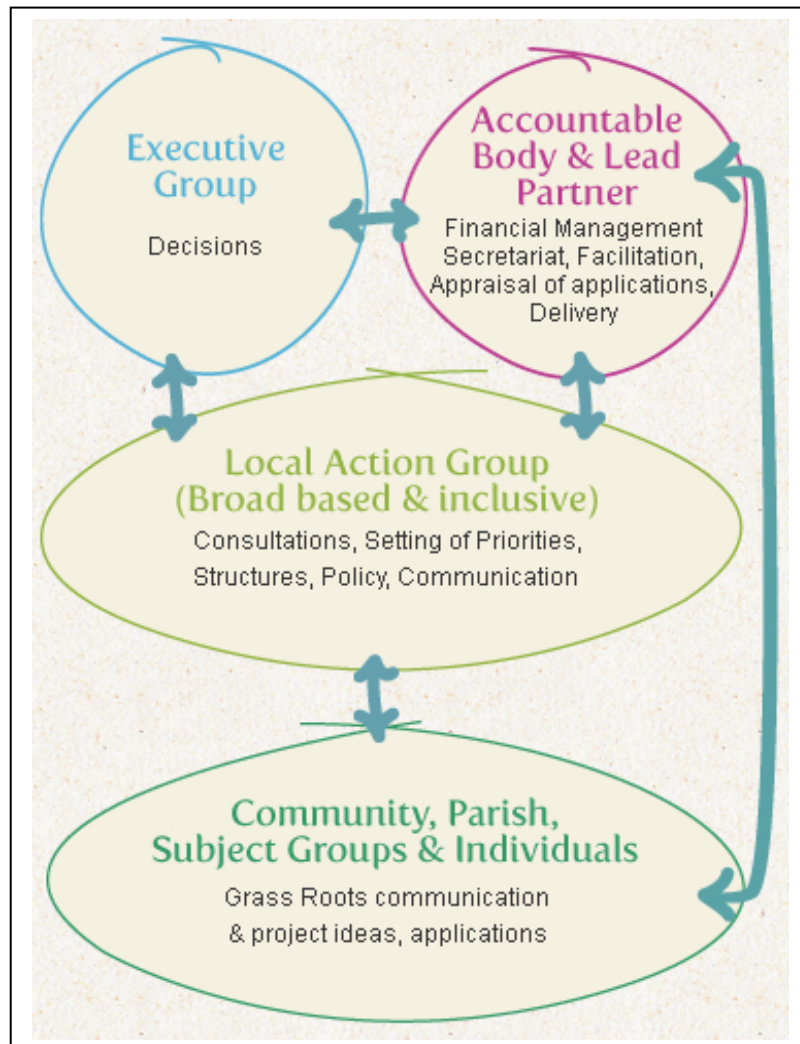


NORTH YORK MOORS, COAST AND HILLS LEADER

The Executive Group have met 8 times so far this year to ensure establishment of effective business processes; an application system and associated documentation; and to take part in a series of training events to improve knowledge, skills and abilities. It has also made important decisions on applications for funding.

The recent 3rd meeting of the Local Action Group (LAG) on 13th October proved very successful and gave feedback on delivery progress from the Executive Group, an update on applications received / approved and provided additional policy steer for the programme.



Communications strategy

Pursuit of the Programme communications strategy to date has involved:

- Delivery of LEADER communications training to the Executive and network of Local Action Group members
- Training front line officers in partner organisations to communicate LEADER priorities and support potential applicants
- Design, commissioning and population of a new website (www.moorscoastandhills.org.uk)
- Presentations to farmers, voluntary sector fora, parish councils and area committees
- Design and publication of a range of printed marketing material
- Production of a monthly email news bulletin
- Involvement in funding advice networks and events directed at local groups
- A series of Press & PR activities to increase awareness, highlight programme priorities and celebrate successfully approved projects

As a result of this activity the Programme has generated c. 90 Project Idea Forms so far.

Applications

Programme staff have undertaken more than 80 individual project development meetings in addition to advice given over the phone and by email. This has resulted in 34 full applications to the LEADER Programme to date, with another 15 nearing final submission.

This activity has enabled the NYMCH LEADER Programme to allocate all of its financial resources for the year 09/10 and make commitments to spend in future years. Despite starting late and with no prior LEADER programme in the area to feed early projects into the system, the NYMCH programme is forecast to achieve its targets for this year 4 months ahead of schedule. It is also possible that the Programme will draw in additional resources from other parts of the Rural Development Programme for England where they have under-spent.

Examples of supported projects to date include:

- Cleveland Ironstone Mining Museum - To protect the remains of the existing Sirocco Fan (part of the mines ventilation system) and bring into use an underused space for a programme of activities, exhibitions and lectures.
- Hovingham Village Hall and Community Project - To extend and improve facilities and activities available to the community including the creation of improved youth facilities, a local producers market and a series of taster events. Also to establish new activities such as cooking classes, Pilates, regular coffee mornings and computer courses.
- Community Planning in East Cleveland - To promote Community-Led Planning and enable communities in East Cleveland to develop a community plan for their village.
- Lythe Village Hall - Renovation works in order to provide additional services for the community including the provision of a weekly drop-in centre, a lunch club, regular local produce and craft fair, a photographic exhibition, history research project and the mapping of circular walks in the area.
- Training Loftus and East Cleveland - To address identified skills gaps and provide a wide range of training opportunities to individuals in and around Loftus. In addition, the project will provide a base for information, advice and support for voluntary sector organisations.
- Husthwaite Community Orchard - Range of activities around the fruit-growing heritage of the village including planting, pruning, harvesting and processing fruit. Includes interpretation of local history and involves the local school, social housing tenants, the village hall, local history society and general residents.
- Inspire-Ed - Provision of opportunity for young people throughout Ryedale to access and be involved in theatre/performing arts.
- Thirlby Recreation Field – Drainage to field to improve access, provide storage/changing facilities.
- North York Moors Railway – Bridge 30 and associated community engagement activities to develop stronger marketing propositions, offer work placements for young people and develop joint exhibitions, publicity and interpretation zones.
- Mulgrave Community Research Project – To establish and support new local history groups, a programme of training and events with a wide range of community members, strengthening links with existing local history groups and development of stronger partnerships with local museums.

Small-Scale Enhancement Project

This is a recent application that has had significant development work from the LEADER Programme Manager, Executive Group and NPA. The Executive Group have 'commissioned' the umbrella project to be delivered on behalf of the LEADER Programme by the NPA. The need for the project was established during the consultation stages of the LEADER application process and feedback to the Programme Team since opening in April this year. This identified

strong demand for small-scale village environment activities with a value below £5,000 (the minimum threshold for an individual LEADER application).

The original proposal was for a project covering the whole of the LEADER area, providing financial assistance and facilitation to small-scale projects in order to achieve a large number of small but important village enhancements. Due to numerous complications relating to EU rules around end-beneficiary status, ultra vires expenditure and legal responsibility for completed works, it is only possible for the National Park Authority to deliver this project within the National Park area. It is however hoped that the model established in this application will enable other local partners / authorities to submit applications that cover the rest of the LEADER area.

The project is intended to run until December 2013 and will support a part-time project officer (3 dpw) who will be responsible for delivering projects. It is expected that the project officer will also assist communities in developing proposal for village enhancement schemes that exceed £5,000 in value and which will form LEADER applications in their own right.

Parish / Community Caretakers Scheme

Since it opened in April of this year the LEADER Programme has received a number of enquiries expressing interest in applications to LEADER for parish / community caretaker type projects (mentioned on page 66 of the LDS). Parish / community caretakers are often self-employed individuals contracted to deliver a range of services determined by the local community within a defined parish boundary. Tasks often involve:

- Maintaining and cleaning areas identified by the community including verges, car parks, footpaths, signs and areas of open space
- Cutting back vegetation, dealing with fallen trees
- Ensuring local memorials and historic features are well-maintained (though not carrying out major repair works)
- Clearance of snow and gritting of footpaths
- Providing information and advice to visitors
- Feeding back information gained from contact with local people and visitors
- Helping out with community projects

It was agreed by the Executive Group that a scheme be established to make available resources for such projects and this was launched on 7th October, with a very successful information event held on 23rd September.

The scheme offers a minimum grant level of £2,000 for parish / community caretaker projects over the three years, with a maximum of £4,500 in the first year. It is based on a finite pot for parish / community caretaker projects, set aside by the Executive for each year to the end of 2013. There will be two rounds of applications:

- Round 1 = approx. 15 projects approved in Dec 2009; starting April 2010 ending March 2013 (36 months)
- Round 2 = approx. 10 projects approved in Oct 2010; starting Feb 2011 ending Dec 2013 (35 months)

Intervention rates are set at 75% for the first 12 months of a project, 50% for the next 12 months, and 25% for the final 12 months (11 months if Round 2 projects). Parishes need to find the additional funding required.

The main aim is to facilitate new parish caretaker projects and proactively move them towards sustainability. This will be achieved through enabling demonstration of benefit to the community before requiring parishes to increase their precept to cover the costs of continuation.