

# **Tyne Esk LEADER**

## **'Supporting opportunities for rural communities'**

Local Development Strategy  
and  
Business Plan

APPENDIX 7

Policy Review



31st October 2007

## INTRODUCTION

The policy review explores the relationship between the new LEADER programme for East and Midlothian with some of the key policies and strategies at national, regional and local level. Particular attention has been given to the two selected LEADER themes: 'Progressive Rural Economy' and 'Revitalising Communities' and identified project ideas.

## NATIONAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

### Scottish Rural Development Programme/Strategic Plan for Scotland

The Rural Development Programme operated by the Environmental and Rural Affairs Department of the Scottish Government contributes towards the Scottish Rural Policy (Rural Scotland: Better Still, Naturally).

LEADER 2007-2013 is integral part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) representing the last of the four Programme axes/development priorities.

In the overall context of the SRDP to support sustainable development and focus on the correction of market failure, the role of LEADER is to increase the capacity of local community and business networks to build human capital, innovate and co-operate in order to tackle local development objectives. Actions of a local LEADER strategy should apply particularly to Axis 3 of the SRDP, but may also relate and integrate actions relating to the other two axes. In this way, LEADER is meant to provide integration within the SRDP and its various areas of intervention.

The scope of eligible activity under LEADER and its five themes is, therefore, closely relating to activities outlined under the Axes of the SRDP. In terms of the two LEADER themes selected by East and Midlothian ('revitalising communities' and 'progressive rural economy'), most eligible activities, as identified by the Tyne Esk LEADER strategy and business plan relate to Axis 3 'Improving Quality of Life through Diversification of Economic Activity' and to Axis 1 'Improving the Competitiveness of the Agricultural and Forestry Sector'. Actions relating more closely to Axis 2 of the SRDP 'Improving the Environment and the Countryside through Land Management', are the focus of other LEADER themes.

The project activities anticipated by the Tyne Esk LEADER strategy provide a close match with the eligible activities outlined by the SRDP and its Axis 3 measures. In addition, the Tyne Esk LEADER strategy is targeting and contributing towards the same performance indicators and targets as identified by the SRDP and, therefore, helps achieving the rural development targets set at national level.

Regarding its policy context, the approach of the SRDP is set out in 'Rural Scotland - A New Approach', which seeks to contribute towards the following four high-level outcomes:

- A strong and diverse economy;
- A decent quality of life, including young people;
- Quality, accessibility and choice of public services; and
- A flourishing natural and cultural heritage.

The measures in the SRDP, including LEADER, will focus on incentives to encourage positive actions to improve economic, social and environmental well-being in rural Scotland. It is recognised that this approach requires a range of policy mechanisms to work together.

## **Rural Scotland: Better Still, Naturally**

The rural policy aims of the Scottish Government are presented in 'Rural Scotland: Better Still, Naturally' and are firmly embedded within the sustainable development envelope.

The rural policy document contains many areas for future development which coincide with the new, proposed LEADER activity in East Lothian and Midlothian, for example:

- Promoting a collective, complementary and innovative approach to rural infrastructure and service provision, to improve efficiency and affordability of investment;
- Ensuring an over-arching sustainable development approach across all policy areas and initiatives;
- Continue to explore, promote and encourage efficient, innovative service delivery arrangements, including through developments in ICT;
- Continue to promote and support improvements in transport, including demand responsive transport services;
- Continue to pursue and promote greater regional/local stakeholder involvement in the development and delivery of support arrangements; and
- Encouraging and assisting local people to take a positive, purposeful role in promoting sustainable, thriving communities.

In addition, the policy specifically mentions LEADER as contributing and addressing the key challenges of rural development in Scotland.

## **Framework for Economic Development in Scotland/A Smart, Successful Scotland**

The Scottish Government's strategic approach to economic development is presented in the Framework for Economic Development in Scotland (FEDS), which, in turn, is the basis for the Enterprise Networks and their strategy 'A Smart Successful Scotland' (SSS).

The overall vision of FEDS is to raise the quality of life for Scottish people through increasing the economic opportunities for all on a socially and environmentally sustainable basis.

Through the key driver of increasing productivity in private and public spheres, the FEDS has five priorities:

- Basic education and skills;
- Research and development and innovation;
- Entrepreneurial dynamism;
- The electronic and physical infrastructure; and
- Managing public sector resources more efficiently.

The Scottish economic strategy (SSS), as pursued by the Enterprise Networks, focuses specifically on the key FEDS areas relating to enterprise growth and productivity.

Strongly emphasising the importance of working in partnership, the SSS approach addresses the following challenges, which are shared by the two LEADER themes selected by the East and Midlothian partnership:

- Entrepreneurial attitudes and creativity which are core drivers that lead to success, not only in relation to business start-up, but also with regard to innovation in existing businesses, the public and voluntary sectors and the education establishments;
- Support for businesses to ensure maximum impact and achieve value for money;
- Increase innovation and more generally, the need for businesses to be aware of, and adopt, new technologies and processes, in order to stay ahead of their competitors. Industry must increase internal knowledge generation and seek out and access external ideas wherever they exist;
- Success in key sectors, including energy, food and drink, and tourism, renewable energy, and ensure that sectors important to local economies successfully transform to meet the challenges of changing trading conditions both locally and globally;
- Use of e:business to create business advantage;
- Focus on young people to equip them with the skills, advice and support needed to allow them to contribute to and benefit from economic growth, and to underpin lifelong learning; and
- Connecting to the rest of the world. Further roll-out of digital infrastructure is needed to ensure that more remote communities can communicate and do business electronically.

Through its Rural Group, Scottish Enterprise worked with the Scottish Government in the development of the SRDP, ensuring that the aims and objectives of Scottish Enterprise are appropriately aligned to Government policy.

Specifically referring to the rural development context, the Scottish Enterprise website states the following objectives of the network:

Working closely with partners, the intention of Scottish Enterprise and its Rural Group is to stimulate change in rural communities over the longer term to create:

- an agricultural sector which plays a major role in sustainable rural development and helps to maintain the prosperity of our rural communities;
- a transport and ICT infrastructure which enables rural businesses to compete effectively in the global marketplace and individuals to access opportunities;
- enhanced availability of suitable land/property for economic development activities;
- effective capacity and networks for economic innovation and development;
- an inward flow of people and ideas to rural areas; and
- sustainable, vibrant small communities and towns.

With its emphasis on innovative approaches to local rural services, rural transport initiatives, off-farm and forestry diversification, and tourism initiatives, the East and Midlothian LEADER strategy fits well within the overall SSS range of objectives. At the same time, LEADER will complement Scottish Enterprise activities with its additional aims to develop community facilities, to improve access to areas of high environmental amenities, and to enhance the range of services locally.

## Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy

LEADER is firmly based on supporting sustainable development and the integration of its three core pillars: economy, environment, and society. It is, therefore, of prime importance that any LEADER action relates closely to Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy 'Choosing Our Future'.

Although economic growth is still the top Government Priority, it recognises that economic growth and the protection of the world for the future go hand in hand. The strategy explains the Government's commitment to pursuing the goal of sustainable development in an integrated way, through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment, and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being. This will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible.

The actions in the strategy reinforce the approach set out in *FEDS* and aim to deliver sustainable economic development in Scotland: improving transport, investing in infrastructure, regenerating communities, protecting our natural resources and releasing the skills and creativity of Scotland's people.

Improving energy efficiency, exploiting the opportunities in the sectors of renewable energies, recycling, and waste management, sustainable travel choices, improving the quality of life through promoting personal well-being, networking between communities and businesses, the production of healthy food and drink including the reduction of 'food miles', as well as sustaining local communities with economic opportunities and services are key objectives of the Scottish Sustainable Development Strategy.

All of the above objectives are shared by LEADER and the two themes selected by the East Lothian and Midlothian partnership. The LEADER strategy and respective actions will, therefore, be able to contribute directly to the targets of Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy.

## Lowlands and Uplands ERDF Programme 2007-2013

One of the four priorities in the Lowlands and Uplands ERDF Programme 2007-2013 is dedicated to Rural Development.

Priority 1: Research and Innovation;

Priority 2: Enterprise Growth;

Priority 3: Urban Regeneration; and

Priority 4: Rural Development.

Under Priority 4, there are specific eligible rural target areas announced before each round who can apply for circa £6 million annually. The main objectives of Priority 4 are:

- Strengthening rural industries and diversification
  - Sector-wide diversification strategies
  - Development of new sources of supply and production processes; and
  - Supporting development of key shared services to underpin rural diversification
- Development of local ICT and learning facilities
- Strategies to improve educational access
- Start-up of community transport initiatives.

For the first round of ERDF applications, East Lothian is amongst the eligible target areas. Although the emphasis of the LEADER strategy is firmly based on local, community-based action, many of the overall areas of interest such as diversification, supply chains and production methods, ICT, and community transport are the same as in the ERDF Programme, although mainstream ERDF funding supports large-scale projects with a minimum project size of £200,000<sup>1</sup>. As a European Structural Fund initiative, LEADER activity cannot be mach-funded by any other European Structural Fund Programme, and duplication need to be avoided.

Although partnership is encouraged, it is not required under mainstream funding and the overall focus of ERDF is on supporting more strategic projects, potentially covering more than one area. It will be necessary for East Lothian LEADER projects (and in future, potentially also for Midlothian projects) to demonstrate their complementarity and difference through their local focus, and smaller scale of initiatives.

### **Lowlands and Uplands ESF Programme 2007-2013**

With regard to the new Lowlands and Uplands ESF Programme 2007-2013, there are three priorities:

- Priority 1: Progressing into Employment;
- Priority 2: Progressing through Employment; and
- Priority 3: Improving Access to Lifelong Learning.

Again, the minimum project size threshold is £200,000. The ESF Programme identifies four key target groups:

- Hardest-to-reach;
- Those with multiple disadvantage;
- Young people at risk, especially NEET; and
- Employers recruiting from these groups.

The ESF Programme is working closely with the Community Planning Partnerships, particularly through Priority 1, which has a number of eligible areas. East Lothian and Midlothian are currently not identified as an eligible area.

However, Priority 2 and Priority 3 do not have any geographical restriction and can support projects anywhere in the Programme area. Both priorities contain action areas, which potentially present a thematic overlap with the LEADER Programme, particularly with regard to 'capacity building of social enterprises' (Priority 2) and 'development of new methods of giving access to learning, and learning materials' (Priority 3).

As with the ERDF Programme, LEADER's complementarity with the ESF Programme is likely to be established through its local focus and smaller scale of initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the annual average of total eligible costs of a project.

## REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

### East Lothian and Midlothian Rural Economic Strategy/Refresh of East Lothian and Midlothian Rural Economic Strategy

Previous rural development work has been largely set within the context of the above strategies, which presented four strategic objectives for the rural area:

- Cultivating and sustaining local businesses;
- Achieving the rural tourism potential;
- Optimising agriculture and its contribution; and
- Developing the community contribution.

The strategy has been refreshed in 2007 and was largely confirmed in its objectives by the assessment of statistical evidence and stakeholder input described elsewhere in this document.

The refreshed strategy highlights the following issues, which have become more pronounced since 2001. These are:

- Climate change presenting challenges at the local level regarding the improvement of the environment and combating the causes and effects of climate change;
- Lack of affordable housing, while at the same time the need to create local employment to encourage people to stay locally; and
- Continuous outmigration of the workforce increases the need to create businesses in the countryside and innovative solutions.

Essentially, the Local Development Strategy for LEADER is the document that replaces the previous strategy and the new LEADER programme will still be able to contribute well to all four objectives of the existing rural economic strategy by, for example:

- Providing access to mentoring services to new business start-ups;
- Establishing and supporting business networks specifically for rural entrepreneurs;
- Supporting tourism product development, promotion and marketing;
- Building on the existing networking within and between sectors as a means of supporting these elements;
- The development of specialist and niche market agricultural products;
- The development of short chain marketing approaches, such as farmers markets;
- Investigating the potential for farm based tourism with strong activity links as a basis of a complementary tourism product;
- Improving transport and communication links across and between rural communities to enhance access to services, opportunities, community cohesion and identity;
- Developing links and networks between rural communities; and
- Encouraging the development of joint approaches and shared resources.

In addition, through its locally-based partnership approach LEADER will also be able to contribute to the three horizontal themes of the joint strategy, such as transport, networking, and communication.

LEADER activity will complement the strategy through a number of additional characteristics, particularly via its focus on:

- Innovative approaches to local rural services;
- The provision of community facilities for young people and other target groups, such as women;
- Youth and young entrepreneurs;
- Sustainability, particularly in the way of environmental improvements, transport, and green product development; and
- Capacity building regarding local governance and ownership issues.

### **Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015**

Transport and land use are the main issues addressed by the structure plan, with planning matters related to strategic land use (over a 10 year period) being the main purpose of the plan. The structure plan does not address all economic sectors (such as tourism, and ICT), but is an important source regarding business location, cluster developments, and development of the countryside, areas of environmental/historic interest and strategic transportation matters.

The Structure Plan acknowledges the importance of economic development in the Lothians and seeks to support the local economy and to reduce dependence on out-commuting.

With regard to the new LEADER strategy, the following structure plan aspects are amongst the most relevant:

- The allocation of land for a total of 7,000 more housing units have been allocated to towns in East Lothian (4,800) and Midlothian (2,200). In connection of these allocations, housing developers have to address any deficiencies in local community facilities and amenities arising as a direct result of their development proposals;
- In terms of key transport investment proposals for East Lothian include a tram network extension to Musselburgh, improved rail services to North Berwick and Dunbar, and the Musselburgh Parkway Station. Investment proposals for Midlothian include a tram network extension to Dalkeith and/or Penicuik, the Waverly rail route and a number of bus priority routes and road improvements;
- The plan also encourages the development of sustainable forms of transport, including safer routes to school, cycling to school, which requires that a high priority is given to safe and convenient travel by these road users;
- The policies for the environment in the structure plan aim to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development and a wide number of important issues regarding environmental/historic sites are mentioned. Local plans should include relevant policies;
- Acceptable countryside development includes agriculture, horticulture, forestry and countryside recreation/tourism and diversification of the rural economy, maintaining communities and services. Any such development must be well-integrated into the rural landscape.

- The development of renewable energy resources will be supported where this can be achieved in an environmentally acceptable manner.

In the above mentioned areas, LEADER activities will have to consult with the Local Plans in order to establish fit and consent with current legislation.

## **EAST LOTHIAN**

### **East Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2004-2007**

In its strategic statement, the East Lothian Council Corporate Plan identifies three corporate objectives:

- Ensure we deliver quality services in a quality environment and contribute to the sustainable development of the area;
- Strive to address and reduce deprivation, disadvantage and inequality within the local community; and
- Work with others to achieve more for the area and act as the natural focus of civic life in East Lothian, giving leadership and voice to the community's concerns, ensuring its views influence local, national and if necessary international agencies.

LEADER activities will provide a good match with the three objectives of the Corporate Plan. In addition to sustainable development and its focus on particular target groups, such as the young and women, LEADER contributes specifically well with the third objective regarding to community involvement, capacity building, and innovative ways of governance.

The Corporate Plan feeds into many thematic local strategies, the most relevant to LEADER are briefly reviewed in the following sections. A new Corporate Plan is being developed and this will be reflected in the annual review of the Local Development Strategy and Business Plan.

### **East Lothian Economic Strategy**

The East Lothian Economic Strategy has five strategic objectives:

- Objective 1: Creating a modern tourism and leisure offer (actions include: strategic marketing, golf sector action, and development of a day-trip/weekend leisure package);
- Objective 2: Growing the knowledge economy in East Lothian (actions include: strategy development for QMU campus, and promoting Musselburgh/Criaghall and Blindwells as premier locations for knowledge-based businesses);
- Objective 3: Growing the business base and promoting enterprise (actions include: improved promotion; targeted support for high-end tourism/leisure-oriented businesses, and develop dedicated workspace/studios for start-up and micro-businesses);
- Objective 4: Developing skills, attracting talent (targeted action: develop strong links between the new QMU university and the local economy); and
- Objective 5: Promoting sustainable development and quality of life (actions include: energy efficient design and construction, and town centre regeneration).

There is a strong correlation between the new LEADER strategy and the East Lothian Economic Strategy, particularly in the areas of tourism development, training, and business/start up support.

LEADER will add with its community and local focus to the objectives of the economic strategy.

### **East Lothian Tourism Plan 2007-10 (Draft April 07)**

The draft Tourism Plan identifies four key potential strengths in relation to Scotland's key tourism markets:

- Golf;
- Active/outdoor activity;
- Food and drink; and
- Wildlife and touring.

Within those areas, the plan seeks to promote particularly green tourism, to increase leisure tourism as well as overnight stays, and to encourage operators to invest in skill development and to join collective representation in marketing of East Lothian. All these areas relate well to the identified activities under the new LEADER programme, mainly with regard to the promotion and development of sustainable tourism involving the outdoors and joint marketing action and networking between tourism operators.

The East Lothian Tourism Action Plan 07-10 aims to increase tourism by 50% by the year 2015, in line with the national strategy tourism framework for change.

### **East Lothian Natura 2000**

Designated Natura 2000 sites, including Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Local Wildlife Sites are distributed throughout the LEADER area in East Lothian, including an almost full coverage of the coastal area.

A previous Natura 2000 Scoping Study published by The Scottish Executive's Central Research Unit, found clear links between the natural heritage interest and a variety of socio-economic activities, and the study includes examples of innovative community development initiatives which depend on natural heritage values. However, it emphasises constraints of such developments mainly due to small rural populations, lack of skills and/or infrastructure, match funding, and the fragility of some types of natural heritage or culture or the 'wilderness' experience which visitors are seeking.

The study suggests that tourism development based on the natural heritage offers great potential and identifies considerable potential for collaborative work between agencies, NGOs and local communities to promote such developments.

LEADER and its core principles of partnership, networking, collaborative work, and sustainable development matches the requirements of NATURA 2000 well ensuring that designated NATURA 2000 sites will be respected and their potential development carefully integrated into socio-economic activity.

### **East Lothian Community Planning Partnership - Community Plan 2007-2016**

The new LEADER strategies are required to be firmly grounded in the strategies being pursued by Community Planning Partnerships in their area.

The East Lothian Community Planning Partnership was established in 1999, bringing together a range of agencies in partnership 'Working Together for a Better East Lothian'.

The current Community Plan identifies core priority areas over the next 10 years working towards a 2020 Vision for East Lothian. The priorities are:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing;
- Keep our environment clean and green;
- Help build safer communities;
- Raise educational attainment;
- Encourage enterprise and skills; and
- Promote healthy living and social care.

In addition to the core principles of partnership work, engagement with local communities, which are shared by both ELCCP and LEADER, there are a number of specific target areas, where joint project activity might develop well in future, for example:

- Promote responsible access and management of the outdoors;
- Sustainable network of paths to enable access for all;
- Support new business start ups;
- Develop new/existing tourism products;
- Increase confidence and skills of individuals and groups from a broad range of communities to participate in local and community activities; and
- Increase participation levels and competencies of young people from specific priority groups in community learning.

The new LEADER strategy will be able to contribute well towards a range of the performance targets of the Community Plan.

### **East Lothian Community Planning - Regeneration Outcome Agreement, Annual Report 2006/07**

Based on the Community Regeneration Fund and Community Voices Programme, the work of the East Lothian Community Planning Partnership (ELCCP) focuses on the areas of Tranent and Prestonpans following the results of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2004 which identified these areas as being within the 20% of most deprived areas of Scotland.

In its Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA), the ELCCP has the following regeneration objectives:

- Building strong safe and attractive communities;
- Getting people into work;
- Improving Health;
- Raising educational attainment; and
- Engaging young people.

The Annual Report 2006/07 of the ROA shows that much of the work has focused on engaging and working with young people. It also indicates that good achievements have been made against performance targets.

Sourcing match-funding for initiatives is identified as an ongoing concern in light of limited Council budgets.

Although the Annual Report identifies a range of match funding sources, LEADER+ has not been mentioned. The emphasis on connecting the new LEADER activity with the ROA could, therefore, represent an opportune prospect for both sides to combine financial sources and jointly work on shared themes such as young people, improving transport, skills and training, and innovative approaches to local rural services in the two target areas.

The engagement with a wide range of community groups and representatives, and partnership working are further shared principles of the ROA and LEADER.

### **East Lothian Community Planning - Draft Community Engagement Strategy, Aug. 2007**

Recognised as a core requirement of community planning, the community engagement strategy identifies the following priorities areas for action:

- Strengthen and extend community planning structures and mechanisms so that people can get involved wherever and however is most appropriate for them;
- Increase the involvement of all communities, including children and young people;
- Build the capacity of management, staff, community leaders and groups and individuals in community engagement; and
- Increase the co-ordination of efforts in community engagement, sharing experiences, knowledge, skills, resources and funds.

The above priority action areas of the Community Engagement Strategy corresponds exactly to the core principles of LEADER. However, community-based work achieved through LEADER+ so far has not been referred to in the strategy, signifying that the new LEADER partnership will have to strengthen links and close connections. The LAG membership and management structure of LEADER should identify clearly how the relationship is put in place.

## **MIDLOTHIAN**

### **Economic Strategy for Midlothian (1998-2008)**

Amongst the five key objectives of the Economic Strategy for Midlothian, the creation of a quality environment, and the promotion of regeneration encompass development themes, which are closely related to those proposed by the new LEADER strategy.

Key development themes under the environmental objective are:

- Creating of quality business environment;
- Continuing environmental renewal and upgrade of town and village centres;
- Improvements to visitor attractions and heritage; and
- Improving the image of Midlothian by improving gateway locations and strategic routes.

These themes correspond well to eligible project LEADER activity, such as improving access to areas of high environmental amenities, tourism activities, and implementing innovative approaches to local rural services.

In terms of the promotion of regeneration, key economic development themes, which match those of LEADER include:

- Encouraging active community involvement; and
- Influencing/supporting public transport provision to enable access to opportunity.

The remaining strategy objectives regarding 'company base', 'work force', and 'infrastructure', whilst relevant and inclusive of LEADER objectives, including issues concerning supporting business start-up, skills development, and improving transport, are more focused on larger company development, and industrial property.

### **Midlothian Economic Development Framework and Supplementary Report (2007)**

Focusing on integrated economic development and the creation of 10,000 new jobs in Midlothian by 2020, the following key priorities have been outlined:

- To create a lifelong learning environment to enable people to achieve the workforce skills, qualifications and experience required for a modern local economy;
- To develop Midlothian as a place to do business in a competitive but sustainable way; and;
- To support enterprise.

Similar to the economic strategy, LEADER objectives match best the Midlothian Economic Development Framework regarding the aims to create jobs, start-up businesses, and to develop sustainable, green business initiatives.

### **Midlothian Tourism Action Plan 2007-2010**

In line with the Scottish targets to increase tourism revenue by 50% by 2015, the Midlothian Tourism Action Plan seeks to improve the range and quality of products available, and promote the Midlothian countryside to attract higher spend visitors.

LEADER will be able to contribute to all major development areas outlined by the Action Plan, including:

- Enhancing the visitor experience through the provision of information;
- Expanding into the business/conference market;
- Improved promotion and awareness raising of events, festivals and cultural activities;
- Improving accommodation provision throughout Midlothian, ensuring excellent service levels and participation in the Green Tourism Business Scheme;
- Improving access to the existing tourism product;
- Raising awareness of available visitor attractions and considering joint promotions; and
- Optimising benefits to the tourism sector of currently planned infrastructure improvements.

## **Midlothian Employability Strategy 2007-2010 (Draft)**

Co-ordinated through the Midlothian Employment Action Network, which is aligned with the Community Planning Partnership, the Employability Strategy seeks to contribute towards most priorities of the economic strategy and reflects the local delivery of the Scottish national employability framework: Workforce Plus.

The focus on youth and young entrepreneurs, but also the aims to diversify agricultural businesses, create homeworking opportunities and improving access to training courses/materials are LEADER activities which will contribute well to the Midlothian Employability Strategy.

In addition the focus of the LEADER strategy on young people and women has a clear contributory role towards achieving employability objectives highlighted in the strategy.

## **Midlothian Community Learning and Development Partnership Strategy 2005-2008**

LEADER relates closely to all three national priorities for Community Learning and Development, which are:

- Achievement through learning for adults (including ICT);
- Achievement through learning for young people (including engaging with young people enabling them to gain a voice, influence and a place in society); and
- Achievement through building community capacity (including building community capacity and enabling people to develop confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision-making and service delivery).

The Midlothian Community Learning and Development Partnership develops action plans around these priorities and its operating principles include the development of effective working relationships with groups, communities and organisations, sharing existing resources, and avoiding duplication and competition wherever possible. The operating principles further state that work would be targeted at disadvantaged communities in terms of geography and common interest. Assuming that these areas are largely urban, LEADER might be able to play a complementary role with its rural perspective.

## **Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2006)**

The Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan incorporates a number of Action Plans with individual objectives as well as cross cutting issues. One of the key aims is to maintain and increase biodiversity and to raise overall awareness of its importance.

The Biodiversity Action Plan corresponds closely with LEADER and its aim to support sustainable development throughout its range of themes and activities. Particular contribution can be expected in the following areas:

- promote education and learning, building on the natural and historical culture of the area via the access strategy;
- help raise awareness of cultural and natural heritage management needs and conservation to increase enjoyment and learning;
- promote and improve woodland management;
- work with local communities to develop biodiversity projects; and
- raise the awareness of the importance of and opportunities for biodiversity on tourist sites, including golf courses.

## **'Midlothian Moving Forward' Community Plan 2007-2011**

The overall aim of the Midlothian Community Plan is to promote a better quality of life in Midlothian and improve the delivery of services by all the partner agencies.

Four key concepts underline the Community Plan, which correspond well with the key principles of LEADER:

- A strategic vision for the whole area;
- Partnership working;
- Community involvement; and
- Community leadership.

In addition, the three themes of the Community Plan ('economy', 'environment', and 'community and society') provide a good match with LEADER objectives. The Plan has six objectives of which the following are more closely met by LEADER action:

- Maximising business opportunities in Midlothian (including the increase of number of businesses located in the area, increase the start up of businesses, increase the number of visitors, and help businesses improve their environmental performance);
- Conserving and improving Midlothian's environment (including the reduction of Midlothian's ecological footprint, increase satisfaction with woodlands and open spaces, and increase the neighbourhood environmental quality); and
- Improving opportunities for people in Midlothian, including:
  - Increase the proportion of Midlothian-based employees as a percentage of the total working age population
  - Increase the number of parents seeking to return to work who receive appropriate support (including childcare)
  - Support and assist social enterprises
  - Ensure that young people are offered a range of opportunities that will assist their personal development and help them influence community planning
  - Increase the number of visits to leisure centres or libraries; and
  - Increase the levels of active citizenship in Midlothian.

LEADER initiatives will be able to contribute well to all of the above community planning areas, in principle due to the community capacity building objectives, but also in terms of contributing to the actual targets of the Community Plan.

## **Midlothian Social Inclusion Plan 2006-2009 (September 2006)**

As part of the Community Plan, the Social Inclusion Plan defines how Midlothian seeks to address the 29 Scottish Government national social justice milestones and the priorities of the Closing the Opportunities Gap statement.

Although LEADER is not specifically targeting the social justice milestones per se, through its economic development objectives, including the creation of jobs, finding innovative ways of increasing income to rural families, targeting young people and women, and working towards a sustainable rural economy, it is able to contribute indirectly to the Social Inclusion Plan aims.