

Proposal Description

Section 4.2

As stated, the LAG will be developing from a standing start and the Preparatory Funding will be essential for expert external advice and resourcing to be bought in to assist the development of an LDS. District and County Officers will seek to support and add value to the process in terms of the on the ground development and to ensure strategic fit with other emerging activity - thereby demonstrating the commitment of both Ashfield District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council to achieve the best position for local rural growth activity – including time commitments to help facilitate the best outcomes.

The list of activity included in the main body of the application is hopefully self-explanatory. The activity is designed to set out a broad path from 1st April 14 to LDS submission (date TBC) recognising the current LAG status and the need for intensive external support. The activity also identifies scope for the LAG to maintain momentum, should the LDS be successful, by supporting further engagement and staff recruitment activities to enable delivery from 1st January 2015.

It is intended that this common approach would be applied individually with each of the 4 emerging LEADER areas in terms of getting the emergent LAGs to a position of sustainability and self-governance with a view to then placing each in the best position to own and deliver its own “bespoke” LDS.

Naturally, the output of each LAG will be different, as different priorities will be identified and tackled locally – this is about a common development framework and facilitation being made available for local use to help extend LEADER coverage in the County and to help compliment other D2N2 and Defra led rural activity.

It is also an opportunity to streamline and improve the capacity and functionality of back office services and on the ground project animation - by also seeking to support any Nottinghamshire LAGs with common delivery frameworks

Clearly, there is a critical mass necessary for shared services to apply- and an understanding of this will only emerge when more is known about what LAGs are successful with Preparatory Funding Support and later if all/any are successful with their LDS submissions and subsequent LEADER support to 2020.

The intention remains for the North Notts LAG to benefit and strengthen its delivery capacity through shared functions – although should insufficient critical mass be achieved (based on number of new LAGs proceeding, breadth of activity, value of programmes) it is likely that the existing LAG will submit its LDS as initially intended with the current Accountable Body.

In specific response to the Questions posed in the Guidance:

1. **Who you will be consulting with to identify priorities:**

Local business groups; individual businesses; farming groups and land owners/NFU; social enterprises; community groups; Parish Councils; District Council; RCAN and other rural service deliverers etc. This list is not exhaustive and others will emerge through planned stakeholder engagement – this will all be facilitated by external consultants.

2. The rationale behind the LAG area chosen:

This has been a theoretical exercise to include the key rural wards within the County that are both contiguous and have a meaningful geography and common economic area. The intention is to test this in reality and amend if necessary based on further statistical analysis and local input – again facilitated by external consultancy

3. How you will encourage and recruit local representatives to develop the LAG

It is hoped to leverage existing local activity and skills as a core LAG nucleus and, through awareness raising and facilitated engagement activity, (workshops, publicity, web engagement, networking etc.) build upon this and through skills analysis target and build up the skills necessary for the LAG to be self-sustaining.

4. Initial thoughts on the priorities and needs LEADER would seek to address

It is anticipated, through anecdotal knowledge of the rural economy, that there will be a focus on SME and micro start up support, rural tourism development, business access to broadband (not-spots), environmental projects (with clear economic focus), business accommodation and farm diversification projects – it would also be likely that there will be a focus on developing social enterprise led activity and improving access to rural services through innovative delivery solutions and growing sustainable entrepreneurial activity. Clearly this list is not exhaustive and it is intended to “test” this through local consultation and engagement and research – again facilitated through external consultancy

5. How you will liaise with the LEPs and any other stakeholders

As stated – the involvement of the District and County Councils and RCAN (RCAN's Chief Executive is the D2N2 Rural Champion and LEP Board Member) will help facilitate and raise opportunities for strategic fit as all rural activity develops over the coming months.

6. Milestones

Please refer to Main Application Section 5 response.

RISKS

- There are various go/no go points throughout this activity given the start-up nature of the LAG. The engagement, support and commitment of the District and County Councils will help to mitigate any lack of engagement through the knowledge of the area/contacts and the appointment of appropriate consultancy support
- There is also the risk that the LAG forms but chooses/is unable to develop an LDS – every effort will be made to support the LAG to complete an LDS but if this is not possible, data/research and increased understanding of the rural economy and valuable community will have been achieved that could later result in other forms of economic activity
- The risk remains that the LDS may be unsuccessful – every effort will be made to support the LAG to develop the best LDS possible through advice and expert guidance
- Ineligible activity – the County Council will act as Accountable Body to ensure that all activity is eligible and compliant with the funding offer