

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE			
PORTFOLIO AREA: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY			
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Title: CUMBRIA RURAL ACTION ZONE – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Report of: HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Report reference: EDU.05/02

Summary:

This report outlines progress with the Cumbria Rural Action Zone and introduces a draft 'Next Steps' document for consultation. The Council is being asked to endorse the document in principle and to make any appropriate comments prior to its consideration at the Cumbria Strategic Partnership on 23 April and also to continue to engage with partners on working towards implementation. The report was presented to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 April and the Committee's views are attached.

Recommendations:

1. Members consider the consultation document and the comments of Community Overview and Scrutiny .
2. Members respond to Cumbria County Council on the basis of the comments set out in this report and any additional comments they may wish to make.

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EDU.05/02**1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS**

1. In October 2001, the Cumbria FMD Taskforce published its Rural Action Zone 'First Steps' Strategy. This was intended as;

- A vision for regeneration of the economy, communities and environment of rural Cumbria, post FMD
- An indicative set of proposals setting out the scale and nature of intervention required to undertake this regeneration
- A bidding document for local, regional and national agencies able to contribute to Cumbria's rural recovery.

1. A Rural Recovery Plan for the North West region was also published as a response to the impact of FMD. Both documents have been previously been reported to the Council.

2. THE 'NEXT STEPS' DOCUMENT

1. Work has now been done to integrate the vision and objectives of the two documents. The aim was to ensure synergy and to harness the increased resources, channelled through the North West Development Agency, in recognition of FMD's impact on the county. However the overall vision and objectives remain. The first draft of the Next Steps Strategy and 5 year Action Plan was published on 27 March and is attached. It takes the Rural Action Zone a stage further. It is intended as a draft for consultation to:

- Refine proposals – subject them to reality check
- Ensure consistency and links with regional strategies
- Define selection criteria for projects seeking support through the RAZ
- Set out a proposal for a rural regeneration company to deliver on RAZ

1. . The objective now is to seek widespread endorsement of the Next Steps document as a strategic approach. The proposals will be taken through the Cumbria Strategic Partnership on 23rd April. Carlisle City Council, as a key partner agency, is being asked to comment and to endorse the document in principle.

2. Work is also under way to develop a first year delivery plan of projects to

enable funding to come on stream as quickly as possible. The Council and the Carlisle and Eden Strategic Partnership have been submitting existing project ideas to the various theme groups and work on project development will continue. It is expected that work on the Delivery Plan will be completed by the end of April and will be the subject of separate consultation with partners.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSALS

1. The timescale for consultation is extremely short. This is mainly due to the need for a delivery plan for the first year to be in place to enable funds to be released by the NWDA. The NWDA must agree the overall approach before it can agree to support individual projects. The Next Steps document sets the context for the delivery plan and for the priority given to projects within the various themes.
2. However, the vision and broad objectives remain as set out in the earlier 'First Steps' document. No commitment is made to specific projects at this stage. The document therefore serves to restate the original case as signed up to by partners and to spell out the types of project areas that would be supported, together with a mechanism for delivery. It is an attempt to match up the priorities and funding allocations of the NWDA towards rural recovery and regeneration with the aspirations of the original RAZ proposal and with local priorities. Figure 5.1 on page 19 shows the matrix of objectives from the RAZ and the NWDA plan, whilst tables 5.1 to 5.8 from page 20 indicate the potential fit between the priorities.
3. Broad figures are given on pages 29, 30 and 31 for costs, partner funding, outputs and impacts. It is important to note that the sums include commitments already made through other programmes such as LEADER the Countryside Agency's Market towns Initiative and Vital Villages scheme. Table 6.2 illustrates this point. Of the total £245m for the programme, £67m is projected to come from the NWDA. Some partners have already commented that some of the output figures, particularly those relating to jobs to be created, are on the high side and may not be achievable. It is important that the figures can be substantiated and this will continue to be discussed within the steering group.
4. The themes and the potential projects within them have been discussed by partner agencies. The agencies have joined relevant theme groups and contributed to the development of project ideas and priorities. Some concern has been expressed by partners that elements of the original priorities might have been lost in the attempt to mirror the NWDA priorities. This affects the social and environmental elements of the programme. In particular, there was felt to be insufficient weight given to maintaining and enhancing landscape quality.
5. As regards the proposals for delivery and in particular the setting up of a Rural Regeneration Company, there has already been some debate in other forums. For example, the Cumbria FMD Task Force received a presentation on 25 March. It was also raised at the Cumbria LGA on 15 March. Earlier, it

was suggested by consultants during a series of consultation meetings hosted by the County Council to discuss the RAZ and attended by a small number of invited agencies.

6. The document suggests that the capacity to address the emerging rural development agenda and the delivery of RAZ together with the necessary strategic impetus is beyond what is currently available in the sub region. The NWDA has indicated that it intends to channel its funding through one, Cumbria wide agency and that this should have an independent status. It is therefore proposed to achieve this through a Rural Regeneration Company and a suggested model is given on page 38. Clearly there is much discussion yet to be had on the structure, method of operation and staffing of the company, and particularly the mechanisms to engage partners and local communities to ensure that representation is appropriate and adequate.
7. It is proposed that the Company would be responsible for appraising projects and agreeing funding and to this end a set of eligibility criteria and appraisal and monitoring processes are set out on pages 39 – 43. Several agencies have commented that the Company should be able to act as a one stop shop for match funding; so that a project proposer can submit a costed idea and the Company would be able to put a package of funds together from various sources. Indeed the suggestion on page 40, bullet point 4, that projects should demonstrate that all match funding be in place before a project is submitted for approval is felt by many to be unworkable.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR CARLISLE

1. The proposals provide a mechanism for bringing NWDA funding to rural Carlisle and to assist the integration with other funding programmes targeted to the area. The interpretation of 'rural' is relatively broad, suggesting that as long as a project can demonstrate a tangible benefit to the rural area it may still benefit, or be located in, an urban area...This does mean that projects with a totally urban focus would not be supported and therefore a large numbers of people within Carlisle's communities will not benefit. The funds within the RAZ are for rural areas so the inclusion of urban Carlisle within the programme is probably not an option. There are separate (albeit limited) potential funding streams within the NWDA for urban Carlisle and this issue would be better debated elsewhere, including through the Regeneration Best Value Review process.
2. The proposals for a Rural Regeneration Company are being strongly supported by the County Council and NWDA. Continuation with present structures is not considered to be an option. The City Council will have the best opportunity to achieve funding and project delivery within Carlisle if it secures an adequate mechanism for representation on the Company. One route might be through the Carlisle and Eden Local Strategic Partnership and/or through discussion with local authorities involved in the M6 Corridor Partnership. In any event the Council should press for LSPs to be recognised within the Cumbria partnership structure.
3. The Council also needs to maintain a presence on the Steering Group and

on the various relevant theme groups. It must work closely with partners to continue to shape the strategy and to secure support for local projects. In some key areas, particularly tourism, there is a funding gap and it is in Carlisle's interest that this gap be filled, through lobbying and through the securing of funds from alternative sources by the Company.

4. Elsewhere on this agenda, the Executive will receive a report on the Carlisle Rural Strategy. 'Next Steps' echoes many of the themes and actions in the Carlisle Strategy. There is potential to draw down funds to implement elements of the Carlisle Strategy from the NWDA in line with the objectives of 'Next Steps'. Indeed the existence of a Carlisle Strategy helps to strengthen the case for NWDA support. Further thought will need to be given to the way in which those operating locally to implement the Carlisle Strategy can link in with the partnership structures around the proposed Rural Regeneration Company.

5. CONSULTATION

1. The Council is one of a number of consultees from the public, private and voluntary sector. There has not been any additional consultation carried out by the Council on the document.

6. STAFFING/RESOURCES

1. Officers are already contributing to the work on the RAZ by attending theme groups and steering group meetings and by developing potential projects. The report suggests that organisations may wish to second staff to the proposed Company and this would be a matter for future consideration once more details of the proposed staffing structure are known.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members consider the consultation document and the comments of Community Overview and Scrutiny .
2. Members respond to Cumbria County Council on the basis of the comments set out in this report and any additional comments they may wish to make.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To ensure that the Council is able to comment on the Consultation document by the required deadline.

Cumbria Rural Action Zone 'Next Steps' Strategy

Consultation Draft

27 March 2002

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1 Forward

2 Introduction

2.1 Overview

This document outlines the 'Next Steps' towards the implementation of the Cumbria Rural Action Zone (RAZ) proposals that emerged from the considered response of local stakeholders to the devastation caused by the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) epidemic during 2001.

Established at an early point in the crisis, the Cumbria FMD Task Force brought together all the key stakeholders in the county and set about (through the Regeneration Sub-Group) developing a collective voice and coordinated response to the crisis. This took the form of a medium to long-term strategy for recovery seeking to generate new sustainable relationships between the local economy, environment and community. The result of this activity was a set of proposals to establish the RAZ.

Outlined in October 2001 publication of 'First Steps: A proposal for a Cumbria Rural Action Zone', the proposals contained a series of objectives designed to guide development of the RAZ, namely that actions to be pursued should:

- ensure that communities are better able to respond to and participate in regeneration opportunities;
- maximise existing resource use to develop a high quality environment stimulating biodiversity, woodland and forest resources;
- contribute to the national recovery of a farming industry which provides a decent standard of living, good quality and affordable food and an improved environment;
- enable an agricultural support industry which retains wealth locally, promotes bio-security and leads to high quality Cumbrian produce;
- facilitate stronger branding for Cumbria, the place and its produce;
- regenerate a robust high quality tourism sector which helps to sustain the link between tourism and the landscape;
- develop infrastructure which meets the needs of today's businesses, visitors and residents; and
- develop skills through learning opportunities which meet the needs of future generations.

These principles remain central to the development of this 'Next Steps' document which is designed to harness the vision of the 'whole-system' thinking outlined in the original set of proposals and which received recognition and support in both the Haskins report and subsequent Government response.

The fact that the FMD epidemic has finally subsided does not detract, in any way, from the original ambition of the RAZ or the need to address some of the fundamental weaknesses that combine to constrain the renewal and regeneration capacity of rural Cumbria. Since the onset of FMD, however, rural development issues have been accorded significant attention as well as increased scrutiny.

One notable outcome of this process has been the emergence of 'Rural Renaissance'¹ the Action Plan sponsored by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) on behalf of all rural partners in the Region. The Plan provides a framework within which coherent and integrated sub-regional activity can contribute to rural recovery in the wider region. Due attention is paid in the 'Next Steps' proposals to ensure that progression of the RAZ is consistent with the structures outlined in the regional plan and to demonstrate the intent and capacity of local partners to contribute to the spirit of communal and community renewal that has been engendered throughout the rural economy in the wake of FMD.

2.2 Objectives and Approach

The primary objective of the strategy document is to act as a platform from which partners can operate to attain the ambition of the original set of proposals within the context of a robust delivery structure that is not only consistent with the wider rural regeneration framework but which promotes enhanced integration and coordination with existing regeneration programmes in the county.

Like the 'First-Steps' document, 'Next Steps' is the outcome of a detailed consultation process consisting of consultation meetings, written submissions and an open all-day event². Development of the Plan has also been guided through a steering group tasked to oversee the evolution of proposals on behalf of the wider community of interest.

In much the same way as the RAZ concept was the product of partner and community cooperation, every element of the implementation proposals have been debated within the consultation process. This has not only included actions and activities but has also included detailed discussion on the nature of the delivery vehicle that is most likely to secure the ambition of the RAZ. The resulting plan is a true reflection of partner and community perspectives.

2.3 Rural Policy Context

The context of rural development has been subject to significant recent policy interventions. The current rural policy framework at national level is enshrined within the 2000-2006 England Rural Development Plan (ERDP), supplemented by the proposals contained within the 2000 Rural White Paper (RWP). Other structures of relevance include the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Sustainability Plan³, the England Forestry Strategy, the English Tourism Council Recovery Plan for Rural Tourism along with recent reports/strategies from the Countryside Agency⁴, the Hills Task Force⁵, the Better Regulation Task Force⁶, the Association of National Park Authorities⁷, and recent finding from the National Task Force and the Policy Commission on Farming and Food.

¹ Previously known as the 'Regional Rural Recovery Plan' (RRRP).

² Details of consultation activities and consultees is provided in Appendix X.

³ The SSSI PSA target that 95% of SSSIs should be in a favourable condition by 2010 will be an additional important contributor to policy given the scale of environmental designations in the North West.

⁴ Strategy for Sustainable Land Management, June 2001

⁵ Report of the Task Force for the Hills, March 2001.

⁶ Environmental Regulations and Farmers, November 2000.

At regional level, the relevant policy context includes the Rural Renaissance action plan alongside the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Food Strategy, Regional Renewable Energy Strategy and Regional Planning Guidance. More locally the Cumbria RDP, a variety of SRB programmes, the Market Towns initiative and the EDZ all provide the developing policy context for rural recovery in the county.

2.4 Structure of the Strategy Document

The remainder of the strategy continues as follows:

- section 3 provides an overview of the Cumbria economy and sets the context for the strategy;
- section 4 reviews the policy framework within which 'Next Steps' is to operate;
- section 5 outlines a vision, strategic objectives and a series of actions to support partner interventions;
- section 6 outlines envisaged costs, funding and impacts;
- section 7 outlines the envisaged implementation arrangements; and
- section 8 details the envisaged forward strategy;

⁷ National Parks as Test-beds for Rural Revival, June 2001.

3 The Cumbria Development Context

3.1 Introduction

The 'first steps' document was based on an assessment of FMD related consequences on the rural economy in the county. The 'Next Steps' document recognizes the wider contextual and regeneration framework within which the RAZ concept will operate and re-examines the development requirements of the county to ensure that interventions are appropriate to needs. This section outlines the evidence upon which the proposed strategy actions will be constructed.

3.2 The Nature of the Cumbrian Rural Economy

Rural areas play a major role in sustaining the economic, social and environmental fabric of large part of the Cumbria economy. They contain a large proportion of the county population, maintain a wide spectrum of communities where people live and work, provide a base for economic activity and contain landscapes and places of great beauty and environmental value.

The very nature of the qualities that do so much to endear rural Cumbria to so many also, on the other hand, bring with them a number of difficulties in promoting and enhancing the economic base, longer-term wealth generation capacity and sustainability of the rural economy. It is important that the 'Next Steps' process, as it transfers attention beyond immediate FMD related activity to wider rural regeneration matters, is founded on an understanding of the key barriers that conspire to limit and constrain rural development.

3.3 The Development Context

3.3.1 Demographics

- Cumbria supports a population of some 492,000 persons, 7.1% of the total population in the North West. The county has
 - experienced prolonged population growth over the past 20 years, primarily in the east rather than the west which has experienced particularly strong decline related to industrial restructuring/job loss and has encouraged out-migration of higher skilled and young workers;
 - an above average and growing retired population and a below average working age population with notable differentials in South Lakeland, Eden and Allerdale and related implications for dependency and housing markets;
 - a low overall population density with marked variations across districts giving rise to problems such as the travel/time costs of accessing employment and services; the cost of providing and maintaining infrastructure; the cost and profitability of providing public transport and a range of social problems related to isolation and social exclusion.

3.3.2 GDP

- Estimates of county GDP for 1998⁸ indicate a Cumbria figure of £5.6bn, 8% of the regional total,
 - 45% of county GDP is attributed to West Cumbria and 55% to East Cumbria;
 - GDP per head in the county is 9% lower than that for the UK with values of 16% lower and 5% lower for West and East Cumbria respectively;
 - Cumbria GDP has declined by 10% from 1993 when county GDP was marginally higher than the UK average.

3.3.3 Business Base

- The business base of the county is narrow relative to other parts of the region,
 - agriculture accounts for between 24% and 42% of all district level business activity except for Barrow-in-Furness where it represents just 5%;
 - concentration of activity in agriculture is four times higher than in the wider region, 60% of that in production and 79% of that in other activities.
 - rural hinterland⁹ activity is more skewed with agriculture accounting for between 32% and 49% of all business activity apart for Barrow-in-Furness where it represents 11%.

3.3.4 Labour Market Activity

- County level activity levels are better than the North West but lower than GB.
 - activity rates vary from 72% in Barrow to 84% in Carlisle;
 - some evidence exists of labour market withdrawal from areas of high unemployment.

3.3.5 Employment

- The total employment base of Cumbria (excluding self-employment) lies in the region of 190,000 persons with heavy reliance on manufacturing, rather than high value added services:
 - rural areas are generally more dependent on tourism and agriculture, sectors where self-employment, micro businesses and part-time status account for a relatively large proportion of employment;
 - the share of agricultural employment is higher than the region in all districts except Barrow-in-Furness; and

⁸ Residence based.

⁹ The concept of rural hinterlands was employed as part of the NWDA resource allocation model for the RRRP and refers to ward level aggregation into rural geographies on the basis of population density.

- Some 13% of the 16+ population is self-employed, significantly higher than the regional and national averages and primarily the result of agriculture and tourism related activities with their reliance on part-time, seasonal work.

3.3.6 Unemployment

- seasonally adjusted claimant unemployment in the county, at X 2002, stands at X%% in contrast to x% for the region and x% for the UK.
 - June 2001 claimant count unemployment rates for districts stand at

3.3.7 Earnings

- average weekly earnings in the county are below the national average – average gross weekly earnings for mid 2000 are reported at £371.10 in contrast to £410.60 for GB;
- average weekly earnings are highest in Copeland (£511.60), followed by Barrow-in-Furness (£360.90), South Lakeland (£355.80), Allerdale (£345.20), Carlisle (342.20) and Eden (£306.20)

3.3.8 Education, Qualifications and Skills

- Cumbria has a relatively strong school performance with high Key Stage 2, GCSE results and with above average progression onto further education but with significant clusters of underperformance in West Cumbria and Carlisle.
- the intermediate skills base is strong, there is relatively high attainment of further education qualifications and there are fewer people with no qualifications than in the regional/national as a whole.
- basic skills levels are poor, there exists a significant shortfall in the National Learning Targets for England, progression to higher education is low and there exists a significant underperformance in terms of higher level qualifications;.

3.3.9 Land and Premises

- there is a considerable over-supply of land for industrial and business development allocated in Local Plans, although the amount of land considered *unconstrained* and *available* for development represents a much smaller proportion of the total;
- some of the sites considered to be unconstrained for the purposes of the County Council's land supply register are unserviced or lack a willing vendor though the situation varies from district to district;
- The *quality* of the available land and premises is variable with old inflexible premises limiting attractiveness to potential occupiers in some areas while more modern, purpose built workspace is hard to let as a result of the quoted rents elsewhere.

3.3.10 Land Use, Quality and Designation

- agriculture accounts for 88% of land-use in the county but there is a smaller proportion of grade 1 and 2 quality land than all other parts of the region;
- Cumbria contains by far the highest proportion of grade 5 land (45% of the agricultural total in the county) in the North West;
- A significant proportion of the county is designated as a Less Favoured Area (LFA).

3.4 FMD Impact and Rural Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities

The impact of FMD on the rural economy of the region has been evaluated in a series of studies undertaken by Pion Economics¹⁰ and the CEIP. The evaluations take account of the likely loss of farming, agricultural and tourist incomes, supply-chain expenditures and subsequent multiplier effects on local economies within the region. Both studies are broadly consistent in estimating GVA losses in Cumbria, for 2001, of the order of 4%.

The independent December 2001 Economic Assessment¹¹ expresses concern that such losses might be sufficient to result in a longer-term loss of competitiveness and business dynamic in the county. The recent Rural Cumbria EDZ proposal defined a compact and authoritative assessment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of rural Cumbria.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good motorway communications – M6 and West Coast Railway • Strong sense of community identity • Strong partnership arrangements • Natural and cultural environment, and its associated industries • New lifestyle / IT business development • Image and brand of Cumbria – The Lake District • Good gateways from the ports of Workington, Whitehaven, Barrow, Silloth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topography – in terms of remoteness of communities and distance from markets • Decline in manufacturing and in agriculture and related industries • Low levels of employment in growth sectors • Low levels of integration with urban communities • High levels of out migration of young people • Impact of FMD on tourism • Road, rail and ICT communications away from the M6 and West Coast Main Line • Quality and availability of new and convertible employment sites and buildings in rural Cumbria
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAZ – consideration of future options for regenerating and renewing Cumbria's rural economy • ICT Infrastructure development – connecting communities and creating opportunities for knowledge employment • Strong natural, cultural and industrial heritage not exploited outside traditional tourism areas • Market Towns Initiative presents opportunity to build on the role of such towns in Cumbria as rural service centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing employment opportunities for young people • Decline in manufacturing and in agriculture and related industries • Lack of affordable housing • Over reliance of Lake District for tourist attractions • Implications of FMD on footpaths, business survival, branding and landscape and agriculture

¹⁰ Economic Impact of FMD in the North West of England, Pion Economics, May 2001; Economic Impact of FMD in the North West of England – Update, August 2001. Economic Impact of FMD in the North West of England – Update, February 2002.

¹¹ DTZ Pieda Consulting.

4 The 'Next Steps' Policy Context

4.1 Introduction

'Next Steps' has been developed within the context of a set of existing and emerging policy initiatives and strategies. These provide an important backdrop to the Plan and the desire that it should maintain a high degree of consistency, coherence and integration with the wider policy framework.

4.2 The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

One of the most significant determinants of current rural policy in the county is the CAP. Proposals for EU enlargement and expectations of future reform have encouraged a series of reforms resulting in commodity price cuts across a wide range of agricultural sectors and introduction of the Rural Development Regulation (RDR), the second 'pillar' of CAP¹². Further consideration of the CAP is due in the course of the next two years and can be expected to have a major influence on the delivery of the RAZ and its associated exit strategy once reforms have been defined and established.

4.3 National Policy Initiatives

4.3.1 *Our Countryside: The Rural White Paper (RWP)*

The RWP sets out a vision for rural areas which incorporates a living countryside with thriving rural communities and access to high quality public services; a working countryside with a diverse economy giving high and stable levels of employment; a protected countryside in which the environment is sustained and enhanced and which all can enjoy; and a vibrant countryside which can shape its own future. Although published in the relatively recent past, the RWP is already coming to play a major role in the way in which rural policy is designed and considered. Implementation of RAZ requires that due consideration be given to the principles that underlie the paper.

4.3.2 *The England Rural Development Plan (ERDP)*

The ERDP is designed to enable an integrated approach to support for rural development using both Community and national instruments. Within the context of the Programme, the Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Organic Farming, Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance and Hill Farm Allowance Schemes are operated on a national basis only. The Countryside Stewardship, Farm Woodland Premium, Woodland Grant and Energy Crops schemes have some degree of regional discretion in targeting but operate within a national framework while Processing and Marketing Grants, the Rural Enterprise and the Vocational Training Schemes are directed through Regional Programming Committees. ERDP provides a significant resource to be drawn down to support delivery of the RAZ

¹² The first pillar broadly accounts for 90% of CAP budget costs (27% for market price support and 63% for direct payments to farmers) leaving the second pillar some 10% of the budget. The RDR introduced provisions for up to 20% of direct compensatory payments to fund agri-environment, afforestation of agricultural land, LFA support and early retirement schemes

strategy. It is therefore imperative to ensure that implementation arrangements are such as to secure the maximum available level of support for the delivery process.

4.3.3 *Other Policy Initiatives*

Other structures of relevance include the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Sustainability Plan¹³ and the England Forestry Strategy along with recent reports/strategies from the Countryside Agency, the Hills Task Force, the Better Regulation Task Force and the Association of National Park Authorities. Each of these organisations and initiatives has a bearing on the RAZ strategy and play a role in shaping the policy proposals,

4.3.4 *Policy Commission on Farming and Food*

In the wake of FMD, the Government established a Policy Commission on Farming and Food to advise on the creation of a sustainable, competitive and diverse farming and food sector that contributes to a thriving and sustainable rural economy, advances environmental, economic, health and animal welfare goals, and is consistent with its aims for CAP reform, enlargement of the EU and increased trade liberalization. The commission reported in January 2002 and provided a series of recommendations based on themes relating to profit, the environment and people. The way in which the latter are taken forward may well help to determine or alter aspects of the delivery plan in due course.

4.4 *Regional Initiatives*

4.4.1 *The North West Regional Economic Strategy*

The regional economic strategy is based on a 20-year vision and contains a set of four related themes with associated objectives and priorities to guide policy action¹⁴, namely Investing in Business and Ideas; Investing in People and Communities; Investing in Infrastructure and Investing in Image and the Environment. As the overarching context for regional development activity within the region, the RES provides an umbrella within which integrated and coordinated regeneration activity can be pursued. Care and consideration has been taken to ensure that RAZ development will be fully consistent with the wider development and regeneration ambitions expressed in the RES.

4.4.2 *Rural Renaissance – The Regional Rural Recovery Plan (RRRP)*

Sponsored by NWDA, on behalf of all rural partners, Rural Renaissance is designed to provide the basis of sustained rural regeneration through eight strategic objectives designed to broaden the economic base of rural areas; renew and strengthen tourism; assist the restructuring of agriculture; enhance primary agriculture; develop skills; develop and promote countryside products; sustain the environmental inheritance and regenerate social and community infrastructure.

¹³ All are referenced in notes 4-7 above.

¹⁴ The RES is supported by a regional HRD Strategy – The Right Angle on Skills - which contains a set of objectives and priorities to guide policy action in increasing employer demand; increasing individual demand; promoting equality of opportunity; and improving the functioning of the labour market.

Delivery of the plan is to be supported through the agreement of partners to align their activities with the eight strategy objectives, the injection of a significant amount of new resource by NWDA and is to involve devolved resource allocation to county-based delivery bodies. Rural Renaissance provides a framework with which the RAZ strategy can nest and jointly secure both local and regional regeneration objectives.

4.4.3 *The North West Food Strategy (RFS)*

The RFS has been conceived with the express purpose of developing the agri-food sector within the region. It proposes nine strategic objectives designed to establish the North West Food Alliance at the heart of agri-food sector and activity within the region; create and reinforce a positive image of the region, its producers and processors and develop markets for the regions food. Development of capacity, capability and markets for the food industry within the county is of primary importance to the future of the agri-food sector as a whole. The RAZ strategy will seek to ensure that actions support both the RFS and the relevant strategy objective in the RRRP.

4.4.4 *Action for Sustainability*

Northwest England's framework for sustainable development is enshrined in the Action for Sustainability Action Plan¹⁵. Objectives are defined in terms of Live, Protect Save and Grow themes that underpin actions designed to secure a sustainable future for the region. The special nature of the Cumbrian landscape and the community identity that directly results emphasise that the RAZ strategy must place the pursuit of sustainability at the very heart of the action agenda.

4.4.5 *Renewable Energy*

The potential available from renewable energy has been defined via a detailed study funded by a wide range of regional and national partners and which identifies wind power, solar energy and biomass as capable of delivering new jobs, inward investment, rural diversification and fewer greenhouse emissions¹⁶. Where feasible, the RAZ process will seek to ensure that opportunities for renewable energy are identified and given due consideration.

4.4.6 *Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)*

The Draft RPG for the North West¹⁷ is structured around the delivery of sustainable development¹⁸ in terms of three principles - economy in the use of land, enhancing existing capital, quality in the use of land - and six objectives¹⁹: RPG makes specific

¹⁵ NWRA 2000

¹⁶ From Power to Prosperity, Sustainability North West, 2001

¹⁷ People, Places and Prosperity, NWRA, 2000

¹⁸ Defined as social progress which recognises the needs of everyone, effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources and maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

¹⁹ Achieving greater economic competitiveness and growth; securing an urban renaissance in the cities and towns of the North West; sustaining the region's smaller rural and coastal communities; prudent management

reference to support for agriculture (RU4) diversification of the rural economy, (RU5) and support for local services in rural areas (RU6). The 'initial steps' document placed emphasis on all of the aspects outlined within the RPG and development of the strategy will ensure equally robust consideration.

4.5 Sub-Regional Initiatives

4.5.1 *Cumbria Rural Development Programme*

NWDA assumed responsibility for the North West RDP Programme at the outset of its operations²⁰. The current strategic framework for the Cumbria RDP was updated in 2000 to link in with changes that have impacted in the rural area since the onset of the scheme in 1995. Four aims and objectives resulted from the review, namely the delivery of

- a prosperous, modern and diverse business base;
- a protected, valued and enhanced environment;
- learning, skills and knowledge; and
- functioning, well-serviced and balanced communities.

The RDP Programme will wind down in the course of the next 12 to 18 months as the resource made available from NWDA transfers across to the Rural Renaissance strategy process. The Programme will, however, provide a vital bridge for access to resources during the transition period. The RAZ proposals will ensure that lessons learned from the RDP experience, and any best practice thereof, will be accommodated in strategy design and delivery.

4.5.2 *SRB Programmes*

Also administered by NWDA, the SRB programmes address local issues of importance to rural areas or thematic issues on a strategic basis. These include the:

- *Cleator Moor Regeneration* scheme;
- *Maryport Regeneration* scheme;
- *Sustainable Tourism* scheme being run by Cumbria Tourist Board;
- *CREDITS* scheme which is establishing Community Development Centres in rural parts of Cumbria;
- *New Frontiers* scheme which offers careers advice in rural Cumbria; and
- *Distinctly Cumbrian* scheme which is seeking to promote and enhance local food production in Cumbria.

4.5.3 *Market Towns Initiative*

The Market Towns Initiative (initiated in conjunction with the Countryside Agency) gives NWDA the ability to target resources on rural service centres and their hinterlands

of the region's environmental and cultural assets; securing environmental quality; and creating an accessible region.

²⁰ Such spending is concentrated in two designated Rural Priority Areas (RPAs), defined across Cumbria and Lancashire in 1994.

in order to increase the impact of regeneration activity where required. Ten priority towns in Cumbria have been identified and action plans are being developed to allow targeting of resources over the next 3 to 4 years. It is expected that the Agency will continue to work with local partnerships to identify new priority towns, or priorities within towns, in order to make use of proposed new resources and to expand the potential of the initiative.

4.5.4 *Rural Cumbria Economic Development Zone (EDZ)*

The structural economic imbalances in Cumbria have long been recognised by the European Commission and as a basis for Structural Funds investment in the county. This activity was directed through the West Cumbria and Furness Objective 2 Programme and (for rural areas) the Northern Uplands Objective 5b Programme for the 1994-1999 programming period²¹.

In the current programming round (to 2006) approval has recently been secured to progress the concept of the rural EDZ. The Zone will encompass some 44% of the population and 78% of the land area of Cumbria and cover all rural wards, except those outside the RPA area, eligible for Objective 2 assistance. The EDZ contains 4 Objectives:

- assisting the economic repositioning of rural businesses, including their diversification into other areas of economic activity, as well as addition of value to the products of traditional sectors;
- building on the interdependence of the rural economy by increasing the contribution of tourism in the rural economy whilst at the same time enhancing the area's natural heritage;
- stimulating the economy of market towns, develop their role as service centres and enhance their physical appearance; and
- enabling the engagement of rural communities with the regeneration process, stimulating economic transition and the uptake of opportunity for employment.

Table 4.1 summarises the sub-regional initiatives and programmes that are likely to provide the local context for RAZ activities and actions over the lifetime of the strategy.

²¹ Two LEADER II programmes also operated in the area - North Pennines and the Fells and Dales - these aimed at the development of innovative approaches to rural development.

At the end of the current programming period a new Rural Community Initiative LEADER + will be introduced to replace LEADER II. This new programme has been the subject of a bidding process and it is hoped that the three LEADER+ Programme bids that cover Rural Cumbria which are listed in Table 1.12 will be approved by the Government.

Table4.1: Complimentary Sub-Regional Initiatives

CUMBRIA RURAL REGENERATION PROGRAMMES	SUB PROGRAMME	OBJECTIVES	AREA	DURATION
England Rural Development Programme	Agri Environment Schemes	Provides targeted assistance through ESA's, Countryside Stewardship and Hill Farm Allowance Scheme to conserve & improve environment	All of Cumbria	2000 - 2006
	Rural Enterprise Scheme	Provides targeted assistance to projects which support the diversification of the rural economy	All of Cumbria	2000 - 2006
	Vocational Training Scheme	Provides assistance for improving occupational skills and competence of farmers	All of Cumbria	2000 - 2006
Forestry Commission	Woodland Grant Scheme	Provides funding for management and creation of woodlands	All Cumbria	2000 - 2006
North West Objective 2 Programme	Priority 1: Business Support	Provides funding to stimulate creation of new business start ups and expansion of existing co	Most of Cumbria, but excludes Carlisle, Penrith and Kendal	2000 - 2006 but spend until 2008
	Priority 1: Rural Workspace	Provides funding for new build and conversions for rural workspace projects	Most of Cumbria, but excludes, Carlisle, Penrith and Kendal	2000 - 2006 but spend until 2008
	Priority 3 :Rural Cumbria EDZ	Provides funding for capital projects which will help create new jobs in rural Cumbria	Most of Rural Cumbria, but excludes Lower Eden valley	2000 - 2006 but spend until 2008
LEADER +	Cumbria Fells and Dales	Provides funding for small scale projects which address rural development issues	Central and Eastern Fells inc Keswick, Shap, Sedbergh	2002 - 2006 but spend until 2008
	Solway Plains	Provides funding for small scale projects which address rural development issues	Solway Plain including Aspatria, Silloth and Wigton	2002 - 2006 but spend until 2008
	North Pennines	Provides funding for small scale projects which address rural development issues	North Pennines including Alston, Brampton, Longtown	2002 -2006 but spend until 2008
North West Development Agency	SRB: Distinctly Cumbrian	It aims to develop local supply chains and promote brands and direct sales opportunities	The whole of the Cumbria Rural Priority Area	2002 - 2007
	Market Towns Initiative	It aims to promote and develop the role of small market towns to inject vitality to rural areas	Selected Market towns such as Cockermouth, Keswick etc	2002 -2007
	Cumbria Rural Development Programme	Annual Funding programme for small scale rural development projects	The whole of the Cumbria Rural Priority Area	2001 -2006
	Rural Workspace Programme	Rural Workspace and Redundant Building Grants	The whole of the Cumbria Rural Priority Area	2001-2006
Countryside Agency	One Stop Health Care Centres	Proposed in the Rural White Paper	The whole of rural Cumbria	2002 - 2008
	Rural Post Offices	Proposed in the Rural White Paper	The whole of Rural Cumbria	2002 - 2008
	Rural Transport Projects	Proposed in the Rural White Paper	The whole of rural Cumbria	2002- 2008
	Vital Villages	Proposed in the Rural White Paper	The whole of rural Cumbria	2002-2008

5 The 'Next Steps' Strategy

5.1 Introduction

This section outlines the 'Next Steps' Rural Action Zone Strategy in the light of the preceding analysis, the assessment of the rural economy in the county, the existing/developing policy framework and the broad, ambitious framework established in the 'Initial Steps' document. The Strategy provides the proposed framework for promoting the sustainable regeneration of the rural economy in Cumbria and is designed in the form of a vision supported by agreed themes and objectives designed to direct the effort of delivery agents/partners through specific interventions/projects.

5.2 Vision

The vision set out as part of the 'Next Steps' process remains precisely the same as that established at the outset of RAZ deliberations, namely:

To enable the rebuilding and development of a dynamic rural economy for Cumbria, which is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable

5.3 Strategic Aims, 'Next Steps' and Rural Renaissance

In order to achieve the vision, a number of strategic aims have been identified. These also remain loyal to the initial ambition of the 'First Steps' proposals and include:

- developing a diverse, dynamic, competitive rural economy for Cumbria, which is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable;
- improving the environmental quality of Cumbrian land and waters and for such quality to be recognised both nationally and internationally;
- increasing opportunities for all who visit Cumbria to get enjoyment from the countryside, together with its related towns and villages, through improved access and facilities;
- creating integrated, responsive and appropriate services for the communities of rural Cumbria through working together; and
- sustaining the cultural landscapes of Cumbria which are already recognised both nationally and internationally for their visual and spiritual qualities.

To secure the set of specified aims, the strategy promotes the development of an integrated package of initiatives tailored to the needs of the county as informed by scrutiny of county circumstances. Full details of revised actions, in accordance with the original thematic groupings, are outlined in Appendix X but two significant sets of adjustments have been made in progression to 'Next Steps'.

In the first instance, all of the original thematic groups have been reconvened to take a fresh look at potential interventions and, secondly, thematic activities have been mapped across to the set of eight strategic objectives (SO1 - SO8) used in the NWDA sponsored *Rural Renaissance* proposals.

5.3.1 *SO1: Broadening the Economic Base of Rural Areas*

Rationale: While agriculture and the primary industries provide an important backbone of the rural economy, significantly greater value added and wealth is created by other sectors of the rural economy and it remains the case that rural areas are less diversified than their urban counterparts. In attempting to broaden the economic base of the rural economy, SO1 seeks to enhance inherent wealth generating capacity and employment opportunity, appropriate in scale and nature to local circumstances.

5.3.2 *SO2: Renew & Strengthen Sustainable Recreation and Tourism*

Rationale: It is imperative that the competitive position of regional tourism product be improved, enhanced and broadened to attract an increasing share of this growing market. SO2 is designed to provide a generic framework within which partners can seek to achieve these ambitions while recognizing the interdependence between tourism and landscape and ensuring adherence to sustainability principles.

5.3.3 *SO3: Assisting the Restructuring of Agriculture*

Rationale: With reducing income from traditional farming, many of those wishing to retain involvement in agriculture will find it necessary to generate income from a broader range of activities. SO3 is designed to assist an efficient and effective transition within agriculture, building upon existing structures, to enable improved efficiency, environmentally friendly diversification appropriate to local circumstances and multifunctionality through agricultural business reviews, planning, diversification and training.

5.3.4 *SO4: Enhancing the Competitiveness/Capability of Primary Agriculture*

Rationale: Despite the commercial pressures expected to bear on the agricultural sector over the next decade, large numbers of existing producers are likely to seek continued involvement in primary agriculture. Long-term survival will require a process of continuous efficiency improvement and enhanced competitiveness. SO4 is designed to assist primary producers within the region to adapt to changing circumstances and enhance their capability to compete.

5.3.5 *SO5: Rural Skills Development*

Rationale: Workforce skills are vital to the competitiveness of all businesses. SO5 is designed to ensure that the process of strengthening the primary agriculture base, restructuring and diversification within the rural economy, as well as the broadening of the economic base, is supported by commensurate development of human capital.

5.3.6 *SO6: Development and Promotion of Countryside Products*

Rationale: The development and promotion of local countryside products offers significant potential for producers to establish differentiated brands, develop new and alternative markets and generally add and retain value locally. SO6 is designed to renew and accelerate the potential benefits from such activities by assisting marketing and consumption of local products that sustain the environmental and cultural heritage of the region.

5.3.7 SO7: Sustaining the Rural Environment

Rationale: Rural communities are custodians of an environmental inheritance. Such has become the economic value of that inheritance that it is in the long-term interests of those communities to ensure environmental sustainability. SO7 seeks to promote a range of actions designed to ensure environmental sustainability remains a key feature of all forms of structural change and transition in rural economies.

5.3.8 SO8: Delivering Social and community Regeneration

Rationale: A growing volume of development research and practice emphasises the role of social capital, community relations and very local organisations²² in sustaining rural regeneration policies and programmes. SO8 seeks to support the social infrastructure of rural areas through maintenance of service infrastructure, addressing particular forms of exclusion and invigorating support networks.

5.4 Strategic Objectives and Policy Actions²³

This section reviews the proposed intervention strategy developed in conjunction with partners and mapped into the series of eight *Rural Renaissance* Strategy Objective Areas. Figure 5.1 outlines the mapping process. Coloured ovals indicate where 'Next Steps' thematic activity is expected to play a significant role in contributing to the *Rural Renaissance* objectives. White ovals indicate where such activity is also expected to contribute, but indirectly.

Figure 5.1: Next Steps & Rural Renaissance

	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8
A1 – Empower Communities	○		○			○		○
B1 – Environment & Access		○	○				○	
B2 – Forestry Futures		○	○			○	○	
C1 – Agri/Env 'Fresh Start'				○		○	○	
C2 – Farm Business Regeneration		○	○	○		○	○	
D1 – Ag Support Industry			○	○			○	
D2 – Other Rural Business Support	○							
E1 – Food Brand Cumbria			○			○		
F1/F5 – Tourism/Culture/Creative	○	○	○			○	○	
G2 – Enhanced Transport	○	○					○	○
H1 – Learning for the Future	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

²² EG voluntary sector organisations, churches and congregations

²³ Some proposals may require State Aids clearance by the European Commission.

Table 5.1: SO1 Actions and Partners - Broadening the Base of Rural Areas

RAZ Thematic Categories	D2: Non Agricultural Business Support; F5: Cultural/Creative Industries
Proposed Interventions	<p>Business Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rural business advice and support • support new starts and survival • marketing/promotion • research into product/service deficiencies and target local capacity development • development of rural business support networks working with local associations, Chambers of Trade and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce • inward investment with rural potential <p>Business Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • property and equipment grants to encourage business creation and growth • assistance with loans • equity investment <p>Quality Assurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • product development • participation in quality assurance schemes • develop local kitemarking to relevant standards • encourage businesses with waste minimisation and business environment networks <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of rural workspace (office, workshop, serviced, managed and incubators) • re-use of redundant farm buildings • promote adequate supply of development land for employment purposes <p>Skill Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training programmes for multi-skill the workforce • provision of business management training and up-skilling • local training centre delivering relevant and flexible training courses • target IT training relevant to the needs of businesses <p>IT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage use of computers and support with appropriate IT training • encourage e-commerce and use of market portals • extend broadband technology to facilitate business in rural and remote areas
Innovations Required	<p>D2: Establishment of business start clubs facilitated and supported by mentoring. Sharing of best practises through closer integration of means of delivery.</p> <p>F5: closer/integrated working between funding agencies & flexibility within planning system</p>
Lead Organisation & Partners	<p>D2: C.L.E.A.N. (Cumbria Local Enterprise Agency Network); SBS; Learning and Skills Council; FE & HE Centres; Enterprising Communities/and CDC's; Cumbria Chamber of Commerce; Chambers of Trade/Associations; Bank, Accountants and other professional; LSP's/District Councils; Princes Trust</p> <p>F5: CCC Regional Arts Board; NW Regional Cultural Consortium; NWDA; District Councils and private sector</p>
Links to other SOs	SO2, SO3, SO5, SO6;

Table 5.2: SO2 Actions and Partners –Sustainable Recreation and Tourism

RAZ Thematic Categories	F1: Diversification of the Tourism Product; F2: Tourist Product Enhancement F3: Lakes Plus; F4: Tourism ICT Strategy; F5: Cultural/Creative Industries; G2: Enhanced Transport
Proposed Interventions	<p>Feasibility Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cruise ship market in West Cumbria and Furness; • wildlife and habitat opportunities; • round Cumbria rail-trail; • Solway Peatlands eco-tourism project <p>Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expanding visitor accommodation in developing tourism areas outside LDNP; • expansion of business/ conferencing capacity; • improve standards and regulation of accommodation; <p>Attractions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capitalising on history, culture and environmental heritage; • development of complementary products to existing attractions; • expanding wildlife/countryside-based tourism attractions/visitor facilities • thematic approach to grouping of sites/attractions (eg Solway Peatlands) • develop projects to capitalise on Cumbria's key target market segments; • improve attraction quality in less developed & environmentally appropriate areas; • improved visitor information/interaction & lengthen season; <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrated walking and cycling network; • product development linked to quality integrated transport network; • product development for creative/interpretative sector; • environmental visitor enhancement to conservation and development; • improve access where appropriate; <p>Skill Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accredited training support; • responsible tourism scheme • tourism/creative sector business advice and benchmarking • e-learning/ skills campaigns <p>Marketing/Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeted promotional overseas and UK markets activity; • pilot promotions of underdeveloped tourism products/other thematic campaigns; • strategic planning/ promotion of threatened cultural and heritage activities; • alignment with/contribution to national/regional campaigns • e-marketing for tourism businesses & improve data collection/ strategic planning. <p>ICT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'virtual Cumbria' Destination Management System (DMS) • private Tourist Information Centre virtual network; • industry extranet; • customer relationship management system; • Online purchasing of supplies;
Innovations Required	<p>F2: comprehensive approach legitimising an integrated and joined up approach to regulation that will also prevent oversupply of facilities in appropriate areas.</p> <p>F5: closer/integrated working between funding agencies & flexibility within planning system</p>
Lead Organisation & Partners	<p>F1: CTB, NWDA, Local Authorities</p> <p>F2: CTB, NWDA, SBS, LSC, Local Authorities</p> <p>F3: CTB, Industry sector, Local Authorities, Area Based Partnerships</p> <p>F4: CTB, tourism industry, Local/County Authorities, ETC, LDNP, SBS</p> <p>F5: CCC Regional Arts Board; NW Regional Cultural Consortium; NWDA; District Councils and private sector</p>
Links to other SOs	SO3, SO4, SO5, SO7, SO8

Table 5.3: SO3 Actions and Partners – Assisting the Restructuring of Agriculture

RAZ Thematic Categories	B2:Forestry Futures; C2: Farm Based Business Regeneration D1:Agricultural Support Industry Regeneration;
Proposed Interventions	<p>Forestry Futures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> diversification/exit route for reducing scale/intensity of agricultural operations; advisory service re integrated environmental/economic potential of farms; identify constraints/opportunities for woodland-related recreation/access pilot demonstration for alternative woodland uses for tourism and recreation research feasibility of locating CHP power or wood energy plant; identify existing and potential markets for woodland-related products/branding; <p>Farm Business Diversification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> diversification support for diversification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> woodfuel, biomass; organics farm tourism; light manufacturing; sports; countryside sports food processing/value-added capture/producer groups; building redevelopment/renewal; Renewable energy; <p>Skill Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> diversification training needs assessments; training to support diversification activities; training to support off-farm income generation; IT training training for farmers/landowners re woodland creation and management; <p>Agricultural Support Industry Regeneration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance systems; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> auction marts/abattoirs with code of animal welfare practice, traceability; promote & extend membership of FABBL; farm health plans; nutrient management planning; low nitrogen best fertiliser practice; Infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved bio-security for auction marts/abattoirs; Equipment Suppliers Gold Standard; infrastructure improvements for re-cycling waste and rainwater, energy conservation at the marts; introduction of EID and diversification into tourism.
Innovations Required	D1: Establishment of formal body representative of all the agri services committed to quality products and services, innovation, sharing best practices and collaborative working.
Lead Organisation & Partners	B2: Forestry Commission, Cumbria Woodland Forum C2: FBAS, SBS D1: Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Agri-Service Sector Group) – SBS
Links to other SOs	SO1, SO2, SO5, SO8

Table 5.4: SO4 Actions and Partners – Primary Agriculture Support

RAZ Thematic Categories	C1 Agri-Environment Fresh Start;; C2: Farm Based Business Regeneration
Proposed Interventions	<p>Sustainable Restocking for the Fells</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advisory service for economic/environmentally sustainable restocking at whole farm/common scale. • grant assistance for shepherding, stock handling infrastructure, fencing and cattle grids; • promotion of RDR agri-environment provisions for local breed/livestock payments; • schemes to promote sustainable common land management. <p>Sheep strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group breeding schemes; • performance testing of hill rams; • improvements to carcass quality and disease resistance.; • establish association of Cumbria sheep breeders to coordinate marketing and breed development. <p>Farm Connect Cumbria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agricultural business support/development advice; • Support for cooperatives/collaboration; • funding facilitation advice/guidance; • ICT based infrastructures to assist purchasing and sales efficiency; • Promotion of farming practices/solutions that promote economically and environmentally sustainable systems of farming; • infrastructure investment related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • livestock housing.; • waste management (including carcass disposal, nutrient budgeting schemes); • animal health schemes, • animal welfare, • flock re-hefting (linked in with C1 proposal); • small scale habitat improvement schemes; • technical consultancy <p>Supply Chain/Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop existing buying groups, labour/machinery rings and marketing groups; • promote new collaborative groups; • encourage collaboration between farmers to add value to meat products; • development of processing and added value facilities <p>Skill Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT training • farm secretarial services and training
Innovations Required	
Lead Organisation & Partners	C1: Cumbria Farm Link, English Nature, NFU, Newton Rigg College. C2: FBAS, SBS
Links to other SOs	SO6, SO7.

Table 5.5: SO5 Actions and Partners – Skills Development

RAZ Thematic Categories	HI Learning for the Future
<p>Proposed Interventions</p>	<p>Challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ creating demand for learning at all levels, but especially at higher levels, by both individuals and employers; ▪ making learning more accessible; ▪ improving the skills within businesses; ▪ developing the supply side by establishing new learning programmes and facilities which reflect the new imperatives; <p>Creating Demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for Young People in Rural Communities - enhancing the capacity of Connexions Cumbria to work in an intensive way with young people in rural communities. Field workers will, inter alia, work with Young Farmers Clubs, re-engage young people in learning and promote demand for learning, including for further and higher education. The field workers will undertake an accredited training programme and the project has achievable outputs. ▪ Summer Learning Programme – supporting programmes of learning activity for young people. The programme will involve young people in a range of skills with an emphasis on making opportunities available to those young people who are rurally isolated, including the application of information technology. ▪ Outreach Guidance for Adults - engaging guidance advisers to outreach rural communities to encourage demand for learning and skills development amongst adults who would not normally access provision. <p>Making learning more accessible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Locally Facilitated Distance Learning - recognising the potential of distance learning helping people overcome access barriers to learning. It will exploit developing technologies and define a facilitation model designed to overcome barriers. The proposal will increase the use of locally facilitated distance learning and involve Community Development Centres. <p>Improving skills within business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small Business Management Development – delivery of the Brathay Management Development Programme to cohorts of businesses and aimed at owner managers of small businesses in rural Cumbria. ▪ Strategy for Success - a programme designed to improve the management capabilities and capacities in rural SMEs. <p>Developing the supply side</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equine Centre - enabling the equine facility at UCLAN (Newton Rigg) to be improved to provide for an increase in student numbers and for support for tourism, small businesses, outdoor education and community use. ▪ Project title: Higher Education Certificate (Rural Recovery) - enabling the development and offer of a higher education certificate that will enable participants to develop their skills base and so aid diversification. The programme will be offered in a flexible way to accommodate the farming year. ▪ Higher Education Certificate (e-learning) - development of a higher education certificate that will utilise a range of e-learning. When developed the programme will develop skills based on individual needs, overcome access barriers and aid diversification.
<p>Innovations Required</p>	
<p>Lead Organisation & Partners</p>	<p>Cumbria Learning and Skills Council, working with the University of Central Lancashire, other further education providers and Connexions Cumbria.</p>
<p>Links to other SOs</p>	<p>All SOs</p>

Table 1: Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations	
Findings	Recommendations
1. The current regulatory framework is outdated and does not adequately address the risks posed by emerging technologies.	1. Review and update the regulatory framework to incorporate the latest scientific and technological developments.
2. There is a lack of coordination and information sharing between relevant government departments and agencies.	2. Establish a cross-departmental working group to coordinate efforts and share information.
3. The public is not sufficiently informed about the risks and benefits of emerging technologies.	3. Develop a comprehensive public awareness campaign to educate the public on the risks and benefits of emerging technologies.
4. The current funding mechanisms for research and development in emerging technologies are insufficient.	4. Explore new funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, to increase investment in research and development.
5. The current data protection and privacy laws are not sufficiently robust to protect personal data.	5. Strengthen data protection and privacy laws to ensure the security and integrity of personal data.
6. The current intellectual property laws are not sufficiently clear and predictable.	6. Clarify and strengthen intellectual property laws to provide a clear and predictable legal environment for innovation.
7. The current standards for emerging technologies are not sufficiently harmonized with international standards.	7. Engage in international cooperation to harmonize standards for emerging technologies.
8. The current regulatory approach is too fragmented and inconsistent.	8. Adopt a more integrated and consistent regulatory approach across different sectors and technologies.
9. The current regulatory framework does not adequately consider the ethical implications of emerging technologies.	9. Incorporate ethical considerations into the regulatory framework for emerging technologies.
10. The current regulatory framework does not adequately consider the environmental impacts of emerging technologies.	10. Incorporate environmental considerations into the regulatory framework for emerging technologies.

Table 5.6: SO6 Actions and Partners – Countryside Products

RAZ Thematic Categories	E1: Food Brand Cumbria; B2:Forestry Futures; C2: Farm Based Business Regeneration
Proposed Interventions	<p>Food Marketing and Branding Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> creation of small expert group within the food industry for, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> planning, public relations and sales; market research and production of marketing plan; reviewing all marketing and create scale economies; minimising duplication through joined up approach to marketing. <p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> current product availability; perceptions of Cumbria and its food; niche market opportunities; bulk market opportunities retail opportunities channels to market <p>Distinctly Cumbria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency will continue to lead this SRB project in RAZ <p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PR, merchandising & awareness programme development of farmers markets; promotion of farm retail outlets growth of Cumbria fellbred activity investigation into organic markets; courting local supermarkets; centralised sales outlet for products; <p>Forestry Futures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify existing and potential markets for woodland-related products/branding; Investigate development/ marketing opportunities for wood-based craft sector; investigate the feasibility of a "Cumbria Wood Fair"; benchmarking woodland-related SMEs/ micro-businesses to target facilitation of business development support services provision of e-commerce platform for small businesses to market woodland and wood product facilities and services. <p>Farm Connect Cumbria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for cooperatives/collaboration; <p>Supply Chain/Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of the red meat marketing structure; development of processing and added value facilities for dairy and red meat products. <p>Skill Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT training marketing training within the local farming, food processing, craft and other product communities;
Innovations Required	E1: Viability and credibility of brand requires unified Cumbria-wide approach though sub-brands will also be encouraged
Lead Organisation & Partners	B2: Forestry Commission, Cumbria Woodland Forum C2: FBAS, SBS E1: Cumbria marketing/branding consortium, Chamber of Commerce
Links to other SOs	SO6, SO7

Table 5.7: SO7 Actions and Partners – Rural Environment

RAZ Thematic Categories	B1:Environment & Access; B2:Forestry Futures; C1: Agri-Environment Fresh Start; C2: Farm Based Business Regeneration
Proposed Interventions	<p>Access Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> access status review & ROW audit; improvements to ROWs & access team support; promotion of web-based ROW information; conflict resolution strategy <p>Forestry Futures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitate applications for new woodland creation; bring under managed or neglected woodlands back into sustainable management; advice on how woodlands can contribute to delivery of BAPs/HAPs); new planting to safeguard landscape/water quality and soil protection; research feasibility of locating CHP power or wood energy plant; demonstration/ best practice of silvicultural systems;; nursery of local origin/provenance stock to support woodland planting schemes. mentoring and informal work placements for new entrants to the woodland-based sector; <p>Land Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> intensive pasture lowland land management; lowland diary stewardship; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of arable pockets via whole crop silage and fodder crops; grassland management through reduced cut silage options; grassland management through extensive grazing of permanent pasture. whole farm planning;; demonstration farms; land-use demonstration projects; holistic integrated land management; pilot native breed support for habitat improvements; waste disposal improvements; <p>Supply Chain/Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the health status of livestock for improved marketing, animal welfare and biosecurity. <p>Skill Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> training to support above scheme
Innovations Required	E1: Viability and credibility of brand requires unified Cumbria-wide approach though sub-brands will also be encouraged
Lead Organisation & Partners	<p>B1: Countryside Agency, English Nature, Environment Agency, LDNP, National Trust, Local Authorities, Forestry Commission; Farmers, CWT, ECCP</p> <p>B2: Forestry Commission, Cumbria Woodland Forum</p> <p>C1: Cumbria Farm Link, English Nature, NFU, Newton Rigg College.</p> <p>C2: FBAS, SBS</p>
Links to other SOs	SO2, SO3, SO4, SO6

Table 5.8: SO8 Actions and Partners – Social & Community Regeneration

RAZ Thematic Categories	A1:Empowering Cumbrian Communities; G2:Enhanced Transport;
Proposed Interventions	<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> buildings/property for community social and economic development; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable training and social enterprise centres at key locations providing focus for capacity building activities, support development services and exchange of 'enterprise' ideas; improved access & interchange; <p>Community/Group Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support to enable community empowerment organisations to innovate, extend and co-ordinate work within communities; promotion of 'animateurs' from within communities of interest and place, growing the impact of peer led capacity building.; development of entrepreneurs within the farming community; <p>Community Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved accessibility to financial resources for community organisations, micro businesses and individuals development of Community and Asset Reinvestment Trust (CART), Community Regeneration Fund, building upon the success of the Community Recovery Fund; 'Loan Circles', 'Community Chests and non sterling based trading.' <p>Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development work with Parish and Town Councils, second and third tier Local Authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships; participation strategies and enhanced co-ordination and co-operation between local decision making structures. <p>Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> secure increased community participation of young people and women in the regeneration process; development of personal confidence and capacity skills; representation and enterprise through peer and network led approaches; <p>ICT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> embed ICT in community led regeneration; transfer of experience from the Wired Up Communities project to other communities further development of the function of CREDITS centres. <p>Skill Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capacity building leadership/facilitation skills
Innovations Required	A1: Integration of grant and finance structures; Development of animateurs from within communities; increasedco-operation and co-ordination between Community Support organisations; Delegation of responsibility to Community Support Organisations for the development and co-ordination of programme areas.
Lead Organisation & Partners	A1: VAC, CVSS, NT, LSPs, Local Authorities, Parish/Town Councils
Links to other SOs	SO2, SO3,

6 Costs, Funding, and Impact

6.1 Introduction

The interventions outlined in section 5 provide the basis upon which the 'Next Steps' strategy will be delivered. This section contains a preliminary and indicative funding and impact assessment of the 'Next Steps' proposals.

6.2 Cost and Funding Gap

It is estimated that implementation of the Strategy will incur cost equivalent to £274m, broadly in line with the Initial Steps proposals, and broken down across strategy objectives as outlined in Table 6.1. Table 6.2 details indicative contributions from partners in the light of the work undertaken for the original strategy development and discussions with partners regarding resource availability for the region as a whole. The available resource from NWDA is based on the distribution of Agency resources outlined in the RRRP and the allocation framework used to provide indicative sub-regional allocations.

Table 6.1: Projected Costs and Funding Gap

Strategic Objective	Projected Cost (£m)	Available Resource (£m)	Funding Gap (£m)
SO1 – Broadening the Economics Base	38.5	40.9	(2.4)
SO2 – Renew and Strengthening Tourism	56.0	31.3	24.7
SO3 – Assisting Restructuring of Agriculture	50.9	51.7	(0.8)
SO4 – Enhancing Primary Agriculture	13.6	12.8	0.8
SO5 – Skills Development	10.3	9	1.3
SO6 – Countryside Products	22.1	22.3	(0.2)
SO7 – Supporting Rural Environment	71.8	72.4	(0.6)
SO8 – Social and Community Regeneration	11.0	5.0	6.0
Total	274.2	245.3	28.9

Overall, it is projected that implementation will cost £274m, of which £245m is expected to be available through existing and emerging funding streams, resulting in a funding gap of approximately £29m

The projected economic impact of the strategy has been formally examined using benchmark data where available and a economic impact model which takes account of additionality, displacement, supply chain and income multiplier effects. Two versions of the model are employed to address different impact effects of safeguarded and new economic activity across each of the eight strategy objectives providing a comprehensive assessment of potential impact outcomes.

The illustrative gross employment impacts that are modelled to arise from implementing the Strategy are summarised in Table 6.3 while gross and net employment and GVA impacts are outlined in table 6.4.

Table 6.2: Indicative Partner Funding Profile (£m)

Partners	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	Total
ERDP/DEFRA	3.3	2.8	4.6	1.6	0.7	3.4	62.4	1.0	79.6
Countryside Agency	2.8	4.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.4	2.5	10.8
Forestry Commission	3.9	0.0	2.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	8.5
LSCs	1.2	1.8	7.3	1.8	4.2	2.4	0.0	0.0	18.8
NWDA	24.8	7.5	13.2	2.1	1.6	11.0	6.3	0.6	67.0
English Nature	0.0	0.0	4.5	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	6.0
Objective 2	1.0	4.4	0.0	3.3	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.7	11.9
Objective 3	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.7	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	3.8
Leader+	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.3	0.0	0.0	2.0
Private Sector	2.1	6.4	19.8	0.1	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.0	30.3
SBS	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
Other	0.1	2.7	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	4.0
Total	40.9	31.3	51.7	12.8	9.0	22.3	72.4	5.0	245.3

Table 6.3: Projected Gross Employment Effects

Strategic Objective	Total Jobs	Safeguarded Jobs	New Jobs
SO1 – Broadening the Base	2860	1403	1457
SO2 – Renew and Strengthen Tourism	2954	1494	1460
SO3 – Assisting Restructuring of Agriculture	2475	1273	1202
SO4 – Enhancing Primary Agriculture	817	436	381
SO5 – Skills Development	712	565	148
SO6 – Countryside Products	590	438	153
SO7 – Sustaining Rural Inheritance	553	367	186
SO8 – Social and Community Regeneration	493	296	197
Total	11455	6271	5184

Table 6.4: Projected Gross and Net GVA and Employment Impacts

Gross Job Impacts	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	Total
Gross Additional Jobs	2860	2954	2475	817	712	590	553	493	11455
Gross Additional Safeguarded Jobs	1403	1494	1273	436	565	438	367	296	6271
Gross Additional Created Jobs	1457	1460	1202	381	148	153	186	197	5184
Gross GVA Impacts	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	Total
Gross Additional GVA (£m)	100.8	51.3	83.0	33.3	18.7	22.0	14.0	8.9	331.9
Gross Additional Safeguarded GVA (£m)	49.2	25.6	42.8	17.9	15.1	16.3	9.5	5.1	181.5
Gross Additional New GVA (£m)	51.6	25.6	40.2	15.4	3.6	5.8	5.1	3.8	151.0
Net Job Impacts	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	Total
Net Additional Jobs	2381	1678	2054	485	422	301	505	433	8259
Net Additional Safeguarded Jobs	1084	866	984	221	334	222	319	257	4287
Net Additional Created Jobs	1297	812	1070	264	88	79	186	176	3972
Gross GVA Impacts	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5	SO6	SO7	SO8	Total
Net Additional GVA (£m)	84.0	29.1	68.8	19.7	11.1	11.2	13.4	7.8	245.1
Net Additional Safeguarded GVA (£m)	38.0	14.9	33.0	9.1	8.9	8.2	8.3	4.4	124.9
Net Additional New GVA (£m)	45.9	14.3	35.8	10.6	2.1	3.0	5.1	3.4	120.2

It is projected that implementation will result in creating/safeguarding 11,455 jobs, some 73% of the total regional target outlined in the *Rural Renaissance* document and in line with the fact that the value of the 'Next Steps' strategy is some 70% of that in the RRRP. Table 6.4 shows that estimated gross additional GVA will amount to £332m over the strategy period of which 55% will represent safeguarded and 45% new GVA²⁴.

Adjustments to a net basis inevitably lower both the projected employment and GVA impacts as considerations are made for additionality, displacement, and both supply chain and income multipliers. On the basis of the net adjustment process it is estimated that net additional jobs will sum to 8,259, a fall of 28% on the gross figure and net additional GVA will sum to £245m, a fall of 26% on the gross figure.

The net adjustment process results in reductions from the gross baselines that are more conservative than in other impact models as a result of the fact that diversification and broadening of the economic base are important elements of the activity to be pursued via the strategy. Successful promotion of such activity will result in 'new' market players that are more likely to displace imported goods/services to the county rather than locally produced goods/services. Likewise, the narrow base of the rural area means that the risk of such activities being pursued independently of the strategy is likely to be lower than elsewhere. Hence both additionality and displacement losses are more restricted than in other modelling scenarios.

²⁴ Such estimates assess the impact of all activity pursued through the umbrella of the RAZ, cover both existing and 'new' funding streams and includes an allowance for the 'synergy gains' to be generated through the RAZ process. RRC monitoring and evaluation procedures will be structured to assess the contribution of both sources of resources and to evaluate the impact synergies that result from the RAZ concept.

7 Delivery and Implementation Arrangements

7.1 Introduction

The strategy outlined in earlier sections represents the framework within which Cumbrian partners will seek to instigate recovery of the rural economy. This section focuses on envisaged arrangements for delivery and implementation of the 'Next Steps' Strategy over the course of the five-year period and covers organisation and delivery, outputs, and monitoring and evaluation.

7.2 Organisation and Delivery Arrangements

The premise that lies behind both the 'Initial' and 'Next Steps' proposals is that, despite the recent prominence given to dealing with the impact of FMD, the rural economy of Cumbria is subject to a series of longer-term structural trends that are likely to bring impending change to all parts of that economy. Such change will not be confined to those areas that are the subject of particular forms of targeted policy and programme assistance, will impact on urban hinterlands as well as areas of remoteness, have implications for the environmental and ecology structures of rural landscapes and redefine the nature of many current socio-economic relationships.

It is the contention of partners that these challenges are unlikely to be addressed effectively without the encouragement and emergence of an overarching rural policy framework that:

- promotes enhanced cooperation, coordination and integration of agencies and activities 'on the ground';
- establishes mechanisms that permit a flexible response to changing circumstances as well as emerging opportunities and challenges;
- delivers innovative and timely solutions to both short-term and longer-term development barriers;
- engages the full range and mix of funding and non-funding partners, as appropriate, in addressing development and regeneration constraints; and
- pre-empts emerging issues and prepares the ground for concerted action in response to impending change rather than operating passively and reactively.

7.2.1 *The Delivery Vehicle*

The tasks required both in terms of addressing the emerging rural development context and the delivery of RAZ require a degree of strategic impetus that partners believe lies beyond the delivery capacity of the current policy infrastructure.

The 'mix' of delivery mechanisms and spatial targeting serves to generate overlap, limit effectiveness and coordination and inhibit innovation. Multiple bidding criteria, regulations, reporting, audit and accountability regimes likewise compromise effectiveness and efficiency. Structures are viewed as too disparate, fragmented and constrained to secure the step-change necessary to secure the degree of coordination and coherence necessary to achieve successful implementation of the RAZ.

The RAZ programme provides an opportunity to pursue coherence, coordination and integration in the delivery of rural policy. Partners are determined to seize this opportunity through development of a delivery infrastructure that secures the ambitions of the RAZ concept.

In the light of extensive deliberation and consultation among a wide range of partners, it has been agreed that:

- delivery of the 'Next Steps' Strategy will be achieved via the constitution of an independent, not-for-profit, regeneration company, limited by guarantee²⁵;
- the RRC will be a small, efficient and focussed delivery vehicle, will operate at arms-length; and
- the RRC will be involved in direct delivery only to 'plug' gaps in delivery infrastructure.

7.2.1.1 Core Regeneration Company Activities

It is envisaged that the RRC will undertake a series of core activities designed to ensure both efficient and effective delivery of RAZ and integration of complementary regeneration activities. More particularly, the RRC will²⁶:

- assume responsibility for coordination, direction and funding of activity to secure overall delivery of the RAZ programme;
- establish and implement procedures to ensure the effective coordination of such activity with other rural initiatives and to ensure that Cumbrian partners play their full role in delivering the Rural Renaissance RRRP;
- influence and advise public and private sector agencies/organisations on policies and programmes in so far as they impact on rural regeneration;
- provide clear facilitation and signposting functions to ensure and secure access to resources available for rural regeneration;
- provide innovation and leadership in the identification, design and development of projects and assist in project appraisal;
- consider the merits of establishing/delegating responsibility for a small project/community development fund/approval process for smaller scale activities and projects that support the wider objectives of 'Next Steps';
- implement effective and robust monitoring mechanisms that monitor and evaluate strategy progress and performance and/or comply with the M&E requirements of any body to which the duty of scrutiny is passed;
- assist development of delivery structures to address issues/areas of need/opportunity for which existing infrastructure is weak;

²⁵ Hereafter referred to as the Rural Regeneration Company (RRC) for convenience.

²⁶ These duties are in line with those envisaged and outlined in the NWDA sponsored *Rural Renaissance Plan*.

- act to ensure efficient and effective regeneration activity through: 1Yr/3Yr delivery plans; rolling forward delivery plans on an annual basis throughout the period of the Strategy ;
 - preparation of an annual report setting out performance against targets, outputs and accounts; and
 - preparation of an annual business plan setting out priorities, expected commitments and outcomes.

7.2.1.2 Regeneration Company Characteristics

The aim of partners is to constitute a small but dynamic company through which to drive forward regeneration of the rural economy in the county. To this end, it is conceived that the RRC will:

- operate in accordance with a constitution and responsibilities consistent with prevailing legislative requirements;
- be accorded appropriate powers to pursue a set of specified objectives/aims consistent with the delivery of the RAZ programme;
- embrace an inclusive membership through annual subscription;
- engage a Chief Executive of national standing and experience;
- operate via a senior and proactive Board of Directors that will
 - establish and pursue both short and long-term objectives consistent with the ambitions of the RAZ;
 - take responsibility for ensuring compliance with legal and financial duties;
 - undertake to plan and coordinate company development through a robust business planning regime;
 - ensure proper, efficient and appropriate management of an approved work programme;
 - ensure the design and introduction of mechanisms to monitor and evaluate strategy progress and performance; and
 - balance thematic experience/skills alongside spatial representation.
- be led by a private sector Chair independent of founding and funding partners;
- be supported by a dedicated but small executive team; and encourage partner secondment where feasible to promote and secure integration of activities and funding streams.

Regeneration Company Structure

The desire to instil the RRC with dynamism will be balanced by the necessity to provide sufficient capacity to address the demands of a challenging work programme and to integrate/coordinate rural regeneration activities across the county. To this end it is envisaged that the staffing complement of the RRC will consist of senior staff, support staff (including secondees) and administration staff:

- Senior Staff:

- Chief Executive;
 - Development Director; and
 - Finance Director;
 - Support Staff:
 - Project coordinators;
 - Funding coordinators; and
 - Seconded Admin Staff
- The Delivery Framework*

In developing the Strategy and associated delivery arrangements, partners have recognised the need to due regard to the wider institutional framework within which the RRC might be incorporated.

7.2.2.1 *The Cumbria Strategic Partnership (CSP)*

The Cumbria Strategic Partnership represents an important development in the context of development policy in the county. As a strategic body, the CSP provides an overarching framework for economic regeneration across the whole of the county, not just in rural areas, and is in a prime position to secure partnership working and development. The CSP has an important scrutiny role to play in any delivery framework and is likely to play a key role in coordinating with agencies within and outwith the county.

In addition, *Rural Renaissance* envisages that the sub-regional delivery of the wider regional action plan will be coordinated through a county level-body that will:

- provide an overarching framework for economic regeneration of rural areas;
- pursue 'on-the-ground' integration of all rural regeneration activities consistent with and complementary to the RRRP;
- take strategic responsibility for the activities and actions that will deliver the ambitions of the RRRP; introduce structures to ensure that community representatives have agreed consultative mechanisms for advocacy and policy direction; perform a scrutiny role through assessment and monitoring of sub-regional delivery plan activities, progress and outcomes;
- act to ensure that delivery vehicle structures: assume objectives/aims & powers consistent with the delivery of the RRRP programme; adopt constitutions and responsibilities in line with the nature of proposed actions and consistent with any relevant and prevailing legislative requirements; implement operating standards that are efficient, transparent and secure probity in the development progression of project activity; act to ensure efficient and effective regeneration activity through development of a 5Yr overarching plan detailing proposed delivery structures, actions and their fit with both the RRRP, other initiatives, funding partners priorities, outputs and M&E arrangements; provide progress/M&E reports along with an annual report to the SB²⁷; and

²⁷ SB – The Strategy Body through which overall progress of *Rural Renaissance* will be reviewed.

- review the relevance, enhance actions and/or modify the ambitions and direction of the sub-regional strategy in the light of changing circumstances.

Local partners have agreed that the CSP will operate to fulfil this remit for the purposes of sub-regional RRRP delivery and will also serve to oversee rural regeneration activity on behalf of all stakeholders in the rural regeneration process.

7.2.2.2 Rural Strategy Sub-Group

It is recognised that there is need to ensure focus and coherence in rural policy issues and RAZ development/progression below the level of the CSP with its wider remit. It is therefore intended to establish a rural sub-group to which the CSP will delegate responsibility for rural strategy development, oversight and monitoring of the 'Next Steps' strategy. Partners are clear that such a group must serve to aid the development process rather than duplicating attributes of the CSP.

7.2.2.3 Accountable Body Role

Partners recognise that Cumbria County Council represents the only organisation of sufficient stature and viability, in the first instance, to act as an accountable body in the context of strategy delivery. Responsibilities of the County Council in this regard will include:

- establishing effective appraisal, approval and monitoring systems;
- implementing sound financial management systems to:
 - ensure regularity, propriety and value for money in the handling of financial flows; and
 - notify the RRC of any financial irregularities in the use of funds;
- providing quarterly reports to the RRC covering progress of activity, spend and draw-down against targets and budgets;
- maintaining an inventory of assets aided by the strategy programme;
- preparation of annual audited accounts; and
- providing access and documentation for ad-hoc inspections and audits;

In the longer-term, consideration may be given to the pursuit of independent accountability status for the RRC as an element of a designated exit strategy.

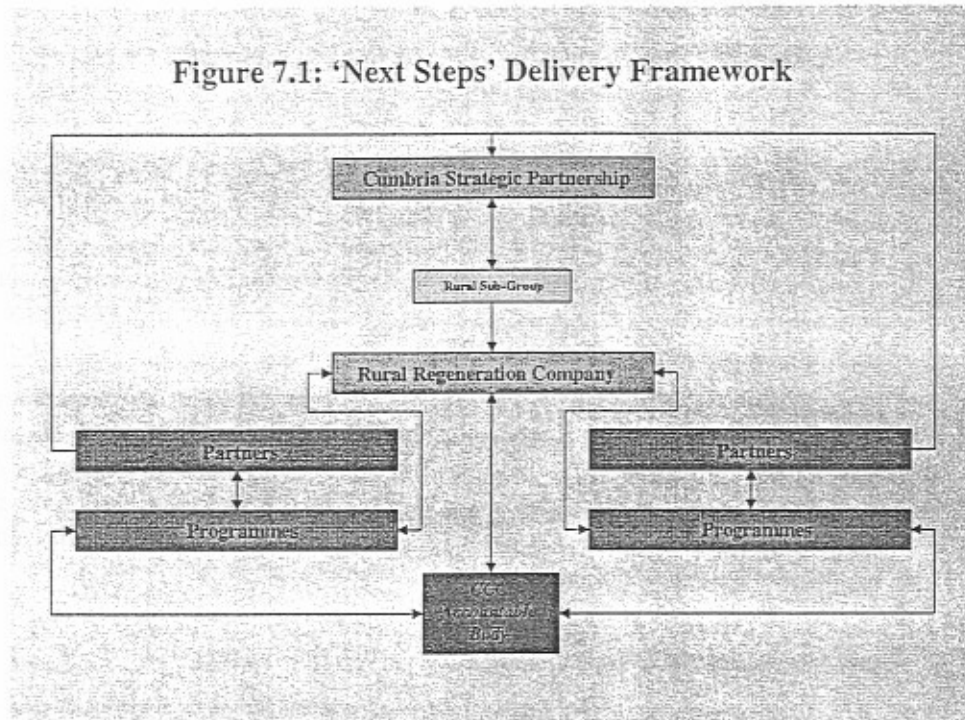
7.2.2.4 Partner and Community Groups Roles

The on-going and continuing engagement of partners and the community are crucial to implementation and delivery of 'Next Steps'. Accordingly, the delivery framework will ensure that partners and community representatives have recognised mechanisms for influencing policy direction and development. Opportunities for the latter will occur through contributions at CSP level.

7.2.2.5 The Delivery Framework

On the basis on the considerations outlined above, a desire to develop an integrated but effective delivery infrastructure and an ambition to grant the RRC maximum flexibility to pursue the RAZ strategy, Figure 7.1 illustrates the framework within which 'Next Steps' will be delivered.

Figure 7.1: 'Next Steps' Delivery Framework



7.2.3 Transition to the RRC

Establishing the RRC will invariably take time as arrangements, preparation, recruitment and selection are pursued. Partners are aware that there is a need to progress elements of the strategy prior to the point at which the RRC can commence operations. At the same time, it is recognised that maximum flexibility must be accorded to the RRC at the outset and that any legacy of prior decisions/approvals should be limited. To this end, it is envisaged that:

- a 'shadow' entity will operate to manage the strategy process during the transition period;
- where feasible, the existing RDP Programme will provide a 'bridge' through which to generate early momentum though such resources will ultimately dovetail into the RAZ process;
- consideration will be given, on a case-by-case basis, to any projects of significance or where multi-annual approvals are required to enable progression.

Project Management

Delivery of 'Next Steps' is crucially dependent on the nature and quality of activity supported through the strategy process. A strong and robust project management regime

will be fundamental to the attainment of strategy objectives. Development of 'Next Steps' has paid particular attention to project management, and in particular, the issues of project:

- development;
- appraisal;
- approval; and
- monitoring.

7.3.1 *Project Development*

The RRC will, upon commencement of operations and in conjunction with sponsors, assume joint responsibility for development and progression of all projects seeking resource support to deliver specified elements of the 'Next Steps' strategy. It is expected that the approach to project development will be flexible with some sponsors wishing to work-up projects to a particular stage prior to seeking the assistance of project and funding coordinators within the RRC.

Alternatively, some sponsors may wish to develop projects in conjunction with the RRC from the outset. Finally, the regeneration company, itself, will be tasked to provide innovation and leadership in the identification, design and development of projects in its own right. Projects will not be progressed to the technical appraisal stage unless and until they have satisfied the RRC that they are of sufficient quality and robustness to contribute to strategy objectives.

7.3.2 *Project Appraisal*

It will be a requirement of the strategy process that a full appraisal of each project be undertaken before any recommendation for approval is given and any expenditure outlay incurred. The activity of appraisal will be independent of any organisation and/or individual connected with the development process and will be subject to any delegation limits attached to funding streams from which resource support is sought. Projects that require support above and beyond delegation limits, requiring third-party support, will be pursued on behalf of sponsors by the RRC.

Any significant change to project proposals in the light of an initial appraisal exercise will require a full and complete re-appraisal to be undertaken. It is expected that appraisal outcomes will be used as a management tool in terms of project implementation, forming the basis of any contract for delivery and serving as a point of reference for subsequent monitoring and management.

Partners have agreed that appraisal of projects with the prior endorsement of the RRC will be undertaken by the Accountable Body and will reflect performance against a set of pre-established and agreed eligibility/project selection criteria.

7.3.2.1 *Eligibility Criteria*

The set of eligibility criteria to be employed as part of the appraisal exercise will include:

- compliance with the 'Next Steps' Strategy;

- projects will only be supported if they are compliant with and nest within the 'Next Steps' strategy proposals.
- envisaged contribution to strategy objectives;
 - projects will only be supported if they make an identifiable contribution to strategy objectives.
- location of beneficiaries;
 - there is no proposed spatial boundary on the location of applicants/sponsors or project delivery but it is expected that at least 70% of final beneficiaries should be located in the 'rural hinterland' of the county.
- additionality;
 - only projects that can demonstrate significant additionality will be deemed as eligible for support.
- match-funding; projects will be viewed as eligible if, and only if, evidence of required match-funding has been secured and is available. permissions/consents; projects will be viewed as eligible if, and only if, evidence of any necessary permissions/consents have been secured or agreed in principle and is available. *Project Selection Criteria*

(PSC)

The set of PSC criteria to be employed as part of the appraisal exercise will include:

- Need, Consistency & Viability
 - Need;
 - evidence of need, option appraisal & the identified 'gap' for the project.
 - Objectives;
 - a clear and coherent definition of project objectives;
 - Relevance;
 - demonstration of consistency with RAZ strategy.
 - Complementarity;
 - consistency with existing programmes/activities.
 - Feasibility; assessment of risk.
 - Beneficiaries;
 - clear definition of the nature and location of project beneficiaries.
 - Consultation/Partnership;
 - evidence of support from relevant community of interest.
 - Sustainability;
 - demonstration of impact beyond project life.

- Delivery Issues
 - Delivery Capacity;
 - sponsor body & previous performance.
 - Delivery Structure;
 - delivery infrastructure & proposals.
 - Innovation;
 - demonstration of innovative practice.
 - Funding;
 - appropriate and agreed funding/match arrangements.
 - Private Sector Contributions;
 - evidence of private sector leverage.
 - Timing; appropriate phasing of expenditure.
- Outputs, Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Outputs;
 - definition, coherence and relevance of proposed outputs.
 - Baselines;
 - specification of an appropriate baseline to enable observation of progress.
 - Project targets;
 - envisaged performance targets.
 - Environmental Impact;
 - assessment of environmental benefits/costs.
 - Equal Opportunities;
 - assessment of EO impact.
 - Outcomes
 - assessment & profiling of gross & net outcomes (where relevant) in terms of jobs/GVA created/safeguarded and taking account of deadweight, displacement and multiplier effects;
 - VFM;
 - proposals accord with established efficiency criteria.
 - •Monitoring & Evaluation; specification of an appropriate M&E infrastructure. *Project Approval*

Approval of projects will be undertaken by the Board of the RRC only upon advisement of a technical appraisal outcome/recommendation and subject to any authorised delegation limits. Approval will normally result in the issue of an 'offer' letter to project

sponsors detailing any conditions of support alongside specified targets/funding and delivery dates to be agreed by the sponsor. Projects with resource requirements beyond any delegated limit will receive an offer letter upon approval of project proposals from the relevant delegation authority.

Approval of a project will not act as a guarantee of funding but an indication of funding intent subject to evidence of satisfactory progression and performance. Any material alteration to initial project proposals – adjustment to outputs/costs, project ownership, financing – will require approval in advance by the RRC Board and may result in the withholding/repayment of resource already provided. Other potential reasons for withholding/repayment will include:

- unsatisfactory progress;
- use of substantially incorrect information to support project application, progress and/or monitoring statements;
- erroneous payment/overpayment of resource;
- non-disclosure of funding streams used in project delivery;
- evidence of irregularity, impropriety or negligence;
- insolvency or receivership of the recipient sponsor; and
- direction from a body with appropriate legal jurisdiction and authority.

7.3.4 Project Monitoring

All project sponsors will be required to monitor progress of projects in order to ensure that resources are used for purposes for which they have been made available and to inform on performance. Sponsors will be required to keep records of their activities, expenditure and outputs and provide evidence, upon request, that resources have been expended. The protocol detailing precise processes and procedures for monitoring will be detailed in the offer letter upon approval of the project by the RRC and will require the agreement of sponsors. Monitoring will commence upon acceptance of the offer and will be subject to periodic validation and auditing.

7.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

7.4.1 M&E Procedures

On-going monitoring and interim/ex-post evaluations of the Strategy are essential to ensuring that the latter remains relevant, achieves its objectives and offers good value for money. Partners have agreed that a combination of both bottom-up/micro analysis of projects and top-down/macro analysis of secondary indicators will form the basis of the wider strategy M&E arrangements.

The bottom-up approach will involve reviewing inputs, outputs, results and impacts associated with individual projects and will be based on detailed project-level information and analyses. It is expected that the Accountable Body will provide quarterly reports on project activity and progression to the RRC which will, in turn, provide a six-monthly report to the rural strategy sub-group and CSP. The top-down analysis will consider changes in a limited number of strategic indicators and assesses the

extent to which changes in these indicators can be attributed to the strategy. This analysis will be carried out by the RRC and submitted to the strategy sub-group and CSP on the same six-monthly cycle as the bottom-up review²⁸.

Another important component of the evaluation process will consist of mid-term and ex-post evaluations to be undertaken by independent organisations. One of the key elements of this work will be to consider the additionality of the activities supported through assessment of deadweight, displacement, substitution and multiplier effects.

7.4.2 Implementing the M&E Framework

The 'Next Steps' strategy is designed to be consistent with the wider *Rural Renaissance* framework sponsored by the NWDA. To this end, the 'Next Steps' M&E framework will report on the indicators proposed as part of the RRRP (Tables 7.1 to 7.4).

²⁸ The information base gathered via this process will provide the basis of the CSP annual summary to the Strategy Body overseeing the delivery of the *Rural Renaissance* RRRP.

Table 7.1: 'Next Steps' Monitoring Indicators – SO1 and SO2 (*Market Towns to be identified)

SO1 - Broadening the Economic Base of Rural Areas	SO2 - Renew and Strengthen Sustainable Recreation and Tourism
Number/proportion of VAT registered ag/non-agricultural business stock	Volume/growth of domestic/overseas visitors/spend to/in rural areas
VAT reg/deregistration rates for ag/non-agricultural businesses	Stock/growth of VAT registered tourism/leisure businesses
New agricultural/non-agricultural businesses starts*	VAT registration/deregistration rates for tourism/leisure businesses
Business survival rates for agricultural/non-agricultural businesses	New tourism/leisure business starts*
Employment base and employment growth in rural areas	Volume/growth of tourism/leisure related employment
Number of businesses advised on ICT	Membership of ICT linked farm-based tourism network
Number of businesses trading electronically	Volume/growth in farm based tourism visitors
Number/growth of ICT related business	Number of farm business advised/assisted/started*
Number/growth of ICT related employment	Volume/growth in farm based tourism beds/bednights
ICT training beneficiaries & Number/level of NVQ qualifications	Ha of quality habitats
Volume & value of relocation/inward investment	Additional Ha of quality habitats
Volume & value of inward investment in env technology, remediation and related KBIs	Visitor numbers/Ha of quality habitats
Rural businesses accessing venture finance	Number of cultural/creative industry start-ups*
Accessibility levels of Rural Areas	Volume/growth in heritage attraction visitors/income
M ² of office/manufacturing/warehouse workspace available*	Number/Attendance of/at arts/events & venues
M ² of new/renovated office/manufacturing/warehouse workspace*	Size & membership of operator networks
Additional Ha of woodland/forestry	Number & proportion of quality assured provider network
Number of Market town health checks/Action Plans	No of tourism/leisure businesses assisted
Employment base and employment growth in market towns	No of tourism/leisure businesses assisted to use ICT in marketing/promotion
VAT registration/deregistration rates for ag/non-agricultural businesses in market towns	Proportion of tourism/leisure businesses linked to integrated database/network
New agricultural/non-agricultural businesses starts in market towns	GVA created/safeguarded*
GVA created/safeguarded*	Jobs created/safeguarded*
Jobs created/safeguarded*	

Table 7.2: 'Next Steps' Monitoring Indicators – SO3 and SO4 (*Market Towns to be identified)

SO3 – Assisting the Restructuring of Agriculture	SO4 – Enhancing the Competitiveness and Capability of Primary Agriculture
<p>No of farm businesses assisted through diversification support</p> <p>Number/proportion of farm businesses assisted pursuing diversification activities within agriculture</p> <p>Number/proportion of farm businesses assisted pursuing diversification activities outside agriculture</p> <p>Number of whole farm plans completed</p> <p>Number/value of renewable energy projects supported</p> <p>Mw of renewable energy generated</p> <p>Number/growth of organic farm registrations</p> <p>Diversified income as a proportion of total farm household income</p> <p>% of income derived from non-farming sources</p> <p>% of income derived from off-farming sources</p> <p>% growth in supported farm turnover/incomes</p> <p>Additional Ha of woodland/forestry through diversification support</p> <p>Number of diversification needs assessments undertaken</p> <p>Number of farm workers undertaking training for alternative careers</p> <p>% of farm workers training for alternative careers gaining employment</p> <p>No of upland farm businesses assisted</p> <p>Number/proportion of upland farm businesses assisted acting on advice</p> <p>Number of cases supported via the Planning Facilitation Service</p> <p>% of positive outcomes delivered via the Planning Facilitation Service</p> <p>GVA created/safeguarded</p> <p>Jobs created/safeguarded</p>	<p>GVA contribution of primary agriculture</p> <p>Net profitability of farming businesses</p> <p>No of farm operations assisted to develop primary agriculture business</p> <p>Number/proportion of farm businesses assisted acting on advice</p> <p>% growth in supported farm turnover/incomes</p> <p>Number and membership levels of best practice/benchmarking networks</p> <p>Number/size of cooperatives/collaborations supported</p> <p>Volume/value of cooperative/collaboration activity</p> <p>Number of applicants assisted/facilitated to secure funding support</p> <p>Establishment/participation levels of ICT purchasing/sales infrastructure</p> <p>Number of applicants facilitated to secure funding support</p> <p>Number of workers in primary agriculture undertaking IT training</p> <p>% of workers using IT in farm operations</p> <p>Number of demonstration farms for economic/environmentally sustainable farming</p> <p>Visitor levels at economic/environmentally sustainable farms</p> <p>Establishment/membership of best practice/benchmarking networks for economic/environmentally sustainable farming</p> <p>GVA created/safeguarded</p> <p>Jobs created/safeguarded</p>

Table 7.3: 'Next Steps' Monitoring Indicators – SO5 and SO6 (*Market Towns to be identified)

<i>SO5 – Rural Skills Development</i>	<i>SO6 – Development and Promotion of Countryside Products</i>
Skills/qualifications of rural area/market town residents	Volume/value of countryside product/produce
Qualification performance and achievements*	% growth in volume/value of countryside product/produce
FE/HE access rate*	Membership levels of branding networks
Working age persons receiving job-related training *	Number of local farmers markets supported
Number of beneficiaries receiving reskilling/upskilling support, & number of training weeks, to enhance sustainability of primary agriculture businesses	Number/size of cooperatives/collaborations supported (cross reference SO4)
Number of beneficiaries receiving reskilling/upskilling support & number of training weeks to enhance landscape/habitat management skills	Volume/value of cooperative/collaboration activity (cross reference SO4)
Number of primary agriculture 'new start' entrants from the North West	Number of new retail farm/non-farm produce/product outlets supported/established
Number of training beneficiaries from, & number of training weeks to, small rural businesses*	Number of craft businesses advised/assisted/started
Number of SMEs supported through management development/ mentor schemes*	Volume/value/growth of activity in supported retail outlets/food futures activities
Numbers assisted to pursue self-employment*	Volume/value of new sales to public sector purchasers (eg NHS)
Numbers accessing mobile-learning facilities*	Number of marketing/promoting beneficiaries trained (6.7)
Heritage/arts/craft/culture beneficiaries/training weeks*	GVA created/safeguarded
ICT training beneficiaries/training weeks (cross-reference SO1) *	Jobs created/safeguarded
Tourism/leisure training beneficiaries/training weeks*	
Woodland/habitat training beneficiaries/training weeks*	
Number of farm workers training for alternative careers (cross reference SO3)*	
% of farm workers training for alternative careers gaining employment (cross reference SO3)*	
Number of workers in primary agriculture undertaking IT training (cross reference SO4)*	
GVA created/safeguarded*	
Jobs created/safeguarded*	

Table 7.4: 'Next Steps' Monitoring Indicators – SO7 and SO8 (*Market Towns to be identified)

<i>SO7 – Sustaining the Environmental Inheritance</i>	<i>SO8 – Delivering Social and Community Regeneration</i>
<p>Number of farms advised with regard to economically/sustainable farming options</p> <p>% of advised farms pursuing actions</p> <p>Number of whole farm plans completed (cross reference SO3)</p> <p>Additional Ha of woodland/forestry (cross reference SO2)</p> <p>Additional Ha of broad habitats</p> <p>Km of new/restored hedgerows</p> <p>Km of new/restored dry-stone walls</p> <p>Km of rights of way made accessible</p> <p>Km rights of way improved</p> <p>Km of cycleway added/improved</p> <p>% take-up of CS/ESA schemes</p> <p>Mw of renewable energy generated</p> <p>Establishment/membership of best practice/benchmarking networks for sustainable building practices</p> <p>Number/% of planning applications supported by pre-submission advice on building</p> <p>GVA created/safeguarded</p> <p>Jobs created/safeguarded</p>	<p>Access to Post Offices/Food Shops/Banks/Primary Schools</p> <p>Public transport coverage</p> <p>Establishment/Number of Rural CART schemes</p> <p>Numbers of individuals/families supported through CART schemes</p> <p>Number of rural credit unions established</p> <p>Membership of rural credit unions</p> <p>Capacity building training beneficiaries</p> <p>Leadership/facilitation skills training beneficiaries</p> <p>Number of social/community enterprises supported</p> <p>% growth in employment/turnover for social/community enterprises</p> <p>New social/community enterprises starts</p> <p>Survival rates for social/community enterprises</p> <p>Access to GP/healthcare services</p> <p>GVA created/safeguarded</p> <p>Jobs created/safeguarded</p>

8 Forward Strategy

TBC

Appendix X: Consultation Events

Appendix X: Detailed RAZ Proposals

A1 - Empowering Cumbrian Communities

Rationale:

Implementation of the RAZ will depend upon the engagement of people in the process of social, economic and environmental regeneration. Whilst there will be people and communities who are already engaged, it is important that the RAZ process is relevant and accessible to a far broader number of people and communities if discernable change is to occur in the Rural economy. Cumbria has a range of public and voluntary sector organisations already active in capacity building within both geographical and thematic communities. RAZ will offer a means of developing joint strategy and resource co-ordination to enable effective and cohesive projects to be further established. Drawing on the expertise of these organisations, a series of themes (or programmes) have been identified. Project activity will include:

- Capital projects, buildings and property for community social and economic development. Enabling the establishment of training and social enterprise centres at key locations within the rural area, providing focus for capacity building activities, development services and exchange of 'enterprise' ideas. Links could be created with the provision of affordable housing. Proposals include Crofton, Appleby Heritage and Trainine Centre and Lane Farm, Crooklands.
- Resourcing and co-ordinating community and group development work within communities. Enabling organisations with community empowerment remit to innovate, extend and co-ordinate their work within communities. This would include initiatives to develop 'animateurs' from within communities of interest and place, growing the impact of peer led capacity building. Proposals include, 'Rural Futures' a project to develop entrepreneurs within the farming community, the extension of services provided by VAC and the engagement of Housing Association expertise and capacity in community regeneration.
- Accessible and locally managed grant and finance structures. Enabling the establishment of co-ordinated community development finance initiatives and grant funds, increasing accessibility to financial resources for community organisations, micro businesses and individuals who otherwise face difficulty in accessing support. Proposals include a Community and Asset Reinvestment Trust (CART), A Community Regeneration Fund, building upon the success of the Community Recovery Fund and innovative ways of engaging communities through 'Loan Circles', 'Community Chests and non sterling based trading.'
- Engaging communities in local decision making. Enabling significantly increased community participation within key local community plans such as Parish Plans, Market Town Plans and Community Strategies. Proposals include development work with Parish and Town Councils, second and third tier Local Authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships, developing participation strategies and enhanced co-ordination and co-operation between local decision making structures.
- Empowering rural young people and rural women. Enabling the potential of two key communities to be realised, who face particular barriers to participating in regeneration activity and are thus under represented. Proposals include innovative projects from the Cumbria Youth Alliance and the Cumbria Rural Women's Network seeking to develop personal confidence and capacity, representation and enterprise through peer and network led approaches.
- Information and communications technology in community empowerment.. Enabling ICT to be embedded in community led regeneration. Proposals include the transfer of experience from the Alston Wired Up Communities project to other communities and further development of the function of CREDITS centres.

Investment in these themes will result in a series of community assets, (or 'foundations') upon and through which other projects for sustainable regeneration can be built and developed. They will enable significant uplift in grant take up from programmes such as Leader +, ERDP, Objective 2 etc.

Innovations required:

Integration of grant and finance structures; Development of animateurs from within communities and accountable to those communities; Methods for increasing co-operation and co-ordination between Community Support organisations, securing funding for core activities which will reduce competitiveness between organisations; Delegation of responsibility to Community Support Organisations for the development and co-ordination of programme areas.

Total Cost

Resources available

Lead organisation and partners:

VAC CVSs + Newton Rigg, FBAS, Westmoreland County Agricultural Society, National Trust, Local Strategic Partnerships, Parish and Town Councils

Links with other proposals:

Strong links with Objective 2 Rural EDZ proposal which includes local rural resource centres as venue for exchange of business ideas. These could provide a focus for animateurs as well as a longer-term investment in the process of developing peer group approaches to new rural businesses.

Outputs and Impacts:

Outputs

Impacts

B1 – Environment and Access

Rationale:

The Cumbrian environment and landscapes are renowned for their high quality and international importance. Air Quality in general is high as might be expected of a rural county. Soil quality has been impaired by use of fertilisers and there is a need for improved husbandry with attention being paid to nitrate and other mineral balances. The most urgent need for action concerns the county's freshwaters. The rivers and lakes present many major, large-scale challenges in terms of water quality. It is for its varied landscapes that Cumbria finds a place in the public imagination. The varied attributes of these areas – their scenic character, the characteristic vegetation and wildlife, the distinctive local character of their buildings and other heritage elements, such as dry stone walls – account for much of their appeal and underpin the major tourist industry of the county. The wealth of wildlife is recognised by an array of national and international designations reflecting important habitats and species.

The value of the cultural heritage is reflected in Areas of Outstanding Beauty, the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks and the proposed nomination of the Lake District as a cultural landscape of World Heritage Status. Designations afford important protection for these environmental assets although over the years they have been in steady decline in response to sweeping agriculture changes, neglect and development pressures. Increasingly these assets are seen as providing opportunities for public investment to restore their quality. For instance, the government target to bring Sites of Special Scientific Interest to a good quality condition by 2010 is providing such an impetus. Likewise the World Heritage proposal is a mechanism to help focus action on longstanding problems such as the declining quality of the lakes, overgrazing of the uplands and footpath maintenance on the fells. The move to open up land for public access, through the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000, is a key driver for the coming decade. Improved access to the countryside is of crucial importance to the tourism industry and needs to be integrated with management so that they complement the wildlife habitats and landscape value that they exploit. The environmental challenge, post FMD, is to bring about rural recovery that identifies and addresses the key environmental issues facing the county and helps restore the high quality of our environmental assets. The solutions found need to be sustainable in terms of the local communities and economies that are involved. The public investment involved must yield public benefit in terms of quality food, environmental gain – restored heritage, more wildlife – and public access. The Rural Action Zone offers an opportunity for action around a number of key themes:

Restoring our Freshwaters: The river valleys and catchments of the county, and the necklace of lakes associated with them, provide a focus for 'rainbow' projects that bring together water quality and resources, soil erosion, flood control, river habitat and species enhancement, angling and access concerns, identify existing uses, problems and opportunities as a basis for conservation remediation and development works and deliver integrated solutions. This will be the lakes which, are arguably the most important resource in the county and where the Stillwaters Project has already made a start. The Restoring Eden project is the river-based frontrunner but others, such as the Derwent and the rivers of the south of the county, deserve to follow. There is scope for linkage and synergy with existing Market Town initiatives.

A fresh start for fell farming: the traditional way of life of fell farming communities, in decline for so long, has now reached a turning point. There is an opportunity to address issue of overgrazing through restocking at significantly lower stocking levels. English Nature has a number of proposals ready to run now. There is a need to rebuild hefted flocks and focus on higher quality food and more local marketing. New systems of funding and support are needed now to build upon existing ESA and CSS schemes, to deliver this. Fencing and other capital investment is needed and has to be done in ways that are sensitive to landscape concerns. Likewise farmers need help in providing the greater access to moorland that the Government is seeking..

Changing Lowland Grassland: The core FMD affected area of the North Cumbrian lowlands in Eden and Solway needs assistance to rebuild its farming with a greater incentive for environmentally-sensitive farming. A key focus will be a pilot agri-environment scheme offering opportunities to intensify lowland grassland and trial an alternative future for lowland pastoral areas. Other projects need to cluster around this to maximise the value of this holistic approach.

Wildlife & Tourism Experiences: There are opportunities to develop sustainable tourism experiences focussing on the wildlife assets of Cumbria. There is already strong support for a proposal to create, on a landscape scale, a major wildlife and tourism experience in the Solway area and link it to the heritage coast AONB. The aim is to create, around the internationally important peatlands, new marginal wetlands and reedbeds and create a tourist infrastructure of access roads, hotel accommodation, an interpretation centre and wetland access walks. Many other opportunities on a smaller scale exist.

A wealth of wildlife: The recently published Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been produced by a vibrant partnership of over 120 organisations and is Cumbria's commitment to the UK BAP. Using the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan as a focus, there is a need to direct resources towards gaps in funding delivery of parts of the BAP, especially as regards opportunities to bring wildlife closer to people and creating nature reserves. Applications for funding are encouraged to help implement the Plan.

Access for all: farmers and landowners need help in delivering the requirements of the the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 over the coming decade and existing network of access routes, footpaths, and greenways needs to be developed to underpin a greener, more sustainable tourism. Cumbria's Rights of way network needs to be of the highest quality to encourage visitors to return to some of the best walking and riding in the country. A strategic and innovative approach is needed that integrates with other environmental and tourist initiatives, such as those listed above, and takes into account the carrying capacity of the environment. A number of high-profile projects are needed as beacons of what can be achieved. (crosslink with proposal)

Farming Advice & Facilitation: there is a need to offer a comprehensive best practise advice and facilitation service to underpin the countywide sustainable recovery of the industry. The idea is to build on the existing FBAS service and the pilot agency-funded regional facilitation project and offer these services more widely. Output will take the form of integrated Business Plans for farms that cover both farming and environmental aspects, advice on viable options and opportunities for funding and support over time in securing such support.

The RAZ should invite projects that contribute to the delivery of these themes. All projects should deliver quantifiable environmental, economic and social outputs and outcomes and should be subject to an environmental appraisal.

Total Costs:

Resources available:

Lead organisation and partners

CBLA ;Countryside Agency; Countryside Management Bodies (e.g.Eden Rivers Trust, East Cumbria Countryside Project); Cumbria Wildlife Trust; English Nature; Environment Agency; Forestry Commission; Lake District National Park Authority; National Trust; National Farmers Union; RSPB

Links with other proposals

Agri-environment Fresh Start programme – C1; Forestry futures – B2; Diversification of tourism product – F1; Farm based business Regeneration Package – C2

Outputs and Impacts:

Outputs

Impacts

<p>B2 - Forest Futures</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <p>The Forest Futures sustainable woodland development programme is a key mechanism in taking forward the "Cumbria Woodland Vision". Prepared on behalf of the Cumbria Woodlands Management Committee, this Plan is part of an evolutionary process for a new phase of the former Cumbria Broadleaves Project and is designed to add further value to Cumbria's woodland resource by expanding its delivery of practical sustainable development outputs under a single umbrella. Objectives of both the Forest Futures and Woodlands Vision are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and manage woodland in a sustainable way for the benefit of communities, the economy, nature conservation and landscape. • Conserve and enhance Cumbria's existing woodland resource. • Significantly increase woodland cover, small copses and individual trees. <p>Forest Futures will focus activity on three core priority areas - Woodland Creation, Woodland Management and Business Development Support serving to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversification/ exit routes for reducing scale and intensity of agricultural operations • Non-market benefits to existing livestock businesses through increased local supply of timber, materials for shelter, fencing and renewable energy • Enhanced income through recreation and tourism opportunities where public access is encouraged • Where marginal farms are disposed of, an opportunity exists for purchase as community forests, held in a land-bank for planting. • Enhancing and protecting the environment - woodlands can contribute to biodiversity and help to sustain the landscape, protect water quality and soils. They can also be used as carbon sinks - reducing the impact of climate change. <p>These measures will overcome the low economic return of woodland in short-term and will reinforce other emerging projects such as The Carlisle-Eden Partnership Eden Safaris Concept. In addition there is an opportunity to develop an extensive community forest on areas most affected by FMD, particularly on areas in the north and west of the county previously afforested. The proposals would develop those in the Cumbria Woodland Vision to reflect changed circumstances but would operate largely outside the National Parks. They are based on the realisation that the current intensive grazing regimes may no longer be viable and there's a need to create attractive but radically new landscapes and economies in the long term. Within the Cumbria High Fells, further proposals to revert some of the valley sides to native woodland would be implemented. Where marginal farms are disposed of, an opportunity exists for their purchase as part of the community forest project, and then held in a land bank for planting.</p> <p>Innovations required: Working with local communities to develop woodland plans. Retraining for farmers and land managers in techniques of forest management. A single rate of planting grant per hectare, with no differentiation between broadleaves and conifers, regardless of planting area.</p> <p>Total Cost</p> <p>Resources available</p> <p>Lead organisation and partners: Forestry Commission. Cumbria Broadleaves in association with Cumbria Woodland Forum</p> <p>Links with other proposals: <i>Farm Business Regeneration Package (C2)</i> - will identify potential beneficiaries through diversification consultancy advice service. The Cumbria Forest could complement proposals to develop other alternative land-uses in these areas such as wildlife refuges, energy crops and tourism developments.</p> <p>Outputs and Impacts: <u>Outputs</u></p> <p><u>Impacts</u></p>

C1 - Agri-Environmental 'Fresh-start' Programme

Rationale:

The extent of the foot and mouth outbreak in Cumbria gives a unique opportunity for a "fresh start" for agri-environmental schemes. With agri-environment payments forming a key part of the recommendations of the Future of Food and Farming Commission report Cumbria is in a unique position to pilot schemes that may be operated more widely in future.

Lowland Land Management Scheme – intensive pasture

Lowland grassland areas have become increasingly specialised for livestock and milk production with loss of mixed farming systems and intensification of grass use. Despite this, both lowland livestock and dairy farmers have shown little return for their investment and the sectors have continued to contract in numbers and increase in size and intensity. Foot and mouth has given many farmers in Cumbria the chance to reassess their businesses but so far no agri-environmental scheme has specifically targeted the intensive livestock and dairy sector to provide them with a choice of less intensive production in return for environmental payments.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme special project

A Countryside Stewardship Scheme Special Project is currently being developed by the DEFRA Rural Development Service at Penrith in conjunction with the national DEFRA Countryside Management Division. Funding will be provided through existing DEFRA Countryside Stewardship regional budgets and it is expected that this will provide additional options to lowland producers for reversion of intensive pasture. This, however, will be a specialist option which is likely to have take up amongst a limited number of producers.

RSPB/English Nature Proposals

RSPB and English Nature have put together a more wide-ranging scheme covering a menu of payments on intensive pasture land. This is intended to give commercial dairy farmers a more economically attractive environmental scheme than the current Countryside Stewardship scheme and the proposal is for this to be piloted in both Cumbria and Devon. The additional options would be combined with some existing Countryside Stewardship prescriptions to deliver a package of measures which could offer opportunities to intensify lowland grassland, defragment remnant habitats, and trial an alternative future for lowland pastoral areas. RSPB/English Nature with the support of the National Farmers Union are seeking national DEFRA funding and support for this project in addition to existing Countryside Stewardship budgets.

Sustainable Restocking for the Fells

This proposal has arisen from discussions about how best to help hill farmers recover from foot and mouth particularly those on common land. The project is proposed to be led by English Nature in conjunction with Cumbria Farm Link and the aim of the project will be to stock upland farmland and common land in Cumbria at environmentally and economically viable levels and to rebuild hefted and traditional breed sheep flocks. The project will operate within the Lake District High Fells, the upland parts of the Penrith Spur and the Cumbrian North Pennines with targeting towards, but not exclusively, within common land. It is proposed that the scheme will be available to those directly affected by stock losses as a result of foot and mouth disease and also to all farmers affected by FMD by disruption to markets, stock movements and traditional stock management. Activities would include:

- An advisory service to develop economically and environmentally sustainable restocking proposals at the whole farm, or whole common scale.
- Support for the re-hefting of flocks through grant assistance for shepherding, stock handling infrastructure, fencing if considered appropriate and infrastructure such as cattle grids.
- The provision of environmental payments for farmers through existing English Nature Wildlife Enhancement Schemes, Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

This scheme, particularly the grant assistance will be delivered alongside the farm business regeneration package described in C2 and may also consider payments for local or traditional breeds of livestock which are part of the agri-environment provisions of the EU Rural Development Regulation but not currently made use of within existing UK agri-environment schemes.

Demonstration Projects

The Curry Report on the Future of Food and Farming is likely to influence future Government strategy for agriculture. The Cumbria Rural Action Zone will seek to promote a range of demonstration farms linked in with the Curry Report recommendations.

Linking agri-environment benefits with the branding of Cumbrian produce and livestock

The Cumbria RAZ will seek to use the benefits of existing and new agri-environmental schemes within Cumbria coupled with Farm Business Regeneration schemes to improve the animal health profile of the County, to better market and brand Cumbrian produce and livestock. This to include help for the development of the organic sector.

Farm Waste Disposal

Schemes will be encouraged to help farmers develop more sustainable farm waste disposal options including synthetic waste and carcass disposal.

Innovations required:

Total Cost:

Resources available

Lead organisation:

Cumbria Farm Link, English Nature, Royal Society of Protection of Birds, National Farmers Union, Newton Rigg College.

Links with other proposals:

Food B rand Cumbria E1 proposal. Farm based business regeneration package C2. The CART initiative, a component of Empowering Cumbrian Communities A1 could provide a source of funding for purchase of key farm holdings as demonstration projects (e.g. hefted flock preservation)

Outputs and Impacts:

Outputs

Impacts

C2 - Farm Based Business Regeneration Package

Rationale:

The foot and mouth crisis has resulted in a devastating loss of income to farmers, particularly those that were not culled out and had to survive through over ten months of stringent movement restrictions a number of which are still in place. Farmers that were culled out are having to rebuild their businesses and have also had a period without income during the restocking period. Reports such as the Curry report on the Future of Food and Farming stress the need for farmers to increase their efficiency but the industry has suffered from falling incomes since 1995. This, and the cash flow crisis created by foot and mouth, has put the industry in a poor position to make the necessary reinvestment for the future.

Farming Connect Cumbria

One of the key proposals for farm business regeneration within Cumbria is a proposal for a five year programme of integrated farm business and environmental advice coupled with a programme of grants for improving farm infrastructure and viability with benefits to the environment, animal health and welfare, and biosecurity.

Advice Programme

The advice programme will enhance and if necessary replace the current national Farm Business Advisory Service and make it more suitable for the requirements of Cumbrian farmers post foot and mouth. The scheme would therefore require funding to "top up" existing FBAS monies and to link it with environmental advice to maximise the potential benefits to the farm business. It is proposed that the scheme would be accessed through Cumbria Farm Link who would operate an integrated farm advice service working closely with English Nature, the Environment Agency, DEFRA (through the Cumbria Rural Development Service), the Forestry Commission and other agencies. This would facilitate the entry of the farm into existing environmental schemes where appropriate and facilitate access to existing England Rural Development Plan schemes. It would also crucially allow the farmer to access a menu of new Cumbria RAZ funded farm improvement grants tailored to the needs of Cumbrian farmers, a sample list of which follows:

Grants to improve farm infrastructure

These would include investment in infrastructure to meet farm assurance criteria thus improving the marketing ability of the farmer and reducing environmental impact. This would include grants for livestock housing, waste management including carcass disposal, nutrient budgeting schemes, animal health schemes, stock traceability, animal welfare, flock re-hefting (linked in with C1 proposal) and small scale habitat improvement schemes not able to be funded from other packages. The farmer would be facilitated through the grant application process and also be signposted to other services such as training, marketing cooperatives and buying groups and to the England Rural Development Programme grants where appropriate. Cumbria Farm Link would also act as the gateway to planning advice services.

Improving Collaboration in the supply chain and the Marketing of Cumbrian Livestock and Cumbrian produce

Cutting costs and improving returns from the market are key to the future profitability of farming in the County. The Cumbria RAZ would therefore seek to:

- Develop existing buying groups, labour/machinery rings and marketing groups and promote new groups where these are not in existence.
- Encourage developments in the red meat marketing structure in Cumbria particularly collaboration between farmers and adding value to meat products
- Encourage the development of processing and added value facilities within the County particularly for dairy and red meat products.
- Promoting schemes which improve the health status of Cumbrian livestock which could be used as a marketing tool as well as the direct benefits to animal welfare and biosecurity.

Cumbria Sheep Strategy

Cumbria is a major producer of sheep, both finished for the slaughter market and for sale of store and breeding sheep. As well as marketing, farmers might also be assisted in improving their economic returns by a range of activities involving cooperation between sheep breeders. As an example, the strategy could include group breeding schemes and performance testing of hill rams linked in with improvements to carcass quality and disease resistance. The Strategy could also incorporate a more formalised association of Cumbria sheep breeders to coordinate both marketing and breed development.

Farm Business Diversification

With little funds for investment, farmers may need additional help over and above the existing England Rural Development Plan schemes to develop alternative business enterprises on their farms. The Cumbria Rural Action Zone should seek to top up existing funding where necessary to enable schemes to happen and provide funding for projects where ERDP funds are insufficient or not appropriate.

Skills Development

Farmers may need new skills to develop their businesses, for example, by using computers to improve record keeping. A central signposting service to all relevant training that might be available within the County would help reduce confusion about the various courses that are currently available and the Cumbria RAZ should seek to identify areas where training is not currently available and facilitate training providers to fill any gaps.

Innovations required:

Ability of planning system to reflect community well-being issues in drafting development plans and making planning control decisions

Total cost:

Resources available

Lead organisation and partners:

Small Business Service, Farm Business Advice Service – who already deliver one-to-one business advice

Links with other proposals:

Food Brand Cumbria E1 – will develop market penetration of products arising through diversification, quality assurance *Empowering Cumbrian Communities A1* – strong links with Rural Futures element – which will develop entrepreneurship skills in farming community by developing self-awareness

Outputs and Impacts:

Outputs

Impacts

D1 – Agricultural Support Industry Regeneration Package
Rationale:
<p>The agri-services sector is an extremely diverse group. Industries within the sector include Animal Pharmacists, Animal Feed Manufacturers, Hauliers – Livestock, Hauliers – Feed, Hauliers – Foodstuffs (e.g Milk), Hauliers – Fuel, Vets, Abattoirs, Animal Marts., Equipment Manufacturers, Equipment Suppliers, Fertiliser Blender and Distributors., Agricultural Co-operatives, Agricultural Contractors.</p>
<p>At the start of the FMD crisis the agricultural support industry had nobody to represent them unlike the farming and tourism industries. This gap was filled by the new Chamber of Commerce supported by the SBS during the crisis. It is now ready to be formalised through the Chamber with an Affinity Group comprising businesses in all the sub sectors identified above, a Steering Group with a representative of each of the sub sectors plus arrange of specific working groups covering Animal Feed Manufacturers, Animal Pharmacist and Vets, Animal Marts and Abattoirs, Hauliers, Agricultural Contractors, Equipment Manufacturers and Suppliers, Fertiliser Blenders and Distributor, Agricultural co-operatives. This structure will be formalised and project managed by the Chamber, who will oversee the research, implementation and monitoring of the programme necessary to re-engineer the agricultural services sector and help to instil confidence in Cumbria.</p>
<p>Response to the crisis by this sector has shown that there is an acceptance and willingness by many businesses that practice must change in many areas. The sector is now committed to quality products and services, innovation, sharing best practices and collaborative working. If successful this will result in a stronger business base and a sector less dependant on agriculture, a more effective and skilled workforce, model and modern business practices with high quality infrastructure, and attractive to well educated and qualified people.</p>
<p>The initial priorities for Agri Support Sector are as follows:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management (as described above) • Quality Assurance systems – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auction marts and abattoirs with a code of animal welfare practice, traceability, extend membership of FABBL. • Farm health plans to be endorsed by veterinary pharmacists enhancing livestock value whilst ensuring the highest environmental protection. • The introduction of nutrient management planning (as highlighted in the Curry Report). • The introduction of low nitrogen best fertiliser practice. • Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bio-security for auction marts and abattoirs including upgrade of lorry washes, modern disinfectant equipment. • Equipment Suppliers Gold Standard will ensure the equipment supplied will meet new standards throughout the agricultural industry. It will make the sector more technologically sound and able to take advantage of the great advances in new technology that have been missed to date. • re-cycling waste and rainwater, energy conservation at the marts. • EID and diversification into tourism. • Skills Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved management advice for auction marts and abattoirs covering diversification, business planning and marketing. - NVQ style training programmes for key staff. - Skills development for auctions and abattoirs including IT development and links to DEFRA and BCMS, with an extension of Pentalk and an email network for farms and marts. • Research and Development. This is a key element of many of the above projects.
<p>Innovations required: Establishment of formal body representative of all the agri services sector committed to quality products and services, innovation, sharing best practices and collaborative working.</p>
<p>Total Cost</p>
<p>Resources available</p>
<p>Lead organisation and partners: Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Agri-Service Sector Group) - SBS</p>
<p>Links with other proposals: Agri-environment 'fresh-start' programme C1, Farm Based Business Regeneration C2, Food Brand Cumbria E1, Cumbria Learning for the Future H1</p>
<p>Outputs</p>
<p>Impacts</p>

<p>E1 – Food Brand Cumbria</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <p>While existing branding schemes have shown substantial success, there remains a post FMD need to re-establish credibility of brand to overcome negative imagery viewed nationally and internationally. Farm Health Plans with annual audits linked to controlled restocking of "disease free" animals can establish a Cumbrian "disease free" zone and the "Fresh Start" and Farm Based Business Regeneration Packages will result in high quality livestock production, improved animal management practices, enhanced equipment and buildings. Through such mechanisms Cumbria should become synonymous with quality.</p> <p>A programme of further work needs to be implemented beginning with research of consumer attitudes to Cumbria. When the branding has been decided a major generic marketing campaign will need to be established. This will establish an integrated network of marketing centres, abattoirs, processing facilities etc to give farmers maximum choice as regards route for sale of product and which can bring back to Cumbria, the processing where possible. Early action is planned relating to merchandising, PR and awareness of Cumbria as a centre for quality food productions. This will be supported by three main groups of activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research designed to inform the planned future programmes relating to a highly targeted marketing programme. The research will look into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current product availability ▪ Perceptions of Cumbria and its food ▪ Niche market opportunities ▪ Bulk market opportunities ▪ Local, regional and national markets ▪ Retail opportunities ▪ Channels to market ▪ Link to other research that has been carried out • Distinctly Cumbria support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency has lead this SRB bid to gain funding in both capital and revenue terms to assist rural businesses. This work will continue through RAZ. • Urgent Projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Farmers market development ▪ Farm retail outlets ▪ Growth of Cumbria Fellbred activity ▪ Investigation into organic markets ▪ Courting Supermarkets locally ▪ Amongst others
<p>Innovations required:</p> <p>Rolling out benefits of branding initiatives across all of Cumbria, not just in areas designated for these funding streams. Unified Cumbria wide approach (albeit sub-brands – Fellbred/ Made in Cumbria also be encouraged).</p> <p>Establish Cumbria Food Marketing and Branding Steering Group – a small effective group of experts within the food industry tasked to manage and enable a project manager to deliver group objectives, plan, public relations and sales, implement market research and manage the future marketing plan. overview all marketing and create economies of scale, minimise duplication of activity through a joined up approach to marketing, form a section within any rural development company for Cumbrian Food Marketing and monitor results.</p> <p>Use RAZ status to make special case to overcome EU restrictions on locality marketing (eg woollen produce cannot be locally branded) – Exemptions have been achieved for Scottish island produce and similar freedoms should be achieved through RAZ.</p> <p>Encourage easier direct sales from farms, the more proportionate applications of health and safety regulations should be experimented with in the RAZ.</p>
<p>Total cost:</p>
<p>Resources Available</p>
<p>Lead organisation and partners:</p> <p>Cumbria Food Marketing and Branding Steering Group – Cumbria Chamber of Commerce; a countywide organisation with no specific sectoral links to lead on Marketing and Branding Steering Group; Chairing group of Specialists.</p>
<p>Links with other proposals:</p> <p>Strong links with Distinctly Cumbrian Leader + bid designed to create accessible virtual market place for Cumbrian produce, local infrastructure to access this and increased capacity of local producers to capitalise on these improvements.</p>
<p>Outputs</p>
<p>Impacts</p>

F1 - Diversification of Tourism Product

Rationale:

Tourism plays an essential role in rural Cumbria, contributing nearly £1bn each year to Cumbria's economy. Investment in competitive tourism product continues at a significant rate both overseas and within the UK at a time when Cumbria's tourism industry has been left weakened by the Foot and Mouth Crisis. To drive the industry forward and maintain Cumbria's position as a world class tourism destination, new products and marketing methods will need to be delivered through the Rural Action Zone. The success of Cumbria's tourism industry is inextricably linked to the county's unique natural and built heritage. The vision is to promote new, innovative and world class tourism attractions, accommodation and infrastructure which reinforce and complement the county's sustainable development of its historic, cultural and environmental assets. To capitalise on these opportunities, enhanced product, services and infrastructure will be required across the county. A step change is required to extend beyond current core markets, exploit new tourism market and development opportunities and drive rural and geographical diversification.

A targeted approach must be adopted, which satisfies market demand and meets Cumbria's economic, social and environmental needs, reflected in the Regional Tourism Strategy. Investment in new product development outside the Lake District National Park will be required, complemented by investment in improved facilities within the Park. Through targeted action and careful assessment of product and market needs, the process of renewal and regeneration will be accelerated, providing tangible benefits for the rural economy. To realise this potential, the economic benefits of tourism to the county will be increased through a range of new initiatives.

Feasibility Studies

New market opportunities will emerge during the life of the RAZ, and it is critically important that new products and markets are developed in a targeted way, to meet clear demand. As such, a range of feasibility studies will be required to guide new development and ensure that maximum economic, social and environmental benefit is secured for the county. These feasibility studies will enable the most appropriate and sustainable projects to be identified and brought forward for funding under other the elements of this proposal. Proposals include:

- Development of the cruise ship market in West Cumbria and Furness, underpinning rural and geographical diversification;
- Build on Cumbria's wildlife and habitat opportunities, to ensure effective visitor management and secure sustainable economic benefit;
- Use of a round Cumbria rail-trail, incorporating the Cumbria Coastal and Settle-Carlisle Railways, as a basis for product and market and infrastructure development around Cumbria;
- Development of the Solway Peatlands project as a major new eco-tourism attraction outside the Lake District National Park, to extend Cumbria's world-class environmental credentials.

Accommodation

New accommodation will be required to meet acknowledged market demands and strengthen the product offer in emerging tourism destinations. Such development will be viewed against a backdrop of quality enhancement and development measures for the accommodation sector, proposed under F2, and within the context of the overarching marketing and ICT strategy detailed in F3 and F4. Development priorities include:

- Expanding the visitor accommodation stock in developing tourism areas outside the Lake District National Park to capitalise on related infrastructural investment and to access priority UK and overseas visitor markets;
- Expansion of Cumbria's business and conferencing capacity, to include accessible high quality facilities in strategic locations.

Attractions

There remains clear potential to develop the network of visitor attractions and events within the County, particularly to provide an enhanced geographical and seasonal spread of tourism benefits. New development proposals will come forward across the county, generating tangible economic, social and environmental benefits. It is vital that such development is guided by market intelligence and is carried forward within the context of proposals F2, F3 and F4, to maximise their positive impact. Key priorities for development will include:

- Capitalising on the county's rich history, culture and environmental heritage to generate additional income and visitors, particularly in emerging tourism destinations, through projects which are tailored to meet the demands of the county's current and emerging visitor markets;
- Adding value to previous investment in tourism facilities and environmental enhancement, through development of complementary products e.g. The Tall Ships Project at Whitehaven, which will contribute further to the process of renewal and regeneration;
- Expanding the range of wildlife and countryside-based tourism attractions and visitor facilities, to provide increased access, understanding and awareness through visitor interaction. A thematic approach would enable grouping of sites / attractions at a scale which would create significant new attractions e.g. the Solway Peatlands project;
- Developing projects which capitalise on Cumbria's key target market segments and are able to meet the potential offered by tourism growth markets.

Infrastructure

To strengthen the performance of the accommodation and attractions sectors, and maximise the impact of new product development and marketing activity, it will be necessary to invest in tourism infrastructure. Projects will address both strategic weaknesses in current infrastructure provision and increase Cumbria's capacity to support new visitor markets and products. Projects might include:

- Coordinated development of the walking and cycling network within the County, building on key strategic routes and providing a framework for product development and marketing;
- Product development linked to a high quality integrated transport network, including implementation of a round Cumbria rail-trail and supporting sustainable travel within Cumbria;
- Focused environmental enhancement measures which directly benefit the visitor experience, and enhancing visitor contributions to practical conservation and development, through such initiatives as the Lake District Tourism and Conservation Partnership.

Innovations required:

Total cost:

Resources available

Lead organisation and partners:

Cumbria Tourist Board, NWDA, Local Authorities

Links with other proposals:

C2, B2, G1, G2, F2, F3, F4, F5

Outputs

Impacts

F2 - Cumbrian Tourism Product Enhancement Programme
<p>Rationale:</p> <p>Visitors are growing increasingly demanding in their expectations of the whole tourism experience, in particular the need for high quality accommodation, attractions, catering, customer service, tourism information and the ambience of the area. Furthermore, the National Trust and others have identified that people are more interested in the context of the place they are visiting than ever before.</p> <p>This discernment, coupled with a growing experience of overseas and the development of competing UK destinations is putting more pressure on Cumbria to hold on to its market share. However, it also creates more opportunities for the local economy to benefit from tourists. Quality grading schemes reveal that Cumbria has, in the past, had some of the highest quality tourism product in the country. It is essential that this is maintained if we are to retain a competitive advantage. In order to drive up quality standards, at a time when the industry has few reserves to invest, it is important that a comprehensive support package, including financial aid, is available to improve the visitor's enjoyment of staying and experiencing the County. Support will be available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the standards of accommodation and visitor facilities offered in defined sectors for both the business and leisure tourist. ▪ Increase the quality of visitor attractions in certain target areas particularly where the industry is less well developed and the environment is appropriate. ▪ Improve the operation of attractions by providing better information, visitor interaction, identifying scope to increase opening hours and lengthening the season, where appropriate. ▪ Improve access for those less able, non-car users and coaches where appropriate, and provide advice to businesses on their responsibilities, capitalising on opportunities in information technology provision. ▪ Improve customer care and understanding of visitor needs by providing accredited training, as a precondition of receipt of support. Recipients will also be encouraged to work towards meeting the standards of a Responsible Tourism scheme thereby emphasising the industry's awareness of its environmental, social and economic responsibilities. ▪ Establish a "Fit for Purpose" approach for the regulation and development of the tourism industry. ▪ Improve the availability of quality transport and accommodation for tourism employees. ▪ Enhance the provision of tourism specific business advice ensuring the advice given fits with the regional tourism strategy. Tourism benchmarking activity will be encouraged to highlight best practice and areas for development through dedicated business advice.
<p>Innovations required:</p> <p>RAZ funding to deliver a comprehensive approach across the county, overcoming funding barriers; RAZ to legitimise agencies to operate an integrated and joined up approach to regulation that will also prevent oversupply of facilities in appropriate areas.</p>
Total cost:
Resources available
<p>Lead organisation and partners:</p> <p>Cumbria Tourism Board, NWDA, SBS, LSC and Local Authority</p>
<p>Links with other proposals:</p> <p>Diversification of Tourism Product F1; ICT Strategy for tourism in Cumbria F4; Enhanced Transport Experience G2; Cumbria Broadband ICT Initiative G3; Cumbria Learning for the future H1; NWDA ICT Infrastructure Study</p>
Outputs
Impacts

F3 - Lakes Plus
Rationale:
<p>Already Government funding to support marketing activity post FMD is showing considerable success and return on investment. Marketing evaluation research carried out by Cumbria Tourist Board shows that in 2001 a £1 million marketing campaign generated £70 million of expenditure in Cumbria. Over the next five years a co-ordinated marketing campaign at international and national level is required to help rebuild and sustain recovery of Cumbria's tourism industry. This same five year period provides an opportunity to significantly enhance the marketing and promotion of the whole of Cumbria, not just the famous Lake District brand. A variety of action is required to address the specific needs and opportunities of Cumbria's geographical areas and of the various tourism industry sectors. Marketing activities require rigorous monitoring and evaluation in order to measure effectiveness and impact and to inform future strategies and plans. Longer-term branding issues need to be informed by demonstration and pilot marketing projects. It is essential to identify existing and potential, viable and sustainable brands in order to provide a framework for future marketing investment. Specific needs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attracting visitors back to Cumbria post FMD through a sustained programme of targeted promotional activity aimed at key overseas and UK markets via Cumbria Tourist Board, local authorities and local tourism partnerships. ▪ Strengthening the awareness of Cumbria's key brands and it's world class environmental credentials. ▪ Undertaking a series of pilot promotions of underdeveloped tourism products, including lesser-known areas of Cumbria, wildlife/conservation holidays and other thematic campaigns. ▪ Advance strategic planning and promotion of threatened cultural and heritage activities in order to derive greater benefits for the local economy and communities. ▪ Alignment with and contribution to national and regional campaigns addressing cross boundary thematic opportunities and supporting international marketing campaigns. ▪ Utilisation of up to date technology and e-marketing techniques to directly benefit tourism businesses and to improve data collection and strategic planning.
Innovations required:
Total Cost:
Resources available
Lead organisation and partners: Cumbria Tourist Board, Area based tourism partnerships, Local Authority
Links with other proposals: All tourism 'F' projects, B1 Environment & Access Enhancement Programme; E1 Food Brand Cumbria G2 Enhanced Transport Experience
Outputs
Impacts

F4 – ICT Strategy for tourism in Cumbria (Modernising Tourism)

Rationale:

Cumbria is the best known tourism brand in the UK after London and yet the area is one of the worst served in terms of ICT infrastructure and uptake of applications in the whole country. This potentially puts Cumbria's tourism industry at a great disadvantage as it is estimated that by 2006 there will be 1.33 billion Internet users worldwide. People buying online is also forecast to increase from £143 million in 2001 to £446 million in 2005 and travel and tourism is expected to account for an increasing share of this rapidly growing market, rising from less than 10% in 1998 to 30% or more in 2003 (NUA research).

In the UK regions such as Scotland, Wales, Northumbria and Manchester have already developed world class Destination Management Systems with the input of public funding and they are therefore able to compete with destinations in USA, South Africa, Australia, Austria and Canada which already operate fully integrated online systems.

The management and dissemination of information for visitors is critical to the future of tourism and the FMD crisis highlighted serious shortcomings in Cumbria's visitor services infrastructure. To address these problems and provide a sound ICT framework on which to build sustained growth in Cumbria's tourism industry it is proposed that ICT networks (including broadband in due course) and applications are used to create a virtual Cumbrian Internet presence i.e. information on all tourism providers in the County is made available from one interactive point on the Internet. This project will closely liaise with the Cumbria ICT Broadband Initiative. This initiative, led by NWDA and Cumbria County Council will work to secure the rollout of broadband technology and the provision of affordable broadband services to communities in Cumbria.

The tool for delivering "virtual Cumbria" is a fully integrated Destination Management System (DMS) the main features of which include:

- A central database of tourist accommodation and attractions with a seamless link into online booking facilities, event calendars, video clips etc.
- A contact centre to manage business-to-business and business to consumer communication.
- Tourist information kiosks at strategic points e.g. key railway stations, tourist attractions etc.
- Access to travel and event information with the facility to buy tickets online. There is also the opportunity to integrate the DMS with a smart card system to enable visitors and local residents to use one card to travel on all the various forms of public transport throughout Cumbria.
- Reservation software facilities to enable providers to provide real time availability.

In order to improve business-to-business communication and collaboration the following projects are required to support the DMS and to strengthen the overall tourism product:

- A Tourist Information Centre virtual private network – enabling seamless communication and exchange of data between centres.
- E-learning and e-skills campaigns to improve ICT knowledge and skills; such campaigns will be developed in conjunction the Learning and Skills Council.
- An Industry Extranet – enabling tourism businesses to access market research and intelligence data, training manuals, business and management information etc.
- A customer relationship management system – which will integrate with the DMS and record past/potential customers and profile geographic, demographic and psychographic trends including travel behaviour, activities, interests and transaction history. This information will be made available to SMEs to assist them in business planning processes.
- Online purchasing of supplies.

the aforementioned ICT applications will raise industry standards and provide the mechanisms for businesses to make significant improvements in performance.

Innovations required:

This project will ensure Cumbria's tourism industry is skilled and equipped to undertake e-business in the most efficient and effective way through the provision of ICT infrastructure, networking, equipment and skills training.

Total cost

Resources available

Lead organisation and partners:

CTB in partnership with Cumbria County Council, Cumbria TB members, District Councils, English Tourism Council, Lancaster University, Lake District National Park Authority and SBS for Cumbria

Links with other proposals:

F4 fits with the following elements of NWDA's Regional Economic Strategy: B1 – Develop Growth Clusters
E1 – Image of the Region (Regional Tourism Destination Marketing).

Outputs

Impacts

F5 - Cultural and Creative Industries Expansion Package
Rationale:
<p>To strengthen the contribution of the cultural and creative industries to the economic and social life of rural Cumbria a range of developmental and support measures are needed. The main growth areas are design and visual arts, crafts industries, museums and galleries, and tourism linked businesses. There is a need for better networks, business skills and support for new and existing creative businesses, there is also a problem of creative talent moving out of the county and region, particularly in the audio visual, music and new media sub sections. Activities, such as festivals and showcase events need to be developed and sustained to help raise the profile of the cultural and creative industries in Cumbria. Key Themes for the Proposals are:</p> <p><i>Business Advice and Skills Development</i> - to facilitate the development of a climate supportive of those working in the cultural sector. Advice and guidance targeted at cultural sector businesses located and operating in rural Cumbria, designed to support and develop clusters of cultural business active in the arts and heritage. Activities will concentrate on improving innovation, strengthening business skills, particularly in the area of e-commerce and ICT. The sector is marked by the spread of relatively dispersed and isolated micro businesses. Activities will be designed to co-ordinate training, access to facilities and resources, networking and business advice and mentoring</p> <p><i>Product Development for the Creative Industries</i> - schemes to assist in the establishment of new businesses for 'new start' creative industry proposals and support networks through the appointment of a network of advisers within existing organisations. Market development advice and co-ordination via regional, national and international contact. Enhancement of existing businesses through access to advice and creative opportunity via ICT and networking. Develop a strategy to capitalise on the contribution of digital technologies to the economic and social life of rural Cumbria.</p> <p><i>Product Development for the Interpretative Sector</i> - schemes to assist museums and galleries, heritage attractions and local community groups to develop their skills and quality of product in the conservation and interpretation of the cultural heritage of Cumbria. Work to promote the contribution of new technologies to the cultural life of Cumbria, seeking to provide a vehicle for the development of a countywide access gateway to the rich resource of data, objects and documentation relating to the cultural heritage of rural Cumbria.</p> <p><i>Marketing and promotion</i> - to build on the success of the Spirit of Cumbria 2001 programme by focussing on the development of Cumbria as a 'Festival County'. Providing support and coordination for those strategically important Festivals and events that can contribute to the issues surrounding seasonality and staying visitors. Schemes to market and promote both the products of Cumbria's cultural and creative industry sector and the content of its cultural resources. This to include the identification of clusters appropriate to specialised marketing, the development of loan and purchase schemes for creative industry products and close working with existing agencies on a co-ordinated approach to using the cultural sector as an additional tool to attract inward investment.</p>
Innovations required:
Closer and integrated working between funding agencies, clearly linked through to overall RAZ strategy and Cumbria Cultural Strategy priorities. Flexibility within planning system to take account of impacts to community well-being in encouraging cultural business development.
Total Cost:
Resources available:
Lead organisation and partners:
CCC (Lead), Regional Arts Board, NW Regional Cultural Consortium, NWDA, District Councils and private sector
Links with other proposals:
F1 Diversification of the Tourism Product; F2 Cumbria Tourism Product Enhancement Scheme; F3 Lakes Plus
Outputs
Impacts

G2 - Enhanced Transport Experience

Rationale:

Transport is a key sector for the recovery of the rural economy following FMD. The aim is to enhance the visitor experience travelling in and around Cumbria. As part of the Local Transport Plan process the County Council has submitted a supplementary bid relating to FMD for 2002/3. This bid recognises the importance of accessibility, improving the visitor infrastructure and developing alternative green tourism opportunities as part of FMD recovery. The bid for £2.055m for 2002/3 consisted of four categories - public transport access improvements, recreational/visitor cycling facilities, pedestrian walking improvements and local economic support for jobs. This RAZ proposal is in addition to the supplementary bid and develops it further. It also includes a number of strategic transport proposals which provide the context for LTP plans.

Transport access/interchange improvements

- Develop high quality transport interchanges and services at key nodes such as main line and tourist related railway stations.
- Cycling facilities
- Develop opportunities for cycle tourism including Hadrian's Wall, Cumbria Cycleway and circular routes and links to local business and tourist attractions and develop cycling parking at railway stations and visitor facilities.
- Pedestrian/walking improvements
- Improve pedestrian routes in key visitor villages and from car parks, bus and rail stations to visitor attractions with particular regard to those with mobility difficulties.

Strategic Access

Rail

Seek acceleration of the West Coast Main Line improvements including high frequency stopping at Cumbrian stations. Improve rail line facilities on the Furness, the Cumbria coastal line and the Lakes Line to Windermere.

Air

Encourage the development of Carlisle airport with high quality connecting transport facilities/services.

Sea

Encourage the development of Barrow docking facility, Whitehaven and Workington as cruise and leisure sailing call in points with high quality connecting transport facilities/services.

Car

Implement a strategic tourism destination signing strategy incorporating motorway and gateway signs to improve visitor journeys into Cumbria. Provide adequate car parking as part of a comprehensive approach to visitor access to towns and villages including directional signing and interpretation of visitor attractions. However this must take account of planning considerations and not undermine, through car park provision, the very qualities which bring visitors to the area.

Bus

Develop real time information on core and feeder visitor bus routes.

Local access

Include hotels and caravan parks on public transport routes.

Innovations required:

Use of telematics for real time transport information including GPS and other technologies.

Total cost:

Resources available:

Lead organisation and partners:

Cumbria County Council; Cumbria Tourist Board; Countryside Agency; Lake District National Park Authority; North West Development Agency; Hadrian's Wall Heritage Partnership, Sustrans; Private sector transport providers

Links with other proposals:

Local Transport Plan 2001/2 - 2005 Supplementary Bid 1 - 2002/3

Outputs

Impacts

<p>H1 – Cumbria learning for the future</p> <p>Rationale:</p> <p>The Rural Action Zone Vision will require a step-change in the way people work and in their skills. Much of the rural economy especially tourism, draws on urban areas for its workforce and, conversely, many people who live in rural areas commute to urban areas for work. Thus, there is a strong inter-relationship, and hence inter-dependence, between economic activity, and hence learning and skills, across the County's rural and urban areas. The impact of the foot and mouth disease outbreak has resulted in an accelerated need to develop the skills and qualifications of both workforce entrants and of the workforce itself. Rural Cumbria, indeed the County as a whole, is characterised by worryingly low basic skills levels and a large lag in higher level qualifications. Cumbria also exhibits below the national average progression into higher education. In part the reasons are attributable to the predominance in the rural economy of agriculture and tourism which have historically not perceived a need for high level skills and qualifications. Rurality and remoteness may also impose barriers to access to learning. These low levels of skills have inevitably had a deleterious impact on businesses in the County.</p> <p>This accelerated need is made all the more urgent as before the foot and mouth outbreak a Performance and Innovation Unit Report on <i>Rural Economies</i> (December 1999) set out clearly that the farming industry needed to "become more skilled at understanding and responding to the needs of customer segments, managing supply chains, innovating and adapting rapidly to changing conditions and watching and learning from competitors". One of the objectives set out in the Government's Rural White Paper " <i>Our Countryside and the Future – a fair deal for rural England</i>" is to facilitate the development of dynamic, competitive and sustainable economies in the countryside, tackling poverty in rural areas through: helping rural businesses to succeed through improved skills, business support and better infrastructure; helping farmers to restructure (this requires additional learning support – in IT for example); targeted support for deprived rural areas; better services which combat poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>The Government's Task Force for the Hills recognised the need to develop research and higher level education in the management of the uplands: "That a continuing role and funding be given to a relevant institution to collate and disseminate in England, research and good practice in upland farming, learning from experience in Scotland and elsewhere in Europe" and "That a higher and further education institute be designated as a centre for the study of agriculture and multi-functional land management in the English uplands."</p> <p>Proposals</p> <p>Learning and skills development is a element of key recovery and regeneration – this includes support for the training and retraining of individuals within the workforce, whether in employment or not, whether in rural areas or not, in order to help them overcome change and access new opportunities.</p> <p>Major challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ creating demand for learning at all levels, but especially at higher levels, by both individuals and employers; ▪ making learning more accessible; ▪ improving the skills within businesses; ▪ developing the supply side by establishing new learning programmes and facilities which reflect the new imperatives; ▪ ensuring local research support for a range of disciplines associated with agriculture and multi-functional land management.
Innovations required:
<p>Lead organisation and partners: Cumbria Learning and Skills Council, working with the University of Central Lancashire, other further education providers and Connexions Cumbria.</p>
Total Cost:
Resources available
<p>Links with other proposals: The achievement of this proposal is an essential underpinning to the remainder of the RAZ.</p>
Outputs
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