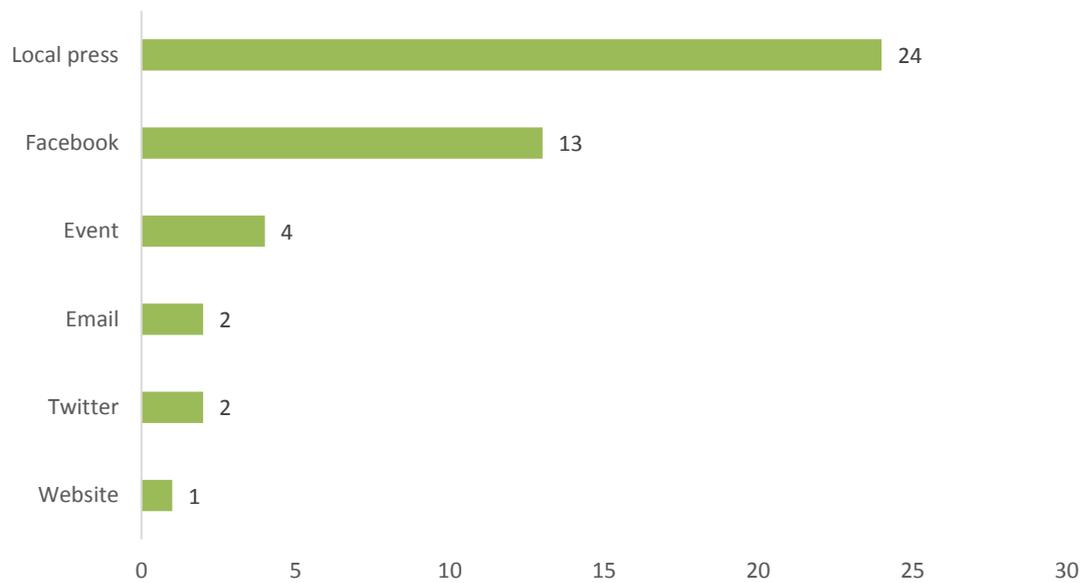
This chapter presents the views of applicants interviewed for this evaluation on the administrative process for the LEADER programme in Ceredigion. It also considers how the cross-cutting themes for the programme have been delivered.

### 5.2 Applying for support

#### 5.2.1 How applicants found about the support available

Applicants for support participating in the survey were asked whether they had seen information about Cynnal y Cardi and the LEADER programme in Ceredigion in general, either in the local press, on Facebook or Twitter, on other social media or through any other sources. As the graph below demonstrates, most projects had seen information about the programme through local press. Other sources cited were through events, on the council's website and through update emails. Twelve projects said that they had not seen any information about Cynnal y Cardi or the LEADER programme.

**Figure 5.1: Have you seen information about Cynnal y Cardi and the LEADER programme in Ceredigion in general in any of the following?**



Base = 44, respondents could choose more than one option

When asked what kind of information about Cynnal y Cardi and the LEADER programme in Ceredigion they had seen, most (28/44) had heard about other projects that had successfully received LEADER funding. Six projects had seen advertisements for LEADER events and five had seen calls for applications.

### 5.2.2 The support provided during the application process

Almost all the organisations interviewed had received support from the Cynnal y Cardi team during the development of their application/project (42/44) suggesting a high demand for this kind of support. Primarily this support related to ensuring projects would meet the application criteria and the types of applications the LAG would be looking to fund. On average, organisations rated this advice as 3.8 out of 5. Those whose applications were unsuccessful or withdrawn were more likely to give the advice a lower score, however 6/16 of these organisations still rated the advice as 5/5.

Those who scored the support highly praised the team for their approachability and genuine interest in projects. It was felt that the advice they gave was useful and clear, and that the team kept in regular contact. It is a positive reflection on the quality of the advice that these qualities were also remarked upon by candidates whose application had been unsuccessful or withdrawn:

*“The support from the LEADER team was excellent as they provided a clear explanation of Leader's criteria and outcomes approach and they helped me by giving me excellent feedback about my expression of interest document.” -*

**Unsuccessful Applicant**

*“The meetings with the LEADER team were very informative but it was clear after our initial meetings that our project did not meet Leader's criteria. They helped us clarify what the main aims of the project should be and signposted us in the right directions for funding support from other sources.”* **Applicant who withdrew their application**

Projects that gave the advice a lower score broadly felt that the team were quite negative about their applications, indicating that they were unlikely to be funded. One felt that the advice they were given to improve their project meant it became overcomplicated and increased their workload. Another project felt that the full terms of the funding hadn't been explained sufficiently.

Two projects received additional advice, one from CAVO whilst another project teamed up with a colleague from a separate organisation applying for funding. Together these two organisations shared ideas and ensured there was no overlap in their project proposals.

#### Impact of the support and advice

As inferred in the comments to explain the scores given to the quality of the support, the impact of the support which interviewees described was mostly to improve or refine either the project or the application to ensure that it would meet LEADER criteria. In some instances, projects were encouraged to emphasise aspects of their project, to consider adding innovative aspects or to increase the scale of their project. One applicant said that once they concluded that LEADER funding was not appropriate for their project, the team helped them to refine and improve their application to submit to other funding bodies. Reflective of the aims of LEADER, seven projects were asked to refine their projects to ensure that they were more inclusive of the community or community led.

*“The advice from the LEADER team meant that we put more emphasis on community involvement and community benefit. We had to highlight how the project would benefit the people of Ceredigion and how we could engage multiple communities in the project. They also gave us invaluable insight in terms of the application.”*

Eight projects felt that the advice they received hadn't had an impact on their project and two interviewees said the advice they received made them decide to withdraw their projects.

*“The LEADER team came back to us that we needed to add innovation elements to the project if we were going to be funded but this would have complicated our plans and added to much of a delay to the project.”*

When asked how likely it was that they would have submitted their application for funding if the aforementioned support was not available:

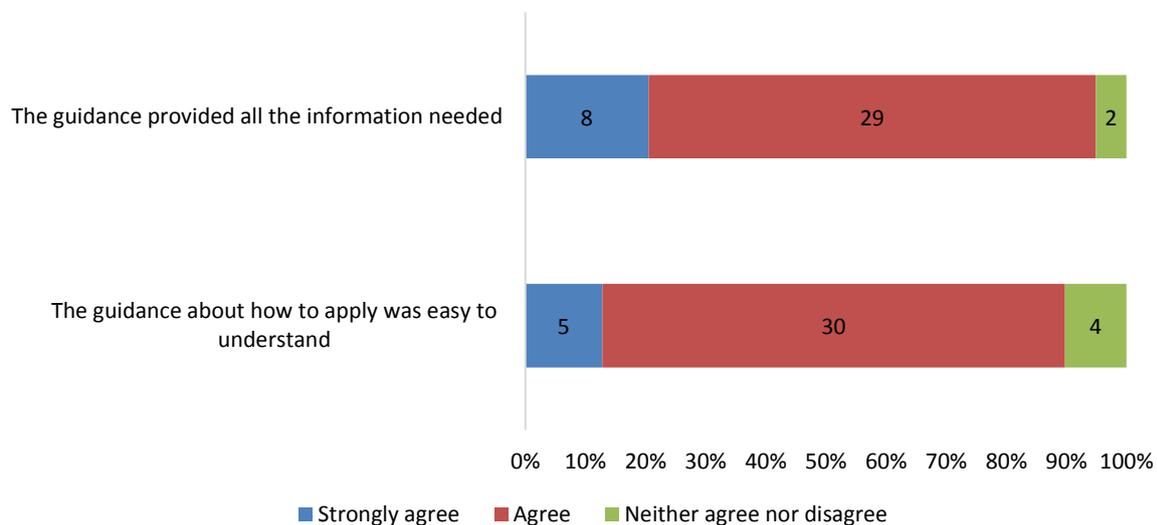
- Three projects were certain that they would have submitted the application anyway;
- Seventeen projects thought it was likely they would have submitted the application;
- Fourteen projects thought it was unlikely they would have submitted an application
- Four projects were unsure; and
- One project said they definitely would not have submitted their application without the support.

Although 20 of the 42 projects<sup>21</sup> who received support felt they would most likely have submitted their application anyway, the support provided played an important role for the 19 organisations who were unsure or unlikely to have submitted their application without it.

### 5.2.3 Application guidance

As shown in Figure 5.2 below, the majority of respondents agree to an extent that application guidance was comprehensive and clear. Respondents typically described this guidance as ‘straightforward’ and suggested that if there was anything they were uncertain about, they could simply follow this up with the LEADER team. Despite some projects having their applications rejected, none of the interviewees felt that the advice wasn’t easy to understand or did not provide all the information needed.

Figure 5.2: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement about the guidance you received when preparing your application for funding?



Base: n=39 as excludes three respondents who did not feel they were able to answer this question

<sup>21</sup> Excludes respondents that did not respond to this question.

All eight projects who felt the guidance provided all the information that was needed were experienced in applying for grant funding. Where the guidance was scored lower, participants felt that the language used in the guide was *'highly technical'* and difficult to understand. However, three of the four projects that made this comment said that the LEADER team had been on hand to provide clarity and explain the guidance more clearly.

### 5.2.4 Overall process

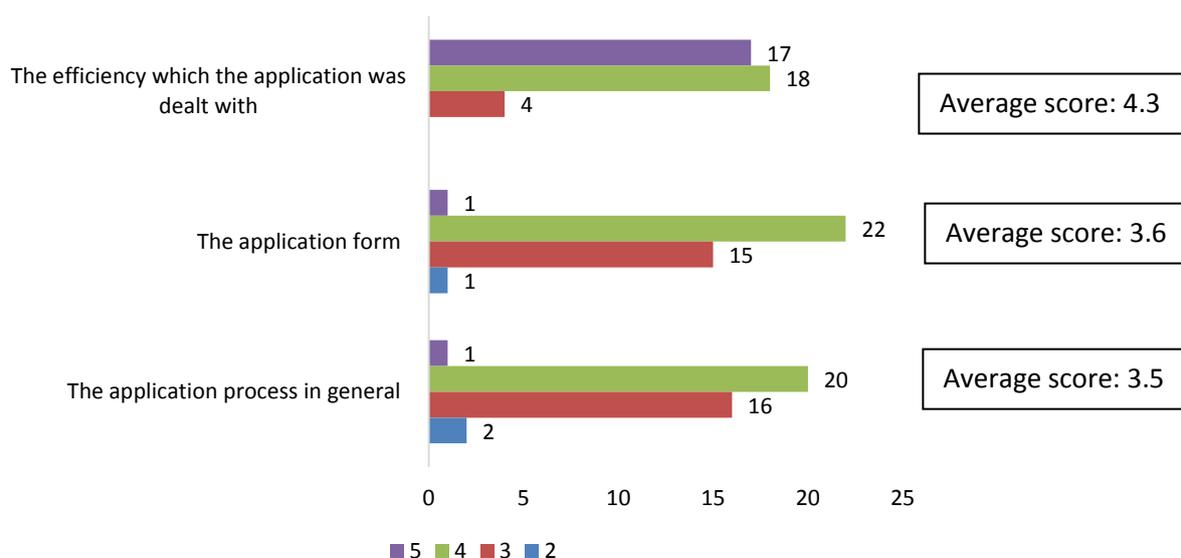
Respondents were subsequently asked how the guidance they received could be improved. Eighteen of the thirty-three organisations who felt this question was applicable believed that the language of the guidance documents should be more straightforward and reflect the clear and comprehensive advice provided by the LEADER team. One applicant expressed a concern that the current terminology could be off-putting for smaller groups:

*"The guidance notes for the application could be simplified in places. The terminology used seems designed to put ordinary community groups off applying without LEADER support."*

Five projects also requested more information in the guidance about what the LAG were looking for in applications, and the possibility of including more examples. Eleven projects didn't feel that there were any amendments necessary.

As illustrated in Figure 5.3 below, the majority of interviewees perceived the overall application process positively, on the scale of 0 (very poor) to 5 (very good). Projects were more likely to score the efficiency with which their application was dealt with positively and the application process overall received the lowest average score.

**Figure 5.3: How would you rate the following on a scale of 0 (very poor) to 5 (very good)**



Base: n=39, excludes 'don't know' and blank responses.

Where applicants scored the application process as 'poor', one said this reflected the complexity of the language used in the guidance whilst the other project felt that the LAG's request for amendments to the project late in the application stage, despite being aware of tight timescales, was a critical flaw in the process.

## 5.1 Unsuccessful and withdrawn applications

In total, 18 interviewees were with those responsible for application that had not been successful; seven withdrew from the process and eleven had their applications rejected.

### 5.1.1 Feedback on Unsuccessful Applications

Ten of the 11 projects recalled receiving feedback as to why their application was unsuccessful. Of these, the reasons they recall being given were as follows:

- Three projects were judged to be underdeveloped or not focused enough
- The outcomes for two projects would be too difficult to measure
- Two projects were felt not to be innovative enough
- There wasn't enough evidence of the demand for one project
- One project was rejected as the LAG had already funded a number of applications
- One project was unable to explain what criteria their project failed to meet

Seven of the ten projects who received feedback stated that they were dissatisfied with it, describing it as being 'vague' or conflicted with communication they had prior to submitting their application. Whilst the potential for bias within any sample of unsuccessful applications must be acknowledged (as it does in any sample of successful applicants), this negative response must be noted and considered when feedback is provided in the future.

### 5.1.2 Reasons for withdrawals

Seven projects withdrew their applications at an early stage in the process:

- Three were advised early on that their projects did not meet LEADER criteria
- Two felt that suggested amendments to their projects made by LAG meant they weren't feasible
- One project withdrew due to a member of staff leaving the organisation
- One project withdrew as they felt their project wasn't at the right stage of development

### 5.1.3 Subsequent progression

Eight of the 18 projects that did not secure LEADER funding were able to progress despite this. This was either by applying for alternative funding or by reducing the scale of their project. One project is still in the development stages. The fact that just under half of unsuccessful applications progressed (to an extent at least) is interesting. On the one hand, it demonstrates that potential alternative funding is available within Ceredigion. However, the fact that more than half of projects did not proceed also suggests some dependence on the funding.

Those who secured alternative finance for their projects all did so through multiple organisations or means. Two organisations also generated finance by providing extra events or charging more for their services. All the groups that had been able to progress their projects had some prior experience in applying to funding, though this ranged from accessing funding through local councils to applying to UK wide funding bodies.

Of the ten projects that have not been able to progress to date, three said that they did have plans to continue with their project in the future. However, six projects stated that they had no intention of carrying on with their ideas with four specifically explaining that their experience of failing to secure LEADER funding had meant they had lost motivation<sup>22</sup>.

*“I lost motivation to carry on with the project and there was never any follow up from the LEADER team despite them promising to help improve the application for another attempt, so the project was abandoned.”*

Given that the majority of recipients who received feedback were unhappy with its quality, a more in-depth process coupled with the signposting support that Cynnal y Cardi seem to be able to offer would likely help to improve the experience and resilience of groups that were judged as being unsuitable to receive LEADER funding.

The loss of motivation on the part of a proportion of unsuccessful applicants is also of interest as it demonstrated the potential knock-on implications of a negative experience. The concern is that the next project or application developed by the individual or organisation in question could have been a good one... Again, this underlines the need, however challenging, to seek to provide negative responses to applications in a positive manner.

## 5.2 Administration and support of approved projects

### 5.2.1 The administrative process

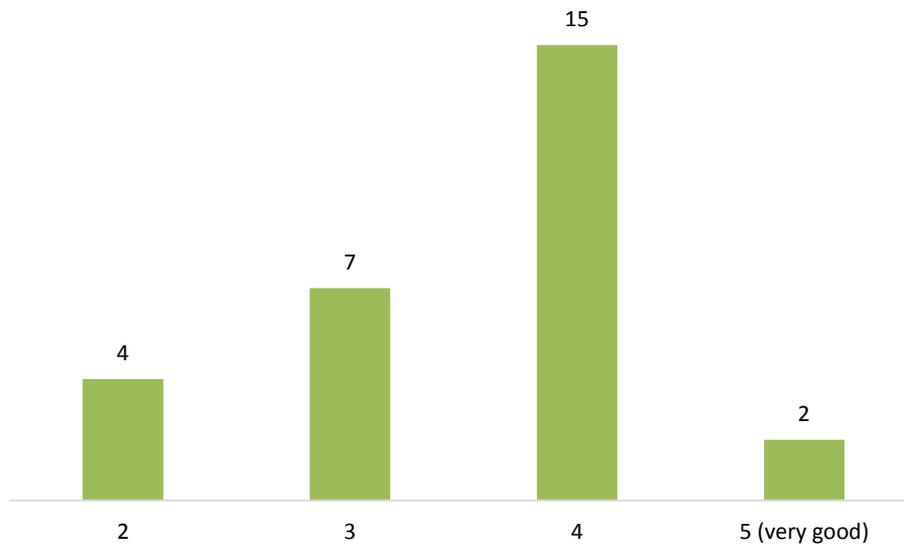
Those responsible for approved projects were asked to rate the funding administrative process (see Figure 5.4). Whilst most respondents were still positive, there was a greater variance in views expressed about the administrative process compared to views about the application process.

Qualitative answers suggest that lower ratings are due to projects finding the evidence requirements and complexity of the administration burdensome. Delays in claims being processed were also reported to have put organisations under strain in terms of their cash flow. However, it is important to note that 21 out of the 28 responses praised the LEADER team for their support and regular contact.

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<sup>22</sup> One respondent did not indicate whether or not they intended to progress with their project in the future

Figure 5.4: How would you rate the funding administrative process?



Base: n=28

When asked how this element of the process could be improved, respondents suggested that the amount of evidence needed to claim the funding should be reduced, particularly the breakdown of costs. Four respondents felt that there needed to be a change to the processing of claims as the initial wait to receive funding placed strain on the cashflow of organisations. Two projects felt that the timesheets they were required to fill in could be simplified.

### 5.2.2 The support provided

Since having their projects approved by the LAG, the survey found that the LEADER team has provided:

- Fifteen projects with general day-to-day advice
- Six projects advice on indicators which demonstrate their project's impact
- Five projects with further financial guidance, and
- One project advice on future plans

Projects that described the LEADER team as providing general day-to-day advice suggested that this was on an ad-hoc basis and flexible depending on need. For example, whilst one project described having '*brief discussions*' with the team '*because they haven't needed to get in touch*' another described greater contact with the team; '*We had meetings with the LEADER team on a semi-regular basis which tended to focus on financial processes and reporting system as this was an area we needed support with.*'

This suggests that, overall, support through the LEADER team is flexible and projects are aware that they are able to access it if needed. This approach appears effective as the majority of interviewed projects (12/20) stated that there is no other support they perceive themselves as needing from the LEADER team, whilst four suggested that a platform from which they could network with other LEADER projects would be beneficial.

## 5.3 Cross-cutting themes

LEADER programmes must incorporate a number of cross-cutting themes (CCTs) within their activities. A number of such themes are consistent across all European funded programmes in Wales, namely:

- equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming;
- sustainable development; and
- tackling poverty and social exclusion.

The Welsh language is also identified within the LDS as a CCT as is 'supporting the uplands' which is a CCT for the rural development programme in Wales.

The LDS for Ceredigion sets out in some detail how the LAG will maximise its contribution to the CCTs and interviews with staff and LAG members for this phase of the evaluation suggest that addressing the CCTs is considered within the management and delivery of the programme. As one would expect, all applicants for support are required to describe how their projects will address the CCTs as part of the application process. It is also part of the assessment process.

Processes are therefore in place to address the CCTs. However, there would not seem to be any specific reporting against the CCTs at a LAG level and interviews with members suggest that there is limited discussion of the themes at a LAG level other than when applications for support are being considered. Further, no specific monitoring data relating to the CCTs is being collected.

## 6 Project case studies

This chapter presents three of the projects funded to date as case studies for the LEADER programme in Ceredigion.

### 6.1 Coed Y Bont - Pontrhydfendigaid Community Woodland Association

Located near the village of Pontrhydfendigaid, the Coed y Bont Community Engagement Project manages 60 acres of local woodland to raise awareness about the environment and biodiversity amongst the community, in particular young people, whilst also encouraging them to access the woodland and become involved in other activities such as conservation training.

The Coed y Bont Community Engagement Project aims to be self-sustaining through education-based activities designed to build up the skillsets of volunteers whom can share their knowledge with new volunteers. In the first instance, the Coed y Bont Community Engagement Project wanted to ensure that the woodland was accessible to all, a place that both local people and visitors would want to visit, had a range of interesting and diverse wildlife, involved and educated people. The woodland, part of the Welsh Government's woodland estate and managed by Natural Resources Wales, officially opened in September 2016 as a result of the Coed y Bont Community Engagement Project's work.

In the first instance, the project trained local volunteers in the use of small tools so that they could help maintain and manage the site. From this, the range of activities has expanded and diversified, now also including educational school visits, ties with local youth clubs and large-scale projects such as building a shelter out of local timber. A Coed y Bont Community Engagement Project representative stated:

*'By the end of the project we will have had sessions and visits from all the schools in the community and also completed a series of activities with the local Youth club. The school groups and youth club will have completed the arts activities and done a series of mosaics and sculptures that are exhibited in and around the education centre. We will have four volunteers who will have completed all aspects of the brush cutting course and have all the tools and equipment they need to do the work. Twelve volunteers will have completed the Woodland conservation and biodiversity courses.'*

The Coed y Bont Community Engagement Project can be described as both innovative and sustainable. The project raises awareness about the environment and diversity, alongside encouraging improved health and wellbeing through outdoor activities through the dissemination of information through volunteers and the engagement of young people through organisational links, tying in with the national curriculum, and arts-based projects which are now on display throughout the woodland. Its success is also demonstrated through its recognition as a finalist in the biodiversity category at the 2017 Tidy Wales Awards run by Keep Wales Tidy.

Looking forward, The Coed y Bont Community Engagement Project hopes to continue its current educational and training activities alongside developing a wildlife and bird population monitoring project which, with further funding, will lead to the construction of hides and nesting boxes within the woodland.

## 6.2 Case Study – Hen Linell Bell/A Far Old-Line Festival

In March 2017, Arad Goch announced their launch of Hen Linell Bell/A Far Old Line, an open air, bilingual arts festival in Aberystwyth which would take place between the 21<sup>st</sup> July-5<sup>th</sup> August in 2017 and include workshops for local people and community groups in its lead up. Hen Linell Bell's overarching aims were to celebrate Ceredigion culture and heritage, drawing on local stories and tales and incorporating Visit Wales' Year of the legend to connect different local groups, enable local residents to develop skills and showcase the creativity and history of Aberystwyth. As described by Jeremy Turner, artistic director of Arad Goch:

*'Our aim is to see Aberystwyth transformed into a kaleidoscope of colour and a cauldron of creativity.'*

With the support of the LEADER programme, Hen Linell Bell was the first open-air arts festival ever held in Ceredigion; the production was designed bilingually and had an emphasis on visual production so that it was accessible to all. The free of charge festival also included a range of arts-based events including performances, workshops, storytelling and food-based events. A key success of Hen Linell Bell is articulated by a representative as its reach into the community:

*'We were able to involve 1492 members of the community in the production and delivery of the festival which included over 157 events. We had an audience of 7467 on Aberystwyth Prom.'*

Alongside the arts-based events produced throughout the festival, the Hen Linell Bell was community-led, with a specific focus on the development of local people's skills through preparatory workshops. This included developing the performance, technical and marketing skills of community members both to support this festival and enable similar events in the future:

*'We developed a network between different community groups to ensure that they cooperate more in the future. We have put plans in place so that a similar event is held in Aberystwyth every 2-3 years.'*

When asked about the LEADER team's involvement with the programme, the representative describes the committed support and guidance provided which enabled the festival to transform and focus more intensively on the community-led and community produced aspects of the festival which made it such a success:

*'I think the event showcased the ability of the people of Aberystwyth. The event was consistently of a high standard.'*

Since August 2017, Hen Linell Bell has won the 2018 Wales Theatre Award's Best Design Award for The Sea King's Feast, the final performance at the festival, and has been nominated for a further two awards. Moreover, has enabled local people who worked collaboratively with Arad Goch to develop links with groups within their community, develop skills and confidence and lay the foundations for more successful events in the future.

## 6.3 Yma i Chi/Here for You

Launched on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018, Yma i Chi/Here for You is a free online counselling service for people aged 18-30 in Ceredigion. The service is currently being run by Area 43, an accredited British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy counselling service based in Cardigan. The project aims to improve the wellbeing of young people in rural Ceredigion, providing access to support services which may not be feasible for individuals to physically get to whilst also raising local awareness about mental health in an attempt to remove the stigma around mental health issues.

The Yma i Chi/Here for You project's key focus is to provide support that has previously been unavailable in Ceredigion:

*'Before this project there was no online counselling services for young people in Ceredigion. The rural nature of the county and the lack of mental health services meant that people had to travel far to receive simple counselling. By having an online service young people in isolated areas with poor transport links could easily access professional counsellors at any time.'*

The service, delivered over a secure platform by fully accredited counsellors, is intended to be reflective of local need, with said counsellors having an in-depth understanding and local knowledge of the unique challenges and problems faced by young people in rural West Wales.

Yma i Chi/Here for You has been promoted throughout Ceredigion with information disseminated through local organisations and is accessible through its bilingual website which directs individuals toward a free telephone number. As an online counselling service, Area 43 offer Yma i Chi/Here for you counselling through a variety of digital methods including email and video chat software. The purpose of this is to make the service *'user-focussed'* whilst also enabling the Yma i Chi/Here for you team to *'deliver appropriate responses to personal crises and offer strategies and coping skills'* through digital mediums young people are comfortable using.

Looking forward, Area 43 is hoping to ensure that the service continues and is sustainable. To do so, Area 43 hope to recruit and train more counsellors in order to increase their capacity over the next 12 months. By the end of 2019, it is hoped that the Yma i Chi/Here for you project will have helped over 70 people.

## 7 Conclusion and recommendations

As part of their interviews, LAG members and staff were asked to give a score out of 10 for the LEADER programme in Ceredigion to date; the average score was 6.5 which can be summed up as 'good, with some room for improvement'. The average score given is probably a fair reflection of the findings of this mid-term review. Several positives have been identified but action is also required to enhance the delivery of the programme over the remainder of its lifetime as discussed below.

A key finding of the review of the LDS is that the priorities and objectives it sets out are very broad and wide ranging, with very little prioritisation. There has also been a very reactive approach to date with little 'strategy' apparent in the project selection process. There is an argument that this approach reflects the wide-ranging challenges facing the county and the need to cast the net widely in order to identify new and innovative projects and ideas. However, we believe that there is a stronger argument for greater prioritisation going forward to ensure that the remaining funding available is utilised as effectively as possible.

**Recommendation 1:** The potential to introduce greater prioritisation into the LDS to provide a clearer steer for the LEADER programme, the LAG and the animation team over the remainder of the lifetime of the programme should be considered. A clear action plan for the implementation of the LDS and the LEADER programme in Ceredigion should then be developed for the second half of the programme-period.

A limited number of indicators (and associated targets) are in place to monitor the performance of the programme. Such an approach has several benefits from an administrative perspective. A result of the approach however is that the indicators provide limited data on the extent to which the LDS has been delivered and the performance of the programme, especially at an outcome level (most of the indicators are outputs; i.e. activities). There is therefore an argument for introducing additional indicators and a few suggestions have been made within the report.

There is also a disconnect between the ambitions and objectives set out within the LDS (high) and the targets that have been set (low). We would not be overly critical of this as setting targets for a programme such as LEADER (especially at an output level) bears little value and risks an over focus on the part of the LEADER team on achieving those targets as opposed to delivering the LDS or developing the best possible projects. However, the potential to introduce some further indicators to enhance our ability to assess the extent to which the LDS has been delivered should be considered.

**Recommendation 2:** Consideration should be given to the introduction of additional performance indicators for the implementation of the LDS in Ceredigion including both generic indicators and theme/priority specific indicators. The potential to increase the level of monitoring of the implementation of the CCTs at a LAG level should also be considered including regular review and analysis of progress against the themes at a LAG level.

The limited number of programme level indicators and the wide variety in projects supported also means that the programme is dependent to a large extent on the monitoring and evaluation activities being undertaken by the projects to demonstrate its achievements. However, only half the projects interviewed for this mid-term evaluation reported having plans in place for the evaluation of their projects which is of some concern. The quality and robustness of those plans that are in place is also unclear.

**Recommendation 3:** The evaluation plans of the individual projects should be collated by the Lead Body for review by the evaluation team to assess the likely quality of the data that projects are likely to provide. Dependent on the findings of the review, evaluation workshops or training sessions should be provided to projects with a view to maximising the value of the evaluation data that is gathered at a project level.

The understanding of the LEADER approach at a LAG level seems to be generally good which is obviously positive. The relative complexity of the programme does however need to be acknowledged as does the need to ensure that LAG members attend meetings on a regular basis in order to ensure that they have a good working knowledge of the programme and the discussions that have taken place during previous meetings. There were also concerns amongst interviewees about the understanding, or indeed awareness, of LEADER and the role of the LAG amongst key stakeholders outside the LAG.

**Recommendation 4:** Continuity of members/attendance at LAG meetings is important to allow members to build up their knowledge of the programme and activities being undertaken. LAG membership should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that members have the capacity to fully commit to the LAG. Where members are not able to commit adequate time to the LAG, replacement members should be sought.

**Recommendation 5:** A briefing-pack on the LEADER programme and the role of LAG members has been produced and is available to LAG members. This should be used and referred to by LAG members (new and existing) on an ongoing basis to ensure that members maintain a comprehensive working understanding of the programme and the approach that it promotes. Summaries of the programme could be taken from the pack which LAG members could then use when sharing information about LEADER with colleagues and stakeholders.

**Recommendation 6:** In response to concerns about the level of awareness of the programme amongst some key stakeholders, the key role that LAG members in raising awareness of the LEADER programme in Ceredigion should be recognised. LAG members also have an important role in the animation of the local area. The potential to enhance the role of LAG members as 'ambassadors' for LEADER should be explored including representing the LAG at events or meeting, leading activities with particular sectors and so on. Members should also be encouraged to note/promote their role as LAG members within their existing networks and activities. The potential to develop a page on the Ceredigion LEADER programme website which lists (and provides contacts details, etc.) for LAG members and their role on the LAG should be considered.

Those interviewed were generally positive about the range of organisations and sector represented at LAG meetings although 'young people' and 'private sector' were identified as gaps. Those gaps are however, in the experience of the evaluation team, common amongst LAGs; they are not sectors which LAGs find it easy to engage with.

**Recommendation 7:** The LAG should assess whether there are gaps in its knowledge and understanding of the challenges and opportunities in rural Ceredigion (for example, by undertaking a skills audit). If gaps are identified actions to address those gaps (e.g. specific research or consultation activities) should be considered. Specifically, options for engaging young people and the private sector in LAG/LEADER activities (both identified as gaps during the evaluation interviews) should be explored including setting up sub-groups to the main LAG for specific groups (e.g. young people) or sectors (e.g. private sector).

The number of benefits of membership of the LAG identified by interviewees is important to note including the networking opportunity that membership of the LAG provides and the learning from the assessment of such a range of project ideas. Such benefits are an important outcome of the LEADER approach.

'Amination of the territory' is a key part of LEADER and the evaluation has found potential for LAG members to engage more fully in the direction of activities being undertaken by the LEADER team on their behalf; the LAG should take greater responsibility for the animation activities being undertaken.

**Recommendation 8:** Animation is a key element of the LEADER approach. Considering the updates to the LDS, there should be a greater focus on discussing, directing and monitoring of animation activities at a LAG level.

**Recommendation 9:** A key objective of LEADER is to foster local economic development. There should therefore be a focus within the animation process moving forward on engaging with and encouraging groups with limited or no previous experience of developing projects and applying for financial support.

**Recommendation 10:** Whilst committing funding is clearly important, care should be taken when committing further funding to ensure that adequate resource remains available to fund ideas and applications generated by animation activities to be undertaken during the next phase of the programme period.

The evaluation has identified the potential for further development in respects of the level of networking taking place both within and outside Ceredigion (especially at a LAG and projects level) and for increased awareness of other LEADER activities in Wales (and beyond) amongst LAG members.

**Recommendation 11:** Networking and cooperation are also key features of LEADER. Opportunities and options for the following should therefore be explored:

- a) Increasing networking, exchanging of experiences and cooperation at a project level within Ceredigion; such activities could potentially be focused on sharing the lessons learnt and findings of LEADER projects undertaken.
- b) Increasing LAG members awareness of LEADER projects being delivered in other parts of Wales (and across the EU); if possible, information about projects developed and delivered in previous programme periods (within and outside Ceredigion) should also be shared.
- c) Developing further cooperative projects, especially with LAGs outside Wales and across the EU; those should be explored as soon as possible as to allow enough time for those projects to be developed and implemented.

**Recommendation 12:** A key element of any pilot project is the capturing *and* then sharing of any learning. Consideration should be given to the production of detailed case-studies/reports for all of the projects that have been funded by LEADER in Ceredigion that should be used to share and disseminate the findings and lessons learnt from each project. The method for effectively sharing those documents with stakeholders (local and from further afield) should also be considered; for example, the potential for conferences or workshops to share and discuss findings.

There was a clear awareness amongst LAG members of the focus on supporting new and innovative activities via LEADER. The definition of 'innovation' being used is however relatively broad, the focus being on whether activities have taken place in Ceredigion previously. Whilst this is understandable, there is an argument that the LAG could take the opportunity presented by LEADER to be more ambitious in respects on the level of innovation being supported. The constraint of the need for projects to source match funding must however be recognised.

**Recommendation 13:** Innovation is a key element of LEADER. Consideration should be given to the potential to encourage greater innovative/creative thinking with communities and stakeholder groups within Ceredigion with a view to developing new and innovative project ideas.

**Recommendation 14:** Opportunities to source match funding 'at a programme level' in Ceredigion should be explored in order to allow particularly innovative projects to be funded 100%.

# Appendix 1: An overview of the Ceredigion LDS priorities and objectives

## THEME 1: TO UTILISE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

### Need/Opportunity

What the LDS says:

*One of Ceredigion's main assets is its high-quality environment. It boasts a rich variety of landscape stretching from the coastline of Cardigan Bay to the Cambrian Mountains and from the Dyfi in the north to the Teifi Valley in the south. The natural environment has been identified as a potential economic driver for the county and LEADER activity proposes to build on this opportunity. LEADER activity will focus on:*

- *Protecting the county's environmental assets through sustainable management;*
- *Developing a destination management approach to tourism and developing sense of place;*
- *Exploring opportunities for accessing the county's natural and built heritage;*
- *Supporting communities to explore the potential for renewable energy in Ceredigion.*

## THEME 2: BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASED ECONOMY

### Need/Opportunity

*Ceredigion has a strong research and educational foundation, across many sectors e.g. Aberystwyth University including IBERS – specifically Pwllpeiran Upland Research Station, University of Wales Trinity St. David and The National Library of Wales. There is real potential to exploit these knowledge hubs for business-university networking and collaboration. LEADER activity will focus on:*

- *Improving links with Universities and research sector to develop business hubs through facilitating workplace development/incubator units and mentoring;*
- *Support pilot initiatives and research on new and innovative opportunities for pre commercial development in all sectors;*
- *Develop opportunities for businesses in Ceredigion to access data that will help them identify market trends, market data, analysis of market information and research insights;*
- *Strengthening local supply chains through facilitating joint actions.*

*Supporting mechanisms already exist through Food Centre Wales and the Cywain programme which allows individuals within the agricultural sector and food to access support to develop new products and access new markets. In this particular sector activity within this LDS will help support new product development where a gap currently exists and where there is a barrier to those who wish to add value to their products. This objective within the strategy therefore completes the support for those in the industry to react to market needs and develop new products to test the market.*

### **THEME 3: MAKING THE MOST OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

#### Need/Opportunity

*Ceredigion has a strong cultural and linguistic identity. With a number of key distinctive heritage locations, numerous native breeds and well-established cultural activities in the county, there are opportunities for strengthening the role of culture and heritage to become an economic driver. The small decline in the number of Welsh speakers in the latest census has highlighted the need for increased use of the Welsh language to create a stronger identity. LEADER activity will focus on:*

- *Promotion of innovative economic activities that are developed from a direct relationship with the Welsh language and culture;*
- *To develop community based local sense of place initiatives that promote local distinctiveness and celebrate local themes;*
- *Develop coordinated marketing strategies and promotional tools to promote culture and heritage.*

### **THEME 4: ADDING VALUE TO OUR PRIMARY PRODUCTS**

#### Need/Opportunity

*At 1,800km<sup>2</sup> Ceredigion's scale and its sparsity of population ensure that we have an abundance of primary resources to draw on, on land and at sea. Previous experience from the Cynnal y Cardi LEADER project has highlighted that there are opportunities for building on Ceredigion's primary products. The county has a strong agricultural and forestry sector and work was done with the forestry sector in terms of developing training opportunities for volunteers, supporting marketing initiatives to promote woodland opportunities. LEADER activity will focus on:*

- *Developing support for innovation of pre-commercial product development that allows access to new market opportunities at a local level;*
- *Developing a network of producers to identify new ways of utilising natural products;*
- *Developing networking opportunities between individuals and businesses in all sectors;*
- *Supporting the development of themed tourism activities e.g. food.*

## THEME 5: DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

### Need/Opportunity

*Creating more resilient communities – whether geographical or communities of interest and individuals is a key aim of LEADER. The changing face of our economy with ongoing financial pressure on public services means that there are opportunities for communities to innovate and explore initiatives that can support local non-statutory services. The LDS also provides the opportunity to grow capacity of individuals and groups in all sectors in order to develop skills and foster capacity building to develop local initiatives. LEADER activity will focus on:*

- *Researching the role of communities in the delivery of local non-statutory services;*
- *Exploring opportunities for piloting local non-statutory services and preparing business cases for asset transfer of non-statutory services and assets;*
- *Exploring opportunities for growing community capacity of social enterprises, groups and individuals.*

### **LDS PRIORITIES**

1. To utilise the natural environment and landscape
2. Apply a Destination Management approach to tourism and sense of place in Ceredigion
3. To grow community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities
4. To adapt to Ceredigion's population change, with net out-migration of young people and net in-migration of middle adulthood
5. To facilitate a substantially knowledge-based economy to support new & innovative opportunities
6. To strengthen short supply chains to yield the optimum benefit for businesses
7. To increase opportunities for workforce development
8. To improve access to and exploitation of IT
9. To strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area
10. To reduce the impact of long term rises in living costs

The table below maps the priorities per the theme (with priorities feeding into multiple themes) they contribute towards, the objectives identified within each of the priorities and the projects that have been approved to date.

The priorities and themes where projects have been funded to date are shaded with the gaps to date therefore being easily identified.

| Priority   | LDS Theme   | LDS Objectives   | Projects funded to date   |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1. To utilise the natural environment and landscape                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 1: Utilising the natural environment and landscape</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase the economic, social &amp; well-being opportunities generated by Ceredigion's high-quality environment</li> <li>• To develop cooperation actions in the Teifi Valley, Cambrian Mountains and Dyfi Biosphere areas based on utilising the natural environment and landscape</li> <li>• To encourage the sustainable management of the natural environment and landscape of the area</li> <li>• To strengthen the skills of the workforce in the sector and provide volunteer training opportunities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CYC01/11 Pen Dinas Hill Fort – Exploring the Celtic Coast</li> <li>• CYC01/17 Pweru'r Dyffryn</li> <li>• CYC01/19 Coed y Bont Woodland</li> <li>• CYC02/06 Pentir Pumlumon Upland Regeneration Study</li> <li>• CYC02/07 Adnabod Gorsgoch</li> <li>• CYC05/02 Upland Arboretum</li> <li>• CYC05/04 Small Steps – Strata Florida</li> <li>• CYC05/07 Teaching Trees</li> <li>• CYC06/03 Pentir Pumlumon Upland Project Officer</li> </ul> |
| 2. Apply a Destination Management approach to tourism and sense of place in Ceredigion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 1: Utilising the natural environment and landscape</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop innovative products and collaborative initiatives to promote the Teifi Valley, Cambrian Mountains and Dyfi Biosphere as destinations</li> <li>• To stimulate the growth of locally based clusters to deliver tourism initiatives using the natural resources of the area as an asset</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COOP02/DB Dyfi Biosphere Cooperation project</li> <li>• COOP01/CM Cambrian Mountains Cooperation project</li> <li>• COOP03/PRT West Wales Angling Passport</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</i></li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To foster an environment of networking between community and business sectors and destination management partners to share best practice and resources</li> <li>• To make the tourism sector more attractive to younger people</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CYC02/06 Pentir Pumlumon Upland Regeneration Study</li> <li>• CYC06/03 Pentir Pumlumon Upland Project Officer</li> </ul>   |

| Priority   | LDS Theme   | LDS Objectives  | Projects funded to date  |
|--|---|---|--|
|  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a Ceredigion focused customer service programme</li> </ul>  |  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 3: Making the most of culture and heritage</i></li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To stimulate the growth of locally based clusters to deliver tourism initiatives using the cultural resources of the area as an asset</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYC03/02 Peaceful Places Links</li> <li>CYC08/03 Bica Byw</li> <li>CYC02/06 Pentir Pumlumon Upland Regeneration Study</li> <li>CYC06/03 Pentir Pumlumon Upland Project Officer</li> </ul>   |
| 3. To grow community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 1: Utilising the natural environment and landscape</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To facilitate the pre-development work for community based renewable energy initiatives and to identify opportunities for preparing communities to respond to climate change</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NONE</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 5: Developing our people and organisations</i></li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase support to groups and organisations for the development of locally based sustainable initiatives</li> <li>To build the capacity and increase the confidence of individuals/groups to identify community development opportunities</li> <li>To improve access to information &amp; fostering community networks</li> <li>To improve communication and engagement within communities</li> <li>To research the role of communities and other delivery partners in the delivery of local non-statutory services &amp; support for asset transfer of non-statutory services and assets</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYC01/18 Cegin Prydau Plant – Jig So</li> <li>CYC02/05 Mind feasibility</li> <li>CYC02/08 PARRC</li> <li>CYC02/10 Tregaron Old School feasibility</li> <li>CYC03/07 Compassionate Communities</li> <li>CYC05/06 Rural Community Asset</li> <li>CYC07/01 Aber Food Surplus</li> <li>CYC08/01 Amethyst</li> <li>CYC08/11 Hen Eglwys Silian</li> <li>CYC08/09 Youth service feasibility</li> <li>CYC10/07 Ceredigion Place Plans</li> <li>COOP09-RB Radio Beca Ysgogi drwy ddarlledu</li> <li>CYC09/03 Ar dy Feic</li> </ul> |

| Priority   | LDS Theme   | LDS Objectives   | Projects funded to date  |
|--|---|--|--|
|  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify innovative approaches to service delivery in rural areas</li> <li>To pilot activities that improves the well-being of individuals and communities</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYC11/06 Maes Chwarae Tal-y-bont feasibility</li> <li>CYC11/02 Pwll Nofio Caron feasibility</li> <li>CYC09/09 Dyma Ni – RAY Ceredigion</li> <li>CYC11/05 Digital Tregaron Digidol</li> </ul>  |
| 4. To adapt to Ceredigion’s population change, with net out-migration of young people and net in-migration of middle adulthood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</i></li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore business opportunities arising from service needs of the ageing population</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NONE</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 5: Developing our people and organisations</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster integration between different age demographics to support sustainable Welsh-speaking neighbourhoods and community cohesion</li> <li>To encourage greater engagement between different age groups to promote the transfer of skills</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NONE</li> </ul>   |
| 5. To facilitate a substantially knowledge-based economy to support new & innovative opportunities                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</i></li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To access market leading Intelligence that will allow Ceredigion businesses to access data in order to support growth in the private sector</li> <li>To foster an environment of networking between community and business sectors to share best practice and resources</li> <li>To improve access by businesses and entrepreneurs to the Higher Education and research and development sector to support new &amp; innovative opportunities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYC07/02 Real Ceredigion Experiences</li> <li>CYC10/05 Design your Future</li> <li>COOP005/EOR [Shetland Wool Preparatory Technical support]</li> <li>CYC02/12 Cymraeg yn y Gweithle</li> <li>CYC03/05 Digital Community Cardigan</li> <li>CYC08/03 Bica Byw</li> </ul> |

| Priority   | LDS Theme  | LDS Objectives  | Projects funded to date   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster innovative pre-commercial product development that will support accessing new markets</li> </ul>   |   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 4: Adding value to our primary products</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster innovative pre-commercial product development that will support accessing new markets</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NONE</li> </ul>  |
| 6. To strengthen short supply chains to yield the optimum benefit for businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To strengthen local supply chains within Ceredigion (knowledge economy)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NONE</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 4: Adding value to our primary products</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To strengthen local supply chains within Ceredigion (primary products)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NONE</li> </ul>  |
| 7. To increase opportunities for workforce development                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage leadership skills to grow</li> <li>To upskill Ceredigion's employment workforce</li> <li>To support initiatives that assists individuals to access work, training, volunteering opportunities and other services</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYC01/07 Academi Arweinyddiaeth Gymunedol</li> <li>CYC03/03 LEAF</li> <li>CYC04/01 Penparcau at the Arts Centre</li> <li>CCOP07/CFC Contemporary Food Craft</li> <li>COOP09-RB Radio Beca Ysgogi drwy ddarlledu</li> </ul> |
| 8. To improve access to and exploitation of IT                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve utilisation of digital technology by individuals, businesses and communities to promote sustainable rural economic growth</li> <li>To exploit the opportunities for digital trading by businesses and increase the productivity, diversity and efficiency of businesses in rural areas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYC03/05 Digital Community Cardigan</li> <li>CYC07/02 Real Ceredigion Experiences</li> </ul>   |

| Priority  | LDS Theme   | LDS Objectives  | Projects funded to date  |
|---|---|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 5: <i>Developing people and organisations</i></li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure digital inclusion for people in rural communities to combat social exclusion and provide improved access to services</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYC05/01 Ceredigidol</li> <li>CYC08/02 Area 43 Yma i chi</li> </ul>   |
| 9. To strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 3: <i>Making the most of culture and heritage</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the use of the Welsh language by the people of Ceredigion.</li> <li>To increase and consolidate Welsh language skills amongst the people of Ceredigion</li> <li>To promote economic activities that will strengthen the position of the Welsh language</li> <li>To celebrate and promote Ceredigion's rich social and cultural heritage</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CYC01/07 Academi Arweinyddiaeth Gymunedol</li> <li>CYC02/12 Cymraeg yn y Gweithle</li> <li>CYC03/08 Arad Goch Hen Linell Bell</li> <li>CYC08/03 Bica Byw</li> <li>CYC08/06 Bringing the cob home</li> <li>CYC10/01 Collections for a Nation – Ceredigion Museum</li> <li>CYC08/03 Bica Byw</li> </ul> |
| 10. To reduce the impact of long term rises in living costs                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 5: <i>Developing people and organisations</i></li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop opportunities for sharing resources &amp; identifying new cost and environmentally efficient initiatives</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>   |

## Appendix 2: A summary of the projects funded in Ceredigion to date

| Project code | Project Name                                       | Project Summary  | Rural Development Programme |
|--------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| COOP01/CM    | CMI Community Resilience and Nature Park Proposal. | Cooperation between Carms, Powys and Ceredigion. Project to 1). build and support the Cambrian Mountains (CM) as a destination by strengthening the CM Tourism Network, developing integrated working patterns across the organisations with a tourism/destination remit in the CM and building the CM brand. 2). work within local communities and with business to build the economy of the area that benefits from and supports the distinct cultural and high-nature value landscape of the CM; forging and strengthening formal and informal networks of producers, businesses and communities across the CM; promoting integrated working and brand-building/recognition. 3). investigate with CM communities the establishment of the area as a 'Parc Natur' or similar based on the French Parcs Naturels. | £90,344.93                  |
| CYC03/07     | Arts4Wellbeing                                     | To implement A4W Compassionate Communities Hubs initially in eight local village halls.<br>Supporting them to establish themselves as small community based co-operatives.<br>To facilitate, A4W Compassionate Communities training and empowerment toolkits in the community hubs.<br>To initiate a rolling out of A4W Compassionate Communities training and empowerment toolkits by these member groups, to other local groups in other surrounding villages.<br>To service the setting up of hubs and new hubs through a mobile equipment, tools and materials cooperative lending scheme.<br>To research, evaluate, measure and monitor the social impact, the training has upon participants and their communities.  | £81,656.55                  |
| CYC07/01     | Pilot Food Surplus                                 | Aber Food Surplus Ltd is a not-for-profit charitable social enterprise based in Aberystwyth. The remit of the organisation is to redistribute edible fit-for-consumption food waste (or food surplus) from businesses, food retailers, and other organisations, and to provide the tools to reduce food waste more widely. Focus project on the innovate ideas in application e.g. waste management, community engagement. etc<br>Those areas have now been identified and officers are now focusing on three specific areas of work:<br>Ø Project Manager – Innovation and Promotion<br>Ø Project Manager – Outreach and Development<br>Ø Project Manager – Recruitment, Coordination and Events.   | £72,395.35                  |
| CYC02/12     | Cymraeg yn y Gweithle                              | The purpose of the project is to engage and work with rural employers and organisations to support, facilitate and increase the use of the Welsh language in employment, and encourage companies and organisations to use the Welsh language as a tool to promote activities and economic development within the area. The project will also work with young people in the county to promote enterprise to help them recognise the economic and linguistic value of starting a business locally. The project is a two-year pilot scheme requiring a grant to fund a Business Officer within the county to work with key partners and develop the work necessary to promote the Welsh language in business.   | £62,396.84                  |

| Project code | Project Name  | Project Summary   | RDP        |
|--------------|---|---|------------|
| CYC09/09     | Dyma Ni - RAY Ceredigion  | <p>Project to offer a series of taster activities over a period of 10 weeks to 12 young adults aged between 17 and 30 years of age with differing levels of needs. Activities delivered between two sites RAY Ceredigion and Green Rocket Futures with the following activities provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and cooking meals, cakes, desserts etc</li> <li>Growing food / polytunnels</li> <li>Arts and crafts activities - recycled materials</li> <li>Small animal husbandry</li> <li>Carpentry - planters, bird boxes, pallet outdoor furniture</li> <li>Gardening for climate change</li> <li>IT - office skills, record keeping, photography and social media</li> </ul> <p>As part of this process the project will identify opportunities for making links with community organisations/businesses to seek potential partnership working.</p> <p>The anticipated outcomes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved health and wellbeing, reduced reliance on statutory services</li> <li>Contribution to wider community</li> <li>Less reliance on state benefits, reduced levels of poverty, sustainable over the longer term</li> <li>Change in perception of what people with disabilities can do and contribute</li> </ul> | £56,612.34 |
| CYC09/03     | Ar dy Feic / On your Bike - Rural Health and Care Wales (hosted by Hywel Dda University Health Board) | The "On your Bike" project is based on the need to increase and mainstream physical activity in everyday life. It is likewise linked to environmental issues in that it generates clean energy from sustainable sources – human physical power. Approve phase one to include further detailed consultation and survey of users, sites and future viability. LAG to review progress for phase two once results received.   | £56,000.00 |
| CYC03/08     | Hen Linell Bell (Arad Goch)   | To develop and deliver a series of exciting outdoor performances of a high quality and on a large scale. At the heart of the project will be a collaboration between local community groups and expert and professional theatre workers from Wales and abroad. The first year will include events in the Aberystwyth and surrounding area in the summer of 2017 and will relate to Visit Wales' theme Year of the Legends.  | £54,151.00 |
| CYC05/04     | Small Steps / Camau Bach - Strata Florida   | Community-led project, called Small Steps/Camau Bach, which will identify and coordinate a series of activities using and promoting skills centred specifically on heritage, building on local capacity within the community of Pontrhydfendigaid and its bro. It will be a major step in drawing together, cataloguing and making ready for use in the proposed Centre, some of the rich Welsh heritage of the region. This will be a mechanism for supporting the local community by affirming and reinforcing its historic identity as well as providing a process of economic regeneration through heritage by supporting the aims of the Strata Florida Trust at a critically important stage in its development of the Centre.  | £54,068.94 |

| Project code | Project Name   | Project Summary  | RDP        |
|--------------|--|--|------------|
| CYC08/02     | Area 43 Here for you - online counselling service for 16-25 year olds. | To provide an online counselling service that will support those that work/live in isolating industries and locations throughout Ceredigion. The aim is to improve and promote emotional well-being among the groups they work with and Increase resilience in those that engage.  | £52,500.00 |
| CYC08/03     | Bica Byw - Pwyllgor Lles Llangrannog                                   | Bica Byw project aims to create a sustainable community in Llangrannog, adding value to the local identity and making the most of the natural and cultural assets. Groups, businesses and individuals within the community wish to collaborate on the development of an exciting interactive project combining innovative technology and real experiences, creating Bica Byw on several platforms.   | £51,930.00 |
| CYC06/03     | Upland Tourism Development, Pentir Pumlumon                            | The application is to fund a part time officer over three years, to deliver the recommendations of the recently completed Upland Tourism Study. This was undertaken by Miller Associates, with funding from Cynnal y Cardi.<br>The consultants were briefed to prepare the following action plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a baseline study of the area to include visitor numbers and type, accommodation, attractions, activities, facilities and services</li> <li>• Explore and develop a cultural / heritage visitor action plan</li> <li>• Explore and develop an activities / sporting visitor action plan</li> <li>• Explore and develop country life/nature opportunities for visitors</li> <li>• Explore public transport issues for community and tourists.</li> </ul>   | £50,050.73 |
| COOP02/DB    | Dyfi Biosphere Cooperative Plan  | Cooperation between Gwynedd, Powys and Ceredigion. To create capacity by employing an animateur to inspire and support the development of community actions using the LEADER approach. Actions will be based on the unique characteristics of the internationally-recognised status of the Biosffer Dyfi Biosphere area and community, and will focus on its economic, environmental, cultural, geographic and social features. The focus of the work will be based on the following objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify possible sectors and exploring ways in which the Dyfi Biosphere brand can deliver economic and other benefits. Learning from other areas where brands have been developed and adopted will be a key outcome.</li> <li>• Engage with children and young people via schools, young farmers clubs, youth clubs etc. to explore the unique opportunities that the Dyfi Biosphere can offer. Identify gaps e.g. in skills and identify initiatives that meet those needs.</li> </ul> | £47,487.92 |
| CYC11/02     | Pwll Nofio Caron Swimming Pool   | A feasibility Study to look into the development stage of the project includes costings such as market analysis/research, consultation sessions, feasibility study to include a five year business plan for the project, along with legal fees, architect fees and a heating survey.   | £44,175.00 |

| Project code | Project Name  | Project Summary   | RDP        |
|--------------|---|---|------------|
| CYC01/18     | Cegin Prydau Plant (Jig-So)                                       | <p>A pilot project to support local families in Cardigan and surrounding area who do not have access to healthy and nutritional meals especially during school holidays. The pilot project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support families in Cardigan and the surrounding area</li> <li>• Develop parents confidence in the kitchen through participation in a weekly training programme</li> <li>• Enable parents and older children within the family to prepare meals in group settings at the holiday kitchen and empower parents to participate in the community initiative.</li> </ul> <p>The training sessions will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic cookery skills, advice on how to produce healthy meals on a budget, planning, smart shopping, basic health messages and the link between childhood obesity and poverty, food labelling, sugar levels in food, five-a-day etc.</li> </ul>  | £40,597.04 |
| CYC08/01     | Small World Theatr Amethyst                                       | <p>A project to work with young people experiencing issues around anxiety, depression, low mood, self-harm, suicidal ideology, low confidence and low self-esteem. The project will pilot the use of a unique tool bag of techniques to help participants explore their relationship with themselves and others, to identify barriers they face in their lives and look for positive solutions. Areas of Self Harm; Suicide prevention; Training in Child Protection/when to refer Forum Theatre and Mental Health</p>  | £37,826.88 |
| CYC10/07     | Cynlluniau Lle Ceredigion Place Plans - Ceredigion County Council | <p>To employ a consultant to work with the Town/Community councils to undertake the consultation process stages to developing Place Plans in the areas of:<br/>Aberystwyth; Aberaeron; Lampeter; Tregaron; Cardigan and Llandysul.</p> <p>The intention is to adopt a collaborative approach in preparing these plans, with Town and Community Councils taking the lead and Ceredigion County Council offering a mentoring role as a way of engaging and supporting communities in preparing the Place Plans. This will then enable communities to continue on their own initiative in the future and also offer greater ownership in shaping their communities.</p> <p>To keep the process impartial, Cynnal y Cardi would fund a specialist consultant to work with Town/Community councils to:</p> <p>(i) Guide the communities in identifying the most appropriate forms of engagement in their consultations,<br/>(ii) Assist with the analysis of these consultations and<br/>(iii) Steer communities towards a draft plan.</p> | £36,000.00 |
| COOP07       | Contemporary Food Craft   | <p>Cooperation with Carmarthenshire. The food and farming sector is a significant contributor to the Welsh economy and encompasses a large part of the food and drink supply chain. The project aims to consult with and identify industry's specific skills gaps, to support the retention of employees with higher skillsets in Wales and increase opportunities for supply chain growth and the sectors economic growth. Project activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ø Evaluation of current Market status</li> <li>Ø Consultation with Employers to identify skills gap and need</li> <li>Ø The new product development</li> <li>Ø Final Report and outline of new course content (Level 3 or higher)</li> <li>Ø Possible progression opportunities.</li> </ul>   | £32,154.31 |

| Project code | Project Name   | Project Summary   | RDP        |
|--------------|--|---|------------|
| CYC04/01     | Penparcau at the Arts Centre                                       | The aim of the project is to partner Penparcau Community Forum with Aberystwyth Arts Centre for a 'Penparcau Partnership' whereby members of Penparcau Forum groups and other Penparcau residents will upskill, and help to manage the venue for a week, with the support of the Arts Centre team. Over a year-long period, experienced Arts Centre staff will help train residents from Penparcau in a wide range of skills including technical, event management, front-of-house, marketing and budgeting for the creative arts. This project will support development of the trainees' transferable skills, including Welsh language, helping them become more employable, and will address specific skills shortages for the creative arts, hospitality and tourism sectors in the area. At the end of the training project period, the Arts Centre will be 'shared' with Penparcau Forum, who will then help to run it for a set of events and put their newly gained skills into action in a live, professional arts environment.   | £30,965.13 |
| CYC01/07     | Academi Arweinyddiaeth Gymunedol (Ceredigion County Council)       | To establish and pilot a Community Leadership Academy for 18-26 year olds working in partnership with various agencies in Ceredigion. The Leadership Academy will target young people from across Ceredigion, who are fluent Welsh speakers, or have a certain amount of Welsh language skills. The project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase local ability (capacity) to ensure local Welsh neighbourhoods and sustainable bilingual communities in Ceredigion</li> <li>• Enable young adults aged 18-26 to build leadership skills in the community and their neighbourhood</li> <li>• Increase the confidence of individuals who are natural Welsh speakers to take positive action in their community</li> <li>• Increase the confidence of individuals who are not naturally Welsh speakers to take positive action in their community demonstrating more Welsh and bilingualism.</li> </ul> <p>Project activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An annual intensive development course for 8-12 people</li> <li>• Casual learning opportunities open to any eligible interested individuals.</li> </ul> | £30,000.00 |
| CYC05/01     | Ceredigidol YFC/CFFI   | To create video clips to strengthen and develop the YFC's current training programme to train members and to develop their skills further. The series of videos focuses on the training of members who have been elected to different posts within their clubs and the organisation e.g. Chair; Secretary; Treasurer and shows them in a digital way including what the role is and how to undertake the work. It is also anticipated videos will include training members on stock-judging, a variety of rural crafts and public speaking.   | £28,475.39 |
| CYC02/05     | Environmental Social Enterprise Feasibility Study (MIND)           | A feasibility study to establish the practicality and methodology of developing a local site in Ceredigion such as a woodland or similar local environmental asset into an Environmental Social Enterprise community hub based on a core of ecotherapy services and activities.   | £26,700.00 |
| CYC01/04     | Intergenerational Community Resilience (Ceredigion County Council) | The project, through surveys and questionnaires will help establish an accurate baseline of current attitude/perception/awareness of dementia in two pilot areas - Cardigan and Tregaron communities. The Intergenerational Community Resilience Group Partnership is made up of CAVO, Hywel Dda University Health Board and Ceredigion County Council. The project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the current accessibility of public spaces and the environment</li> <li>• Identify and train Dementia Champions</li> <li>• Motivate businesses and to encourage staff to undertake Dementia Friends training</li> <li>• Raise awareness and understanding of Dementia</li> </ul>   | £26,642.50 |

| Project code | Project Name  | Project Summary   | RDP        |
|--------------|---|---|------------|
| CYC07/02     | Real Visitors - Real Ceredigion Experiences                   | <p>The 'Real' Ceredigion network will explore opportunities to reach wider audiences in the UK and internationally through joint ticketing and packaging and / or the use of online sales channels such as Viator to sell tickets and experiences through channels such as Trip Advisor.</p> <p>How we will do this:<br/>Following initial research, we will recruit our Real Ceredigion pilot group and develop their skills, and the network, through a series of workshops.</p>  | £24,842.46 |
| CYC05/07     | Dysgu am Goed/Teaching Trees Tir Coed                         | <p>RFS currently work with landowners and primary schools in England to offer educational visits to local woodlands. Curriculum linked sessions are organised that give children the opportunity to learn about trees, woodlands and forestry in a hands-on and fun way. Children will gain an appreciation of woodlands, a value for wildlife, timber and for enjoyment. The sessions will be led by an experienced Educational Officer and are designed to excite and inform children about their local woodland heritage and the importance of woodlands for them today and in the future.</p> <p>Tir Coed aim firstly to adapt the English provision into the Welsh curriculum and translate all teaching resources and then deliver a pilot of the programme across the 44 schools in Ceredigion over two academic years.</p>  | £22,409.13 |
| CYC03/03     | LEAF (Learning to Enable Achievement & Fulfilment) (Tir Coed) | <p>Ten Bespoke Outreach Activities per year: Brand new sustainability approach being piloted. Enabling disadvantaged groups who may not otherwise visit their local woodlands to benefit from access to the natural environment, and to gain a new appreciation of the natural world.</p> <p>Two Introductory Training Courses per year: Brand new taster sessions, peer mentoring programme and level 2 woodland management workbook to be piloted.</p> <p>Three month courses where participants can gain Agored Cymru accreditation (level 1-2)</p> <p>Two Focused progression opportunities per year: Brand new provision</p> <p>Five-day intensive training courses, offering experiences in different woodland career strands, for those wishing to progress from the introductory training courses.</p> <p>Guided support for LEAF trainees leaving the LEAF introductory training courses and intensive training weeks to support them in gaining further experience and skills.</p> <p>Guided support for Tir Coed beneficiaries wishing to start their own micro-enterprises, become self-employed or start a cooperative in the woodland sector.</p> | £21,867.28 |
| CYC02/06     | Upland Regeneration Study (Pentir Pumlumon)                   | <p>To commission a feasibility study to address a number of issues that have been identified through on going community consultation within the Pentir Pumlumon area. These issues fall under the following broad areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The area has a wealth of cultural and heritage to offer, but no clear guide to fully appreciate and understand the narrative linking the various sites.</li> <li>2. The area lacks activities/sporting opportunities, becoming more in demand from visitors. The study will explore why entrepreneurs are either missing the opportunity, or are deterred by regulations.</li> <li>3. The development of the country life/nature opportunities with farms, woodlands, nature reserves and moorlands visits, could offer a unique experience.</li> <li>4. The lack of public transport, both for the community and visitors has long been a concern. The study will identify the issues and offer solutions.</li> </ol>   | £18,975.00 |

| Project code | Project Name   | Project Summary  | RDP        |
|--------------|--|--|------------|
| CYC08/06     | Bringing The Welsh Cob Home  | In London, a number of Welsh Cob enthusiasts have preserved milk carriages from the Welsh dairies' heyday. As a centrepiece to the 2018 Aberaeron Festival of Welsh Ponies and Cobs (August 12th) the project will enable 10 of these preservationists to bring their cobs and carriages 'home'. This celebration will be two-fold, namely...1) A grand procession from Llannerchaeron to Cae Sgwâr, Aberaeron, and 2) A theatrical show (in Cae Sgwâr) celebrating the story of the Cardis in London (man and horse) with the preserved units as an integrated part of the story-telling.   | £18,009.67 |
| CYC01/11     | Pen Dinas Hill Fort – Exploring the Celtic Coast (Penparcau Community Forum)               | An innovative 'grass roots' community led bilingual heritage and environment initiative, framed around the Pen Dinas hill fort / Local Nature Reserve site, exploring its heritage, culture and environment. Project activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A feasibility study</li> <li>• A 'never been done before' community geophysical survey of the site</li> <li>• Designing and developing signage and benches for the site</li> <li>• Creating a History &amp; Heritage centre space at the proposed new Community Centre, focusing on the hill fort and the Village of Penparcau, including digital signage, 'heritage stations' and visitor/educational packs</li> <li>• Creating an easily available bilingual booklet on all survey findings</li> <li>• Scoping visits to other sites in Wales e.g. Caerau Community Hillfort project in Ely Cardiff, Heather &amp; Hillforts project in Denbighshire and Castell Henllys in Pembrokeshire.</li> </ul>  | £17,515.00 |
| CYC10/05     | Design your future   | Consultation exercise with relevant stakeholders including around 100 construction and housing related businesses to identify the current skills gap of the sector and to meet those gaps with an innovative multi-skilled qualification to meet the housing crisis.   | £17,207.00 |
| CYC11/05     | Whilen y Porthmyn  | The Town council consultation identified a need to improve the delivery of information in the town and to improve the marketing and promotion of services, events, organisations and businesses to both visitors and residents of Tregaron. To achieve this all under one umbrella, they would like to purchase an Interactive Information Board and locate it on the square in Tregaron. The information board would have real time connectivity, an information hub for residents and visitors, coupled with a web-based information hub for Tregaron. It will have many diverse applications such as up to date bus timetables, local history, places of interest, sending e-postcards (promoting Tregaron and surrounding area to the World), advertise local events, information on local services as well as having the Town Council Monthly minutes. Providing these services through an electronic interface, will enable users to accomplish multiple tasks in a single multi-functional hub which is a highly efficient user experience and will provide high user satisfaction. | £16,000.00 |
| CYC10/01     | Feasibility Study for the 'Collection for a Nation' project - Friends of Ceredigion Museum | Feasibility Study for the "Collections for a Nation" stage of the museum's plan to improve sustainability and increase public access to the collections. This will further build on the community engagement across Ceredigion and significantly improve physical and intellectual access to all the museum collections (over 60,000 items), as well as improving 'collection care' and the storage environment to meet professional standards.  | £14,000.00 |
| COOP10/RAB   | Radio Beca Ysgogi trwy ddarlledu /Motivating by Broadcasting                               | Cooperation: Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire. In Ceredigion, the aim is to employ either 1 additional Motivator/Trainer (@16 hours a week) or 2 (@8 hours). In line with the Informal Teaching models on which the Radio Beca programmes of work are based, Motivating by Broadcasting will be a clustering and cascading project, i.e. the role of all Motivators/Trainers will be (i) to create questioning and discussion clusters with the aim of broadcasting as the primary motivator, and (ii) to begin a motivation/training cascade as members from the clusters become motivators/trainers themselves, sowing the seeds of social broadcasting wider and wider across rural areas.   | £13,680    |

| Project code | Project Name                                    | Project Summary   | RDP        |
|--------------|---|---|------------|
| CYC01/17     | Pweru'r Dyffryn<br>(Gweithgor<br>Dyffryn Aeron) | To assess the feasibility of creating a model of the development of renewable energy in the Aeron Valley and the surrounding area, that will contribute not only to the energy needs in an environmentally sustainable manner, but also contribute to the economic and social development of the area. The activities will include a community consultation to inform an understanding of which renewable energy technologies are favoured by locals, including the scale to which their use is acceptable, discover the priorities for local people for micro economic development locally then develop a feasibility study and potential business structures.   | £12,320.00 |
| CYC11/01     | Mind the Gap/<br>Cofiwch y Bwlch                | Mind the Gap / Cofiwch y Bwlch is a project that aims to build links between older people who either live in care homes, extra care facilities or who live in their own home but have become isolated, with younger people, either through linking with schools or activity groups like scouts, young farmers or other youth groups.  | £10,660.71 |
| CYC02/07     | Adnabod<br>Gorsgoch                             | Collecting and interpreting some of the history and culture of the Llanwenog ward and provide information on its natural life, introducing these aspects in different ways, including information boards, digital material and walks.<br>The aim is to:<br>a) Clear a number of local paths and create 3 walks.<br>b) Erect 1 colourful, bilingual information board near Gorsgoch Hall and 3 smaller boards near the paths. The boards will give brief information about the main features of the path focussing on history, culture and natural life.<br>c) Present additional and fuller information on all the paths using i-beacon technology. As a basis for this the findings of local research, recollections, artefacts, pictures, audio tapes and video will be used. | £10,358.34 |
| COOP03-PRT   | West Wales<br>Angling Passport                  | The rivers of Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire are being restored by rivers trusts (Pembrokeshire RT, Teifi RT and Carmarthenshire RT) so that sustainable angling tourism can take place once again. The aim of the project is to identify and make ready new and potential fisheries and market them via an existing and well established scheme known as the "Fishing Passport". The scheme brings in visitors from all over the UK, EU and further afield and links fishing with accommodation providers, pubs and other outlets, thus boosting the rural economy.   | £9,720.67  |

| Project code | Project Name                 | Project Summary   | RDP       |
|--------------|------------------------------|---|-----------|
| CYC12/03     | Panteg Woods                 | <p>Panteg Woods lies on the hill between Panteg Road (Craft Centre to Lampeter road), and the river Aeron. It is a mixed leaf woodland extending to some 3 acres. At present part of the land is owned by Ceredigion County Council and part by Aberaeron Town Council.</p> <p>After lengthy consultation with the local community and a number of local clubs and societies the Aberaeron Town Improvement Committee has decided that they wish to take over the management of the site from Ceredigion County Council and return it to a well-managed woodland that is safe and accessible for all and which encourages a wider variety of flora and fauna. In order to achieve this goal the Aberaeron Town Improvement Committee must first undertake the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalise negotiations with Ceredigion County Council to take ownership of this woodland, excluding possible dangers adjacent to roads.</li> <li>2. Employ consultants to undertake a site survey which will include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A tree safety survey with schedule of what will need to be done to eliminate any dangerous risks to the public.</li> <li>b) A survey of the current footpaths and site furniture outlining proposals for improvement and associated costs.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Work with the Consultants to draw up proposals on how to increase visitors to the site such as including the woodland in coastal plan and Llanerchaeron trail.</li> <li>4. Work with the Consultants and steering group of local authority representatives, Aberaeron Town Council members and specialist community woodland support organisations to outline a formal management plan which seeks to improve usage of the area by the local community, schools, societies, environmental groups and visitors.</li> <li>5. Obtain a final written report setting out the formal proposals from the steps above.</li> </ol> | £8,040.00 |
| CYC05/02     | Upland Arboretum, Coed Cymru | <p>An innovative project bringing together organisations from across the woodland and environmental sector in Ceredigion to promote, develop and revitalise the land around the Hafod Arch near Devils Bridge, out towards Cwmystwyth and Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre, with the aim of making positive change to the social, economic and environmental resilience of the area, linking environmental and social agendas in the uplands. The land is Johnes also used extensively for farming, forestry, and gardening, in each case trying out new ideas and experimental methods that would have a lasting impact long in to the future, this spirit is being brought to the 'Upland Arboretum' project with the aim of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing tourism through investigating routes for new paths, facilities and tree planting suitable for the future of upland Wales on land surrounding the Hafod estate</li> <li>• Researching increased resilience in trees, plants and soil, responding to climate change/pests and diseases</li> <li>• Investigating increased training and employment opportunities in the uplands</li> <li>• Involving community groups in health and wellbeing activities</li> <li>• Promoting cross-sector working models</li> <li>• Investigating increasing the economic sustainability of woodlands and rural upland areas</li> <li>• Researching diversification of land use - post Brexit and contributing to post-Brexit discussions about what Wales uplands might look like</li> </ul>  | £7,950.00 |
| CYC08/11     | Hen Eglwys Silian            | <p>Hen Eglwys Silian Old Church - Long term vision is to transform the Old Church building into a multi-purpose community centre which would provide a wealth of social, cultural, recreational and learning opportunities for the whole community. This proposal is to undertake further consultation with the community and explore opportunities for the use of the building.</p>  | £7,000.00 |

| Project code | Project Name  | Project Summary   | RDP       |
|--------------|---|---|-----------|
| CYC05/06     | Rural community assets development  | To develop and deliver a small scale feasibility, consultation and investment plan to make effective use of the assets of the churches for the benefit of the wider community (the combined churches of Llanfihangel Ystrad and Cilcennin with Trefilan and Nantcwnlle.)  | £7,000.00 |
| CYC02/08     | Play & Recreation in Rural Ceredigion - PARRC (Ceredigion County Council) | This project sees four community councils joining forces with Ceredigion County Council with the aim to improve play and leisure facilities in:<br>•Llanddewi Brefi •Llanon •Cardigan •Ponterwyd • Felinfach.   | £6,681.22 |
| CYC02/10     | Feasibility Study for Tregaron Old School Site Redvelopment               | A feasibility study into the viability of the community taking over the Tregaron Old School Site. It will investigate the feasibility to determine the possible uses for the site and look at the cost associated with any proposed uses.   | £6,507.50 |
| CYC03/05     | Digital Community Cardigan  | To support a community engagement, consultation and awareness exercise to develop a project that will install innovative technology to provide information and free public wi-fi and information beacons in the centre of Cardigan town. This LEADER project will provide deeper community consultation and engagement that could complement a capital RCDF project submission and will provide valuable information to enable best practice.   | £6,364.90 |
| CYC08/09     | Youth service feasibility - Ceredigion County Council                     | Ceredigion Youth Service. Mobile Youth Provision – a feasibility study to investigate the potential for mobile/ detached youth work for young people who are rurally isolated   | £6,000.00 |
| CYC01/19     | Coed Y Bont (Coed y Bont community woodland)                              | The Coed y Bont Community Engagement Project will use 24.2 hectares of woodland for the benefit of the community. Here, local people can 'have their say' and get involved in activities to improve their environment. The project will:<br>• improve access to the woodland by developing existing paths and creating new ones<br>• assist in conserving and enhancing biodiversity<br>• use the woodland as an educational tool and to involve the community in wildlife by organising events open to the public<br>• involve the local community to improve the woodland and to assist in its management and maintenance | £5,319.43 |
| CYC01/14     | Dyffryn Aeron Cycle Path (Cycle Path group)                               | A feasibility study by a local group to determine the viability and cost of a 1.27 mile cycle path from Ciliau Aeron to link with the National Trust estate at Llanerchaeron, joining up with the National Trust's network of footpaths and the existing cycle path to Aberaeron.   | £5,000.00 |
| CYC03/02     | Peaceful Places Links   | This three-month Feasibility Study aims to assess the need to strengthen links between a new heritage interpretation trail called Peaceful Places ( <a href="http://www.peaceful-places.com">www.peaceful-places.com</a> ) and local tourist-providing accommodation businesses in north Ceredigion. Peaceful Places, funded initially by Cadw, comprises 17 participating churches and chapels, each displaying interesting stories set in the context of their surrounding landscapes. The trail aims at increasing accessibility and visitor appeal, with the principal intention of enhancing the local economy.        | £4,745.11 |

| <b>Project code</b> | <b>Project Name</b>  | <b>Project Summary</b>   | <b>RDP</b> |
|---------------------|--|--|------------|
| CYC11/06            | Maes Chwarae<br>Cymunedol Tal-y-<br>bont/ Tal-y-bont<br>Playing Field<br>Association | To undertake feasibility/research work on a proposed community playing field that will lead to the creation of a resource that does not exist at the moment in the village of Tal-y-bont - a field for sports and specifically for local football teams.   | £3,720.00  |
| COOP05              | Shetland Wool<br>Visit   | The provenance of Shetland wool is world renowned, both in terms of quality and its industry. People travel from all over the world to visit their mills, workshops, and their beautiful islands. There are also many other similarities between Shetland and rural Wales. Consider our largely rural economies, our (perhaps scant) public investment in trades, services, or infrastructure. Our strong and historic textile cultures. Initially the first stage would be a preparatory visit to Shetland to coincide with my own work-experience visit, in which they would visit relevant industries and individuals to gain potential exchange visit interest. This would centre on all stages of the production, from farmers to textile producers and similar groups to our knit group. They would also want to create links between the Shetland wool week organisers and our own Wonder Wool Wales groups to facilitate a joint event at the two festivals. | £1,540.00  |

## Appendix 3: Performance indicators definitions

| Indicator   | Definition   |
|---|--|
| Number of feasibility studies   | Number of specific feasibility studies commissioned or undertaken through the programme to provide the background research for a specific problem or issue and the production of a comprehensive written appraisal of the issues, the alternative solutions, the financial costings, a detailed risk analysis and recommendations for the next steps.  |
| Number of networks established  | Number of formal networks that have been created as a direct result of the LEADER programme and were not in existence prior to programme involvement. (Each network can be scored only once over the life of the approved programme).  |
| Number of jobs safeguarded through supported projects   | Jobs safeguarded are where jobs are known to be at risk over the next 12 months. Jobs should be scored as FTE and permanent (a seasonal job may be scored provided the job is expected to recur indefinitely; the proportion of the year worked should also be recorded). The job itself should be scored, not an estimate of how many people may occupy the job. If the job is not full time then the hours per week will need to be divided by 30 to find the proportion of what FTE represents (e.g. 18 hours per week would be 0.6 FTE). |
| Number of pilot activities undertaken/supported   | Number of pilot activities undertaken/ supported through the capacity building activities, broken down as: new approaches, new products, new processes, new services.  |
| Number of community hubs  | The number of new community hubs that were formed as a direct result of the LEADER programme.  |
| Number of information dissemination actions/ promotional and/or marketing activities to raise awareness of the LDS and/or it's projects | The number of actions undertaken by the Local Action Group to raise awareness and explain the aim objectives and activities undertaken via the Local Development Strategy to the rural population.<br>The number of planned and targeted activities undertaken by the Local Action Group that promote the Local Development Strategy and its projects OR the production and distribution of materials aimed at marketing and promoting the Local Development Strategy and its projects.  |

| Indicator                        | Definition   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Number of stakeholders engaged   | <p>Stakeholder: Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the project objectives. These can be people, groups or entities that have a role and interest in the objectives and implementation of a project. They include the community whose situation the project or programme seeks to change.</p> <p>Engagement: Stakeholders who become actively involved in the project's implementation at any stage.</p> |
| Number of participants supported | <p>Participants: number of people who attend an event to disseminate information, etc. Please note that the number on receipt of any kind of mail-shot associated with the dissemination of information (e.g. the distribution of a report summary) cannot be counted as participants.</p>   |

## Appendix 4: National well-being indicators that are relevant to the Ceredigion LDS priority and objectives

| Priority   | LDS Theme   | LDS Objectives   | National well-being indicators  |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1. To utilise the natural environment and landscape                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 1: Utilising the natural environment and landscape</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the economic, social and well-being opportunities generated by Ceredigion's high-quality environment.</li> <li>To develop cooperation actions in the Teifi Valley, Cambrian Mountains and Dyfi Biosphere areas based on utilising the natural environment and landscape.</li> <li>To encourage the sustainable management of the natural.</li> <li>Environment and landscape of the area.</li> <li>To strengthen the skills of the workforce in the sector and provide volunteer training opportunities.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of healthy ecosystems in Wales.</li> <li>Percentage of designated historic environment assets that are in stable or improved conditions.</li> </ul>   |
| 2. Apply a Destination Management approach to tourism and sense of place in Ceredigion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Theme 1: Utilising the natural environment and landscape</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop innovative products and collaborative initiatives to promote the Teifi Valley, Cambrian Mountains and Dyfi Biosphere as destinations.</li> <li>To stimulate the growth of locally based clusters to deliver tourism initiatives using the natural resources of the area as an asset.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least three times a year.</li> <li>Percentage of designated historic environment assets that are in stable or improved conditions.</li> </ul> |

| Priority   | LDS Theme   | LDS Objectives  | National well-being indicators   |
|--|---|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 2: Building a knowledge-based economy</i></li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To foster an environment of networking between community and business sectors and destination management partners to share best practice and resources.</li> <li>• To make the tourism sector more attractive to younger people.</li> <li>• To develop a Ceredigion focused customer service programme.</li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of museums and archives holding archival/heritage collections meeting UK accreditation standards.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 3: Making the most of culture and heritage</i></li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To stimulate the growth of locally based clusters to deliver tourism initiatives using the cultural resources of the area as an asset.</li> </ul>  |  |
| 3. To grow community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 1: Utilising the natural environment and landscape</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate the pre-development work for community based renewable energy initiatives and to identify opportunities for preparing communities to respond to climate change.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed.</li> <li>• Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area.</li> <li>• Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.</li> <li>• Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live.</li> <li>• Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.</li> <li>• Percentage of people who volunteer.</li> </ul> |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 5: Developing our people and organisations</i></li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase support to groups and organisations for the development of locally based sustainable initiatives.</li> <li>• To build the capacity and increase the confidence of individuals/groups to identify community development opportunities.</li> <li>• To improve access to information and fostering community networks.</li> </ul> |  |

| Priority  | LDS Theme   | LDS Objectives  | National well-being indicators   |
|---|---|---|--|
|   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve communication and engagement within communities.</li> <li>• To research the role of communities and other delivery partners in the delivery of local non-statutory services and support for asset transfer of non-statutory services and assets.</li> <li>• To identify innovative approaches to service delivery in rural areas.</li> <li>• To pilot activities that improve the well-being of individuals and communities.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of people who are lonely.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>4. To adapt to Ceredigion's population change, with net out-migration of young people and net in-migration of middle adulthood</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 2: Building a knowledge-based economy</i></li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explore business opportunities arising from service needs of the ageing population.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh.</li> <li>• Percentage of people who can speak Welsh.</li> </ul> |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 5: Developing our people and organisations</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To foster integration between different age demographics to support sustainable Welsh-speaking neighbourhoods and community cohesion.</li> <li>• To encourage greater engagement between different age groups to promote the transfer of skills.</li> </ul>  |  |

| Priority  | LDS Theme  | LDS Objectives   | National well-being indicators  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>5. To facilitate a substantially knowledge-based economy to support new and innovative opportunities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To access market leading intelligence that will allow Ceredigion businesses to access data in order to support growth in the private sector.</li> <li>• To foster an environment of networking between community and business sectors to share best practice and resources</li> <li>• To improve access by businesses and entrepreneurs to the Higher Education and research and development sector to support new and innovative opportunities.</li> <li>• To foster innovative pre-commercial product development that will support accessing new markets.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of businesses which are innovation-active</li> </ul>  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 4: Adding value to our primary products</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To foster innovative pre-commercial product development that will support accessing new markets.</li> </ul>   |   |
| <p>6. To strengthen short supply chains to yield the optimum benefit for businesses</p>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To strengthen local supply chains within Ceredigion (knowledge economy).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of businesses which are innovation-active.</li> </ul> |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 4: Adding value to our primary products</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To strengthen local supply chains within Ceredigion (primary products).</li> </ul>  |   |

| Priority   | LDS Theme  | LDS Objectives  | National well-being indicators   |
|--|--|---|--|
| 7. To increase opportunities for workforce development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage leadership skills to grow.</li> <li>To upskill Ceredigion’s employment workforce.</li> <li>To support initiatives that assists individuals to access work, training, volunteering opportunities and other services.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (relative to UK average).</li> <li>Gross Disposable Household Income per head.</li> <li>Percentage of people in employment who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn more than 2/3 of the UK median wage.</li> <li>Percentage of adults (aged 16+) in employment who report satisfactory or higher levels of jobs satisfaction.</li> <li>Percentage of people in employment.</li> <li>Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups.</li> </ul> |
| 8. To improve access to and exploitation of IT         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 2: Building a Knowledge based economy</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve utilisation of digital technology by individuals, businesses and communities to promote sustainable rural economic growth.</li> <li>To exploit the opportunities for digital trading by businesses and increase the productivity, diversity and efficiency of businesses in rural areas.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of people who are lonely.</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 5: Developing people and organisations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure digital inclusion for people in rural communities to combat social exclusion and provide improved access to services.</li> </ul>   |  |

| Priority  | LDS Theme   | LDS Objectives   | National well-being indicators  |
|---|---|--|---|
| 9. To strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 3: Making the most of culture and heritage</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase the use of the Welsh language by the people of Ceredigion.</li> <li>• To increase and consolidate Welsh language skills amongst the people of Ceredigion.</li> <li>• To promote economic activities that will strengthen the position of the Welsh language.</li> <li>• To celebrate and promote Ceredigion's rich social and cultural heritage.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh.</li> <li>• Percentage of people who can speak Welsh.</li> <li>• Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year.</li> <li>• Percentage of designated historic environment assets that are in stable or improved conditions.</li> <li>• Percentage of museums and archives holding archival/heritage collections meeting UK accreditation standards.</li> </ul> |
| 10. To reduce the impact of long term rises in living costs                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theme 5: Developing people and organisations</i></li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop opportunities for sharing resources and identifying new cost and environmentally efficient initiatives.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance.</li> </ul>   |

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