

Final version

RURAL RENAISSANCE IN SOMERSET

**A new future for
Somerset's rural communities**

**Delivery Plan
Transitional Year
2008/09**

Somerset Rural Renaissance Partnership

**Approved by the RR SMG Jan 2008
Approved by the RR Board April 2008**

The aim of Rural Renaissance is:

“ To help rural communities in the South West respond to and influence economic change, by supporting the development and implementation of sustainable projects that use innovation and enterprise to:

- Create prosperity and generate employment
- Improve delivery and access to services
- Realise the value of the environment as an economic asset”

South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) 2002

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1. Introductory Statement

1.1 Agreement of Partnership

The Somerset Rural Renaissance Partnership comprises representatives from the agencies as listed in Appendix One. All members of the Partnership have been invited to contribute to this Transitional Year Delivery Plan, and it has been discussed and formally agreed at a Scheme Management Group held on January 30th 2008.

1.2 Purpose of the Scheme

In this transitional year the Partnership will oversee the implementation of SWRDA funds in the following Programmes:

- The completion of the existing Rural Renaissance Main Programme (allocation of £1.65million as at April 2005) & RR Rural Workspace Programme (allocation of £0.5 million as at April 2005).
- The commencement of initiatives to develop a future rural regeneration programme under the aegis of the Somerset Strategic Partnership with a total allocation of £400,000 for 2008/09.

1.3 Geographical Area/Target Groups

Originally the Somerset Rural Renaissance Partnership identified the following key needs and priorities:

- Addressing the low productivity, wage levels and skills base of the county's rural economy;
- Diversifying and adding dynamism to the county's rural economy and broadening the employment base of vulnerable employment centres in rural Somerset;
- Improving the limited economic infrastructure of rural Somerset and overcoming remoteness of rural businesses from training and business support;
- Reversing the economic and physical decline of some key rural centres in the county and the serious decline in rural services;
- Tackling barriers to employment, skills gaps and exclusion experienced by particular groups of the population in rural Somerset; and
- Tackling the particular issues of low productivity, deprivation and vulnerable economic base of Western Somerset;

For 2008/09, and beyond, these priorities will be refreshed to ensure that they are focussed on the relevant key priorities for Somerset as expressed in the Somerset Strategic Partnership's (SSP) sustainable community strategy and local area agreement (LAA). Future rural delivery resources from SWRDA and related programmes, such as Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC), will need to be aligned for delivery of these LAA targets. The RR Partnership will be mindful to review priorities emerging from all of the blocks of the LAA, but will undoubtedly look to primarily address those within the Economy theme. The draft outcomes & priorities for the Economy theme of the Somerset LAA appear in Section 2.

1.4 Management and staffing Arrangements

Initially, the intended management arrangements for this interim year are as set out in previous years. By October 2008, however, we anticipate that these will be revised in line with:

- The SSP setting the Overall Direction by means of the Local Area Agreement priorities
- The Economic Leaders Group of the SSP setting out the wider strategy to deliver against these priorities
- The current RR Partnership, continuing to be the Delivery vehicle for detailed decisions concerning the allocation of investments (See 1.9 below)
- Somerset County Council continuing to be the accountable body administering the funding and employing the staff working to the Programme.

For the period from April 1st to Sept 30th 2008 whilst the current 2005-08 Scheme is finalised, outputs fully quantified and projects evaluated, the County Council will continue to employ the following staff on RR activities: a Scheme Manager (0.8fte on RR activities); A workspace programme manager (1 fte on RR); an Asst officer (0.8fte) dedicated admin staff (0.5fte) and two Rural Project Officers (0.5 fte each on RR). (Total 4.1fte). Many of these staff resources have been available only since the capacity building resources of the RDA were provided in early 2007.

From October 1st 2008 to March 31st 2009, it is intended that the County Council will employ the equivalent of 3.1 fte of staff time (1 fewer Project Officer). This Delivery Plan seeks an annual contribution of £60,000 from the RDA towards these staff costs and other ancillary management and admin costs for the year, with equivalent match funding from SCC.

1.5 Project Appraisal, Monitoring, and Evaluation

We will take the opportunity in the early part of the financial year to review our processes and paperwork in line with any emerging Best Practice lessons from our own internal reviews and from any fresh Guidance arising from the RDA including the current Region-wide evaluations of the RR Programme. Appraisals of fresh projects for 2008/09 investments will be carried out according to this Guidance.

Monitoring of project outputs will continue throughout 2008/09 in order to continue to make returns to the RDA on a quarterly basis. We anticipate the final return in respect of the 2005-2008 RR Programme outputs to be made after Q4 of 2008/09.

As we come to the end of the current 2005-2008 Programme, the emphasis in the past 12 months has been to encourage all projects to ensure that they had appropriate arrangements and resources in place in order to complete an evaluation that was commensurate with the scale of the activity. To this end a number of the larger projects have now finalised or are finalising major evaluation reviews, usually with external consultants and/or with evaluation steering groups. Particularly for the smaller projects, but also for the larger ones in order to ensure

consistency, we have also instituted our own evaluation review so that all projects might provide lessons for future funding streams and project deliverers. All of these evaluation reports will be made available via the RR website.

1.6 Involvement of the Local community and other strategic partnerships

The local community is involved via representatives of the Somerset Market Towns Forum, the Community Council for Somerset and the Somerset Voluntary Sector Network. Each is represented on the Scheme Management Group as well as the Board.

1.7 Inflation, assumptions and VAT

A salary increase of 2.5% per annum has been included for staff. An inflation assumption for other programme costs has not been included. Individual projects will need to factor in appropriate inflation and VAT elements in their proposals.

1.8 Publicity

In 2007 we initiated a range of activities that ensured better publicity for the RR Scheme and its projects. Following the launch of the dedicated RR website (www.somerset-rural-renaissance.co.uk), and the publication of the 2005-2008 RR Review in the autumn of 2007, we will now ensure that there is a revised PR strategy that ties in with the SSP PR strategy.

1.9 Transition to the new Delivery Model

The current Rural Renaissance Board, Scheme Management Group and staff team will build on its linkages with the Somerset Strategic Partnership (SSP) and will evolve as the rural delivery arm for economic initiatives in the rural areas. A number of member agencies represented on the RR Board are also members of the SSP and have been able to contribute to the discussions for the emerging LAA outcomes and priorities. There will be scope for further specific research to be commissioned in the early part of 2008/09 on behalf of the SSP through the RR to help develop and strengthen the evidence base for the LAA.

A review will take place in the first half of 2008/09 to establish the preferred model for the rural delivery vehicle. At the present time it is envisaged that it will be based upon the current RR Scheme Management Group of 10 partners, although there will be scope for this to be expanded if it is felt that there is a need to have broader representation. In addition it is envisaged that there will be at least an Annual meeting of the wider range of agencies, the 'Board'.

1.10 Further Activities

In 2008/09 the RR partnership will look to invest in a range of initiatives. Some of these will continue the successful activities of the current Scheme, such as the Workspace Programme; whilst others will help set the scene or initiate further activities that the SSP will wish to take

forward. It is intended that up to £200k of RR investments will be made in the Workspace Programme in 2008/09. A further £140k will be available for commissioning new projects that pave the way towards implementation of the priorities of the SSP LAA.

1.11 Post Programme Responsibilities

The County Council will take responsibility at the Scheme end for the following tasks:

- Collection and reporting of any outputs arising after the end of the Rural Renaissance Programme
- Completion of the Statement of Grant Expenditure for 2008/09
- Maintenance of records for ten years
- Maintenance of an asset register, including notifying the Agency of any proposals to dispose of assets
- Providing information in case of any future audit.

1.12 Risk Assessment

The Partnership will keep under review potential risks that may affect the Partnership and delivery of the Scheme during 2008/09. Any major initiative that is awarded an investment will be required to fully analyse risks as part of the application and appraisal process. At quarterly meetings the Partnership will review progress of all significant projects.

1.12 Signatories

The following members of the Partnership have been authorised to sign the final version of this Plan on behalf of the partnership:

.....

Rupert Cox (Chairman of the Partnership)

.....

Paul Chadwick (RR Scheme Manager)

2. OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE ECONOMY THEME OF SOMERSET LAA

The Somerset Rural Renaissance Partnership (SRRP) will deliver the transitional year programme in alignment with the emerging LAA priorities. We anticipate that these will be finalised by June 2008. LAA Economic Theme outcomes 1, 2, 4 & 5 below are particularly relevant. (As at Jan 18th 2007)

No	LAA Outcomes	Priorities	Possible Indicators	Named Partners
1	A more productive and competitive Somerset economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase levels and quality of investment into Somerset • Develop key business sectors and expand the county's knowledge economy • Improve the operating environment for local businesses and remove barriers to growth • high quality business support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIS 171: (VAT registration rate per 10,000 adults) • NIS 172: (VAT registered businesses showing growth) • Local indicator (Growth of Somerset's knowledge economy) • Small business growth PRG target (2008/09) <i>Measures relating to VAT registration rate per 10,000 adults and growth in key small business sectors as a percentage of key small business sector growth in the South West since 2001</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West RDA • SRRP • Peninsula Enterprise • Learning and Skills Council • HEFCE • Further Education Colleges • SCC (Community and Environment Directorates) • District Councils • ENPA • Somerset Chamber of Commerce and Industry
2	More sustainable and resource efficient economic growth in Somerset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the environmental efficiency of businesses • Promote the economic opportunities arising from climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIS 176: Adapting to climate change <i>(Economy theme contributing to</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West RDA • SRRP • Peninsula Enterprise • SCC (Community and

		<p>change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable and resource efficient workspace development 	<p><i>business element of this indicator, with lead responsibility held in Environment theme)</i></p>	<p>Environment Directorates)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Councils • Exmoor NPA
3	<p>A strengthened economic role for Somerset's key growth centres (including Taunton, Yeovil and Bridgwater as growth centres in the RSS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realise the potential of development opportunities in key growth centres • Increase range and quality business, employment and cultural opportunities in key growth centres • Ensure that growth brings increased economic opportunities to deprived neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIS 151 (for growth areas) • NIS 153 • NIS 172 (for growth areas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West RDA • Peninsula Enterprise • Learning and Skills Council • JCP • Further Education Colleges • SCC (Environment, Community and CYP Directorates) • District Councils
4	<p>A stronger and more diverse economy across Somerset's market towns and rural communities (including West Somerset as a national Working Neighbourhoods Fund priority area)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen and diversify the employment base of Somerset's market towns • Improve economic performance in lagging rural areas of Somerset • Increase the productivity and sustainability of Somerset's rural economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIS 151: overall employment rate (West Somerset District) • NIS 171: VAT registration rate for West Somerset District • Local Indicator of market town economy > net change in stock of rural small businesses; > economic strength of Somerset's market towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West RDA • SRRP • Peninsula Enterprise • Learning and Skills Council • HEFCE • JCP • SCC (Community and Environment Directorates) • District Councils • Somerset Chamber of Commerce and Industry • Community Council • ENPA

5	A more highly skilled, rewarded and qualified Somerset workforce, relevant to the future needs of the County's economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase skills, employability and wages across Somerset's workforce • Develop the skills, confidence and potential of young people • Develop and attract higher level skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIS 117:(16-18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) (<i>relevant to both Children and Young People and Economy theme</i>) • NIS 163: Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 (GCSE*) or higher • NIS 165: Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 (Degree) or higher • NIS 166: Average earnings of employees (median weekly, gross pay for full time workers • Worklessness PRG target (2008/09) – Measures relating to proportion of JSA claimants in top 30 most deprived areas and number of economically inactive people in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South West RDA • Learning and Skills Council • SRRP • JCP • Connexions • HEFCE • Further Education Colleges • SCC (Community and CYP Directorates)
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			<p>Somerset, as percentage of total population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worklessness PRG target (2008/09) – Number of economically inactive people in Somerset, as percentage of total population • Skills for life PRG target (2008/09) - Number of adults gaining basic skills up to Level 2 as part of the Skills for Life strategy) 	
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3.0 Baseline Position and Intended Outcomes: Somerset Rural Renaissance Scheme

Evaluation of projects in 2008/09 to confirm progress towards lifetime position.

Strategic Objectives	Baseline Position	Position at end of lifetime of bid
SO1 To create greater dynamism in the economy and increase the rate of small business growth and survival within rural Somerset.	85% of all Somerset Businesses have less than 10 employees. In some rural parts this is as high as 90%.	Increase in business productivity and employment levels Increase in rates of business start-up and survival. Provide additional specialist advice and support for community enterprise sector.
	ICT provision, such as broadband, and training, still not taken up by businesses – e.g. 38% of all firms do not have e-mail (2002 study)	Increase in ICT levels Increase in e-commerce activity among businesses in rural Somerset
	Access to and delivery of business support to small businesses is patchy due to resource constraints and West Somerset in particular.	Encouragement and support for the business sector to work together with the establishment of business networks and local solutions.
SO2 To maximize the diversity of key sectors to the growth of Somerset’s rural economy and retain a greater proportion of product value within Somerset	Food sector – in the County as a whole not significant, but in some market town areas, especially in South Somerset, food production occupies an important position in the local economy e.g. in Chard (2-% of employee jobs); South Somerset West (16%); Shepton Mallet (10%)	Increase quality, productivity, added value and wealth generating potential of food sector businesses in Somerset. Develop at least one major project to assist in this.
	Leisure & Tourism – higher than average employment with 12% or 24,000 jobs county-wide and significant reliance in some rural areas such as West Somerset (30% of jobs)	Increase quality of tourism business and tourism product in rural Somerset, <i>especially in West Somerset</i> , through the provision of integrated advice, guidance and support. Increase visitor expenditure.
	Agriculture- still an important employer with 13,300 jobs across the County in 2002, and especially important in upland areas of Exmoor and other “deep rural” parts of Somerset. Most of these jobs (58%) are now part-time	Ensure that land-based businesses are able to continue to receive specialist advice & support and that the agency has a long-term future beyond this RR phase.

Strategic Objectives	Baseline Position	Position at end of lifetime of bid
	Creative Industries- the Region has at least 12,000 companies, employing 117,000 people and Turning Over £5.6 Billion. Somerset lags behind the rest of the region with around half the regional average with 5668 employed or 2.3% with a turnover value of £314 million per year (Source: Colin Mercer report 'Joining Up the Dots')	Generate greater linkages amongst the existing creative industry businesses in the County, and consequently increase the number of such businesses and their contribution to the local economy.
SO3 To develop the competitiveness, attractiveness and sustainability of Somerset's rural communities		Retention and development of economic activity in small towns and rural centres in Somerset Stimulation of new private investment in small towns and rural centres Maintenance and development of rural services Retention of rural employment. Carry out specific project activity in at least five larger villages/smaller market towns across the County and fully evaluate the benefits.
SO4 To address skills shortages where they are limiting the growth of key sectors	28% of population aged 16-74 have no qualifications (higher than regional average) Access to jobs and training is problematic, particularly in remote rural areas – lack of transport and childcare.	Increased levels of take up of training, advice and information services. Establish at least 2 specialist projects to address take up – one for young people & 1 for all ages. Increase the number of voluntary organisations providing regular skills/knowledge training at a local village or small town level. Develop support for community enterprises - especially where they help to develop the employability of vulnerable/unskilled individuals.
SO5 To improve transport and other communication links		Promote the further role out of broadband coverage.
SO6 To harness in a sustainable way the economic potential of the county's environment	No overall co-ordination or integrated support at present of sustainable tourism initiatives	Increased visitor expenditure achieved without detrimental impact on the environment. Carry out Tourism infrastructure work in at least three locations and fully evaluate the benefits. Provide practical support for a number of new tourism initiatives linked to the environment.

4.0 Revised Funding Profile: Somerset Rural Renaissance Programme (Transitional Year 2008/2009)
all figures £000s

<i>Breakdown of Funding</i>	05/08 Cumulative to 31 st March 08 (tbc)	05/08 spend carried fwd (tbc)*	05/08 Scheme Total spend	Q1 08/09	Q2 08/09	Q3 08/09	Q4 08/09	Total 08/09		
*Note that 05/08 funds carried forward should all be spent in Q1										
SWRDA contributions to Programmes										
RR Capital	1031	69	1100	20	40	80	85	225		
RR Revenue	996	54	1050	50	50	50	50	200		
(1) Sub-Total (SWRDA element) <i>Includes £500k capital Workspace investment funds</i>	2,027	123	2,150	70	90	130	135	425		
<u>Contributions towards Administration and Management costs (inc above)</u>	150	0.5	150.5	15	15	15	15	60		
<u>Funding from Private Sector and Non-Public Sector</u>										
(2) Sub-Total Private & other non-Public	526	1,474	2000	0	125	220	280	625		
<u>Funding * from Public Sector Contributors</u>										
(3) Sub-Total all Public Sector contributors	1,539	61	1600	25	50	50	50	175		
(4) Total of Match Funding = (2) + (3)			3600	25	175	270	330	800		
Grand Total (1) + (4)			5750					1225		

5.0 Milestones Somerset Rural Renaissance Scheme: Transitional Year 2008/09					
	1st Period Apr-June	2nd Period July-Sept	3rd Period Oct-Dec	4th Period Jan- Mar	2009/10
Scheme Management	<p>Interim Year Delivery Plan Agreed & Formal Contract signed with SWRDA (April 2008)</p> <p>Revision to Scheme Processes agreed (May 2008)</p>	<p>Revised Management and staffing arrangements finalised (Sept 2008)</p> <p>Collection and submission of any post RR Scheme outputs for projects that have ended (July 08)</p> <p>Final spend on 07/08 Projects takes place (Sept 08)</p>	<p>Annual Review meeting of the Board (Nov 08)</p> <p>Submission of the audited Statement of Grant Expenditure for 2007/08 (Dec 08)</p> <p>Archiving of Scheme documentation (Dec 08)</p>	<p>Delivery Plan for future rural regeneration activity 2009/2010 onwards drafted and submitted as required</p>	<p>Completion of Q4 Claim and final draw down of SWRDA investment via RR. Completion of project evaluations and any outstanding project closure reports (June 09)</p> <p>Final collection and submission of any post Scheme outputs (Sept 09)</p> <p>Archiving of Scheme documentation (Sept 09)</p> <p>Submission of the audited Statement of Grant Expenditure for 2008/09 (Dec 09)</p>

LAA Outcome, and specific projects	1st Period Apr-June	2nd Period July-Sept	3rd Period Oct-Dec	4th Period Jan- Mar	2009/10
LAA Outcome 1: A more productive and competitive Somerset economy	Review(s) of sector specific needs: e.g. Food & Drink Sector review commissioned (June 08) (£25k)		Review of Food & Drink sector completed (Nov 08)		
Outcome 2: More sustainable and resource efficient economic growth in Somerset	Workspace Programme (value £200k) re-launched with capacity building sessions for applicants to the scheme (June 08)	Workspace Panel allocates 50% of Programme funds (Sept 08)	Workspace Panel allocates remaining funds (Nov 08)	First workspace projects for 08/09 completed (Jan 09)	Completion of 08/09 workspace projects by end of Q1 09/10. Review of Programme.
Outcome 4: A stronger and more diverse economy across Somerset's market towns and rural communities (including West Somerset as a national Working Neighbourhoods Fund priority area)	Review of scope to address economic performance in West Somerset commissioned (June 08) (£25k)	Review of the potential for the Development of a Market Towns investment Strategy finalised and new initiative launched as appropriate (July 2008) (up to £75k)	Review of West Somerset economic activities completed (Nov 07)		
Outcome 5: A more highly skilled, rewarded and qualified Somerset workforce, relevant to the future needs of the County's economy		Review of skills-specific initiatives required in rural areas			

6.0 Indicative outputs- All investment proposals

<i>INDICATIVE * GROSS OUTPUTS (to be confirmed) (08/09 figures include 05-08 yet to be evidenced)</i>											
	05/08 Cumulative to 31/03/08	05/08 yet to be evidenced in 08/09	05/08 Approved TOTAL	05/08 Projected Total	08/09 Q1	08/09 Q2	08/09 Q3	08/09 Q4	08/09 Total	09/10 Total	
RDA Core Outputs											
1	Job Creation – No of jobs created or safeguarded	21	12	33.1	33	0	0	0	16	16	6
2	Employment Support – No of people assisted to get a job	66	155	221	220	30	40	45	45	160	10
3	Business Creation – No of businesses created & demonstrating growth after 12 months and businesses attracted to the region	3	26	29	29	0	0	5	10	15	11
4	Business Support – Number of businesses assisted to improve their performance	628	0	306	628+	0	0	10	30	40	0
4a	Business Support – Number of businesses engaged in Knowledge Based Collaborations (*note)	69	31	100	100	0	10	10	11	31	0
5	Regeneration – Amount (£m's) of public and private sector regeneration infrastructure investment levered in (to the region)	0	0	0	2.95	0	0	0	0	0	0
5a	Regeneration – Amount (£m's) of public and private sector investment levered into reclaiming and developing brown field land	N/a (1.3m)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Skills – Number of people assisted in skills development	851	0	555	851+	0	0	20	40	60	0
6a	Skills – Number of adults gaining basic skills as part of the Skills for Life Strategy that count towards the Skills PSA Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6b	Skills – Number of adults in the workforce who lack a full Level 2 or equivalent qualification who are supported in achieving at least a full Level 2 qualification or equivalent.	0	0	22	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
SWRDA Supplementary Outputs											
No of New Housing Units Supported											
	M ² Workspace created/refurbished using SWRDA funds	N/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	600	600	200
Activity Specific Outputs (define and quantify)											
* Note definition used is based on networking between											
Between businesses											

The approved (contracted) totals are taken from the approved Year One Delivery Plan (Nov 2005); with additions forecast for 08/09 Transitional Year.