



Derry & Strabane Rural Partnership



Annual Report 2018

(AGM: February 2019)



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CHAIR'S WELCOME

I am delighted to present this second Annual Report of the Derry & Strabane Rural Partnership following another productive year in terms of delivering our Rural Development Strategy.

This year it has been a privilege to begin to see the impacts of our funding on the ground for those projects now complete and launching their new services, products or activities. This included the first project launches under the following three schemes:



- *Rural Business Investment Scheme* – the launch of Oakfire Adventures Ltd's new Zip Trekking course in May 2018 – the first of its kind in Ireland. The funding has allowed Oakfire to grow its business and create new jobs. It is adding significantly to our visitor experience and opening up new tourism markets.
- *Rural Basic Services Scheme* – the launch of the new Dementia Friendly Hub at Learmount Community Resource Centre in September 2018. This is an innovative project, the first of its kind in Northern Ireland, which is helping to unlock barriers facing people and families living with dementia and providing a vital service, not just in Park, but for the wider area.
- *Village Renewal* – the launch of the new facility for the Jack and Jill Playgroup in Plumbridge in November 2018. The project has revitalised a vacant site in Plumbridge and provided a much needed new space for the playgroup who have been delivering vital services for over 30 years. It is a particularly positive outcome following the devastation of the flooding in August 2017.

Of our total funding available for projects of £6.18 million, we have now allocated over £2.7 million across four schemes, with the largest share of £1.5 million committed to the Rural Business Investment Scheme. This funding will support the projected creation of over 80 new jobs – with 54 of these already in place and positively impacting on our rural economy and community.

With three calls now complete or under assessment for the Rural Basic Services Scheme, the budget of £1.75 million is on target to be fully committed, with its budget boosted by funding re-profiled from the Broadband Scheme which is no longer progressing due to the £150 million Government Broadband funding to be targeted at rural areas. The 13 capital projects under Village Renewal have now been identified by local communities and are being worked up – with the first now complete in Plumbridge. Under the Cooperation Scheme, we are working on a third potential project with other LAGs in Northern Ireland under 'Yellow Frames' as well as progressing the IAT and Rivers Access and Recreation Project.

I would like to highlight my full appreciation of the hard work of the staff as well as the dedication of the LAG Board. I look forward to passing the baton onto Cllr Gus Hastings as Chair for 2019 and to our Partnership continuing to make a real difference in rural areas.

William Lamrock

Chair of Derry & Strabane Rural Partnership

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

This is the second Annual Report of Derry & Strabane Rural Partnership. It covers the period from the first AGM in November 2017 up until 31st December 2018. The Annual Report provides an update on both the governance of the company as well as for implementation of its Interim Strategy. The report is set out under the following sections:

- *Section 1* - Introduction and background
- *Section 2* - Governance (LAG Board and Wider LAG)
- *Section 3* - Update for each of the five funding schemes
- *Section 4* - Update on Animation and Communication activities
- *Section 5* - Financial Update

1.2 Rural Development Programme

The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014 –2020 is part-funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the European Union. Ten LAGs (Local Action Groups) were established across Northern Ireland in 2015 to deliver the LEADER elements (Priority 6) of Rural Development Programme.

A LAG is a partnership involving representation from the local council, rural stakeholders and individuals from the local rural community. It is part of 'LEADER' - an EU wide initiative that gives local people an opportunity to get involved and have their say in the delivery of a local development strategy. Each LAG is made up of elected members and social partners representing the business, farming and community/voluntary sectors.

1.3 Derry & Strabane Rural Partnership

The Partnership was set up during 2015 with support from the Rural Development Council and was incorporated as a company limited by Guarantee in March 2016. The Partnership includes a Wider LAG of 175 members and a LAG Board made up of 11 elected members and 13 social partners (7 from the community/voluntary sector, 4 from the farming sector and 2 from business/enterprise). Nominations for the social partner places on the board come from the Wider LAG.

Derry and Strabane Rural Partnership has been allocated a budget of £7.54m with £6.18m available for project funding across the five funding schemes. The eligible area for funding (see map below) includes the 'core rural area' outside Strabane town and the city of Derry (as well as Culmore, Newbuildings, Strathfoyle, Drumahoe, Nixon's Corner and Coshquin).

Map of the Derry Strabane LAG Eligible area



1.4 Derry & Strabane Interim Strategy

Derry and Strabane Rural Partnership agreed an 'Interim Strategy' in December 2015 as its application to deliver the LEADER elements of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014 –2020 (Priority 6). The vision and strategic priorities of the strategy are set out below:

Vision: *A sustainable, prosperous, inclusive and entrepreneurial rural area which encourages and supports modernisation, connectedness and growth, improved quality of life and well-being for all, which takes advantage of its natural and built environment and respects its role as the custodian of the landscape for future generations*

The strategy (interim) sets out the budget and targets for the following funding schemes being delivered through LEADER:

- Rural Business Investment Scheme
- Rural Basic Services Scheme
- Rural Village Renewal Scheme
- Rural Broadband Scheme
- Rural Cooperation Scheme

The Partnership reviewed the Interim Strategy in light of the draft Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032 (Community Plan) in early 2018 with no revisions to the targets or budget submitted to DAERA.

2. Governance

2.1 Overview

Derry and Strabane Rural Partnership is made up of the LAG Board and the Wider LAG. The administration of the programme is undertaken by the Rural Development Team (also known as the Administration Unit) within Derry City & Strabane District Council on behalf of the Partnership. Details of the LAG Board and Wider LAG are included below with a list of board members and staff included in [Appendix 1](#).

2.2 LAG Board

The LAG Board is the decision-making body responsible for agreeing the operations of the LAG including the strategy and allocation of funding to projects. The LAG Board came together initially in April 2015 and meets on a monthly basis. It was established as a company limited by guarantee with board members as company directors - 11 elected members (councillors) and 13 social partners (7 from the community/ voluntary sector, 4 from the farming sector and 2 from business/enterprise). The positions of Chair and Vice Chair rotate annually between a Social Partner and Elected Member.

2.3 Wider LAG

The wider LAG is the membership of individuals who have completed a membership registration form and currently has 175 members. It is from this membership, that the 13 social partner places on the LAG Board is drawn.

Membership of the Wider LAG is open to anyone over 18 who lives or works in the rural area of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area – to reflect the purpose of the LAG in benefitting rural communities. The initial recruitment to the Wider LAG was undertaken by the Rural Development Council (RDC) in 2015 and resulted in a total of 167 members. From this membership, the initial 13 social partner places were filled through a nomination and ballot process. An additional membership recruitment process took place in October 2017 with the purpose of encouraging female members as part of the process of filling a social partner vacancy in line with the Partnership's Gender Action Plan. This resulted in an additional eight members, bringing the total membership up to 175 people.

The first (annual) general meeting of the Wider LAG took place on 13th October 2016 with the first full AGM following on 21st November 2017. The Wider LAG is also invited to all RDP events including pre-application workshops and information events.

3. Schemes

3.1 Overview

The budget for each of the five schemes as allocated in the Interim Strategy is outlined in the table below. An update on each scheme is provided in sections 3.2 to 3.7 below.

SCHEME	ALLOCATED BUDGET	% OF OVERALL BUDGET
Rural Business Investment	£2,586,000	45%
Rural Basic Services	£1,725,000	30%
Rural Village Renewal	£1,206,400	21%
Rural Broadband	£230,000	4%
Rural Co-Operation	£432,600	7%
TOTAL	£6,181,000	100%

3.2 Scheme Progress

The table below provides an update on progress to date against key targets for each scheme.

SCHEME INDICATORS	TARGET	PROGRESS
<i>Rural Business Investment Scheme</i>	£2,586,000	£1,446,107
Number of Jobs Created (FTE – actual jobs)	68	54
Number of businesses supported	29	32
<i>Rural Basic Services</i>	£1,725,000	£1,116,266
Number of feasibility studies	11	19
Number of capital projects	11	10
<i>Village Renewal</i>	£1,206,400	£145,531
Number of Villages (village plans)	15	49
Number of capital projects	8	1
<i>Rural Broadband</i>	£230,000	-
Number of projects	1	-
<i>Rural Cooperation</i>	£432,600	£11,854
Number of projects	2	3
Number of networking events	5	9
Number of feasibility studies	3-4	3
TOTAL	£6,181,000	£2,719,759

The progress figures relate to LOOs (funding committed) rather than projects completed (claims paid).

3.3 Rural Business Investment Scheme

OVERVIEW:

BUDGET: £2,586,000

The Rural Business Investment Scheme provides investment support for the creation and development of non-agricultural and non-food activities for micro and small enterprises (e.g. farm diversification, tourism, craft, recreation and other non-agricultural businesses). The primary objective of the scheme is to create new jobs. Funding is primarily for capital grants with some resource funds towards bespoke training and marketing. Eligible applicants include micro, small and social enterprises.

2018 AT A GLANCE:

Calls for Applications:

- Call 4 opened for applications on 26th February and was extended to close on 22nd June 2018.
- 5 pre-application workshops (122 participants);
- 3 procurement workshops (30 attendees);
- 11 applications received (8 approvals).
- Call 5 opened for applications on 26th September and closed on 9th November 2018;
- 4 pre-application workshops (68 attendees);
- 2 procurement workshops (32 attendees);
- 17 applications received (3 approvals to date with assessments ongoing).

Project Launches:

Oakfire Adventures Ltd held their official project launch on 28th May 2018 after successfully implementing their £50,000 funded Zip Trekking project. The launch was attended by the Mayor as well as LAG Chair and Vice-Chair and Derry City F.C to officially open the facility.

Other Activities:

- Event as part of Enterprise Week event on 6th March 2018 featuring 2 funded projects (22 attendees);
- Planning workshop on 15th May 2018 to inform future applicants for construction projects on the requirements and timescales for planning approval (35 attendees).

OVERALL PROGRESS TO DATE:

CALLS	DEADLINE	LAG APPROVAL	APPLICATIONS	APPROVALS	FUNDING
CALL 1	Jun 2016	Jul/Sep 2016	20	8	£294,853
CALL 2	Jan 2017	Feb/Apr 2017	18	8	£474,992
CALL 3	Jul/Sep/Oct 2017	Sep/Nov/Dec 2017	11	5	£341,770
CALL 4	Apr/Jun 2018	July 2018	11	8	£225,096
CALL 5	Nov 2018	Dec 2018+	17	3*	£109,396
TOTAL			77	32	£1,446,107

*approvals to date with remainder undergoing assessment

3.4 Rural Basic Services Scheme

OVERVIEW:

BUDGET: £1,724.750

The Rural Basic Services Scheme provides capital grants to support innovative ways of delivering multiple services in rural areas – community hubs that will help create inclusive, accessible, shared services in locations where there is currently a lack of existing or outreach services. Eligible applicants for the scheme include the community/voluntary/public sectors. The Partnership agreed the following targeted calls where projects must:

- *Be part of a cluster with at least three other partners/groups;*
- *Meet the overall priority of 'Health & Wellbeing'; and*
- *Include at least one absent or difficult to access service.*

2018 AT A GLANCE:

Call 1 Large Grants:

- Call opened 19th January 2018, closed 29th June 2018;
- 7 pre application workshops (142 attendees)
- 2 business plan/procurement workshops & 1 to 1 sessions with business plan consultant
- 4 applications (4 approvals) – pending Legal Charges/Letters of Offer.

Call 2 Technical Support:

- Called opened 26th February 2018, closed 23rd March 2018
- 5 pre application workshop (66 attendees)
- 10 applications (9 approvals) – all complete,

Call 2 Small Grants:

- Call opened 26th February 2018, closed 4th May 2018
- 5 pre application workshops (66 attendees)
- 2 business plan/procurement workshops & 1 to 1 sessions with business plan consultant
- 2 applications (1 approval) – project complete.

Call 3 Small Grants:

- Call opened 3rd September 2018, closed 8th October 2018
- 4 pre application workshops (35 attendees)
- 2 business plan/procurement workshops & 1 to 1 sessions with business plan consultant
- 4 applications (3 approvals) - 2 projects underway and 1 pending.

Call 2 Large Grants:

- Call opened 5th November 2018, closed 31st January 2019
- 5 pre application workshops (66 attendees)
- 2 business plan/procurement workshops & 1 to 1 sessions with business plan consultant
- 6 applications (under assessment).

OVERALL PROGRESS TO DATE:

CALLS	DEADLINE	LAG APPROVAL	APPLICATIONS	APPROVALS	FUNDING
CALL 1: Technical Support	Jul 2017	Sep 2017	12	10	£42,523
CALL 1: Small Grants	Sep 2017	Nov 2017	3	2	£52,254
CALL 2: Technical Support	Mar 2018	May 2018	10	9	£34,658
CALL 2: Small Grants	May 2018	July 2018	2	1	£15,401
CALL 1: Large Grants	Jun 2018	July 2018	4	4	£860,790
CALL 3: Small Grants	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	4	3	£110,641
CALL 2: Large Grants	Jan 2019	-	6		
TOTAL			41	29	£1,116,266

3.5 Village Renewal Scheme

OVERVIEW:

BUDGET: £1,206,400

The Village Renewal Scheme supports collective and/or individual village renewal projects which contribute to the vibrancy of a village through improving the environment, tackling dereliction, conserving heritage/culture or improving image/identity. The eligible applicant for the scheme is the local council in partnership with the local community. The scheme includes village plans as well as capital projects in 13 selected settlements.

2018 AT A GLANCE:

- Completion of 15 cluster village plans to cover all 49 settlements in the Council area, in line with the existing Local Community Plan DEA structures;
- Capital projects scoped to include 4 strategic and 9 small projects (see tables below); and
- The project at Plumbridge was the first of the village renewal projects to be completed. The derelict and vacant site at Dergbrough Road which had become an eyesore within the village was revitalised and is now home to Jack & Jill Community Playgroup who suffered the devastating loss of their premises in the August 2017 floods. A project launch was held on 8th November 2018 to officially open the premises – attended by Mayor, LAG Chair, Vice Chair and other Board members.

Strategic Projects (£183,000 grants):

PROJECT SPONSOR	SETTLEMENT	PROJECT
Parks Development	Newbuildings	Access & Environmental Improvements
	Newtownstewart	Play Provision (Mourne Play Park)
	Sion Mills	Play Provision
	Castleberg	Access & Environmental Improvements

Small Projects (£35,000 grants):

PROJECT SPONSOR	VILLAGE	PROJECT
Parks Development	Artigarvan	Enhancement of play area and adjacent picnic facility
	Ardstraw	Enhancement of existing play area
	Donemana	Regeneration of space for community use
	Drumahoe	Access improvements /trim trail
Regeneration	Clady	New entrance/gateway features & environmental works
	Park	Environmental improvement scheme
	Claudy	New entrance/gateway features & environmental works
	Killeter	New civic space with feature clock
Community Services	Plumbridge	Revitalisation of derelict and vacant site

OVERALL PROGRESS TO DATE:

CALLS	LAG APPROVAL	APPLICATIONS	APPROVALS	FUNDING
Village Plans	July 2017	1	1	£42,188
<i>Capital: Plumbridge</i>	Apr 2018	1	1	£35,000
<i>Technical: Strategic Grants</i>	Dec 2018	1	1	£68,344
TOTAL		3	3	£145,532

3.6 Rural Broadband Scheme

OVERVIEW:

BUDGET: £230,000

The Rural Broadband Scheme aims to improve rural broadband provision solutions for communities in hard to reach and "not spot" areas in order to provide reliable connectivity and speed particularly in isolated and terrain, compromised areas with cabinet distance issues and; improve the knowledge and skills of those involved in the potential development of community based broadband schemes. Eligible applicants for the scheme include community/voluntary sector, local Council or as a partnership.

PROGRESS:

Broadband Expression of Interest:

The Partnership agreed to progress an Expression of Interest (EOI) process in June 2018 to identify if any potential interest in community pilot projects, pending further details of the proposed Government Broadband funding of £150 million earmarked from the 'Confidence and Supply Agreement'.

The EOI process included 4 pre-application workshops delivered jointly with Basic Services Call 3 Small Grants with an EOI deadline of 29th June 2018. An advert was placed in local newspapers to promote awareness of the potential opportunity for funding of up to £100,000 for community-led solutions to broadband enable 'not spots' in rural areas with no/poor broadband access.

The EOI asked interested groups to indicate if interested in either: (*Option A*) fibre connection to a community premises to provide a hub for local access to broadband; or (*Option B*) fibre connection to multiple residential/business premises.

Three Expressions of Interest were received by the deadline. One of these was ineligible and the other two opted to progress/scope alternative funding via the Gigabit Voucher Scheme. Given that there were no EOIs to progress, the Board put the Broadband scheme on hold again pending publication of the proposed intervention areas for the £150 million.

Government Funding (*Project Stratum £150 million*):

In June 2018, a launch of an independent report on the potential economic impact of fibre broadband in rural NI took place at Stormont. The report 'Deployment of FTTP in rural Northern Ireland' undertaken by DotEcon estimated total benefits to the NI economy up to 2033 would be £1.2 billion for a subsidy of around £150m. It indicated a rural focus of the funding and targeting of not-spots (speeds under 30 Mbs).

In December 2018, Department for the Economy (DfE) published the list of intervention areas where broadband services of at least 30 Mbps are not currently available with a consultation deadline of 14th January 2019 to ensure all postcodes correctly identified. www.nidirect.gov.uk/broadband-improvement

The project name was confirmed as 'STRATUM' to reflect the need for layers of technology to deliver broadband in rural areas.

In December 2018 the Board agreed to re-profile the Broadband budget in light of the above funding and to promote awareness of the public consultation to ensure all postcodes correctly identified. This was facilitated by a photocall with the Mayor and LAG Chair, press release and prominent banner on the home page of the Council website.

3.7 Rural Cooperation

OVERVIEW:

BUDGET: £432,600

The Rural Cooperation Scheme enables activity to be delivered that LAGs could not do on their own. It encourages and supports LAGs to undertake joint actions with other LAGs, locally or in another region or Member State. Within the RDP, there is a specific strand focusing on Cooperation between LAGs in NI and those in ROI. Each NI LAG is expected to participate in a minimum of two full Cooperation projects delivered under this scheme. These projects may involve LAGs from other Member States but as a minimum must involve at least one LAG from NI and one LAG from ROI.

2018 AT A GLANCE:

- The Cooperation sub-group had four meetings during 2018 to discuss progress and make decisions on the LAG's Cooperation projects.
- Council approved additional Council match funding for the Cooperation and Village Renewal schemes where Council is required to be the lead applicant and responsible for match funding.
- 3 Cooperation projects scoped/progressed – two as cross-border projects (IAT and Rivers) and one as a NI-wide project with the other LAGs (Yellow Frames).

International Appalachian Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory Technical Support 2 (PTS2) – procurement and appointment of Integrated Consultancy (ICT) design team to produce design toolkit and branding for all areas (Park Hood Landscape Architects); • Audit of Derry Strabane entire section of trail to identify works; • Drafting and issue of comprehensive marketing tender for overall trail; • 3 Inter-LAG/DAERA meetings with officers from all participating LAGs • Agreement of timescale for PTS2, procurement and works; • Regular meetings with Council officers from Rural Tourism and Marketing (Marketing tender) and Capital Development team (ICT and capital works).
Rivers Access & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory Technical Support 1 (PTS) - procurement and appointment of consultants to undertake scoping study (JM Consulting); • Agreement of sites to be scoped/progressed in Derry-Strabane area; • Drafting of specifications for the capital works at selected sites; • Regular meetings to progress project (4 with consultants; and 4 with Loughs Agency, Councils and LAGs).
Yellow Frames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causeway Coast & Glens (CCG) proposed project with Estonia identified as a pilot by DAERA for an all-LAG NI wide project (potential budget £1m); • Each LAG asked to identify 5 sites in public ownership in their area as potential locations for a Yellow Frames trail; • 2 meetings of DAERA, LAGs and RDC to explore and progress project; • LAG agreed short-list of 6 sites to further explore as potential locations.

Cooperation Networking Events

- DAERA / LAGs Cooperation update meeting held in Cookstown in June 2018;
- Three board members attended the OECD Rural Development Conference "Enhancing Rural Innovation" in Edinburgh, Scotland from 9th – 12th April 2018;
- One board member attended the UK LEADER Annual Capacity Building Event in Llandudno, Wales on 27th September 2018. The focus of this event was on Evaluation and best practice;
- Three board members attended the European LEADER Seminar in Austria from 15th – 17th October. This seminar focussed on the role of LEADER, added value, new challenges and opportunities.

OVERALL PROGRESS TO DATE:

See further details of progress to date for each of the projects below.

INTERNATIONAL APPALACHIAN TRAIL

LEAD PARTNER: Derry & Strabane Rural Partnership

PARTNERS: Donegal, Fermanagh Omagh, Mid Ulster, Causeway Coast & Glens, Mid & East Antrim

The International Appalachian Trail (IAT) is a long-distance walking route – one of the largest trail networks in the world. The Ulster Ireland section of the trail, launched in 2013, measure 282 miles/ 453km and traverses four counties (Donegal, Tyrone, Derry and Antrim) and six council areas. The project aims to develop and enhance the trail, applying a consistent design and branding to the entirety of the route and delivering a joint marketing campaign to attract local, national and international visitors.



PROGRESS TO DATE:

- Best practice study trip to Scotland involving 18 representatives from the six LAGs and visiting the West Highland Way, Ayrshire Coastal Path and Mull of Galloway Trail (October 2016).
- Appointment of Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) to undertake a scoping study relating to the development and enhancement of the Ulster-Ireland section of the International Appalachian Trail – *Preparatory Technical Support Stage 1 (April to September 2017)*
- Appointment of Park Hood Landscape Architects to undertake all services necessary to provide a brand design and templates for all wayfinding/marketing, information, safety and interpretation signage along the full route of the Ulster Ireland International Appalachian Trail, along with a suite of construction details and specifications for various trail infrastructure. – *Preparatory Technical Support Stage 2 (June to December 2018)*
- LAGs now progressing to the technical design stage. Some LAGs will complete this work in-house, other LAGs will tender for the appointment of an Integrated Consultant Design Team (ICT), who will prepare technical drawings e.g. locations of interpretation panels and ground-works required at each location (for costing, tender & to submit with planning permission if required). The team will also prepare pre-tender cost estimates and compile technical documents for the appointment of a contractor to deliver the capital works.
- LAGs intend to have tendered for contractors and issued letters of offer for the delivery of all capital works, by September 2019. Capital works must be complete by September 2020.
- A tender for the supply of Marketing Services for the Ulster Ireland IAT was advertised in December 2018. As only one response was received, the tender will be re-advertised in March 2019.
- The Partnership has agreed an indicative budget of £277,400 pending full design and costings.

RIVERS BASED ACCESS & RECREATION PROJECT

LEAD PARTNER: Causeway Coast & Glens LAG

PARTNERS: Derry & Strabane, Donegal, Latvia and Estonia

To improve access to rivers to promote better use of natural resources for recreation and tourism (e.g. canoeing, angling). This will include physical infrastructure required to enable the provision of water based recreation and ancillary facilities (e.g. parking, toilet facilities). Project aims to create an attractive river based recreation product, with the potential to attract increased visitor numbers and expenditure as well as delivering health and social benefits.



PROGRESS TO DATE:

- JM Consulting appointed to undertake a scoping study relating to the provision of River based Recreation on the River Bann & River Foyle – *Preparatory Technical Support Stage 1 (December 2017- April 2018)*
 - Cooperation sub-group agreed for further scoping and costing of capital works at the following sites:
 - Dunalong Quay
 - Grangefoyle
 - Gribben Quay
 - Strabane Canal
 - Whitewater facility at Newtownstewart
- 
- Officers from the Loughs Agency and Derry City & Strabane District Council prepared draft specifications for capital works at each site.
 - Second stage Preparatory Technical Support to appoint a design team to design and indicatively cost the capital works to be progressed (Spring 2019).
 - LAGs from Latvia and Estonia joined the project as project partners in 2019.
 - A cooperation agreement has been signed by all partners.

YELLOW FRAMES PROJECT

LEAD PARTNER: TBC

PARTNERS: All Northern-Ireland Project (& potentially Estonia and Latvia)

Using the template of the National Geographic magazine which is bordered by a yellow frame, this project would encourage visitors to look at the places worth discovering through the yellow windows of the National Geographic magazine. The frames would be strategically placed to capture regional characteristics and grab visitors' attention, with the frames giving the illusion of looking through an open window. The project would offer scope to promote local under-developed tourist assets and boost local economy.



Tartu, Estonia

PROGRESS TO DATE:

- DAERA has provided an opportunity for all 10 LAGs in Northern Ireland to be part of the 'Yellow Frames' project - to take visitors off the beaten track and spread economic benefit to rural areas.
- The project would include a yellow frame and interpretation panel to provide information on each site/area as well as promotional materials.
- A similar co-operation project has been successfully delivered in South & Central Estonia and the Netherlands. Causeway Coast & Glens LAG are leading on a pilot project with partner LAGs in Estonian and Latvia - which would then be rolled out to the rest of Northern Ireland.
- The pilot has established strong links with National Geographic, with DAERA currently in discussions in respect of a marketing contract for all of Northern Ireland.
- The LAG Board has agreed the following short-list of six locations in the Council area that are in public ownership. These have been selected from a long-list as the most suitable in terms of meeting both DAERA and project requirements.

LOCATION	NEAREST SETTLEMENT	OWNERSHIP
Learmount Forest & Castle	Park Village	Forest Service
The Wilson Ancestral Home	Strabane	National Museums of NI
Glenelly Valley (Barnes Car Park)	Plumbridge	Council
Castlederg Castle Site	Castlederg	Council
Newbuildings Look Out	Newbuildings	Council
Clady Bridge	Clady	Council

- The sites are subject to further investigation with Forest Service, National Museums of NI and relevant Council officers, with the most suitable five to be approved by the LAG Board. In the interim Council has approved a recommendation to progress the project.

3 Animation & Communication

4.1 Overview

Animation is a term used to describe activities to promote the programme and support potential applicants by delivering a range of different events and activities to reach different audiences. This section provides an update and breakdown of activity to date under animation (events) and communication (marketing/promotion).

4.2 Animation

The table below provide a summary breakdown of animation events in 2018:

Event	Number of Events	Attendees
Pre-application workshops	18	294
Procurement/business planning/other workshops	21	147
Other events (e.g. Enterprise Week, launches)	12	556
TOTAL	51	997

Figures exclude Village Planning events undertaken by consultants

The cumulative totals for all animation events to date is provided below:

Period	Number of Events	Attendees
1) Up to March 2017	40	956
2) 2017/2018	44	740
3) 2018/2019 (to end Dec 2018)	31	796
TOTAL	115	2,492

Figures exclude Village Planning events undertaken by consultants

4.3 Communications

Approach & Objectives

The Partnership developed a communications plan which seeks to animate the area - encouraging, informing and communicating the opportunities available through the Rural Development Programme. As well as monitoring DAERA publicity requirements for acknowledging funding by individual projects, the LAG is committed to promoting awareness of the Rural Development Programme to ensure maximum uptake of funding opportunities.

Primarily, marketing and communications campaigns covers one of the following objectives:

- To promote a funding call;
- To publicise a project launch;
- To announce funding awards;
- To promote a RDP event; or
- To promote outcomes and impacts of funding (e.g. job creation targets)

The Partnership has undertaken two phases of communications/marketing as follows:

Phase 1: Launching & promoting overall programme and individual schemes

Marketing Campaigns – adverts, press releases and online content to promote specific funding calls or events;

Branding – development of distinctive branding for the Derry & Strabane Rural Partnership as well as brand guidelines for application to promotional materials, headed paper, compliments slip, merchandise, pop-up stands and PowerPoint presentation slide templates;

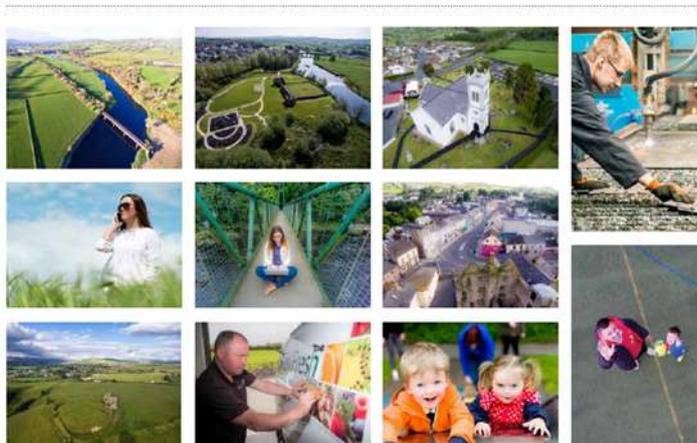
Merchandise – development of a range of merchandise for use at events and promotional activities (e.g. pencils, pens, notepads, bags and USB pens);

Promotional Materials – design and printing of conference wallets and leaflets as required (e.g. for the Rural Business Investment Scheme) as well as design of web and social media banners;

Web Contents – development of web content to promote awareness and provide updates on each of the funding schemes online at www.derrystrabane.com/rural;

Image bank – commission of photographer to produce an image bank to provide a range of photographs to cover each of the funding schemes for use on online content and promotional materials.

Photography



Brand Guidelines » 11

Phase 2: Promoting final funding calls and raising awareness of impacts of funding awarded

Procurement of consultants to deliver a marketing and communications campaign for phase 2 of communications activities until the end of the programme. This will build on activities undertaken to date. In particular, the next phase of communications activity will focus on promoting the impacts and outcomes of projects funded to date and to use this as a vehicle to encourage uptake of the remaining budgets still to be allocated. It will include the following activities:

- PR campaigns
- Promotional case studies;
- Design & print;
- Merchandising;
- Photography;
- Copy-writing;
- Communications workshops;
- Marketing & media monitoring.

ASG was the successful supplier and is currently working on photography and videography for the first phase of promotional case studies as well as the second phase of merchandising.

Communications Activities in 2018

The table below provides a summary breakdown of communications activity undertaken in 2018:

Adverts	Press Releases	Social Media Campaigns	Email/ Ezine	Website Content/ Articles
24	13	26	7	14

In addition to the above, videography was commissioned to produce a short film to raise awareness of the programme and promote progress to date. As well as an overall film, short films were produced for each scheme to highlight the type of projects that can be funded and included the following:

Scheme	Project
Business Investment	Oakfire Adventures Ltd
Basic Services	Dementia Friendly Hub in Park
Village Renewal	Plumbridge
Cooperation	International Appalachian Trail

The overall film is available on the Council website at: www.derrystrabane.com/Subsites/Rural

The Oakfires Adventures short film is at: www.derrystrabane.com/RBIS

Communications Activities to Date

The cumulative totals for all communications activity to date is provided below:

Period	Adverts	Press Releases	Social Media Campaigns	Email/ Ezine	Website Content/ Articles
Up to March 2017	18	4	5	7	7
2017/2018	43	8	14	17	17
2018/2019 (to end Dec 2018)	18	12	19	2	12
TOTAL	79	24	38	26	36

See Appendix 2 for samples of communications activity for 2018.

5. Financial Update

5.1 Overview

Derry & Strabane Rural Partnership has been allocated a total budget of £7.5 million under the NI Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020. This is made up of a budget of £6,179,750 for projects, with 22% of this budget allocated to administration (17%) and animation (5%). A summary breakdown of the funding allocation across the financial years of the programme is included below:

BUDGET	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	TOTAL
Projects	£200,843	£650,000	£1,434,192	£3,424,716	£470,000	£6,179,750
Administration & Animation	£232,223	£253,735	£276,502	£284,158	£312,927	£1,359,545
TOTAL	£433,066	£903,735	£1,710,693	£3,708,874	£782,927	£7,539,295

A breakdown of target and actual spend for the administration and project budgets for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 to date are detailed below.

5.2 Administration & Animation Budget

The table below provides an overview of actual expenditure to date against the target spend set out in the Implementation Plan for 2017/2018.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2017/2018		
Month	Target Spend (£)	Actual Spend (£)
Apr / May 2017	£39,480.71	£36,137.47
Jun / Jul 2017	£41,514.64	£41,338.24
Aug / Sept 2017	£41,226.12	£40,214.79
Oct / Nov 2017	£44,099.92	£44,425.37
Dec / Jan 2018	£44,091.38	£44,099.92
Feb / Mar 2018	£43,322.01	£44,459.43
Total	£253,734.78	£246,679.22

Administration Expenditure to Date (2018/2019)

The table below provides an overview of actual expenditure against the target administration spend set out in the Implementation Plan for 2018/2019 to date.

Implementation Plan 2018/2019 (<i>Administration</i>)				
Month	Target Spend	Actual Spend	Variance (£)	Variance (%)
April / May 2018	£43,141.92	£40,162.57	-£2,979.35	-6.9%
June / July 2018	£46,141.92	£46,185.00	+£43.08	+0.1%
August / September 2018	£48,441.92	£41,321.52	-£7,120.40	-14.7%
October / November 2018	£44,691.92	£47,145.96	+£2,454.04	+5.5%
December / January 2019	£41,941.92	£44,779.93	+£2,838.01	+6.8%
Total	£224,359.60	£219,594.98	-£4,764.62	-2.1%

Note: The spend targets in the table above are based on the May 2018 Implementation Plan adjustments

5.3 Project Budget

The table below provides an overview of actual project expenditure against the target spend set out in the Implementation Plan for 2017/2018.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2017/2018 (Projects)		
Scheme	2017/2018 Target Spend	2017/2018 Actual Spend
Business Investment	£523,536	£588,960
Rural Basic Services	£70,214	£61,258
Village Renewal	£56,250	£33,750
Rural Cooperation	-	£3,704
TOTAL	£650,000.00	£687,672

The table below provides an overview of actual expenditure against the target spend in the Implementation Plan for 2018/2019 under each scheme to date (i.e. end Jan 2019).

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2018/2019 (Projects)		
Scheme	2018/2019 Target Spend	2018/2019 Actual Spend to Date
Business Investment	£638,639	£223,200
Rural Basic Services	£552,545	£52,649
Village Renewal	£229,857	£35,000
Rural Cooperation	£13,150	£3,750
TOTAL	£1,434,191	£314,599

Overall Project Spend to Date

The table below provides a progress update on overall spend to date (end of Jan 2019) against the Interim Strategy funding allocation for each scheme and the target number of projects (spend covers all financial years to date and actual spend only – i.e. claims paid).

Scheme	Interim Strategy Allocation		Funding Spent to Date (Claims Paid)	
	£	Projects	£	Claimed
Business	£2,586,000	29	£1,017,013	19
Basic Services	£1,725,000	11	£113,907	19
Village Renewal	£1,206,400	8	£68,750	2
Cooperation	£432,600	2	£7,454	2
Broadband	£230,000	1	-	-
Total	£6,180,000	51	£1,207,124	42

APPENDIX 1: LAG BOARD MEMBERS

	Name	Sector
1	Angela Dobbins (28/05/2016)	Councillor (Ballyarnett DEA)
2	Noelle Donnell	Social partner (community/voluntary sector)
3	Seamus Duffy	Social partner (business/enterprise sector)
4	Paul Fleming	Councillor (Faughan DEA)
5	Hugh A. Hastings	Councillor (Faughan DEA)
6	Mary Hunter	Social partner (farm diversification)
7	Dan Kelly	Councillor (Sperrin DEA)
8	Thomas Kerrigan (06/06/2016)	Councillor (Derg DEA)
9	William Lamrock	Social partner (community/voluntary sector)
10	Patricia Logue	Councillor (Moor DEA)
11	Caroline Lynch	Social partner (community/voluntary sector)
12	James McColgan	Social partner (business/enterprise sector)
13	Kenny McFarland	Social partner (community/voluntary sector)
14	Kieran McGuire	Councillor (Derg DEA)
15	Ruairi McHugh	Councillor (Derg DEA)
16	Maoliosa McHugh	Councillor (Derg DEA)
17	Jim McKeever	Councillor (Faughan DEA)
18	Margaret McLaughlin	Social partner (community/voluntary sector)
19	Patricia McNulty (21/11/2017)	Social partner (community/voluntary sector)
20	Robert Moore	Social partner (farm diversification)
21	Edel Mullan (13/12/2016)	Social partner (community/voluntary sector)
22	William O'Neill	Social partner (farm diversification)
23	Graham Warke	Councillor (Faughan DEA)
24	John Wauchob	Social partner (farm diversification)

The dates that members joined are indicated (after member names) if not in place since LAG Board set up

	Rural Development Team:	Role
1	Deirdre Harte	Programme Manager
2	Linda White	Project Officer
3	Emma McGill	Project Officer
4	Claire McDaid	Project Officer
5	Eilish Boyle	Finance & Verification Officer
6	Shonagh Higgenbotham	Administration Officer

APPENDIX 2: Sample Communications Activities



Derry Now News Sport Obits Features Vid

Mayor shows a good head for heights as Ireland's first 'zip trekking' course opens in Derry

f t g+ m



Derry Now News Sport Obits Features Vid

If you build it they will come- the Derry man proving rural businesses can survive and thrive

f t g+ m



Hi 26°C | Lo 13°C Belfast | WEATHER

Belfast Telegraph DIGITAL

HOME NEWS SPORT BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE CARS OPINION TRAV

Home - Video News

Video: Ireland's first zip line trek opens at Faughan Valley

June 13 2018

Video: Ireland's first zip line trek opens at Faughan Valley
source: Oaktree Adventures



They're sure to enjoy their zip trekking!

Like Reply 30

Derry City Football Club

Derry City Football Club shared a post.
June 13 at 10:11 PM

Looks great!



Business Support Derry Strabane
June 10 at 7:19 PM

The Rural Development Partnership Programme offers funding streams for initiatives to promote the community, voluntary and business sector in rural areas. Check out the video showing progress due to funding under this programme Oaktree Adventures Jack & Jill Playgroup and Learmont Resource Centre.

Funding is now open for grants under the #RuralBasic Services and #RuralBroadband Schemes. For more information and dates of the pre-funding workshop go to: <https://bit.ly/2pcDVAG>

NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Funder: DAERA & EU
Board: Derry and Strabane Rural Partnership
Budget: £7.54 million
Schemes: 5 funding schemes



rural network ni

NEWS AND EVENTS - ABOUT PROGRAMME - SHARING PRACTICE - LEADER CO-OPERATION - CONTACT POINTS - SIGN UP

Derry and Strabane Rural Partnership Funding Scheme opening soon

19 June 2018

RDF News

Derry and Strabane Rural Partnership is responsible for delivering LEADER funding throughout the Derry City and Strabane District Council area under the 2014 - 2020 NI Rural Development Programme (RDP).

Rural Basic Services Scheme (RBS3 - Small Grants)

The Rural Basic Services Scheme is opening for its third call which will deliver capital funding to support innovative ways of delivering services in rural areas. This call is for small grants only. (£10,000 to £10,000). This could be funding for equipment or small-scale capital works such as refurbishment.



Home - Business - Agri

Rural businesses urged to apply for broadband and services funding in Northern Ireland



The eligible area for funding includes the 'core rural area' outside Strabane town and the city of Derry (as well as Cullymore, Newboulds, Struffloway, Dumanone, Naon's Corner and Coshquin).



Derry Now

News Sport Obit Features Video

Call out to rural businesses in the Derry and Strabane area to attend workshops for funding next week



Home - Your Council - News - Sayers Engineering - the rural business that grows and grows

YOUR COUNCIL

- City Deal
- Council Business
- Community Planning
- Consultations
- Corporate Documents and Publications
- Corporate and Improvement Plan
- Have Your Say 2018

Sayers Engineering – the rural business that grows and grows

27 September 2018
 Continuing to grow, Sayers Engineering are a business whose growth over the last 10 years knows no bounds.
 Established in 2003 by Gareth Sayers, what started off as a part time one man enterprise is now one of the most thriving rural businesses in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area, employing over 30 people and based across two sites.
 The ever expanding company are experts in steel sheet, stainless steel and aluminium engineering and produce products to suit a wide range of requirements and their products include stainless steel tanks, rail walk, hand rails and precision pipe work.

YOUR COUNCIL

Council members approve major capital development funding

27 November 2018
 There was a warm welcome today for proposals presented to members of Derry City and Strabane District Council for 21.5 million in the construction of a range of local capital development projects across the City and District.
 Members of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee heard that to be approved in particular will be 10.5 million from the funding which has been allocated by Council following further strategic assessment of Council's 10 month Strategic Action Plan.
 Local Finance Officer Mike Collins, told the committee that the investment is part of a very ambitious capital plan which Council is delivering as part of its overall strategic, financial growth plan.
 I am delighted to highlight the work progress that is being made in the delivery of our Capital Development Programme, he announced. The programme forms a very critical part of our Strategic Action Plan and we are being driven with the delivery of the strategic projects which have been identified as critical in achieving the long-term positive transformation of our Council area.
 10.5 million has been allocated to a number of projects across the district which is significant and which demonstrates Council's commitment to delivering real value across the district and addressing needs highlighted by their being in their communities.
 The most recent stage to date of 11.2 million the local authority Council has invested allocated into the local Council budget in 2018, a significant position which will do with it back in the next phase of development and investment opportunities that come the Council year.

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Rural Development Programme Monitoring Committee Newsletter

The latest quarterly newsletter updates on activities of the Monitoring Committee and progress of the 4th Rural Development Programme (2014-2020). This edition focuses on the meeting of 19th October 2018.

About the Committee
 The Monitoring Committee was established in 2014 to monitor the implementation of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020. The Committee is chaired by the Monitoring Committee Chair, Councillor John McKeown, and includes representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Monitoring Committee, the Derry City and Strabane District Council, and other stakeholders.

Agri-Marketing
 The latest meeting of the committee was held on 19th October 2018. The agenda included a presentation on the progress of the Agri-Marketing Programme, a report on the progress of the Agri-Marketing Programme, and a report on the progress of the Agri-Marketing Programme.

DAERA Meeting
 The Monitoring Committee met with DAERA on 19th October 2018. The agenda included a presentation on the progress of the Agri-Marketing Programme, a report on the progress of the Agri-Marketing Programme, and a report on the progress of the Agri-Marketing Programme.

DAERA Meeting
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5 NEWS

19 NOVEMBER 2018

Public urged to check broadband speed information

The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council has today issued a public warning to check broadband speed information. The Mayor, Councillor John McKeown, said that the information is being used to inform the public of the availability of broadband services in the area. He said that the information is being used to inform the public of the availability of broadband services in the area. He said that the information is being used to inform the public of the availability of broadband services in the area.



Established in 2003 by Gareth Sayers, what started off as a part time one man enterprise is now one of the most thriving rural businesses in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area, employing over 30 people and based across two sites. The ever expanding company are experts in steel sheet, stainless steel and aluminium engineering and produce products to suit a wide range of requirements and their products include stainless steel tanks, rail walk, hand rails and precision pipe work.

Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District
 Local people should get behind a new campaign aimed at improving broadband services, particularly in rural areas. The Department for the Economy is asking householders to help areas they have correctly identified local postcodes that contain premises currently unable to access 30 megabits per second (Mbps) broadband services. The information in plans that could see a significant investment of up to £200 million of public money in telecoms infrastructure in NI. Find out more at <https://gov.ni.gov.uk>

APPENDIX 3: Partnership Gallery of Images



LOCATION/EVENT: Enterprise Week (March 2018) and Rural Showcase at Council event (May 2018)



LOCATION/EVENT: Oakfire Project Launch, May 2018



LOCATION/EVENT: Learmount Launch, September 2018



LOCATION/EVENT: Plumbridge Launch, November 2018



LOCATION/EVENT: Broadband Photocall, December 2018