

3rd November 2008

£16 million Secured for Rural Communities

Six partnerships are set to receive a share of over £16 million over the next six years to fund activity which will encourage and support rural economic development, thanks to a scheme managed by Yorkshire Forward.

The South Pennines LEADER Group; Yorkshire Dales LEADER Group; North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Group; East Peak Innovation Partnership; Coast, Wolds, Wetlands and Waterways; and Northern Lincolnshire Rural Local Action Group have all successfully submitted applications to deliver a community led approach to rural development known as LEADER.

LEADER, is the name given to the 'Links between actions of rural development' method of delivering rural development through a local community led, bottom up approach and is a good way of addressing rural needs.

The LEADER partnerships, which are known as Local Action Groups, have produced Local Development Strategies and will develop a range of projects that will improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of local communities between now and 2013. The projects will primarily focus on basic services for rural communities, rural culture and heritage, village development and renewal.

The Local Action Groups are made up of local businesses, farmers, landowners, voluntary and community groups and individuals who will play a key role in allocating the funding. The groups reinforce the value of partnership working by bringing into one forum all those who have an interest in improving the quality of life and economic prosperity of their community.

The EU-wide initiative forms part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) fund which is jointly funded by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the European Union, and is managed by Yorkshire Forward in Yorkshire and Humber.

Groups and organisations located within the LEADER areas will be able to apply for grants for initiatives that fit with the themes and priorities identified by each of the Local Action Groups.

Andy Tordoff, Assistant Director of Environment at Yorkshire Forward said:

"LEADER reinforces the value of partnership working by bringing into one forum, all those who have an interest in encouraging and supporting local economic development. I am confident that all the LEADER Partnerships will support and develop a range of projects which will help to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of local communities in the region."

The Regional Development Agencies for the North West and North East England are also working very closely with some of the partnerships.

One North East's rural board member, Ian Brown, said: "We're delighted that the North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER group – which covers parts of East Cleveland – has developed this strong and exciting strategy.

"While LEADER still focuses on RDPE's core themes, it's about the ideas and solutions of communities themselves. So whether that's supporting micro-businesses, the marketing of farm produce, community training and skills, conservation projects or improving the use of heritage as a tourism tool, they can be really innovative in how they use this funding and tailor it to the needs of their area."

David Hunter, Head of Rural Affairs at Northwest Regional Development Agency said: "The South Pennines Local Action Group demonstrates exactly what the LEADER approach is there to achieve by working across regional boundaries to address matters locally. Rural communities want to act on important common agendas regardless of the confines of lines on the map and the LEADER approach supports this."

Additional information on the LEADER groups and how to contact them, also the support which is available through the rest of the RDPE programme can be obtained from the Yorkshire Forward website www.yorkshire-forward.com/rdpe or by contacting Elizabeth Scott on 0113 394 5705 or email Elizabeth.Scott@Yorkshire-Forward.com

Notes to editors:

The RDPE is jointly funded through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the UK government and is managed in the region by Yorkshire Forward.

Yorkshire Forward

- Yorkshire Forward is the Regional Development Agency behind the economic regeneration of Yorkshire and Humber. It aims to make a positive difference by investing in jobs, improving towns and cities, and in supporting businesses throughout the region.
- Over the past year, Yorkshire Forward has created and safeguarded more than 25,456 jobs, assisted 35,165 people in skills, created 1,231 businesses and attracted over £1 billion in investment.
- Yorkshire Forward's investment across the region is maximised by attracting European Regional Development Funding from the Objectives One and Two programmes and the 2007-2013 Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes.

For further information, images or to arrange an interview, please contact Laura Scholey, Press Executive on 0113 3949540 or email laura.scholey@yorkshire-forward.com

