

# RURAL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

VALE OF GLAMORGAN RDP 2014 – 2020



## SUMMARY

September 2014



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## **ANNEXES** (available on request)

LAG Terms of Reference and Constitution  
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## INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan Local Action Group (LAG), I am delighted to present this Rural Local Development Strategy. It describes the priorities for action in the rural parts of the Vale of Glamorgan under the Rural Development Programme for Wales, for the period 2014 to 2020.

This strategy has been subject to considerable consultation with local communities, organisations and businesses. It is based on a wide range of evidence and analysis. It offers a clear understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the area. It builds on the excellent work within the Rural Vale over the past six years. It offers a realistic and focused plan for improving and growing the economy of the Rural Vale.

The Vale of Glamorgan has many strengths and advantages. While acknowledging those, this strategy aims to use LEADER funding and LEADER principles to support the opportunities to make our businesses more productive, to make our communities more resilient and to make our environment more accessible.

We will keep it under review so that it can adapt to changing circumstances. It will be a living document.



Rachel Connor, Executive Director, Vale Centre for Voluntary Services

Chair  
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## CONTACT DETAILS

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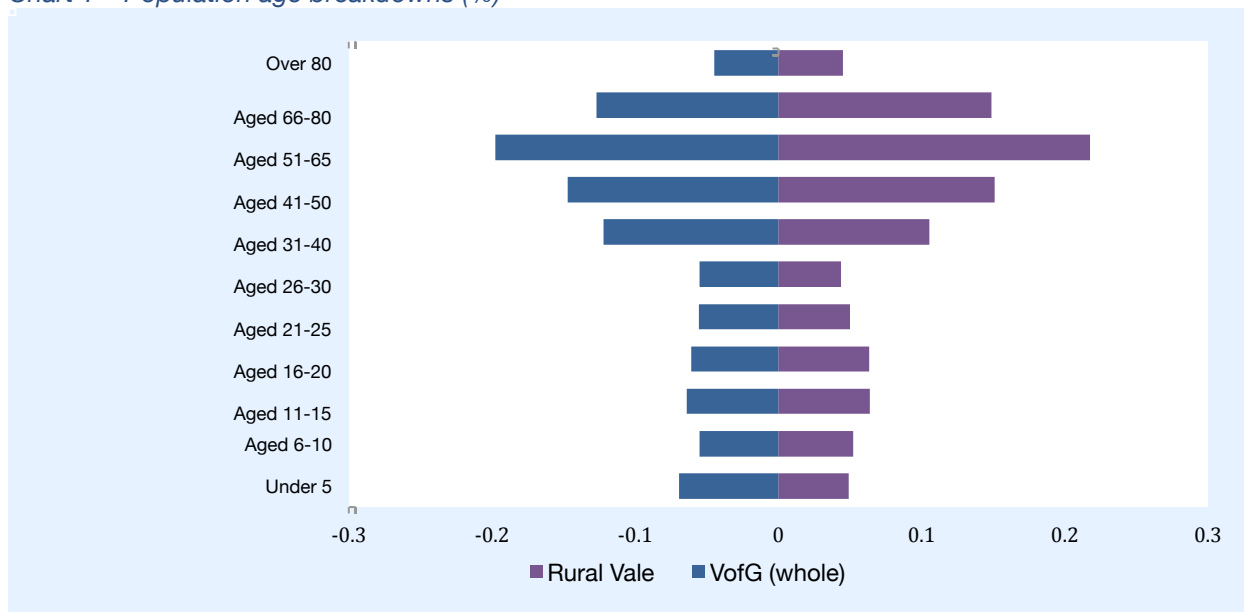
*Prif Swyddog Adfywio Gweledig  
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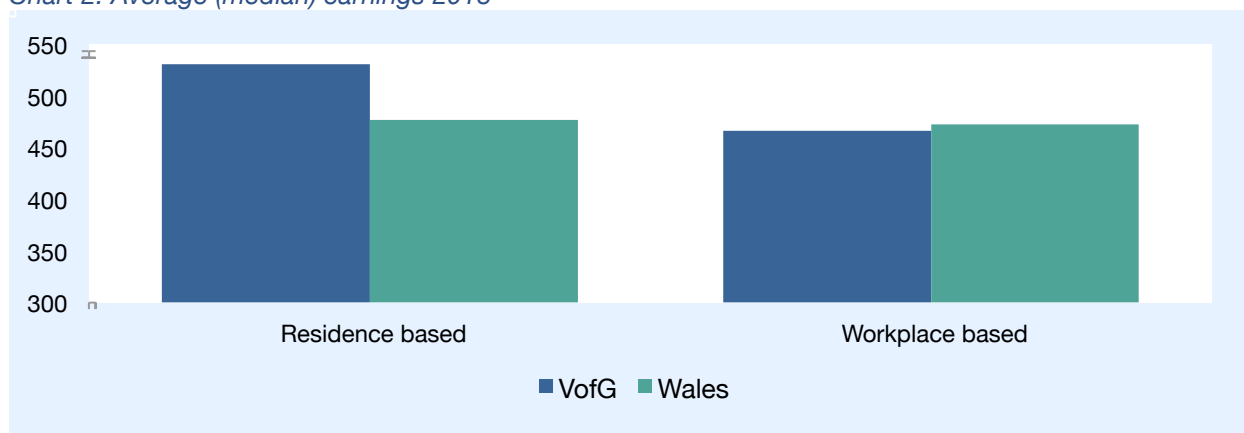
Chart 1 – Population age breakdowns (%)



## Deprivation

The Vale of Glamorgan overall is a relatively wealthy area. Proportionally, it has fewer claimants of housing benefit than Wales as a whole. Gross Value Added (GVA) per head is highest of the 12 Welsh areas – at £21,239<sup>6, 7</sup>. Average mean earnings for those living in the Vale were significantly higher than the Welsh average. We expect both measurements to be influenced by Cardiff.<sup>8</sup>

Chart 2: Average (median) earnings 2013



On some measurements of 'wealth' Rural Vale is relatively more affluent. A greater proportion of homes are detached and have 4 or more bedrooms. 90% of households have private transport, with almost half having two or more cars<sup>9</sup>.

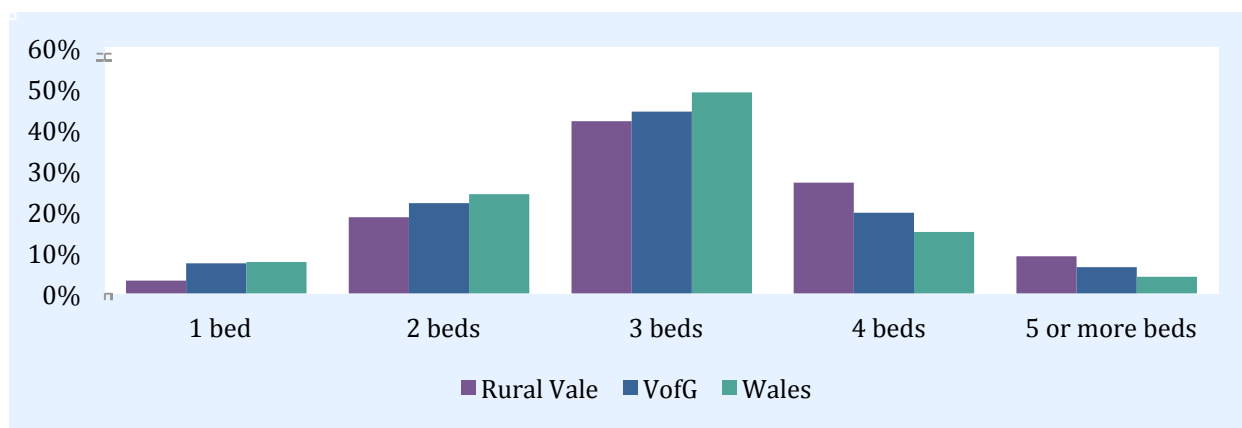
Chart 3: Household size

<sup>6</sup> This measurement is only available at a NUTs3 level and therefore reflects the Vale and Cardiff. It should be noted that we would expect Cardiff to influence this measurement.

<sup>7</sup> 2013 Regional Gross Value Added

<sup>8</sup> 2013 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

<sup>9</sup> 2011 National Census



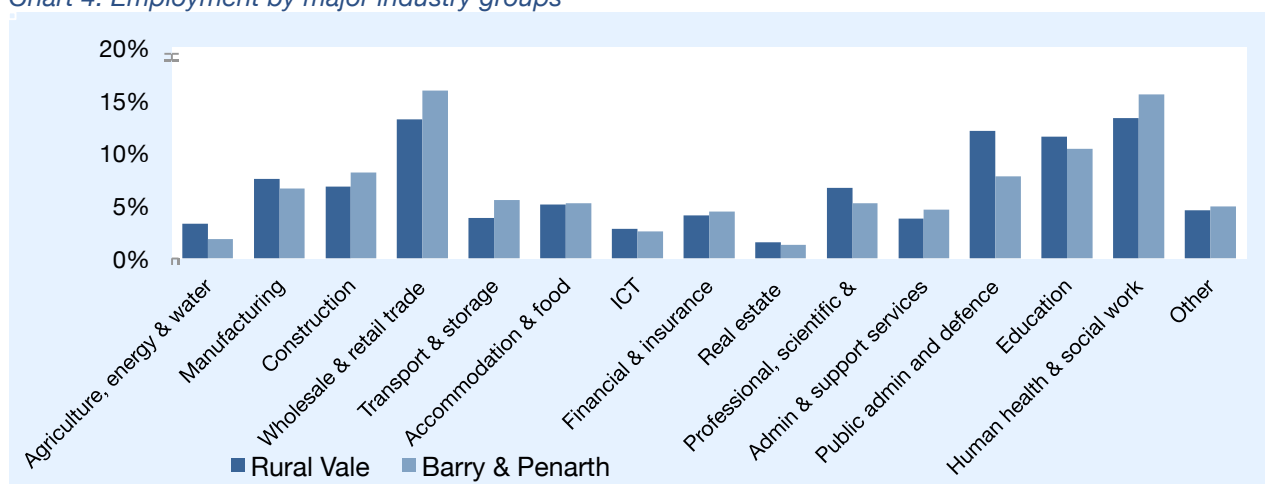
Nevertheless, there are also pockets of poverty and deprivation. In common with many rural areas, this is less noticeable than urban areas. Some wards (and in particular Llantwit Major and St Athan) have a significant number of households renting from the Council or registered social landlords (RSL)<sup>10</sup>.

Parts of Llantwit Major and St Athan are the most deprived within the Rural Vale. Some other parts of the rural Vale (parts of Cowbridge, Petersen-Super-Ely, Rhoose and Wenvoe) are counted within the most deprived 200 areas of Wales for 'access to services'.

## The Economy

The most important sectors by employment within the Vale as a whole are wholesale and retail, health and social care, education and public administration and defence. Rural Vale has proportionately more people employed in agriculture, energy and water and public administration and defence – reflecting the importance of agriculture and also the presence of MOD St Athan and Aberthaw Power Station<sup>11</sup>.

Chart 4: Employment by major industry groups



Most (90%) of enterprises in the Vale as a whole employ less than 10 people and only 1% employ more than 50 people – similar to the Welsh average. There was a small increase in the number of businesses incorporated in 2012<sup>12</sup>. Agriculture, ICT and accommodation and food services saw a small increase in business numbers.

Self-employment levels tend to be higher. Of those who are economically active, 17% work as self-employed traders, which reflects the greater representation of industries such as agriculture and small-scale construction<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> 2011 National Census

<sup>11</sup> 2011 National Census

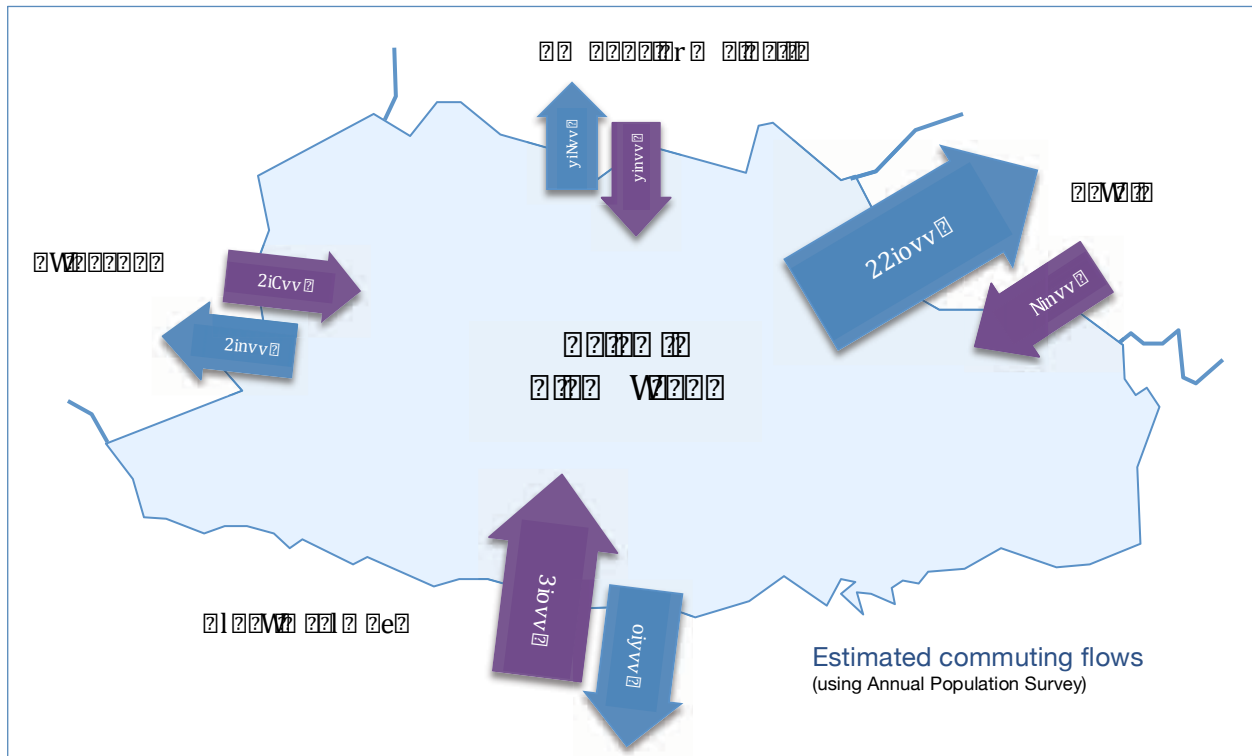
<sup>12</sup> Business Demography 2012

<sup>13</sup> Annual Population Survey 2014

## Commuting

The Vale has the highest levels of outward commuting of any local authority in Wales. Most of this is commuting into Cardiff – around 22,500 people from the Vale overall, with around 4,600 commuting the other way<sup>14</sup>.

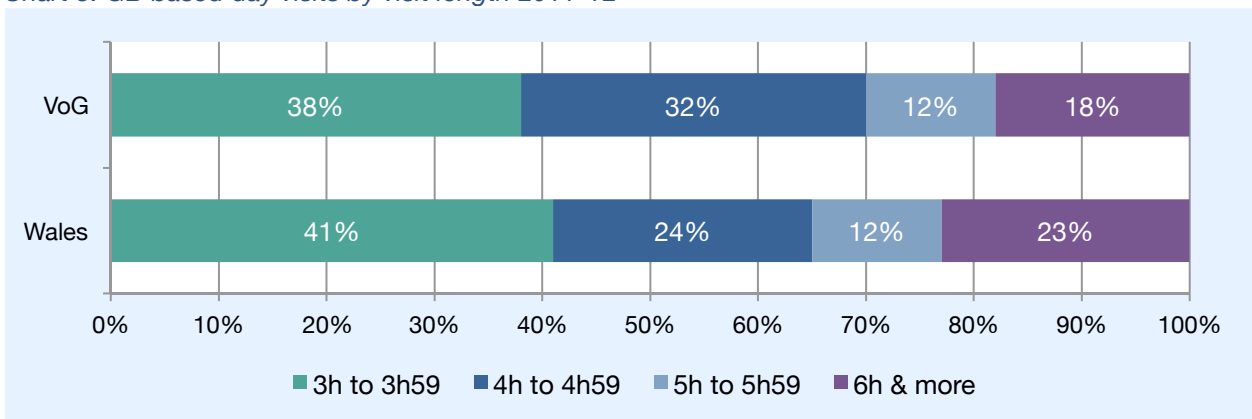
Chart 11: Commuting Patterns from the Vale of Glamorgan



## The tourism economy

The Vale of Glamorgan received just over 3.5 million visits on average, between 2010 and 2012. This was 3.2% of all visits to Wales but, crucially, only 1.1% of overnight stays. 97% of all trips to the Vale are by domestic day visitors. When they do visit, evidence shows that only 18% stay for longer than 6 hours, lower than the rest of Wales<sup>15</sup>.

Chart 5: GB based day visits by visit length 2011-12



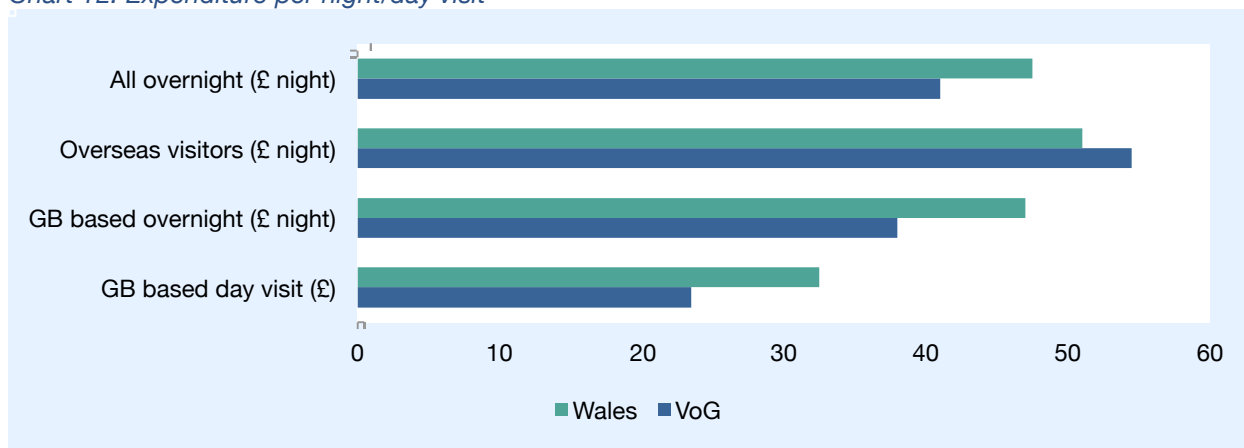
Not only do fewer people stay overnight, they tend to spend less when in the Vale compared with the rest of Wales. However, overseas visitors tend to spend a little more than average.

Source: Wales Audit Office, 2013

Wales Audit Office, 2013. The data is based on a survey of 1,000 visitors to the Vale of Glamorgan. The survey found that 97% of all trips to the Vale are by domestic day visitors. When they do visit, evidence shows that only 18% stay for longer than 6 hours, lower than the rest of Wales.



Chart 12: Expenditure per night/day visit



Both in terms of the number of trips and the spending made, the Vale has seen a significant absolute decline since 2007, though it has started to recover again more recently. Relatively, tourism in the Vale has suffered much more than Wales as a whole.

## The infrastructure

### Renewables

Renewable energy has a very limited presence within the Vale as a whole. Overall, the Vale has only 3.6% of the installed capacity of Wales – at 5.9mW. By comparison, the capacity of the Aberthaw Power Station is 1,637mW<sup>16</sup>.

Chart 16: Completed installations of renewable energy in the Vale of Glamorgan

	Installations		kW installed	
	Number	% of Wales	kW	% of Wales
Photovoltaics	1245	3.5	5832	3.8
Wind	8	2.7	47	0.5
Hydro	4	21.1	25	1.1
AD	0	-	0	-
Micro CHP	2	5	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5906</b>	<b>3.6</b>

### Digital

70% of premises in the Vale have access to superfast broadband. However, only 22% of premises have taken up SF broadband compared with 77% that have taken up normal broadband<sup>17</sup>. In terms of mobile phone coverage, 76.3% of premises in the Vale of Glamorgan have access to 3G but only 50.3% of the geographic area is covered – suggesting that parts of Rural Vale do not have 3G coverage.

### Development Areas

The Vale of Glamorgan is planning for 9950 new residential units and 480 hectares (gross) of employment land up to 2026. Strategic Housing Sites in the rural Vale are focused on St Athan and Llantwit Major. Strategic employment sites for the Vale of Glamorgan are all in the rural Vale; on land to the south of Junction 34 on the M4, and on the Cardiff Airport and St Athan Enterprise Zone which is split between two sites – land adjacent Cardiff Airport and the Aerospace Business Park at St Athan.

<sup>16</sup> Central Feed-in-tariff - Ofgem

<sup>17</sup> Ofcom – UK broadband speed data 2013

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community involvement is at the heart of the LEADER process. It is also a fundamental part of the approach taken by Creative Rural Communities (CRC) in the Vale of Glamorgan. Responsible for rural regeneration in the County and managing the LEADER process, CRC have been engaging with its rural community for years - whether formally through the Local Action Group or informally at events throughout the rural Vale.

As an example, nine community consultation events were held in different rural wards during 2012 and 2013, which led to new ideas and new projects in villages across the rural Vale. Equally, the LAG and CRC have responded to evaluation and feedback on projects and have adjusted past LEADER programmes to take account of changing needs.

## **New Local Action Group**

In preparation for the new LEADER programme, a new Vale of Glamorgan Local Action Group (LAG) has been formed, largely from existing members - with many new members representing public, private and community organisations throughout the rural Vale invited via an open call process. The new LAG has been actively engaged with the development of the Rural Local Development Strategy.

- Discussed at Inaugural Meetings
- Workshops to develop SWOT analysis
- Face-to-face or telephone survey of LAG members
- Special meeting to consider the draft LDS

## **Wider community involvement**

In order to reach a much wider range of stakeholders, CRC has managed an online survey of over 250 businesses and organisations. This was held during the first two weeks of August and has been completed by 38 different people. A link to the online survey was also published on the Vale Council website and promoted on its front page and social media.

One of the most popular events in the Vale of Glamorgan calendar is the Vale Show. CRC had a stand at the Show with the core purpose of consulting with the thousands of people who attend. More than 500 people came to the stand and many made comments on the boards and filled in questionnaires relating to the RLDS themes and SWOT. Also at the Vale Show, the Vale of Glamorgan Council hosted a Rural Business Breakfast attended by more than 40 local businesses at which destination management was the key theme - a critical part of this RLDS.

Further, informal, consultation has taken place throughout the summer - with CRC staff discussing key issues with a range of businesses and representative bodies, such as the FUW, Vale Marketing and VCVS.

# STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS<sup>2</sup>

The SWOT analysis flows from the evidence base and consultation process, drawing out the key points for each of the four parts of the SWOT, where the opportunities lie for LEADER to make a difference for the rural Vale.

One critical part of our thinking in developing the RLDS has been in relation to future drivers of change. There are global changes, which we need to be aware of, which are difficult to factor into a very local evidence base but are vital considerations for a six-year strategy- not least from a sustainable development perspective.

The next 20 years or so will bring profound changes in the way we live our lives, manage our businesses and plan for our communities. These changes, such as climate change, population growth, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss, will provide serious challenges and some opportunities - both globally and locally.

*Table 2: Key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the Rural Vale*

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
The Rural Vale has a number of strengths on which to build in the next round of LEADER	There are weaknesses of the Rural Vale which we need to address	There are opportunities which the Rural Vale could capitalise on, to grow its local economy:	There are external local and global factors which could impact on growth in the Rural Vale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality and extensive natural environmental resources</li> <li>• Array of cultural and heritage features and facilities some with significant recent investment to make them accessible to visitors</li> <li>• Talented well qualified rural resident workforce</li> <li>• A major adjacent growing population centre in Cardiff with easy access into the rural Vale</li> <li>• A wide variety of activities and places to visit packed into a geographic area which is easily accessible</li> <li>• Economic clusters in agriculture / horticulture, tourism and arts/crafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low tourism profile,</li> <li>• Low levels of staying visitors and low levels of average visitor spend</li> <li>• Lack of any further/higher education facilities (or connections with facilities) in the rural Vale</li> <li>• Extensive out-commuting to Cardiff</li> <li>• Small pockets of particular deprivation issues in the rural Vale, below the radar</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing</li> <li>• Limited volunteering opportunities</li> <li>• Poor internal public transport links</li> <li>• Poor broadband and mobile phone coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location within the Cardiff City Region</li> <li>• Development of St Athan – Cardiff Enterprise Zone</li> <li>• Presence of Cardiff Airport</li> <li>• Building on investments already made to develop tourism products and supply chains</li> <li>• Raising the profile of local food and drink products</li> <li>• Capitalising on walking and cycling opportunities, and use of the railway line</li> <li>• Proposed Local Government reorganisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of climate change</li> <li>• Increasing pressure on local authority finances</li> <li>• Installation of superfast broadband availability not keeping pace with technology</li> <li>• Ageing population, and implications for service provision</li> <li>• Loss of young people due to limited economic opportunities locally and high cost of housing</li> <li>• Constraints of a high quality environment on development</li> <li>• Outward skills migration</li> </ul>

## THE STRATEGY

The Vale of Glamorgan is a relatively wealthy county, which benefits from its rich coastal landscape and heritage, from its proximity to the capital city and from its skilled workforce.

However, its success masks some challenges, which need to be addressed if its self-evident advantages are to be seized - particularly in the rural parts of the Vale. Although the economic fortunes of the Vale are heavily linked to Cardiff, the rural Vale has not benefitted as much as it could have done from those links. Many of the working population commute to Cardiff and other towns to find employment. There is a danger, as the population ages, that the economy within the rural Vale itself will become less resilient and more limited in its activity. The rural Vale has important and somewhat under-utilised assets, which could help to create more opportunities for jobs and businesses.

### Learning from experience

Previous LEADER Programmes have piloted new business opportunities, have put in place much-needed infrastructure and have promoted the rural Vale in a more coherent way. The Perfect Pitch initiative has encouraged five new campsites to set up using a shared toolkit. Walking trails have been improved and supported with a new set of leaflets and signage. Community events have benefitted from a range of shared equipment. Villages have been able to create better facilities. And much more besides.

This Rural Local Development Strategy (RLDS) seeks to take those initiatives further and create new opportunities using the intrinsic assets of the area. It is aiming to shift the emphasis from the quality of rural life to the strength and resilience of the local economy.

### Growing the economy

The purpose of this strategy is to grow the rural economy in the Vale of Glamorgan - not just for its own sake but to help maintain the natural environment, to support its varied communities and to create vibrant businesses. Creating more wealth and more value to the rural Vale is important because this is how vital services will be protected and improved - thus encouraging more people to live, work and visit the rural Vale. This can be achieved by increasing the number of people coming to the rural Vale, by increasing the amount that they spend, by starting new businesses that create wealth within the community and by improving the physical and social infrastructure.

#### *Create more economic value from the natural and historic environment.*

The Strategy aims to create more employment and enterprise opportunities within the Vale and to create economic value from the landscape, heritage and communities around the County. The coast, the history and local activities offer the chance to improve the economy through providing more and better services, such as cafés, shops and accommodation and increasing the spending of visitors.

HAS	BUT	OPPORTUNITY
Heritage Coast Beaches Numerous castles Ancient churches Local products Walking, cycling and horse-riding trails	Not many people stay overnight They don't spend much when visiting There are not enough services for visitors Too many things are free Some facilities are underexploited	To offer better access, signage, quality and marketing of visitor services - in order to create an integrated tourism package that supports more jobs and businesses

### *Maximise the benefit of being part of the Cardiff City Region*

The Strategy aims to build on the existing links with the capital and make much more of being part of the Cardiff city region. The rural Vale needs to be seen as a valuable asset for Cardiff - as a place to work, to grow, to rest, to play and to breathe. Stronger ties can be created with the cultural, educational and sporting institutions in order to bring benefits back into the rural Vale. More could be made of the opportunities provided by Cardiff Airport and the major enterprise zones at Rhoose and St Athan; and the rural Vale can work harder to capitalise on the hundreds of thousands of people living right on its doorstep.

HAS	BUT	OPPORTUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent transport links</li> <li>Recreational offers</li> <li>High quality housing</li> <li>Skilled workforce</li> <li>Enterprise zones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large net out-commuting</li> <li>Very high house prices</li> <li>Low paid jobs in tourism and agriculture</li> <li>Not making strong institutional links</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To create more economic ties and benefits from the city region - attracting jobs, facilities and visitors into the rural Vale</li> </ul>

### *Encourage business and community enterprises to provide local services.*

The Strategy aims to support new and growing small businesses and community enterprises. Local businesses could benefit from collaborating to become more efficient and profitable. There are some excellent examples of community initiatives with the County but much more could be done to encourage and support social enterprise, community action and community owned assets. This would offer more control to local people and help make some services more resilient and financially sustainable.

HAS	BUT	OPPORTUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A strong community sector</li> <li>Some services supported by volunteers</li> <li>Developing opportunities for providing services</li> <li>An enterprising culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited experience of community enterprise</li> <li>Lack of community assets</li> <li>Many services are provided by the council</li> <li>Over reliance on grants</li> <li>Public funding under increasing pressure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage local businesses and community enterprises to provide local services - involving communities and building local skills</li> </ul>

### *Improve digital usage within businesses and communities*

The Strategy aims to make better use of modern, fast digital infrastructure. There still needs to be improvement in the provision of superfast broadband and 3G/4G mobile technology in some very rural communities. However, the more important issue is to get more companies using digital technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their business - whether enabling better collaboration, extending their marketing or tracking their customers.

HAS	BUT	OPPORTUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail businesses</li> <li>Accommodation providers</li> <li>Food outlets</li> <li>Farmers and growers</li> <li>Art venues</li> <li>Visitor attractions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They don't work together very effectively</li> <li>Too few make full use of digital media</li> <li>Many are consequently less productive</li> <li>Innovative digital marketing is underused</li> <li>Some rural areas still 'not-spots'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To build on existing digital infrastructure and offer training and support - ensuring that business make the most of the opportunities and become more profitable</li> </ul>

AIM	PRIORITIES	KEY OBJECTIVES
GROW THE ECONOMY OF THE RURAL VALE	<b>PR1.</b> Create more economic value from the natural and historic environment <i>We'd like to see more visitors stay overnight and spend more when they are here.</i>	To increase the business and employment potential of the coast To increase the business and employment potential of heritage assets To increase the business and employment potential of outdoor activities To increase use of local produce to add value, increase resilience and shorten supply chains To develop more business tourism opportunities
	<b>PR2.</b> Maximise the benefit of being part of the Cardiff city region <i>We'd like to see more jobs located in the Vale and more visitors to the region using all that the Vale has to offer.</i>	To reduce net outward commuting To create outposts of Cardiff-based institutions in the rural Vale To maximise economic benefit to the rural Vale from development at Enterprise Zones To increase use of Vale produce in Cardiff outlets To develop links with Cardiff-based conference hotels To encourage more Cardiff visitors to use the Rural Vale for business and pleasure
	<b>PR3.</b> Encourage local businesses and community enterprises to provide local services <i>We'd like to see some (non-statutory) services being delivered in different ways, possibly by local businesses and communities themselves.</i>	To identify opportunities for council services which could be delivered by the community To vest Council assets with the community to support local initiatives in the Rural Vale To investigate a Rural Vale Community Bond, Community Reinvestment Trust or similar innovative funding models. To secure community support for more renewables To research investment models for community-owned renewable energies and energy efficiency
	<b>PR4.</b> Improve digital usage within local businesses and communities <i>We'd like to see more businesses and communities making full use of the internet and social media, and networking together.</i>	To aggregate local demand in order to encourage faster rollout To provide digital hubs and public wifi in villages and other 'not spots' To provide up-to-the-minute information for visitors To improve digital literacy in local businesses and communities To support business growth and the delivery of services using ICT tools

## Preparing the ground

This RLDS will aim to give businesses the skills and knowledge to identify new opportunities and exploit them. The Vale of Glamorgan LAG aims to help businesses and community enterprises demonstrate that they are ready to access commercial loans or mainstream support from the Welsh Government and other sources. LEADER funding will be used to support proof of concept and pre-commercial activities - leading to schemes being put in place by businesses themselves and using other programmes to support delivery.

## Delivering the strategy

This Local Development Strategy offers the opportunity of delivering an innovative programme across the rural parts of the Vale of Glamorgan. The LEADER funding will enable a range of activities that will research best practice, test new ideas, trial new schemes and build capacity in the rural communities. As these activities develop from proving concepts towards market implementation, they will be able to draw on further support from other RDP, ERDF, ESF, Welsh Government and Council funding streams – as well as from commercial and charitable sectors.

A key component of successful delivery is the quality of the new LAG and the CRC team that support LEADER in the rural Vale. Their experience, contacts and creativity in supporting and encouraging rural businesses and communities will be built into the heart of this LEADER Programme.

In all aspects of the delivery of this Strategy, there will be an emphasis on creating and growing new enterprises, on new jobs, on training and on developing new skills. These may not be immediate outcomes of the pre-development phase, but will be a clear goal of the projects and activities that grow out of this LEADER Programme.



## INTEGRATION

Activities through the RLDS are developed to link with other programmes both locally and nationally. We see LEADER as the opportunity for pilot projects, feasibility and proof of concept work, where successful results have the potential to grow and develop through other programmes and initiatives. Planning our priorities for our RLDS has been done with this in mind, so that we can see a forward path for their ongoing development.

We are also mindful of the need for LEADER to contribute towards Welsh Government policies and programmes and to those locally as well and have scoped potential activities in terms of what contribution they could make.

### Integration with Welsh Government Policies and Programme Areas

Our integration with Welsh Government and local, Vale of Glamorgan, policies and programmes is set out in the following table.

Welsh Government programme / strategy	Vale of Glamorgan programme / strategy
Partnership for Growth: The Welsh Government Strategy for Tourism 2013-2020	Vale of Glamorgan Deposit Local Development Plan 2011- 2026
Natural Resources Wales	Community Strategy: 'Planning and Working Together': The Vale of Glamorgan Community Strategy 2011 to 2021
Business Wales	A Destination Management Plan for the Vale of Glamorgan, May 2014
Wales Tackling Poverty Programme for Government – Action Plan Update 2014	Vale of Glamorgan Tourism Strategy 2011-2015
A Living Language – A Language for Living. Welsh Language Strategy 2012 – 2017	Communities First Programme
Energy Wales – A Low Carbon Transition Delivery Plan, March 2014 (Main Strategy, 2012)	

### Integration with other LAGs

We intend to work with other LAGs where this will contribute valuable experience and knowledge transfer to benefit our priorities and vice versa. We have identified the priorities/activities of our proposed RLDS where we think working with other LAGs can have maximum impact, as part of our co-operation and network strategy; notably in relation to developing the economic potential of natural and historic assets. The Co-operation and Networking section provides more detail on this and our intention to actively participate in the Welsh Rural Network, exchanging experience with our colleagues across the Welsh LAGs.

Cost savings and economies of scale can be achieved at a project level through joint working with neighbouring LAGs on areas of synergy such as food, outdoor activities, farm diversification and the Coast. Specific areas for integration will include:

- Working with neighbouring LAGs in South East Wales, where there are opportunities for economies of scale, joint activities and knowledge sharing that would benefit all our respective LAG areas; for example tourism packages with reach LAG, Bridgend; local produce with reach and Monmouthshire LAGs
- Working with other LAGs in Wales/UK/Europe in a similar way, e.g. a network of Jurassic coast LAGs to jointly capitalise on this natural resource potential



## CROSS CUTTING THEMES

The RLDS integrates the three cross cutting themes of Sustainable Development, Equal Opportunities and Poverty and Social Exclusion, together with Welsh language, as core components of development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of our LEADER activities:

- **Sustainable Development:** *achieving economic, social and environmental wellbeing whilst keeping within environmental limits; building in environmental sustainability.* The environment is a vital resource and driver to our tourism and agricultural sectors and developing the economic potential of natural and historic heritage must go hand in hand with its sustainable management
- **Equal Opportunities:** *ensuring equality of opportunity including gender mainstreaming across the nine 'protected characteristics'.* We need to ensure equality of opportunity for both the businesses and communities in the rural Vale and, importantly, for the visitors that we want to encourage to the rural Vale
- **Poverty and Social Exclusion:** *addressing the issues that underlie poverty and the needs of households and individuals in poverty.* Major poverty issues are focused outside the LEADER area (Barry Communities First Cluster). Nevertheless there are more hidden issues in the Rural Vale to be addressed; and experience to be exchanged/built on with the Barry Community First Cluster and Tackling Poverty programme (also focused on Barry). Our focus for poverty initiatives will be Llantwit Major and St Athan.
- **Welsh Language:** *ensuring equality of Welsh language opportunity and contribution to the Welsh language National Action Plan.* The number of Welsh speakers in the Vale of Glamorgan is relatively low, at 10.8% (2011 Census), on a par with other East Wales authorities such as Cardiff. However development of new schools working through the medium of the Welsh language is developing its use. We can make more of the Welsh language as part of our cultural tourism offer as well as ensuring that a bilingual approach is promoted

The cross cutting themes are a fundamental part of the RLDS approach and all activities will be expected to contribute:

- In terms of **development** our approach is to raise awareness of their requirement and opportunity, and focus on ways in which integration of cross cutting themes can add value and participation to the activities that we carry out as well as contribute to theme specific requirements
- In terms of **delivery**, we want to maximise participation of businesses and communities through their integration into activities
- In terms of **monitoring and evaluation** we want to promote and disseminate the value of their integration and the benefits that brings

## CO-OPERATION AND NETWORKING

Co-operation is one of the seven principles of LEADER and offers excellent opportunities for us to exchange and learn from experience at four levels:

- At the **transnational** level where we see particular opportunities for knowledge exchange in relation to our top priority – developing the economic potential from our natural and historic assets
- At the **inter-regional** across other nations in the UK where we see opportunities for:
  - knowledge exchange in relation to our highest priority – developing the economic potential from our natural and historic assets - in particular in relation to Jurassic coastlines which is an underplayed resource for us
  - knowledge exchange in relation to community led energy and digital initiatives in particular; and community led approaches to rural service delivery more broadly
- At the **Wales inter-regional level** where we see opportunities for:
  - Exchange of experience in relation to tourism activities and Welsh language integration
  - Participation in the Wales Rural Network, which we expect to take a full role in
  - Work across LAG areas in South Wales at a project level to achieve economies of scale and savings. Some areas may choose to lead on a thematic basis.
  - Small scale targeted cooperation projects that may be labour intensive but require very little financial input for a short period of time.
- At the **Vale level** where we see opportunities for networking between the rural Vale and our two urban areas of Barry and Penarth

In preparing this RLDS we have researched example of projects elsewhere – through LEADER and other programmes. Our proposals stem from the value of examples we have identified. Our priority for transnational working will be in relation to our highest priority of creating more economic value from the natural and historic environment.

### How Co-operation will be addressed

Our initial scoping has identified opportunities for networking and co-operation with the table above indicating the potential level of co-operation envisaged and the geographic scope for this.

More work is needed to refine and develop these opportunities and we look to work with the Wales Rural Network on this. Establishing sound partnerships for networking and co-operation requires an investment of time and effort and needs to engage LAG members and beyond. We have therefore prioritised networking and co-operation on the following – where we believe networking and co-operation would definitely be beneficial:

- Building on the Jurassic/Triassic coast profile as a core part of our tourism offer. Whilst not a World Heritage designated as the Dorset Jurassic Coast is, the rural Vale has similar characteristics and opportunities and could learn from the integrated approach taken in Dorset, as well as work with other similar coastlines (North Yorkshire and Asturias being two).
- Developing the potential of food and drink short supply chains and use; we are aware of activities both within the UK and transnationally and know we could benefit from knowledge transfer.
- Local liaison with the Barry Communities First Cluster, in terms of exchange of experience and mutually beneficial pilots addressing poverty and social inclusion issues

We intend to participate fully in the Wales Rural Network and hope that issues we have flagged up here for sharing experience can be part of the Network's events and workshops programme.

# INNOVATION

The focus of this RLDS is unashamedly on the economy. By helping to grow and improve the local economy, the viability and resilience of the rural communities in the Vale will be strengthened.

By building on the best of recent experience in the Vale of Glamorgan and by actively seeking out new and relevant ideas from elsewhere, this programme will support businesses and rural communities through the innovation process. Our approach to innovation is to help create new ideas; to seek out good ideas from elsewhere; and to use ideas from different sectors.

## WHAT IF?

The Vale of Glamorgan LAG could investigate to establishing an Innovation Fund (WHAT IF), which will work across all four Priorities of the strategy. This could enable the LAG to commission pilot projects to test new products and processes; it could enable rural businesses and community organisations to research the potential of new ways of delivering services; and it could enable the LAG to bring in innovation experts to advise businesses on new developments.

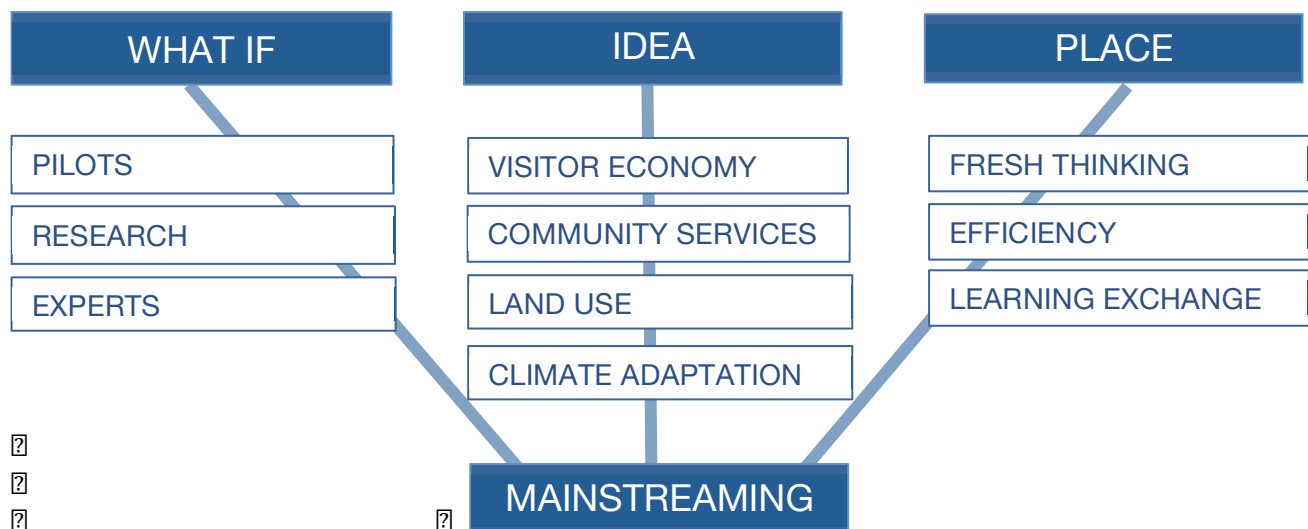
## IDEA

The LAG will also investigate the feasibility of establishing an Innovation Demonstration and Enterprise Action group (IDEA). IDEA will be an informal grouping of business organisations, community leaders, academics and entrepreneurs whose task is to find potentially transformative ideas - from Wales, the UK and Europe - and bring them to the attention of organisations and businesses in the rural Vale.

## PLACE

A PLACE programme could link post-graduate students with rural businesses and community enterprises within the rural Vale for up to a week. These placements will bring business studies, tourism or community development students to work with local organisations and suggest new and more efficient ways of delivering products and services, or even new service areas altogether.

These three innovation programmes could help local businesses discover and adopt new ideas, enhance their effectiveness and so improve the economy of the Vale. This LEADER programme will encourage the most successful pilots and development ideas to access mainstream funding and support.



# MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

## **New Local Action Group**

In the new Programme, a single, smaller board will oversee the delivery of RDP in the Vale. The new LAG comprises both existing and new members representing public, private and community organisations. Since it started, the new LAG has been actively engaged with the development of the RLDA and the development of the LEADER project.

## **Administrative Body**

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has been selected by the LAG as the administrative body. It will be responsible for the LAG administration and animation. The Council, in its role as project sponsor, will ensure that LEADER funding is targeted at project activity and will always seek to lever in additional funds over and above the 20% minimum required under the regulations.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council will be responsible for the delivery of the programme on behalf of the LAG and its successful conclusion, using a core of LEADER staff working to commission and deliver projects. It will undertake to ensure that financial propriety and compliance is observed in its management and administration of the programme.

The Council has excellent compliance procedures in place via the role of monitoring officer. Current systems will be carried over into the new programme relating to segregation of duties, reporting systems and the capacity to maintain full audit trails for expenditure and indicators.

## **Staffing Structure**

A minimum level of staffing is required in order to achieve both compliance and effective administration of the LAG. This structure recognises the labour intensive nature of LEADER. It involves a great deal of hand-holding in order to succeed. This has been evident within the current Business Plan.

## **LAG appraisal process**

The LAG has been developing the LEADER project for the Vale since early 2014 through looking at themes and possible eligible actions. The LAG will be responsible for preparing and publishing calls for proposals for involvement in projects. Projects will be commissioned by the LAG via a tender process or delivered by the core Leader team.

The LAG will operate in a fair, open and transparent way in its application of selection criteria. It must be noted that projects will come from the LAG itself. The administrative body will support the LAG in this process. The LAG has set out its hierarchy of objectives in the LDS emphasising likely splits of budgets per theme.

## **The LEADER approach in the Vale.**

The Vale LAG fully supports the LEADER approach. This involves working with stakeholders around clearly identified needs and opportunities to develop new ideas and pilots, disseminating their findings. Perfect Pitch was a prime example of this. Creative Rural Communities now has models of delivery that not only work, but also make best use of minimal resources.

The knowledge base of the team is crucial to the success of LEADER 2014-2020. Posts have been included with the broad job descriptions, allowing for a greater degree of flexibility during the programme. This has also been proven to be invaluable in the current round of funding - with staff having to jump from food, to tourism to farm diversification as and when demand dictates.

## LAG involvement in strategy delivery.

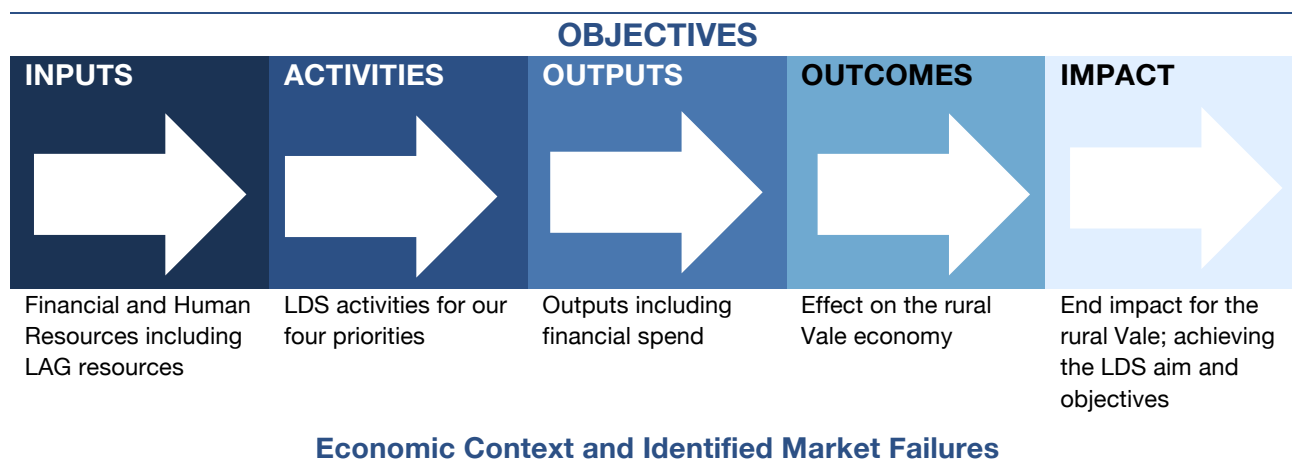
The new LAG will steer the direction of the Strategy with great interest and active involvement. The added bonus of the intervention logic in the new programme will mean that the RLDS is more of a living document. Those tables will be reviewed at every one of the 4 LAG meetings per annum.

Budgets will be closely monitored, as they have been during the current programme. The LAG constitution and terms of reference shows how flexibility is part of the operation of the LAG, with meetings convened as needed and sub groups formed to tackle specific issues and projects

## Monitoring and Evaluation

A sound framework for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is essential for any programme:

- **Monitoring** is vital to provide a regular updated snapshot of progress with activities, outputs and administrative/management processes
- **Evaluation** provides the critical feedback on effectiveness (how well the programme is performing against objectives), efficiency (outputs relative to inputs) and impact (changes resulting from intervention and consequent impact of these)



## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Welsh Lag allocation from Welsh Government:	£1,820,000
Match funding (from VoG Council, private sector and in kind):	<u>£ 341,250</u>
TOTAL	£2,161,250