



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu
Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi
mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development: Europe Investing in
Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

LEADER 2014-2020

**CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
RURAL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2014-
2020**

SEPTEMBER 2014

VERSION: 1

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2014

Please use Arial Size 12 throughout the document for consistency

This template is intended as a guide. Please ensure that you complete this in conjunction with the full LEADER 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy Guidance document issued in June 2014

NAME OF LAG AND CONTACT DETAILS

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TIMESCALES

Proposed Start Date (no earlier than 1 January 2015)	1 January 2015
End Date (no later than 31 December 2021)	31 December 2021

Suggested word limits have been provided for each section as a guide however these are not prescriptive

SECTION 1 – STRATEGIC FIT

Description	Explain how the Local Development Strategy (LDS) fits with EU strategies, policies and programmes and the extent to which it aligns with the Focus Areas of the Wales Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) and the five LEADER themes as appropriate to the context of the LDS.
Linked to	Sections 3.1 and 3.5 of the LDS Guidance June 2014

1.1 Definition of the area and population covered by the strategy
(2,000 words)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∨ *Overview of the proposed geographical area of the LAG and its population. Population figures to be broken down by rural, service and host wards.*
- ∨ *Intentions to work across boundaries*

The City and County of Swansea is a unique combination of urban and rural settings on the south coast of Wales. Swansea City Centre is flanked by rural areas, with the Gower peninsula to the west and the wards of Mawr, Pontarddulais and Llangyfelach to the north. The Gower is the UK's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Gower), flanked by a number of other smaller areas including agricultural and former mining areas. The northern wards are dominated by upland common land, similar in character and settlement pattern to parts of mid-Wales. The latter also has a predominance of Welsh speakers.

Geography

Rural Swansea is identified as 8 rural wards with a total land area of 248.98 km² (2011 census). The rural census wards are characterised by significantly smaller populations and lower population densities than the urban wards. Eligible rural wards are:

- Gower
- Mawr
- Pennard
- Pontarddulais
- Fairwood
- Llangyfelach
- Bishopston

- Penclawdd.

These wards are served by three Service Centre wards:

- Gorseinon
- Gowerton
- Clydach

Population

The total population in the rural wards at 29,354 (2011 census) represents 12% of the population of Swansea as a whole. At ward level this breaks down as:

Table 1: Population of Swansea's rural areas

Rural Wards	Total population
Bishopston	3,251
Fairwood	2,914
Gower	3,696
Llangyfelach	5,039
Mawr	1,850
Penclawdd	3,635
Pennard	2,688
Pontarddulais	6,281
Rural Swansea total	29,354

Service Centre Wards	Total population
Gorseinon	4,301
Gowerton	5,212
Clydach	7,503
Service Centre total	17,016

Host Wards	Total population
Dunvant	4,383
Killay North	3,463
Killay South	2,239
Newton	3,316
Oystermouth	4,160
Penllergaer	2,868
Host Wards total	14,733

City and County of Swansea total 239,600

The rural census wards are characterised by significantly smaller populations and dramatically lower population densities than the urban wards, ranging from 0.3 people per square kilometre in Gower and Mawr to 5.4 in Bishopston. By

comparison, population density in the urban wards increases to 21 people per sq. km in Sketty and 48.1 in Townhill. Population density is at least 4 times greater in Swansea's urban areas than the more populous rural wards, but in the case of Gower and Mawr population density is 70 times greater in the urban areas.

In terms of the demographics of the rural wards, the average population size of the rural wards is 3,669 per ward. Mawr ward has the smallest population of 1,850, with Pontarddulais having the highest population of 6,281. The male/female split across the wards is roughly equal. The average household size is 2.3 per household. The percentage of BME people is very low. 50% of the population is aged 45 or over.

The unemployment count is low, but economic inactivity is high in several of the wards – Pennard (38.3%), Bishopston (35%) and Fairwood (34.4.%). Llangyfelach has the lowest unemployment rate in Swansea at 23.7%. Of those economically inactive a high proportion are retired – 61%; compared to the Swansea average of 15.6%.

Qualifications

Since the last census the number of people with no qualifications has decreased in every ward, with Mawr and Pontarddulais having the biggest reduction, all are below the Swansea average of 23.9%.

Bishopston, Pennard and Gower continue to have the highest number of people qualified to Level 4 and above. All wards have experienced an increase between 8-11% since the last census, apart from Mawr which saw a smaller increase of 5%. All wards are above the Swansea average of 25.8%.

The picture is more varied for Levels 1-3 but most wards are around the Swansea average.

Welsh speaking

Levels of Welsh speaking varies greatly with Mawr and Pontarddulais having around half their populations with Welsh skills, whereas the remaining wards have between 72% and 83% with no Welsh skills at all.

Industrial breakdown:

The breakdown of industrial sectors in rural Swansea looks as follows:

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing: highest in Gower 6.6%(slightly lower than in 2001). 3.8% and lower in others wards.
- Energy: 1.8% or less, this is above the Swansea average of 1.3%.
- Manufacturing: 5.7%-9.9% (2001=15-18%) Pontarddulais has highest share;
- Construction ranges from 6.1%- 11%.

- Wholesale, retail, accommodation, food: 17.8%(Bishopston) to 22.7% (Gower) (increased since 2001)
- Transport: ranges from 4.1-6.8%
- Financial and professional services: 16.6% Bishopston; 15.3% Pennard; 14.8% Gower (some wards increased some decreased)
- Public admin, education and health: highest in Bishopston, Fairwood, Llangyfelach and Pennard – all 40%+, remaining wards are 30%+..
- Other services: (3.5-5.3%)

The rural areas of Swansea therefore demonstrate a diverse industrial breakdown. Manufacturing is still significant in the more northern rural wards, especially in Pontardulais, Llangyfelach and Penclawdd (8.8-9.9%). Wholesale, retail, hotels and catering range from 18%-22% across all the rural wards.

Financial and business activities 10.9-16.6% overall – highest in Bishopston remains highest at 16.6% Public sector occupations are the highest overall averaging 38% across the rural wards, with the highest concentrations in, Bishopston, Fairwood, Llangyfelach (41.6%-42.3% an increase since 2001).

Occupational breakdown:

The picture in relation to occupational breakdown is also quite varied, with relatively high percentages of managers/professionals and skilled trade. The broad picture is as follows:

- Managers/senior officers: Mixed picture ranging from 10.2% in Mawr to 19.5% in Gower.
- Professional occupation: Lowest in Pontardulais at 16.5% highest Bishopston and Pennard
- Associate professional and technical: highest Llangyfelach (14.9%), lowest Pontardulais (10.5%) and Mawr (11.1%). This is still around the Swansea average (10.7%)
- Admin and sec: 16.8% Llangyfelach, 9.7% Gower, 12-15% in other wards.
- Skilled trade: around 9% Fairwood, Bishopston, Llangyfelach; 15-18% Gower, Mawr, Penclawdd
- Personal service: 6-10% - highest Pontardulais
- Sales and Customer service: Gower 3.4%; 9.6% Pontardulais
- Process, plant and machine: highest Pontardulais (6.9%) and Mawr(7.5%), .
- Elementary occupations: 4.5% Bishopston; 11.7% Pontardulais

In terms of the occupational breakdown, managerial, senior/professional is more focussed in the southern wards (Gower, Pennard, Bishopston over 40%) but much lower (18%) in Mawr). Skilled trade is higher in Gower, Mawr and Penclawdd (15-18%). Lower in Fairwood, Llangyfelach, Bishopston. Process, plant and machine highest in and Mawr (7.5%), Pontardulais (6.9%) and lowest in Bishopston (1.8%).

Travel to work:

All wards except Pontardulais have a higher than Swansea average of people

working from home. (Gower has 15%). All areas have seen a decrease though since the last census in 2001. All wards have seen number of people on bike or foot increase since last census.

Work from home varies from 2.9% in Pontardulais to 15% in Gower
Public transport 2-4.7% (same or reduced since 2001)
Private transport 67-83%
Passenger in car 3.5-6.8%
Bike/on foot 5.3% in Llangyfelach 11.8% in Gower.

Over 66% use private transport, only 2-4% using public transport.
A higher percentage (8.6%) use bike or on foot in Pontardulais.

Health

A significant proportion of the population of the rural wards suffer from some form of 'Limiting Long Term Illness', with the highest concentration in Pontardulais at 24.4%. Llangyfelach is the lowest at 15.2%, with the remaining wards at around 22%. However, differences emerge at the working age population. Pontardulais, Mawr and Penclawdd have 16-18% of working age people with LLTI, whereas the other areas are much lower at 11-15%. Swansea's average is 17.4% of working age.

The proportion of individuals with LLTI is comparable with Swansea's urban areas. Sketty compares with Fairwood in terms of 14% of working age people with LLTI. Morriston is similar to Mawr, Pontardulais and Penclawdd.

Service Centre wards

Three wards in Swansea are categorised as 'Service Centres' in that they provide key services for the fully rural wards.

Gorseinon

Gorseinon is classified in the Unitary Development Plan as a traditional regional shopping district, sitting between Pontarddulais ward to the North and Gowerton to the South. It is accessible via the A4240 directly and in terms of the road network is a more natural connection for the smaller communities such as Felindre for services that are more difficult to find travelling East towards Clydach. In particular the 'Lliw Link' bus service operates from the extremes of rural Swansea from Garnswllt, through Cwmcerdinen and Felindre, passing through Penllergaer and then Gorseinon. and the route of the Lliw Link is significant in demonstrating the way the communities interlink via the road network. The ward is also host the highly successful Gorseinon Food Festival, supported by *Rural Swansea Action* in the 2007-2013 round of RDP.

Gowerton

Gowerton forms one of the key gateways, to the 'Gower' flank of the City and County of Swansea. The ward provides links through public transport connections including a small rail station, and bus links such as the Gower Explorer service, as

well as key entry point for tourists entering and leaving the rural area to the West. The ward also contains small commercial retail zones, which form a stopping off point for people entering and leaving the rural areas, both the rural population as well as tourists. The ward also contains three schools whose catchment area takes in the rural hinterland.

Clydach

Clydach is a small town adjacent to the fully rural Mawr ward, sharing a boundary with Neath Port Talbot. The Unitary Development Plan notes the importance of Clydach as one of the traditional district shopping centres. As such it has natural connections with the rural hinterland, particularly smaller settlements such as Craig Cefn Parc, which is linked to Clydach by a regular bus service. Clydach hosts popular local markets such as Clydach market, as well as providing small-scale local shopping outlets and basic services including Clydach library and other facilities.

Host wards

Several wards fall into the category of 'Host wards', that cannot benefit directly from RDP funding, but from which activities that wholly benefit the fully rural wards might be based.

Penllergaer

Penllergaer borders the northern rural areas of Swansea, again with relatively low population density of 447 people per km², concentrated in two main housing estates. Much of the land area consists of commons and the Penllergare Valley Woods¹ historic gardens, part of which lies in the Llangyfelach ward.

Oystermouth

Oystermouth has developed as a settlement around Oystermouth castle over the past 200 years. The village acts both as a suburban shopping centre for the surrounding area, and popular holiday resort. The area is commonly known as 'Mumbles' after the three outcrops of rock at the western end of the bay, and is one of the major entrances to the rural areas to the West of Swansea. As such the village area offers major opportunities in terms of tourism draw, and offering small-scale services to the rural hinterland.

Newton

Although relatively populous at 1,393 people per km² Newton is home to the popular holiday resorts of Langland and Caswell, which lead on to the dramatic landscapes of Three Cliffs and the wider Gower peninsula area. The area is more residential in nature, and adjacent to the fully rural wards.

Killay North and South

¹ Penllergare Valley Woods: www.penllergare.org

The combined wards of Killay North and South have a density of 1,793 per km². Killay has a purpose built district shopping centre, including two supermarkets and a range of convenience shops, three pubs and takeaway food shops and two restaurants. Nearby are doctors' and dentists' surgeries and a branch library. Killay is linked to Gower by the main east-west road the A4118, and also most of the Gower bus services run through Killay. The ward therefore provides a number of useful services to residents of north and west Gower and visitors as a major gateway to Gower.

Dunvant

Dunvant grew as a small village around the coal mining that took place in the area during the 1800s, bordering the rural ward of Fairwood. The ward suffers from a high level of deprivation, particularly access to services, housing and physical environment. Population density at 1,884 people per km² is comparatively high. Service provision includes schools and small-scale provision of services including local shops and post office.

Potential for cross-boundary working

To the north Swansea borders with Carmarthenshire to the west and Neath Port Talbot to the east. The close proximity of smaller towns and villages in the border areas means there is a good deal of scope for collaboration with neighbouring Local Action Groups on themes of common interest to our communities. These themes need to be explored in more depth once implementation begins, but initial discussions and requests during development of the Strategy include:

- Work around tourism, local food and local crafts
- potential for developing community transport options
- studies and developments around renewable energy
- capacity building around access to services

There is scope for joint-working with capacity building teams in the neighbouring areas to build on these themes and others as the Strategy is reviewed in light of local demand.

Local Action Groups in Central and South West Wales have met on several occasions over the period Autumn/Winter 2014/15 to discuss joint working. LDSs have been shared, and a number of common themes where cooperation activity could be developed have been identified. There is consistency between all the LDSs, with the main potential for joint working and pooling of resources to develop joint cooperation proposals. Common themes included green spaces, local produce, work around visitor attractions and 21st Century facilities. Discussions are at an early stage as the majority of the South West and Central LAGs are still scoping how local programmes will run, where as a rolling programme, set calls for proposals or commissioning. Swansea Administrative Body is taking part in these discussions and linking back to the Shadow LAG.

1.2 Description of the Integration

(2,500 words – to be linked in to the actions described in Section 3.1 – Intervention Logic)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∇ *Explain how LEADER will complement other structures and initiatives and not duplicate*
- ∇ *Provide an explanation of the coherence and consistency between local strategies and existing national, regional or sub-regional strategies*
- ∇ *The LDS should show how integration is proposed in respect of:*
 - Welsh Government policies and programme areas.*
 - The range of RDP schemes and activities to which LEADER can make a contribution*
 - Other initiatives and schemes within your area*
 - The projects and activities of other LAGs*
 - Other European programmes and funding streams*

The Strategy sits within a wider policy and strategy framework in South West Wales at local and regional levels. The most relevant national, regional and local strategies that could be impacted by the LDS are referenced below. In each case there is a brief summary of the scope of the strategy or plan and the potential links to the LDS.

Local strategies

Swansea Single Integrated Plan

At local level, the Swansea Local Service Board has set out a clear vision in the new Single Integrated Plan (SIP), that Swansea will be a desirable place to live, work and visit that:

- Capitalises on the distinctive relationship between its vibrant urban areas and outstanding rural and coastal environments
- Has sustainable, distinct communities, in both urban and rural locations, that benefit from sufficient good quality accommodation,
- supporting infrastructure, community facilities and opportunities for recreation
- Supports a competitive and prosperous economy that acts as a focal point for the wider Swansea Bay City Region
- Is a thriving city centre destination that offers excellent shopping facilities and supporting leisure and business opportunities, capitalising on its proximity to the waterfront
- Celebrates and conserves its unique natural heritage and cultural and historic environments.

The importance of making the most of the urban and rural diversity of the County is made clear, but the LSB is also clear on the importance of partnership working and a Team Swansea approach to ensure best use is made of limited resources.

LEADER is an essential part of this process, providing the capacity to work in and

across Swansea's rural communities.

The SIP also points to the important role Swansea plays as the primary economic hub in the Swansea Bay City Region recently established in South West Wales. For the rural wards, LEADER is an essential component in providing capacity to work with local businesses and communities to help them make links with each other and the wider region. Examples in the 2007-2013 programme have included helping local rural Swansea micro-enterprises to attend markets further afield, such as in Pembrokeshire which was helpful in building confidence in small micro-enterprises. The initial version of the strategic objectives for the new LDS allow scope to develop this work further, but will be subject to the prioritisation to be undertaken by the new LAG once a further consultation and formal review of the initial objectives has taken place during Spring 2015.

Swansea Bay Destination Management Plan

The proposed objectives for the Rural Strategy are consistent with the strategic themes set out in the *Destination Swansea Bay 2013-2016* Visit Wales 'Destination Management Plan' for Swansea Bay. The previous 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan in Swansea features in the current version of the accompanying action plan, with the Swansea Rural Development Partnership noted as an important part of helping to deliver the actions in the Plan.

Strategic Theme 1 – Working Together

Strategic Theme 2 – Driving Quality

Strategic Theme 3 – Tackling Seasonality

Strategic Theme 4 – Ensuring Sustainability

The tone of the document is about enabling better approaches to development and marketing of the area, involving as many stakeholders as possible, underpinned by an awareness of external perceptions of the area and how it is understood. A range of improvement have been supported by the 2007-2013 RDP including footpath access, a number of village and small town enhancements, improvements to grading of tourism accommodation provision, and a new suite of marketing and interpretation literature contributing to the walking and cycling offer of the rural wards.

The previous RDP has provided a number of practical initiatives to increase local product offer, but did not succeed in pulling the various strands of activity together. The new Rural Strategy is therefore timely in providing potential resource through LEADER to work with communities and businesses to make the most of the improvements made to date to encourage further sustainable development of the local product offer, perhaps through training of local proprietors on the materials available, or active buy-in from communities to further develop the materials produced through RDP 2007-2013. This work will be subject to prioritisation of resources by the new LAG during Spring 2015.

Draft Sustainable Tourism Strategy

One of the Objectives of the 2007-2013 Swansea Rural Development Strategy was consideration of application for Europarc status for the Gower AONB area. *Rural*

Swansea Action, the Axis 4 Local Action Group commissioned a sustainable tourism study in 2012 which resulted in a *draft sustainable tourism framework*, which is currently undergoing further consultation at the time of writing (September 2014). The 2007-2013 RDP invested in a range of upgrades to facilities, premises of micro-enterprises, along with quality interpretation and marketing materials across the rural wards. Specific effort was put into creating a range of additional materials highlighting the features of the northernmost wards. The report makes a number of recommendations for improvements that could be made to the way the area is marketed, as well as underlining the need for better working together. The draft document has been developed in parallel with *Destination Swansea Bay 2013-2016 (DMP)*, to ensure there are no conflicting objectives, and that the documents are complementary. Many of the actions in the DMP relate to activities supported through the RDP, and as such the RDP provides an important contribution to the implementation of the DMP. The City and County of Swansea Tourism is a member of the new Task & Finish Group established to bridge the transition between the 2007-2013 LAG and Partnership arrangements to the formation of the new Local Action Group.

Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan

The Gower AONB Management Plan is currently under review; consultation on a draft plan has been completed, with a final version to be adopted later in 2015. The AONB area incorporates several of the rural wards in Swansea, with a number of consistent issues coming through across the peninsula. The main purpose of the AONB plan is to promote policies and actions to encourage the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the AONB for which it was designated. The AONB plan covers a wide range of issues including economic activities, infrastructure, housing and community facilities, climate change and development, the issues associated with these themes and the impact on the special qualities of the AONB. These are fundamental to approaches to balancing the needs of the AONB area between the need for investment and encouraging visitors to the need to conserve historic and important features. This dialogue is something LEADER has started to help to broker through the draft sustainable tourism strategy, but can be taken further through this 2014-2020 Rural Strategy subject to agreement by the new LAG once the strategic objectives have been further refined and prioritised.

Regional strategies

Swansea Bay City Region Economic Regeneration Strategy 2013-2020

At regional level, the Swansea Bay City Region is underpinned by a newly designed economic regeneration strategy which encompasses five strategic aims overlaid by the imperative to close the productivity gap with the rest of Wales and the UK. The five strategic aims are:

- Business Growth, Retention and specialisation
- Skilled and ambitious for long term success
- Maximising job creation for all

- Knowledge economy and innovation
- Distinctive places and competitive infrastructures.

A partnership approach is being taken to the implementation of the Strategy, with a focus on a selection of major transformational projects to achieve a step change in the performance of the economy of South West Wales. The Skills aim is being led by the Regional Learning Partnership for Central and South West Wales, to be steered by a comprehensive delivery plan based on a newly collected evidence base to attempt a sea change in the way that skills and employment support is delivered through both domestic funding and the added value that European funding can bring.

The regional strategies are necessarily high level, so below them and the Single Integrated Plan, there is a continued need for capacity to undertake innovative activity and networking across the designated rural areas. The high level imperatives to increase jobs, increase the number of higher value-added jobs and businesses have to be addressed at all levels, including local.

Regional Delivery Plan for Skills & Employment South West and Central Wales

The Regional Delivery Plan for Skills and Employment for Central and South West is one of three being developed across Wales at the request for Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills. The Plan integrates with the Welsh Government Skills Implementation Plan, and links across to the Swansea Bay City Region Regeneration Strategy, forming the delivery plan for 'Strategic Aim 2' of that strategy.

The development of the plan has provided a rare opportunity for organisations and individuals at all levels in Wales to discuss and agree on skills and employment needs and priorities in the coming years. The process is enabling those involved to gain a better understanding of real and perceived needs in the region as a whole, and what provision is going to be needed to help the region develop. The Plan covers 6 local authority areas with both urban and rural demographics. As a result there is scope for regional solutions to be developed that could serve the needs of the smaller rural populations in close proximity to larger urban centres like Swansea, as well as the larger rural areas in west and central Wales.

Specific examples of opportunities for the new Swansea Rural LDS to complement the Plan include skills needs for micro-enterprises. Issues highlighted include the nature of small businesses, often individuals working from home due to transport and lack of employment in the local economy, but without access to the resources and skills of larger businesses around financial management, marketing and promotion and business planning. At the same time, successful existing small businesses are keen to share their knowledge and expertise with others and need opportunities to do this.

Working through the Regional Learning Partnership has already enabled local organisations, e.g. Pontarddulais Partnership, to put forward suggestions for gaps in delivery of skills development and training. Using the RLP expression of interest process with a large number of national, regional and local players including

Welsh Government at the table will ensure that duplication can be avoided in design and implementation of new programmes and schemes through 2014-2020 European funding as well as mainstream training provision, and that any input from LEADER is complementary. No specific schemes have been developed as yet, but briefing on the Regional Delivery Plan for Employment and Skills will be part of the introductory briefings for the new LAG. It is more likely that the LAG will offer a strategic contribution to the design of programmes, unless there is a need for specific bespoke local activity to complement national and regional schemes. This would cover links with all national and regional projects under development through mainstream or ESF, including traineeships and Apprenticeships.

Welsh Government strategies

Programme for Government

The Welsh Government published its new Programme for Government during 2011, setting out specific objectives to support rural communities in Chapter 10. Three main themes are identified as:

- A thriving rural economy
- Ensuring access to broadband and new digital services
- Improving public services for rural communities

Whilst these issues are predominantly dealt with through large-scale national interventions, particularly around next generation broadband and support for the agri-food industry, work around access to services is something that LEADER can help towards at local and regional level. Current examples include helping communities considering taking on the running of local services themselves, and community transport.

Work around renewable energy is also an essential theme, and part of the objectives set out in Chapter 12 on environment and sustainability, living within environmental limits, acting on climate change and creating sustainable living spaces for people.

These national objectives provide a sound backdrop for the proposed themes and objectives in this local rural strategy for tailored local solutions to fill gaps around national and regional interventions as appropriate. Avoiding duplication of effort will be essential due to the relatively small sums available for LEADER in Swansea's rural areas.

Skills and Employment Policy Statement and Implementation Plan

The publication of the policy statement in February 2014 and implementation plan in July 2014 provided a clear picture of the direction of skills and employment priorities for the Welsh Government over the next few years. Fundamental to the approach is dove-tailing with regional learning partnerships, and the ambition of joining up skills and employment delivery at local, regional and national levels. The regular

publication of a footprint document setting out what will be delivered at what levels has been a useful tool for giving a steer as to where activities are best developed and delivered. As such inputs will be directed via the Regional Strategic Partnership in south west Wales as detailed above to ensure duplication is avoided.

Woodlands for Wales Strategy

Woodlands for Wales (the Welsh Government's (WG) strategy for woodlands and trees) sets out WG's aims and objectives for all woodlands and trees in Wales - in both public and private ownership. The strategy looks at the role they play in delivering social economic and environmental benefits and also the contribution they can make towards addressing the impacts of climate change.

The strategy is framed around Welsh woodlands and trees as a basis for delivery across four strategic themes:

- Responding to climate change – coping with climate change and helping reduce our carbon footprint.
- Woodlands for people – serving local needs for health, education and jobs.
- A competitive and integrated forest sector – innovative, skilled industries supplying renewable products from Wales.
- Environmental quality – making a positive contribution to biodiversity, landscapes and heritage, and reducing other environmental pressures.

Overall, 13% of Wales is covered by woodland – 9% plantation and 4% semi-natural woodland. Data specific to the rural wards of Swansea is not available, but there is nothing to suggest that the eligible area differs greatly from this mix. However, most of the main woodland areas in the rural wards are either in public ownership (particularly the Natural Resources Wales forest estate) or in sympathetic ownership/management (e.g. National Trust). Remaining areas tend to be small areas of woodland on agricultural holdings. Previous interventions in woodlands have focussed on management for community based benefits under the Objective 1 programme. The current view is that there is only limited scope for local delivery on these themes through the LEADER programme, but this will be kept under constant review by the new LAG as part of its forward work programme.

Energy Wales – A Low carbon transition

The area of renewable energy is a topic of significant importance in Swansea, in particular the rural areas where a number of different forms of generation are either being implemented or discussed across the eight rural wards, from installation of wind turbines to solar parks. A number of schemes were supported locally through the RDP Transition Initiative Grant Scheme under Business Plan 2 which were intended as demonstrators of installations including solar and bio fuels. The third sector is also active in seeking to implement further schemes to help achieve better sustainability. There is considerable enthusiasm for investigating these options further, in particular with reference to the wider impact on local natural resource management. The shadow LAG membership includes representation from this sector and will form part of discussions in refining the initial objectives set during Spring 2015. Implementation of activities will be subject to prioritisation by the new

LAG as part of its agreed work programme later in 2015, and is a key area that will be carefully explored by the new LAG.

Food tourism strategy

Exploration of local food and its links with sustainable tourism formed a fundamental part of the work programme for Axis 4 Leader under the two Business Plan phases of the 2007-2013 RDP in Swansea. A great deal of work was done working with local producers and end users in making links to new markets and building confidence in the sector. This included working closely with Ffres and Tourism Swansea Bay in meet the buyer events etc. Alongside a good package of tourism infrastructure and marketing investments from the previous round, there is a great opportunity to take this work further, help to further develop urban-rural links in terms of supply chains, in particular links to Swansea Market, perhaps the most successful indoor market in Wales. Further exploration of this theme will form part of initial discussions of the new LAG during Spring 2015, and prioritisation of the new work programme for the LAG.

Other European programmes and funding streams

European Fisheries Fund

There is very good strategic alignment between proposals under the Rural Strategy 2014-2020 and the existing Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Development Strategy valid until December 2015. There is particularly good fit around making links between local food and other producers and local markets. The Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Action Group has supported a number of small scale but important projects to support the local fishing industry, as well as looking more widely at tourism and interpretation. This includes cold storage for catch at Swansea marina which should help to improve the supply chain to Swansea Market and other local outlets including the local restaurant trade. Importantly this is looking at integrating the needs of the local fishing fleet into the wider regeneration agenda for Swansea. Studies are also being supported to gain a better understanding of the local fishing industry and its needs in preparation for the 2014-2020 round.

WG Vibrant and Viable Places

Swansea's *Realising the Potential* programme has received £8m of support from the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places programme, which focusses on primarily on the regeneration of Swansea City Centre. There are however numerous opportunities for making urban-rural links on a number of fronts. Tackling deprivation is a major theme of the programme. Whilst the issues facing the urban and rural parts of Swansea differ in terms of scale, there are similarities such as timing of public transport to get to employment opportunities and support for development of micro-enterprises (venues to operate a business from and business support).

Gower Crafts & Artisans is an example of a cooperative formed with RDP-support under the 2007-2013 programme that has reached the level of maturity to establish a shopping outlet on High Street in the City Centre. Encouraging micro-enterprises

to take space in the annual Christmas Market in the City Centre is another successful example of helping micro-enterprises access new markets. The new rural strategy offers further opportunities to test these and similar approaches across the variety of industrial sectors represented in rural Swansea. Also in the context of the Swansea Bay City Region there is no reason why this cannot be explored across the footprint of South West Wales. Availability of information is a critical factor, and something that is being raised through the Swansea Bay City Region and Regional Learning Partnership.

Gower Landscape Partnership

The Gower Landscape Partnership is a £1.9m initiative aiming to inspire and help local people to look after Gower's special and distinctive features. Some of the projects proposed and underway include:

- Seashore safaris - rock pooling and environmental education
- Renewing traditional events such as wassailing and Mari Lwyd
- Conserving medieval agricultural systems found on the Peninsula
- Apprenticeships in traditional heritage skills
- Collection of stories and historical information of the 189 ship wrecks around the Gower coast
- Recording and interpreting Gower's industrial and cultural history
- Conservation of natural and built features

The existing RDP has provided financial support towards the initial stages of the programme. There will be scope for LEADER to help work with communities and businesses in the rural wards to implement the findings of studies and the various work packages resulting from the Gower Landscape Partnership.

European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund

A strategic approach is being taken in Central and South West Wales to the development of local and regional proposals for ESF and ERDF support in the context of the Swansea Bay City Region and the Regional Learning Partnership for Central and South West Wales. The primary concern is to avoid duplication of national Welsh Government and UK-level support schemes. A critical step will be enabling information flow around services and support available from national and regional schemes so that front-line practitioners including those funded via the LEADER programme are able to signpost effectively. As a minimum the LEADER team will work closely with Business Wales contractors in relation to support for micro-enterprises and potential start-ups.

Transnational European programmes

A range of opportunities exist to support transnational working. There are many options that would be appropriate to support implementation of this rural strategy, linking to wider developments across the region and Wales as a whole. Opportunities to work with micro-enterprises to support innovation and growth in productivity are present in several of the programmes including Ireland-Wales , INTERACT, North West Europe and Atlantic Area. Adaptation to climate change is

another consistent theme. The primary benefit would be exchange of good practice and learning from other areas what has worked well.

SECTION 2 – FINANCIAL & COMPLIANCE

Description	Explain how the Local Action Group (LAG) intends to meet its financial and compliance based obligations. LAGs need to demonstrate that they have competent financial planning and will comply with all necessary legal and regulatory requirements.
Linked to	Part of Section 3.11 of the LDS Guidance June 2014 (remainder to be covered under Section 4 – Management of Operation)

2.1 Management and Administration

(2,500 words)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∨ *The Constitution of the LAG*
- ∨ *Details of the proposed LAG members including the sectors represented (public, private, third sectors)*
- ∨ *Terms of Reference for the LAG*
- ∨ *Details of the Administrative Body*
- ∨ *Evidence that the working and decision making procedures are clear and transparent. Show how the operating methods of the LAG are compliant with the Commission's regulations and guidance (see Annex 4 of the LDS guidance)*
- ∨ *Details of compliance procedures and processes demonstrating segregation of duties, reporting systems and capacity to maintain full audit trails for expenditure and indicators.*
- ∨ *Details of selection, appraisal and approval processes for projects submitted to the LAG*
- ∨ *Details of declaration of and management of conflict of interest*

The Swansea Rural Development Partnership has successfully and enthusiastically undertaken its role in overseeing the implementation of the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 in Swansea. It has been supported by the separate Rural Swansea Action Management Committee that has monitored implementation of Axis 4 Leader. It is proposed that the best elements of these bodies move forward as the Swansea Rural

Development Partnership, with a complete review of membership in line with the development of this Rural Strategy for 2014-2020. This will include improving local political visibility of the programme, and ensuring that all themes of the Strategy are properly represented.

Following discussions throughout 2014 with members of the Swansea Rural Development Partnership and Rural Swansea Action Management Committee it was agreed unanimously at a meeting on the 29th October 2014 that a new shadow LAG would be formed comprising of all existing members of the RDP and RSA groups. At this time the secretariat also asked if existing members would contact their networks in Rural Swansea and ask if there were individuals who they would like to nominate to join the shadow LAG.

Further to this, at a shadow LAG meeting on the 25th February 2015 where findings of the final evaluation were presented. It was agreed that a task and finish group would be formed with the purpose of further refining and prioritising the Local Development Strategy's objectives; agreeing the terms of reference; approving an application form for LAG members and determining the project selection process. At the meeting the shadow LAG agreed that a more formal approach to recruiting new members. This will include development of formal SMART objective and replacement of the current flat apportionment of resources and outputs to specific measurable activities and resource allocation. Due to pressure to complete expenditure on Business Plan 2 there has not been enough time to date to commit to this process, or to manage a contract to deliver it. However, as the final claims are completed towards the end March 2015, time will be dedicated to moving the current shadow LAG through a Task & Finish Group to a new LAG membership and a detailed work package as referred to above. **Draft versions of the minutes and application form to the LAG are attached separately.**

The current list of shadow LAG representatives are as follows:

NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTOR
Robin Kirby	Gower Society	Third
Ant Flanagan	Gower Power Cooperative	Private
Cathy Lewis	Tourism Swansea Bay	Private
John Davies	BayTrans	Private
Phil Owen	Mawr Community Development Trust	Third
John Evans	Pontarddulais Partnership	Third
Chris Brundenell	Farmers Union of Wales	Private
Dave Williams	Crofty Llanmorlais & Penclawdd Development Group	Third
Alyx Baharie	Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS)	Third
Richard Beale	Local volunteer from rural ward	Third
Jo Scott	Local volunteer from rural ward	Third
Chris Lindley	Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team (City and County of Swansea)	Public
Paul Thornton	The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales	Third
Hamish Osbourn	Natural Resources Wales	Public

Clare James	Local authority economic development, planning, tourism (advisory)	Public
Peter Lanfear	Gower Commoners Association	Third
Nerys Adams	Culture & Tourism (City & County of Swansea)	Public
Suzy Mayhew	Education Youth Service (City & County of Swansea)	Public
Cllr Jane Harris	Community Councillor- Pontarddulais	Public
Geoff Haden	Clyne Farm	Private
Grant Cockerill	Groundwork	Private
Bob Morgan	Cartref Holidays	Private

At the meeting on the 29th October 2014 the membership also voted in support of retaining the City & County of Swansea as lead body for the Swansea LAG and Rural Development Strategy and agreed that a joint arrangement with another local authority would be unworkable due to limited resources in the Swansea allocation. Whilst discussions had been progressed with Carmarthenshire County Council to explore the scope for efficiencies and having a single lead body arrangement. The discussion focussed around achieving a management and administrative structure that balances local development needs with pooling of resources at regional level to simplify contact with Welsh Government. Having looked closely at the needs and demands of running the proposed programme, and the financial allocations involved, it would be very difficult to achieve efficiencies in terms of financial savings. The nature of the programme requires localised support. This is not the same as running a regional collaboration for a regionally-designed project for example. Based on the particular circumstances of Swansea and Carmarthenshire, with different systems and approaches and the need to enter complex legal agreements for what are relatively small programmes, it would be impractical and more inefficient to brigade. Discussions have however covered the possibility of regional promotion of Leader by working cooperatively, and looking to work together on themes of common interest through cooperation budgets, and sharing costs for specific tasks such as publicity and evaluation.

Local Action Group terms of reference and duties

The following terms of reference for the Local Action Group Partnership in Swansea are written to comply with Regulation EC 1303/2013 Article 32 2(b) requiring community led local development to be led by local action groups comprising representation from public and private local socio-economic interests whereby no single interest group public or private represents more than 49% of the voting rights. As described in Section 2, the revised membership of the Local Action Group Partnership will be formed via a transparent application process to be steered by the current shadow LAG formed of the membership of the Swansea Rural Development Partnership and Rural Swansea Action Management Committee during spring 2015.

Objectives

- a) To build the capacity of local actors in Swansea's rural areas to develop and implement projects (operations) including fostering their project management capabilities
- b) To agree and implement a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of projects (operations), avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring that at least 50% of the votes in selection decisions are cast by partners which are not public authorities. Selection by written procedure will be possible.
- c) To continually develop and review the Local Development Strategy (LDS) and to target available LEADER resources to local areas of need and opportunity by prioritising operations according to their ability to meet the objectives and targets of the LDS.
- d) To prepare an ongoing project submission procedure
- e) To receive and assess applications for support in line with the agreed Strategy objectives
- f) To select operations, fixing the amount of support to be awarded, and where relevant presenting the proposals to the body responsible for final verification of eligibility before approval
- g) To undertake detailed monitoring of implementation of the LDS which will include the following actions:
- Monitor and approve reports on progress in implementing the Strategy and identify gaps in provision;
 - Monitor the activities taking place as part of the Strategy;
 - Ensure that robust, good value for money and well developed projects are put forward and selected for appraisal and funded;
 - Carry out specific evaluation activities;
 - Promote the programme locally.

General

The Local Action Group will:

- Appoint a Chair and Administrative Body
- Annually review the Strategy, consult on it, and submit it to the Welsh Government for approval.
- Establish effective systems for assessing projects and secure the Welsh Government endorsement of them.
- Assess projects submitted and ensure those selected fulfil the aims and objectives of the Strategy.
- Prepare a publicity strategy to promote the programme locally and engage local communities.

Membership

The membership of the Local Action Group will be subject to annual review in line with the review process for the LDS itself. This will ensure that strategic interests at the table are reflective of the objectives of the current version of the LDS. An application process will be used to form the membership of the LAG, and where appropriate for the co-option of additional members or advisors, in compliance with EC 1303/2013 Article 32 2(b).

The composition of the membership of the Group will ensure that no single interest has more than 49% of the voting rights and be truly representative of relevant local public and private socio-economic interests. LAG Partnership members will be informed from the outset of the need for them to represent their sector or interest rather than personal or organisational interests. The application process for membership will be used to quantify the level of membership from public/private interests and ensure a cap on numbers from public authorities based on the total required membership. It is proposed to use the initial Task & Finish Group drawn from the shadow LAG to establish the initial membership of the new LAG.

The application process will be advertised via existing RDP mailing lists and networks that have extensive coverage of actors in Swansea's rural areas, and via a press release to the local press, and council website.

A declaration of interest form will be circulated at every meeting and used to inform the composition of meetings for discussions of particular issues or operations.

The wider circulation list built up under the previous RDP 2007-2013 working arrangements will be updated and used as one of the means to ensure the wider group of stakeholders and interested parties are kept regularly informed of development. This will include updates on implementation of the strategy, opportunities to take part in consultations and operations, and other methods such as the quarterly newsletter and social media.

Declarations of interest

- A declaration of interest form will be circulated at every meeting and used to inform the composition of meetings for discussions of particular issues or operations.
- In cases of a specific declaration of interest relating to discussion of an item on the agenda or specific operation, a member with a financial interest will be required to leave the room for that agenda item.
- Conflicts of interest will be addressed by a vote following discussion with the Chair having the casting vote.
- The quorum position will be carefully monitored in these situations to ensure that no single interest can represent more than 49% of voting rights

Signing and complying with the terms of the Funding Agreement

The LAG will:

- Require sight of the duly signed Funding Agreement and to receive and approve quarterly reports on performance against the requirements set out in it.
- Formally agree any and all changes to the Strategy and any significant changes to projects.
- Monitor compliance with this process to ensure that all significant changes are approved by the Welsh Government prior to implementation.
- Ensure that that full records of such changes are maintained and are readily available for inspection.

Overall delivery and management

The LAG will:

- Be clearly representative of the main partners having an interest in the Strategy.
- Take overall responsibility for the robustness of the project appraisal, selection and monitoring process.
- Receive detailed quarterly reports on progress against the aims and objectives of the Strategy.
- Take overall responsibility for the delivery and management of the programme locally.
- Oversee the delivery of projects
- Approve annual progress reports from the Lead Administrative Body on the Strategy.

Regularity and Propriety

The LAG will:

- Draw up and follow rules on regularity and propriety, including rules for avoiding conflicts of interest in relation to the selection of projects for financial assistance and all other Partnership activities.
- Ensure its general policies reflect these rules and basic principles of propriety.
- Receive an annual report on the application of the rules and good practice relating to the public procurement of works, goods and services.

Asset Inventory

The LAG will:

- Receive an annual report covering the Asset Inventory.

Asset holding

The LAG will:

- Receive an annual report on assets held within the Partnership.
- Select and approve projects suitable for funding out of income derived from the use of assets held for the benefit of the community.

Assets

The LAG will:

- Consider the proposed disposal of any assets and seek the Welsh Government's approval of any such disposal prior to any disposal taking place.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Election of Chair

The LAG will elect a Chair who will remain in office for a period of three years

Election of Vice-Chair

The LAG will elect a Vice-Chair who will remain in office for a period of three years

Meetings

Frequency of meetings:

The LAG will meet on at least a quarterly basis, in line with the quarterly claim intervals agreed with WG. Further meetings to be arranged at the request of the LAG should extraordinary items need to be considered. Meeting times and venues will be notified to LAG members by the Administrative Body.

Recording of meetings:

The minutes of the meetings shall be reported to the next meeting of the Swansea Economic Regeneration Partnership for information.

The order of business at each meeting shall be to:

- Receive any apologies for absence.
- Receive disclosures of interest.
- Confirm and sign the Minutes of the last Meeting.
- Dispose of business (if any) remaining from the previous meeting.
- Report on progress on agreed projects.

LAG members may nominate a named deputy and the Secretariat be informed when the deputy is chosen.

Quorum for meetings:

The quorum for a LAG meeting shall be one third of the membership to the nearest whole number. If at any time the number of members present falls below this the meeting shall be adjourned. The quorum will take account of the proportion of attendees from public and private sectors to ensure the necessary balance is achieved to comply with EC 1303/2013 Article 32 2(b).

The Secretariat shall keep a record of attendance for each meeting.

Minutes of each meeting shall be kept and circulated to LAG Partnership members as soon as possible after each meeting.

Decisions by the LAG Partnership shall be made by show of hands with the Chair having the casting vote.

If members of the LAG Partnership have any direct and significant involvement with a proposed project being considered, then they should declare this at the appropriate point on the agenda, and revoke their voting rights for any vote on that project.

Project appraisal, approval and onitoring

All project activity underpinning the SRLDS will be monitored formally by the LAG at regular intervals. The main tool for enabling effective monitoring has been the distribution of Quarterly Monitoring Reports covering all expenditure and achievement against outputs. Reports will include:

- A brief report on progress for the preceding quarter
- Expenditure to date
- Progress against outcomes
- Any other relevant information

Interim results of evaluation activity on each project operating as part of the Strategy will be fed back to the LAG or a designated sub-group for comment. This will assist the LAG in building a view of how effectively activities are implementing the objectives of the Strategy. It will also enable identification of remedial action needed where such activity is not meeting the desired aims, and contribute to an overall improvement in capacity levels in the LAG, and supporting structures.

Where projects are not achieving performance to profile, the LAG will take appropriate action through the Administrative body to resolve the situation.

The Administrative Body will undertake its responsibilities as outlined above, including maintenance of the systems required to ensure satisfactory reporting on all aspects of delivery to Welsh Government as required.

The Administrative Body role will be undertaken by 1 FTE officer (0.4 FTE on administration, 0.4 FTE animation), reporting to the Principal European Officer post in City and County of Swansea's Economic Regeneration & Planning Division. The function will be undertaken with support from other parts of the local authority as necessary, in particular the Finance Department. Tasks include:

- Secretariat to Swansea Rural Development LAG
- Preparation of reports and other associated documentation
- Collation of administrative body claims and checking of backing information
- Processing and submission of financial and output returns.
- Monitoring the administrative body budget codes for each funded project
- Preparation and distribution of publicity

For financial elements, to ensure separation of duties, Central Finance complete final checks on financial aspects of funding letters/amendment forms/ claim forms and arrange for sign-off via the Head of Finance.

Project Assessment Criteria

The project assessment and approval process will operate as a rolling programme based on needs identified by the Rural Thematic Development Officers and Administrative Body officer on an ongoing basis. The LAG will take decisions on balancing demand with the needs outlined in this Strategy, and the relative importance of the strategic objectives of the Strategy. The proposed project assessment criteria are set out below:

PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- | |
|---|
| 1. Is the application fully completed? |
| 2. Will the project deliver to the 8 rural wards, 3 service centre wards, or operate from a host ward? |
| 3. Does the organisation applying for RDP 2014-2020 support have the ability/capacity to deliver e.g. Staffing, administration systems, funding etc.? |
| 4. Is the organisation in a position to provide the required match funding towards funding their project? |
| 6. Does the proposed project clearly contribute to meeting the strategic objectives contained with the approved Local Development Strategy (LDS? In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to what extent does the project contribute to the achievement of the LDS? b) how does the project complement other activities covered by other relevant initiatives? c) how does the project respond to and is consistent with identified need? d) how far is the project support by evidence of actual or prospective demand (including assessment of potential displacement of existing activities) e) how far is the intervention and delivery method appropriate? f) does the proposal have realistic and measurable milestones with performance indicators, including cross-cutting themes indicators developed within them g) how dependent is the activity on LEADER support to achieve its outcomes? h) is the proposal value for money in terms of costs vs outcomes i) is there a clear exit strategy? |
| 7. Is the proposed activity and expenditure eligible under RDP 2014-2020 rules? |

7. Does the idea have clearly defined goals and SMART objectives?
8. Is the project realistic and to an appropriate scale?
9. Is there a clear explanation of the proposed expenditure?
10. Does the project complement other activities proposed against the LDS and other relevant strategies as detailed in the LDS?
11. Is there firm evidence of need for the proposal?
12. Is the proposal appropriate for the local area and consistent with the needs set out in the LDS?

The shadow LAG has already discussed the implications of the limited resources available, and has agreed that prioritisation of resources will be essential to gain maximum impact. As such this means a more focussed approach to project development rather than an open call approach. The intention is to use the small team to be employed by the programme comprising an administrative body post covering administration and animation functions, and two development officers to work with the LAG and external stakeholders to identify priority activities for support to then develop into projects. This is likely to include early quick wins building on previous Business Plan 2 activity around tourism promotion and local food. However, there is a willingness to tackle more difficult issues, and this will be worked through once the new LAG membership is in place later in Spring 2015.

A two stage application process will be employed subject to caveats on resources above. This will be used to screen opportunities identified through consultation and discussions in the LAG to identify projects that could develop to full applications. Paperwork to support the process has not yet been finalised, but will be agreed by the new LAG by June 2015. The initial project assessment criteria will be used as the starting point. Administrative body staff will screen all applications for eligibility in line with the published LEADER Guidance and EC regulations.

SECTION 3 - DELIVERY

Description	Explain how the Local Action Group (LAG) aims to transfer its stated objectives into delivery on the ground. The LAG should have a clear plan that links the result, the outputs that deliver the result, what activities will take place to deliver the outputs, how and when those activities will take place, and who will be responsible for delivering them.
Linked to	Sections 3.4 (including intervention logic table), 3.8, 3.9, 3.10 and 3.12 of the LDS Guidance June 2014

3.1 Description of the strategy and hierarchy of objectives

(2,500 words (narrative) plus up to 10 pages A4 in the form of an Intervention Logic Table (template provided))

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∨ *A description of how the LAG can improve and develop the area*
- ∨ *Identified 'hierarchy of objectives'*
- ∨ *Explanation of how earlier activity has influenced the strategy*
- ∨ *If you have previously implemented LEADER or other relevant programmes please explain how this experience has influenced the approach*

Please also complete the Intervention Logic Table Template provided

Based on ongoing conversations with partners in recent months including recent Swansea Rural Development LAG meetings, the following high level RDP Leader programme objectives recur as important:

- Adding value to local identity and natural and cultural resources
- Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains
- Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services.

A written procedure was undertaken following the Rural Development Partnership meeting 8 January 2014 to agree the initial expression of interest:



Swansea Rural
Development Partner

This was followed up at the 2013 Annual Event which took place 18th February 2014, where the afternoon workshop was dedicated to discussion around the Expression of Interest and the proposed strategy objectives. There was broad agreement of the proposals. The objectives set out in the EOI are the basis of the Strategic Objectives and Themes set out below as the starting point for the new LDS.

Renewable energy and digital technology are also important, but in terms of need on the ground the first three themes indicated above seem to have the most demand for support. In particular adding value to local identity was a strong theme coming out of the sustainable tourism study funded through Axis 4 running costs, which engaged with over 100 stakeholders from the tourism sector focussed on rural Swansea.

Our work under the RDP 2007-2013 through the current Axis 4 Leader has provided the ideal place to test approaches, bring interested groups together to work on common themes and encourage business growth, increasing the profile of dozens of micro-enterprises in the food and crafts sectors, and increasingly sustainable tourism through partnership working with Tourism Swansea Bay. The strategic vision in relation to tourism is also the subject of a strong partnership approach through the new Swansea Bay Destination Management Plan. Links between the existing RDP and the DMP are coherent, and much of the 'Business Plan 2' work currently underway is referenced in the Plan. Examples of previous work that will

influence the new work programme include:

- Suite of investments in physical infrastructure and tourism marketing under our tourism umbrella project including visitor accommodation improvements, additional walking routes, visitor attraction improvements and a range of interpretation and marketing leaflets electronic and hard copy that can now be exploited and better integrated in communities and businesses
- Basic service investments that provide facilities where events and consultations can take place and further developed; a successful Sunday bus service operation that can bring together public and private interests to further develop the service with real economic impact
- A range of village and small town improvements that provide sustainable venues that could be further exploited and more effectively networked with each other
- A range of conservation and heritage investments where dialogue with stakeholders has begun and could be further developed
- Significant effort in food, local crafts and natural resources that can be further exploited linked to the tourism initiatives referred to above, and have potential for cooperation activity building on relationships already developed with neighbouring LAGs.

The opportunity to formulate a successor Rural Local Development Strategy to bring focus to developments in the rural parts of Swansea for the next seven years ties in well with the higher level strategic context, providing a localised platform to test approaches that could be rolled out on a bigger scale and more widely within the programming period. Also the newly formed Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Action Group is only just beginning its work, but already the need to work across themes is becoming apparent, particularly around marketing and supply chain development. Leader is the best way to get the mainland groups together and would build on the strong platform developed over the past 6 years. A range of investments in the local fishing industry and community are creating a realistic prospect of a better marketing opportunity for local product offer and building urban-rural links in particular with Swansea Market, the largest indoor market in Wales. This has considerable potential when linked with the tourism investments cited above, and the large micro-enterprise base this would benefit collectively.

A review of the SWOT analysis in the current rural LDS was undertaken in December 2012 at our RDP Annual Event held in Pontarddulais, with representatives from across the rural wards present. Many of the issues remain salient, but with an increasing understanding of the need to support economic growth to support sustainability of our rural communities.

In summary, and based on needs coming through our existing networks and implementation of the current LDS for 2007-2013, the Swansea Rural Local Development Strategy 2014-2020 would seek to align local need with the above strategic drivers as follows:

TABLE 3: STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

RURAL STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**LEADER THEMES****Strategic Aim 1: Developing Businesses and their Potential****Objective 1:** Supporting and developing local and regional supply chains

Theme 2

Objective 2: Micro-enterprise support and incubation

Themes 2, 5

Objective 3: Supporting rural-urban links

Theme 4

Strategic Aim 2: Adding value to and enhancing local identity**Objective 4:** Supporting local business and community capacity building and networking

Themes 2, 4, 5

Objective 5: Encouraging enhancement of local offer (especially food, crafts, recreation and tourism)

Themes 1, 2, 4, 5

Objective 6: Developing better marketing of local offer (especially food, crafts, recreation and tourism)

Themes 1, 2, 5

Strategic Aim 3: Improving sustainability of rural basic services**Objective 7:** Developing new approaches to implementation of services

Themes 3, 4, 5

Objective 8: Encouraging development of small number of self-sustaining 'hubs'

Themes 2, 3, 4

Objective 9: Educating communities around new approaches to 'adopting' local services

Theme 3

Strategic aim 4: Conserving our natural, cultural and built heritage**Objective 10:** Encouraging a conversation on sensitive development

Theme 1

Objective 11: Encouraging urban-rural links

Theme 1

Objective 12: Capitalising on potential of local natural, cultural and built heritage

Themes 1, 5

These objectives are intended to go wider than purely RDP Leader funding. Mapping of the objectives against the four leader themes is outlined in the Action Plan set out in Section 12.

The strategic aims and objectives are consistent with the overall strategic context for the region, and the aims and objectives of the current *Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Development Strategy 2012-2013*. Specific activities will fall out of discussions due to take place during Spring 2015.

As such there is a need for further detailed consultation on these objectives and the strategy document overall to achieve better citizen engagement. This has not been possible to date, not for a lack of financial resources, but due to the need to complete the complex Business Plan 2 programme in Swansea, large parts of which were delivered towards the end of 2014 putting a strain on resource available to either undertake consultation work in house, or indeed employ an external consultant to do so. Our proposed approach to addressing these issues through conversion of the current Shadow LAG to the new formal Local Action Group membership is set out in section 2.1 above and will be completed by July 2015.

The Intervention Logic Table is currently flatly apportioned across the five LEADER themes, as the LAG membership needs to be formally revised before a proper review and prioritisation of activities can take place. As described in Section 2.1 steps are in place to ensure this work is undertaken by July 2015.

3.2 Co-Operation and Networking

(1,000 words; up to 500 to be focused on preparatory activities)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ▼ Describe how you will seek to incorporate co-operation and which of the co-operation stages outlined in the guidance (exchange of experience, transfer of practice or common actions) are envisaged.*
- ▼ If your area, or parts of your area, have not used LEADER funds before please provide information on how you will learn from other LAGs.*

The focus of the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan approach in Swansea was on local level activities, as the programme was new to the area, and there was a need for a high level of animation and capacity building support. Whilst this support was successful in engaging a number of key sectors and groups across the rural wards, a number of longer-term issues were uncovered during consultations and delivery of projects that still need to be addressed.

Early discussions with neighbouring authority areas of Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire have identified a number of possible areas where cooperation projects could be helpful. These include community transport, as well as farming/food/local supply chains, in particular in the context of the Swansea Bay City Region.

There is openness to exploring ways of achieving cooperation by working across boundaries to achieve common solutions through involvement in practical networking sessions with the other Local Action Group partnerships in the wider Central and South West region. In particular food, crafts and tourism has been an area where cooperation has been tentatively explored in the 2007-2013 programme.

Opportunities to work with other areas have been taken under the previous programme, and it is hoped these links could be continued over the next few years, e.g. the current Rural Swansea Action team helping local producers from rural Swansea attend markets in Pembrokeshire, work with the Wales Community

Tourism Forum and Food Tourism project led by Carmarthenshire LAG, also working with Neath Port Talbot and Pembrokeshire. There is a lot of potential still to be explored, particularly around supply chains, and high-profile opportunities for local produce such as Swansea Market.

3.3 Description of Innovation

(1,000 words – to be linked to the actions described in Section 3.1 above and referring to the bullet point tick headings in Section 3.9 of the LDS guidance document)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- v Demonstrate how the LDS will take advantage of the potential to experiment and innovate.*

The opportunity to pilot new products, services or ways of doing things provided by Leader through this Rural Local Development Strategy has great potential to act as a catalyst across Swansea and the wider south west region.

There is an increasing appetite in private, third and community sectors to ‘make a difference’, coupled with an imperative to find new and more cost-effective ways of providing services. There is demand from community councils and third sector groups to work on adoption of local services and also thematic demands around for example renewable energy options.

Various small scale activities undertaken during the two phases of the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 in Swansea have demonstrated what can be achieved using Leader as a tool to bring interested parties together to work on common issues.

It is very apparent that local solutions depend on appropriate people, places and resources coming together at the right time to enable solutions to be developed.

3.4 Action Plan

This section is to be provided as a unified document with the Intervention Logic at Section 3.1 above. The ‘Who’ and ‘When’ elements required by the Commission have been added to the Intervention Logic table (can be indicative where exact details are not known). Please also show in the relevant columns where activities are expected to contribute to Cross-Cutting Themes, Welsh Language and supporting the Uplands.

3.5 Promotional Activity

(1,000 words)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∨ How you will advertise and promote the opportunities / benefits that the project is offering to target participants and/or sectors;*
- ∨ How you will work with identified stakeholders to promote the operation;*
- ∨ How you will publicise the results and impact of your operation;*
- ∨ How you will disseminate best practice;*
- ∨ How you will ensure that full acknowledgement of the funding from the European Union is clearly displayed including type of media utilised;*
- ∨ How you propose to 'fly the EU flag' during the week that includes 9 May;*
- ∨ How you propose to ensure that participants and/or enterprises are clearly aware of the funding received from the EU;*
- ∨ Confirmation that you will ensure that you liaise with RDP Communications staff and the Wales Rural Network on any proposed launches/press releases to be arranged/issued in relation to LEADER activities;*

This section outlines the Communications Plan for the Rural Development Strategy in line with Welsh Government and European Union guidance and requirements.

Advertising programme opportunities

A number of inter-linked methods will be used to advertise the support available through the programme. A limited number of hard copy newsletters will be made available in key locations, backed up with social media presences on Twitter and Facebook, webpages on the City and County of Swansea website at www.swansea.gov.uk/rdp and limited runs of factsheets and case study material as the programme progresses. Reference will be made to groups and networks accessed or established during the RDP 2007-2013. Continual iterative feedback will also be employed between the lead body officer and the Rural Thematic Development Officers to assist specific targeting of groups and interests.

Engagement methods

The programme will build on successful approaches used during the RDP 2007-2013 and lessons learned. A large amount of consultation has taken place during the programme, and information is also available from events and initiatives undertaken by other organisations that clearly identify areas of work needing input and support. Engagement methods will include:

- Distribution list containing over 250 stakeholders impacting rural Swansea
- Regular programme of events and consultations in line with the work programme to be agreed by the new LAG
- Social media channels and website to be kept regularly updated
- Promotion of networking opportunities through communication channels outlined above

- Presence at local events and shows such as Gower Show in August and other regular fixtures on the rural Swansea calendar of events

Publicising results and impact of the Strategy

Existing methods of summarising activities in newsletters, annual reports and factsheets will be continued, but with significant refinements and simplifications to content and distribution methods, learning lessons from the existing programme. Press releases, advertorials in the local press and where capacity allows having a presence at local events and festivals will provide further avenues for promoting the results and impact of the Strategy as it progresses.

Dissemination of best practice

The range of methods outline above will be used to ensure examples of best practice are effectively shared locally, regionally and where appropriate, nationally. Regular reporting between Rural Thematic Development Officers and the Lead body Officer will enable quick identification of suitable case studies for publication. Regular dissemination events will be scheduled during the programme to bring people together to showcase good examples of best practice on a thematic or sectoral basis as required.

Acknowledgement of European Union support

All documentation across all media forms will acknowledge European Union support through use of the agreed official logos, and the agreed wording formula for press releases and other written communications. EU support will also be verbally acknowledged at events and meetings as appropriate.

Annual Publicity of 9th May Europe Day

Europe Day will be acknowledged by flying the flag outside civic buildings, acknowledgement on the programme homepage on the City and County of Swansea website, and arrangement of appropriate activities and press notices to draw attention to Europe Day.

Awareness raising for participants/enterprises

All correspondence and communications with participants and enterprises receiving support from the programme will be made aware of the EU funding contribution through the various measures outlined above. Any funding awards will clearly acknowledge the specific programme, relevant EU regulations and use of logos.

Liaison with Welsh Government RDP Communications team and Wales Rural Network

Liaison with central teams in Welsh Government has been a beneficial way of ensuring national awareness of local and regional activity and ensuring that good practice can be shared and publicised effectively. Early warning of events and press notices will be given to Welsh Government colleagues to ensure maximum publicity

for the RDP nationally and locally.

SECTION 4 – MANAGEMENT OF OPERATION

Description	Explain how the Local Action Group and its elected Administrative Body has the capacity and resources necessary to successfully deliver on the planned results, output indicators and activities.
Linked to	Part of Section 3.11 of the LDS Guidance June 2014 (remainder to be covered under Section 2 – Financial & Compliance)

4.1 Management and Administration

(2,500 words)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∨ *Evidence of an effort to collaborate with other LAG areas to produce the most cost effective management and administrative structure for the area*
- ∨ *A description of the management and monitoring arrangements of the strategy demonstrating the capacity of the LAG to implement the strategy*
- ∨ *Details of the number of staff anticipated to run and animate the LDS and structure of the animation/running cost functions*
- ∨ *Evidence of skills and training plans for staff of the Administrative Body*

City and County of Swansea is proposed as the local administrative body for the programme. Discussions have been progressed with Carmarthenshire County Council to explore the scope for efficiencies and having a single lead body arrangement. The discussion focussed around achieving a management and administrative structure that balances local development needs with pooling of resources at regional level to simplify contact with Welsh Government. Having looked closely at the needs and demands of running the proposed programme, and the financial allocations involved, it would be very difficult to achieve efficiencies in terms of financial savings. The nature of the programme requires localised support. This is not the same as running a regional collaboration for a regionally-designed project for example. Based on the particular circumstances of Swansea and Carmarthenshire, with different systems and approaches and the need to enter complex legal agreements for what are relatively small programmes, it would be impractical and more inefficient to brigade. Discussions have however covered the possibility of regional promotion of Leader by working cooperatively, and looking to work together on themes of common interest through cooperation budgets, and sharing costs for specific tasks such as publicity and evaluation.

The primary need in Swansea’s rural areas is for experienced facilitators able to work on the ground within communities with micro-enterprises, community groups and the wide range of other local stakeholders to build on the successes of the previous RDP, and begin to tackle some of the more deep-seated unresolved issues that continue to stifle sustainable and balanced economic and social development in the rural wards.

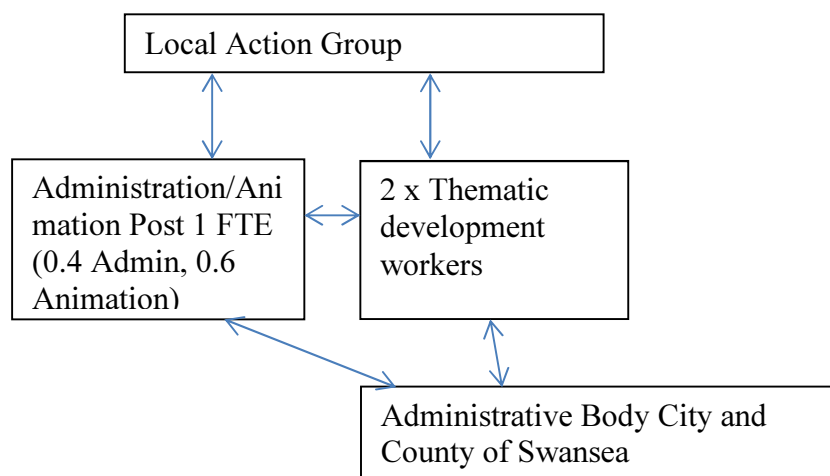
The staff resource allied with a modest development fund over the programming period will enable capacity building and feasibility work to take place, with funding for pilot projects to be supported to back that work up. The proposed team structure is set out below:

Administration and animation (25%)

Administration costs are worked out at maximum 10% of the overall RDP budget, and 15% allocated towards ‘animation’ activity, i.e. promoting and evaluating the Strategy. In terms of staff costs, 1x FTE is envisaged to cover administration (0.4 FTE) and animation (0.6 FTE) working across administrative running costs and animation activity in relation to the Strategy. The staffing allocation is proportionate to the indicative scale of the programme, on the basis that there will be a smaller number of projects supported at local level, and a simpler delivery structure set out below. Systems will be established to keep audit trails fully compliant but as short as possible.

Leader programme delivery (75%)

At the start of the programme, it is proposed to employ 2 x FTE Rural Thematic Development Officers to work across the themes and objectives set out in the Strategy, responding to local need as the programme progresses. The RTDOs will have access to a £450k development fund set aside within the indicative 7 year allocation to enable funding of small experimental initiatives and activities during the programme. This equates to £65k per year, and will focus attention on small scale pilot projects that result from capacity building and networking within the rural wards and service centres.



A more focussed programme will result from this structure, providing the resource for the LAG to work with to enable a full programme of networking and consultation, direct feedback to the LAG to enable proper discussion of priorities, and sufficient administrative resource to manage the small number of resulting projects. The team will work to the LAG membership to ensure a totally bottom up process of identification of the work programme and detailed interventions using the limited resources available. It is hoped this model will provide the best balance between staffing resources, expertise from the LAG membership, administrative and policy support from the Administrative Body to enable effective delivery of the LDS.

Staff skills and training

The complexity of the systems and procedures to run the programme necessitates a level of skills and training for new staff. The Principal European Officer is experienced in supporting delivery of a range of European-funded programmes, including the 2007-2013 RDP in Swansea. Good practice from the previous programme, developed with new guidance in place for the 2014-2020 round will be used to up-skill new staff to ensure efficient programme delivery. Training will also be made available to new and existing LAG members to update them on the parameters of the new programme.

SECTION 5 – VALUE FOR MONEY

Description	Explain how the proposed actions and expenditure outlined in the Local Development Strategy represent the best use of EU funds. Explain how the costs included are reasonable, such as the cost and number of staff required to deliver the proposed activities.
Linked to	Section 3.4 and 4.0 of the LDS Guidance June 2014 Details of Section 3.4 have already been provided in Section 3 of this template (Intervention Logic)

5.1 Financial Delivery Profiles

Please complete the delivery profile templates provided.

Please note that you are asked to provide annual profiles at this stage in the process. You will be asked to input detailed quarterly profiles into PPIMS at a later date.

- ∨ Running Costs and Animation Costs should not exceed 25% of the total RDP funds (minus preparatory costs)
- ∨ Running Costs, Animation Costs and Preparatory Costs can be 100% funded

through the RDP

- ∇ The LEADER implementation costs must include a minimum of 20% match funding
- ∇ Capital expenditure should not exceed 5% of overall implementation expenditure
- ∇ Sources of match funding should be identified, including the type (i.e. cash or in-kind)
- ∇ Please state if you are likely to opt for simplified costs (further guidance will be issued as soon as available)
- ∇ If a LAG does not propose to combine costs with other LAGs a robust justification is required
- ∇ Full rationales (including explanation of assumptions) must be provided for all costs in order demonstrate reasonableness of costs
- ∇ 10% flexibility will be allowed at Cost Heading 'Category' level not 'Sub Category' (see delivery profile template for further detail)

Running costs are capped at the defined percentages and 100% funded.

The three posts identified – Animation/Admin and 2 x Thematic Development Officers are costs at City and County of Swansea Grade 9 level with annual increments and including on costs at 30% including NI and pension contributions.

Match funding is identified at 20% from volunteer time and staff time from core funded Principal European Officer post. We do wish to explore indirect costs, which would form part of the match funding contribution. Temporarily the time allocation against the European Officer post has been increased to accommodate for this, but would be replaced by the indirect cost method once agreed.

Discussions had been progressed with Carmarthenshire County Council to explore the scope for efficiencies and having a single lead body arrangement. The discussion focussed around achieving a management and administrative structure that balances local development needs with pooling of resources at regional level to simplify contact with Welsh Government. Having looked closely at the needs and demands of running the proposed programme, and the financial allocations involved, it would be very difficult to achieve efficiencies in terms of financial savings. The nature of the programme requires localised support. This is not the same as running a regional collaboration for a regionally-designed project for example. Based on the particular circumstances of Swansea and Carmarthenshire, with different systems and approaches and the need to enter complex legal agreements for what are relatively small programmes, it would be impractical and more inefficient to brigade. Discussions have however covered the possibility of regional promotion of Leader by working cooperatively, and looking to work together on themes of common interest through cooperation budgets, and sharing costs for specific tasks such as publicity and evaluation.

Rationales are included in the appropriate spreadsheets.

SECTION 6 – INDICATORS & OUTCOMES

Description	Explain how the Local Action Group intends to deliver the result and output indicators identified and all associated targets.
Linked to	Section 4.1 of the LDS Guidance June 2014

6.1 Monitoring and Results

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∇ *A detailed narrative of the expected outputs, results and impacts that will derive from the proposed operations.*

Please also complete the Performance Indicator table provided (within the delivery profile template) and the intervention logic table at Section 3.1.

A basic flat apportionment has been undertaken at this stage with outputs and finance as there has not been sufficient time to properly consult with the shadow LAG on a more detailed programme of interventions due to the need to commit resources to the completion of Business Plan 2 from RDP 2007-2013. The flat apportionment is temporary until the new LAG membership (to be established as described in 2.1 above) is in place and undertakes a formal review of the LDS objectives and prioritisation of the themes. This exercise will be completed by July 2015. This will include a more realistic distribution of the outcomes across the calendar years under the direction of the LAG.

Five indicators are stipulated for Leader activity. In this first iteration of the Strategy, proposed outcomes are indicative and will be subject to change as implementation progresses. Proposals set out below under each indicator will be subject to review by the LAG, and in the light of actual work with communities and businesses. Initial proposals are explained below.

No. of operations: There is scope for a networking project under each of the five Leader themes. Subsequent operations will depend on how the initial capacity building phase develops. It is likely that if networking and capacity building are successful, an operation to undertake a feasibility or scoping study will emerge. This may then be tested by one or more pilot projects. This could mean 4-5 operations per Leader theme.

Focus area(s) addressed: Based on the proposed objectives of the Strategy, the following focus areas are likely to be covered, under RDP Priority 6 Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas:

- a) Facilitating diversification, creation of new small enterprises and job creation
- b) Fostering local development in rural areas
- c) Enhancing accessibility to, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas.

Businesses benefiting: Existing networks under Axis 4 Leader 2007-2013 in Swansea have seen over 200 micro-businesses participating and benefiting from support, taking into account food, crafts and tourism businesses. The final definition of numbers benefiting will depend on the definition of 'benefiting' agreed at programme level.

Communities benefiting: It is envisaged that support will be provided over the 7 year programme in all 8 rural wards and 3 service centres. There are smaller communities within each ward, but as a minimum 11 communities will benefit.

Jobs created: Jobs created is the most difficult output to fulfil given the small scale of the enterprises the programme intends to work with, usually fractions of Full-Time Equivalent posts. 5-10 FTE has been achieved under the 2007-2013 programme after lengthy periods of capacity building work. The more targeted approach proposed through the 2014-2020 programme could mean better results, but it is difficult to estimate at this early stage of the programme.

6.2 Evaluation Plan

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∨ *Please specify your proposals for evaluating performance against the LDS*
- ∨ *Provide details of the methodology you propose to use to evaluate the benefits of the LEADER activity*
- ∨ *Details of baseline data*
- ∨ *Provide an explanation and justification of the chosen evaluation methods both during the life of the operations or activity (formative) and at the end of the operations or activity (summative)*

Evaluating Performance against the LDS

Evaluation approaches will build on the successful framework used to monitor the 2007-2013 Rural Strategy and its underpinning business plans and projects. Quarterly and Annual Reports provide:

- A concise report on progress for the preceding quarter
- Expenditure to date against profile (including RDP grant and match funding breakdowns)
- Progress against outcomes
- Update on promotional activity
- Update on cooperation activity
- Progress against cross-cutting themes

- Any other relevant information

The reports will ensure a breakdown of activity that reports against each Strategy Objective. The more limited levels of funding will require prioritisation of resources by the LAG.

Methodology to evaluate the benefits of LEADER activity

Initially the approach will follow the successful model of evaluation employed on the two business plan periods from the 2007-2013 programme in Swansea. This would involve procuring an external evaluator to:

- Review the effectiveness of the governance arrangements between the Administrative Body and the LAG Partnership
- Review the effectiveness of the LAG Partnership, its membership and its role in implementing the LDS
- Assess the implementation of the LDS in relation to the evolving programme of work established on an annual basis by the LAG Partnership
- Assess the impact of LDS delivery on the areas of work the LAG Partnership chooses to focus on, including specific workshops for LAG members and project sponsors as appropriate
- Undertake fieldwork with beneficiaries of the LDS to assess the effectiveness of the programme
- Make use of data collected by the Administrative Body and projects to help limited resources go further.

Ideally a baseline report will be produced using the version of the LDS current at that point in the programme. Further reports will then be required on an annual basis to inform the annual review of the Strategy and suggest refinements to the approach.

Details of Baseline data

Baseline information will be drawn from the characteristics section of the Strategy, but it will also be possible where relevant to reference indicators to be agreed for the Swansea Bay City Region Regeneration Strategy and the Regional Delivery Plan for Employment and Skills of the Regional Learning Partnership for South West and Central Wales, both of which will have formal performance indicators allocated during 2015.

Explanation and justification of the chosen evaluation methods both during the life of the operations or activity (formative) and at the end of the operations or activity (summative)

The formative evaluation approach used for the two Business Plans that delivered the 2007-2013 strategy was successful in enabling reviews to programme delivery on an ongoing basis. A scaled-down version of this approach will be employed for the 2014-2020 Rural Strategy, in view of the reduced budget available and the intention to target resources on a smaller number of projects. The evaluation process will include an appropriate level of fieldwork (direct contact with project beneficiaries) linked back at every stage to implementation of, and influence on the

design of the LDS.

The approach of a baseline report, interim report(s) and final report worked well for Swansea under the 2007-2013 programme. The main advantage was providing a 'critical friend' approach to challenge projects during implementation to enable scope for improvements during the lifetime of the Strategy. The proposal for a thorough annual review of the LDS underlines the need for regular external challenge. The resources allocated would be proportionately smaller than the 2007-2013 RDP in Swansea, but there would be scope for the external evaluator to consider 'piggy-backing' on consultation opportunities, regular LAG Partnership meetings or project reviews to reduce costs. Overall this would provide a good model for evaluating the new programme, with shorter interim reports to accommodate the longer period of delivery in a single programme compared to the two business plans-approach of the previous programme. This would provide an informed approach to the annual review of the LDS, though timing would need to be scheduled to coincide with the formal Welsh Government timetable for the annual Strategy review.

A final summative report will be requested to draw the previous annual reports together and provide an overview of the implementation of the LDS to identify successes, good practice and areas for improvement in future programmes.

Consideration will be given to to work on a regional basis if this is considered necessary with a steer from Welsh Government, or at the very least to agree a consistent approach with the other LAGs to ensure resulting reports are comparable.

SECTION 7 – SUITABILITY OF INVESTMENT

Description	Explain the need and demand for the Local Action Group and the actions identified in the Local Development Strategy and whether this demand is already being met through existing provision. Explain how the Local Action Group will be able to successfully deliver the proposed activity.
Linked to	Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of the LDS Guidance June 2014

7.1 A description of the community involvement process in the development of the strategy

(1,000 words plus a list of consultee groups and organisations)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∇ *Communications Plan showing how the various interests have been consulted with in preparation of the strategy and how they will continue to be included and kept informed during delivery*
- ∇ *Evidence of dialogue with and between local citizens at each of the key*

stages in the design of the strategy

Communications plan showing consultation with various interests in preparation of strategy and how they will be kept included and informed

The proposed local action group is based on a review and consolidation of local working arrangements for the RDP 2007-2013, building on the good networks and working relationships developed over the last 7 years, but with an eye to opportunities to further develop the Leader approach. Whilst the networking and engagement activities under the 2007-2013 round have been successful in bringing together a number of local groups to encourage growth and cooperation in and between local micro enterprises, there remains significant untapped potential which can only be unlocked with further responsive Leader-based support, networking and capacity building. Merging the existing Swansea Rural Development Partnership and Rural Swansea Action Management Committee is the first planned step. As such these groups are already representative of key interests across the rural parts of Swansea.

Swansea is currently acting as lead body for the Swansea Bay Fisheries Local Action Group, with a local development strategy for the European Fisheries Fund covering Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend. There is considerable opportunity to exploit these links in terms of encouraging sustainable production, supply chains and marketing/tourism potential.

Compared to 2006 when the Swansea Rural Development Partnership was first established, networks are now far stronger, and implementation of Business Plan 2 in particular has touched a large number of business and community organisations across the rural wards. Over 250 organisations are part of the mailing list created through our previous Rural Swansea Action LAG which is still operated and used to provide updates and exchange information. With these networks in place, and a good level of understanding generated through participation in the current RDP across our partners and networks, there is a good level of engagement with our rural communities. Ongoing conversations around the existing programme have helped suggest amendments to the SWOT analysis, and setting the strategic themes and objectives for the Strategy.

The Swansea Rural Development Partnership continues to be very well attended, and has matured well into its role as gatekeeper for the current LDS. Membership does need to be reviewed, and whilst the overall size of the group has to be kept manageable, the Partnership is open to new members. A review in tandem with design of the new LDS will be undertaken to ensure consistency with any new themes emerging, and making the most of interest from new members willing to engage with the process. The proposed Task & Finish Group will lead the process of establishing the revised membership and steering a programme of work for formal consultation on the new LDS and the forward work programme for the LAG. The former RSA mailing list will be updated and used as a key means of disseminating information to wider stakeholders, and social media channels will be exploited along with new options from an update of the Swansea Council website content

management system that will enable better online interaction with stakeholders during 2015.

Evidence of dialogue with citizens

A review of the SWOT analysis in the current rural LDS was undertaken in December 2012 at our RDP Annual Event held in Pontarddulais, with representatives from across the rural wards present. Many of the issues remain salient, but with an increasing understanding of the need to support economic growth to support sustainability of our rural communities. Following submission of the Expression of Interest for Leader status for Swansea's rural wards in January 2014, workshop sessions were undertaken at the 2013 Annual Event (postponed to February 2014) which was attended by around 30 representatives of Swansea's rural communities, and organisations involved in delivery of the existing programme. There was broad support for the objectives as set out in the hierarchy of objectives section of the Strategy. A consultation survey was issued during September 2014 to get views on the proposed objectives. Whilst the response rate was low – from a circulation list of over 250 contacts only 9 returns were received, the proposed objectives were supported by the majority of those that responded, with a number of suggestions for implementation that will be summarised and made available to the Partnership to get the programme started in early 2015. The final Annual Event for the 2007-2013 Strategy will take place in November 2014, and provided a opportunity for further discussion around the new Strategy and the initial areas for the new team to begin work on in 2015. Time commitments in finalising Business Plan 2 have delayed our work in making more progress with the implementation of the 2014-2020 round, but as this work nears completion in March 2015, it will be possible to divert more resources to energising development of the new programme, moving from the current shadow LAG to formally introducing the new membership, and getting prioritisation of resources and cooperation activity underway between April and July 2015. Until the three posts anticipated to manage and implement the programme are formally in place, there will be limitations on how quickly developments can take place. The establishment of the new Task & Finish Group is a step towards ensuring management of the process by community representatives to ensure a full bottom-up process is achieved and a more iterative process than was achieved under 2007-2013 arrangements.

7.2 SWOT Analysis to show development needs and potential of the proposed area

(No word limit – table format)

Please provide a SWOT analysis in a table format based on the model of the SWOT in the RDP consultation document:

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/rdp-2014-2020-next-steps-consultation/?lang=en>

The following table presents a concise analysis of the current situation in rural

Swansea, identifying the main opportunities and problems.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty • World-class natural environment • Large areas of unspoilt coastal and inland environments adjacent to urban core • Large number of indigenous micro-enterprises in tourism, agricultural and crafts sectors • Popular annual festivals, e.g. Gower Show, Gower Festival • Range of integrated tourism marketing materials and small scale infrastructure from 2007-2013 programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to improvements to infrastructure and buildings from 2007-2013 EU funding programmes, e.g. Felindre Business Park, numerous facilities across rural wards • Swansea City Centre • Opportunities to evaluate community-based renewable energy options • Local networks and interest groups: tourism, food and crafts producers, Gower Landscape Partnership, AONB Partnership
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative perceptions of ability to undertake development vis a vis planning requirements • Availability of public transport • Availability of quality tourism facilities at key locations, e.g. parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline of rural services • Prevailing memories of unsuccessful cooperation initiatives, e.g. Gower Growers • Inappropriate developments • Longer term sustainability of services and facilities

SECTION 8 – CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Description	Explain how the Local Action Group will maximise its contribution towards the Cross Cutting themes of Equal Opportunities, Sustainable Development and Tackling Poverty.
Linked to	Sections 3.6 and 3.7 of the LDS Guidance June 2014

8.1 Cross-Cutting Themes

(1,500 words)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∇ *Information as to how you intend the LDS activities to maximise their contribution to the Cross Cutting Themes of Equal Opportunities, Sustainable Development and Tackling Poverty and Exclusion*
- ∇ *Show how the LDS will follow the terms of the Welsh Language Commissioner's document 'Grants, Loans and Sponsorship; Welsh Language considerations'.*

This section sets out in broad terms the approach to applying the cross-cutting themes to implementation of the Strategy.

Equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming

Equal opportunities principles are fundamental to the approach to delivering the Strategy. Successful integration of equal opportunities in the previous 2007-2013 programme of projects informs the approaches that will be taken. The starting point is the need to reduce injustice and promote social cohesion, providing the opportunity for all eligible beneficiaries to participate and use their skills and abilities to raise the level of GDP in Wales and address the imbalance in earning for women and men and others with protected characteristics. Examples include:

- Careful marketing and promotion of consultation and networking events, targeting specific groups where appropriate.
- Tailoring content of sessions to the needs of particular target groups, using prior experience and research as appropriate.
- Careful selection of venues for events, meetings and other gatherings to maximise participation.
- Ensuring appropriate equipment is available to maximise participation (e.g. audio-visual, access, formatting and availability of documentation)
- Embedding equalities requirements in specifications for projects, activities and studies.
- Ensuring good transport access, e.g. public transport, allocation of disabled parking for park and ride.
- Avoiding any form of bias in literature.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is an integrated component of all proposed activities under the Strategy. Examples include:

- Considering studies into alternative renewable energy sources
- Exploring potential for shortening of supply chains, bridging urban-rural links and access to local and sub-regional markets to reduce food miles and improve local identity
- Influencing business and community practices to encourage sustainable approaches

- Piloting of new approaches to service delivery in the community.
- Building on networks formed during Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 period and developing them further to help bring communities and other interests together to solve common problems.
- Building on walking and cycling marketing and infrastructure improvements from RDP 2007-2013.

Tackling poverty and social exclusion

The 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan identified a range of poverty and social exclusion issues as a result of various projects operating under both Business Plans. Issues such as fuel poverty, rural isolation and distance from services, access to transport are just a few of the critical issues facing rural communities in Swansea. Means of addressing these link to the other cross-cutting themes and could include:

- Exploring options for widening access to community transport
- Building on previous Youth Service interventions to encourage local groups to take on similar activities using local resources
- Exploring potential for community-based joint service provision using existing models of best practice e.g. Llanmadoc Community Shop, and using lessons learned for other initiatives, e.g. future use and operation of Pennard Library.
- Addressing fuel poverty issues through exploration of different forms of renewable energy.

Welsh Language

The importance of the Welsh language was acknowledged through a specific objective in the previous *Swansea Rural Local Development Strategy 2007-2013*, which was 'to support initiatives which encourage the use of the Welsh language and the retention of Welsh culture. The objective was subsequently delivered in particular by Menter Iaith Abertawe through projects funded under basic services and conservation of rural heritage measures respectively. Use of the Welsh language was also embedded throughout the programme.

The purpose of the projects was to encourage the use of the Welsh language through provision of translation services. The cultural heritage provision was particularly targeted at young people. These simple projects helped communities, businesses and individuals to get more from the language by making use of it in their everyday situations. Another successful example was the production of bilingual walking and cycling materials by Cazbah Ltd across electronic and hard copy mediums show successful integration of Welsh and English. These examples could serve as models for new approaches under the 2014-2020 RDP.

Use of the Welsh language is stronger in northern parts of Swansea, co-terminus with neighbouring authority areas of Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire. There is scope to explore the potential for cooperation projects around the theme of the Welsh language, and learn from the approaches used by Menter Iaith Abertawe under the 2007-2013 RDP. The potential to support the language could be realised in many ways including:

- Bilingual provision of information across all mediums
- Pilot projects around pre-commercialisation, branding potential, cultural heritage and identity, digital approaches
- Working with young people
- Support for micro-enterprises and community groups in their use of the language as an asset

The 2007-2013 RDP has shown the potential for the ways that support for the Welsh language can be provided. Good practice from the Menter Iaith Abertawe projects should be explored and embedded in new approaches coming forward through the 2014-2020 funding round. This will include use of the Welsh Language Commission Guidance 'Grants, Loans and Sponsorship'.

8.2 Supporting the Uplands

(1,000 words)

This Section should include the following as a minimum:

- ∇ *Define the areas of uplands which the LAG feels should be a priority with a description of interventions and activities which are envisaged under the LEADER themes.*

Geographically there is limited scope for the Swansea Rural Strategy to contribute to supporting the uplands area. However, opportunities to work on themes of common interest will be explored through cooperation activity across the region.

SECTION 9 – LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Description	Explain the potential of the Local Action Group to continue the proposed activity beyond the lifetime of the Programme.
Linked to	Section 5.0 of the LDS Guidance June 2014

9.1 Mainstreaming Plan

- ∇ *A plan for how you envisage the actions supported under the LDS will be disseminated and to whom*
- ∇ *How you would seek to mainstream successful actions*

Programme level

As with the 2007-2013 Rural Development Plan, the intention is to ensure consistent and effective dissemination of programme information and results. This will be achieved through refined, more concise documentation targeted around the programme themes. Opportunities will include:

- Annual events, supplemented by regular community-based sessions facilitated by RDP staff will provide a good vehicle for raising programme profile and the methods being explored.
- Briefings for community councils, local ward member and local groups (community-based, micro-businesses etc) will be part of an ongoing programme of engagement.
- Frequent publication of newsletters and bulletins using the over 250 contact mailing list and further development of this list
- LAG members feeding back through their networks
- Regular reporting the LAG itself and updates posted via website and social media
- Annual reports including information on updates to the LDS and actions implemented during the preceding year
- Feedback at national and regional meetings of LAGs including events arranged through the Wales Rural Network.

Mainstreaming by communities and businesses

The primary tool for mainstreaming is adoption of newly piloted methods by local businesses and communities. The best legacy of any support programme is its success meaning it 'works itself out of a job'. The 'animation' of an area, even the relatively small rural wards and populations is a big task compared to the resources available. Effective networking and building of relationships and cooperative approaches to finding solutions and piloting approaches to rural economic development are the core aim of the programme. Adoption of the approaches is the best mean of mainstreaming. In some cases additional larger scale funding may need to be sought to roll out a proposal on a wider basis, perhaps with cooperation funding, or by accessing other funds such as the other European Structural and Investment Funds. Implementation of actions through groups formed through

LEADER processes and existing umbrella organisations e.g. Tourism Swansea Bay will be an important means of achieving this.

New approaches to service delivery

Public sector mainstreaming could be more difficult to achieve in view of shrinking resources. However, new approaches to service delivery that could involve community adoption of basic services, as well as testing approaches for local 'hubs' could result in entirely new ways of working that result in public sector cost savings and more active buy-in from local communities to delivering the services they require at local level.

Opportunities for mainstreaming and dissemination will be actively explored and discussed throughout the programme.

SECTION 10 – DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

I am acting with the authority of the Local Action Group and certify to the best of my knowledge and belief the information provided in this Local Development Strategy application and supporting documentation are true and correct and the application for financial assistance is for the minimum required to enable the project to proceed.

I undertake to notify the Welsh Government in advance of carrying out any changes to the nature of this project.

I also confirm that I am not aware of any reason why the project may not proceed and that the commitments and activities can be achieved within the timescales indicated.

Local Action Group (LAG) Representative

Signed:	
Name:	
Chair/Deputy Chair LAG:	
Date:	

Administrative Body Representative

Signed:	
Name:	
Position in Administrative Body:	
Date:	

A signed hard copy of the Local Development Strategy must be received at the address below no later than 30 September 2014

Scheme Management Unit, Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr,
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. SY23 3UR

Please submit an electronic copy to: LEADER2014-2020@wales.gsi.gov.uk