

Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Programme

Business Plan

Phase One – Walking with Offa



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for the Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Partnership

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1 Introduction

Offa's Country stretches across the Welsh-English border from the North Wales coast to the Bristol Channel. It contains beautiful and special landscapes along with a string of economically peripheral and struggling border towns and villages. The four designated protected landscapes of the Brecon Beacons, Clwydian Range, Shropshire Hills and Wye Valley are connected by the ancient boundary of Offa's Dyke and the modern walking route of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Programme aims to turn the unique combination of national border, linear ancient monument and national trail into an opportunity to strengthen the visitor economy through encouraging more people to explore the varying landscapes, natural and cultural assets and local distinctiveness along and across the border.

The Programme has been developed under the Cross Border Memorandum of Understanding. The 2009 Welsh-English Border Strategic Regeneration Programme (funded by Welsh Assembly Government, Natural England and Advantage West Midlands) recommended sustainable tourism as an *'opportunity to develop a more sustainable rural economy based on the high quality natural and cultural assets of Offa's Dyke and the surrounding landscape'*.

The Programme has been developed to build on the WEB Strategic Regeneration Programme and its recommendation to Develop Sustainable Tourism. Its Delivery Plan identifies three broad activities:

- Increase accessibility and connectivity
- Strengthen local distinctiveness through links to the local community and economy
- Provide seamless information to visitors about both sides of the border

This Programme has integrated these activities within its projects and has been informed by the discussions which took place as part of the process in developing the WEB Strategic Regeneration programme.

2 The Partnership

The Programme involves a strategic partnership of bodies led by the four protected landscapes along the Welsh English Border;

- **Brecon Beacons National Park Authority,**
- **Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,**
- **Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**
- **Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,** plus
- **Offa's Dyke Path National Trail Partnership** which is led by Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and Local Authorities along the National Trail.

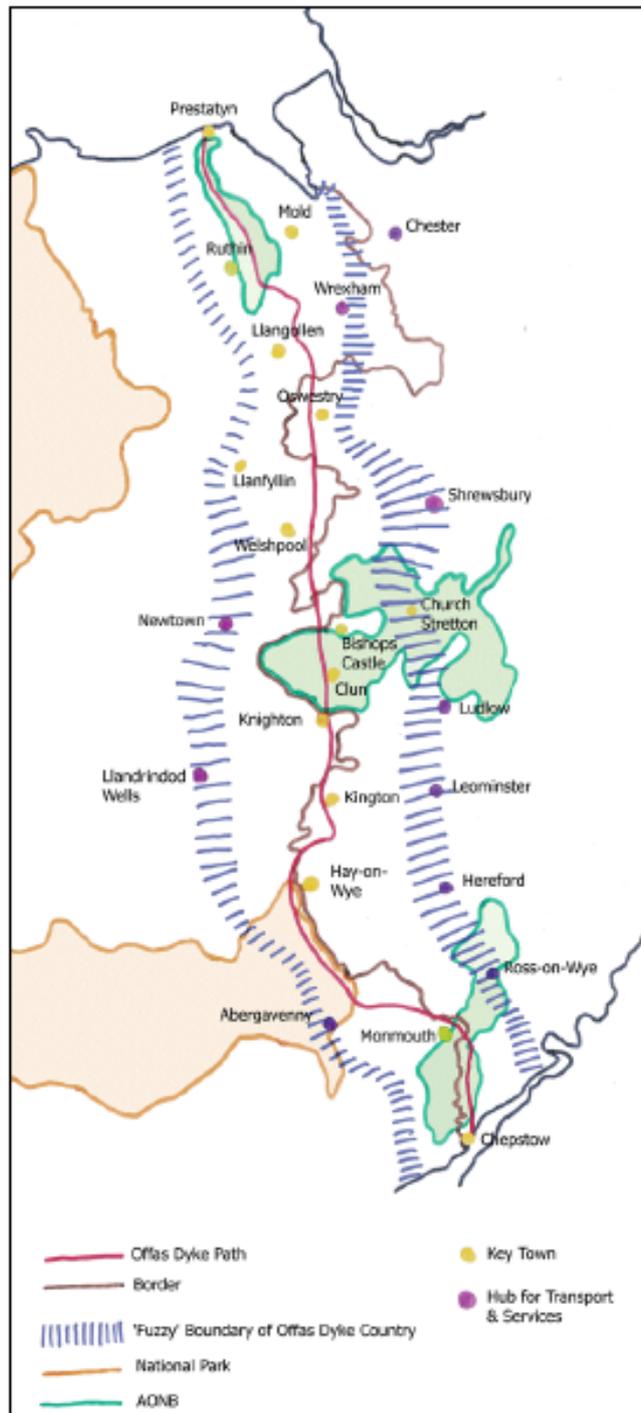
Figure 2. shows the Programme and Partnership structure diagrammatically.

The wider partnership involves: Government Office for the West Midlands, Welsh Assembly Government, West Midlands Leaders Board, Advantage West Midlands, The Tourism Partnerships for North, Mid and South East Wales, The Destination Management Partnerships for Shropshire and Herefordshire, Adventa, Glasu, relevant LEADER Local Action Groups in England and the University of Central Lancashire.

3 Offa's Country

The area was defined by the Strategic Regeneration Programme. It recommends using a 'fuzzy border' either side of the Welsh-English border at about 12-20 miles either side creating a corridor. The exact boundaries are felt to be flexible depending on what issue is being addressed and will depend upon key transport links, towns and villages, special landscapes and tourism assets. See summary map in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Map of Offa's Country



Welsh-English Border Strategic Regeneration Programme, Resources 4 Change

4 Programme Aim and Objectives

The Overall Programme Aim is:

- To improve the economy and sustainability of the Welsh-English border area by developing and promoting the sustainable tourism experience, based on the high quality natural and cultural assets of Offa's Country.

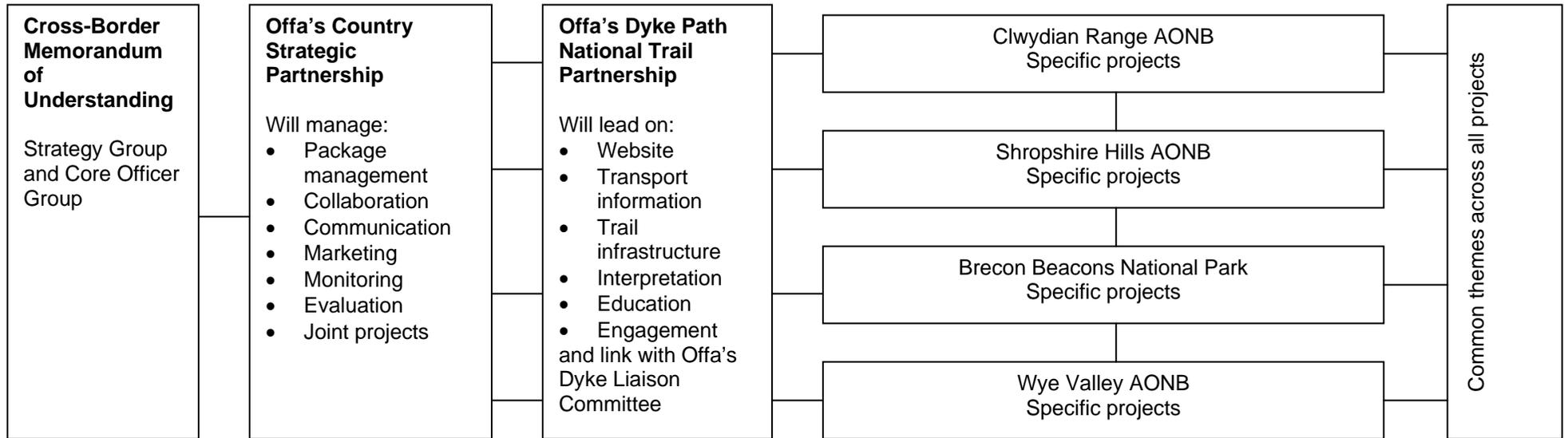
Its more specific objectives are:

- To improve the quality of the sustainable visitor experience across Offa's Country, with easier access and information, interesting interpretation, a range of excellent outdoor activity opportunities and good quality facilities.
- To encourage more repeat visits, recommendations and longer stays throughout the year in Offa's Country, motivated by its natural and cultural assets.
- To increase the average spend of visitors on sustainable local products and services, supporting new and existing isolated rural businesses along the border.
- To ensure the management of key natural tourism assets is more sustainable in future.
- To increase the proportion of visitors who use public or sustainable transport during their visits to Offa's Country.
- To raise the strategic profile of Offa's Country as a destination for sustainable tourism.

Phase One of the Programme has been entitled 'Walking with Offa'. Given the large area being addressed, the number of partners and the wide range of possible activities it has been decided to focus initially on the strongest offer – walking. Recreational walking is extremely popular, with the majority of visitors enjoying shorter or longer walks during their visits. For some it is their main focus over several days – if they are tackling Offa's Dyke Path or one of the other long distance routes. To achieve most impact the programme will focus on the infrastructure, information, interpretation, marketing and business engagement required to deliver a good walking product, alongside working to develop sustainable transport to access the walking offer.

Phase One will start in 2010 and run for three years. Further phases are planned to follow in subsequent years subject to identified needs, partnerships and funding availability.

Figure 2. Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Programme - Structure



Quantifying economic objectives

In order to quantify the economic impacts this programme aims to achieve through additional visitor days, longer stays and more visitor spend a basic Economic Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

Tourism data for the whole area is patchy but all areas have some form of economic impact of tourism data within the last five years. Not all use the same model and estimates have been made as to what proportion of each area is included within the fuzzy borders of Offa's Country. However despite these caveats the following figures have been calculated for the overall tourism activity within Offa's Country currently.

Estimates of current tourism economy of the Welsh English Borders:

Area	Estimated % in Offa's Country	Year of data	Expenditure	Visitor days	Visitor numbers	Employment	Research Model
	%		£m	000s	000s	FTEs	
Denbighshire (rural)	70	2008	75	2369	1561	1612	STEAM
Wrexham	30	2006	21	630	443	459	STEAM
Shropshire	30	2005	168	4475	3181	3449	Cambridge
Powys (exc BBNP)	30	2005	66	1650	1260	1790	STEAM
Herefordshire	45	2008	184	3212	2156	3818	STEAM
Brecon Beacons	50	2008	109	2623	2036	2174	STEAM
Monmouthshire	75	2008	109	2118	1459	2287	STEAM
Forest of Dean	30	2007	30	719	523	697	Cambridge
Totals			762	17796	12619	16286	

Potential Impact of the Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Programme- Walking with Offa

Increase in visitor days: The programme will aim to encourage an additional 3% per year increase in visitor days, which equates to an extra 1.65m days. At an average spend above of £42.82 per day, this would equate to a boost to the economy of **£70 million over the three years**.

Increase in visitor spend: It is envisaged that a visitors' average spend will increase as a result of the programme from £42 to about £50 per day by increasing the proportion of staying visitors and increasing spend of all visitors. This would mean an **additional £210 million spend**. That is £762m currently increasing to £972m in year 3 of programme.

Increase in employment: The programme would expect to support more jobs in the area through the multiplier effect.

5 The Rationale and Need for the Programme

The Programme is a collaborative approach to tackle the tourism related issues facing the communities along the Welsh-English border, linked by Offa's Dyke and the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

The Welsh-English Border Strategic Regeneration Study (2009) involved considerable consultations across the whole area, including 42 telephone interviews with partners and key stakeholders, meetings and phone calls with 69 representatives of the local authorities on each side of the border, 190 responses to an online questionnaire, three workshops targeted at community groups and businesses along the border and stakeholder workshops at the April 2009 Strategic Forum of the Memorandum Of Understanding. The Study identified a number of common and recurring issues that affect the delivery of services and economic development in the England-Wales border areas.

'These can be summarised as:

- *Administrative barriers relating to the England-Wales border, in particular relating to cross-border service delivery and different funding regimes.*
- *The 'edge' effect i.e. being on the edge of England, Wales and regions.*
- *The rurality of the area; affecting the infrastructure e.g. transport, broadband.'*

The Offa's Country Programme aims to address these issues by making the whole of Offa's Country the focus for a joined up approach to developing sustainable tourism. Visitors do not perceive administrative boundaries but want to explore the beauty, nature and culture of the borderlands. They will use linear resources such as paths, trains and bus routes and will not care whether they wriggle between England and Wales. They will want information to be available easily across borders. In response to this partners will collaborate across administrative boundaries, linking together different funding regimes, to improve the sustainable rural tourism product. **Appendix 1** includes the feedback from the MoU Strategic Forum stakeholder workshop on tourism which had initial discussions on the topic, identifying issues and potential responses.

Phase One of the programme focuses on walking – the infrastructure for walking and the way it is promoted, plus improving access through sustainable transport. Several surveys have found that walking is important to over 60% of visitors to the Offa's Country area. Most businesses along Offa's Dyke say the majority of their visitors walk during their visits even if they are not walking the whole trail. There is potential to capitalise on what is now a good quality National Trail and broaden the walking opportunities, offers and promotions to widen the economic benefits and participation.

A later phase of the programme is planned in several years time which will address a wider range of activities specifically cycling, riding and supporting activities such as food and drink development and educational initiatives. However, food and drink is currently being taken forward successfully through other initiatives. It is felt that to achieve most impact the programme should focus on walking and the infrastructure, information, interpretation, marketing, business engagement required to deliver a good walking product, alongside working to develop sustainable transport to access the walking offer.

Key issues and problems to be addressed include:

- Many border towns and villages fail to capitalise on the natural and cultural assets of the area to promote sustainable tourism and boost their economies.
- Inconsistent quality of infrastructure along the long distance routes and paths which connect to the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.
- What circular walks there are, are very variable and promoted in a very fragmented way, yet the demand for shorter and circular routes has grown from both visitors and local residents.
- Fragmented and variable quality/quantity information and interpretation about the natural and cultural assets of the area, attractions and activities.

- Despite the popularity of walking, towns, local areas and protected landscapes have struggled to present the walking offer in a coherent, attractive and up to date way – for example, little use is made of web-based information which walkers could use to research their walks before setting out.
- A lack of awareness amongst isolated rural businesses of current visitor expectations, new technology, sustainable practices (including support for local supply chains) and opportunities for joint working.
- Low levels of spending by many visitors – restricted by limited opportunities and lack of availability of quality local products.
- A lack of knowledge amongst local businesses about the walking opportunities and natural and cultural assets in their local areas (and public transport options) so they do not share their knowledge and motivate visitors to explore.
- Variable numbers of guided walks leaders across Offa's Country and very variable levels of knowledge about the local heritage and environment and skills amongst existing walks leaders.
- Few public transport options for visitors to use to access linear and circular walking routes, especially at weekends – with particular cross-border connectivity problems. This results in an overwhelming dominance of car based visitors. For visitors wishing to walk sections of Offa's Dyke it would be much easier to use public transport to and from each end of the section walked.
- Poor information available (particularly cross-border) on the public transport options to reach and travel around Offa's Country. Lack of packaged walking propositions for visitors using public transport.
- Poor welcome, facilities and visitor information at public transport interchanges across Offa's Country.
- While walking festivals and events have emerged in several locations across the area and are proving successful – there is little cross promotion, collaboration or attempt to encourage more people to use public transport to attend.

Offa's Dyke, walking and business potential

The report *The Benefits to Business of the National Trails to Wales* (Tourism Company 2006 for CCW) found

- *Over one third of visitors staying on or near Offa's Dyke Path are coming to walk the National Trail, staying for 1 or 2 nights en route*
- *Accommodation providers on Offa's Dyke are more positive about the importance of the Trail to their business than those on Glyndŵr's Way, but less positive than those on the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, reporting that the Trail 'provides them with welcome additional income' more frequently than that it is 'very important to the profitability' of their business.*

Cause for concern was also identified

- *The proportion of visitors making use of Offa's Dyke Path is more likely to be static, or even to have declined, than on the other Trails. This is of concern as, along the remoter parts of Offa's Dyke Path, both service and accommodation enterprises are particularly dependent on the Trail for business.*
- *However, walking tour operators see some opportunities on Offa's Dyke Path to extend the season for their use.*

The above suggests that there is considerable potential for further development of walking-based tourism, particularly as they found the market for people walking national trails is changing – with less experienced walkers who have less time to commit but appreciate more comfort than formerly.

The report made a range of recommendations to help sustain and further develop business benefits along Offa's Dyke, including:

- *Extending the season for walking on the National Trails*
- *Developing short walks based on the National Trails, as a way of introducing visitors to an enjoyable and rewarding walking experience*

- *Supporting responsible use of the National Trails through use of public transport wherever possible*
- *Raising the profile of National Trails within the walking offer*
- *Providing enterprises with visitor information that supports a range of ways in which the Trails can be used*
- *Providing opportunities for accommodation and service providers to work as partners in delivering excellent walking opportunities and enjoyable experiences*
- *Opening a channel of communication between tourism enterprises and those responsible for managing and promoting the Trails.*
- *Promoting links between enterprises and the National Trails*
- *Encouraging the development of excellent weblinks between those involved with the National Trail*
- *Securing and maintaining a comprehensive network of accommodation for each National Trail*
- *Supporting the delivery of a quality accommodation offer*

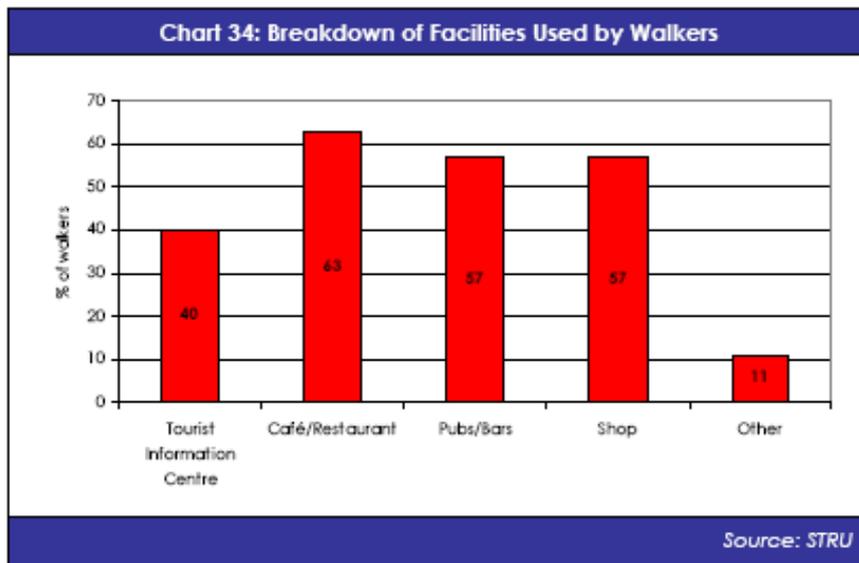
Offa's Dyke is a relatively well recognised asset – either as a historic monument and landscape feature or as a long distance footpath and national trail. However there is a huge under-realised opportunity to build on this existing profile to generate economic benefits, lengthen the season, diversify the offer and link communities across the Welsh-English border.

The 2003 Study for Advantage West Midlands and the Countryside Agency on Informal Recreation in the West Midlands found that 17.5 million visits are made to the countryside for walking in the West Midlands for informal recreation a year by residents of the region, plus about 2 million visits by tourists. The report calculated that every kilometre of path, bridleway or cycleway generates an average of £10-15,000 a year. Open spaces in the West Midlands also contribute a further £150-200 million. Using this calculation Offa's Dyke Path, which is 285 km long, could generate over £3-4 million a year (at 2003 prices), not including all the connecting routes and rights of way and open areas of countryside. This figure is very imprecise – some routes will obviously be far more popular than others. Offa's Dyke Path is a long way from major centres of population; on the other hand it is a national trail with a high profile so may well be generating considerable income.

The report recommended that the importance of rights of way and open space and the inter-dependence of the rural economy on informal recreation should be recognised and promoted. It also stated identified specific opportunities:

- *'Opportunities should be explored for promoting and marketing the existing opportunities for informal recreation so it can yield higher economic returns to local business...*
- *Opportunities should be explored and financial support given to encourage local businesses to develop innovative schemes to accommodate visitors in a more sustainable manner e.g. linking the public transport network with pick-up and drop-off journeys to accommodation and forwarding on the luggage;*
- *Opportunities should be explored to coordinate information services for both users and providers through an interactive website indicating key recreational routes and open spaces,....facilities and...public transport routes.'*

The Shropshire Tourism Research Unit research into Walking Tourism in Shropshire (Dec 2005) found that 20% of businesses across the county received over 40% of their business from walkers, with a particular cluster of businesses within the AONB close to Offa's Dyke which had high dependency on visitors who come for the walking. About a third of tourism businesses provide specific facilities and slightly fewer specifically promote themselves to walkers – suggesting scope for more to do so proactively. The associated survey of walkers to Shropshire found that most were regular visitors – a valuable market. Most walkers enjoyed walks of 3-4 hours or up to 10 miles. The majority used local services – as shown in the table below:



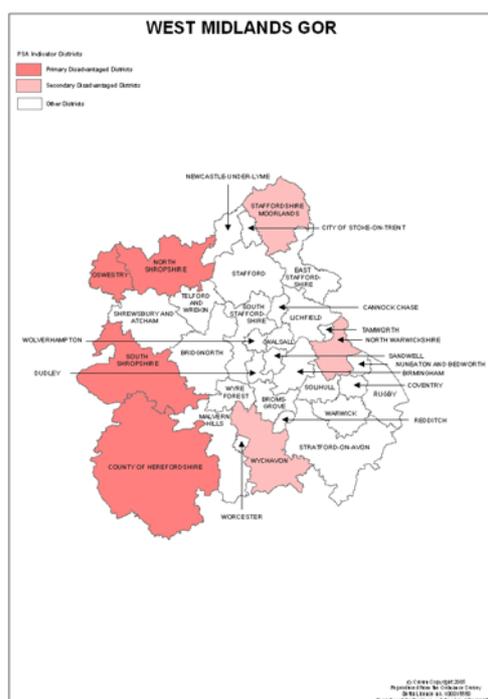
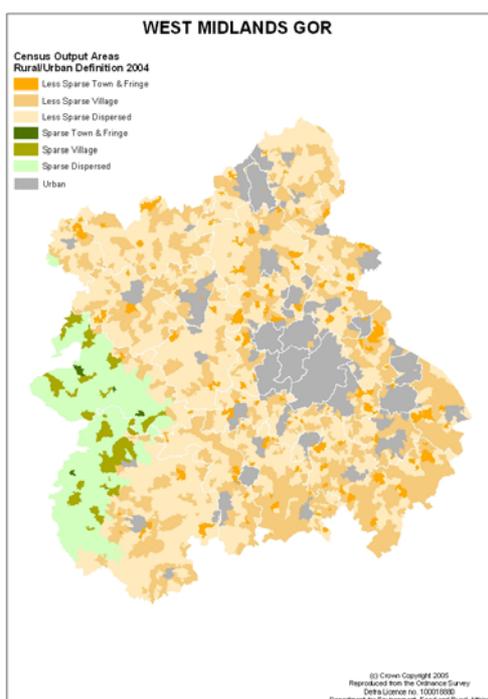
Further supporting tourism data is presented in **Appendix 2**.

Economic peripherality of Offa's Country

The economies of local communities along the border are relatively peripheral, suffering from limited and often seasonal employment opportunities, low wages and poor access to services.

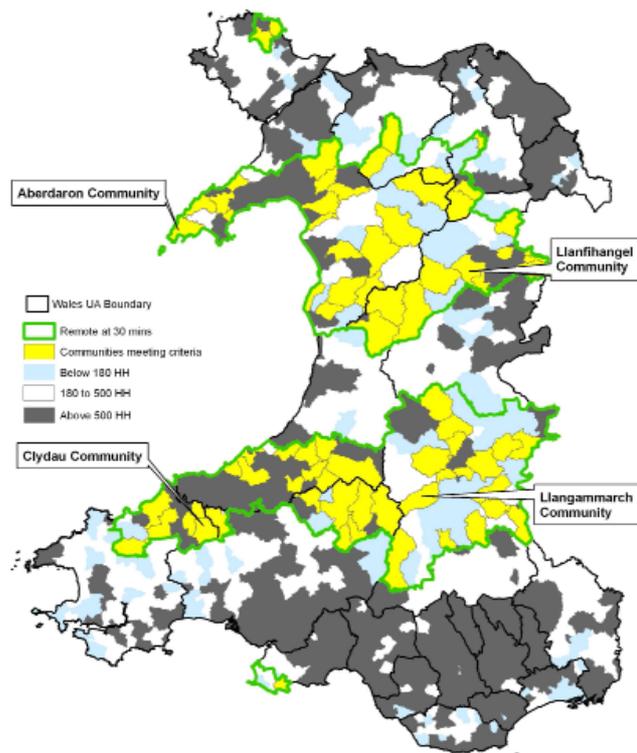
Most data is only available for either England or Wales and therefore we have tried to source equivalent data from both sides of the border. It is a point worth noting that this lack of joined up data is symptomatic of the lack of joined up approaches across the border in general that the Memorandum of Understanding is hoping to address through improved dialogue.

The two maps below demonstrate how the western fringes of the West Midlands are both sparsely populated and disadvantaged. The green areas on the left hand map are characterised as sparse dispersed and sparse village census output areas. The right hand map shows Public Service Agreement indicator areas with the primary disadvantaged areas in red.



Recent research in Wales into 'deep rural' localities (Wales Rural Observatory, 2009) mapped communities across Wales with reference to their access to services and numbers of households in each area. The map below shows sparsely populated areas in pale blue, white and yellow. Those in yellow have only 180-500 households, are also over 30 minutes from a town with a population of 10,000 and also have limited local rural services. (The pale blue areas had such low populations they were omitted from the research as sample sizes would be too small.) The map shows how much of the border area is extremely rural – with only a few towns such as Newtown, Welshpool and Knighton providing jobs and services in the central area. The northern section of the Offa's Country is less remote as there are more towns close to the Clwydian Range.

Figure 1.1 The Four Deep Rural Communities



The report researched four communities in depth to represent the experience of living in deep rural localities in Wales and found that while most residents felt their quality of life was good access to services such as a broadband, public transport and health services was poor and there were concerns over the sustainability of communities longer term. Data for Powys estimate that 54% of residents in Powys live in the worst 10% areas in Wales for **access to services on foot or by bus**, according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2008.

Appendix 2 includes more detailed data to illustrate economic and population related issues.

Transport issues

Recent cultural research using focus groups undertaken for the West Midlands Regional Observatory have found:

'For respondents living in rural areas, serious deficiencies in public transport were considered a significant barrier to cultural participation. The high cost of fares, inconvenient timetabling and lack of connecting routes were criticised in particular. Similar criticisms were made in the interviews; many visitors to the region commented that travelling by car was the only viable means of undertaking their trip to the West Midlands.'

The WAG Sustainable Transport and Tourism Assessment quotes UKTS figures for visits to Wales: of the 8.85 million holiday trips made by UK tourists in 2007 only 2% used regular bus or coach services whilst 8% used rail. It quotes a range of barriers and constraints that prevent visitors using public transport which include:

- Availability of pre-journey information for planning purposes
- Difficulty in moving around the destination via sustainable transport
- A need for a culture change in the way that tourist/visitor destinations think about sustainable transport
- A lack of knowledge about the sustainable transport options available

The Wye Valley AONB Visitor Survey 2004 found:

- The majority (79%) of respondents had heard of the Offa's Dyke Path, over a third (36%) of visitors who had heard of the Offa's Dyke Path had walked the route. 1% did not know/were not sure if they had or not.
- The principal mode of transport used to arrive at a visitor destination is the car (82%).
- Public transport, i.e. train and local bus, was used by only 2% of all visitors, tour buses accounted for 5% of visitors, higher than the regional average of 2%.
- Respondents were also asked to indicate all forms of transport they had used to travel around the AONB. Use of the private car remained high at 75% of all respondents. However, walking was the most popular mode of 'transport', used by over two fifths (41%) of respondents.
- 'Scenery / views' were noted by over a quarter (28%) of all respondents. Responses given were of a similar nature and followed certain themes; the beautiful area (27%), the countryside and landscape (16%) and the river (11%).

Certain honeypot sites receive large numbers of visitors. For example

- Symonds Yat Rock 250,000 (approx)
- Tintern Old Station 107,000 (2003)
- Tintern Abbey 80,000 (2003)
- Carding Mill Valley 250,000 (approx)
- Moel Famau (Clwydian Range) 200,000 (approx)

Interpretation Needs

The study 'Interpreting Offa's Dyke on the Shropshire-Powys Border' produced for Shropshire Council, Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales in 2009 identified the need for better interpretation. It found very little interpretation of any kind anywhere along the route. Visitor surveys and interviews with businesses revealed that visitors would appreciate more interpretation about Offa's Dyke itself and other natural and cultural features in the landscape. The media which did exist such as guide books and websites was mainly targeted at long distance walkers and actually the majority of walkers are walking short stretches on a more casual basis or trying to find circular routes. The interpretation plan proposes a range of interpretation options developed around core messages and principles to help enhance visitors' enjoyment.

The 2005 Lower Wye Valley Interpretation Plan highlighted the key role interpretation plays in the visitor experience and how it is the main route of communicating with visitors about the special qualities of the natural and cultural assets. The overarching interpretive theme developed is:

'This beautiful and special landscape needs to be cared for to ensure it continues to provide us with a sense of awe, wonder, achievement, relaxation, and discovery and we must all play our part in keeping it special.'

6 Programme Management

The Phase One Programme will run from April 2010-March 2013. It contains a package of projects some of which apply across the whole area or along the National Trail and some of which focus in the protected landscapes – the ‘landscape pearls along the central thread of Offa’s Dyke’.

It will be managed by the Offa’s Country Strategic Partnership which reports to the Cross-Border Memorandum of Understanding Core Officers Group. The Partnership has been working up proposals for a collaborative approach to sustainable tourism along the Welsh English border over the last three years. The Partnership includes representatives from all the Protected Areas and the National Trail Partnership – Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England, plus other key partners such as Government Office for the West Midlands, West Midlands Leaders Board, Advantage West Midlands, Tourism Partnership Mid Wales (which represents all three Tourism Partnerships and Welsh Assembly Government), Shropshire Destination Management Partnership, Adventa – the LEADER Programme in Monmouthshire and University of Central Lancashire. The University’s Institute of Transport and Tourism specialises in sustainable travel and tourism and has been involved in partnership discussions over the last three years through Professor Les Lumsdon. The Partnership could be expanded to include additional representatives and/or funders as required.

At least two lead bodies will manage and monitor the Programme – one in England and one in Wales and act as accountable bodies for funding and financial management. This is to enable both English and Welsh funding bodies to support the programme. Shropshire Hills AONB is lead body for a bid to the West Midlands Natural Assets Programme. Adventa are likely to be the lead body for a bid for LEADER Collaboration funding. Other organisations may act as lead bodies for other bids as appropriate.

The Offa’s Dyke National Trail Partnership will deliver the projects which will be implemented along the National Trail itself and several for the whole of Offa’s Country. Activity in each Protected Area will be managed and delivered locally with a local steering group.

7 The Programme and project details

The Offa’s Country Programme has been developed following discussions between partners over several years as to how to address the ongoing problems of strengthening sustainable tourism throughout the cross-border area. The Programme is designed around five headings aimed at meeting the objectives set out in section 4:

1. **Improving the walking offer**
2. **Offa’s Country information and interpretation**
3. **Business and community engagement and training**
4. **Walking promotion**
5. **Sustainable transport development and promotion**

Plus **6. Management and monitoring**

Project 1. Improving the Walking Offer

1.1 Circular walks development – Delivering 10 circular routes per year most of which will include sections of Offa’s Dyke. Several pilot routes have been established in Shropshire this year. This project will roll out a total of 30 additional circular walks across Offa’s Country. Each will include researching the route on the ground, infrastructure improvements if required such as new waymarks or route improvements to make sure the whole route is of a similar quality to Offa’s Dyke itself. Each route is then mapped

attractively to a similar format, with a route description and loaded as a pdf and podcast onto the National Trail website and other county/AONB/walking etc websites.

1.2 Walkers are Welcome – Five towns across Offa's Country are already Walkers are Welcome towns – Prestatyn, Llangollen, Bishops Castle, Church Stretton and Ross on Wye. There are another 12 towns across the area and this project will work with these towns to encourage at least another five to join the scheme and support the installation of small scale improvements required e.g. way marking new routes and map based noticeboards. This will create a string of ten or more Walkers are Welcome (WAW) towns along the border – which will be the greatest concentration in the UK (there are currently 36 WAW towns). The project will also work with the existing WAW towns to support them in developing and promoting their WAW status further. This addresses the main criticism of the scheme which is that once achieved there is no further progression to continue improving the welcome for visitors who walk. The project will also encourage collaboration and joint working between the towns – sharing experience and ideas and networking between businesses.

1.3 Long Distance Paths development – Offa's Dyke Path National Trail is now well way marked and maintained along most of its length. There are ongoing infrastructure improvements – particularly along the Hatterell Ridge and a programme of replacing stiles with gates to make access easier along the path. However the network of other regional long distance routes which cross Offa's Dyke Path or link to it are generally not as well known or maintained. These paths include: The Wye Valley Walk, The Beacons Way, Glyndwr's Way (National Trail), the Jack Mytton Way, Shropshire Way, Blue Remembered Hills Bridleway, Kerry Ridgeway, Maelor Way, Dee Valley Way, North Berwyn Way, Mynydd Hiraethog, North Wales Path and Wales Coastal Path. This project will include upgrading infrastructure, business development along the routes (for example encouraging farm diversification), plus marketing and improvements to information and maps on websites.

Project 2. Offa's Country Information and Interpretation

2.1 Interpretation planning and implementation along the National Trail and at key sites plus entry/information points/centres and interpretive events – Shropshire Council and Countryside Council for Wales funded an Interpretation Strategy for the Shropshire-Powys section of Offa's Dyke Path in 2008/9. This set the template for the interpretation of the whole Trail and wider corridor area and further sections of the interpretive planning have been undertaken in Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire. This project will complete the planning process and implement the highest priority projects in a coherent fashion along the whole length of the Trail corridor. The plans include costed interpretive recommendations including audio guides, geocache trails, interpretive panels, guided walks and 'intriguing features' or artistic interpretation at specific sites. The other main element of this project includes new interpretation on Offa's Country themes at key visitor information centres in the main towns along the route such as Bishops Castle, Llangollen, Hay on Wye, Ross on Wye and Abergavenny. There is an opportunity through this programme to engage with each centre and help it develop its information, knowledge and promotions to link to the objectives of Offa's Country. Centres will install new interpretation (written or audio), have new staff/volunteer training about Offa's Dyke, walking opportunities and sustainable transport options and will become champions for the initiative on the ground along Offa's Country, in direct contact with the visitors.

2.2 Offa's Dyke Centre, Knighton - Options/interpretation study on its role to promote and interpret the whole Trail/Dyke, new exhibition implementation and engagement project. The Offa's Dyke Centre was opened in 1999 and cost approx £590,000, funded through ERDF, National Lottery, Wales Tourist Board, Powys County Council and the Offa's Dyke Association. It is owned by Powys CC and operated by the ODA. The interpretive exhibition is now in urgent need of replacement – some technological elements no longer work and

the overall impact is tired and out of date. The project will commission an options and interpretation study looking at the role of the whole building (as there are options for using some currently unused rooms and spaces) and design a new interpretive exhibition which will tell the overall story of the whole of Offa's Dyke – the ancient monument, the National Trail and walking opportunities and promote the objectives of Offa's Country – sustainable travel and showcasing natural and cultural assets, plus locally sourced products and services. The project will then implement the main focus of the study – designing and installing the new exhibition, plus undertake an engagement project with the local community, schools etc to integrate more local ownership and pride in the centre.

2.3 40th anniversary events linked throughout area – 2011 is the 40th anniversary of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and also of the Wye Valley AONB. It is planned to make the most of these opportunities to promote Offa's Dyke and Offa's Country in a co-ordinated way through the range of existing and perhaps some new events which take place up and down the border during that year. Although the main focus is just one year the aim will be to create lasting improvements in networking between events and a higher profile for Offa's Country and embed its values of sustainable tourism with events organisers.

Project 3. Business and community engagement and training

3.1 Training/ familiarisation for local businesses and guided walks leaders – This project includes a range of activities to be undertaken in the four protected landscapes to deliver training and familiarisation days for both local businesses and also in some cases for local guided walks leaders. The training will be developed with common themes but the format will respond to local demand and needs. Topics will cover sense of place – information about the natural and cultural assets of the local area and Offa's Country including wildlife, archaeology, history, folklore, land management and information that visitors will appreciate about regular local events, food and drink, attractions, places to visit and little known localities. Businesses will improve their knowledge and first hand experience of walking routes – including the new routes developed through the programme. Walks leaders will also improve their guiding skills, leadership experience and first aid/emergency training.

3.2 Business and community engagement - This project is led by the National Trail Officer and will impact along the whole of Offa's Country. It includes the purchasing of new display materials and resources which the Officer, or other partners, can use when attending events, business networks, shows etc in towns and villages up and down the border. The materials will include three pop up displays and an interactive screen/laptop, plus some new imagery. They will also be used for temporary displays in local community spaces such as libraries, village halls etc. The aim is to promote the values and objectives of Offa's Country Programme across the whole area highlighting the business opportunities to local businesses and raising awareness of Offa's Dyke, the National Trail and the area's natural assets with local communities – so that they are motivated to explore their local area more regularly for recreation - with associated health benefits. The project includes holding 12 new events targeting priority groups such as local business networks or community groups presenting talks on Offa's Country.

Project 4. Walking promotion

4.1 Upgrade Offa's Dyke National Trail Website – the National Trail website is popular and along with the ODA's site is it the main source of information for most people researching to walk all or part of the route. It follows the common format of all national trail websites but has few additional features and has fallen behind many of the other national trail websites in the UK. This project will develop better mapping facilities, new interactive features, video, including aerial flyover footage, a photo gallery to encourage walkers to post their own photos. The updated site will also feature all the new walks developed through this programme in easily accessible and downloadable formats.

4.2 Offa's Dyke Passport/Hall of Fame – This small project will enable the establishment of a new service for those who walk the whole of Offa's Dyke and at the same time help monitor usage and gain feedback. The mechanism is a simple passport scheme which requires a few stamps from a range of services along the route (on a flexible basis). Once the route is completed the visitor posts or emails the proof through to the National Trail Officer, on receiving their badge or certificate of completion they are invited to submit a photo for the Trail Hall of Fame and fill in a short feedback form asking for their views and also details about themselves. For a modest set up cost this scheme will generate useful information and help sustain small service businesses along the route.

4.3 New walking webpages/websites – Walking is the main activity in each of the protected landscapes yet the information available on the local websites on walks is extremely variable and in some cases non-existent. This project led by the protected landscapes in each of their areas will map existing and new routes using traditional and GPS systems as appropriate. Walks will then be written up as featured walks along with pdf route maps and/or GPS equivalents. This will enable the walking offer to be consumed by walkers of all ages – including those who are beginning to use GPS mapping technology rather than traditional maps. Each protected landscape will develop new walking webpages to promote walking generally and have a searchable index for walks – so visitors can find a suitable walk by location, distance, theme, strenuousness etc.

4.4 Refresh and relaunch Offa's Dyke Association website – The ODA website is still an important source for many visitors for information about the National Trail – particularly accommodation – however its design is out of date and it gives a poor impression to visitors. The ODA compiles an annual list of accommodation businesses including the very small and ungraded facilities which are still an important resource – especially along stretches of Offa's Dyke Path where there is little other choice. This project will enable the website to be overhauled, redesigned in a more modern and user friendly way and ensure it links to and complements the National Trail website wherever relevant. This will benefit businesses up and down the Trail and will boost the profile and image of the whole of the area.

Project 5. Sustainable Transport development and promotion

5.1 Offa's Country Sustainable Transport leaflet and webpages – This project, managed by the National Trail Officer, will research, design and deliver new webpages and a leaflet to promote the walking of Offa's Dyke Path using public transport. Several other National Trails such as the Thames Path and the South Downs Way have achieved excellent informational products – and their experience and costs have been used in designing this project. The new webpages and leaflet will enable visitors to plan their routes, giving them all the public transport options and timetables. They will package particular offers which have enjoyable walks with reliable transport. This will give visitors confidence to try sustainable travel options which otherwise only the intrepid would attempt.

5.2 Offa's Country by Train – This project includes an initial phase in the Shropshire Hills which can then be replicated and developed across other parts of Offa's Country. Walks from train stations will be researched in association with local tourism groups and communities, information and interpretation will be prepared in printed, web based and poster format (for the stations). The routes will be promoted through the Arriva Trains Wales, bus operators, local pubs and accommodation businesses as well as the National Trail website and walking websites, plus normal outlets. The initial phase will target the stations in Broome, Hopton Heath and Bucknell on the Heart of Wales Line. Later phases are likely to include Knighton, plus routes to Abergavenny and Chepstow and rail lines which cross Offa's Dyke further north such as Welshpool, Llangollen and Prestatyn. As the project develops businesses will be encouraged to promote the routes as packages to

visitors. The aim is to attract walkers by train by creating an attractive proposition with all the necessary information which fits in with train timetables.

5.3 Sustainable transport bus services – This project will deliver bespoke sustainable transport solutions for each protected landscape. The mechanism will be different in each area – depending on existing bus services available and past experience – of which there is a considerable amount. Each project will develop and deliver a new or additional service – for example in the Shropshire Hills it will introduce a new service from Much Wenlock bringing more people by public transport to Church Stretton where they can catch existing shuttle bus services across the Long Mynd and Stiperstones. In the Wye Valley the project will research the feasibility of operating minibus tours working with local hotels and guest houses to market sustainable travel options to their guests and then piloting the service in year two. In the Beacons the Offa's Dyke Flyer will run on additional days and be promoted more widely.

5.4 Develop green transport options for events – This small project is included to allow protected landscapes to work with key local events to promote green transport options for events. There are likely to be many common issues, sources of advice and solutions so the project will be delivered across the whole area and encourage events to network and seek advice from each other.

5.5 Green Transport Nodes – The practical experience of travelling by public transport is let down by a lack of information and poor facilities at many train stations, bus stations and transport interchanges in the market towns of Offa's Country. This project will identify small scale, modest costing improvements which can be installed at the key market towns and some villages throughout the area depending on local circumstances and needs. The infrastructure may include welcome information, orientation maps, transport information, possibly including hi tech options for recognition by mobile phones, information on local walks and relevant interpretation information. The costs are likely to be around £5,000 per town.

Project 6. Management and monitoring

6.1 Package management, monitoring and finance post – It is essential to manage the overall Programme and its relevant sub-packages effectively. This project contains sufficient funding across the applications to allow for good management and communication between partners and ensure successful delivery of the Programme. The costs are split between the sub-packages so that the costs can be set against the project contained in each and responsibilities for reporting on each are clear cut.

6.2 Offa's Country Research – This project allows for extensive research to be undertaken throughout the timescale of the Programme to monitor visitor numbers at sites or on routes or bus service, visitor characteristics, spending and satisfaction. A range of mechanisms will be required including people counters and visitor surveys, ticket sales and attendance counts. Participation in events for businesses and local communities will also be monitored, numbers counted and views recorded. Website statistics will also be collected to monitor usage before and after improvements and the usage of new web pages. Simple web based surveys are also planned to collect feedback on new webpages via tools such as Survey Monkey.

6.3 Co-operation and sharing best practice – To help facilitate communication between all the partners along the length of the area. This will enable sharing best practice, visits from one area to another and other co-operative activities.

Phase Two of the Sustainable Tourism Programme will be planned in more detail over the next two years. It will build on the improvements made to the walking offer in phase one and focus

more on embedding and promoting this improved offer and widening the focus to include additional outdoor activities.

Provisionally entitled “Capitalising on Offa” initial project outlines include:

- Offa’s Dyke Cycle Route – to be progressed as an National Cycle Network route with Sustrans
- More riding routes and linking in other outdoor activities e.g. through brokerage or web-based promotion
- Further PR, marketing and events strategy to support and promote developments, promote the trail and Offa's Country
- Pilot new events across Offa's Country e.g. winter walking festivals
- Business development including greening tourism businesses
- Business support through strengthening sense of place, food and drink, improving biodiversity and visitor facilities
- Education – research materials (themes inc trail, biodiversity, history, archaeology, health) with curriculum advisers and test them with several school in towns and villages along Offa’s Dyke route to be rolled out across wider area.
- Other community engagement activities

8 Strategic and Regional Fit

The Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Programme links directly from the **Welsh-English Border Strategic Regeneration Programme** (Nov 2009) which recommends an intervention for sustainable tourism

‘Strengthening the existing tourism offer in the Welsh-English border areas; creating a distinctive sustainable tourism offer that supports and promotes local brands.’

The vision for the WEB Programme includes the statements:

‘It’s about high quality natural and cultural assets

It’s about people, places and business

It’s about working together across the border

It’s about communities thriving and being sustainable’

And its objectives include:

- *‘Creating strategic and operational changes that allows smooth cross-border working reflecting how people live and work (and visit) (our addition)*
- *Supporting local level activity that brings about sustainable development*
- *Creating added value by linking up activities and strategic working*
- *Showcasing the unique identity, spirit and drive of the England-Wales border’*

The following priorities of the **West Midlands Economic Strategy** link strongly with the Programme:

Place

Improving infrastructure - supporting a secure low carbon energy infrastructure for the region and improving transport and communications to increase accessibility, efficiency and competitiveness

Sustainable communities - developing sustainable communities and maximising our cultural offer and natural assets

People

Sustainable Living – changing attitudes to sustainability and consumption

Raising ambitions and aspirations – driving up ambition and aspiration

Achieving full potential and opportunities for all – skills for employment and enterprise

Business

Seizing market opportunities – creating economically sustainable new businesses and capitalising on sustainable and low carbon opportunities

The Programme's objectives to encourage more and repeat visits and to raise the strategic profile of Offa's Country link to the **West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy** which aims to attract more visitors from outside the region, more overnight visitors and to use cultural heritage as a driver to grow the short break market. The WM VES also supports more pilot projects for better delivery of visitor information, adopting best practice in environmental management in tourism and using local produce such as food and drink to increase visitor spend.

The **Wales Tourism Strategy Achieving our Potential** has as its vision to '*develop a customer responsive, innovative, sustainable and profitable industry which makes an increasing contribution to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well being of Wales.*' This Programme is aiming to deliver this approach to walking in Offa's Country – providing quality walking opportunities, with information and interpretation to suit a range of visitor needs, building on the cultural and environmental assets of the area in a sustainable fashion. Achieving Our Potential also makes specific reference to:

- *'Improving the quality of the overall visitor experience at the destination level*
- *Encourage more innovative marketing and product development activity to grow tourism seasonally and spatially*
- *Encourage more tourism businesses to use web-based and emerging ICT marketing innovations*
- *Encourage initiatives which increase the use of public transport by visitors to and within Wales*
- *Develop strong partnership working at the national, regional and local level for tourism marketing and development.'*

All the **County Tourism Strategies or Tourism/Destination Partnership Business Plans** make reference to the need to develop more sustainable tourism – encouraging both visitors and businesses to be more environmentally responsible. They all stress how tourism offers need to build on the distinctive natural and cultural assets of each local area and all recognise the importance of walking as an activity for the majority of visitors. Some local strategies such as the **Sustainable Tourism Strategy for Church Stretton 2008** stress how the connection between the special landscape and the walking opportunities need to be further developed and promoted.

The **Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009-2013** includes the following aims which this Programme will contribute towards:

- *'To maximize the contribution that walking and cycling can make to increasing tourism*
- *Showcase and share best practice in delivery and promotion of walking and cycling routes*
- *Increase walking and cycling trips made in conjunction with public transport usage*
- *Encourage the use of National parks, forestry, countryside and coast for walking and cycling'*

The Programme fits **Natural England's** position statements on access

- *High quality trails and routes in England should be managed and promoted to inspire outdoor adventure for local people, visitors and tourists*
- *Access to the natural environment using public rights of way, open access areas.....should be increased and should include improved sustainable connections from urban places*
- *Access should contribute to achieving the transition to a low carbon economy by encouraging sustainable leisure use*

It will also link to and contribute to its work on sustainable leisure travel.

The Programme will also contribute to the Vision of the **Countryside Council for Wales** for the ten years from 2010:

- *'That economic development respects the natural environment including its historical and cultural aspects*
- *A Wales in which there is greater access to countryside and coast for all its people and its visitors, giving enjoyment and well being.'*

The vision also makes specific mention of using sustainable transport to access the countryside

The **Welsh Assembly Government Sustainable Transport and Tourism Assessment** Nov 2009 identified the following short term objectives which this Programme addresses:

- *Provide better information to visitors on what sustainable transport options are currently available*
- *Encourage more local services linked to visitor attractions*
- *Offer incentives to visitors to use public transport*
- *Simplify ticketing arrangements including integrated ticketing for different modes of transport*
- *Travel planning for key visitor attractions'*

In this case the visitor attractions are Offa's Dyke, the National Trail and local events as well as the many specific tourist attractions across Offa's Country.

This Programme links to the **Offa's Dyke Path Management Plan** which involves all the partners in the ODP National Trail Management Partnership. It recognises the potential and opportunity the trail presents and has four strategic aims:

1. *Managing the trail and its corridor, including high standard infrastructure and progressively improving the trail users' experience. Plus working with local authorities to improve adjoining rights of way.*
2. *Promoting the ODP and providing information for trail users, including widening audiences*
3. *Maximising the economic benefits of the Trail to the local economy*
4. *Addressing sustainability – ensuring the trail helps encourage environmentally sustainable lifestyles and minimising negative impacts of trail usage.'*

The Programme also links with each of the four **Protected Landscapes' Management Plans**. Each of the AONBs and the Brecon Beacons National Park have used the objectives and priorities within their plans when developing the specific projects to be delivered within their areas.

9 Environmental Impact and Sustainability

The overall aim of the Programme is to improve the economy and sustainability of the Welsh-English border area by developing and promoting the sustainable tourism experience, based on the high quality natural and cultural assets of Offa's Country. Several of the specific objectives also incorporate sustainability.

More specifically it is intended that the programme will result in:

- More visitors exploring the landscape through sustainable activities such as walking, cycling, canoeing and horse-riding
- Reduced car travel into and around Offa's Dyke Country
- Increased usage of rural bus and train services
- Increased good quality web-based information, reducing the quantity of printed leaflets etc required.
- New interpretation installed will incorporate sustainability messages and communicate them to a wide audience.
- Greater awareness of the special qualities of the local environment in visitors and local businesses and communities
- Better involvement of the local community in the tourism experience

The delivery of the programme itself will generate some environmental impacts: including car travel for consultations and for meetings. This will be minimised by holding meetings in venues and at times that

can be accessed by public transport and encouraging car sharing. Other consultations and discussions will take place on the telephone, using email to transfer information.

Assessments will be made during more detailed project development to ensure that there are no unforeseen adverse environmental impacts from any of the activities included in the Programme.

10 Costs

The costs for the overall Programme are detailed in **Appendix 3** – Overview and **Appendix 4** – Detailed Breakdown.

To summarise, the proposed budgets for each of the five priority headings, plus management and monitoring, are as follows:

Overall costs by priority heading	2010-2013	
1. Improving the Walking Offer		£325,000
2. Offa's Country Information and Interpretation		£350,000
3. Business and Community Engagement and training		£66,500
4. Walking Promotion		£73,000
5. Sustainable Transport development and promotion		£280,500
6. Programme Management and Monitoring		£120,000
Total		£1,215,000

The costs have been broken down to show how much is planned to spend in each of the protected landscapes, through the National Trail and other cross-area projects.

Overall costs by area	
Whole Offa's Country Area	£255,000
National Trail	£175,500
Brecon Beacons National Park	£174,000
Clwydian Range AONB	£187,000
Wye Valley AONB	£189,000
Shropshire Hills AONB	£234,500
Total	£1,215,000

11 Funding Strategy

Given the geography of Offa's Country the Partnership have developed a funding strategy splitting the overall programme into a relatively small number of sub-programmes which are coherent in themselves and can be proposed to funding agencies as discrete packages of projects. These are part of the wider programme but would also stand up independently if some of the funding applications fail.

The initial funding strategy is identified within the detailed breakdown in **Appendix 4** by colour coding. The funding applications are being worked up in parallel and all will be supported by this business plan. Some funding programmes have specific deadlines which have to be met; others will receive applications at any stage.

The current funding strategy is as follows:

Funding applications	Timescale	Costs of projects in bid
Application to West Midlands Natural Assets Programme	mid February 2010	£269,000
Collaborative application to LEADER – across all the relevant LEADER areas	April/May 2010	£681,000
Application to Heritage Lottery Fund, with smaller bids to Cadw and English Heritage	May 2010	£265,000
Total		£1,215,000

Terms of Reference

In order to assist the funding applications Terms of Reference for the partnership have been drafted so that these can be submitted as necessary to funding bodies to show the aims and objectives of the partnership and the way in which it will operate. The Terms of Reference are attached at **Appendix 5**.

Natural Assets Application

Natural Assets is a £2 million grant scheme funded by Advantage West Midlands and delivered by Natural England. The grant scheme aims to tap into the natural potential of the West Midlands to benefit everyone who lives and works there and will focus on realising economic benefits from new environmental initiatives over a four year period.

Projects funded by Natural Assets must take place on or link to the region's natural assets and have a lasting impact. The potential benefits include:

- Attracting visitors to the area;
- Creating and safeguarding jobs;
- Enhancing urban and rural publicly accessible natural spaces;
- Creating sustainable business opportunities linked to the natural environment;
- Making better places to live and work by reducing air and noise pollution;
- Tackling climate change;
- Reducing flood risk;
- Increasing productivity by enhancing workers' surroundings;
- Improving wellbeing and health through high quality recreational spaces;
- Engaging young people in nature-based opportunities for learning, enjoyment and employment.

An application was submitted on behalf of Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Programme in time for the February deadline and this is being considered currently and a decision is expected by May. It included the projects shown in green on the spreadsheet at Appendix 4 amounting to £269,000. £39,700 of matching funding was identified to go with this application, so the actual bid was for £229,300.

LEADER Cooperation Application

A LEADER Cooperation bid to link LEADER groups along Offa's Country is planned as part of the funding strategy. While almost all of Offa's Country is in a LEADER area the European Funding Programme is delivered through Local Area Groups and these operate in different ways in Wales and in England. Further details of the LEADER LAGs and their priorities are given in **Appendix 6**.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Application

The third application being proposed is to the Heritage Lottery Fund, to cover the projects coloured Purple in Appendix 4, interpretation planning and implementation and the refurbishment of the Offa's Dyke Centre in Knighton. This would make a good package for the HLF whose sine qua non is that all projects must focus on heritage. This would be backed by applications to English

Heritage and CADW for matching funding, as the HLF will not give more than 90% and preferably less. It will be necessary to apply separately to HLF Wales and HLF West Midlands, as a joint cross border bid would be judged nationally against far larger bids and be far less likely to succeed.

An application to the *Your Heritage* programme for less than £50,000 on the English side would cover the interpretation there, while a larger one to HLF Wales under Heritage Grants could be for the Centre and the interpretation on the Welsh side. It is, however, understood that the Rural Media Company have submitted an expression of interest to HLF from the Offa's Dyke Association for the refurbishment of the Offa's Dyke Centre, their education project, website, film, etc. and intend to take this forward so it may be that on the Welsh side a smaller bid to *Your Heritage* would suffice for the interpretation.

Both programmes have three aims which relate to learning, conservation and participation.

The project **must**:

- help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage,
- and do **either or both** of the following:
- conserve the UK's diverse heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy;
 - help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage.

Your Heritage is a more flexible programme and there are no deadlines for applications, decisions are made in ten weeks and while there is a need to contribute cash, non cash contributions and/or volunteer time, the percentage is not specified

For Heritage Grants

- All applications are assessed in two rounds.
- First round approval can include some development funding.
- It is a rolling programme with no deadlines for applications under £5million.
- At least 10% matched funds are needed, and preferably more
- It takes three months to assess it and decision is made at the next available meeting after the 3 months.
- The grant request is the combined total of any development grant awarded and delivery grant

English Heritage and CADW

Both organisations will fund interpretation about the Ancient Monument, i.e. Offa's Dyke, although they would both usually do this through Management Agreements with individual owners. The dangers of this are that it is down to each owner to commission the work and then submit a grant claim and this would inevitably end up with a fragmented and piecemeal approach, lacking any similarity of style and design. Both EH and CADW have been approached and have expressed interest in supporting a scheme of interpretation which covers the whole area in a planned, coherent and comprehensive way. It is suggested that this is managed through further discussions at the regular meetings which take place with both organisations and that reasonably sized bids are then made and used as matching funding to support a bid or bids to the HLF.

12 Financial sustainability

The whole ethos of the Programme is sustainability and the projects planned are aimed at making the visitor economy more sustainable longer term – including financially. Each element of the Programme has been designed to build in longevity and financial sustainability. This has been done in various ways:

- Web-based information – will be designed to last for several years with minimal updating. Those elements which need to be updated regularly such as public transport details have had these costs included for the period of the programme. Continued webpage maintenance will also be agreed for each project and will be a condition of the project going ahead.
- Business development and community engagement – projects which involve business development involve working with businesses to help them realise new opportunities and these should be continued through the individual business activities into the future. Similarly community engagement aims to increase community awareness, involvement and participation levels for the longer term.
- New sustainable transport services – over the three years of the programme the aim is to build up the services through strong marketing and usage so that they will require a relatively small subsidy from public agencies in future. Some solutions such as the minibus tours may be taken on as a business proposition once it has been researched and piloted.
- Infrastructure projects – will be designed and installed to last for at least 10 years and maintenance responsibilities and standards will be agreed.
- Establishing better networking across the area between groups, towns, events etc is also part of the Programme and should help with the sharing of resources and cost saving opportunities in future.

13 Assessing Risk

With such a large programme it is difficult to assess all the potential risks. Risk events which are thought most likely have been included in the table below alongside the mitigation which will be put in place to reduce the impact or probability of it happening.

Risk	Impact	Probability	Score	Mitigation
	1 to 3	%		
One or more funding applications is unsuccessful	3	25%	0.75	The LEADER Collaboration application is key as it is the one which links all partners. The loss of other applications would not threaten the overall partnership working
Funding applications take considerably longer to be approved	2	25%	0.5	This is a three year programme and there is considerable flexibility. Few of the projects have specific dates (40 th anniversary in 2011). The partnership would need to re-programme and adjust its plans for implementation
Problems working across the border	2	20%	0.4	Some partners are used to cross border working issues (eg Wye Valley AONB) and can advise. Major problems can be raised with MOU.
Technological problems with web/ICT projects	2	15%	0.3	Seek outside expertise to resolve new technology
Lack of take-up of sustainable transport services	2	30%	0.6	All services will be monitored to identify success factors and issues which can be addressed in the following year(s). Lessons will be learned to feed into future

				initiatives.
Delays with interpretation due to need for ancient monument/listed building consents	1	15%	0.15	Liaise with relevant heritage and planning bodies to resolve issues
Lack of interest from sufficient towns in welcoming walkers	2	15%	0.3	Programme is targeting 5 towns from 12 new possibles. If that number cannot be engaged then the project will work with the 5 existing towns
Lack of take up of training events	2	15%	0.3	Events will be well advertised, offered at low costs and participants proactively targeted if initial interest is low.
Loss of key staff at delivery partners	2	20%	0.4	Responsibilities will need to be set out in work programme for new staff. Team based working across the Partnership will help cover gap periods.
Natural disaster eg major flooding or disease outbreak	3	5%	0.3	Prepare recovery plan. Within a three year programme responses could be developed.

14 Monitoring and Evaluation

Most of the Offa's Country partners are public sector bodies which have clear responsibilities for accounting for financial resources, monitoring impacts and good reporting practices.

The officers responsible for each package of projects and the lead officer responsible for the overall Programme will carry out monitoring and evaluation during the project and at the end of it. Project 6.1 includes a lead officer to manage and monitor the whole Programme through the LEADER Collaboration Programme. It also includes management staff time for the main English and Welsh packages of projects – to Natural Assets and RDPW.

Project 6.2 includes a range of research activities to monitor the impact of the Programme. This is described in more detail above. It will produce a range of data including:

- visitor numbers at specific sites
- numbers of people using new routes using people counters on stiles/gates
- numbers visiting interpretation and information centres
- economic benefits via visitor spend data and/or business surveys in specific locations
- visitor satisfaction expressed in visitor surveys
- numbers from bus services
- take up of train packages and offers
- number of people trained
- number of events attended and people attending
- length of routes improved or completed
- web site statistics

Qualitative data will also be collected via the surveys, feedback from business participants and discussions between partners.

15 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Tourism Workshop – Notes from Cross Border MOU Event April 2009

Sustainable tourism would have certain characteristics: **Accessible** – easy to access and ease of traveling around, joined up/packaged; **Green** – low carbon and less need to travel round by car; **Sense of place** – rooted in the locality offering distinctive experience; **A learning experience** – about the place, landscape and heritage. The underpinning factor would be the high quality of tourism on offer. The area has a Unique Selling Point and offers plenty of opportunity for different experiences, ranging from walking, food, crafts, heritage, cycling etc. The quality of the welcome and the packaging of what is available are the key determinant.

If this could be achieved it would increase community cohesion, encourage new business development in tourism and in local supply chains, and provide a stronger economic and environmental future for our children. To make this happen:

- Better packaging of holidays and provide better information for visitors
- Use Offa's Dyke as a way to complement existing brands

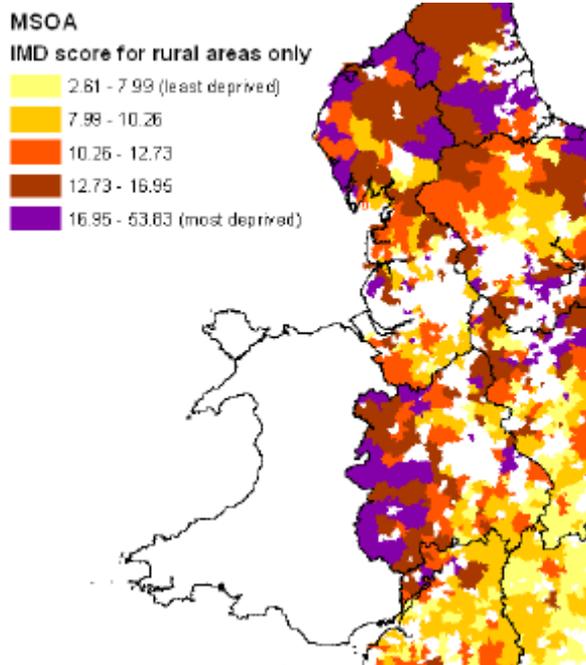
The change needed?	The benefits?	How to make it happen?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a shared vision – need to change local mindsets – encourage pride in own locality • Flexibility within planning policy and spatial plans for green development • Transport planning needs to include visitor focus as well • Make information easy to find (loss of TICs in Wales) eg easy website • Offer needs to be customer focused eg provide mountain bike transport • Make it easier to get involved – businesses, local people, visitors • Collective offer – leads to an increased sense of place • Improved perception of the borders • Change the anti Welsh perception • Reduce differences between support and systems for English and Welsh tourism businesses eg grants, green schemes, business support services. • More farmers diversifying • Quality to compete with Europe • Identify USPs to create a strong identity • Better education to generate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased community cohesion • Encourage new business development • Incorporate the travel experience into the holiday • Transport that enables people to walk linear routes and return to their base. • Increased employment for land based businesses • Healthier environment and people • More visitors leads to more profit! • Economic and environmental future for our children • Increase use of local produce – joined up supply chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong but flexible planning policy • Agri-hotel model (Italy) stay on a farm • Website portal leading to information • Better packaging of holidays eg activity holidays • Encourage self-catering visitors to buy locally • Local authority support for local supply chains • Using Offa's Dyke as a brand in an appropriate way to complement existing destination brands • Widen the Offa's Dyke identity to include heritage and the broader offer • Identify/research market to define deliverables and measure success • Spread good practice eg Beacons Bus, Hay Festival bus – could pilot similar schemes elsewhere • Clear objectives and action plan • Ensure cross border works on the ground • Simplify/more consistent • Support on either side of the border eg farming/business support

<p>more respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become greener • Improved and more joined up transport • Better packaging of holidays eg activity holidays 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make information more simple – make it <u>easy!</u> • Cross border should be integral to local authority job roles and targets • Facilitate dialogue between partners either side of border to generate ideas and encourage joint working.
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Appendix 2 – Economic and population data to support need for programme

Economic peripherality of Offa's Country

Data from the Commission for Rural Communities on rural deprivation (2007) shows high scores on the index of multiple deprivation for western Shropshire and Herefordshire. See figure below.



Looking in more detail at the employment and income elements of the IMD (see the two figures below) there is still a strong contrast between Offa's Country and the rest of the West Midlands and many other rural areas.

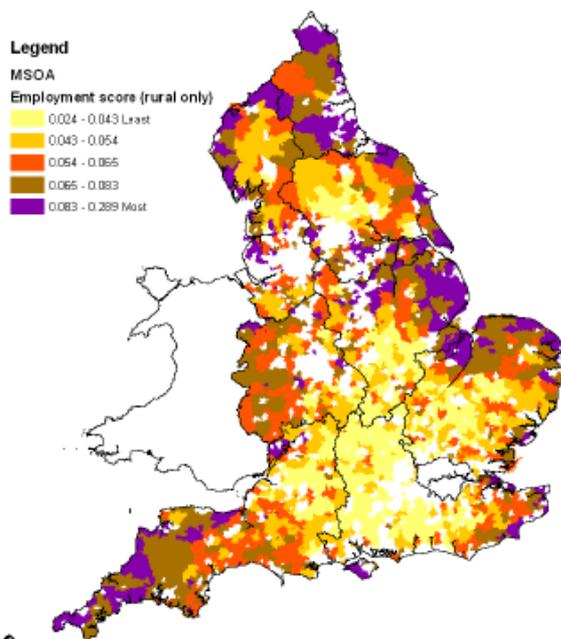


Figure 11 – Employment domain

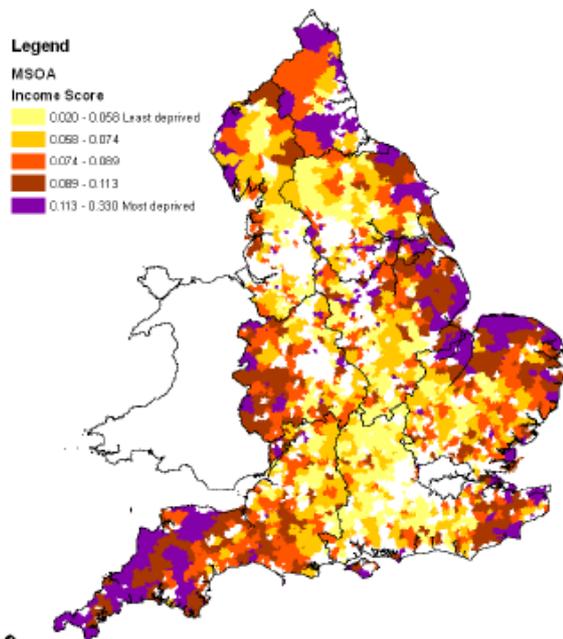


Figure 12 – Income domain

Population issues

In the West Midlands the total population in rural areas continues to grow but the rate of growth is beginning to stabilise. Despite this, the traditional concerns of an ageing population and the out-migration of young adults continues to be reflected in the data. For example, 28% of the rural population are 60 years of age or older compared to only 21% of the urban population. Over half the population in rural areas are aged over 40, and 28% are nearing or of pension age (over 60). Whereas nationally only 22% of the population are aged 60 or over. The proportion of 0-29 year olds increased in urban areas and decreased in rural areas.

For example - Shropshire Statistics:

- Shropshire has a population of 292,800 people (2008 mid-year estimate). Shropshire rural areas are amongst the lowest in population in density in the UK and certainly in the West Midlands.
- 58.2% of the total Shropshire population is of working age (2008 mid-year estimate), compared with 60.9% of the West Midlands population and 62.0% of the total UK population.
- In Shropshire, the working age population has increased by 4.8% since 1996 (the equivalent of an additional 7,800 people). However, over the last year the proportion of the total population who are of working age has fallen from 58.6%.
- Implications of this include access to and viability of education and employment as well as cultural and leisure activities are more challenging and even more vital.
- Self-employment rates remain high (18%) compared to other parts of the region, although some of this may be out of necessity. Despite this, earnings for those working in most rural areas are still significantly lower than those of people living there but working elsewhere.
- Of the 13,298 workplaces in Shropshire in 2006, 86.9% employ 10 or fewer. These micro businesses employ approximately 30% of the Shropshire workforce.
- Workers in Shropshire-based businesses are paid 17.1% less than the UK average of £490.20 per week.
- Some parts of the county still reflect the lower educational achievements and are in the higher quartile of the “no qualifications” population (eg N Shrops, Oswestry) although overall the rural parts of the W Mids region have seen a rise in the proportion of the workforce with higher qualifications (NVQ Level 4 or above) between 2005 and 2008 (3.9 percent points). At the same time the proportion of the rural workforce with no qualifications fell 3.5 percent points.

Earnings levels in South Shropshire are the lowest in the West Midlands and in Herefordshire the third lowest levels.

2008 median weekly residents' pay

South Shropshire	£395
Herefordshire	£398
West Midlands average	£450
UK average	£484

Powys Statistics:

- Powys has an estimated population (2008) of 132,598 and covers a quarter of Wales, making it the most sparsely populated county in England and Wales, with just 26 persons per square kilometre. (Wales 144 persons per square kilometre).
- The average age is also older in Powys at 44.0 (Wales 40.9). The proportion of people aged 75 and over has increased from 9.0% in 1998 to 10.3% in 2008 (Wales 8.0% in 1998 to 8.6% in 2008), due to national trends in longer life expectancy and falling birth rates accentuated by the net outmigration of young adults from Powys.
- In 2007 an estimated 50% of Powys residents lived in villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings compared to 9% on average in Wales

- The median gross weekly pay for full-time jobs in Powys in 2007 was £370.40, an increase of 0.5% from 2006, but considerably lower than the average for Wales of £404.70, which had increased 1.2% in the previous year.
- An estimated 1,300 women and 1,700 men, representing 5.1% of working age residents in Powys, were unemployed in 2008, compared with 4.2% in 2007.

GVA

GVA in Shropshire and Herefordshire is significantly lower than average in the West Midlands and UK. The figures below are headline GVA for 2007:

Herefordshire	£15,176
Shropshire	£14,093
West Midlands Average	£17,044

Between 1995 and 2008, the West Midlands produced less GVA per head than England or the UK. All sub-regions within the West Midlands also fell below the UK and England average GVA per head, (apart from Solihull -£22,600 per head - mainly due to the predominance of Birmingham airport).

GVA in Powys is considerably lower than on the English side of the border and lower than in Wales on average. GVA fell in Powys from £12,377, 76% of UK figure, in 2003 to £11,914 in 2005, just 67% of the UK figure. (Wales 2003, £12,712, 78% of UK; Wales 2005, £13784, 77% of UK).

Shropshire business performance data shows that only 73% of businesses are currently operating at full capacity. Cash flow also remains a problem for many, with just 18% saying that their cash flow had improved over the last quarter

Table 3.7.4b Socio-Economic groups (National Statistics Classification) - Percentages

AREA	All people aged 16-74	Large employers and higher managerial occupations	Higher professional occupations	Lower managerial and professional occupations	Intermediate occupations	Small employers and own account workers	Lower supervisory and technical occupations
England & Wales	-	1.71	2.52	9.29	4.70	3.49	3.57
England	-	1.75	2.56	9.37	4.74	3.49	3.55
West Midlands Region	-	1.64	2.01	8.37	4.37	3.25	3.85
Herefordshire (U.A.)	-	1.49	2.03	8.87	3.57	6.02	3.79
South West Region	-	1.60	2.34	9.34	4.56	4.39	3.78
Gloucestershire	-	1.81	2.57	10.09	4.74	4.07	3.78
Forest of Dean D.C.	-	1.45	1.94	8.65	4.09	4.93	4.14
Wales	-	1.09	1.86	8.03	4.00	3.53	3.90
Monmouthshire (U.A.)	-	2.03	2.85	9.98	3.93	4.47	3.45
Wye Valley AONB	-	2.27	2.69	9.87	3.26	5.99	3.17

AREA	Semi-routine occupations	Routine occupations	Never worked	Long-term unemployed	Full-time students	Not classifiable
Eng & Wales	5.84	4.53	1.36	0.51	3.52	8.95
Eng	5.83	4.51	1.36	0.51	3.52	8.83
W Mids	6.59	5.31	1.82	0.80	3.43	9.08
Hfds	6.86	4.49	0.82	0.38	2.34	9.54
S West	6.15	4.44	0.77	0.34	3.15	9.25
Glos	6.12	4.33	0.77	0.37	2.95	8.41
FD DC	6.43	5.40	0.88	0.42	2.65	9.03
Wales	6.13	4.97	1.37	0.55	3.62	10.95
Mnmth	5.25	4.24	0.83	0.37	2.77	9.85
WV AONB	5.60	3.95	0.76	0.36	2.28	9.79

Source: Census 2001, Casweb

Employment statistics reveal the importance of the sectors which relate to the visitor economy in Herefordshire and Shropshire.

Employment Figures 2007 (Source: Annual employees enquiry 08)

	Cultural sector	Tourism sector	Accommodation	Retail trade (not inc cars)	Beverage serving activities (inc pubs)	Food and Beverage services	All sectors
Herefordshire	7,100	3400	1000	9200	300	4100	76,800
Lichfield	3,500	1900	200	3500	100	2600	40,000
Malvern Hills	2,700	1400	400	2400	100	1800	26,500
North Warwickshire	2,900	1700	800	1800	100	2300	39,000
Shropshire	11,700	5900	1500	13000	500	6500	112,400
Staffordshire Moors	4,500	3500	1000	2100	200	1700	30,500
Stratford-on-Avon	7,500	3800	1600	5300	200	4000	57,400
Wychavon	6,100	2400	800	5200	200	3000	50,200
TOTAL	46,200	24100	7300	42600	1600	25600	

The West Midlands as a whole – as a comparison employs 2,355,400 in these sectors.

In Powys data for 2008 give a figure of 11,000 employees in the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector – equivalent to 17.7% of the workforce. In contrast the agriculture and fishing sector employs 6,400 people or 10.3% of the workforce. In Denbighshire at the time of the AONB Tourism Strategy in 2004 25% of jobs were in distribution, hotels and restaurants.

In the Clwydian Range the business survey undertaken for the Strategy found the need for increased levels of tourism was strongly felt by local enterprises. 83% said that increased business was either essential or necessary for them to achieve reasonable profitability. Enterprises were particularly looking for more business in the months of November and January through March. However, June and October also stood out as months when more business was sought, compared with the Easter period and high summer which tended to be busier. Businesses were keen on more active marketing, information provision and branding of the Range as a place to visit. There was also a lot of support for improved web-pages and more packaging of accommodation and activities.

The Wales Rural Observatory's report on living and working in rural Wales in 2004 found that 25% of economically active respondents report that they have found it difficult to find a suitable job in their local area – younger people aged 16-34 are twice as likely to report difficulties as older people. So creating more businesses and jobs in the rural areas will help enable more people to find work close to where they live.

The implications of this are: **huge pressure to maintain market share** since in GVA terms counties in Offa's Country are some way behind the rest of the region. And whilst the numbers of employees in these relevant sectors are high, salaries are generally low. Thus, in current recessionary times, any reduction in tourism and cultural economies has a severe effect on the overall viability of the rural areas since the employee data above is roughly half of the Counties' population.

The Offa's Country Programme application seeks to put the visitor economy in these rural areas into a more sustainable position for the long term through a programme of accessible and stronger product development and better targeted marketing.

In terms of numbers of **businesses** – the picture is similar with high numbers of businesses in tourism related sectors:

	Cultural sector	Tourism sector	Accommodation	Retail	Beverage serving (inc Pubs)	Food and beverage services	All sectors
Herefordshire	1,200	400	100	1,000	300	500	8,800
Lichfield	500	200	*	400	100	200	4,600

Malvern Hills	500	200	*	300	100	200	3,800
North Warwickshire	300	100	*	300	100	200	2,900
Shropshire	1,900	800	100	1,600	500	900	13,800
Staffordshire Moorlands	400	200	*	400	200	200	3,600
Stratford-on-Avon	1,000	300	100	700	200	400	7,600
Wychavon	800	200	100	600	200	300	6,100
TOTAL	6,700	2,500	500	5,400	1,600	3000	

Figures for Powys are 500 businesses in the cultural sector, (5.1%), 618 in accommodation and food (6.3%), 755 in retail (7.7%). In comparison the number of businesses in agriculture, forestry and fishing are much higher at 3,334 (34%) (2009).

Offa's Country counties are thus vulnerable to greater economic and social impact from market failure. In turn the region's GVA as a whole suffers if the rural visitor economy is not successful.

2009 has in fact been very good for tourism attractions due to the recession and the 'staycation effect' but the need is therefore greater to build on this good year and ensure that investment is made now into the infrastructure since all local authorities are now under severe pressure to cut discretionary services like tourism.

The figures above do not include **land managers and the environmental sector jobs** which are also an important element of employment in Offa's Country and help conserve the natural assets of the area. The 2006 Wales Rural Observatory Report into the Eco-Economy of Wales attempted to quantify the number of jobs dependent on the environment and natural assets of Wales. The report quote figures of:

- 117,000 FTE jobs associated with the management, use and appreciation of the natural environment
- Other spin off work related to this takes the figure to 169,000
- The management and use of the environment and the knock on economic effects generate output goods and services worth 8.8 billion a year – about 9% of Welsh GDP.
- This work contributes around 1.8 billion to people in Wales

The report gives the following employment figures – for the whole of Wales (2004)

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing 47,900
- Environmentally related tourism 23,600
- Landscape services 7,000
- Public and voluntary environmental sector 4,600

Tourism statistics

- Tourism is an important business for the whole of Offa's Country – the statistics given in section 4 of this business plan summarise the overall value of tourism to the area as £762million. However spend per head was relatively modest at £42 per visit.
- Visitor numbers total 12.6 million – the majority of which are day visits. Encouraging more of these visitors to stay overnight would greatly boost their spend and support more jobs and businesses.
- An estimate of the number of jobs supported by tourism along the border area is 16,286 full time equivalents.

Visitor motivations and behaviour

The Wye Valley AONB Visitor Survey 2004 gives a snapshot of visitor behaviour/characteristics. It found the following results:

- Approximately 20% of visitors were staying overnight in the Wye Valley area.

- Analysis of all visitors (UK and overseas) staying overnight in the AONB reveals an average length of stay of **4.2 nights**. For domestic visitors, the average length of stay was **3.9 nights**, and for overseas visitors, **6.3 nights**.
- The 642 respondents who were in the AONB for a day or touring visit were asked how long (in hours) they intended to spend in the area. The average (mean) time was **4 hours**.
- It is not surprising, given recent increases in car ownership that for most visitor surveys, the principal mode of transport used to arrive at a visitor destination is the car (82%).
- Public transport, i.e. train and local bus, was used by only 2% of all visitors, tour buses accounted for 5% of visitors, higher than the regional average of 2%.
- Respondents were also asked to indicate all forms of transport they had used to travel around the AONB. Use of the private car remained high at 75% of all respondents. However, walking was the most popular mode of 'transport', used by over two fifths (41%) of respondents.
- Visiting a restaurant/pub/café for refreshments was cited by over half (59%) of respondents who were visiting the Wye Valley AONB followed by respondents who were visiting heritage sites and walking for up to 1 hour (36% respectively).
- 'Scenery / views' were noted by over a quarter (28%) of all respondents. Responses given were of a similar nature and followed certain themes; the beautiful area (27%), the countryside and landscape (16%) and the river (11%).
- The majority (79%) of respondents had heard of the Offa's Dyke Path, over a third (36%) of visitors who had heard of the Offa's Dyke Path had walked the route. 1% did not know/were not sure if they had or not.

Appendix 3 - Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Programme - Overview

Phase One - Walking with Offa - Improving the product, visitor experience and sustainable access									
No.		Whole area	National Trail	Brecon Beacons	Clwydian Range	Wye Valley W	Wye Valley E	Shrops Hills	Total
1	<p>Improving the Walking Offer Circular walks development - 10 routes per year inc sections of Offa's Dyke – following pilot Shrops walks this year. Includes improvements on ground, pdfs and podcasts Walkers are Welcome – encourage more market towns to join, support existing towns to develop and promote their WAW status, encourage collaboration and joint working between towns. Long Distance Paths development – infrastructure and website improvements to LDPs which link to Offa's Dyke</p>		21,500	67,000	97,000	56,000	21,000	62,500	325,000
2	<p>Offa's Country Information and Interpretation National Trail interpretation planning and implementation inc. key sites plus entry/information points/centres Offa's Dyke Centre, Knighton options/interpretation study, new exhibition implementation and engagement inc its role for whole Trail/Dyke 40th anniversary events linked throughout area</p>	135,000	95,000	20,000	20,000	12,500	12,500	55,000	350,000
3	<p>Business and community engagement and training Training/familiarisation for local businesses and guided walks leaders - sense of place, local knowledge, walking opportunities, walk leader/guiding skills, route familiarisation Business and community engagement - new materials and resources to attend meetings, events, arrange displays/stands and raise profile of Offa's Dyke Country opportunities.</p>		19,000	10,000	10,000	7,500	7,500	12,500	66,500

No.		Whole area	National Trail	Brecon Beacons	Clwydian Range	Wye Valley W	Wye Valley E	Shrops Hills	Total
4	Walking promotion Offa's Dyke National Trail Website – make website more interactive with new features, video, aerial flyover, post your own photos, also need to add all the circular routes developed, better mapping etc. Offa's Dyke Passport/Hall of Fame Walking webpages for protected landscapes pdfs/GPS Refresh and relaunch Offa's Dyke Association website.	3,000	20,000	20,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	5,000	73,000
5	Sustainable Transport development and promotion Leaflet and webpages with mapping and integrated public transport information, inc walks from public transport. Offa's Country by train - railhead information, promotions with train companies, walks from stations, webpages, business packages Sustainable transport bus services Develop green transport options for events Green Transport Nodes – welcome, orientation maps, transport info, inc hi tech options – esp for interchange, info on walking, other interpretation.	19,000	20,000	57,000	55,000	30,000	20,000	79,500	280,500
6	Management and monitoring Package management, monitoring and finance support Offa's Country Research - visitor and resident surveys to monitor impact of improvements, visitor numbers, profiles and route/transport usage Co-operation and sharing best practice	98,000					2,000	20,000	120,000
	Total	255,000	175,500	174,000	187,000	116,000	73,000	234,500	1,215,000
							189,000		

Appendix 4 – Offa’s Country Sustainable Tourism Programme – Detailed Breakdown

Phase One - Walking with Offa - Improving the product, visitor experience and sustainable access 2010-13									
No.		Whole area	National Trail	Brecon Beacons	Clwydian Range	Wye Valley	Wye Valley	Shrops Hills	Totals
1	Improving the Walking Offer					Wales	England		
1.1	Circular walks development - 10 routes per year inc sections of Offa's Dyke – following pilot Shrops walks this year. Includes improvements on ground, pdfs and podcasts		16,500	12,000	12,000	6,000	6,000	7,500	60,000
1.2	Walkers are Welcome – encourage more market towns to join, support existing towns to develop and promote their WAW status, encourage collaboration and joint working between towns			25,000	25,000	20,000	5,000	25,000	100,000
1.3	Long Distance Paths development – infrastructure, business development, marketing and website improvements to LDPs which link to Offa's Dyke		5,000	30,000	60,000	30,000	10,000	30,000	165,000
	Sub total		21,500	67,000	97,000	56,000	21,000	62,500	325,000
2	Offa's Country Information and Interpretation								
2.1	Interpretation planning and implementation along National Trail and at key sites plus entry/information points/centres and interpretive events		95,000	20,000	20,000	10,000	10,000	55,000	210,000
2.2	Options/interpretation study for Offa's Dyke Centre, Knighton inc its role for whole Trail/Dyke, new exhibition implementation and engagement project	120,000							105,000
2.3	40th anniversary events linked throughout area	15,000				2,500	2,500		20,000
	Sub total	135,000	95,000	20,000	20,000	12,500	12,500	55,000	350,000
3	Business and community engagement and training								
3.1	Training/familiarisation for local businesses and guided walks leaders - sense of place, local knowledge, walking opportunities, walk leader/guiding skills, route familiarisation			10,000	10,000	7,500	7,500	12,500	47,500

No.		Whole area	National Trail	Brecon Beacons	Clwydian Range	Wye Valley W	Wye Valley E	Shrops Hills	Totals
3.2	Business and community engagement - new materials and resources to attend meetings, events, arrange displays/stands and raise profile of Offa's Dyke Country opportunities		19,000						19,000
	Subtotal		19,000	10,000	10,000	7,500	7,500	12,500	66,500
4	Walking promotion								
4.1	Offa's Dyke National Trail Website – make website more interactive with new features, video, aerial flyover, post your own photos, also need to add all the circular routes developed, better mapping etc.		15,000						15,000
4.2	Offa's Dyke Passport/Hall of Fame		5,000						5,000
4.3	New walking webpages/sites for protected landscapes, route mapping, pdfs/GPS			20,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	5,000	50,000
4.4	Refresh and relaunch Offa's Dyke Association website	3,000							3,000
	Sub total	3,000	20,000	20,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	5,000	73,000
5	Sustainable Transport development and promotion								
5.1	Leaflet and webpages with mapping and integrated public transport information, inc walks from public transport.		20,000						20,000
5.2	Offa's Country by train - railhead information, promotions with train companies, walks from stations, webpages, business packages	15,000						5,000	20,000
5.3	Sustainable transport bus services			30,000	50,000	15,000	15,000	45,000	155,000
5.4	Develop green transport options for events	4,000						2,000	6,000
5.5	Green Transport Nodes – welcome, orientation maps, transport info, inc hi tech options – esp for interchange, info on walking, other interpretation.			27,000	5,000	15,000	5,000	27,500	79,500
	Sub total	19,000	20,000	57,000	55,000	30,000	20,000	79,500	280,500

No.		Whole area	National Trail	Brecon Beacons	Clwydian Range	Wye Valley W	Wye Valley E	Shrops Hills	Totals
6	Management and monitoring								
6.1	Package management, monitoring and finance post	68,000					2,000	20,000	90,000
6.2	Offa's Country Research - visitor and resident surveys to monitor impact of improvements, visitor numbers, profiles and route/transport usage	30,000							30,000
6.3	Co-operation and sharing best practice	??							
	Sub total	98,000		0			2,000	20,000	120,000
		255,000	175,500	174,000	187,000	116,000	73,000	234,500	1,215,000
							189,000		

Natural Assets NE/AWM	269,000
LEADER Collaboration	681,000
HLF, plus Cadw/English Heritage	265,000
Total Programme	1,215,000

Appendix 5 - Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Partnership - Terms of Reference

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to establish a framework for the Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Partnership.
- 1.2 The Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Partnership has emerged from the Central Wales-West Midlands Cross Border Memorandum of Understanding and reports to its Core Officer Group. The MOU was signed in 2007 between the Welsh Assembly Government and the West Midlands Regional Assembly and over 60 local authorities and organisations on either side of the border have subsequently signed up to the principles and are assisting with the implementation.
- 1.3 The Offa's Country Sustainable Tourism Partnership is part of the Welsh-English Border Strategic Regeneration Programme, launched in 2009, that links a series of interventions that together are intended to bring about sustainable economic regeneration.
- 1.4 These Terms of Reference are not a binding contractual agreement and are an indication by the signatories of commitment to the aims of the Partnership.
- 1.5 The Partnership will not hold or expend funds itself, but its work will be supported through key partners and external funding.

2. VISION

- 2.1 Offa's Country will be an area achieving effective cross border collaboration between Welsh and English partners in order to create more sustainable economies and communities
- 2.2 By 2020, Offa's Country will have achieved recognition for the high quality of its sustainable tourism offer based on effective cross border working and by implementing the principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To improve the economy and sustainability of the Welsh-English border area by developing and promoting the sustainable tourism experience, based on the high quality natural and cultural assets of Offa's Country.
- 3.2 To make the most of available resources by working together to achieve funding for the improvements needed to achieve 3.1.
- 3.3 The more specific objectives are:
 - To improve the quality of the sustainable visitor experience across Offa's Country, with easier access and information, interesting interpretation, a range of excellent outdoor activity opportunities and good quality facilities.
 - To encourage more repeat visits, recommendations and longer stays throughout the year in Offa's Country, motivated by its natural and cultural assets.
 - To increase the average spend of visitors on sustainable local products and services, supporting new and existing isolated rural businesses along the border.
 - To ensure the management of key natural tourism assets is more sustainable in future.

- To increase the proportion of visitors who use public or sustainable transport during their visits to Offa's Country.
- To raise the strategic profile of Offa's Country as a destination for sustainable tourism.

4. VALUES

4.1 Promoting equality, diversity, access and social inclusion.

- It is important that the Partnership is built upon the fundamental principles of inclusiveness and equality for all.

4.2 Improving Sustainability.

- The Partnership will seek to support and promote social, economic and environmental sustainability and well-being of the area.
- The Partnership will base its work on the intrinsic and authentic values of the area, helping express its sense of place to visitors
- The Partnership will work with and through local people and communities to ensure that tourism development supports and does not damage valued cultural and environmental resources.
- The Partnership will pay particular attention to reducing the impact of its economic development projects on the environment, whether this be local impacts on countryside and wildlife or global impacts in terms of resource use, climate change etc.
- The Partnership will aim to monitor the impact of its projects on the environment, society and economy

4.3 Delivering value for money.

- Projects supported by public and other funds should assess their value for money paying equal attention to economic, environmental and social impacts on either side of the border.
- Through joined-up activity involving collaborations between organisations and businesses on either side of the border, add value to any projects and initiatives

4.4 Cooperative Working

- The partnership is based on the principles of cooperative working between partners. No partner shall be forced to take part in any particular activity but where appropriate joint projects will be developed for implementation with or without external funding.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The Offa's Country Partnership is an inclusive forum, currently made up of representatives of the following partner organisations operating in Offa's Country:

- 1 Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- 2 Clwydian Range AONB Partnership

- 3 Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
- 4 Wye Valley AONB Partnership /JAC
- 5 Countryside Council for Wales
- 6 Natural England
- 7 Tourism Partnership Mid Wales
- 8 Adventa
- 9 Denbighshire County Council
- 10 Flintshire County Council
- 11 Gloucestershire County Council
- 12 Herefordshire Council
- 13 Monmouthshire County Council
- 14 Powys County Council
- 15 Shropshire Council
- 16 Herefordshire DMP
- 17 Shropshire DMP
- 18 Welsh Assembly Government
- 19 Advantage West Midlands (AWM)
- 20 West Midlands Leaders Board
- 21 Memorandum of Understanding Core Officers Group

5.2 Membership shall be reviewed annually.

6. MEETINGS AND ORGANISATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP

6.1 Meeting shall be agreed as and when necessary and dates will usually be agreed at the previous meeting.

6.2 Chairmanship and administrative support for the meetings of the partnership will be provided by one of the Partners as agreed annually.

7. SCRUTINY OF THE PARTNERSHIP

7.1 All members of the Partnership shall abide by the nationally recognised procedures, guidelines and standards for ensuring probity and good governance in public life.

7.2 The representative members will report annually to their organizations and local Partnerships. The purpose shall be to report on the progress and activities of the Partnership.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 8.1 Member organisations and their representatives are required to declare any private, professional, political, commercial, academic or other interest that may conflict with the Partnership's interests, or which might be seen by members of the public to influence or bias judgment when discussing or reaching decisions.
- 8.2 All declarations of interests may be recorded in the minutes and notes of meetings and will be available for public scrutiny if requested either electronically or in hard copy.
- 8.3 Any person declaring an interest may be asked to leave the meeting for the duration of the relevant agenda item, at the discretion of the Chair.

9. OPERATIONS

- 9.1 The Partnership will establish a clear statement of commitment to support the delivery and the aims and objectives of the Partnership.
- 9.2 Members are accountable to the Partnership for the commitments they make with regard to the implementation within their own organisations/partnerships of relevant aspects of the agreed actions.
- 9.3 Members representing a sector will use their best endeavours to promote the partnership and the delivery of its objectives in their work.

10. PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

- 10.1 The Partnership shall develop project proposals for the implementation of Partnership objectives. These will primarily be for submission to agreed funding bodies. No partner will be obliged to take part in these projects whether funded or non-funded. Individual participating partners will be responsible for their own match funding and their own implementation of the work. A Lead Partner will be appointed for any such project and a separate legally binding Project Agreement will be drawn up to cover the legal and financial responsibilities of all parties. Such Agreements will include termination and dispute resolution clauses.

11. DELEGATION

- 11.1 There will be no delegated actions.

12. CONTRACTS

- 12.1 Employment, supplies or service contracts with third parties on behalf of the Partnership, will be entered into by one of the Partners and not by the Partnership as a whole.
- 12.2 If the partner entering into a contract is only willing to do so on the basis of financial support from any or all of the other partners, then no contract should be awarded until the financial support relied upon is agreed and set out in writing within a Project Agreement as under Para 12 above.

- 12.3 No partner has the power to commit any other partner to any expense unless expressly and specifically agreed.
- 12.4 Any partner holding funds provided by any other partner will maintain accounts and provide such information at any time as may reasonably requested.

13. REVIEW & DISSOLUTION

- 13.1 Partners should recognise the need to keep the operation of the Partnership within the terms of reference and under constant review.
- 13.2 If any Partner wishes to withdraw from the Partnership written and verbal notice must be given of how any funding committed to the partnership will be dealt with.

14. SHARING INFORMATION

- 14.1 It is agreed that, wherever possible, Partnership members will share information about their organisations and services where that information is relevant to the aims and objectives of the Partnership.
- 14.2 For reasons of client or stakeholder confidentiality Partners will seek to supply information in such a form to assist the Partnership whilst resolving the confidentiality issues.
- 14.3 Members shall at all times abide by the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

15. CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO THESE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 15.1 The Partnership shall review the Terms of Reference annually.
- 15.2 The current version shall be publicly accessible on the website of the Partnership if one is created and available in hard copy on request.
- 15.3 Date for review March 2011.

Appendix 6 - LEADER LAGs, priorities and progress

Wales

The main priorities are Axis 3 and Axis 4.

Axis 3 – Axis 3 aims to diversify the rural economy by providing support to farming families to diversify into non agricultural activities, support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises and support for the encouragement of tourism activities. It also aims to improve the quality of life in rural communities by supporting basic services for the rural economy and population, village renewal, conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage and training for rural economic actors.

Axis 4 - Axis 4 uses the LEADER approach to engage grass-roots communities and to encourage the generation of new innovative ways to sustain rural development in Wales in the longer term. Support is also available to fund co-operation projects between Wales and both other parts of the United Kingdom and other European Union Member States.

1. *adventa* (Monmouthshire)

adventa's primary focus is to work with local enterprises and businesses and provide support to enhance and strengthen these Monmouthshire businesses.

adventa manages the Axis 4 activity of Monmouthshire County Council's Rural Development Programme. The overall aim of *adventa* is to encourage spend in the local area, with a view to improving and sustaining the local rural economy. *adventa's* activities are governed by the Monmouthshire Rural Partnership, a partnership of public, private, voluntary and community sector representatives and organisations.

2. *Glasu* (Powys)

Glasu looks specifically at projects that fit within Axis 3 and Axis 4:

Glasu currently has eight project areas:

1. Food and Sustainability
2. Taste of Powys
3. Low Carbon Futures
4. Culture, Heritage and Local Products
5. Festivals and Events
6. Wild and Green Tourism
7. Wild and Green Products
8. Renewables Powys

3. *Cadwyn* (Clwyd)

The Company focuses on actions, which stimulate grass-root participation, partnership working and innovation to support projects for rural communities and sector groups. It works directly with local communities to assist in the development and implementation of projects, which benefit the area's local economy. RDP funding can be spent in eligible rural wards of Denbighshire and Flintshire. Its main priorities are also:

Axis 3 Improving Quality of life and encouraging diversification

Axis 4 Implementing the LEADER Approach

England

4. Northern Marches (parts of North Shropshire and South West Cheshire)

Aims

- To capitalise on the local distinctiveness of the Northern Marches area to stimulate rural economic and community development

- To empower local people to work in partnership to build a vibrant and dynamic local community

Objectives

- To stimulate appropriate development of the land-based/food sector to meet the needs of producers and consumers
- To work in partnership to promote local distinctiveness and unique heritage to local communities and a wider audience
- To develop actions which mitigate the effects of threats to the natural environment
- To increase the participation of community members active within the area, either through work, training or community action
- To Improve access to services in those areas not served by market towns

5. Shropshire Hills

The theme for the programme is improving the well-being of people in and around the Shropshire Hills by building on a sense of place and attachment to the landscape.

Well-being can be defined as "a contented state of being happy, healthy and prosperous" and recent work by the New Economics Foundation, defining the actions society can take to improve well-being, have been adopted as a framework for the delivery of LEADER in the Shropshire Hills. The Shropshire Hills Leader programme is therefore centred round community rather than tourism.

6. Herefordshire

The West Midlands priorities for LEADER are focused on social and community issues, and LEADER in Herefordshire has the following **strategic objectives** to:

- Enable local communities to develop and implement actions to improve the quality of life of those living and working in rural Herefordshire.
- Enable local communities to develop and access the services they need in their area.
- Support and improve local democratic structures to meet the needs of local communities
- Training local people to meet identified skill gaps and encourage enterprise
- Enhance and maintain the distinctiveness of the countryside, including cultural, historic and natural environment

7. Forest of Dean

Actions: 3 themes

- Engaging communities
- Re - localisation
- Intelligent Economic Growth

Outputs

- Formation of an effective LAG based on sound procedures
- Integration of sustainable development principles
- Deploying projects that focus on the area's USP
- Enabling skills progression opportunities
- Empowering communities to identify gaps and broker solutions
- Exploiting skills & technologies that maintain the landscape
- Enable communities and households to address Carbon Footprint.

It can be seen that the seven groups have a variety of aims and objectives and do not all necessarily fund the same type of project. Any bids will therefore need to be tailored to the individual LAG being approached.