



Local Development Strategy LEADER 2014-2020



Cynnal y Cardi: Delivering the LEADER scheme in Ceredigion



Summary



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



Introduction

The Cynnal y Cardi Local Action Group (LAG) has prepared this Local Development Strategy (LDS) document following consultation with the community. The strategy identifies what local people believe is most important for the development of their area, what the challenges and opportunities are. The strategy forms the priorities and potential actions for distributing European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development (EAFRD) to support LEADER activity.

All activity must support and fit with the aims of this LDS and must utilise the seven key features of LEADER:



Ceredigion has a high level of historic, geographical and cultural coherence and one which local residents are proud to belong to. The Cynnal y Cardi LEADER scheme will capitalise and strengthen on these assets through developing a selection of LEADER actions. Ceredigion is blessed with an abundance of unspoilt coastline, uplands, cultural heritage, biodiversity assets and resilient communities. On the other hand, the people of Ceredigion experience some of the highest levels of worklessness, as well as the second lowest wages in Wales at the outset of the programme. In its socio-economic indicators Ceredigion is not entirely typical of rural Wales.

The census data for 2011 shows Ceredigion's population structure is ageing more rapidly than most other areas in Wales, an issue compounded by the falling numbers of residents of a working age. Also in decline is the number of Welsh Speakers at 47.35%, as opposed to 51% in previous Census. Outward migration of young people to the cities and low wage rates - seventh lowest local authority in Great Britain (with a mean average of £452.3 gross weekly earnings).

Progress has been made during the 2007-2013 RDP Programme on developing a successful model in engaging communities to support Ceredigion's rural communities. It has been a vehicle by which this type of funding has been used to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, promote the area's rich culture and heritage and has promoted active and empowered communities, by working with them to seek solutions to local issues.

The experience of implementing LEADER activities in this programme has influenced some of the approaches outlined below and in the Intervention Logic Table but furthermore this strategy also identifies further opportunities for local innovation, partnership working within destination areas and more network and cooperation between LAG's.

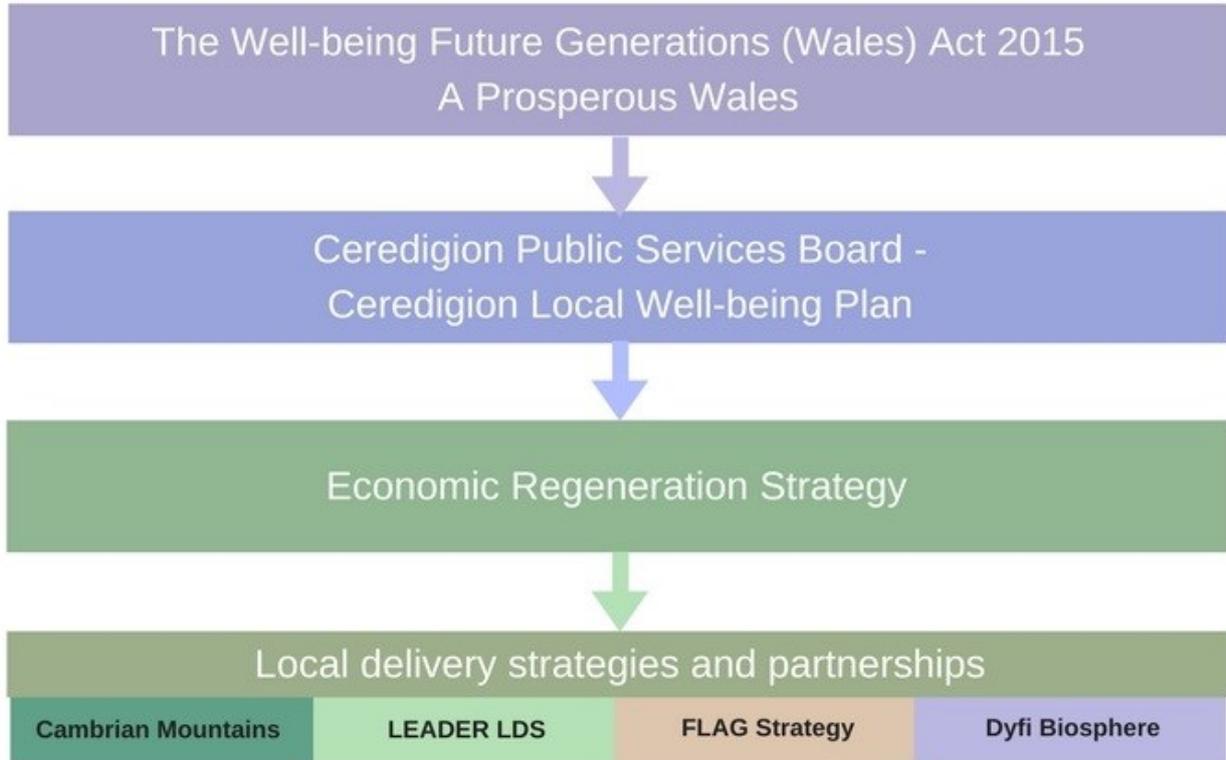
Ceredigion SWOT Analysis

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ High quality environment. ◇ Strong social capital. ◇ Cultural and linguistic identity. ◇ High potential quality of life. ◇ Established tourism product. ◇ Loyal, well qualified/skilled and flexible workforce with low labour costs. ◇ Substantial higher education / research sector. ◇ Established population. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Peripheral to main economic centres with ICT & Transport infrastructure often inadequate. ◇ Higher costs to trade, provide services and to live. ◇ Labour and skills shortages. ◇ Low productivity and incomes with high % of public sector employees. ◇ Lack of community capacity. ◇ Image and perception. ◇ Low population density. |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Improving access to and exploitation of IT. ◇ Growing community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities. ◇ Destination management approach to tourism and developing sense of place. ◇ Optimising land management in the upland areas to increase incomes. ◇ Continued population change through migration, with net out-migration of young people and net in-migration in middle adulthood. ◇ Strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area. ◇ Cross border partnership working to develop collaborative approaches that will benefit the rural economy. ◇ Increase opportunities for workforce development incl. staff training, skills acquisition, apprenticeships, and better transport to access the workplace and training. ◇ Utilise the natural environment and landscape of the area. ◇ Facilitation of a substantially knowledge-based economy to support new and innovative opportunities and develop & strengthen short supply chains to yield optimum benefit for businesses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ EU changes / Government reorganisation, centralisation, which is a threat to rural communities. ◇ Demographic change. Out-migration of young and qualified resulting in a declining working age population. Projected rise in older people's population groups over the next decade resulting in social exclusion and erosion of social capital. ◇ Climate change - the greater likelihood in future years of extreme weather events such as flooding. ◇ Declining number of businesses. ◇ Pressure on public services due to measures to reduce public debt, such as reduced spending on welfare and reduction of other public sector budgets. ◇ Affordability of living due to low labour costs and long-term rises in transport and heating fuel costs. ◇ Problems with accessibility to a range of services. ◇ The location of Ceredigion on the periphery of Wales and the UK and the EU centres. |

Strategic Aims and Objectives

There is a key strategic relationship between Ceredigion's LDS and the Ceredigion Public Services Board-**Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan**.

The following chart shows the relationships:



The second and equally important component is the “Our Livelihoods, Our Economic Regeneration Strategy”.

The strategy goes on to build on these strengths through five thematic areas:



It is clear from the focus of these five areas that all are relevant to the LEADER scheme and the LDS has been designed to deliver against each of the thematic areas identified.

The LDS guidance requires choices to be made and for the LDS to focus on delivery of particular objectives within the local strategic frameworks. The strong match between the LDS and the Economic Regeneration Strategy show that there is a great degree of complementarity. This is clearly related to the strongly rural nature of Ceredigion, and the fact that wider economic regeneration is firmly anchored in the county's rural resources.

The LEADER scheme draws its local strategic focus from "fellow travellers" in the local strategic sense; these include the Cambrian Mountains, the Dyfi Biosphere and the Cardigan Bay FLAG. The development of the LDS has drawn on each of these strategies and partnerships in the development of its vision and objectives. These are set out in the following five thematic areas.

LDS Strategy

The strategy mobilises the knowledge and resources of local actors from the public, private and community and voluntary sector, which come together to form the LAG. They form the basis for facilitating local decision-making on strategic priorities and on the use of resources to implement the strategy.

A. Utilising the Natural Environment and Landscape

One of Ceredigion's main assets is its high quality environment. It boasts a rich variety of landscape stretching from the coastline of Cardigan Bay to the Cambrian Mountains and from the Dyfi in the north to the Teifi Valley in the south. The natural environment has been identified as a potential economic driver for the county and LEADER activity proposes to build on this opportunity.

The four geographical areas previously noted will be prioritised, but not exclusively, as areas where LEADER activity will be operated and will focus on:

- ◇ Protecting the county's environmental assets through sustainable management;
- ◇ Developing a destination management approach to tourism and developing sense of place;
- ◇ Exploring opportunities for accessing the county's natural and built heritage;
- ◇ Supporting communities to explore the potential for renewable energy in Ceredigion.

B. Building a Knowledge Based Economy

Ceredigion has a strong research and educational foundation, across many sectors e.g. Aberystwyth University including IBERS – specifically Pwllpeiran Upland Research Station, University of Wales Trinity St. David and The National Library of Wales. There is real potential to exploit these knowledge hubs for business-university networking and collaboration. LEADER activity will focus on:

- ◇ Improving links with Universities and research sector to develop business hubs through facilitating workplace development/incubator units and mentoring;
- ◇ Support pilot initiatives and research on new and innovative opportunities for pre commercial development in all sectors;
- ◇ Develop opportunities for businesses in Ceredigion to access data that will help them identify market trends, market data, analysis of market information and research insights;
- ◇ Strengthening local supply chains through facilitating joint actions.

Supporting mechanisms already exist through Food Centre Wales and the Cywain programme which allows individuals within the agricultural sector and food to access support to develop new products and access new markets. In this particular sector activity within this LDS will help support new product development where a gap currently exists and where there is a barrier to those who wish to add value to their products. This objective within the strategy therefore completes the support for those in the industry to react to market needs and develop new products to test the market.

C. Making the Most of Culture and Heritage

Ceredigion has a strong cultural and linguistic identity. With a number of key distinctive heritage locations, numerous native breeds and well established cultural activities in the county, there are opportunities for strengthening the role of culture and heritage to become an economic driver. The small decline in the number of Welsh speakers in the latest census has highlighted the need for increased use of the Welsh language to create a stronger identity. LEADER activity will focus on:

- ◇ Promotion of innovative economic activities that are developed from a direct relationship with the Welsh language and culture;
- ◇ To develop community based local sense of place initiatives that promote local distinctiveness and celebrate local themes;
- ◇ Develop coordinated marketing strategies and promotional tools to promote culture and heritage.

D. Adding Value to Our Primary Products

At 1,800km² Ceredigion's scale and its sparsity of population ensure that we have an abundance of primary resources to draw on, on land and at sea.

Previous experience from the Cynnal y Cardi LEADER project has highlighted that there are opportunities for building on Ceredigion's primary products. The county has a strong agricultural and forestry sector and work was done with the forestry sector in terms of developing training opportunities for volunteers, supporting marketing initiatives to promote woodland opportunities. LEADER activity will focus on:

- ◇ Developing support for innovation of pre-commercial product development that allows access to new market opportunities at a local level.
- ◇ Developing a network of producers to identify new ways of utilising natural products.
- ◇ Developing networking opportunities between individuals and businesses in all sectors.
- ◇ Supporting the development of themed tourism activities e.g. food.

E. Developing Our People and Organisations

Creating more resilient communities – whether geographical or communities of interest and individuals is a key aim of LEADER. The changing face of our economy with ongoing financial pressure on public services means that there are opportunities for communities to innovate and explore initiatives that can support local non-statutory services. The LDS also provides the opportunity to grow capacity of individuals and groups in all sectors in order to develop skills and foster capacity building to develop local initiatives. LEADER activity will focus on:

- ◇ Researching the role of communities in the delivery of local non-statutory services.
- ◇ Exploring opportunities for piloting local non-statutory services and preparing business cases for asset transfer of non-statutory services and assets.
- ◇ Exploring opportunities for growing community capacity of social enterprises, groups and individuals.

The above thematic areas inform the framework set by Welsh Government ensuring the alignment of LEADER resources to the key priorities. These include:

- Theme 1** Adding value to local identity, cultural and natural resources.
- Theme 2** Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains.
- Theme 3** Exploring new ways of providing non statutory local services.
- Theme 4** Renewable energy at community level.
- Theme 5** Exploitation of Digital Technology.

The consultation process undertaken as part of the preparation of the LDS also informed the prioritisation of the above W.G. themes. The results of the consultations prioritised themes 1 to 3 as being of most importance while themes 4 and 5 were seen as less of a priority but still relevant in terms of the issues facing rural Ceredigion. The priorities under each theme are shown below:

Theme 1: Adding Value to Local Identity and Natural and Cultural Resources

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| Priority 1: To utilise the natural environment and landscape | To increase the economic, social and well-being opportunities generated by Ceredigion's high quality environment. |
| | To develop co-operation actions in the Teifi Valley, Cambrian Mountains and Dyfi Biosphere areas based on utilising the natural environment and landscape. |
| | To encourage the sustainable management of the natural environment and landscape of the area. |
| | To strengthen the skills of the workforce in the sector and provide volunteer training opportunities . |
| Priority 2: To strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area | To increase the use of the Welsh language by the people of Ceredigion. |
| | To increase and consolidate Welsh language skills amongst the people of Ceredigion. |
| | To promote economic activities that will strengthen the position of the Welsh language. |
| | To celebrate and promote Ceredigion's rich social and cultural heritage. |
| Priority 3: Apply a Destination Management approach to tourism and sense of place in Ceredigion | To foster an environment of networking between community and business sectors and destination management partners to share best practice and resources. |
| | To develop innovative products and collaborative initiatives to promote the Teifi Valley, Cambrian Mountains and Dyfi Biosphere as destinations. |
| | To stimulate the growth of locally based clusters to deliver tourism initiatives using the natural and cultural resources of the area as an asset. |
| | To develop a Ceredigion focused customer service programme. |
| Priority 4: To adapt to Ceredigion's population change, with net out-migration of young people and net in-migration of middle adulthood | To make the tourism sector more attractive to younger people. |
| | To foster integration between different age demographics to support sustainable Welsh-speaking neighbourhoods and community cohesion. |
| | To encourage greater engagement between different age groups to promote the transfer skills. |
| Priority 5: To grow community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities | To explore business opportunities arising from service needs of the ageing population. |
| | To increase support to groups and organisations for the development of locally based sustainable initiatives. |

Theme 2: Facilitating Pre-commercial Development, Business Partnerships and Short Supply Chains

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| Priority 1: To facilitate a substantially knowledge-based economy to support new and innovative opportunities | To access market leading intelligence that will allow Ceredigion businesses to access data in order to support growth in the private sector. |
| | To foster an environment of networking between community and business sectors to share best practice and resources. |
| | To improve access by businesses and entrepreneurs to the Higher Education and research and development sector to support new and innovative opportunities. |
| | To foster innovative pre-commercial product development that will support accessing new markets. |
| Priority 2: To strengthen short supply chains to yield the optimum benefit for businesses | To strengthen local supply chains within Ceredigion. |
| Priority 3: To increase opportunities for workforce development | To encourage leadership skills to grow. |
| | To upskill Ceredigion's employment workforce. |
| | To support initiatives that assist individuals to access work, training, volunteering opportunities and other services. |

Theme 3: Exploring New Ways of Providing Non-statutory Local Services

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| Priority 1: To grow community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities | To build the capacity and increase the confidence of individuals/groups to identify community development opportunities. |
| | To improve access to information and fostering community networks. |
| | To improve communication and engagement within communities. |
| | To research the role of communities and other delivery partners in the delivery of local non-statutory services and support for asset transfer of non-statutory services and |
| | To identify innovative approaches to service delivery in rural areas. |
| | To pilot activities that improve the well-being of individuals and communities. |

Theme 4: Renewable Energy at Community Level

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| Priority 1: Need to grow community capacity to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities | To facilitate the pre-development work for community based renewable energy initiatives and to identify opportunities for preparing communities to respond to climate change. |
| Priority 2: To reduce the impact of long term rises in living costs | To develop opportunities for sharing resources and identifying new cost and environmentally efficient initiatives. |

Theme 5: Exploitation of Digital Technology

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| Priority 1: To improve access to and exploitation of I.T. | To improve utilisation of digital technology by individuals, businesses and communities to promote sustainable rural economic growth. |
| | To ensure digital inclusion for people in rural communities to combat social exclusion and provide improved access to services. |
| | To exploit the opportunities for digital trading by businesses and increase the productivity, diversity and efficiency of businesses in rural areas. |

Monitoring and Evaluation

The LAG considers the outputs - results - impacts will provide a sound basis for achieving its vision across the whole of Ceredigion. LAG discussions focused on fostering and building on a “can do” attitude by communities, institutions, businesses and individuals within this rural county. LEADER activities within Ceredigion will focus on "what's local matters", taking a grass roots, innovative and ambitious approach to any developments. It is therefore important that the LEADER scheme recognises and records the ‘journey’ or the process taken by those individuals, businesses and communities during the course of time as well as the more concrete based outputs and results. Therefore the data on “how” as well as “what” will be monitored and captured to evidence the achievements of the LEADER scheme.

The outputs are set out as follows:

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| Number of feasibility studies | 10 |
| Number of networks established | 8 |
| Number of jobs safeguarded through supported projects | 1.5 |
| Number of pilot activities undertaken/supported | 38 |
| Number of community hubs | 1 |
| Number of information dissemination actions/promotional and/or marketing activities to raise awareness of LDS and/or its projects | 122 |
| Number of stakeholders engaged | 230 |
| Number of participants supported | 473 |

The LAG has also identified a number of additional outputs to be collated during the programme period, which includes:

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| Number of communities engaged |
| Number of groups engaged |
| Number of young people participating in the project |
| Number of women participating in the project |
| Number of Welsh speakers participating in the project |
| Number of elderly people participating in the project |
| Number of individuals with disabilities participating in the project |
| Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability |
| Number of consultation exercises |
| Number of cluster groups / informal networks |
| Number of LAG members participating in training |
| Number of staff participating in training |

The LAG’s approach to **evaluation** will be strategic, establishing a strategy of evidence collection, setting the mid-term and final points for formal external evaluation.