



SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY of 2007-13 North Wessex Downs LEADER PROGRAMME

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Real local decision making on local priorities; a bottom up approach. -Relatively small amounts of funding have made a real and significant difference to individual businesses and communities. -Experienced / cohesive LAG has made sound decisions. -Several commercial and community projects have struggled to find cost effective ways of accessing affordable finance. The LEADER grants have been essential to successfully achieving their objectives. -Grant making expertise has been excellent. -The LAG is non political – it has a range of interests, expertise and knowledge. -Good momentum has been built up and there has been a strong pipeline of projects. -Wiltshire Council as the Accountable Body (AB) has been supportive; Programme staff, LAG and WC has worked effectively together. -Project holder feedback indicates that support given to applicants by staff and appraiser has been very good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Complexity of application and reporting / administrative processes made grant-making inefficient. -Measures were too restrictive – need to allow more LAG flexibility to meet local needs. -Access to and applications from farmers / land managers have been limited. Need careful targeting. -Changing the goal posts mid-term (e.g. reducing the budget mid-term) created uncertainty and reduced impact. -LAG membership and terms - representation could be better (need to ensure relevant sector and geographic coverage). -LAG meeting attendance of some members less than expected – need to ensure good / consistent representation in decision making. -Same processes and rules for wildly different projects in scale and theme. Administration needs to be more proportional to the grant. -Priorities should have been reviewed over the period of the Programme. -Some delay in the Accountable Body making M&A claims and some duplication of administration between LAG and AB due to the split site working.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Review local priorities / geographic need / objectives and desired outcomes. -Build a more co-ordinated approach to economic, social and environmental priorities – LEPs, RFNs, LNPs, Local Authorities, Parish Plans etc. -Work with other LAGs to improve cost-effectiveness, improve geographic coverage and share best practice etc. -Possible access to other funding streams to maximise targeted rural development funding. -Review governance arrangements e.g. LAG representation, LCG and added value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Engagement with all 4 LEPs (and all other stakeholders) may be difficult / time consuming. Need to continue to take pro-active role and have clear timetable for engagement. -A coherent LAG geography may be undermined by defined population limits, by some LEP objectives for “LEP bounded” LAGs, by and the definition of “rural” and by whether “market towns” can be included or not. -Competition for funding from other (new and existing) LAGs. Need to clearly demonstrate continuing “need” of NWD.