

# Rural Development Programme for England

## East of England Regional Implementation Plan 2007-2013

**DRAFT (13) submitted to DEFRA: July 2008**



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development : Europe investing in rural areas

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## **Preface**

This draft Regional Implementation Plan sets out the principles, priorities and delivery proposals which have been agreed by partners to deliver the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) 2007-2013 in the East of England.

The RDPE is jointly funded by the EU, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the Government. In England, we are also making use of Voluntary Modulation.

In compiling this document, the region has consulted with regional stakeholders – both by correspondence and through regional consultation events. Events held in April/May 2006 were attended by over 150 businesses, community and stakeholder representatives. EEDA subsequently hosted facilitated workshops with strategic partners and stakeholders to further focus and prioritise the issues to be supported by RDPE, particularly in relation to Axis 1/3 and the Leader approach.

All of the delivery partners are continuing to work collaboratively on delivery – both amongst themselves at the programme level, and with a wider group of regional partners on project delivery.

This revised version sets out the demarcation principles in greater detail, updates on progress in selecting Local Action Groups and includes the Governance arrangements for the Programme.

**RDPE Regional Steering Group, July 2008**

***The RDPE Regional Steering Group comprises: Government Office for the East of England Rural Team, Natural England, East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and the Forestry Commission***

## 1 Analysis of Regional Evidence

### 1.1 The East of England Region

#### Topography and Climate

- 1.1.1 The East of England is a **low-lying region**, with a rich diversity of rural and coastal landscapes, communities and economies. It is the **driest** region in England, but even so 25% of its land area is at risk from river valley or coastal flooding. **Climate change** presents challenges from both changing rainfall patterns and rising sea levels. There are particular issues around water security, flood management and coastal realignment.
- 1.1.2 In the context of increasing demands for water, particularly from those parts of the region with rapid population growth, there are challenges in ensuring adequate **water supplies**. Recent work by the Environment Agency illustrates that most of the region shows a deficit in potential water supply against current and anticipated demand (see map 5 below). In the agri-food sector, there is a need to focus on water efficiency, winter storage and other adaptations which reduce the pressure on groundwater supplies, river flows and summer abstraction. Without more investment in water efficiency and winter catchment, significant areas of agri-food production will be constrained by a lack of water availability.

#### Growth and its geography

- 1.1.3 The region's population is **growing quickly**. Three of the four Growth Areas in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan are wholly or partially within the region and three further areas have recently applied for Growth Point designation (Norwich, Haven Gateway, and Thetford (Breckland)). The region is experiencing rapid change and **significant development pressures** are affecting many of its rural areas. In addition, the region is characterised by a growing rural population which is increasingly deriving its income from employment outside the traditional rural economy, either by working in growing sectors of the economy such as financial services, commuting or by working remotely using ICT. Even in areas which are still perceived as being dominated by the food and farming sector, such as the North Cambridgeshire Fens, most employment is now in wholesale, retail and distribution or the public sector.
- 1.1.4 This can lead to the local population becoming **disconnected from the land based economy and the economic factors shaping the rural landscape within which they live**.
- 1.1.5 Growth brings some opportunities. The population is relatively affluent. In addition, being adjacent to London represents a very large potential market (nearly 20% of the UK's food consumption, and at the value added end of the market 40% of the UK's restaurant trade – London Food Strategy 2006). For both reasons, there are opportunities to develop new **high value markets** linked to recreational access and premium food and drink products. However – particularly in the north and east of the region – there are concerns about continuing **economic underperformance** and an over-reliance on traditional employment sectors such as food processing and farming.

#### Market Towns and Medium-Sized Cities

- 1.1.6 The region's settlement structure is characterised by a number of medium-sized cities. These present an important backdrop to the delivery of RDPE, particularly in the provision of enhanced countryside access, local products and recreational and landscape goods.

- 1.1.7 The region contains nearly a quarter of England's **Market Towns**. These are adapting to economic changes which have redefined their role and function.

### **Deprivation in Rural Areas**

- 1.1.8 Even within prosperous rural areas, many people do not share in the increasing affluence. Examples of those suffering particular **disadvantage** include some of the elderly, the unemployed, lone parents, those with caring responsibilities, those without access to a car, gypsies and travellers.
- 1.1.9 More generally, **wage levels** in rural areas are much lower than regional averages and there are major challenges relating to the **affordability of housing** (parts of the North Norfolk coast now have average prices which are nearly 10x average incomes – Commission on Affordable Rural Housing 2006) and **access to services**.
- 1.1.10 In addition, in many rural areas, countryside recreation provision is failing to meet the growing needs of specialist users, minority groups and local people. The opportunity to improve the physical and mental health of the population through enhanced access to the natural environment is not being fully realised.

### **Land Based Sector**

#### *Farm and woodland size*

- 1.1.11 Compared to other regions, the farming and food sector is characterised by **larger businesses**. The average land area for individual holdings is 73 hectares compared with 55 hectares for England as a whole (Agricultural Census 2004, DEFRA). Despite this growth in average size the region has also seen a trend towards more diversity in farm size.
- 1.1.12 Whilst the number of very large arable units (over 2,000ha) has been growing, with some now over 5,000ha under single management, the number of farm holdings in the region has also increased with a marked increase in small part time farms. The sector is dividing into commercial farms which are growing in size and those being run as adjuncts to other employment or diversifications.
- 1.1.13 Some of the growth in effective farm size in the commercial parts of the sector is masked by the fact that land ownership has often not been consolidated even if farm operations have been. Through the use of contractors and contract farming it is now becoming very common that one operational farming business is managing and providing the labour and machinery input to several farms which are still owned separately.
- 1.1.14 In practice the economic difference in farm business size is even more marked when it is recognised that the region contains very little low intensity rough grazing (only 2% of the region against 7% nationally) but more of the intensive horticultural area. These intensive horticultural businesses also operate a very flexible approach to land utilisation with large areas of their cropped area being hired on an annual basis from local arable farmers.
- 1.1.15 The combination of these factors means that farm businesses are significantly larger in economic terms (turnover and jobs supported) than in many other areas, with a few intensive vegetable businesses employing in excess of 1,000 staff. In general, the size of commercial farm business units is still increasing – a trend which has been accelerated by CAP reform and is likely to continue.
- 1.1.16 In contrast, **woodland ownership is generally small scale** and as woodlands are sold they are often split between numerous purchasers - making it hard to create viable supply chains for woodland products.

1.1.17 Amongst smaller farming businesses, particularly those under 100hectares, the trend has been more focused on **developing new income streams** - whether linked to managing the landscape (e.g. stewardship agreements), adding value to farm products (e.g. food processing, direct sales), through to the development of other enterprises or off farm jobs. Whilst this trend is region wide, it has been particularly marked in the south of the region in areas of higher population density closer to London. CAP reform and moves to more global free trade in agricultural products will encourage more, smaller businesses to pursue these options as their ability to compete in global markets becomes constrained by their lack of economies of scale, particularly where they have produced commodity products in the past.

#### *Farm Types*

1.1.18 With particular concentrations of **intensive cropping and intensive livestock enterprises**, linked to supply chains that are increasingly integrated, the region is potentially better equipped to cope with the challenges of **globalisation** than most other regions in Europe. However, increasing environmental and regulatory burdens, variable commodity prices and rising costs are making much of the region's commodity food and farming sectors uneconomic.

1.1.19 A recent survey by a major accountancy firm (Larking Gowen 2006) showed that across 112 farms on nearly 26,000ha average profits in 2005 were less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the results achieved in 1995, with the average farm now losing £40 per hectare before receiving payment under the Single Payment Scheme.

1.1.20 To make these businesses more sustainable, a focus on **business development and production efficiency** is essential alongside work to help them improve their environmental performance. Many of the more intensive farming businesses are also looking to diversify their income stream by utilising existing assets in new ways and by joining environmental stewardship schemes.

1.1.21 The region's livestock sector is concentrated on **pig** (28% of the total English herd) **and poultry production** (30% of England's total broilers, 38% of the geese flock and 53% of the duck flock) much of which is vertically integrated.

1.1.22 The region also includes some **sheep and cattle production** but these are relatively much less important than in other areas of the country - with the region only having 2% of the English sheep flock, 2% of its dairy production and 4% of the beef herd.

1.1.23 Most grazing livestock is still managed in small units, often as adjuncts to other larger farming enterprises (the average English sheep flock is 326 head but in the East of England it is only 135, and for cattle the figures are 75 in the region against 100 nationally). Many of the region's most valuable and sensitive grassland (in biodiversity and landscape terms) is dependent on seasonal grazing by small flocks and herds.

1.1.24 Problems with infrastructure (e.g. loss of livestock markets and abattoirs) and poor returns combined with rising costs are making it increasingly difficult to sustain sufficient grazing livestock to maintain ecologically important areas which in turn has an effect on the region's tourism industries which are heavily reliant on farming for the management of the region's cherished landscapes.

#### *R&D*

1.1.25 The region contains one of the largest concentrations of food and farming research and development in the world which is underpinned by world class bioscience research capabilities. This is supported by a large network of demonstration and research farms which demonstrate new approaches to land

and enterprise management. In taking forward the regional implementation of RDPE links to the region's research establishments will be encouraged.

### *Skills*

- 1.1.26 The **skills base** in the land-based sector is a continuing concern in terms of both the need for enhanced skills for existing enterprises and the challenges of restructuring and new enterprises. Some of the region's most rural areas in the Fens and North West Norfolk are amongst the worst in England for the proportion of the adult workforce with no recognised qualifications (Countryside Agency State of the Countryside report 2004).
- 1.1.27 New College and University sites are addressing this issue, through providing a range of full and part time qualification bearing courses. However, there is still a need to do more to address workforce short course uptake both by addressing weaknesses in provision and through projects to encourage uptake.
- 1.1.28 There are needs in up-skilling, and an imperative to recognise the increasingly critical role played by **migrant workers**, together with developing extra skills in environmental and sustainability management, managerial disciplines, adding value and the management of new enterprises.
- 1.1.29 Across the land-based sector, there are **problems in accessing appropriate semi-skilled staff** - although in large scale arable farming the rapid increase in contract farming is addressing these problems for some businesses.
- 1.1.30 Larger businesses are also experiencing problems in finding appropriate qualified managers, particularly in the more intensive production sectors where large teams of staff need to be managed. In response the largest farming businesses have created in house management development schemes to meet this need but struggle to find enough suitable candidates from the UK.
- 1.1.31 In the woodland sector, there is a reliance on contractors running micro enterprises. There are problems in the supply of woodland management and timber processing services for smaller woodlands.

### **Landscape and wildlife**

- 1.1.32 The East of England region has a rich and diverse natural environment that supports many of the UK's rarest and best loved habitats and species. It is a region of dramatic and often sharp contrasts with landscapes ranging from a long, low-lying coastline (featuring windswept beaches, dunes and marshes), to large scale arable farmland, extensive lowland heathland, and a more intimate mosaic of mixed woodlands and hedgerows. Previous agricultural policies and low commodity prices have accelerated the loss of mixed farming and favoured intensive single enterprise regimes. These changes in agriculture over recent decades led to **very significant declines in biodiversity and landscape quality** in the region. These issues are now well recognised amongst much of the farming community and improvements are being made, not least as a result of the various measures supported under the England Rural Development Programme. Schemes including Countryside Stewardship, Environmentally Sensitive Areas and the Woodland Grant Scheme have together delivered targeted improvements to 121,000ha (6.3%) of the region
- 1.1.33 National landscape designations cover c7.3% of the region (ie 142,000ha comprising: the Broads National Park (c30,000ha), Dedham Vale AONB (c9,000ha), Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB (c40,000ha), Norfolk Coast AONB (c45,000ha) and parts of the Chilterns AONB (c18,000ha)). The region's most important sites for habitats and species are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). They are an indication of the health of biodiversity more generally. SSSIs constitute some 6.6% of the region's land cover

(c128,000 ha) in 570 different sites. Of these about 78% are in good condition (compared with a national figure of c70%). The national Government target is to get 95% of SSSIs into good (or favourable) condition by 2010. The remaining areas of high biodiversity value are concentrated in the low lying coastal and river floodplains, such as the Broads and the coastal zones in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. The main reasons for SSSIs being in unfavourable condition are:

- **modification of flood plains** by flood defences and drainage for agriculture;
- decline in water quality through **diffuse agricultural pollution**;
- **competition for water supply**;
- **undergrazing and over-browsing**; and
- the effects of **climate change**.

- 1.1.34 Coastal squeeze, resulting from sea level rise, affects 17,000 ha of SSSIs, while water pollution, inappropriate water levels and drainage affects over 12,000 ha\*. Restoration of naturally functioning flood plains will assist with responses to climate change and help conserve water and soil resources. Again these issues are indicative of issues affecting other areas of high biodiversity value across the region.
- 1.1.35 **Grasslands and heathlands** – which occupied extensive areas of the region until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century – are now found in small and dispersed fragments. There have been **insufficient grazing livestock** to maintain conservation grazing, which has contributed to some 4000ha of SSSIs being affected by undergrazing and scrub invasion.
- 1.1.36 At the other extreme, there are problems with high **deer** populations causing over-browsing in woodlands. This is preventing tree regeneration and causing deterioration of the flora and fauna in established woodlands.
- 1.1.37 Some **arable cropping practices**, such as the prevalence of winter cereals and the loss of mixed farming, has resulted in a severe decline of once-common and widespread species of farmland birds such as skylarks and lapwing. Restoration of farmland biodiversity will be a key to allowing nature to adapt to a changing climate.
- 1.1.38 The historic environment of the region is rich and varied and important both for its own sake and because it is a significant driver of economic and social objectives. It contributes to the quality of life of all, whether local residents, visitors from the wider region or tourists.
- 1.1.39 It is significant that the historic environment cuts across and unites environmental, social and economic issues. Examples are the important role it plays in tourism, education and outreach; the re-use of historic farm buildings for new businesses; and training in historic building repair methods which both develops skills and contributes to the conservation of important buildings.
- 1.1.40 The region's most cherished landscapes are the most important for the tourist industry and are largely reliant on farming, particularly grazing livestock, for their maintenance. However, there is little consumer awareness of the availability of local produce and added value products from "conservation farmed land". In part this is created by a lack of reliable local supplies which are clearly branded with their origin, and recent surveys have shown that most consumers would like to consume more local products.
- 1.1.41 More work is needed to develop the links between landscape and food products in consumers' minds, by developing the availability of, and building trust in, food

with local provenance. Whilst EEDA is funding some work to help the regional food and drink sector this is focused on awareness raising and co-ordination activity. EEDAs current Single Pot funding does not allow direct business investments, which is the gap which RDPE needs to address to allow the region to make the most of the awareness raising activities that are currently underway.

- 1.1.42 There is also a need to develop agricultural, landscape and biodiversity sustainability to enhance the contribution which farmed landscapes make to the wider population and the region's economy.
- 1.1.43 The region's tourism sector is worth in excess of £4bn per annum and much of this is linked to the quality of the countryside and coastal landscape in a region which has few major urban centres. A report by the RSPB (2001) estimated that along a section of the North Norfolk Coast tourism centred on the landscape and wildlife supported 4,000 jobs and contributed £120m to the local economy making it the largest single sector.

*\* Target 2010 – East of England. English Nature 2006*

## **1.2 Regional Maps**

- 1.2.1 In developing the regional implementation plan the steering group have been informed by a series of maps which have been selected to provide an overview of the region to illustrate the geographical context within which the region's delivery of the RDPE needs to operate. The maps can be found at Annex A.

They illustrate the following key points:

### **Map 1 - Predominant Farm Types**

This map shows the predominant farm type in each parish and clearly illustrates the diversity of farming across the region, both on a regional and a much more local scale. The very local variation is mainly a function of soil and topographic characteristics which favour particular land uses, and is important in identifying the need for thematic as well spatially driven interventions when targeting farming-related economic development.

### **Map 2 - Landscape Character**

Joint Character Areas (JCAs) describe and map differences in 159 landscape and habitat character areas across England. The region contains 30 JCAs which illustrates the diversity of its landscape character. They are used to help applicants for Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) select options which can enhance their specific local landscape character. Likewise, the new approach to targeting the Higher Level Stewardship scheme developed by Natural England in consultation with stakeholders, will help conserve and enhance those landscapes of greatest value to the region, and at most risk of adverse change.

In taking regional implementation forward, the delivery partners will work to ensure that the special quality of these areas is protected and enhanced.

### **Map 3 - Woodlands and Forests**

The region contains a large number of small woodlands, with some larger forested areas around Thetford, near the Suffolk coast, at Epping, and in the London Green Belt. The woodlands, with the exception of those around Thetford and the Suffolk coast, are predominantly broadleaved. The percentage of ancient woodland is slightly higher than the national average.

The presence of the many small and dispersed areas of woodland helps define much of the region's landscape diversity, but is also a significant challenge in co-ordinating work within the sector. About 70% of the woodland area is privately

owned with Forestry Commission owning or managing 20%. The Community Forests adjacent to some of the region's key growth areas present further large opportunities to develop links between woodland, public access and landscape enhancement.

#### **Map 4 - Environmental Assets**

The region contains many designated landscapes and habitats. These are not only important in their own right as valued and protected landscapes, but also provide drivers for initiatives that deliver:

- Economic growth through better quality local employment in sustainable enterprises, including farming, forestry, tourism and leisure services;
- Contributions to healthy, inclusive communities through promotion of countryside access and recreation for all.

The aim is a region where natural and built environmental assets are protected and enhanced, where the impacts of climate change are addressed, and where natural resources are used efficiently to deliver sustainable economic development and an improved quality of life, accessible to all.

#### **Map 5 – Water Resources**

The region's water resources are under severe pressure due to climate change, increasing use by the existing population and the prospect of significant regional population and household increases.

This map is based upon Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) work which has considered where water may be available for abstraction.

#### **Map 6 - Urban Populations, Infrastructure and Growth**

The region is facing significant growth over the coming years, which will impact more widely on the rural economy and landscapes. Large areas of the region do not contain major urban centres and this increases their reliance on the many small Market Towns within the region.

### **1.3 Regional Indicators**

1.3.1 These will be developed in conjunction with national Defra work in this area.

### **1.4 Other Regional Funding Sources**

1.4.1 In developing this Plan, attention has been given to the range of other regional funding sources and how the limited resources from RDPE might be used to achieve maximum impact. The East of England receives the lowest level of public sector funding per capita of any English region and limited funding is available to address needs in rural areas.

1.4.2 Nevertheless, partners are agreed that project applicants who approach RDPE for funding will have to demonstrate that mainstream funding is either not available or appropriate for their project. Where appropriate, potential applicants will be assisted by RDPE project facilitators in exploring the options for mainstream funding.

1.4.3 For example, in developing the Regional Implementation Plan, skills training was identified as a priority area by most consultees, but there is substantial

mainstream provision, both in schools and via the Learning and Skills Councils (LSC), for many types of post 16 education. With substantial investment already going into skills provision, it is not sensible for the RDPE to fund provision which the LSC can and should fund, or areas which schools should cover. Hence skills development funded by the RDPE will generally concentrate on short, very focused (usually non qualification-bearing) courses, which address specific needs in the land-based or rural communities sector, especially where these address change management issues.

- 1.4.4 The delivery partners for the RDPE are also in regular dialogue with Local Authorities across the region, many of whom deliver local rural and countryside projects and more generic projects which impact on local areas. With the devolution principle set out in the Rural Strategy 2004 (RS04), and the development of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), the delivery of rural interventions by Local Authorities will continue to increase. The delivery partners will seek to work with Local Authorities to deliver integrated programmes and to avoid overlap or confusion in the minds of potential beneficiaries.
- 1.4.5 In addition to mainstream funding the region has access to a range of more discretionary funding programmes which can be used to support a range of rural interventions. In delivering RDPE the regional partners will also therefore ensure that it complements other regional funding sources and mechanisms including the following:
- EEDA's Economic Participation (EP) Programme - a 10-year investment planning approach being used to address socio-economic disadvantage;
  - EEDA's Regional Infrastructure Programme – which is developing a planned approach to high quality and sustainable growth, with an emphasis on physical regeneration;
  - EEDA's Enterprise and Business Support products - concerned with enterprise, business development and competitiveness and now supporting a range of projects delivering the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy;
  - Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) funding and other **regional resource efficiency activity funded by EEDA** is being used to address areas of environmental concern in water, waste and energy;
  - Rural Social and Community Programme operated by GO on behalf of Defra is supporting some aspects of rural community development;
  - The Heritage Lottery Fund which is supporting community and environmental regeneration projects;
  - Environment Agency's work on water resources, flood prevention and associated measures;
  - English Heritage's work on the built historic environment which has identified historic farm buildings as second only in importance to ecclesiastical buildings in the region;
  - Learning and Skills Council investment in skills and workforce development.
- 1.4.6 In delivering the programme, partners will ensure that projects are funded by the most appropriate funding stream. For example, for most community projects which mainstream funding does not support this is likely to be EP and projects proposed in this area will be advised at an early stage which is the most appropriate funding route.

## 1.5 Demarcation with other EU funding

- 1.5.1 In delivering the programme, the relationship with ESF activity and the new ERDF Regional Competitiveness Programme (successor to Objective 2) will be managed carefully to prevent any overlap or duplication of funding, and to ensure complementarity and optimal value for money. Equally, we must avoid a situation in which a high quality project is unable to attract funding. This applies to both other domestic funding streams, and to the closely linked European funding streams.
- 1.5.2 The potential for overlap is believed to be strongest in relation to Axis 1 and 3 of the RDPE. EEDA is responsible for delivery of the new ERDF programme and has a role in delivering some of the ESF programme funding. Some aspects of the ESF programme will be delivered by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or Job Centre Plus (JC+). EEDA will ensure that in delivering the RDPE it consults with the LSC and JC+ in relation to any projects where there could be potential issues around demarcation.
- 1.5.3 EEDA will ensure coherence in the day to day management of the socio-economic support under the RDPE and ERDF. EEDA will ensure that work carried out at the regional level is complementary, and robust project development and selection processes will ensure that any duplication is avoided. EEDA will also work closely with Local Action Groups to ensure demarcation on the ground. These processes begin with the clear establishment of demarcation criteria at the regional level.
- 1.5.4 Partners within the East of England have worked hard to ensure that there is clear demarcation between ERDF and the application of both EAFRD and the (much smaller) EFF. EAFRD is less flexible than ERDF and it is structured by measures as set out in the Rural Development Regulation. Table 1 below adopts the RDR Axis as a framework within which to illustrate the proposed lines of demarcation between the different funding streams.
- 1.5.5 In this context, the distinctive space which has been created for RDPE is defined by:
- A focus on the land-based sector, leaving the ERDF OP to address the needs of downstream businesses in the supply chain;
  - Focusing RDPE on projects and interventions that are unlikely to attract public sector match funding (in recognition of the pre-match funding linked to RDPE in contrast to ERDF). Hence there is logic in focusing RDPE on commercial business beneficiaries.

### Fit between EAFRD and ESF

- 1.5.6 The regional ESF strategy, which the East of England and Competitiveness Partnership is played a key role in developing provides the framework for ESF spending in the region.
- 1.5.7 The ESF priorities include:
- *Extending employment opportunities-* with a particular focus on people with disabilities and health conditions, lone parents and other disadvantaged parents, older workers, ethnic minorities, people with no or low qualifications, and young people, particularly those not in education, employment or training.
  - *Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce-* with a focus on those who lack basic skills and level 2 qualifications. Additionally, seven sectors have been identified as priorities for

Level 2 and 3 skills: construction/built environment; retail; logistics; health and social care; hospitality; manufacturing and engineering; and land-based industries

Within this context, RDPE will focus on:

- Higher level skills; and/or
- Skills and training for those already in jobs in rural areas.

Table 1 – Proposed demarcation in the East of England between ERDF, EAFRD and EFF, structured by RDR measure

| Axis 1  | EAFRD  | ERDF  | EFF        |
|---|--|---|------------|
| Cooperation for the development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors | Support for collaboration and new product development costs from land based SMEs (principally farming, food and forestry) bringing together primary producers, processors and other third parties. Limit max investment. | ERDF support for innovation and knowledge transfer will focus on SMEs with particular emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewable energy</li> <li>• Clean technology</li> <li>• ICT</li> </ul> Land based SMEs supported under this measure will be excluded from support under the East of England ERDF Competitiveness Operating Programme. | No overlap |
| <b>Axis 3</b>   |  |   |            |
| Diversification into non-agricultural activities  | Support for farm household members only setting up high impact, high quality added value (non-agric) enterprises providing local employment  | Beneficiaries under this measure to be excluded from ERDF support.  | No overlap |
| Support for business creation and development   | Support the creation and development of (non-farm / forest ) micro –enterprises and sole traders, including, enterprise  | ERDF will provide business support focussed on development of low carbon or clean technology sectors/ start-ups or targeted at  | No overlap |

|   |   |  |             |
|---|---|--|-------------|
|   | animation, business support and incubator activities to be targeted at specific sectors within this measure (eg food, bio-energy, rural knowledge based business)                                     | improving business efficiency. Support for land based business and businesses in the sectors targeted by EAFRD will be excluded. |             |
| Encouragement of tourism activities   | Support for small scale infrastructure and services related to rural and farm based tourism / hospitality. Activity supported will reflect regional tourism strategy and priorities.                  | Tourism related activities will not be funded under the East of England ERDF Competitiveness OP.                                 | No overlap  |
| Basic services for the rural economy  | In rural areas only. Support for village or group of villages and related small scale infrastructure. Activities will include social enterprise, culture and leisure and innovative service delivery. | No support for the provision of basic services is included in the East of England ERDF Competitiveness OP.                       | No overlap  |
| Training and information for economic measure for economic actors operating in the fields covered by Axis 3 | Training support for economic actors including farmers who are diversifying in rural areas covering activities such as skills, traditional rural skills for young people and management training      | No support for training or skills development is included in the East of England ERDF Competitiveness OP                         | No overlap. |

## 1.6 Summary of Regional Issues & RDPE Response

1.6.1 Whilst this first chapter has set out the range of issues and barriers to sustainable development in rural parts of the East of England, it is recognised that RDPE is not the most appropriate vehicle to address all of these. Table 2 below summarises the issues identified within the regional baseline analysis. For each substantive issue it indicates whether RDPE offers a relevant solution or whether other interventions are more appropriate.

The distinctive contribution of RDPE drawing on the demarcation section above may be summarised as follows:

- focus on the land-based sector and its links into downstream supply chain activities;
- emphasis on links from the land-based sector to the general public, through access, quality food, etc.;
- emphasis on the efficiency of resource use, linked especially to the land-based sector;
- focus on creating/conserving high quality landscapes, the historic environment and their links to economic activities;
- focus on community coherence within rural areas;
- focus on renewables.

Table 2 – Summary of Regional Issues and the Regional Response

| <b>Identified Issues</b>  | <b>RDPE response</b>   | <b>Other interventions</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| Water resource management and water security                    | Water resources with an emphasis on farm use of water will feature in RDPE   |  |
| Flooding and coastal realignment                                | RDPE will via HLS and ELS provide some support to the (re)creation of natural flood and coastal management infrastructure  | The Environment Agency and local authorities have statutory responsibility for flood and coastal management  |
| Development pressures in rural areas                            | Green infrastructure plans have been developed in and around regional Growth Areas and New Growth Points, for which Natural England is looking at how agri-environment schemes have the potential to support their delivery. | Development of the Growth Areas & Regional Cities East include provision for green infrastructure which will develop the connection between rural & urban areas    |
| Disconnection of the population from the rural economy          | Farm and food sector diversification projects and agri-environmental work will stress public engagement & education  | Healthy eating and “five a day” campaigns led by DoH and DfES provide the scope for making the connections   |
| Access to high value markets for food and drink products        | Food supply chain projects to help regional businesses access new markets will be supported  | RDA funding for regional and local food programme through co-ordination and promotion activities   |
| Access to new markets in recreational access to the countryside | RDPE will support projects which bring new consumers into the countryside  |  |
| Market towns  | It is possible – although not certain – that the application of the Leader approach may retain some element of market town focus. In particular RDPE will support  | RDA funding linked to access to services is likely to continue to retain some focus on market towns. In addition RDA regeneration funding has and will continue to |

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|  | the development of links between the rural economy and Market Towns  | support the broader regeneration of Market Towns.   |
| Rural Deprivation  |  | Requirements of Defra PSA4 ensure that deprived rural areas will be a focus. Rural Social and Community Programme will also address issues relating to deprivation during its lifetime  |
| Low wage levels in rural areas                               | RDPE will encourage the creation of higher value jobs in the land based economy  | RDA regeneration funding will support the development of new high GVA jobs in the wider rural economy   |
| Affordable housing supply                                    |  | The Regional Assembly is working with LAs and government to address affordable housing supply   |
| Access to services   | Potentially, RDPE could be used to fund community facilities, etc. which is an important element of access to rural services   | RDAs have a responsibility to address issues relating to access to services. This must also be a feature of second round Local Transport Plans  |
| Access to the countryside                                    | There will be explicit provision for access in agri environment and woodland grant schemes   | Open Access under the CRow Act applies to 18,000 hectares of land in the region, with an additional 17,700ha of Forestry Commission land Dedicated under Section 16 of CROW. It is administered by Highways Authorities, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Highways Authorities are also responsible for the rights of way network and development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans. |
| Developing new farm income streams                           | RDPE is likely to have a role with regard to new income streams particularly given the emphasis on land-based businesses within their wider supply chain context. Some of these supply chains may well be non traditional ones |   |
| Need for farm business development and production efficiency | RDPE is likely to have a role to play  | Business advice to farmers is being provided through a joined up approach using a single gateway (Business Link) to enable farmers to access the appropriate advice from a variety of   |

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|  |   | sources, both private and public sector.   |
| Undergrazing   | RDPE will help to support the work of the East of England Grazing Forum and work to develop market market opportunities for local and premium meat and meat products                    | Natural England leads on a regional project (supported by the EoE Grazing Forum), to raise the profile of undergrazing, to support the development of sustainable market-driven solutions to the issue of undergrazing, to facilitate grazing of land of high environmental value, and to promote the role of the extensive red meat sector. |
| Links between the R&D base and rural businesses                                    | RDPE projects will be encouraged to make use of the R&D base wherever possible but RDPE will not support pure R&D projects  | The Research Councils, HEFCE and RDAs all have responsibilities to disseminate the findings of R&D to the broader economy  |
| Low formal skill levels within the land based sector                               | RDPE will be used to address skills needs in the sector with a focus on short, non qualification courses  | LSC activity is relevant although typically the emphasis is on formal qualification  |
| Lack of semi skilled operatives in the farming and woodland sector                 | There is potentially scope to use RDPE resources for training that does not necessarily lead to formal qualifications. This could be highly beneficial                                  |  |
| Development of new skills in sustainability, environmental and business management | RDPE will support the acquisition of new skills within the land based sector focusing on non qualification courses and those linked to other aspects of land based business development | Formal qualification courses will be provided by the LSC and Land Based Colleges   |
| Diffuse pollution  | The ELS and HLS programmes will encourage the adoption of diffuse pollution mitigation actions  | With the Environment Agency, Natural England is working with farmers in nine priority catchments in the region to address diffuse water pollution from agriculture through its Catchment Sensitive Farming programme.  |
| Climate change adaptation  | All activities supported through the programme will be consistent with climate change adaptation and efficient use of resources   | Broad range of government policy and public sector intervention is focused – in general terms – on adaptation  |
| Renewable energy   | RDPE will support projects which develop the supply chains and lead to increases in production of renewable energy sources  | Subject to consultation, ERDF will support development of new technologies which assist in application of renewable  |

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|  | within the region.  | energy, as well as activities which lead to improved business efficiency through demand management. Renewables East promotes the use of renewable energy, and addresses all aspects of production and application. |
| Landscape quality  | RDPE will support work to maintain landscape quality within SSSIs, protected landscapes and other farmed and rural landscapes as appropriate  | Natural England provides a range of regulatory, advisory and support functions in relation to designated areas.  |
| Loss of biodiversity   | Agri-environment schemes are targeted at this issue directly  |  |
| Deer browsing  | RDPE will support measures to control deer grazing as part of the WGS and HLS agreements with landowners. RDPE will also be used to develop market opportunities for venison.                             | The Deer Initiative facilitates a Regional Deer Forum to co-ordinate the management of wild deer populations   |
| Links between historic and protected landscapes and economic opportunity | RDPE will need to work at this interface in rural areas and there is a strong view in the region that we need better links between agri-environment interventions and those linked to economic well-being | English Heritage works at this interface   |

## 2 Regional Objectives and Priorities

### 2.1 Programme Objectives

2.1.1 The East of England Rural Delivery Framework (EERDF) sets out the key objectives for rural development in the region.

<http://www.eerf.org.uk/condocs/RI%20RRDF%20091106.pdf>

2.1.2 The objectives were established with input from a broad range of regional stakeholders, following a detailed review of the region's key strategies, plans and existing frameworks.

2.1.3 The regional implementation plan for RDPE has been shaped by these objectives. It is also informed by the national consultation process undertaken by Defra and the proposals it contained for the national programme.

2.1.4 Within the overall context provided by the EERDF and national plan for RDPE, the aim in the East of England is to use the RDPE to:

Support the delivery of public benefits through the long term sustainability of the land based sector, rural landscapes, the natural, historic and cultural heritage and the wider rural economy as they respond to the multiple pressures facing rural areas within one of England's fastest growing regions.

- 2.1.5 As set out in section 1.1, and summarised in section 1.6 a wide variety of pressures on the rural economy, environment and community have driven the proposed focus of RDPE within the East of England. These include CAP reform, evolving consumer demand, climate change, political imperatives for more environmentally responsible production and for enhanced access to a healthy and vibrant rural landscape.
- 2.1.6 In other areas it is clear that other mechanisms are more appropriate and thus, as set out in table 1, these areas will be addressed by a wide range of other regional and national interventions.

## **2.2 Regional Programme Themes**

- 2.2.1 To give focus to programme delivery, a set of high level themes have been identified for the RDPE in the East of England (table 2). They derive from the EERDF and national RDPE draft plan but have been prioritised and given greater focus to reflect the national objectives, narrower parameters and limited resources of the programme.
- 2.2.2 Within the region the delivery partners have also used a series of more specific plans, strategies and strategic reviews to help guide the detailed focus of the RDPE implementation plan including:
- Integrated Regional Strategy – 2005;
  - Regional Economic Strategy – 2004;
  - East of England Sustainable Development Framework – 2001;
  - RSS14 – the Regional Spatial Strategy (draft) – The East of England Plan – 2004;
  - Regional Woodland Strategy – 2003;
  - Regional Environmental Strategy – 2003;
  - Food and Drink Industry Strategy for the East of England – 2005;
  - Sustainable Farming and Food Regional Delivery Plan – 2003;
  - Regional Food Study – 2006;
  - Alternative and Non Food Crops Strategy for the East of England – 2006;

## **2.3 Programme Priorities**

- 2.3.1 In line with the national plan for RDPE the balance of resources will be weighted towards agri-environmental and forestry land management programmes. These will be focused on increasing the sustainability of land use and enhancing the contribution which the rural environment makes to the economic and social wellbeing of the region.
- 2.3.2 Across all seven themes, the aim is to support projects which stimulate innovation, build on successful pilots, support collaboration, deliver integrated

outcomes, develop the capacity of businesses and communities to respond to change, and deliver public benefits and value for money.

- 2.3.3 The regional consultation process has identified some specific and immediate project proposals that are well matched to the aims of the Programme in the East of England. These include projects addressing for example: local food supply chains, bio energy (including woodfuel production and usage), agricultural waste, diffuse pollution, community forests, water resources, and undergrazing.
- 2.3.4 These project proposals will be kept under review as part of on-going targeting and programme management processes. They are likely to evolve over the duration of the Programme (see section 4 below).
- 2.3.5 Across the programme the focus which the region has decided to adopt is the sustainable development of the land based economy. The RDPE is alone in being able to support investment within commercial businesses in the sector.
- 2.3.6 Coupled to the rapid changes created by CAP reform it is imperative to the future of the rural economy that the land based sector is assisted in becoming more sustainable. The public benefits to a wide range of rural businesses derived from a well managed landscape, justifies the focus of environmental management resources within the new programme on the major land using industries.
- 2.3.7 The Entry Level and Organic Entry Level elements of Environmental Stewardship have little room for regional flexibility as they are standardised, national schemes open to all, with farmers selecting the management options they want to commit to on a self-service basis.
- 2.3.8 However, Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) is a targeted scheme with five main national objectives and two secondary ones. It does have some regional flexibility in the way that it is targeted, though this is within a clear framework of national priorities.
- 2.3.9 Natural England is in the process of developing a revised approach to HLS targeting and is working with stakeholders to develop and implement an improved targeting process. This will retain an approach that allows the national priorities to be applied in ways that are appropriate to regional and local circumstances.
- 2.3.10 Local delivery partners and stakeholders will play a part in the development of regional and local targets for HLS. This process will provide an opportunity to further strengthen links with the regional delivery programmes for Axes 1 and 3, within a clear framework of national priorities. The priorities for the RDPE in the region set out in the RIP will clearly feed in to this process.
- 2.3.11 The Forestry Commission's English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) although also a national scheme, does have some regional flexibility. The Woodland Creation Grant element, for example, is a discretionary grant where, subject to budget, applications are approved dependant on scores in line with the priorities of the Regional Woodland Strategy. There are currently two regional-specific Woodland Improvement Grants promoting work on Forest Schools and woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The main constraint for EWGS in the region is the overall budget.
- 2.3.12 RDPE will also be used nationally to support energy crop planting. Natural England and Forestry Commission will be involved in the delivery of this objective, and will liaise with EEDA to ensure that there is linkage to associated activity around biomass heat and power facilities, and associated supply chains. Some of this linkage may involve regional delivery via Axis 1 and 3 measures.

Table 2 - High Level Themes for RDPE in the East of England are:

- 1 Business Efficiency** – by focusing on knowledge transfer, skills development and collaboration with the objectives of:
  - increasing supply chain efficiency within the agri-food and forestry sectors by reducing cost and adding value along the chain;
  - reducing waste arising from the agri food sector;
  - encouraging efficiency in the use of water in the agri-food sector;
  - improving energy efficiency and increasing the uptake of renewable energy.
- 2 New Markets and Products** – by supporting new product development and marketing with the objectives of:
  - developing the markets for, and adding value to, existing food, farming and forestry products produced in the region through processing;
  - supporting the creation of new markets and new products within the food, forestry and non food crop sectors.
- 3 New Businesses and Enterprises in the Rural Economy** – by supporting the development of new businesses in the land based sector with the objective of creating new opportunities for the rural population through:
  - broadening the economic base of rural areas;
  - diversifying agricultural and forestry sector businesses. .
- 4 Resource Protection** – addressing diffuse pollution, improving the management of water and wastes and improving the management of soils in the agricultural and forestry sectors with the objectives of:
  - reducing the environmental impact of both sectors;
  - improving the ecological condition of the rural environment.
- 5 Conservation of the Natural Built and Historic Environment** – by supporting land management regimes which balance production with the needs of the landscape, habitat and bio-diversity with the objectives of:
  - maintaining existing environmental assets in good condition;
  - improving the condition of environmental assets which have deteriorated;
  - creating new habitats where applicable;
  - adaptation to and mitigation against climate change.
- 6 Access and Recreation** – opening up new areas of the rural landscape to public access with the objectives of:
  - helping communities access their local rural landscape;
  - promoting accessibility to the countryside for minority, excluded and specialist groups;
  - increasing the economic opportunities provided by commercial access;
  - increasing public understanding and enjoyment of the rural environment.
- 7 Rural Community Capacity**– supporting communities to be sustainable with the objectives of:
  - Helping communities identify and address their own needs and aspirations for sustainable development;

- Building capacity of rural communities to develop and manage their own assets in a sustainable way and generate economic returns;
- Developing links with local businesses and supply chains to benefit the community;
- Community activities which develop access to and enhance the environment and countryside.

### **3 Regional Balance of Measures**

3.1.1 The balance of Measures in the East of England has been informed by:

- The guidelines provided by the EU, which set overall parameters for the balance of programme spend between the four Axes;
- The strategy produced by Defra, which indicated that approximately 80% of Programme spend would be needed to ensure that the commitment to make ELS available to all farmers could be delivered under Axis 2, and that some Measures would be excluded from the England programme;
- The Themes (and priorities) for programme delivery identified in the East of England and set out above.

3.1.2 Actual spend within the programme has to be allocated to the measures which are available within the European Regulation. In developing the suggested allocation of spending against the measures outlined in Table 3, the region has also had to relate this spending to the available measures – the outcome of this mapping process is presented below.

3.1.3 In arriving at this division of spending across the measures within each Axis the delivery partners have used the regional priority themes set out in table 2 to guide the allocation of resources. The regional delivery partners are committed to working across the axes and regional themes wherever possible, and many projects will therefore deliver in more than one thematic area.

3.1.4 Table 3 below sets out the proposed spend by measure, and includes funding which will be delivered via Axis 4, the Leader approach. The region is keen to retain budget flexibility between the measures within each axis to allow the programme to respond to developing needs over the lifetime of the programme.

3.1.5 In the early stages of delivery of the new Programme, provision has been made for the financial commitments resulting from Agreements entered into under the previous (2000-2006) England Rural Development Programme. This inevitably has an impact on the region's ability, initially, to support significant levels of new activity in line with this Regional Implementation Plan. It is clear that much of the work carried forward from the previous programme will be consistent with the priorities identified for the new programme period, but where priorities change, allowance will be made to honour existing contractual commitments.

**Table 3 Allocation of programme spend<sup>1</sup> per Axis against RDPE measures**

| <b>Axis 1 – improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector</b>                                     |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Measures</b>   | <b>Proposed spend within Axis 1 (£m)</b> |
| Vocational training and information actions for persons engaged in the agricultural, food or forestry sectors             | £4.27                                    |
| Setting up young farmers  |  |
| Early retirement for farmers and farm workers   |  |
| Use by farmers and forest holders of advisory services  | £0.85                                    |
| Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as forestry advisory services              | £0.34                                    |
| Agricultural holding modernisation  |  |
| Improving the economic value of forests   | £1.69                                    |
| Adding value to agricultural and forestry products  | £10.60                                   |
| Cooperation for the development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors | £1.88                                    |
| Improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry             | £4.27                                    |
| Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention actions   |  |
| Helping farmers adapt to demanding standards based on community legislation   |  |
| Supporting farmers who participate in food quality schemes  |  |
| Supporting producer groups for information and promotion activities for products under food quality schemes               |  |

The budget allocation is based on £23.9m Axis 1 funds to be delivered by EEDA, including funds allocated to the Leader approach.

The table does not include support for Energy Crops which is currently delivered by Natural England.

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<sup>1</sup> Indicative figures subject to change

| <b>Axis 2 – improving the environment and countryside</b>                    |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Measures</b>  | <b>Balance of proposed spend within Axis 2 (%)</b> |
| Natural handicap payments to farmers in mountain areas                       |  |
| Payments to farmers in areas with other handicaps, other than mountain areas |  |
| Natura 2000 payments and payments linked to Directive 2000/60/EC             |  |
| Agri-environment payments  | 90.0   |
| Animal welfare payments  |  |
| Support for non productive assets  | 3.7  |
| First afforestation of agricultural land                                     | 2.5  |
| First establishment of agroforestry systems on agricultural land             |  |
| First afforestation of non-agricultural land                                 |  |
| Natura 2000 payments   |  |
| Forest-environment payments  | 1.9  |
| Restoring forestry potential and introducing preventative actions            |  |
| Support for non-productive investments                                       | 1.9  |

| <b>Axis 3 – the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Measures</b>  | <b>Proposed spend within Axis 3 (£m)</b> |
| Diversification into non agricultural activities   | £19.9                                    |
| Support for the creation and development of micro enterprises with a view to promoting entrepreneurship and developing the economic fabric | £5.58                                    |
| Encouragement of tourism activities  | £6.38                                    |
| Basic services for the economy and rural population  | £1.21                                    |
| Village renewal and development  |  |
| Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage   | £1.20                                    |
| Training and information for economic actors operating in the fields covered by Axis 3   | £0.81                                    |
| Skills acquisition and animation with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy                                    | £0.40                                    |
| Implementing cooperative projects  | £0.80                                    |
| Running the LAG and developing LAG skills for delivery of Leader   | £3.60                                    |

The budget allocation is based on £39.88 m Axis 3 funds to be delivered by EEDA, including funds to be delivered by the Leader approach.

**Axis 4, the Leader Approach:**

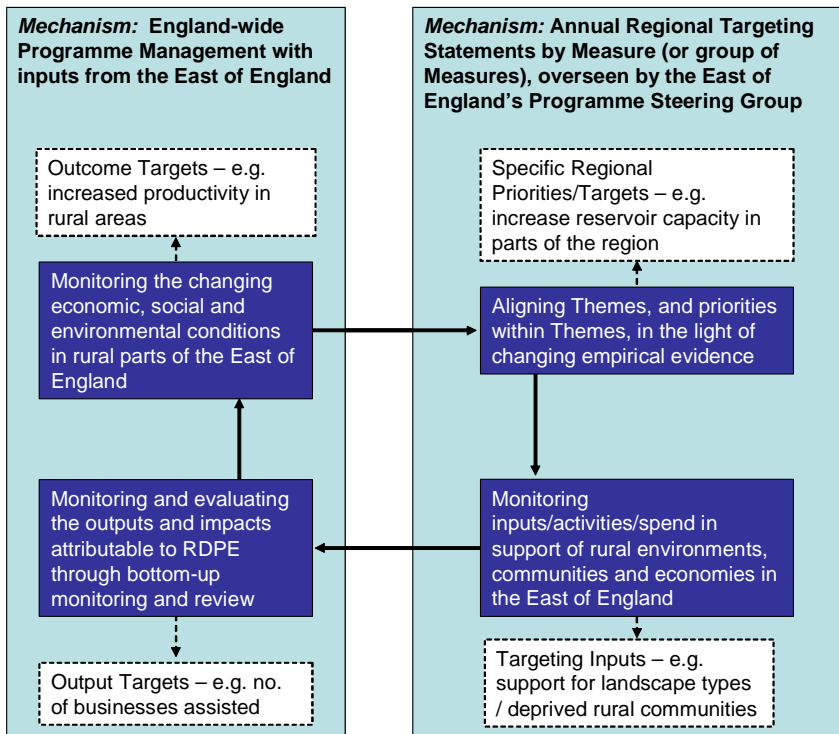
Total funding committed to Local Action Groups (included in above tables within Axis 1 and 3) is £21.12 m

## 4 Regional Delivery Strategy

### 4.1 Targeting Mechanisms

- 4.1.1 RDPE delivery requires an ongoing targeting process at a number of “levels”; some of this will be driven nationally while some will have a strong regional input. Figure 1 tries to capture the different types of targets and targeting, together with the targeting mechanisms that are likely to be used.

**Figure 1: RDPE in the East of England: Indicators, Targets and Targeting Mechanisms**



### 4.2 Targets

- 4.2.1 The output and outcome targets (on the left of Figure 1) are determined nationally by Defra from a menu provided by the Commission.
- 4.2.2 Regional targets – relating to specific priorities within the seven Themes and to particular types of beneficiary or location (on the right of Figure 1) – are determined through the targeting mechanisms outlined above. During the first year of the Programme progress will be made in defining regional targets as the wider governance arrangements start to take shape.
- 4.2.3 The approach to targeting of the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme is currently being reviewed nationally.

### 4.3 Use of the Leader approach

- 4.3.1 Regional partners are keen to see the Leader approach address regional needs as outlined in this RIP and will be encouraging applications by Local Action Groups to link to other regional and local development plans and strategies. In

addition, the region will look to the Leader approach to deliver an integrated approach to sustainable rural development, fully incorporating both socio-economic and environmental activities. It is anticipated that in the future, funding may become available to Leader from Axis 2, particularly for projects demonstrating innovative approaches to securing economic benefits from environment schemes.

- 4.3.2 The Leader approach is seen by regional delivery partners as a possible mechanism to enhance linkages between Environmental Stewardship activity with wider regional and sub-regional priorities and activity, and it is thought that partnerships could use the Leader approach to facilitate entry into ES agreements. Regional partners in the East of England will be engaging at sub-regional and local level to develop creative approaches to encouraging and supporting appropriate integrated activity through the Leader approach.
- 4.3.3 Regional delivery partners consider that supporting cross-border Local Development Strategies, and international cooperation, represents a positive approach if appropriate areas are identified. We will continue working with partners in neighbouring regions to develop appropriate processes and protocols to manage any cross-regional bids.
- 4.3.2 EEDA is required to run a competitive process in selecting successful Local Action Groups (LAGs). EEDA devised a two stage process which was launched on 19 September 2007 via a launch event and a Leader Approach Prospectus. The selection criteria were published in the Prospectus and can be seen at Annex C.
- 4.3.4 The process was designed to allow the region to select the most appropriate Local Development Strategies (LDS), whilst minimising the work required initially by potential LAGs.
- 4.3.5 Stage 1 – local groups were invited to submit an Expression of Interest by 10 December 2007. A regional panel consisting of representatives from EEDA, Natural England, the Forestry Commission and Government Office East considered the EOI submissions and made a recommendation to the prospective LAG on whether to progress to submitting a full Local Development Strategy (LDS) application.
- 4.3.6 During this stage, EEDA funded a short term contract to assist potential LAGs to build their capacity and develop their understanding of RDPE.
- 4.3.7 Stage 2 – During this phase, prospective LAGs were able to apply for up to £5,000 worth of funding to help them develop their LDS. EEDA also ran three workshops to help LAGs understand the process, and better understand existing and planned projects that they need to link to. NE and FC were involved in the delivery of these workshops.
- 4.3.8 14 March 2008 was the deadline for the submission of full LDS applications.
- 4.3.9 These were considered by a regional panel consisting of EEDA, NE, GO and FC. The Panel's recommendation was passed through EEDA's approval processes with an announcement being made at the end of May following EEDA's Board meeting.
- 4.3.10 Six groups were approved. A map showing the geographic coverage of the groups is available at Annex D.
- 4.3.10 It is EEDA's intention to only run a single application round for LAGs during the Programme period.

#### 4.4 Delivery Across Programme Themes, Axes and Measures

- 4.4.1 Within the East of England, the intention is for the RDPE programme to deliver truly sustainable development. This means an integrated approach to the delivery of rural development activity which links environmental and socio-economic outcomes and themes.
- 4.4.2 The regional themes and priorities provide a framework for integrated rural development across the axes, and into which the delivery of the Leader approach can be linked. To ensure this will require a strong partnership-based approach to delivery.
- 4.4.3 The RDPE will be advanced in the region by three key partners, Natural England, EEDA, and the Forestry Commission, who will be working closely together, and with businesses, communities and project teams to achieve integration across the programme. The three partners will co-ordinate their work at both strategic programme management level (through operating common programme management and review processes) and at operational level (by ensuring RDPE facilitation teams share information as appropriate).
- 4.4.4 The three delivery partners charged with operating the new programme will work closely with a range of other regional delivery agents in government, the not for profit and private sectors.
- 4.4.5 Delivery partners will have a regular dialogue with Local Authorities to ensure that interventions funded by RDPE are clearly linked to other larger projects and initiatives supported through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) process.
- 4.4.6 Other important partners in addressing programme priorities and in bringing projects forward for consideration will include:
- **Regional Organisations** such as EERA, Rural Action East, COVER and MENTER
  - **Public Agencies/NDPBs** in the region, such as the Environment Agency and English Heritage
  - **Public sector partners** such as Colleges and Universities;
  - **Business sector bodies** such as the NFU, CLA, FSB, TFA, Agricultural and Rural Training Groups, Farmer Controlled Businesses;
  - **Specialist national food and farming sector bodies** such as the Red Meat Industry Forum, EFPF, levy bodies and Food from Britain;
  - **Sub Regional bodies** such as Sub Regional Economic Partnerships (SREPs), Investing in Communities (Economic Participation) partnerships, Rural Community Councils and the wider Voluntary and Community Sector;
  - **Environmental bodies such as the** Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Wildlife Trusts, the National Trust and RSPB;
  - **Specialist business advisors** such as Land agents, accountants and banks.
- 4.4.6 Integration across the axes will be a focus of the Leader approach in the East of England. Regional delivery partners are working together to bring this about and work this into the priorities for application of the Leader approach.

## 4.5 Project development and facilitation

- 4.5.1 A key feature of the new programme is that the delivery partners are committed to working closely together to achieve integration across the programme. Delivery partners will develop appropriate projects which address the regional RDPE themes and objectives, and will bring forward projects both through a commissioning process, as well as an active process of integrated project facilitation:
- Natural England already has an active team of advisers in place to help farmers and landowners by providing advice and guidance.
  - EEDA has appointed specialist facilitation staff to work with projects across the region to facilitate a range of projects that will address the themes identified in table 1. These facilitators are already working closely with other staff delivering the Economic Participation, business support, enterprise hubs and Regional Infrastructure programmes to ensure alignment with other EEDA initiatives.
  - The Forestry Commission along with EEDA and Natural England, will work with groups of woodland owners and contractors to develop a programme of focused projects to help the sector move forward. This will be in addition to the advice currently provided for woodland establishment and management.
- 4.5.2 The three key delivery partners will ensure that staff working on project facilitation have regular dialogue to maximise the potential for cross axis working and project development.
- 4.5.3 Project facilitation will also include the referral of good projects to other sources of funding where appropriate to ensure that RDPE funds achieve additionality.
- 4.5.4 The delivery partners will make use of existing regional business support projects targeted at the land based sector to help facilitate this development process. For example EEDA launched a 3-year Food and Rural Economy programme in June 2006 which will deliver £8m of business support projects aimed at developing skills, increasing the local and regional food economy, developing supply chain efficiency, helping businesses become more sustainable and developing the export potential of food and drink products from the region. These projects which are supported by the region's Sustainable Farming and Food steering group will in many cases lead to proposals for investments by businesses which may be eligible for RDPE funding.
- 4.5.6 The aim is to develop a range of 'projects' that will match one or more of the objectives set out under the region's 7 key themes. These projects may involve a single business (particularly for environmental stewardship) or a very local area or they could be developed region-wide as appropriate.
- 4.5.7 Potential projects and beneficiaries will be helped to develop a balanced range of benefits within project proposals to ensure they deliver a combination of environmental, economic and social outcomes.
- 4.5.8 Whilst most stewardship agreements and woodland grants will be made to individual landowners and farmers, EEDA has decided to prioritise its limited resources on supporting fewer 'larger' projects within the socio-economic part of the programme. These projects will be expected to respond to issues that have been agreed as priorities with the rural business and community sectors at a regional or sub regional level. This will not stop communities or groups of businesses proposing project ideas, but in doing so they will have to demonstrate how their project would contribute to regional objectives.

- 4.5.9 Whilst these 'larger' projects will normally be multi-partner, individual landowners, local groups or other bodies will help to deliver the project outputs. To gain support, these larger projects will have to demonstrate how they will deliver benefits at the individual farm, rural business or community levels. They will also have to demonstrate how they will be more efficient in delivering these benefits than many smaller projects would be. A key determinant in selecting these projects will be the value for money they deliver in terms of the benefits provided to end beneficiaries relative to the costs incurred.
- 4.5.10 Innovative smaller projects which demonstrate a new approach to rural development will also be supported under the socio-economic parts of the programme. Innovative projects of this nature must be able to demonstrate how their outputs could be replicated or further developed if they prove successful.

#### **4.6 Communications**

- 4.6.1 The programme will be promoted to individuals and businesses via appropriate media and intermediary bodies such as councils, local economic partnerships and rural organisations. The delivery partners will ensure that consistent messages are communicated, and will undertake joint activity where appropriate. The delivery partners see a key role for local and rural organisations to promote the funding to individuals and communities (as outlined in section 4.4 above).

#### **4.7 Governance and reporting**

- 4.7.1 All of the principal delivery partners have contributed to the drafting of this Plan and all are committed to the pursuit of the Themes that have been identified.
- 4.7.2 At a national level, all three delivery partners report to the Delivery Liaison Groups and Audit & Risk Committee organised by Defra.
- 4.7.3 Within the region the RDPE delivery partners will report to the Rural Forum and the Regional Rural Delivery Framework Steering Group (RRDFSG). The RRDFSG will receive quarterly high level summaries of RDPE performance from EEDA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. EEDA also report to the European Programmes Steering Group who oversee ESF and ERDF investment. At the operational level, EEDA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission meet regularly to discuss projects and identify synergies.
- 4.7.4 The region will provide Defra and the Rural Payments Agency with performance data in accordance with their financial and common monitoring and evaluation framework requirements.

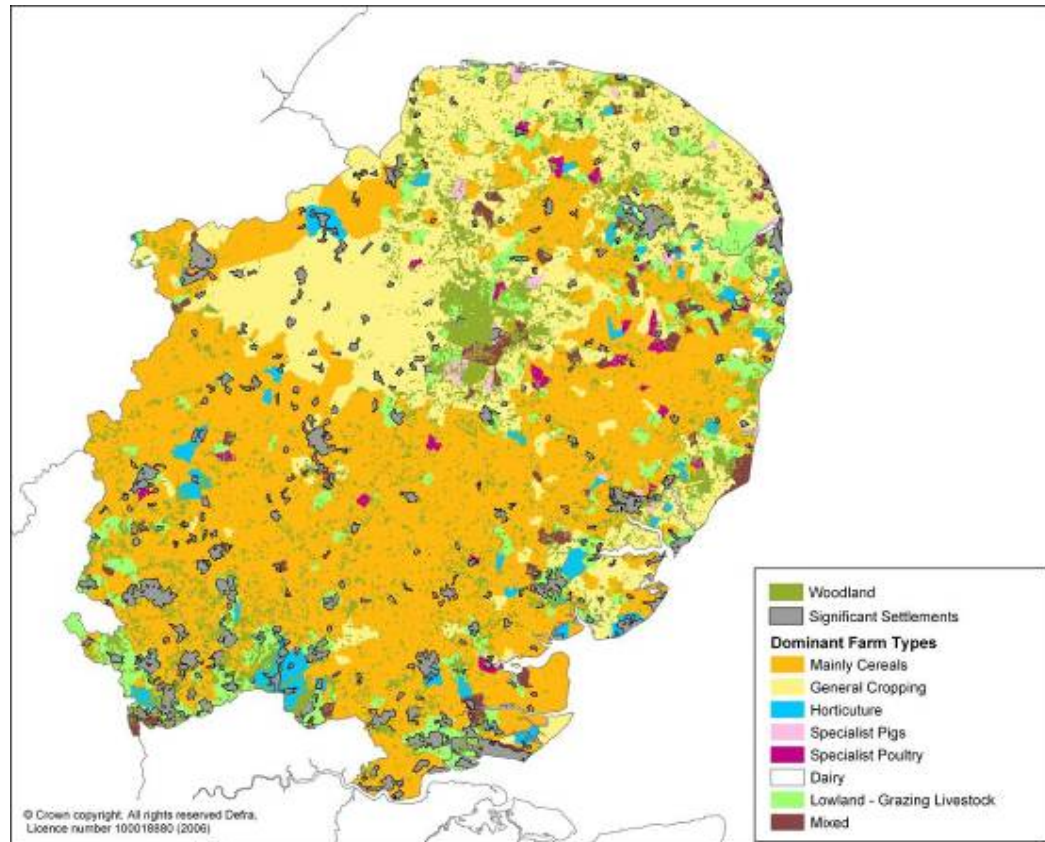
#### **4.8 Ensuring Equality and Diversity**

- 4.8.1 In delivering the programme, steps will be taken to ensure equality and diversity is achieved. This will include treating customers fairly, inclusively and with equal access to services and information.
- 4.8.2 Each of the delivery partners have their own policies and procedures on ensuring equality and diversity, which will apply to the delivery of RDPE. They will be developing a more complete policy which will specifically ensure equality and diversity issues are addressed in delivery of RDPE. This will be specified in further iterations of regional implementation plans.

## Annex A

### Map 1 – Predominant Farm Types

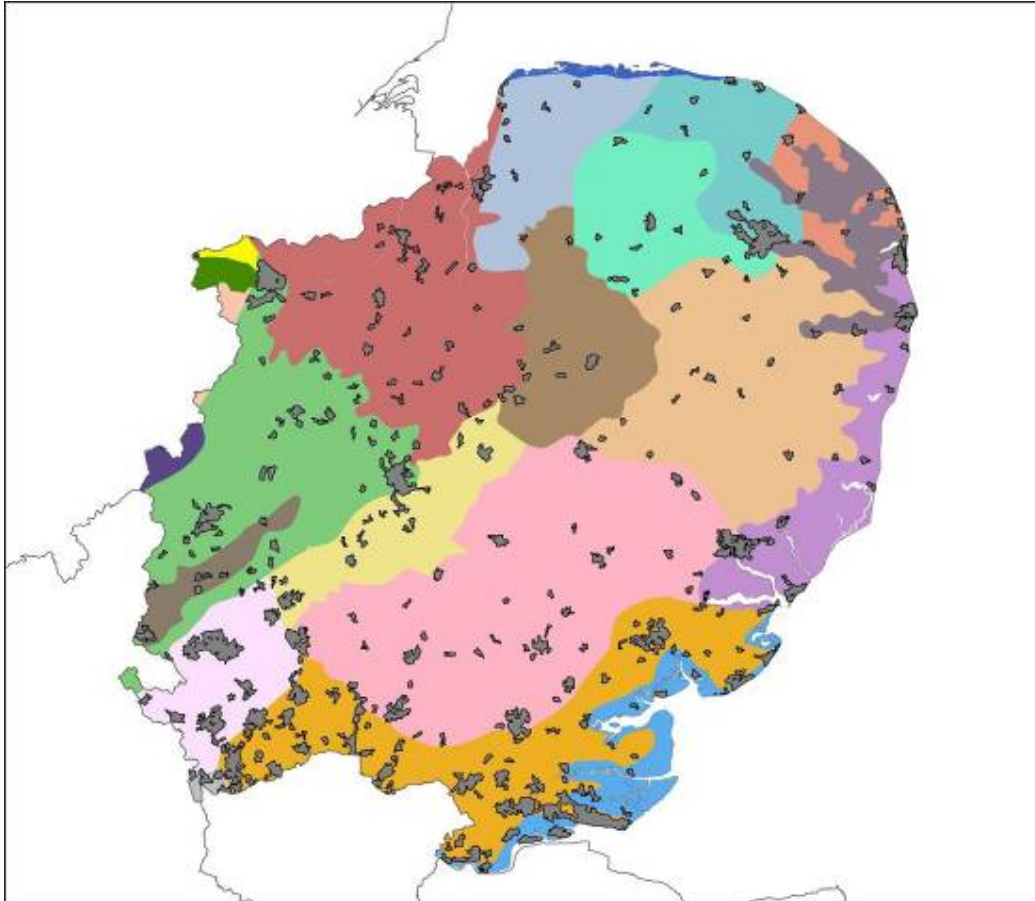
This map shows the predominant farm type in each parish and clearly illustrates the diversity of farming across the region, both on a regional and a much more local scale. The very local variation is mainly a function of soil and topographic characteristics which favour particular land uses, and is important in identifying the need for thematic as well spatially driven interventions when targeting farming-related economic development.



## Map 2 – Landscape Character

Joint Character Areas (JCAs) describe and map differences in 159 landscape and habitat character areas across England and will be used by Natural England to help to ensure that applicants for Environmental Stewardship adopt measures which are appropriate to their specific local landscape character. The region contains 30 JCAs which illustrates the diversity of its landscape character.

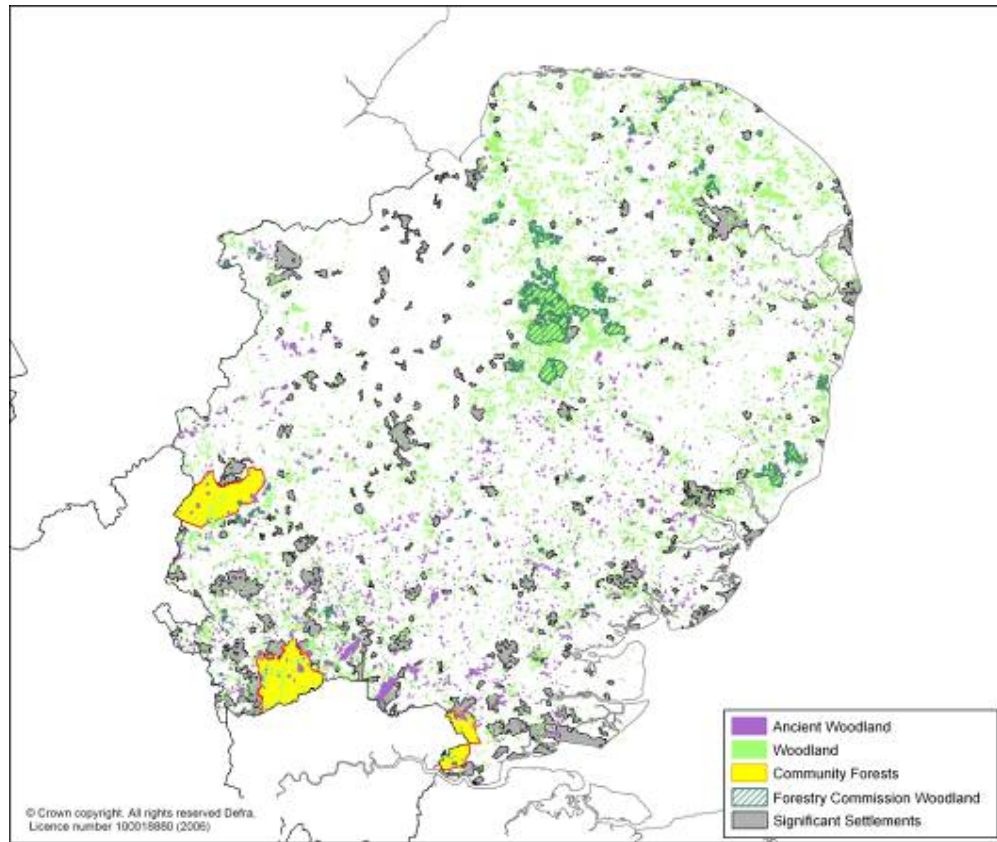
In taking the regional implementation forward, the delivery partners will work to ensure that the special quality of these areas is protected and enhanced.



### Map 3 – Woodlands and Forests

The region contains a large number of small woodlands, with some larger forested areas around Thetford, near the Suffolk coast and in the London Green Belt. The woodlands, with the exception of those around Thetford and the Suffolk coast, are predominantly broadleaved. The percentage of ancient woodland is slightly higher than the national average.

The presence of the many small and dispersed areas of woodland helps define much landscape diversity, but is a significant challenge in co-ordinating work within the sector. About 70% of the woodland area is privately owned with Forest Enterprise owning or managing 20%. The Community Forests adjacent to some of the region's key growth areas present further large opportunities to develop links between woodland, public access and landscape enhancement.

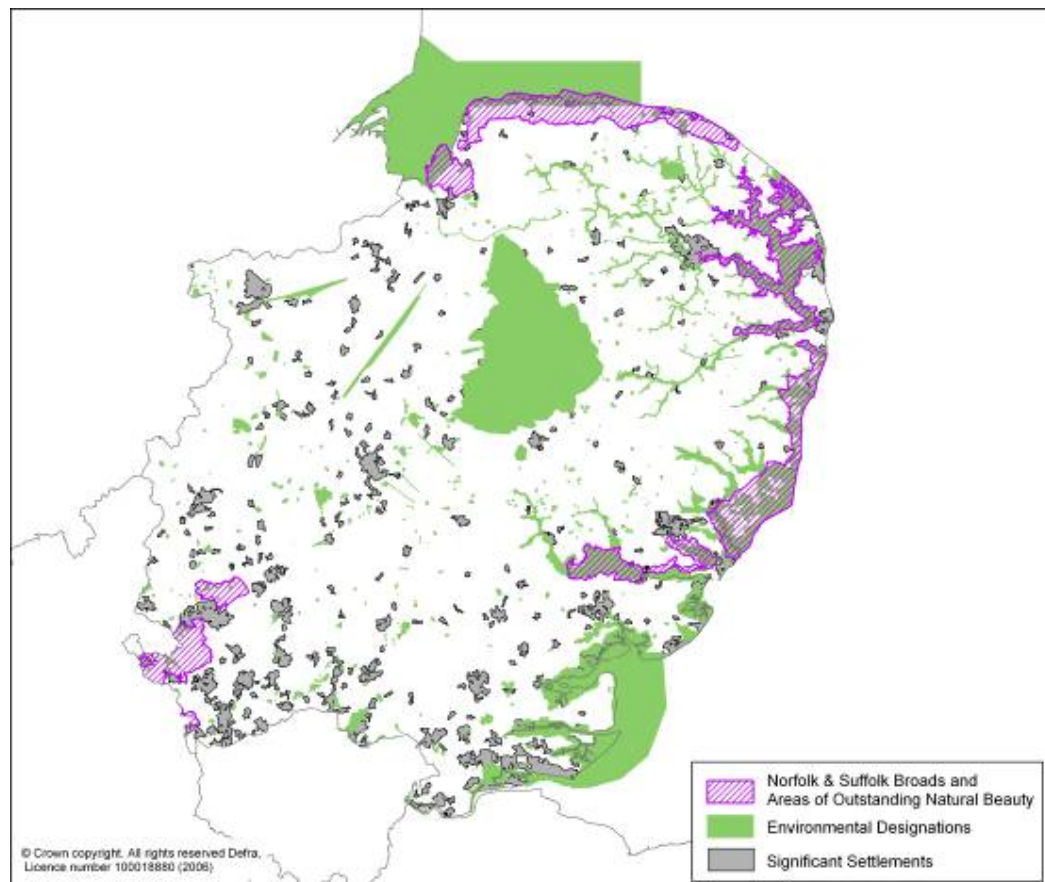


#### Map 4 – Environmental Assets

The region contains many designated landscapes and habitats. These are not only important in their own right as valued and protected landscapes, but also provide drivers for initiatives that deliver:

- Economic growth through better quality local employment in sustainable enterprises, including farming, forestry, tourism and leisure services;
- Contributions to healthy, inclusive communities through promotion of countryside access and recreation for all.

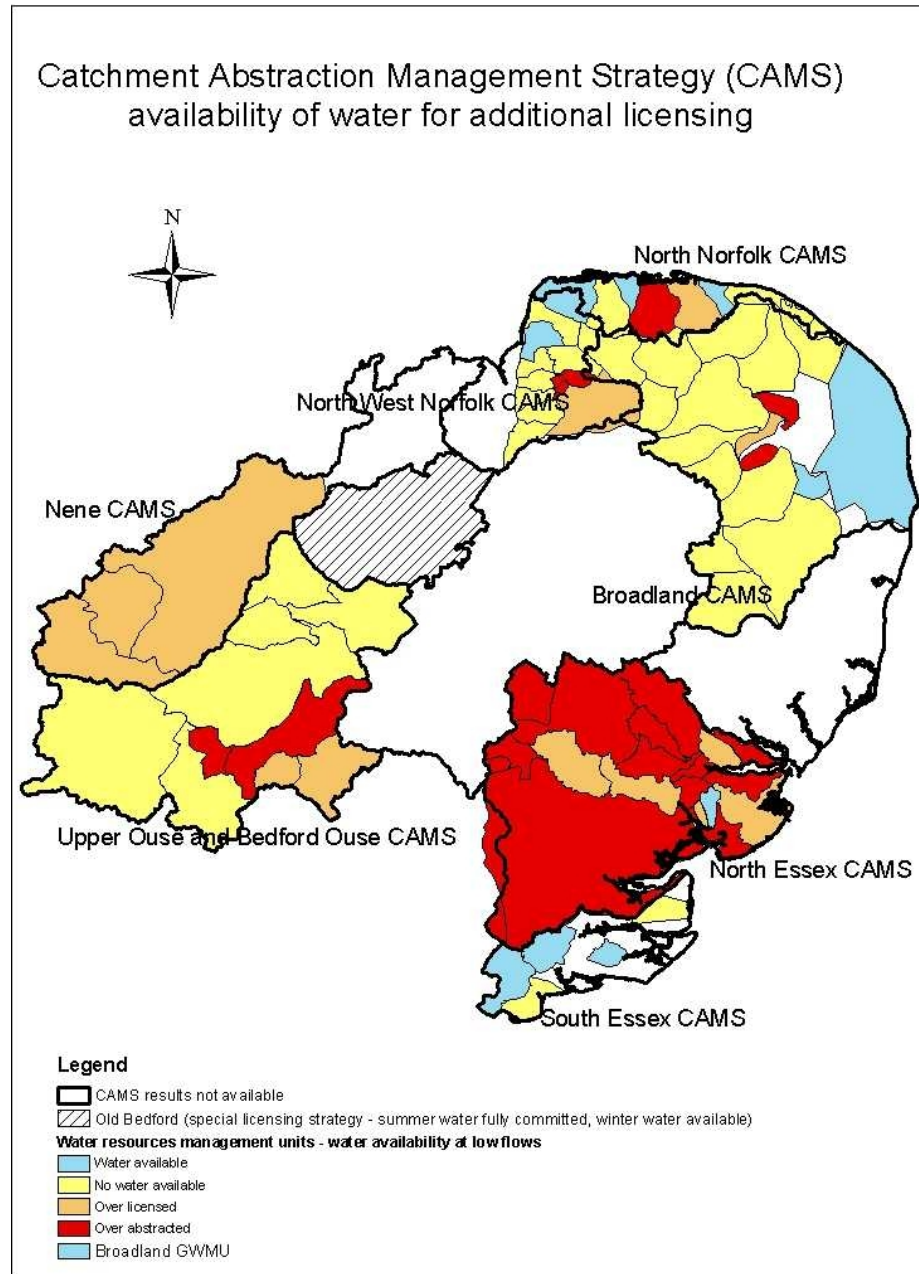
The aim is a region where natural and built environmental assets are protected and enhanced, where the impacts of climate change are addressed, and where natural resources are used efficiently to deliver sustainable economic development and an improved quality of life, accessible to all.



### Map 5 – Water Resources

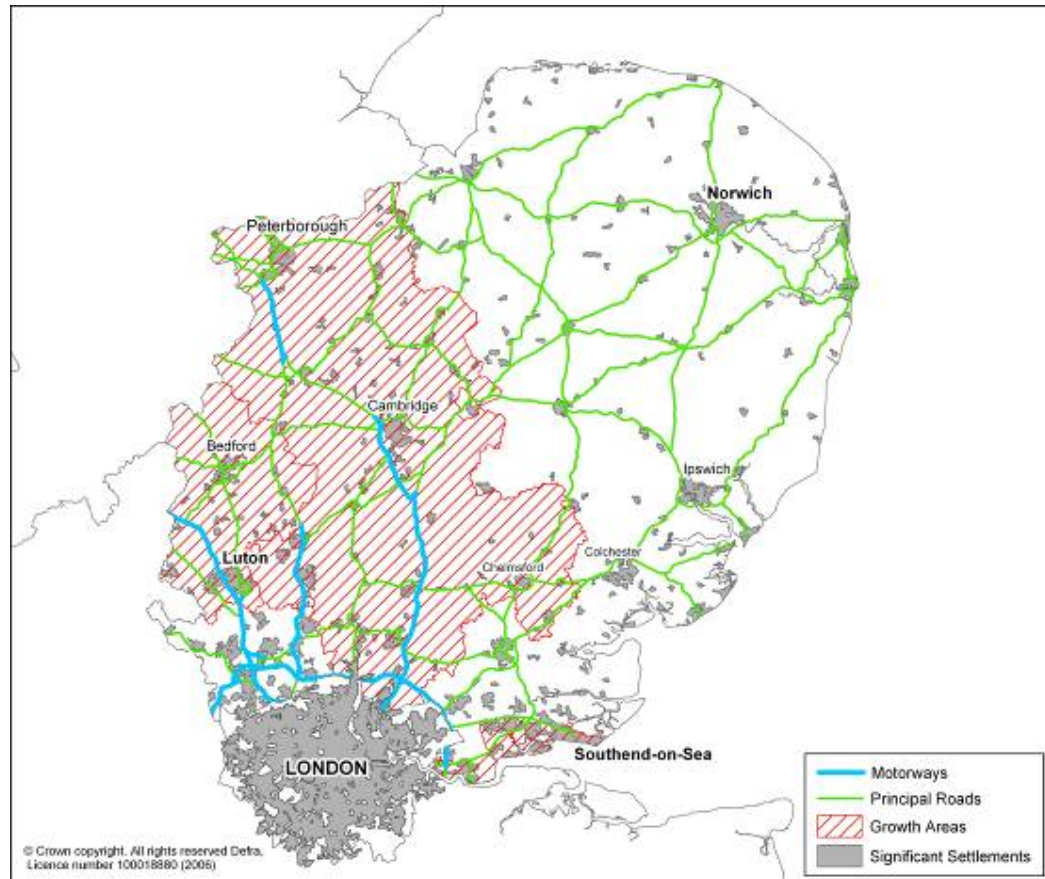
The region's water resources are under severe pressure due to climate change, increasing use by the existing population and the prospect of significant regional population and household increases.

This map is based upon Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) work which has considered where water may be available for abstraction.



## Map 6 – Urban Populations, Infrastructure and Growth

The region is facing significant growth over the coming years, which will impact more widely on the rural economy and landscapes. Large areas of the region do not contain major urban centres and this increases their reliance on the many small Market Towns within the region.



## Annex B: Relationship between RIP themes and RDR measures.

| RIP Theme   | Measure Code | Axis | RDR measure  |
|---|--------------|------|--|
| <b>1. Business Efficiency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increasing supply chain efficiency within the agri-food and forestry sectors by reducing cost and adding value along the chain;</li> <li>reducing waste arising from the agri food sector;</li> <li>encouraging efficiency in the use of water in the agri-food sector;</li> <li>improving energy efficiency and increasing the uptake of renewable energy.</li> </ul> | 111          | 1    | Vocational Training and information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors (Article 20(a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005) |
|   | 114          | 1    | Use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders (Article 20 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) No 1698/2005)   |
|   | 115          | 1    | Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as of forestry advisory services (Article 20 (a) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 121          | 1    | Modernisation of agricultural holdings (Articles 20 (b) (i) and 26 of Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|   | 122          | 1    | Improvement of the economic value of forests (Article 20 (b) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 123          | 1    | Adding value to agricultural and forestry products (Article 20(b) (iii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 124          | 1    | Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector (Article 20 (b) (iv) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|   | 125          | 1    | Improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry (Article 20 (b) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 311          | 3    | Diversification into non-agricultural activities (Article 52 (a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|   | 312          | 3    | Support for business creation and development (Article 52 (a) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |

| RIP Theme  | Measure Code | Axis | RDR measure   |
|--|--------------|------|---|
| <b>2. New markets and products</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing the markets for, and adding value to existing food farming and forestry products through processing</li> <li>Supporting the creation of new markets and new products within the food, forestry and non food crop sectors</li> </ul> | 111          | 1    | Vocational Training and information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors (Article 20 (a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005) |
|  | 114          | 1    | Use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders (Article 20 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) No 1698/2005)  |
|  | 115          | 1    | Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as of forestry advisory services (Article 20 (a) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 122          | 1    | Improvement of the economic value of forests (Article 20 (b) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 123          | 1    | Adding value to agricultural and forestry products (Article 20 (b) (iii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 124          | 1    | Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector (Article 20 (b) (iv) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 311          | 3    | Diversification into non-agricultural activities (Article 52 (a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 312          | 3    | Support for business creation and development (Article 52 (a) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |

| RIP Theme  | Measure Code | Axis | RDR measure  |
|--|--------------|------|--|
| <b>3. New Businesses and Enterprises in the Rural Economy</b> – by supporting the development of new businesses in the land based sector with the objective of creating new opportunities for the rural population through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• broadening the economic base of rural areas;</li> <li>• diversifying agricultural and forestry sector businesses</li> </ul> | 111          | 1    | Vocational Training and information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors (Article 20(a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005) |
|  | 114          | 1    | Use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders (Article 20 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) No 1698/2005)   |
|  | 115          | 1    | Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as of forestry advisory services (Article 20 (a) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 121          | 1    | Modernisation of agricultural holdings (Articles 20 (b) (i) and 26 of Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 122          | 1    | Improvement of the economic value of forests (Article 20 (b) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 123          | 1    | Adding value to agricultural and forestry products (Article 20(b) (iii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 124          | 1    | Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and in the forestry sector (Article 20 (b) (iv) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 125          | 1    | Improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry (Article 20 (b) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 311          | 3    | Diversification into non-agricultural activities (Article 52 (a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 312          | 3    | Support for business creation and development (Article 52 (a) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 313          | 3    | Encouragement of tourism activities (Article 52 (a) (iii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |

| RIP Theme  | Measure Code | Axis | RDR measure  |
|--|--------------|------|--|
| <b>4. Resource Protection</b> – addressing diffuse pollution, improving the management of water and wastes and improving the management of soils in the agricultural and forestry sectors with the objectives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reducing the environmental impact of both sectors;</li> <li>improving the ecological condition of the rural environment.</li> </ul> | 111          | 1    | Vocational Training and information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors (Article 20(a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005) |
|  | 114          | 1    | Use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders (Article 20 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) No 1698/2005)   |
|  | 115          | 1    | Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as of forestry advisory services (Article 20 (a) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 125          | 1    | Improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry (Article 20 (b) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 214          | 2    | Agri - environment payments (Article 36 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 216          | 2    | Support for non-productive investments (Article 36 (a) (vi) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 221          | 2    | First afforestation of agricultural land (Article 36 (b) (i) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 225          | 2    | Forest environment payments (Article 36 (b) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 227          | 2    | Support for non-productive investments (Article 36 (a) (vi) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |

| RIP Theme  | Measure Code | Axis | RDR measure  |
|--|--------------|------|--|
| <p><b>5. Conservation of the Natural Built and Historic Environment</b> – by supporting land management regimes which balance production with the needs of the landscape, habitat and bio-diversity with the objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintaining existing environmental assets in good condition;</li> <li>improving the condition of environmental assets which have deteriorated;</li> <li>creating new habitats where applicable.</li> <li>adaptation to and mitigation against climate change</li> </ul> | 111          | 1    | Vocational Training and information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors (Article 20(a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005) |
|  | 114          | 1    | Use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders (Article 20 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) No 1698/2005)   |
|  | 115          | 1    | Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as of forestry advisory services (Article 20 (a) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 214          | 2    | Agri - environment payments (Article 36 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 216          | 2    | Support for non-productive investments (Article 36 (a) (vi) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 221          | 2    | First afforestation of agricultural land (Article 36 (b) (i) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 225          | 2    | Forest environment payments (Article 36 (b) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 311          | 3    | Diversification into non-agricultural activities (Article 52 (a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 312          | 3    | Support for business creation and development (Article 52 (a) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|  | 313          | 3    | Encouragement of tourism activities (Article 52 (a) (iii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|  | 323          | 3    | Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage (Article 52 (b) (iii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |

| RIP Theme   | Measure Code | Axis | RDR measure  |
|---|--------------|------|--|
| <b>6. Access and Recreation</b> – opening up new areas of the rural landscape to public access with the objectives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helping communities access their local rural landscape;</li> <li>• promoting accessibility to the countryside for minority and excluded groups;</li> <li>• increasing the economic opportunities provided by commercial access;</li> <li>• increasing public understanding and enjoyment of the rural environment.</li> </ul> | 111          | 1    | Vocational Training and information actions, including diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices for persons engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors (Article 20(a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005) |
|   | 114          | 1    | Use of advisory services by farmers and forest holders (Article 20 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) No 1698/2005)   |
|   | 115          | 1    | Setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as of forestry advisory services (Article 20 (a) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 122          | 1    | Improvement of the economic value of forests (Article 20 (b) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 125          | 2    | Improving and developing infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry (Article 20 (b) (v) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 214          | 2    | Agri - environment payments (Article 36 (a) (iv) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |

| RIP Theme   | Measure Code | Axis | RDR Measure  |
|---|--------------|------|--|
| <b>7. Rural Community Capacity</b> – supporting rural communities to be sustainable with the objectives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping communities identify and address their own needs and aspirations for sustainable development;</li> <li>• Building capacity of rural communities to develop and manage their own assets in a sustainable way and generate economic returns;</li> <li>• Developing links with local businesses and supply chains to benefit the community;</li> <li>• Community activities which develop access to and enhance the environment and countryside.</li> </ul> | 311          | 3    | Diversification into non-agricultural activities (Article 52 (a) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|   | 312          | 3    | Support for business creation and development (Article 52 (a) (ii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|   | 313          | 3    | Encouragement of tourism activities (Article 52 (a) (iii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 321          | 3    | Basic services for the economy and rural population (Article 52 (b) (i) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)   |
|   | 323          | 3    | Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage (Article 52 (b) (iii) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)  |
|   | 331          | 3    | A training and information measure for economic actors operating in the fields covered by axis 3 (Article 52 (c) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005)                  |
|   | 341          | 3    | A skills acquisition and animation measure with a view to preparing and implementing a local development strategy (Article 52 (d) of Reg. (EC) N° 1698/2005) |

Annex C

| National Criteria  | What Leader bids will need to demonstrate at:  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | Expression of Interest stage   | Full Application stage   |
| <p><b>Appropriateness of the partnership</b></p> <p>The partnerships purpose is to deliver an integrated rural development strategy. It is therefore important that, as well as satisfying the private/public sector split in terms of membership, the partnership has a broad representation across social, environmental and economic interests. The bid must provide sufficient assurances that the partnership can define and implement a development strategy for the area (or has the potential to do so with appropriate capacity building support)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of how the partnership meets the requirement that at least 50 per cent of the partnership is non public sector</li> <li>• Broad membership of the partnership to include economic, social and environmental interests</li> <li>• Proposed membership list for the LAG to support the criteria</li> <li>• Contact details for the proposed accountable body</li> </ul> | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of how the partnership will be managed</li> <li>• Details on how the LAG will define its LDS, and any capacity building which will be needed to support this</li> <li>• Roles of all partners in the LAG clearly explained, along with details of their experience, skills and qualifications which are relevant to the delivery of their role within the LAG</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Coherence of the area</b></p> <p>The area must be sufficiently coherent from a geographical, economic and social point of view. The bid should be precise on the geographical area to be covered, including wards and parishes.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why the proposed area was chosen</li> <li>• The key economic, social and environmental features of the area</li> <li>• Reasons for believing the area is coherent</li> <li>• List of wards and parishes</li> <li>• Population of the area (the population of the LAGs must not be less than 5,000 and no more than 150,000)</li> </ul>  | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area described and supported with appropriate detailed information</li> </ul>   |

| National Criteria  | What Leader bids will need to demonstrate at:   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | Expression of Interest stage  | Full Application stage   |
| <p><b>Quality of the LDS</b></p> <p>There should be socio-economic and environmental analyses, with objectives and proposed actions that follow clearly from the evidence.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vision for the LDS which demonstrates a commitment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ collaboration and partnership</li> <li>○ innovation and integration</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How the LDS will meet local needs</li> <li>• Outline the type of targets and outputs the LDS will look to deliver</li> <li>• How the LDS will ensure inclusiveness</li> <li>• The balance of the programme proposed against the measures</li> <li>• How the community will be involved in developing and implementing the strategy</li> </ul> | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fully developed vision for the area &amp; Leader delivery, which demonstrates a commitment to collaboration and partnerships through implementing innovative ways of working</li> <li>• LAG output targets &amp; milestones</li> <li>• A full analysis of the issues facing the local area, with a clear link to the proposed actions which the LDS will implement to address them</li> <li>• A table showing how each key area of proposed action maps onto the RDPE measures, how value for money will be achieved &amp; source(s) of match funding</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Fit with the RDPE</b></p> <p>Partnerships must show how their development plan contributes to the overall objectives of the Rural Development Programme for England.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the LDS is aligned with the RDPE objectives</li> <li>• The measures which the LDS will use and an indicative split of funding per measure per year over the lifetime of the programme</li> </ul>   | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A detailed mapping of proposed activities onto the RDPE</li> <li>• A detailed budget proposal for spend across the measures, with match funding clearly identified</li> </ul>  |

| National Criteria   | What Leader bids will need to demonstrate at:  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | Expression of Interest stage   | Full Application stage   |
| <p><b>Fit with regional priorities</b></p> <p>Partnerships must show how their LDS will support the delivery of the Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) for RDPE. In addition links should be made to other regional strategies and plans as appropriate.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LDS must provide the necessary flexibility to ‘target’ the approach towards regional priorities as outlined in the RIP.</li> <li>• Show how links to relevant regional and sub-regional strategies and Programmes will be developed</li> </ul>  | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly demonstrate how the LDS will address the priorities in regional plans and strategies</li> </ul>            |
| <p><b>Inclusiveness and Equal Opportunities</b></p> <p>Partnerships must show how they will ensure that the development of the LDS is built upon the needs and aspirations of the whole community, and how it will deliver benefits across the community. In addition LAGs need to explain the proposals they have for equal opportunities in the delivery of Leader.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LDS must explain how the LAG will involve the local community in developing and delivering the LDS.</li> <li>• How will the LAG ensure that the projects it supports produce benefits to a wide range of beneficiaries in the rural community, whether businesses, communities or the local environment.</li> <li>• LAGs must demonstrate that they have (or give a commitment to develop) robust policies on equal opportunities which will be applied throughout all the activities supported locally to ensure that no members of the community are discriminated against either deliberately or inadvertently.</li> </ul> | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An action plan to ensure inclusiveness and equal opportunities are central to the operation of the LAG.</li> </ul> |

| National Criteria  | What Leader bids will need to demonstrate at:  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | Expression of Interest stage   | Full Application stage   |
| <p><b>Integration of sustainable development principles</b></p> <p>Proposed strategies should take account of the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and enhance the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the area to be covered;</li> <li>• Ensure that resources will be used in such a way that options available to future generations are not impaired:</li> <li>• Strategies supported must demonstrate that they do not have any significant negative environmental, social or economic impacts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How sustainable development principles will be integrated into the LDS and the delivery of projects</li> <li>• Explain local plans to ensure that resources are used sustainably</li> </ul>   | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sustainability appraisal for the LDS proposed</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Commitment to integration across the three Axes</b></p> <p>Proposed strategies will need to demonstrate how the partnership has the expertise to achieve this integration and what it would mean in practice.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How they will bring about closer working between different sectors in the rural economy</li> <li>• How integrated projects will be developed which simultaneously meet a range of local economic, social and environmental needs</li> <li>• How innovation will be supported</li> <li>• How the LAG will ensure that projects funded by Leader would be integrated with other local projects and initiatives</li> </ul> | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concrete examples of the type of integrated projects which will be delivered by the LAG</li> <li>• A clear identification of other local projects and initiative to which Leader projects will link</li> </ul> |

| National Criteria   | What Leader bids will need to demonstrate at:  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | Expression of Interest stage   | Full Application stage   |
| <p><b>Commitment to cooperation</b></p> <p>It is not a regulatory requirement for all Local Action Groups to carry out co-operation but Article 37.4 of the Implementing Regulation states that Member States “shall seek to ensure that a priority is given to the selection of local action groups which have integrated co-operation into their Local Development Strategies.” Co-operation could be with another group in England, in another part of the UK or in another Member State. Co-operation may take the form of a specific project, or complementary actions such as joint marketing by groups that share a common interest. An example may be the development of joint tourism initiatives based on a shared cultural heritage. If groups are new then a later start to cooperation can be expected. However, all should at least be able to identify the sorts of activity that would benefit from co-operation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas in which cooperation with other LAGs are proposed</li> </ul>  | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed plans, where appropriate, for activities which will be developed in conjunction with other LAGs in the UK or other member states</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Budget</b></p> <p>To be able to manage the regional Leader budget effectively EEDA needs to understand both the total and the budget breakdown which LAGs need to operate effectively. LAGs must also give a commitment to obtain match funding to support the delivery of the LDS.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total budget for the Leader partnership, broken down per annum, by measure and between grant and match funding.</li> <li>• An outline of the source of match funding to be used.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A detailed budget for the Leader partnership which demonstrates clearly how the LAG will achieve a minimum of 50% match funding, with where appropriate, commitments of match funding.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Financial and administrative capacity</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appropriateness of the LAG staff</li> </ul>   | <p>All the requirements in the EoI plus:</p>   |

| National Criteria   | What Leader bids will need to demonstrate at:  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | Expression of Interest stage   | Full Application stage  |
| The strategy will need to demonstrate that appropriate resource exists to implement the strategy. There must be clear evidence supporting the partnership's suitability and competence, including: the capacity of the individuals, their track record and their ability to administer public funds and implement the strategy. | <p>proposed in terms of numbers &amp; skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The indicative revenue costs of running the LAG</li> <li>• Links to existing local structures which will help to defray LAG running costs</li> <li>• The experience of the proposed accountable body in managing public funds</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A full budget for the operational costs of administration of the LAG</li> <li>• An explanation of how finances will be managed and projects selected at the local level</li> <li>• A demonstration of the ability to provide robust audit trails and to administer local projects</li> </ul> |

**Annex D – map of Local Action Groups**

