



Rural Renaissance



South West  
England



# **Rural Renaissance Programme 2005 - 2009 Evaluation Report**

**July 2009**





# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Some Barriers to Achieving Outcomes</b>	<b>24</b>
Key Outputs	2		
Key Outcomes	3		
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	<b>25</b>
West of England Rural Renaissance Programme	4		
Rural Economic Strategy	5		
Eligibility Criteria for Projects	5	<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	<b>26</b>
		Topic guide for project interviews	
<b>Background</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>APPENDIX 2</b>	<b>28</b>
West of England Sub-Region	6	Topic guide for staff, Board and partner interviews	
West of England Partnership	7		
West of England Rural Renaissance Initiative Programme	7	<b>APPENDIX 3</b>	<b>30</b>
RRI Delivery Plan Strategic Objectives	8	Outline of funded projects	
		<b>APPENDIX 4</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>The Evaluation – Purpose and Focus of the Work</b>	<b>9</b>	Final Programme output data	
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>Findings</b>	<b>11</b>		
Observations on the Monitoring of Programme Outputs	11		
Reflections on the Strategic Design of the RRI Programme	12		
WoE RRI Management Change	14		
West of England Partnership Funded Projects	17		
Additional Outcomes	23		



# Executive Summary

The research for this largely qualitative evaluation of the West of England Rural Renaissance Programme commissioned by the West of England Rural Renaissance Partnership Board; has been carried out between February -June 2009 and follows a presentation of key findings and recommendations at a celebration event on June 18th 2009 at Radstock Museum.

The Programme was originally funded for three years by South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and partners to £2.7 million.

**The aims of the programme were to strengthen economic links to overcome rural disadvantage and develop economic inclusion by:**

- ▶ increasing business productivity and employment;
- ▶ creating new rural workspace;
- ▶ increasing access to ICT;
- ▶ enhancing networking and partnership working;
- ▶ ensuring rural development.

**The agreed focus of this evaluation was to research and report on:**

- ▶ the impact of mid-programme management changes;
- ▶ partnership working; benefits and good practice;
- ▶ project benefits, innovation and good practice.

The evaluators used a combined methodology of in-depth desk research and 1:1 interviews with key stakeholders. Interviews were face-to-face with most project staff and by telephone with programme management staff, board members and partners.

The report gives detailed background to the West of England Rural Renaissance Programme and the partnership. It sets out the rationale and methodology for the evaluation and gives a brief review with key learning points of the monitoring of outputs by the programme staff and projects. In section five, findings under the three main evaluation focus points above are set out with key learning points. This is followed in section six by a summary of barriers to achieving outcomes with suggestions and recommendations in section seven.

## Key Outputs

Despite considerable constraints and difficulties with the roll-out of the programme in the early stages which are discussed below, the WoE RRI Programme achieved 97% of approved spend and exceeded a number of key targets as illustrated below:

<b>Extract from SWRDA Outputs 2007-2009 Totals</b>		
<b>Output Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Employment support - numbers of people assisted to get a job</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Business creation- no of new businesses created &amp; demonstrating growth after 12 months</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Business support No assisted to improve performance, the assistance being a minimum of at least 2 hours</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>349</b>
<b>Regeneration infrastructure –Public investment levered (£)</b>	<b>£446.8K</b>	<b>£568.5K</b>
<b>Skills- no of people assisted in their skills development as a result of RDA programmes</b>	<b>1939</b>	<b>2846</b>

During a recession it was a particularly good achievement to secure greater public investment leverage than planned for. (see appendix 4 for full output table)





# Key Outcomes

## Mid-way management team:

- ▶ the mid-way change in management was wholly positive;
- ▶ re-engaged the Board and rural projects;
- ▶ prior experience of staff meant a quick introduction of systems and infrastructure;
- ▶ 1:1 support to projects was vital;
- ▶ a cohesive project portfolio was achieved;
- ▶ spend targets were almost achieved in a short time.

## The West of England RR Partnership

- ▶ the requirements of the RRI programme enabled 4 unitary authorities and their rural partners to begin to work together effectively;
- ▶ more effective resource management;
- ▶ improved skill-sharing and learning among the partnership;

## The projects

- ▶ RRI enabled rural communities to develop projects that met their local needs and achieve long-term ambitions;
- ▶ RRI fostered business skills and expertise in rural communities;
- ▶ RRI supported the growth of rural social enterprises;
- ▶ RRI delivered 3 village shops, a community radio station, a maker's collective, a cycling and walking route, local food networks, rural skills training and business services.

## Some other outcomes

- ▶ RRI strengthened some rural networks and kick-started others;
- ▶ RRI provided volunteering opportunities in rural communities;
- ▶ RRI attracted attention to rural areas and issues in the WoE, previously viewed by central government as an urban area.

## Good practice and key learning

- ▶ a local champion or social entrepreneur is vital to rural projects' success and sustainability;
- ▶ community groups are essential to local development;
- ▶ rural networks of collaboration and exchange at strategic and operational level provide vital and effective mutual support and access to resources;
- ▶ investment and financial reporting must be tailored to match rural projects' practical needs;
- ▶ human factors for success i.e. key individuals offering professional experience, skills and face-to-face support make all the difference.

## Legacy and sustainability- the future

Share and build on the WoE RRI Partnership and management good practice and learning.

Publish WoE RRI communities case studies to the web site and as a report to inspire others and disseminate innovation and good practice.

Resource the co-ordination of projects' networks and events.

Develop a Rural Champions award scheme to acknowledge and promote the work of social entrepreneurs in rural communities with a cash award for their community project(s).

Invest in phase 2 funding to support rural communities in taking the work of the RRI programme further.





# Introduction

## West of England Rural Renaissance Programme

Rural Renaissance has been one of SWRDA's main rural regeneration initiatives with a £17.9m investment programme for economic development projects in rural areas in the South West region. It was launched in 2002 with the West of England Scheme launched in 2005 and managed by the West of England (WoE) Partnership. The programme was mainly funded by SWRDA who invested £1million, complemented by public and private partner contributions of approx £1.7m.

Modernising Rural Delivery is a Defra funded programme to support more efficient delivery of rural services and productivity. The programme included an investment programme for projects funded in rural areas using the same regional Partnerships network as RRI. SWRDA invested £8m of Modernising Rural Delivery (MRD) funding through Rural Renaissance Delivery Plans and £2.8m through Rural Renaissance Partnerships' MRD stand alone projects.

**Rural Renaissance objectives were prescribed by SWRDA to help rural communities respond to and influence economic change by supporting the development and implementation of sustainable enterprise projects to:**

- ▶ Create prosperity and generate employment
- ▶ Improve delivery and access to services
- ▶ Realise the value of the environment as an economic asset.

The types of projects funded have included business advice, skills development, networking groups, community facilities, rural transport, marketing, research, support staff and rural workspace.

In the West of England the RRI Partnership decided to implement the SWRDA RRI objectives by funding 18 projects across the area. The Partnership selected projects that would strengthen economic links to help overcome rural economic disadvantage, and develop rural economic inclusion through new opportunities and prosperity for rural businesses and communities.



# Rural Economic Strategy

**The WoE Partnership's Rural Renaissance Delivery Plan was informed by the Rural Economic Strategy and its strategic aims include:**

- ▶ Create and safeguard sustainable, quality jobs in rural areas
- ▶ Help people to receive training or re-training to improve their job prospects
- ▶ Support community and social enterprises, local facilities and community groups to deliver and provide services in rural areas.
- ▶ Support schemes that will help rural businesses and improve their viability, including co-operation and collaboration.
- ▶ Help to raise business productivity to achieve a gradual adjustment of the proportions of employment in key rural sectors
- ▶ Seek to boost overall sub regional Gross Value Added (GVA) by supporting the creation of new rural workspace to enable the development of new sectors in rural areas
- ▶ Increase economic inclusion to achieve a measurable increase in the lowest household incomes, particularly in the most deprived rural areas
- ▶ Strengthen rural communities in the West of England through communications and partnership, to achieve more cohesive and economically active rural communities with better ITC and physical access
- ▶ Realise the economic potential of the sub region's rural environment whilst protecting the exceptional quality of the countryside for future generations.

## Eligibility Criteria for Projects

**The Rural Renaissance Initiative's eligibility criteria for projects seeking funding from their local RR Partnerships, included:**

- ▶ Projects located in a deprived rural area or benefitting rural communities.
- ▶ Projects must not have already started, address at least one of the Rural Economic Strategy priorities and one of the Rural Renaissance Priorities.
- ▶ Statutory or voluntary organisation or partnerships can apply for funding.
- ▶ If matched funding is difficult to obtain then funding for up to 50% of the eligible costs may be available - applicants should contribute at least 10% themselves - plus a private/voluntary sector contribution of at least 10%.
- ▶ Other funding and statutory permissions must be confirmed.
- ▶ Open competition for tendering and employment must be used.
- ▶ All building projects must conform to 'Future Foundations' sustainable construction charter.
- ▶ Private sector applicants for renovation of redundant buildings grants (up to 25%) will be subject to State Aid regulations, which restrict levels of public sector support.
- ▶ Projects which have not drawn down funding within 6 months will have their application re-appraised
- ▶ The minimum RRI grant awarded for projects is £5,000.





# Background

## West of England Sub-Region

The West of England is a prosperous area with an excellent quality of life. However, rapid growth means that the sub-region faces increasing pressure on its infrastructure, and there are many neighbourhoods that do not share in its prosperity. Part of the challenge is that the West of England area is perceived by regional government as primarily urban and suburban, rather than rural and semi-rural in character. The presence of Bristol and Bath as rapidly growing urban economies and cultural centres has dominated perceptions of the wider area.

The economy of the West of England provides the largest concentration of business activity in the South West region. It employs over 500,000 persons with about two thirds of this total accounted for by the Bristol urban area, and supports levels of prosperity and rates of expansion above regional and national averages. Commuters from across the West of England travel to workplaces in the Bristol area and to a lesser extent Bath with the sub-region as a whole functioning as a city-region in terms of economic linkages and shopping patterns.

The Bristol urban area accounts for about two-thirds of the employment in the West of England. This reflects the importance of Bristol City Centre and the North Fringe, especially for financial and business services, public administration, retailing and leisure; and for the North Fringe, the importance of aerospace and advanced engineering.

(West of England Draft Annual Economic Review 2007, WoE Partnership Office)

However, the sub-region is more diverse than 'a city-region' in terms of its economic and social character. Bristol and Bath sit at the heart of a mosaic of popular coastal and market towns (eg. Weston super Mare and Thornbury), old industrial and mining towns (eg. Radstock and Midsomer Norton) and rural villages with 'local food' producers and processors (eg. East Harptree and Almondsbury).

Demographic and employment data highlights issues for older people and young people disadvantage:

Younger persons age below 24 represent nearly a third of unemployed claimants in the West of England. They are about twice as likely to be unemployed as those in the older age groups.

Population projections for the West of England show a prospect of a large rise in the retirement age-groups. The ageing of the population and the slowdown in the growth of the working age population creates the potential for labour shortages over the future.

(West of England Draft Annual Economic Review 2007, WoE Partnership Office)

## West of England Partnership

The West of England Partnership's purpose is to sustain prosperity and quality of life in the sub-region and to enhance the confidence of public and private investors. Particular attention is being given to transport, planning, waste, housing supply, economic competitiveness, inclusion, culture, leisure, tourism.

The Partnership consists of four unitary authorities: Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and a range of social, economic and environmental partners. A Rural Strategy sub group of the West of England Partnership was in existence at the time and acted as the management mechanism for the WoE RRI Programme which had to be developed from scratch as there was little history of rural development in the West of England.

Since the close of the WofE RRI Programme this subgroup of the West of England Partnership has been disbanded. The main reasons for this were a lack of available funding or control over actions required to further a rural strategy.

## West of England Rural Renaissance Initiative Programme

The Rural Renaissance Partnership Board (RRPB) acts as the delivery partnership of Rural Renaissance in the West of England. The Delivery Plan targets the rural wards of the four Unitary Authorities. The Board oversees: delivery plan management; project approval; developing and reviewing partner commitments to the scheme; monitoring and evaluation; forward strategy.

Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES Council) acts as the Accountable Body for the scheme, administering the grant scheme and projects' casework. It provides financial, legal and management systems for SWRDA, the West of England Partnership and the RRPB. B&NES Council employs a Programme Manager, who has a responsibility to oversee the delivery of the scheme and hosts the Project Support Officer. Following a slow launch in its first year a new management structure and staff were introduced in December 2006, to implement scheme delivery.

During the first two years of the programme appropriate application and appraisal systems were not put in place and no projects were approved. Since early 2007 the new management revised the application and appraisal processes, strengthened and expanded the Partnership and Board, enabling the Scheme to make good progress.





## RRI Delivery Plan Strategic Objectives

The priorities of the West of England Rural Economic Strategy informed the Rural Renaissance Delivery Plan's strategic objectives:

- ▶ Helping to raise business productivity to achieve a gradual adjustment of the proportions of employment in the current key sectors supported by this initiative, namely Food and Drink, Social Enterprise, Tourism, Local Farm Shops, Co-operative Shops and Outlets
- ▶ Seeking to boost overall sub-regional GVA by facilitating the creation of rural workspace
- ▶ To increase economic inclusion
- ▶ To strengthen rural communities in the West of England through communications and partnership
- ▶ To realise fully the economic potential of the sub-region's rural environment whilst protecting it for future generations.
- ▶

In addition to the Rural Renaissance Delivery Plan, the MRD Supplementary Delivery Plan featured complementary objectives:

- ▶ Supporting rural transport
- ▶ Developing mixed community use facilities especially to promote local access to services
- ▶ Community use of broadband
- ▶ Social and economic inclusion in rural areas
- ▶ Developing communities as participants in economic and social inclusion
- ▶ Supply of public transport
- ▶ Village halls and other community centres
- ▶ Accessibility to local services and retail provision
- ▶ Electronic communications
- ▶ Deprivation and economic disadvantage.





# The Evaluation – Purpose and Focus of the Work

This evaluation seeks to identify new information and learning about the processes and outcomes of the WofE RRI scheme and to make recommendations about the dissemination and future application of this learning. It includes research into outcomes and impacts related to scheme management at operational and strategic level by the WofE Partnership, and the wider outcomes of projects for staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and the localities, beyond the purely economic.

The evaluation has been informed by previous monitoring results and evaluation documentation on the West of England RRI. Monitoring and evaluation plans were set out in the delivery plans for the main programme and the roll-over delivery plan.

The West of England Rural Renaissance programme was required to be monitored regularly for achievement against key milestones by the Rural Renaissance Initiative (RRI) Board under the SWRDA guidelines for evaluating projects. Individual projects submitted quarterly returns measuring actual against target delivery. Bath & North East Somerset Council (the Accountable Body) is responsible for ensuring monitoring for individual projects delivering outputs after the funding is complete in 2009/10.

Individual projects were required to be evaluated at the end of each financial year. Outcomes and impact on the regional economy are emphasised in the roll-over delivery plan.

An external evaluation of the South West region's RRI scheme was carried out by Roger Tym & Partners (Exeter), and submitted in July 2008.

## **The report identifies two main dimensions for evaluation:**

- ▶ An Impact Evaluation, which considers the changes in the rural economy as a result of Rural Renaissance and MRD, set against the original objectives.
  - ▶ A Process Evaluation, which looks at the management of the programmes by SWRDA and the Partnerships and how the process has affected impact.
- (Evaluation Of Rural Renaissance and MRD, July 2008, SWRDA)







# Methodology

**This evaluation is a qualitative investigation of the wider impacts and outcomes of RRI in the West of England, to complement previous monitoring and data analysis and report on the Roll-Over Delivery Plan. The evaluation reports on:**

- ▶ Effect of change in management - how the learning from this change has been applied to improve on project management and delivery (or not), at operational and strategic levels.
- ▶ Impact on the RRI of the West of England Partnership since July 2007 - and identification of any benefits and learning to be sustained, disseminated and applied post RRP.
- ▶ The projects' process and achievements - against the stated aims of the RRP.

**Evaluation methods, working closely with the partnership and all stakeholders included:**

- ▶ A review of all monitoring and evaluation from the main programme to help identify any knowledge gaps - to ensure the evaluation builds on and adds new learning rather than replicate or duplicate.
- ▶ A review of monitoring data gathered during the Rollover period, analyse against targets and milestones - identify and disseminate learning (Partnership to supply analysed baseline against final output/outcome).
- ▶ An evaluation of the process, identifying good practice and what could be improved; the wider outcomes/benefits and impact for individuals, groups, partner organisations, rural communities and locations and the West of England of the RRP Project work, against stated aims and objectives in the delivery plan.
- ▶ Face to face and telephone interviews with 10 members of the Partnership and its Board, following a topic guide of questions (appendix 2), to identify outcomes and impacts in relation to Delivery Plan aims and objectives.
- ▶ Face to face and telephone interviews with key individuals from the 18 funded projects, following a topic guide of questions (appendix 1), to identify wider outcomes and impacts in relation to funded projects aims and objectives.
- ▶ Make recommendations on ways to disseminate learning from the Projects' activities and achievements across the target areas /among partner organisations and beyond in order to embed learning into future work (incorporating learning from the 2008 Evaluation).
- ▶ Present key findings and learning to at a celebration event in Radstock on June 18th 2009 attended by all key stakeholders
- ▶ Produce a final report and present findings to the WofE Partnership Board.

The qualitative evaluation work carried out by the Evaluation Trust complements the analysis of baseline data of final output and outcomes undertaken by the Partnership itself.



# Findings

## Observations on the Monitoring of Programme Outputs



The evaluators would have liked to have been able to study a set of reliable baseline data from which project progress and achievements could have been compared with the needs that the programme was designed to address. It was possible only to review achievements against the programme targets which were largely economic.

Individual project teams were required to submit output and spend figures to the programme management team on a quarterly basis and a number of staff reported that the requirements were disproportionate to the level of funding allocated. This diverted their energy and resources from delivering the project. This was particularly the case for capital spend projects.

There is a matrix of project monitoring with a summary of programme lifetime outputs against targets in appendix 4 of this report.

The programme was designed before the current economic recession and rolled out in the middle of it. This could not have been predicted but may affect the longer-term impact on targets such as the number of jobs created and sustained by the programme. The nature of most of the funded projects was such that the extent of the outcomes and longer term impact may not be seen for a number of years.

Out of the ten project monitoring targets 6 were met or exceeded and 4 not quite met. Where targets were not met, the outputs of one project had swung the overall programme monitoring figures. The programme particularly exceeded targets in supporting people to obtain jobs and supporting businesses to improve performance.

Targets were not met for jobs created or safeguarded, and the level of private investment secured. Targets were not met for the number of adults gaining basic skills accreditation as part of the Skills for Life Strategy or for adults gaining Level 2 qualifications. As a number of the projects had only just been launched or not yet launched at the end of the programme funding period these targets may be met or exceeded following a period of full operation.



## Reflections on the Strategic Design of the RRI Programme

Feedback from interviews with the WofE RRIP Accountable Body staff, Board members and partner organisations was unanimous in the observation that the programme design had been too complex in its operational rules and over ambitious in its targets given the limited time scale and funding for projects:

### One respondent commented that:

‘the project was set up to fail and was pushed too hard to spend and meet targets...this put pressure on the relationship between SWRDA and the Board’

### Another respondent commented that:

‘the plan was ambitious with limited funds and a large geographic area to work in.....the RDA’s silo funding caused issues for the RRI team to operate within complex rules which included EU State Aid rules. This created a barrier to supporting some projects... the complexity meant a lack of clarity for projects’

‘unrealistic expectations from the RDA led to the LA’s over- engineering the project. The process needs to be appropriate to the scale of the programme’

Respondents in this group also cited the lack of consideration by SWRDA of the added work required in forming the West of England Rural Renaissance Initiative Partnership into a properly functioning body in order to drive the project. It was reported that there was no history of the four unitary authorities working together in this way to address rural economic issues in the sub-region.

‘ there were four different Local Authorities and four different Local Area Agreements... building a relationship takes time... we were adrift in the West of England on this and SWRDA did not understand this’

‘there is no tradition of rural support in the West of England, it has not been a strategic priority and capacity building among the partnership was essential’

‘there was not enough time for preparation.... the programme tried to run before it could walk’

There was much concern about the requirements for reporting being weighted to economic output targets which ignored the broader outcomes and impacts for individuals and the local community. It is acknowledged that the retrospective and largely qualitative evaluation in this report may capture a great deal of this but interviewees reported a need for recognition of the importance of broader outcomes by SWRDA as the funding body. This was reported by a number of respondents but summed up by one as:

‘ it stifles creativity’ and ‘is set up to control rather than inspire innovation’

## Key learning points

- ▶ Due to the delay between the announcement of a funding stream, the application process and the start of programme delivery, SWRDA need to ensure that strategic objectives of funded programmes are reviewed and revised with delivery and management teams immediately that programme begins work. This will help to ensure that the objectives are appropriate to the capacity of the Board and staff and to the particular history and geographic and economic structures of the sub-region or region.
- ▶ Partnerships require capacity building and time to understand each other's perspectives in order to form strong working relationships and become effective bodies. This is particularly true when new partnerships are formed to work on specific programmes. This work requires adequate resources from funders.
- ▶ Programme monitoring and evaluation requirements need to include collecting information about a broader range of outcomes than the economic in order to capture the full impact of the project work.

## Impact of RRI Eligibility Criteria on Projects

It is important to acknowledge that the Rural Renaissance Initiative was planned then launched in an era of prosperity in July 2005. However, since early 2008 all the English regions' economies have been affected negatively by the recession, including the West of England. The climate of economic downturn influenced the final phase of the Rural Renaissance scheme (2008/9) in this area, impacted by: reduced investor confidence and more limited access to affordable finance; reduced levels of charitable funding available, plus increased competition for funds; falling property and asset values; reduced confidence within the building sector.

The result has been that some of the SWRDA devised eligibility criteria for projects applying for the final phase of Rural Renaissance funding for 2008/9, have placed unforeseen constraints or had negative impacts on funded projects. Criteria which impacted negatively on projects (including those relating to the conversion of redundant rural building into workspaces and new build workspace) identified during project interviews, include:

### Projects:

- ▶ Applicants should contribute at least 10% themselves, plus a private/voluntary sector contribution of at least 10% (if matched funding is difficult to obtain then funding for up to 50% of the eligible costs may be available) – this criteria proved to be challenging for some community and social enterprise projects as affordable finance and charitable funding became more difficult to secure.
- ▶ Other funding and statutory permissions must be confirmed – this criteria proved to be challenging for some projects that applied for the final or extension phase of the RRI in terms of securing rapid confirmation of funding.
- ▶ Projects which have not drawn down funding within 6 months will have their application re-appraised – this criteria presents a short timeframe.

### Conversion of buildings into workspace:

- ▶ The maximum level of grant assistance that would normally be expected to be made available from a Rural Renaissance scheme is 25% - this is a lower % than for other types of projects, taking into account that access to charitable funding for capital build or conversion projects increasingly limited.
- ▶ Applicants are required to ensure that premises are used productively, and maintained to a satisfactory standard for 5 years after the last payment – this criteria does not reflect the recessionary economy.





- ▶ Grants will only be paid in arrears, on the basis of actual expenditure – this criteria resulted in negative cashflow issues, particularly acute for community and social enterprise projects with limited financial flexibility.

### **New build workspace:**

- ▶ Evidence that a Quantity Surveyor has provided detailed costings based on recent plans/specifications/results of the tendering process – this criteria could not accommodate the rapid fluctuations in the building sector, nor delays in the RRI application process, and in some cases precluded potential savings as costs changed.
- ▶ What the contractual details with the builder are, how long the tender will remain valid - this criteria could not accommodate the rapid fluctuations in the building sector, delays in the RRI application process, and in some cases precluded potential savings from increasing supplier competition.
- ▶ Clear milestones before, during and after the main construction phase should be identified – this criteria informed quarterly reporting and payments, a process that lacked flexibility when applied to new build and building conversion projects.
- ▶ Estimated valuation of completed building – this criteria was problematic where property prices and values were uncertain or falling.

## **WoE RRI Management Change**

A number of interviewees from the Board and partner organisations commented that the new management team had inherited a largely negative legacy from the first 18 months of management by the previous team. They had had to put in extra work beyond the stated aims of the programme to repair relationships, re-gain confidence in the programme and rescue it. There was much praise for the new management team's success in this:

'it wasn't going anywhere previously; there was little action....no apparent systems for management'

'It was confusing with a lack of consistency in information'

Feedback from all stakeholders reported that the mid-way change in management had been wholly positive:

'if it had not changed nothing would have been achieved'

'it enabled the programme to move forward positively from stagnation'

'they managed to re-engage the Board and rural projects'

A number of respondents said that the prior experience, knowledge of the sub-region and personal networks of the new management team at Bath & North East Somerset Council (having managed the SRB scheme and Bath Communities Partnership -BCP), had been a significant success factor as it meant that an infrastructure and systems were set up quickly 'against the odds'. This was reported to be a key factor in the project having spent most of the funding and met most of its targets despite the first 18 months had been very challenging. The 'odds' against success being cited as the short time left for the targets and spend to be met and the limited available staff capacity. This was further exacerbated by the conflicting pressures put on the RRI Programme Board. SWRDA were pushing for the project to meet spend targets quickly while at the same time, having signed off the projects in March, the Board did not

receive delegation for revenue funding allocation until July and the Capital funding delegation until October. The RRI Programme staff then had to deal with the frustrations of the projects concerning this delay.

It was also reported that there was a lack of capacity in the management team. The WoE RRI scheme manager was not available full time as she had other responsibilities as Funding and Programmes Manager within Bath and North East Somerset which took significant time away from this programme. At times the two staff were not always available to the programme and a single point of contact could not always be made available to projects. Sometimes queries from projects would be passed to staff not directly connected with the programme who may not have had the knowledge to respond accurately or helpfully.

The experience of Bath and North East Somerset Council in being the Accountable Body for the BCP work, which included allocation of funds to local projects, was also mentioned as having benefited the effectiveness of the programme management and rollout.

The 1:1 support offered by the management team to applicants at all stages of the process from preparing applications, through appraisal to roll-out and reporting, was cited as good practice and a success factor by all partnership respondents:

‘Having the proper documents and procedures in place from day 1 of the new management....and someone to work with all the projects...offering appropriate support was excellent best practice’

It was generally expressed that a ‘good range of projects’ has been achieved, Colliers Way cycle path, Tyntesfield Training Centre, a local radio station, community shops and local food distribution, Rural business centres to support local businesses and a managed designer/makers facility . Section 5.5 below will explore the individual project work and likely impact of the portfolio in greater detail.

The management and appraisal panel have funded projects that were likely to succeed, often having been seeded by local entrepreneurs some time ago; and enabled other existing projects to survive and develop. This meant that the concepts and viability had already been thoroughly researched in most cases.

### **Key learning Points**

- ▶ Outreach services in terms of personal face-to-face advice, guidance and mentoring via 1:1 support, being provided locally in rural communities made all the difference in delivering effective rural business support and training services.
- ▶ This level of support requires adequate resources for all LA's involved in the programme delivery and management.
- ▶ Resources could have been better used if local prior knowledge and experience had been researched and used when drawing up initial programme management models. It is crucial to the success of such programmes to appoint individuals to the management team with the necessary knowledge, experience and participation in or access to local networks. One respondent questioned whether a Community Foundation may have been better placed to manage the grant-making process.
- ▶ The programme and all stakeholders would have benefited from increased management capacity. One respondent suggested four full time staff, an over all manager, outreach worker, finance officer and a full time administrator.



## West of England RRI Partnership

The West of England RRI partnership consists of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and a range of social, economic and environmental partners as listed above in the introduction to this report.

Interviewees among the Board, staff and partner organisations cited as a significant factor in the success or otherwise of the project that this was a new partnership set up to address the requirements of the WoE RRI programme in a sub-region viewed by many as largely urban where support for rural enterprise had not been a strategic priority. One respondent commented that:

‘there were 4 different local Authorities and 4 different local Area Agreements trying to build a relationship.... The WoE partnership were adrift at first and the RDA did not understand this.... we are now working well in partnership and with organisations like the National Farmers Union (NFU) and National Trust (NT)’

The forming of new networks and partnerships was reported to have had a positive effect on resource management through greater skills and knowledge sharing within the rural enterprise communities. This was accompanied by a point expressed by a number of respondents that this network needed to be sustained and the collective skills retained. One Board member commented that:

‘Bringing people together at this level (LAs, public service organisations and others)... opened up dialogue...it helped an appreciation of the aims and objectives of other organisations.’

The change in management was mentioned as having a positive effect on the commitment levels of Board members to the programme. Programme management staff also reported that the new Board, particularly the Chair had been excellent in mentoring appraisal panel members and in supporting the work of the staff to deliver the project following a turbulent first year.

A number of respondents said that the skills sharing among board members in effective project appraisal processes was particularly helpful in achieving programme aims. The outcome has been a varied, complementary and likely sustainable project portfolio which will be discussed more fully in section 5.5 below.

There was praise from respondents about effectively run WoE RRI Board meetings and good decision-making processes although quorum was sometimes a problem:

‘Board meetings were good; it was a small group efficient at making decisions’

One person commented that it may have been useful to have more people on the Board from the private and industry sectors with expertise in running or supporting SMEs. Another said that they felt the WoE Board and staff team had focused on supporting and funding specific project work and this was therefore not a strategic approach although the outcomes have been very positive and the likely long term impacts in line with the programme’s strategic and economic aims. The evaluators have often encountered a degree of tension between high-level strategic aims, the accompanying targets and reporting requirements and the drive from local needs and individual energies at grass roots level.

## Key learning points

- ▶ Championing rural issues in areas viewed as not having rural deprivation requires high level political backing
- ▶ SWRDA's definition of 'rural' prevented some potential project partners in semi-rural areas applying for RRI funding
- ▶ The motivation of the different stakeholder groups involved in a programme need to be surfaced, acknowledged and taken account of when reviewing the design prior to operational activity, planning the detailed processes of appraisal, roll-out, reporting and evaluation
- ▶ The skill and experience set required to manage and support the programme at strategic level needs to be discussed, agreed and to inform recruitment to the Board
- ▶ The value of skill-sharing among Board and staff members to the success of programmes needs to be acknowledged by funding bodies and time to do this be properly resourced

## Funded Projects

As part of the evaluation process, fifteen out of sixteen project partners from across the WofE sub-region participating in the main RRI programme were interviewed.

The interviews confirmed that the WoE RRI Partnership has succeeded in 'developing communities as participants in economic and social inclusion' and developing new rural enterprise. Funded project partners reported that RRI supported them to achieve their goals helping them to successfully deliver a mosaic of rural projects, community-led social enterprise and business services. These include: 3 new village shops; a woodland co-operative; a cycling and walking route; 2 networks of local food producers and retailers; 3 rural business support services; 3 rural skills training provides; a community radio station; 2 new rural workspace facilities.

"I'm really glad I found Rural Renaissance, we would have been struggling without it and now it doesn't exist. We needed it to help us with start-up costs. As you can see we are very busy in the shop. After two years if we achieve a £10-40k profit we will look for a permanent site to build a purpose-built shop for the village. I'll be looking at Lottery money and Virsa will provide up to £50k." (**Alun Evans**, Almondsbury Village Shop)

The RRI application process and quarterly reporting were very demanding and did not favour potential project partners who lacked access to professional skills and expertise. Organisations and communities funded by the Rural Renaissance programme required skills and expertise in funding and finance, business planning and reporting, marketing and promotions – or access to expert support – to deliver their projects successfully.

"It was a lot of hard work but it was worth doing, we are delighted with the results We welcome support like this as it has been of huge benefit to meeting business support needs in the rural community, it needs to continue but the process needs to be less onerous. I feel we have achieved something that will benefit the community." (**Philippa Kindon**, Wansdyke Business Centre & GWE)

The community-led projects including Almondsbury, Freshford and East Harptree village shops, Somer Valley FM and Chelvey Designer Makers all had social entrepreneurs leading the process with support from their committees and contacts.





“The radio station has a Management Board shaped to maximize links with local business, education and community broadcasting, including a local councilor, Deputy Head of the school, a local entrepreneur and myself with 22 years experience of the music and media sector” (**Dom Chambers**, Manager Somer Valley FM)

“For a project like Freshford Village Shop, there has to be somebody who spends their whole life working on it. It was hard completing the building of a new village shop in a year but there is never a good reason to give up. I can see how pleased everybody is and they stop me in the village and say ‘the shop looks great and we can’t wait for it to open” (**Gitte Dawson**, Chair of Freshford & Limpley Stoke Community Association)

Projects delivered by established organisations including ‘Eat Somerset’ by Sustain, Tyntesfield Training Centre by the National Trust and Routemap to Business Success by North Somerset Enterprise Agency all had access to professional expertise in-house and a wealth of previous experience.

The interviews confirmed that the WoE Partnership has succeeded in ‘strengthening rural communities through communications and partnership working’. The funded projects reported new partnerships, collaboration, stronger local networks and new rural enterprise. For example, the development of Colliers Way facilitated new links between tourist attractions, cafes, restaurants, B&Bs and hotels in villages and towns along the trail. Eat Somerset managed by Sustain worked with the Radstock Co-operative Society to introduce a new range of local food products sourced from Somerset producers into the main Radstock store and eight convenience stores including Chew Magna, Chilcompton and Shepton Mallet.





“Eat Somerset helped producers to find new markets by providing an intermediary between producers and retailers. Participants at our events valued the networking and opportunities to meet other food producers and exchange information. Retailers valued the help we provided in terms of listings of local producers. Our work is about finding out what producers and retailers need and then putting them in touch with each other, providing information on marketing and distribution and encouraging buying groups.” (**Alison Belshaw**, Sustain)

“North Somerset Enterprise Agency has been established for 22 years, it has a good reputation supported by strong networking, it is linked into local communities and deep rooted in the area. We had an experienced rural development advisor who had worked for the Rural Development Commission and Farm Business Service offering outreach and 1:1 services to businesses.” (**Angela Hicks**, Director of North Somerset Enterprise Agency)

Some community-led projects have resulted in the development of new community organisations as the framework for the management of community enterprise and linked projects. For example the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Community Association has been developed to manage Freshford Village Shop, an innovative and practical management model. This type of active rural community group with a commitment to local sustainable development and a vision for change has been essential to the successful implementation of RRI. The development of Freshford and Limpley Stoke Community Association designed to manage Freshford Village Shop is an example of how RRI supported cross boundary partnership working.

“Freshford is in Bath & North East Somerset but Limpley Stoke is in West Wiltshire, which in the past made collaboration and joint projects difficult, but RRI provided an opportunity for our villages to work together and make a joint application.” (**Gitte Dawson**, Chair of Freshford & Limpley Stoke Community Association)

Interviewees reported that projects are contributing towards increasing social and economic inclusion, raising business productivity and employment in targeted sectors. For example, Wansdyke Business Centre and Chelvey Designer Makers have developed new workspaces for rural businesses. Tyntesfield Training Centre and Somer Valley Radio are offering access to rural skills training and media training respectively.





“Somer Valley FM radio studios are very important, we wanted to create an environment that could benefit everyone who came here. We are involved with a lot of young people and have a close relationship with Somervale School; we provide them with media training and lectures on radio techniques. We have employed a Training Coordinator to lead the NCFE course in Radio Production Skills. Sixth formers with an interest in media and broadcasting come here to develop their careers; they get access to professional facilities and experience. Because of the youth scene in DJ land, we can help guide young people towards new opportunities. Also we have around 80 volunteers of all age groups; the multi-generational aspect of this environment is one of our great strengths.” (**Dom Chambers**, Manager Somer Valley FM)

Representatives of the community groups that have developed the three new village shops in Almondsbury, East Harptree and Freshford reported that they are all providing an innovative mix of community services and facilities by combining local food retail, cafés and internet access, gallery and community meeting spaces. These village shops are operating as community centres, offering local people new opportunities to meet and socialise, shop and sell local products, volunteer and learn new skills. The shops are all being managed by networks of volunteers, many of them older people and young people on work placements, who have benefitted from training in retail, marketing and customer service.

“We wanted to give the community its focal point back, the village shop is where people meet, it holds a village together; it has a strong community function. There is a strong desire in the village to stay local, we have lots of farms in the area and plan to source fresh foods locally to reduce food miles.” (**Gitte Dawson**, Chair Galleries Shop & Café)



Interviews confirmed that projects including Tyntesfield, Colliers Way, Chelvey Makers and Forest of Avon have all contributed towards 'realising the economic potential of the rural environment whilst protecting it for future generations.' Tyntesfield is a flagship heritage and nature conservation attraction in the WoE. Colliers Way is a positive addition to the network of cycling and walking routes in the area. Chelvey Makers and Forest of Avon are supporting the development of sustainable woodland enterprise and woodland skills.

"We need collaboration and networking between project partner organisations so that the good work started by the RRI scheme does not lose momentum. We need a meeting organised for all the project partners to have the opportunity to build on what has been established and achieved." (**Angela Hicks**, North Somerset Enterprise Agency)

"I have found the experience of RRI and receiving £30k extremely positive. I would like to say lets do it all again but I know RRI has finished. We plan to build on what we have achieved by seeking other funding." (**Dom Chambers**, Somer Valley Radio)







## Key learning points

- ▶ **For community-led projects a social entrepreneur or 'local champion'** leading the process is important to the successful development of rural enterprise projects, in terms of having the skills and expertise to navigate the complex application, business planning and quarterly reporting procedures, secure matched funding and affordable finance. They bring with them networks of professional business contacts that can be drawn on to help build sustainable community enterprise. In contrast, the established voluntary sector and social enterprise organisations have access to professional expertise and resources in house.
- ▶ **The combined model of a charitable community-led organisation managing a rural enterprise** providing local goods and services for community benefit is an innovative solution that could be applied to other rural projects. For example the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Community Association developed to manage Freshford Village Shop, is a practical model of a charity managing a limited company that could be applied to the development of other village shops.
- ▶ **Established rural enterprise networks** offering mutual support and access to information and business expertise helped funded partners to develop successful rural projects. Relevant networks included the Plunkett Foundation's Rural Community Shops, Local Food Links, Ofcom's Community Radio Stations and the Enterprise Agencies. In contrast, there were limited opportunities for networking and exchange of information between funded project partners, so projects relied on professional and personal networks.
- ▶ **Community ambition** – RRI in the West of England enabled rural communities to develop projects that met their local needs and achieve long term ambitions for their areas. Many project partners plan to build on the achievements of current projects by seeking further funding for future expansion.
- ▶ **Growth local capacity** – RRI in the West of England fostered new business skills and professional expertise in rural communities.
- ▶ **Community enterprise & innovation** – RRI in the West of England supported the growth of 3 new village shops; a woodland cooperative; a cycling and walking route; 2 networks of local food producers and retailers; 3 rural business support services; 3 rural skills training providers; a community radio station; 2 new workspace facilities.
- ▶ **Value of the environment** – RRI funded projects delivered new rural goods and services that realise and promote the value of the local environment including: local food retail networks; village shops and cafes selling local food and craft goods; woodland services and products; cycling and walking route benefiting residents and visitors; rural skills training including woodland and countryside management.

## Additional Outcomes

- ▶ **Rural enterprise networks** - RRI in the West of England strengthened some rural enterprise networks and kick-started others.
- ▶ **Community enterprise** – RRI funded projects supported the growth of rural communities' vision and capacity, leading to the development of new Community Associations, social enterprises and community-led businesses.
- ▶ **Cross boundary partnership working** – RRI funded projects supported the development of rural community enterprises and networks that delivered cross boundary partnership working across the West of England local authority areas.
- ▶ **Project partners networking** – the WoE Partnership did not have the capacity to co-ordinate strong networking and communications between funded project partners, which would have led to increased learning exchange and strategic added value.
- ▶ **Volunteering opportunities** - RRI in the West of England provided work placement and volunteering opportunities in rural communities that particularly benefited unemployed, young and older people.
- ▶ **Established project partner organisations** – funded by RRI in the West of England were able to implement projects rapidly, within a limited timeframe, as they were already rooted in rural community areas with a strong local awareness of their services and effective communication networks in place.
- ▶ **Promoted rural areas and issues** – WoE previously viewed by central government as a mainly urban area - needs to build stronger awareness.





# Some Barriers to Achieving Outcomes

Interviews with the full range of evaluation participants and subsequent analysis of the scripts made explicit the following factors which were not so helpful to achieving the programme aims:

The WoE Partnership was not provided with standard operational systems for RRI by SWRDA which contributed towards delaying the launch of the scheme and resulted in operational difficulties in the early days.

**Lack of clear communications, information and guidance** at the launch of the RRI in the West of England area resulted in slow uptake of the scheme, and some project partners experiencing a lengthy process of developing and submitting 2 to 3 different or revised applications for project funding before succeeding in securing a grant. Several potentially effective projects were denied funding in the early years of the scheme.

**Organisations and communities participating in the Rural Renaissance programme required professional skills and expertise in funding, enterprise, finance, marketing, reporting – or access to expert support – to succeed.** The application process and quarterly reporting were very demanding and onerous and would have excluded potential project partners who lacked access to a wide range of professional skills and expertise.

**The financial management and quarterly reporting processes** placed heavy demands of project partners, particularly community-led projects. Quarterly reporting and payment in arrears was not well suited to capital build and workspace conversion projects, particularly for community-led projects with limited financial flexibility and management resources.

**Rural Investment Schemes need to be tailored to match rural projects real needs**, in terms of levels of funding, project management, financial reporting and monitoring, particularly in the case of community-led projects with limited resources.

**Planned scope and strategic outcomes of the RRI programme** were unrealistic in relation to available resources and time-scale. The RRI and MRD funding schemes required 3-5 years to support the slower organic growth of funded projects, enabling project partners to develop more local capacity, network and collaborate with other projects, thereby realising greater strategic added value of funded projects.

# Suggestions and Recommendations

**The West of England RRI Partnership Board and Members should to build on the good practice and positive achievements of the Rural Renaissance Initiative Programme and take steps to:**

Develop an effective sub-regional Partnership, hosted by one of the partners as the Accountable Body, including local authorities, Business Link and voluntary sector organisations. There is scope to develop stronger links and partnership working with the private sector in order to;

- ▶ Act as a Forum for exchange of information, ideas, expertise and best practice on rural issues by co-coordinating networking events for project partners, facilitating joint working and collaboration on rural enterprise;
- ▶ Signpost existing funding opportunities such as the RDPE South West Rural Enterprise Gateway and seek new rural funding streams to support WoE communities to build on the work endowed by the RRI scheme and take it to the next phase;
- ▶ Encourage and support the development of new markets and networks for rural goods and services between rural and urban areas in WoE;
- ▶ Develop a Rural Champions' Award Scheme to acknowledge and promote the positive and often unrecognised work of social entrepreneurs in rural communities, offering cash awards to their community projects. The scheme could potentially be developed in partnership between the sub-regional Partnerships, SWRDA and the Plunkett Foundation;
- ▶ Publish its funded Projects Case Studies and final report in an agreed format, to disseminate local innovation and good practice, encouraging local communities to develop vision and ambition towards new projects that deliver goods and services to meet rural needs;
- ▶ Promote the rural agenda by sharing good practice and learning from management of the Rural Renaissance Initiative Programme with its members, sub-regional partnerships and decision makers;
- ▶ In order to capture the full impact of the programme's project work a further qualitative evaluation would be advisable in 6 months to a year's time when projects have been operational for an appropriate period. This is particularly necessary for the final grouping of funded projects that were required to deliver at speed against the March 2009 deadline.





# APPENDIX 1

## Topic guide for project interviews

Topic Guide - Rural Renaissance Project Partners Survey  
Evaluation Rural Renaissance Initiative & Modernising Rural Delivery Programme  
Deborah's intro of Evaluation Trust and the evaluation process for projects.

### Name & role of interviewee

### Organisation

### Contact details

#### 1. What are the main aims of your Rural Renaissance funded project?

#### 2. What have been the benefits (outputs and outcomes), directly or indirectly from your project (residents, staff, volunteers, wider community, area?)

##### 2.1 In what way(s)?

#### Prompts:

- ▶ helped to develop new enterprise, business productivity or employment in rural and disadvantaged areas
- ▶ helped to increase access to rural services for local businesses and communities? e.g. workspace or enterprise support, ICT or transport services, local shops or local food
- ▶ contributed towards increasing access to new skills, training and qualifications for target groups and key rural sectors?
- ▶ communications or exchange of good practice and innovation with other Rural Renaissance projects? – Was it useful? – Who organised it?
- ▶ developed the capacity of your organisation and /or your own understanding of project management and securing external funding?
- ▶ other – unplanned?

- 3. Has your project helped to realise the 'value of the environment' – and if so how? – For example, rural tourism, local food, rural arts & crafts etc?**
  
- 4. What has helped the project in meeting its aims?**
  
- 5. Have you experienced any internal or external barriers to developing and delivering your project – what are they?**
  
- 6. Have there been any unexpected / additional outcomes from your project compared with your original project plan?**
  
- 7. Have the aims & objectives of your project remained the same – or changed – since your application for Rural Renaissance funding? – If so, how? To what effect if any?**
  
- 8. Has your organisation benefitted from being part of the Rural Renaissance Programme – (in terms of e.g. skills and capacity, business planning and marketing, partnerships and networking.**
  
- 9. What has been helpful in the way that the Rural Renaissance Partnership has managed and supported your project throughout the scheme (change in management/roll-over/ communications)?**
  
- 10. Is there anything you would want to change in the way that the Rural Renaissance Partnership has managed the scheme**
  
- 11. Will the work of your project continue after the end of the Rural Renaissance Programme? – If so, how will it be supported - if not, what will be the effect of this on participants and beneficiaries, wider community?**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.**



# APPENDIX 2

## Topic guide for staff, Board and partner interviews

Topic guide- WOE Rural Renaissance Evaluation -Project staff, Board & partners Interviews:  
Maria's introduction to the Trust and the evaluation process.

**Name & role of interviewee**

**Organisation**

**Contact details**

**Date of interview**

1. What has been the nature of your role/connection with the WOE RR Programme?
  
2. What do you feel have been the main achievements of the programme in relation to the project plan/expected &outcomes?
  
3. Do you think there have been any other outcomes which were not in the original plan (positive or negative)?
  
4. What impact if any do you feel the programme has had on:
  - ▶ business and employment in the WOE?
  - ▶ on rural service delivery?
  - ▶ on communication and partnership working in rural communities?
  - ▶ On preserving and promoting the rural environment?
  
5. What has been helpful (good practice points) in the way that the WOE RR programme has been managed/rolled out/delivered?
  
6. Is there anything that has been unhelpful (barriers) in the way that WOE RR Programme has been managed?

**7. What has been the effect of the change in management in the middle of delivering programme?**

**8. How has learning from the change in management been disseminated and applied? To what effect?**

- ▶ Improvements in service delivery
- ▶ Improvements in support to projects
- ▶ Improvements in strategic management & communication
- ▶ Other?

**9. Is there anything that you would change in the way that the RR Partnership has managed the scheme if it were to run again?**

**10. What 1 piece of learning would you like to be carried forward into future work in this field?**



# APPENDIX 3

## Outline of funded projects

### Rural Renaissance Main Programme Projects

Project	DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?	TIMESCALE: Start – finish	COSTS AND FUNDING
<b>Chelvey Designer Makers</b>	<p>Who: Chelvey Designer Makers Partnership</p> <p>How: This project aims to meet the above needs through establishing a sustainable hub for regional wood processing businesses and individuals, creating community wood processing facilities and a designer-makers workshop with related training and skills development. The site has facilities for storing and working with timber but is impossibly cramped, making efficient working difficult. The site has been developed over 10 years and this project will enable additional farm buildings to be brought into use. Demand comes from businesses and individuals wishing to access expensive equipment in a supportive environment. The project will create new jobs and provide skills development for the wider community</p> <p>Where: North Somerset</p>	<p>May 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£15,375 Revenue £66,352 Capital</p>
<b>Wansdyke Business Centre</b>	<p>Who: Business West</p> <p>How: The project proposes the refurbishment and reconfiguration of the Wansdyke Business Centre in Midsomer Norton. The refurbishment and reconfiguration of the Business Centre will deliver a high quality service to tenants and increase the capacity of the workspace available to let. This will enable Business West to work more strategically through the managed workspace to develop the progression, retention and growth of local small businesses.</p> <p>Where: Bath and North East Somerset</p>	<p>April 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£99,598 Capital</p>



<b>DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?</b>		<b>TIMESCALE:</b> Start – finish	<b>COSTS AND FUNDING</b>
<b>Project</b>			
<b>Routemap to Business Success</b>	<p>Who: North Somerset Enterprise Agency</p> <p>How: To contribute to developing rural economic inclusion through the provision of new opportunities and prosperity for rural businesses, the project aims to take rural entrepreneurs through the key foundation skills for business i.e. start-up, access to finance/business planning, developing a marketing strategy, ICT development and environmental management.</p>	<p>May 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£25,000 Revenue</p>
<b>Eat Somerset</b>	<p>Where: North Somerset</p> <p>Who: Sustain</p> <p>How: To extend for a further 9 months work on the Eat Somerset project which started in 2006. The project aims to increase trading between producer groups in North Somerset, Bath &amp; North East Somerset and around Somerset. It works with independent food retailers in the area, and is specifically working on creating new markets in Bristol and Bath, including shops, wholesalers, schools, hospitals, universities and other public sector institutions.</p>	<p>June 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£17, 063 Revenue</p>
<b>Somer Valley Radio</b>	<p>Where: West of England wide</p> <p>Who: Somer Valley FM</p> <p>How: The funding will support station management, training co-ordination, training days, sales and marketing support and related costs to deliver accredited NVQ Level 2 qualification outputs in radio production in addition to a range of other skills outputs. The project also aims to maximise the potential for the station to provide advertising and sponsorship. The project will develop local talent within the creative industries sector through its strong links with local schools and aims to develop skills and opportunities for young people relating to these and related sectors, including journalism, broadcasting and marketing.</p>	<p>April 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£31,392 Revenue</p>
	<p>Where: Bath and North East Somerset</p>		



Project	DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?	TIMESCALE: Start – finish	COSTS AND FUNDING
Freshford Shop	<p>Who: Freshford Shop Project</p> <p>How: The design, obtaining planning permission, construction and fitting out of a new community shop and Post Office for Freshford (where the last shop closed in June 2007) and surrounding communities.</p> <p>Where: Bath and North East Somerset</p>	<p>July 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£90,000 Capital</p>
East Harptree Village Shop	<p>Who: East Harptree Village Shop Ltd</p> <p>How: The adaptation and conversion of existing redundant space within the Communities Village Hall, the purchasing of equipment and fitting out to the necessary standard to serve as a shop. The aim is to provide and develop an accessible and sustainable retail enterprise for the community.</p> <p>Where: Bath and North East Somerset</p>	<p>September 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£30,000 Capital</p>
Tyntesfield Capital	<p>Who: National Trust</p> <p>How: Conversion of a redundant building (old sawmill and accumulator house) at the National Trust's Tyntesfield property, into a learning/training centre and flexible workspace.</p> <p>Where: Tyntesfield, North Somerset</p>	<p>April 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£99,500 Capital</p>
Colliers Way	<p>Who: B&amp;NES Council</p> <p>How: Promoting tourism and business opportunities along the Colliers Way cycle path, and immediate surrounding area.</p> <p>Where: The Colliers Way cycle Path, between Dundas and Frome. (B&amp;NES)</p>	<p>June 2007 – March 2009</p>	<p>£21K Capital £78K Revenue</p>



Project	DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?	TIMESCALE: Start – finish	COSTS AND FUNDING
Forest of Avon	<p>Who: Forest of Avon team on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council</p> <p>How: Project aims to encourage and promote diversification in land based industries through a comprehensive programme of advice, seminars, and dissemination of best practice. It will raise awareness of the opportunities available to businesses e.g. in tourism and leisure, woodland planting etc and foster links between businesses in towns and villages</p>	June 2007 – March 2009	£42K Revenue
Business Clusters	<p>Where: West of England Wide, delivery point, Long Ashton.</p> <p>Who: Destination Bristol</p> <p>How: The project aims to raise the productivity and quality of tourism businesses in the RR area through a package of skills and business development measures.</p>	June 2007 – March 2009	£136,593 Revenue
Tyntesfield Revenue	<p>Where: West of England Wide, delivery Point, Leigh Court.</p> <p>Who: The National Trust</p> <p>How: Support training and learning provided at the National Trust's Tyntesfield estate. In the medium-term training and learning will be delivered through the creation of a training/learning centre being developed for completion in December 2008 through conversion of an old Sawmill.</p> <p>Where: Tyntesfield, North Somerset</p>	July 2007 – March 2009	£35,839 Revenue





## Project

### DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?

**TIMESCALE:**  
Start – finish

**COSTS AND FUNDING**

**GWE: Rural Business Mentors**

**Who:** Great Western Enterprises

November 2007 – March 2009  
£40,898 Revenue

**How:** Project proposes to establish a business mentoring service for SME's across the rural West of England area. Volunteer mentors with relevant previous experience and skills will be matched with SME's that seek this support. The mentoring service will be provided free of charge to SME's. The project will replicate a similar, successful, project run by the applicants in the Wiltshire Rural Renaissance area.

**Where:** West of England

**South Gloucestershire Food Festival**

**Who:** South Gloucestershire Council & South Gloucestershire Local Food Partnership

July 2008  
11,000 Revenue

**How:** The Project aims to:

- ▶ Revitalise the local food economy by raising awareness of and increasing the demand for local food;
- ▶ Increase the availability and consumption of local and healthy food by organising and promoting a series of open events where local people can visit local food producers and talk directly to them - and increase their sales;
- ▶ Reconnect consumers with what they eat and how it is produced by encouraging them to buy more local food and find out where their local producers are. This will raise the profile of food production, increase trade and lead to an improved knowledge of the availability of food in the area; as well as issues faced by producers. Traders and those in the hospitality sector will also be encouraged to make links with local producers;
- ▶ Reconnect farming with its local markets and the food chain.

**Where:** South Gloucestershire



Project	DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?	TIMESCALE: Start – finish	COSTS AND FUNDING
Almondsbury Shop	<p>Who: The Almondsbury Community Services Association (ASCA) Ltd</p> <p>How: The aim is to establish a Community Shop within walking distance of the village centre, selling quality local produce and providing access to services, thereby contributing to the vitality the local community and environment.</p> <p>Where: South Gloucestershire</p>	<p>September 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£16,500 Capital</p>
Tyntesfield Home Farm	<p>Who: The National Trust</p> <p>How: The project will carry out essential structural repairs to the Home Farm Buildings at Tyntesfield (a Victorian Model Farm of national significance, Grade II* Listed) which will enable the second phase of the project (not part of this application as will be completed in Nov 2010) - the creation of permanent Visitor Facilities to include visitor reception, retail, restaurant and office space.</p> <p>Where: North Somerset</p>	<p>September 2008 – March 2009</p>	<p>£95,000 Capital</p>



## MRD Programme Projects

Project	DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?	TIMESCALE: Start – finish	COSTS AND FUNDING
Rural Transport Partnership Core	<p>Who: Community Action</p> <p>How: The Rural Transport Partnership has the overall aim of improving transport and access to services for rural communities, and thus to reduce social exclusion. Funding will enable the Rural Transport Partnership (RTP) to continue to work on identifying unmet needs, and in partnership with local authorities and established community transport schemes to find new ways of addressing rural access issues. In addition, the funding will enable the RTP to deliver at least one major project in each of the three UAs, and to manage a Small Grant Fund for projects of up to £2,000 addressing rural access issues. These projects are the subject of separate bids of around £75,000 and £30,000 (plus equivalent match funding) respectively.</p>	July 2007 – March 2008	£30,000 Revenue
Rural Transport Partnership Keynsham Dial-a-Ride	<p>Where: West of England</p> <p>Who: Community Action</p> <p>How: The Keynsham Dial a Ride service provides a largely on-demand service for people who have problems in accessing public transport. Users are mostly older people and those with serious mobility problems.</p> <p>This project is a pilot 6 month project to extend the service to the neighbouring villages including Saltford, Corston, Newton St Loe, Compton Dando, Pensford and Whitchurch was started in November 2006. Additionally, it is proposed to run a programme of social outings on one day per week. If successful this project will continue.</p>	July 2007 – March 2008	£24,000 Revenue



Project	DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?	TIMESCALE: Start – finish	COSTS AND FUNDING
Rural Transport Partnership Small Grants Fund	<p>Who: Community Action</p> <p>How: This project provides a fund for community groups and other interested parties to apply for small grants (up to a normal maximum of £2,000) to assist with initiatives helping to address rural accessibility. The idea is to provide a simple and quick source of funding for a wide variety of purposes, focused on the needs of rural communities across the RTP partnership area.</p> <p>The fund would be managed by Community Action, as part of their RTP management, who will be responsible for publicising the scheme, issuing application forms and guidance, appraising applications and submitting them to a local panel (to include representatives of all RTP members) paying out grants, managing a simple monitoring process, and reviewing progress of the fund against agreed budgets and milestones.</p>	July 2007 – March 2008	£10,000 Revenue £20,000 Capital
Severnside Community Transport Service	<p>Who: Community Action</p> <p>How: The project will expand and extend an existing semi-scheduled minibus service which operates one day a week between Thornbury and Severn Beach, serving a very isolated area of South Gloucestershire.</p> <p>The funding covers development and marketing, additional running costs (including part time driver and booking staff), plus a new and fully accessible 16-seater minibus.</p>	October 2007 – March 2008	£10,000 Revenue
	Where: West of England		





## Project

### DELIVERY MECHANISM: Who, How and Where?

### TIMESCALE: Start – finish

### COSTS AND FUNDING

Who: Bath and North East Somerset Council

How: The objective is to improve significantly the accessibility of services in local rural communities.

Access to Rural Services  
Feasibility Study

The funding will be used to purchase an on live mobile unit which will be fitted with Wifi IT equipment and linked into the Council Connect E forms customer access system. This service will enable both rural businesses and community members to gain access to services that they would not normally be able to reach due to distance.

January 2008 –  
March 2008

£25,000

Where: Bath and North East Somerset

# APPENDIX 4

## Final Programme output data

Code	Output Measure	Total			
		Target	Actual	Var.	%
1)	Job Creation - Number of job created or safeguarded	82.8	70.8	-12	-14%
2)	Employment Support - Number of people assisted to get a job	44	53	9	20%
3)	Business Creation - Number of new businesses created & demonstrating growth after 12 months	30	31	1	3%
4)	Business Support - Numbers Assisted to improve performance, the assistance being a minimum of at least 2 hours	297	349	52	18%
4a)	Business Assisted - Number engaged in new knowledge base creations	1	1		
5)	Regeneration Infrastructure - Public investment levered (£)	£464.4k	£558.4k	£94.1k	20%
5)	Regeneration Infrastructure - Private investment levered (£)	£1,436.2k	£1,060.7k	-£375.4k	-26%
5a)	Regeneration Infrastructure: Hectares of brownfield land reclaimed & redeveloped				
<b>6</b>	<b>Skills</b>				
6)	Skills - Number of people assisted in their skills development as a result of RDA programmes	1939	2846	907	47%
6a)	Skills - Number of adults gaining basic skills as part of the Skills for Life Strategy	81	50	-31	-38%
6b)	Number of Adults in the Workforce achieving level 2 or equivalent (or more) qualification	61	56	-5	-8%



