



November 2010

Recognising rural interests within Local Enterprise Partnerships

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Introduction

Context

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), as the Government's appointed expert rural adviser, has produced this report to assist and support Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and those responsible for sub-national economic development in England, to ensure that the interests and potential contribution of rural economies and communities are recognised and embraced within these new structures.

The Government wrote to Local Authority and Business Leaders on 29 June 2010, inviting them to work with the Government to help strengthen local economies. The letter outlined plans to reform the system of sub-national economic development by enabling councils and business to replace existing Regional Development Agencies, and invited local groups of councils and business leaders to come together to consider how they wished to form local enterprise partnerships (LEPs).¹ It is intended that these new bodies will be key to the delivery of economic development at a sub-national level, including responsibility for Regional Growth Fund spend and provision of local business support.

On 28 October 2010, the Government, alongside a White Paper on Local Growth which set out its role in empowering locally driven growth, encouraging business investment and promoting economic development, accepted 24 out of a total of 62 LEP proposals received. The remaining prospective LEPs, as well as those considering such status in future, have been encouraged to further develop proposals for submission at a later date.

In light of these developments, the CRC is keen to see that:

- those LEPs that are created take into account geographic diversity and fully reflect the needs of rural communities and economies; and
- representatives of rural businesses and communities are provided with the opportunity to fully engage with any new LEPs and those LEPs currently in development.

Therefore we have examined how rural has been served by existing economic partnerships and offer examples of good practice.

Rural economies

The contribution of England's rural economies and their potential to contribute to growth can be seen in the following facts. They:

- contain about 19% of England's population (9.8 million)² and 25% of its businesses (of which over half a million are registered for VAT/ PaYE)³;
- employ over 4.5 million employees⁴;
- contribute at least £144 billion to England's Gross Value Added (GVA)⁵; and
- have higher rates of new business formation⁶ and entrepreneurship⁷ than most English cities and urban areas.

Many rural areas also exhibit substantial evidence of disadvantage, with high proportions of low income households, financial exclusion and debt, and districts with some of the highest proportions of low-waged employees.

¹ Government letter to Local Authority and Business Leaders, 29 June 2010
www.communities.gov.uk/documents/newsroom/1626430.pdf

² Mid-2008 Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2009.

³ Inter-Departmental Business Register, ONS, 2010.

⁴ Labour Force Survey, ONS, 2010.

⁵ Regional Gross Value Added, ONS, 2009.

⁶ Business Demography, ONS, 2009 and Bank Search Information Consultancy Limited, 2010.

⁷ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2010.

At the same time, rural economies are very diverse. Whilst some sparse and peripheral localities show continuing dependency for example on land based, tourism and food industries and a low waged labour force, others close to our most dynamic urban centres, host high tech companies with highly skilled and professional workforces.

In order to maximise the economic well-being of their areas, it is vital that LEPs recognise both the potential and diversity of rural economies and the very real social and economic problems being faced in some small towns and rural areas.

The overall picture

In preparing this report, the CRC consulted with a range of organisations involved in sub-national economic development, including a number of prospective LEPs (those who submitted proposals to the Government on 6 September 2010); a selection of existing sub-national economic partnerships; rural local authorities; representatives of rural businesses; and a number of key national representative bodies concerned with economic development at the sub-national level.

During this process a picture emerged which showed that a rural dialogue is already active within a number of sub-national bodies in England. However this picture is by no means universal and a lack of integration of rural approaches with mainstream policies still characterises partnerships in many areas.

The creation of LEPs provides an ideal opportunity for areas to develop a stronger mainstreaming approach to their rural policies and programmes. This report aims to provide good practice examples for the new LEPs to use to help them to ensure that their organisations represent and respond to rural businesses and communities.

Report content and methodology

Section 1 of the report looks at how rural economies are recognised and embraced in a selection of existing sub-national economic partnerships (across all regions excluding London), such as City Regions, Multi-Area Agreements and other sub-national economic partnerships, and, using good practice examples, outlines a range of different ways of embracing rural participation that new LEPs could follow.

Section 1 is structured according to a number of key themes, which are deemed to be of particular relevance and importance to rural businesses and communities:

- evidence base;
- policies, strategies and actions;
- leadership and strategic representation; and
- stakeholder input.

In order to identify good practice, a range of existing sub-national economic partnerships were selected and interviewed. The partnerships were chosen from a list of all of the economic partnerships which currently exist in England, using the following selection criteria:

- as LEPs will be required to have significant business involvement and a business leader chairing their boards, the extent of business involvement was used as far as possible to ensure that good practice drawn out in the report would be relevant;
- the rurality of each partnership area was estimated and partnerships with differing levels of rurality were chosen;
- a number of areas with differing economic development arrangements were chosen, for example, where more than one partnership covers the same area;
- a geographical spread of economic partnerships across England; and
- the length of time in which partnerships had been in operation was estimated to ensure that any partnership that was chosen had a sufficient length of time to develop its structures, policies and programmes.

Structured interviews were carried out with those partnerships selected, and with representatives that had an overarching knowledge of individual partnerships. Questions were based on each of the key themes. A list of the partnerships that were interviewed is provided in Appendix 1. We would like to thank all those individuals who gave up their time to talk to us or who provided additional evidence, for example through our call for evidence.

As well as directly engaging with specific sub-national economic partnerships, intelligence on good practice was also gained using information obtained from a call for evidence from rural local authorities and businesses across England (described below).

Section 2 of the report addresses the implications of the new sub-national economic structures for rural business and communities. It is based on information provided through our call for evidence which was sent to rural local authorities and rural business representatives, as well as being placed on the CRC website. Supplementing this we also looked at evidence provided to the Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee on LEPs⁸ and the information from those existing sub-national economic partnerships consulted directly by the CRC.

Finally, we draw together the good practice and key conclusions identified in both sections 1 and 2.

Local interpretation of this report will be critical to its success and it is hoped that LEPs and others find it a helpful contribution towards the development of LEPs and sub-national economic development arrangements across England.

Conclusions

- Good practice to address the contribution of rural areas can be seen in the evidence reports and projects of existing sub-national economic partnerships – in a comprehensive way or on such specific priorities for the partnerships as affordable housing, business crime, or skills.
- Several economic partnerships harnessed the knowledge and experience of rural organisations and forums to gather evidence of the economic character and dynamism of rural areas and inform their strategies.
- Good practice can also be found in the management and operational structures that enable the rural ‘voice’ to inform the decisions and activity of the partnership.
- Our studies also suggest however that evidence of such awareness and attention to the nature, needs and potential of their rural economies is limited.
- In order to develop a fair and full partnership with their rural businesses and communities, new LEPs should:
 - Adopt a strategic approach to ensuring the rural ‘voice’ is presented.
 - Analyse data at the lowest spatial level and look beyond the most obvious datasets to understand the characteristics of rural economies and the challenges of rural deprivation.
 - Identify which individuals and organisations can represent rural interests and ensure that they are able feed into the partnership at key decision making levels.
 - Learn from existing good practice to overcome the perceived challenge of effectively engaging with rural stakeholders.
 - Work towards ensuring that rural interests are ‘mainstreamed’ into the development and implementation of all strategies, policies and programmes whilst recognising that

⁸ www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-innovation-and-skills/inquiries/the-new-local-enterprise-partnerships/

targeted action may be a necessary step along the way.

- An initial reading of some of the proposals for LEPs indicated a similar patchy recognition of rural economies' contributions. They range from those that have fully recognised their rural constituents to others, even where they incorporate sizeable rural areas, that have failed to reference them.
- There is evidence that public sector bodies, such as district councils, and rural business and third sector representatives are seeking more consistent structured engagement with partnerships. There is however concern that the variable engagement during the preparation of LEP proposals will continue.
- The mechanisms to be introduced to resource rural economic development could potentially disadvantage rural businesses and communities. It is imperative that Defra champions the needs of rural LEPs and rural areas within LEPs and monitors finances to ensure fair funding outcomes.
- There is a danger that a LEPs' choice of functions could potentially marginalise rural economies by prioritising those functions that are central to the partnership's urban core and excluding those of relevance to their rural communities. An early understanding of rural needs must be gained to ensure that the roles chosen by LEPs contribute to all their areas.
- In areas where the proposed pattern of partnership working has not been established previously or where there are delays in establishing a LEP, support should be provided by Government to develop the capacity of the partnership to work with all of its constituents, including rural business and communities, to deliver activities that are relevant in all of its areas.
- We hope that the examples and views set out in this report will help those who lead LEPs and their supporting partners to develop, and benefit from, fair and inclusive partnerships for all their areas and communities.

Section 1

Good practice: learning from existing sub-national economic partnerships

This section describes how new LEPs and other economic partnerships⁹ can recognise and address rural issues and opportunities in their areas. It discusses the different options available to partnerships supported by the examples of good practice identified from our research (described in the Introduction). This section is structured into four areas:

- evidence base;
- policies, strategies and actions;
- leadership and strategic representation; and
- stakeholder input.

These separate themes have been chosen to reflect the fact that in order to fully embrace rural businesses and communities, a partnership must integrate rural interests throughout their work and their organisation. For example, without a full understanding of the nature and dynamics of the economies of rural areas, the impacts of the actions of a partnership will be weakened and the appropriate rural stakeholders may not be targeted. It is vital that the methods to be used to promote rural interests are established early in the lifetime of any new partnership with ongoing monitoring established to ensure that they are providing the best outcomes for rural communities and businesses.

A common theme has emerged from our research across each of the areas that have been analysed. Three different approaches to rural engagement can be identified:

- the rural economy is addressed in its entirety but separately to a partnership's other key economic concerns;
- specific issues or groups important to local rural economies are identified and addressed by a partnership; or
- the needs and opportunities of rural economies are not singled out but are integrated into a partnership's mainstream policy.

In order to raise the profile of rural economies within a partnership, it can be important that rural issues are initially addressed separately as in the first two approaches described. However their ambition should ultimately be to adopt the final approach and mainstream rural interests into their overall work.

Theme 1: Evidence base

The first step for any organisation looking to support their local economy is to develop an evidence base which will help them to understand it, including its sectors, workforce, resources and how it functions. A strong evidence base which informs policy-making will help to ensure that any resulting activities and programmes are fit for purpose and address the real needs of an area. The information that is collected and analysed should combine quantitative and qualitative sources including data, surveys and stakeholder consultations.

Use of datasets

It is important that any collection and analysis of evidence for a LEP recognises the economies of rural areas within the boundaries of the partnership, and the barriers to and opportunities for growth in these areas. This may not be a straightforward task. Due to their size and the dispersed nature, the characteristics of some rural economies may not initially be visible. Using datasets at the lowest spatial level available, for example at lower super output area level, will help an analyst to pick up what is happening in their rural communities.

If a particular dataset is not available below local authority level or does not reflect rural circumstances, it may be possible to identify alternative datasets that could be used in its stead.

⁹ For the rest of the document reference to LEPs should be read as LEPs and other economic partnerships.

For example, the Index of Multiple Deprivation is less useful for authorities wishing to identify deprivation in their rural areas as it only identifies areas of concentrated deprivation. Datasets on housing affordability, average weekly earnings; and fuel poverty might provide more useful sources of information on rural deprivation. The CRC has published a report¹⁰ to help fill gaps in the evidence base on rural deprivation. It estimates the overall rural share of deprivation at a national, regional and output area level, and identifies very small area 'hotspots', highlighting the existence of rural deprivation even in areas which are relatively prosperous.

The CRC's State of the countryside report, published most recently in 2010¹¹, provides a useful reference point for anyone looking to understand the key issues facing rural areas. It also includes information on the two primary methods of defining England's rural areas. These are the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) rural and urban area definition (for use with small area statistics such as Super Output Areas) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra's) rural and urban classification of Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities. Incorporating these definitions into any analysis would enhance a partnership's understanding of both their rural and urban areas and enable comparison with areas beyond the sub-region.

Comprehensive rural evidence

Where there is an acknowledgement of the need for greater understanding of rural issues, a partnership can undertake research which addresses the characteristics and impacts of an area's rural economies as a whole. In 2009, Chelmsford Borough Council produced a report on *The Economy and Employment in Chelmsford's Rural Wards*. They used ward level data from sources such as the Annual Business Inquiry, the 2001 Census, planning applications and National Non Domestic Rates data, and found that whilst the local rural economy contributed greatly to the economic vitality and success of the borough, more could be done to encourage and facilitate the development of the micro-economies in the borough's rural wards. Hampshire Economic Partnership have commissioned similar research which recognises the financial and community value of the County's rural economy.

Hampshire Economic Partnership: The "Worth" of Hampshire's Rural Economy

The "Worth" Project has been commissioned by the Hampshire Economic Partnership's Rural Economy Task Group to provide an analysis of the importance of Hampshire's rural business and economy and how it should be supported as the means of creating and retaining sustainable rural communities.

The "Worth" project is so named because it attempts to put a value on the benefits of rural business in Hampshire and its contribution to vibrant and sustainable rural communities. The project will draw on statistical and other data from established existing sources, in particular those of Hampshire County Council. It will also use interviews and consultations and will include a number of case studies.

Demonstrating the significance of rural economies to an area will help new LEPs and other partnerships to recognise their importance to the overall economic growth of an area and that this is reflected fairly in their policies, strategies and actions.

Targeted rural evidence projects

In contrast to the more comprehensive approaches described above, a number of existing economic partnerships have commissioned research which address specific rural issues, including Leeds City Region's Rural Regeneration and Affordable Rural Housing Report.

¹⁰ Deprivation in Rural Areas: Quantitative analysis and socio-economic classification
www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/OCSI%20RuralDeprivationAnalysis%20exec%20summary.pdf

¹¹ State of the countryside 2010, Commission for Rural Communities.

Leeds City Region: Rural Regeneration and Affordable Rural Housing report¹²

In 2009, a report was commissioned by Leeds City Region (LCR) to look into rural housing and regeneration. The report was designed to build on existing local authority housing market assessments; work around monitoring housing market trends; and good practice in West Yorkshire and LCR.

The report focussed on:

- alternative policy interventions required to address affordable housing in rural and urban areas;
- where and how rural affordable housing should be provided across LCR; and
- whether rural schemes were strategically important to LCR.

The report identified that rural parts of Leeds City Region can and do play a strong role in the social and economic well-being of the LCR. However, further evidence is required to better understand these contributions. The report also identified some challenges on how rural issues are considered within the LCR's proposed policies and structures and identified the need for alternative approaches.

Wider linkages

Whilst both of the examples highlighted so far explore rural areas specifically, some partnerships acknowledge the importance of not considering rural areas in isolation. By looking at both rural and urban areas in tandem, linkages, flows and cross cutting themes can often be identified. Building this connectivity into policy, frameworks or activities will strengthen the outcomes of any economic interventions. This is a topic where more work is required in many areas.

Research commissioned by One North East, *City Regions and Rural Areas in the North East of England*¹³, provides a useful example of an analysis of the links between cities and the rural areas within and surrounding City Regions. It identified the types and economic significance of linkages and available data sources for quantifying the scale of flows.

Stakeholder evidence

It is also important that LEPs acknowledge that evidence does not come solely from datasets. It is important to reach a shared story of place, and assessments of areas should not be seen as purely a data collection exercise. For example, speaking to businesses involved in an area can be equally as important as analysing its VAT registered businesses.

Hull and Humber Ports City Region via the Humber Rural Partnership have utilised their stakeholders' knowledge and evidence in order to help strengthen their rural evidence base. Their work emphasises the benefit of working in close partnership and engaging all partners in the process of evidence gathering.

¹² Rural Regeneration and Affordable Rural Housing A Final Report to the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership and Leeds City Region, ECOTEC, October 2009.

¹³ City Regions and Rural Areas in the North East of England, Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, May 2005.

Humber Rural Partnership: Stakeholder Evidence Base

In 2005, the Humber Rural Partnership, who report into the Hull and Humber City Region Board, developed a rural evidence base for use by the four local authorities in the Humber sub-region. This evidence base was a critical element of the Humber Rural Delivery Pathfinder programme which was established to test out new ways of improving the delivery of rural services for communities, businesses and individuals in the Humber sub-region.

Its purpose within the programme was to demonstrate and articulate the current and changing context of social, economic and environmental conditions of rural Humber, to support the development of the thematic priorities and targets adopted by the Humber Rural Delivery Pathfinder and to establish baselines against which the Pathfinder's progress could be measured.

Humber Rural Partnership commissioned consultants to work with local stakeholders and research partners to construct a robust evidence base. This baseline evidence was then developed during the period of the Pathfinder, and improved by adding the information gathered by the Pathfinder's Thematic Groups from their local delivery trials.

The outcomes from the project included an electronic Sub-Regional Rural Evidence Base¹⁴, a Gaps and Issues paper with recommendations about areas of information required and/or of value during the Pathfinder period (2005-2009), and a comprehensive Action Plan for the updating of the evidence base during the Pathfinder period and beyond.

Making use of the information and data held by partners, such as LEADER Local Action Groups, local rural partnerships responsible for delivering the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) in their areas, local business organisations and third sector organisations is often an effective and inexpensive way for partnerships to develop their evidence base. Data sharing across sub-national economic partnerships is also an effective method for collecting rural evidence, particularly where a neighbouring partnership has existing experience of rural data collection and analysis.

Surveys can also be an effective method of gathering evidence. Whilst sometimes being more costly, the amount of high quality data often produced is frequently invaluable.

Derbyshire Economic Partnership: stakeholder consultation on business crime reduction

Derbyshire Economic Partnership used stakeholder consultations, focus group meetings and an online survey of businesses to review business crime reduction investments made by Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership¹⁵ and to provide evidence to support options for future investments¹⁶. As a result of this research, the Partnership concluded that the Business Crime Prevention Advisors needed to increase both support and coverage for rural businesses, and that Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce needed to look at improved geographic penetration across the partnership area, building on its coverage in North East Derbyshire.

Derbyshire Economic Partnership's research into business crime is an example of how the collection and analysis of evidence can be undertaken in ways that help the partnership to mainstream action for rural areas. The analysis of rural business crime is not completed as a separate exercise but is considered as part of a general analysis of an issue which, to differing degrees, is facing the whole partnership area. The methods used to tackle the issue may be different across areas but there is a recognition that the issues facing rural businesses are comparable to those facing other areas.

Those economic partnerships with a well developed understanding of their rural communities and businesses should aspire to a mainstreaming approach to evidence collection and analysis.

¹⁴ www.humberruralpartnership.org.uk/ccm/navigation/category.jsp?categoryID=95293

¹⁵ Following on from the work of the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership but excluding the city of Derby, the Derbyshire Economic Partnership was formed in November 2009.

¹⁶ Review of Business Crime Initiatives in Derbyshire for Derbyshire Economic Partnership, DCResearch, January 2009.

Theme 2: Policies, strategies and actions

To be fair and rurally inclusive, LEP policies, strategies and actions need to visibly support entrepreneurs in rural areas, the rural workforce and rural growth. As part of the process of putting together approaches for economic development at a sub-national level, it is crucial that those responsible for LEPs develop methods for tackling economic development in rural communities. Interventions at policy development levels are equally important to those at the delivery stage. As policies and actions are developed, decision makers need to ask the following questions:

- is the approach likely to have a different impact on different areas/communities?;
- will the impacts be significant in rural areas?; and
- how can the approach be adjusted/enhanced to ensure that the needs of rural communities are taken into account?

Throughout our research it has become apparent that different sub-national economic partnerships have taken various approaches to including and considering rural interests within their strategic work. Some have sought to mainstream rural interests within overall strategic priorities, whereas other have taken a more targeted approach to tackling rural needs.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming rural interests into policies and strategies should be the ultimate aim of any economic partnership. For example, if evidence is collected and analysed which is specifically rural, its conclusions should be integrated into the overall partnership strategy. Equally, programmes resulting from that strategy may address rural issues but this should be as a result of a consideration of rural needs and opportunities that emerge from, for example skills and employment, enterprise or infrastructure development, not as a separate exercise. There may be some instances where a separate strategy is required, for example to increase the prominence of rural issues within the partnership, however ultimately an economic partnership should aspire to mainstream the opportunities and issues facing rural businesses and communities into its policy documents.

The Humber Rural Partnership has adopted an approach which attempts to mainstream rural policy by providing a rural “voice” into the Hull and Humber City Region’s wider policy objectives.

Hull and Humber Ports City Region Rural Strategy: Mainstreaming rural development by identifying rural opportunities and challenges

The Humber Rural Partnership, which is the sub-national rural partnership for the Humber and Humber Ports City Region, provides a rural “voice” for the City Region. Following on from their successful Rural Pathfinder Programme, the Humber Rural Partnership Board commissioned the production of a *Rural Strategy for the Hull and Humber Ports City Region*¹⁷.

The Rural Strategy examined the contribution that rural areas make to economic development in Hull and Humber and considered how rural areas could contribute more effectively to sustainable economic development across the City Region. It identified rural Humber’s distinctive economic drivers and spatial characteristics, and outlined a plan for addressing the specific challenges connected to the City Region’s rural areas. Alongside this, the Strategy also set out priority actions for the future, which could be included in the mainstream strategy for the Humber Ports City Region.

The Rural Strategy’s key aim was to achieve integration of rural priorities into the City Region’s core strategy, not to advocate discrete rural support programmes. Headline actions to support the rural economy therefore reflected the City Region’s overall strategic aims. For example, actions identified by the Rural Strategy which targeted stimulating entrepreneurship, widening local market horizons, developing strong business networks and identifying opportunities for social enterprise development were fed into the City Region’s wider strategic programmes, whilst having rurally specific applications.

¹⁷ Rural Strategy for the Hull and Humber Ports City Region, Humber Rural Partnership, June 2009.

Some issues, such as affordable housing, particularly lend themselves to being included in mainstreamed policy. A successful example of this is Pennine Lancashire's Housing Strategy.

Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy: mainstreaming rural affordable housing

The Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy 2009-2029¹⁸ provides a long term vision for the housing market in Pennine Lancashire. Initially outlining the key housing issues facing areas within the sub-region, it goes on to detail a series of detailed policy aims and possible ways forward. These acknowledge the needs of both rural and urban areas.

In particular, the Strategy recognises that whilst a larger part of Pennine Lancashire is urban in character, rural areas have particular housing needs, including the most severe needs for affordable housing. Policy Aim 13 addresses this issue, by seeking, 'To further develop housing and planning policies to deliver the right housing offer including affordable housing in Rural Areas.' To achieve this, the Strategy suggests a number of ways forward including: prioritising affordable housing schemes and a managed release of sites in the Ribble Valley, probably the most rural of the local authorities in Pennine Lancashire; and developing affordable housing schemes in the areas between urban settlements in Pennine Lancashire in response to needs identified by local surveys.

The mainstreaming of rural interests can also be found in the *Sub-Regional Economic Strategy for Coventry Solihull and Warwickshire*¹⁹. It recognises the "rich diversity of skills, people and industry (in the sub-region) – from rural areas to inner city urban spaces". Whilst rural areas are not specifically referred to in the partnership's priority actions, working with both Future Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) institutions, encouraging the re-use of rural buildings and home working, tackling housing affordability, improving transport connectivity, investing in public transport and upgrading broadband infrastructure will all help to support the growth of rural economies.

Another option for mainstreaming rural policy is the creation of *policy frameworks*. These are policy structures which are sufficiently flexible to allow rural interests to be addressed according to the need in each local area. For example, Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) has devised a number of flexible frameworks to inform and support the preparation of Local Development Frameworks²⁰. These policy frameworks ensure a consistent approach to, for example, affordable housing or employment land, across the PUSH area, whilst at the same time allowing each local authority within the partnership to interpret and apply individual policies according to what is most suitable for local areas.

Actions

A partnership adopting a mainstreaming approach to its strategy may identify that rural needs can be addressed as part of mainstream delivery programmes but with some additional resources and activities to reach the more vulnerable areas. For example, as described earlier, the recommendations from Derbyshire Economic Partnership's review of business crime reduction investments included the need for Business Crime Prevention Advisors, covering the whole partnership area, to increase both support and coverage for rural businesses.

Strategies may also identify that the need is so great that a separate programme of activities is required. Through its *Live and Work Rural* project Derbyshire Economic Partnership has taken this latter more targeted approach to meeting rural needs.

¹⁸ Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy 2009-2029. Pennine Lancashire housing authorities, July 2009.

¹⁹ Sub-Regional Economic Strategy Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire, CSWP Ltd, March 2010.

²⁰ www.push.gov.uk/work/housing-and-planning.htm

Derbyshire Economic Partnership: Live and Work Rural

*Live and Work Rural*²¹ is a three-year project designed to provide support to rural micro-businesses and community renewal programmes across Derbyshire Economic Partnership. A Live and Work rural team works across the Peak District National Park, Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan area and the Rural Action Zone area to provide support to businesses by helping them to develop and grow sustainably, and advise businesses on how ideas can be realised. The initiative is designed to complement the services available through Business Link and other locally available programmes, and has added particular value in terms of fostering effective joint working between partners and other organisations.

Specific services provided by the programme include:

- working with businesses to develop enterprising ideas;
- offering an environmental health-check to help reduce costs and protect the environment;
- signposting to useful business networks, training and groups to improve supply chains and stimulate new business ideas and opportunities;
- offering training and workshops in relevant subjects and addressing issues facing small rural businesses;
- pointing businesses in the right direction for advice through Business Link and other grants such as LEADER, a EU Community Infrastructure Community Initiative for assisting rural development, and Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) funding; and
- running a grant fund, typically providing 40% funding towards small scale projects.

Theme 3: Leadership and strategic representation

Our research has uncovered a small number of different options for rural representation in the leadership and strategic decision-making of new LEPs. These options range from the establishment of rural forums which feed directly into the key decision making bodies of the partnerships, to the inclusion of public and/or private sector rural representatives on these bodies.

Rural forums

Derbyshire Economic Partnership has developed a formal organisational structure in which a rural forum advises the partnership board on the issues facing Derbyshire's rural areas. The arrangement allows rural issues to be considered at a consistently high strategic level within the organisation. This is similar to Hampshire Economic Partnership's Rural Economy Task Group²² which, amongst other things, provides a forum for a wide range of organisations to effectively influence public and private sector support for rural areas.

Derbyshire Economic Partnership: High level rural representation

The Derbyshire Rural Forum²³, which is made up of representatives from rural organisations across the county, is one of Derbyshire Economic Partnership's three main sub-groups. The Rural Forum advises the Derbyshire Economic Partnership's Board on rural issues across Derbyshire. It is made up of representatives from the Peak District local district and borough councils, the National Park Authority, Natural England, the NFU, the University of Derby, the National Forest Company and Rural Action Derbyshire. The two RDPE LEADER Approach programmes in the county also feed directly into the Rural Forum and the Derbyshire Economic Partnership board.

The Rural Forum as a sub group also advises Derbyshire Economic Partnership's other two sub groups, Business and Skills and Infrastructure, to ensure that rural matters are considered in all potential investment or policy decisions.

²¹ www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/index/living-in/grants/liveandworkrural.htm

²² domain2909858.sites.fasthosts.com/section-3_rural_economy-16.php

²³ www.derbyshireeconomicpartnership.org.uk/rural/rural-derbyshire/rural-forum/

The representation of rural businesses within any partnership will be equally important in terms of identifying potential growth areas and representing any problems experienced by rural businesses. The Rural Forum for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire²⁴ has both public and private representatives working together to support and strengthen rural business across the partnership areas, regularly feeding into the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership and contributing to the sub-regional Economic Strategy.

Rural representation on partnership boards

It would be good practice for a partnership to identify a 'rural champion', as suggested by the Leeds City Region rural stakeholder workshops (see page 14), who would represent rural interests on the key decision making body of the partnership. This could be a council, business or third sector representative. They should be a senior representative in the partnership and would have sufficient authority to be able influence any decisions that are made.

The LEP proposal for Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Derbyshire²⁵ states that the new partnership will seek private sector board members who can champion, amongst other things, rural and market towns. Such a clear reference to a 'rural champion' role is to be welcomed and encouraged in other partnerships. Currently both Derbyshire Economic Partnership and Hampshire Economic Partnership have representatives of rural businesses on their boards.

The presence of council leaders representing rural districts on a LEP board would also provide an important rural perspective. They could potentially take the role of the 'rural champion'. Many district councils are active in economic development and regeneration in their areas, indeed they are often the authorities that have strong contacts with local businesses and they will have substantial knowledge of their economies and communities.

A significant number of the existing economic partnerships that we have looked at in our research include district councils in their strategic decision making bodies. However with the move to LEPs, in areas which cover a large number of upper and lower tier authorities, how district council members can be represented at a senior level will be a key question for the partnership.

The inclusion of a rural representative on a partnership's board would be a key step towards mainstreaming rural interests.

Theme 4: Stakeholder input

As highlighted in previous sections of this report, a key means of ensuring that sub-national economic partnerships account for rural interests is by engaging with rural stakeholders. Stakeholders representing rural communities and businesses can provide information not only on the problems that such communities face but also information on how they can contribute to the local and wider economy. Such knowledge and expertise can be invaluable to policy makers when seeking to prioritise activities.

There is often a perception that it can be difficult to engage rural stakeholders, due to the dispersed nature of many rural communities and the limited access to technology in some rural areas, however the good practice highlighted throughout this report should provide new LEPs and existing partnerships with useful examples of how such barriers can be overcome.

Engaging stakeholders

In order to consider and assess how the area could ensure that its work programme reflected the needs and potential of its rural communities, Leeds City Region has used workshops as a method of engaging rural stakeholders.

²⁴ www.rural-forum.org.uk/rural_forum/index.html

²⁵ Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership Proposal, September 2010

Leeds City Region: Rural stakeholder workshops

In June 2009, Leeds City Region (LCR) hosted a workshop for around 40 delegates from local authorities, central government, the third sector and local businesses, to discuss how rural proofing could be developed across the City Region. As well as a general agreement that rural interests should be reflected better within the mainstream work of the partnership, delegates agreed a number of actions:

- A commitment to look into the potential of a Leeds City Region Rural Champion at Member level.
- Prioritisation of enhanced communications with rural partners, based on the attendees at the workshop.
- Utilisation of existing rural forums, and an agreement that an initial task and finish group, made up of the West Yorkshire Rural Partnership Technical group, would develop a work programme to identify research needs.

Similarly, Humber Rural Partnership used a structured seminar to develop an action plan for the implementation of their previously developed Rural Strategy.

Humber Rural Partnership: using seminars as a tool for stakeholder engagement

Following the launch of a Rural Strategy for the Hull and Humber Ports, the Humber Rural Partnership invited key stakeholders and delivery partners to attend a seminar to develop a detailed action plan based upon the aims and objectives of the Rural Strategy and its accompanying implementation framework. Twelve thematic topic areas were covered across two workshop sessions, where facilitated discussions proposed, analysed and considered a range of key questions relevant to implementing the Rural Strategy. Attendees identified 35 deliverable actions that stakeholders agreed to endorse and take forward, all of which were relevant to the range of delivery challenges identified in the Rural Strategy.

As was mentioned earlier, using voluntary and other third sector partners, including their various networks, to engage with stakeholders can also be a valuable and inexpensive way for sub-national economic partnerships to engage with rural communities and businesses. This is a particularly effective method of engagement in rural areas where strong community involvement and strong partnership working are a regular feature of projects. Potential partners in rural areas include Rural Community Councils, LEADER Local Action Groups, local business associations, the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and the NFU.

The dispersed nature of rural businesses in some areas can mean that using an existing representative body is an effective method for understanding the issues facing such firms. A useful example of this type of stakeholder engagement can be found in the Haven Gateway Partnership, who have reached a formal agreement with the CLA.

The Haven Gateway Partnership: a formal agreement to address rural business needs

The Haven Gateway Partnership has agreed a formal Memorandum of Association (MoA) with the CLA. It includes:

- joint events to highlight particular issues of relevance to businesses. These have primarily been around broadband but also the availability of Grant for Business Investment (GBI) support;
- regular (quarterly) keep in touch meetings;
- ongoing meetings between CLA staff 'on the ground' and local business support deliverers, for example Business Link; and
- joint hosting (and cost sharing) of the Tendring and Suffolk shows.

This joint working has helped to ensure that the needs of rural communities remain high on the (largely urban) partnership's agenda. It has allowed the Haven Gateway Partnership to provide responses to consultations and calls for evidence relating to rural economies such as the Essex Rural Commission and Matthew Taylors' Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing. The agreement has also enabled the Partnership to provide a more joined-up offer to farmers and rural businesses and it has raised the profile of rural broadband needs.

Using the knowledge and expertise of local partners can open up less obvious contact channels previously unavailable to partnerships. They will also have developed relationships with rural communities and businesses which can encourage participation. In developing a project to provide support to older people in rural areas, Hull and Humber Ports City Region formed a successful partnership with the Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council to hold a series of events in rural villages aimed at identifying people needing access to such support, what services could be offered and who could deliver them.

Engagement with parish and town councils can also provide similar benefits. As democratically accountable bodies, local councils represent a significant proportion of the rural population.

Ribble Valley parish councils: providing a rural perspective at a sub-national level

Recognition of the value of the contribution of parish councils in Ribble Valley allows their local concerns to be communicated at the Pennine Lancashire sub-national level. Ribble Valley, which is predominantly rural, has a Parish Council Liaison Committee which meets six times a year and allows rural stakeholders to feed local issues and opportunities into the Ribble Valley Borough Council. The major outcomes of the meetings are then routinely fed back into the Pennine Lancashire Chief Executive meetings as an indication of a "rural perspective on key issues". Recent examples of such issues include post office closures and rural broadband.

An alternative method of communicating with rural stakeholders is through local media. One response to our call for evidence was from Media Fish Community Interest Company who recently submitted a proposal to Suffolk County Council to create an Internet and mobile phone-based radio network serving rural areas within the County. Such rurally-focused opportunities have the potential to provide economic partnerships with an alternative means of understanding and reaching their constituents.

Different LEPs will be at different stages in terms of their recognition of rural issues. For example, a predominantly rural county with an established economic partnership is likely to have already integrated rural interests into their work. In making use of the good practice examples, it is important that a partnership selects that option that is most appropriate to them. Ultimately however we would encourage all partnerships to work towards mainstreaming the needs of their rural businesses and communities.

Section 2

Implications of the new Local Enterprise Partnerships for rural economic development

In July we drew together the views of numerous rural organisations and individuals working in rural areas who participated in our Rural Economies Summits during 2009/2010, in our *Agenda for change: releasing the potential for England's rural economies*²⁶. One of the recurring calls was that “more explicit, positive action is needed to ensure that the characteristics and potential of rural communities and businesses are properly taken into account in the development and delivery of economic policies. Central, regional and local government should be able to demonstrate that their activities to achieve sustainable economic growth are being applied equitably between different places. This has direct implications for LEPs, sic:

“Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities and other successor bodies to RDAs should work to support economic growth in rural areas as part of their mainstream functions and programmes. We encourage them to show (for example, in their annual reports) how this results in equitable support for rural businesses and places in their priorities, programmes and investments.”

Agenda for Change was endorsed by Councillor Andrew Bowles, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Rural Commission.

The 24 successful LEP proposals were announced on 28 October 2010. Those partnerships that were approved in this first phase included a mixture of geographies, from large city region partnerships to single county based partnerships. Previous concerns that smaller functional economic areas would not be approved due to the size of their populations and business bases have not been born out.

A review of the contents of the LEP proposals indicates strong variations in the extent to which the contribution of rural economies are acknowledged and taken into account in proposed responsibilities and activities. Good examples include proposals from Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Derbyshire and from The Marches:

- **Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Derbyshire**

Despite encompassing two large cities and numerous larger towns the proposal included the following priority: “Ensuring that the benefits of sustainable economic growth are shared across our cities, towns and rural areas”. It also stated that “the rural parts of the area together with market towns and secondary urban areas offer significant growth opportunities”. The fact that the Partnership will seek Board members who can champion rural and market towns is particularly welcomed.

- **The Marches**

The submitted proposal²⁷ states that the partnership will “promote rural communities that are attractive, viable and affordable.” The Partnership also promises to engage with the NFU, CLA, Women in Rural Enterprise (WiRE) Shropshire, Herefordshire Rural Hubs and the Home Based Business Network.

Despite the fact that they have significant rural areas within their boundaries, a large number of the LEP proposals did not recognise the potential contributions of their rural businesses and communities. Several proposals included their rural economies within the descriptions of their areas but failed to acknowledge them in their proposed priorities and activities or only focused on a limited number of rural issues and sectors such as broadband and tourism. Whilst these are significant priorities for many rural areas, rural economies can face other significant barriers to growth such as poor access to business finance and accessibility to education and training. They also have the potential to contribute innovation, entrepreneurship and growth to many different

²⁶ Agenda for change: releasing the potential for England's rural economies, CRC, September 2010.

²⁷ The Marches Local Enterprise Proposal, August 2010.

industry sectors.

The lack of acknowledgement of rural areas in the proposals of many of the potential LEPs is disappointing. Collectively they give a hint as to the potential scale of unfairness for rural business and communities, unless LEPs are required to address their rural economies by central government. Where LEPs do recognise that a rural gap needs to be filled in their initial proposal, the case studies provided in Section 1 above should assist them to incorporate rural needs and opportunities into the design and delivery of the evidence, strategies, structures and delivery of their work.

Involvement of rural stakeholders

Our call for evidence also highlighted both good and bad practice in the involvement of rural stakeholders in putting together the LEP proposals. For example in a substantially rural county in south west England there was concern that businesses were not able to input meaningfully into the preparation of the LEP proposal. More generally, the NFU, for example, found that their involvement in consultations across the country was mixed and often it was a process of consultation rather than involvement. Good practice could be found in Hampshire and Worcestershire where existing rural partnerships have been heavily involved in the development of their LEPs.

Together with the submissions made to the BIS Committee Inquiry into LEPs, our call for evidence also revealed concerns over the (lack of) opportunities or roles for rural stakeholders, third sector bodies and in particular lower-tier authorities within the LEPs. Given their size and limited funding compared to unitary authorities, there is concern that rural district councils could potentially be marginalised. The positive contribution that district councils and business and third sector representatives could make to a LEP is described in detail in Section 1. We would encourage all LEPs to adopt some of the good practices on these issues set out in Section 1.

Resourcing rural economic development

Ensuring recognition and visibility of rural issues and stakeholders within Partnerships is an important step to securing resources. Concern was raised in our call for evidence that rural communities and businesses will be disadvantaged due to a lack of funding for rural projects and programmes. This perception is reinforced in recent announcements on future resourcing for economic development activities:

- The current emphasis within the Regional Growth Fund²⁸ on attracting 'substantial' (large scale) bids, achieving 'significant growth' and private sector leverage, perpetuates traditional bias towards capital investment and short term measures of input and outputs. Small-scale, ongoing social, environmental and economic investments that achieve sustainable economic growth and wellbeing, that are more typical of rural economies, are potentially marginalised. We look forward to BIS/CLG adopting criteria for programme bids which will overturn this bias.
- The likelihood of a significant reliance on private sector funding which would mean that those rural areas which have a high proportion of SMEs but fewer large businesses will not have as much influence as urban areas on LEP decision making bodies. "In a predominately rural and SME-dominated economy this would not reflect the real growth opportunities that are perceived to be driven by this sector." Devon and Cornwall Business Council²⁹.
- The Introduction of Tax Increment Financing and similar alternative funding mechanisms is likely to favour larger urban areas, as witnessed by the adoption of the Business Improvement Districts of the previous government. Small scale housing and commercial projects in smaller or remote rural areas are unlikely to generate sufficient revenue to trigger new developments.

²⁸ A new £1.4 billion fund to support those areas that are heavily reliant on public sector jobs to stimulate private sector investment.

²⁹ www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmbis/memo/localent/localent35.htm

It is important that those involved in putting together local economic growth policy from BIS and CLG address any potential funding distortions that are attributed to geography, and that Defra contributes to and monitors this process to champion the needs of rural LEPs and rural areas within LEPs.

A rural perspective on the functions of LEPs

The functions chosen by the new LEPs could also have significant implications for rural economies, for example if the partnership's chosen functions are central only to the partnership's urban core, inappropriate for rural areas or exclude priority functions for rural communities. If there is an emphasis on strategic transport or sustainable energy infrastructure within a partnership smaller scale schemes in rural areas could be excluded. Similarly, if a partnership excludes managing EU funded programmes or tourism in areas where rural areas have previously benefited from these, the positive contribution that rural businesses could make to growth could be lost.

The box below lists the functions that the Government envisage LEPs could take on³⁰, together with sources of information which provide the rural perspective on each of the roles.

Sources of information for the rural perspective on LEP roles

- working with Government to set out key investment priorities, including transport infrastructure and supporting or coordinating project delivery; *Developing sector-led guidance on rural accessibility and transport options – Guidance, prepared by TAS and DHC on behalf of the IDEA, April 2010.*
- coordinating proposals or bidding directly for the Regional Growth Fund; *the CRC's Submission to the BIS Committee Inquiry into LEPs.*
- supporting high growth businesses, for example through involvement in bringing together and supporting consortia to run new growth hubs (see Annex B); *Growth sectors in rural England: perspectives on planning for growth by rural businesses, authorities and organisations, CRC, July 2010.*
- making representation on the development of national planning policy and ensuring business is involved in the development and consideration of strategic planning applications; *Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, CLG, July 2008. The Rural Challenge – achieving sustainable rural communities for the 21st century, the Rural Coalition, August 2010.*
- lead changes in how businesses are regulated locally; *Defra Task Force on Farming Regulation at: <http://engage.defra.gov.uk/farm-regulation/taskforce/> Local Regulatory Support Services and Regulation within Small Rural Businesses, prepared by PACEC on behalf of The Countryside Agency, July 2004. Legislation – Regulation – The red tape burden on rural retailers, Rural Shops Alliance, February 2005.*
- strategic housing delivery, including pooling and aligning funding streams to support this; *Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, CLG, July 2008. The National Housing Federation Rural Housing website pages: www.housing.org.uk/default.aspx?tabid=429*
- working with local employers, Jobcentre Plus and learning providers to help local workless people into jobs; *Tackling worklessness – how to help people into employment in rural areas, IDEA, May 2010.*
- exploring opportunities for developing financial and non-financial incentives on renewable energy projects and Green Deal; *Renewable Energy – a guide for local communities, CRC, ACRE and NALC (to be published December 2010).*

³⁰ White Paper: Local growth: realising every place's potential, BIS, October 2010.

- becoming involved in delivery of other national priorities such as digital infrastructure. *Mind the Gap: Digital England – a Rural Perspective, CRC, June 2009. Rural mobile phone coverage – issues and recommendations, CRC, November 2010.*

Impacts on areas outside phase one approval

Our concerns over the potential impacts of LEP approvals on rural economies also extend to those areas that have been unsuccessful in the first round of approvals. This could leave them either outside the LEP system, as late additions to the LEP process, or as part of a potentially extended geographical coverage of a larger LEP, even where the economic geography does not suggest any significant linkages.

Given the variety and extent of the functions that will potentially be carried out by LEPs, what would the absence of a LEP in an area, even for a temporary period, mean in terms of the activities to be delivered by LEPs? In its submission to the BIS Committee Inquiry the TUC stated that "...it is possible that the uneven distribution of LEPs in the early stages of transition might see LEP areas gaining early advantage, producing inequalities and imbalances that could persist, for example between city regions and rural areas"³¹.

In their response to the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Committee Inquiry into Local Enterprise Partnerships³² the RDA Network³³ were concerned that "areas with less established capacity for joint decision making and delivery, such as some rural areas, would need time to catch up". Similarly, in response to our recent call for evidence the National Housing Federation expressed concern that "partnerships in rural areas are generally far less advanced and (that) LEPs in these areas may prove slower to develop and lack capacity, at least in the short term".

In order to assist areas to improve their capacity to develop and advance LEPs, at least one respondent to our call for evidence called for additional funding and support to be given to prospective partnerships that fall outside the first phase of successful proposals. Other support might be needed where approved LEPs appear to be only partly inclusive of rural partners' needs and opportunities.

Given the lack of acknowledgement of rural issues in the submitted proposals for LEPs, we would like to challenge new and emerging LEPs, in moving forward with their new partnerships, to consider how they could ensure that their rural businesses and communities can have their fair say within the partnership and their fair share of resources for economic development. Ideally, the methods and objectives adopted by the partnership should be published. This would allow bodies representing rural interests to understand how they could become involved in their local LEP. It would also enable them, and Government, to monitor the new partnerships to help to ensure that rural areas are not losing out.

³¹ www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmbis/memo/localent/localent107.htm

³² The focus of the inquiry is considering how the new LEP structure will work, as well as the distribution of funding, value for money, accountability, timing, transitional arrangements and required legislation.

³³ www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmbis/memo/localent/localent84.htm

Appendix 1: The sub-national partnerships that provided good practice examples

Leeds City Region (LCR)

The Leeds City Region Partnership brings together the eleven local authorities of Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Craven, Harrogate, Kirklees, Leeds, Selby, Wakefield and York, along with North Yorkshire County Council to work toward the common aim of a prosperous and sustainable city region by working together in areas such as transport, skills, housing, spatial planning and innovation.

Derbyshire Economic Partnership (DEP)

Derbyshire Economic Partnership brings together the nine local authorities of High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover, Amber Valley, Erewash, South Derbyshire, along with Derbyshire County Council and other public, private and third sector bodies to facilitate an effective and co-ordinated approach to economic development across Derbyshire. Its purpose is to develop economic strategy, determine priorities for investment and delivery, oversee performance and represent Derbyshire's economic interests.

Haven Gateway Partnership

Haven Gateway Partnership is a cross border economic partnership which includes the boroughs of Ipswich and Colchester as well as the North-East Essex district of Tendring, and much of the Suffolk Coastal and Babergh districts. It was established to provide a framework through which its partners - from both the public and private sectors - could work together to promote economic opportunities and secure the future prosperity of this international gateway to the UK.

Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)

The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) is a partnership of the unitary authorities of Portsmouth and Southampton; Hampshire County Council and district authorities of Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester. PUSH works to deliver sustainable, economic-led growth and regeneration to create a more prosperous, attractive and sustainable South Hampshire. The Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) for the PUSH area was signed in 2008.

Hampshire Economic Partnership (HEP)

Hampshire Economic Partnership incorporates the unitary authorities of Portsmouth and Southampton and the districts of Basingstoke and Deane, Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Hart, Havant, New Forest, Rushmoor, Test Valley and Winchester. HEP brings together business and local government to influence government policy and support the economic prosperity of Hampshire.

West of England Partnership

The West of England Partnership brings together four unitary authorities – Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council - and a range of social, economic and environmental partners. It co-ordinates high level planning to improve the quality of life of its residents and provide for a growing population. The MAA for the West of England was signed in 2009.

Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP Ltd.)

Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership incorporates the districts of Coventry, Solihull, Warwickshire and Stratford Upon Avon and the Boroughs of Rugby and Nuneaton Bedworth. It is a partnership for local economic regeneration and economic development and unites all sectors of the area's economy with the common aim of working together and moving in the same direction.

Humber Economic Partnership (HEP)

Humber Economic Partnership is the strategic partnership for sustainable economic development for the Hull and Humber Ports City Region. It incorporates the local authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire. The Partnership is made up from leaders of both public and private sectors from both banks of the Humber who believe in the merits and importance of joint action to create the sustainable growth and greater competitiveness of the economy of the area.

Pennine Lancashire

Pennine Lancashire is a partnership of the local authorities of Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Rossendale along with Lancashire County Council and third and private sector partners. Its aim is to increase prosperity to enable everyone to enjoy a better quality of life. The Partnership signed their MAA with central government in 2009.

Acknowledgements

For responding to our call for evidence:

Advantage West Midlands
Breckland Council
Chief Economic Development Officers' Society
Chelmsford Borough Council
The Community Council of Devon
The Community Media Association
Cornwall Council
County Durham Economic Partnership
Cumbria Rural Housing Trust
East Hampshire District Council
Essex County Council
The Federation of Small Businesses
Hampshire County Council
High Peak Borough Council
Ixion Holdings Ltd
Kent County Council
Leicestershire County Council
Leicestershire Rural Partnership
Lincolnshire County Council
The National Farmers' Union (NFU)
The National Housing Federation
North Devon+
North Hertfordshire District Council
Oxfordshire County Council
South Lakeland District Council
Suffolk County Council
University of Plymouth
Winchester City Council
Worcestershire County Council

Case study representatives:

Coventry Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership
Derbyshire Economic Partnership
Hampshire Economic Partnership
Haven Gateway Partnership
East Riding of Yorkshire Council / Hull and Humber Ports City Region
Leeds City Council / Leeds City Region
Ribble Valley Borough Council / Pennine Lancashire
West of England Partnership
Winchester County Council / Partnership for Urban South Hampshire

For further information, please contact Roger Turner, Head of Rural Economies
roger.turner@ruralcommunities.gov.uk