



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 20 October 2009	<u>Item</u> 9
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LEADER IN THE SHROPSHIRE HILLS UPDATE

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Summary

This paper presents an update on the progress of the Shropshire Hills LEADER programme, including Project Approval and future strategic direction.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note progress and offer comments.

Background

1. The Shropshire Hills LEADER Funding Agreement, worth £1.25 million of European Union and UK Government funds between 2009 and December 2013, has now been signed. This means that LEADER funding can now be distributed across the Shropshire Hills LEADER area in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Shropshire Hills LEADER Local Development Strategy and Business Plan.
2. A Project Engagement visit (PEV) was completed by Advantage West Midlands (AWM) on 7th October 2009 at the AONB Partnership office. The PEV is completed in order for both parties to discuss the details of the Offer Letter / Funding Agreement. Advantage West Midlands were satisfied with the systems and processes that are in place to meet the terms and conditions set out in the Funding Agreement.
3. It was envisaged that LEADER funding in the Shropshire Hills would be live from April 2009. Projects have been developed in line with this initial timetable and match funding has been secured with the intention of accessing LEADER funding from April 2009. In order to assist these projects and to ensure that valuable match funding is not lost a LEADER Approvals Panel was organised as soon as the Funding Agreement was signed. The appraised projects were considered by the Shropshire Hills LEADER Approvals Panel on 7th October 2009 (a list of these projects with a brief project description can be found in Appendix 1 of this report).
4. As Members will be aware, the overall strategic aims and objectives of the Shropshire Hills LEADER programme are set out in the Local Development Strategy. A Business Plan that explains the mechanics of LEADER and sets out the strategic aims and objectives for a twelve month period has to be updated on an annual basis. It is intended that the Business Plan Update be provided to the AONB Partnership on an annual basis.

5. In addition to the Shropshire Hills LEADER Local Development Strategy the Shropshire Hills LEADER Programme will fund projects that meet the aims and objectives of the AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014. The defined Policies within the AONB Management Plan will provide direction and guide activity and assist the Approvals Panel in their decisions. It is intended that the AONB Partnership Manager will provide a training session for all Approval Panel members in the near future regarding the AONB Management Plan.
6. The Approvals Panel met on Wednesday 7th October 2009 and approved three projects, outlined in Appendix 1.
7. In addition to the completed applications the following Expression of Interest Forms have been received. Applicants are working with the LEADER Co-ordinator to develop to full application:
 - Small Woods Association – Outreach Forest School
 - Stretton Railway Society – Signal Box Project
 - Hopton Castle Restoration project
 - Shropshire Hills Furniture Scheme – Creating Opportunities with Computers
 - South Shropshire Housing Association – Creating Opportunities with Computers
 - Bishop’s Castle Tourism Community Interest Company - Festivals Officer
 - Lydbury North Field Group – The Making of Lydbury Landscape
 - Stretton Climate Care – Addressing Climate Change in the Strettons
 - South Shropshire Youth Forum
8. Members of the Partnership, which is formally the LEADER Local Action Group, are welcome to see applications or Expressions of Interest for any of the above projects. Pete Banford can supply copies of these on request.

<p>List of Background Papers LEADER in the Shropshire Hills Local Development Strategy and Business Plan, available at http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/leader/Leader.htm.</p>
<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.</p>
<p>Environmental Appraisal The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.</p>
<p>Risk Management Appraisal Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.</p>
<p>Community / Consultations Appraisal The LEADER Appraisals and Approvals Panels have been involved with the projects.</p>
<p>Appendices Appendix 1 Projects approved on 7 Oct 2009</p>

Appendix 1 Projects approved on 7 Oct 2009

Name of Applicant	Project Title	Level of Funding	RDPE Measure	Project Description
Ludlow 21	Grow, Cook and Share	£42,000	321	This project aims is to change the food culture in the two most disadvantaged communities in south Shropshire by re-skilling residents in growing and preparing fresh fruit and vegetables and in procuring and distributing local produce from their rural hinterland.
Shropshire Wildlife Trust	Once Upon a Hill : discovering the lost villages of The Stiperstones	£50,000	323	Once Upon a Hill aims to conserve a Scheduled Monument and Listed Building (Blakemoorgate cottages) and the grasslands and hedgerows of a Natura 2000 site, undertake oral reminiscence and provide access, interpretation, education, training and volunteering opportunities for the community and visitors of all ages and abilities.
Home-Start: South Shropshire & Bridgnorth Districts	Rural Homestart Service	£15,000	321	This project aims to provide a service for isolated families in rural South Shropshire. The project aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce isolation for single parents, those in domestic violent situations, those without extended family links, those new to the area and those in rurally isolated homes • Improve child and parental emotional health • Improve child and parent physical health • Reduce family conflict and improve parenting skills • Improve budgeting skills • Signpost local services