



Vale of Glamorgan RDP Business Plan Round 1 Evaluation

A report by Wavehill Ltd for Vale of Glamorgan Rural Partnership

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In February 2012, Wavehill were commissioned by the Vale of Glamorgan Rural Partnership to undertake an evaluation of the Axis 3 and 4 activities funded as part of Business Plan 1 of the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013.

The Vale of Glamorgan RDP Round 1 programme ran from 2008-2011 and was made up of 11 Axis 3 and 4 projects totalling approximately £2.6m.

Evaluation aims

The principle tasks of the evaluation have been to:

- Confirm all monitoring data is being captured
- Confirm compliance with the Common Monitoring Evaluation Framework
- Evaluate the Creative Rural Communities systems
- Assess the overall success or otherwise of Business Plan 1 projects
- Assess progress against project targets
- Review whether the method of delivery worked (strengths and weaknesses)
- Assess the impact of the programme in the Vale – soft as well as hard outcomes – Have there been any other outcomes beyond the CMEF Performance Indicators? e.g. Other economic and social benefits
- Consider whether the projects worked well collectively / integrate?

Methodological Overview

The methodology applied has been a combination of process and impact based evaluation; reviewing how the projects and business plan were managed and delivered and what the benefits have been to those supported.

Our approach included:

- Documentation and data review
- Compilation of an evaluation framework which outlined the approach to primary research
- Focus group exercise with management and strategic representatives
- One-to-one consultations (either face-to-face or over the phone)
- Telephone surveys (with participants/beneficiaries of a particular project)
- Online surveys (with participants and/or key stakeholders associated with Business Plan Round 1 projects) and
- On site visits (specifically in relation to the Inspire Grant Scheme)

Context

Around 80% of the population within the Vale are eligible for support under the RDP with the programme itself supported by a rural partnership who has the remit of monitoring activities and progress, approving investment and promoting the programme and project activity locally.

Creative Rural Communities (CRC) has taken the lead responsibility for delivering Axis 3 and 4 projects whilst the Vale of Glamorgan Council has provided the role of 'lead body' on behalf of CRC. A Local Action Group comprising 14 local people is responsible for all Axis 4 activities.

Eleven projects were approved through Business Plan 1:

Table 1: Approved Vale of Glamorgan RDP Business Plan 1 Projects

Project	Measure	Value ¹
Tourism Matters Grant Scheme	313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	£350,000
Inspire Grant Scheme	322: Village Renewal and Development	£979,416
Places for Young People	321: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population	£279,765
Heritage Tourism	Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies	£171,067
Rural Community Transport Project/Green Links	321: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population	£232,158
Rural Footpath / Styles Project	323: Conservation and Upgrading of Rural Heritage	£101,722
Rural Bridleways	313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	£51,722
Rural Events Network	313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	£55,901
Inspire the Vale Bursary	Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies	£147,977
Business Networking	313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	£54,977
Visit Vale+ Grant Scheme	Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies	£176,161

Strategic Perspectives on the Vale of Glamorgan RDP

The Creative Rural Communities (CRC) team were widely regarded as being a real asset to the RDP programme within the Vale. Specifically, Partnership members referred to the CRC team's ability to communicate with a wide variety of audiences by overcoming some of the complexities associated with the RDP programme, particularly when disseminating information in relation to schemes, eligibility and points of clarification.

The strategic positioning of the team - considered to be at "arms-length" from the local authority (whilst being conscious that they were employed and line managed from within the local authority) was seen as a real positive for the team, giving a level of independence which enabled more constructive discussions and debate with the Partnership.

Whilst the CRC team are considered as being at arms-length, there was also recognition of the value that the Partnership gained from being able to draw upon the Council's considerable resources (expertise and financial).

¹ Value as illustrated in the Evaluation tender brief

Concerns were largely associated with projects that were managed elsewhere; as it meant that there were multiple contacts with an interest/role in overseeing the delivery of an initiative. It was perceived that on occasion, this perhaps offered additional complexity to the potential users/participants of a project.

The staff were also recognised as being of particularly high quality. Their creativity in approach was acknowledged by many as well as their ability to think on their feet and respond to unforeseen circumstances and situations.

There were concerns however that the short term nature of the programme funding had led to some perceived “tailing off” in levels of delivery from the CRC team towards the end of Round 1.

Project Delivery

In terms of expenditure the Business Plan Round 1 programme has been delivered effectively, falling less than 3% short of expenditure targets with little variance from project to project (aside from the Stone Styles project which suffered a significant shortfall).

The success in expenditure was replicated in the delivery of outputs/indicators with the vast majority being met or surpassed.

Tourism projects in particular were widely praised for their impact, in terms of leveraging in private sector funding and in raising the profile of tourism in the Vale outside of the authority.

Infrastructure investment associated with basic services and village renewal collectively drew almost half of the programme budget. The Places for Young People project was a great success and was reported to be vastly over-subscribed. The renewal of facilities in villages also proved popular. A further significant portion of the budget was targeted in Llantwit Major town centre, whilst visually and from a pedestrian safety perspective, there has been a significant impact; local businesses perceive it to have had little positive influence on trading conditions.

Impact of RDP Investment

Project participants were overwhelmingly positive about the support they'd received and particularly so about the support offered by the Creative Rural Communities team with all projects rating the support from the team as at least 9 out of 10.

Whilst negative feedback was a rarity, respondents were consistent in being least positive about the completion of the application forms, particularly due to their complexity.

Tourism Matters was particularly successful in generating positive impacts for tourism businesses within the Vale, generating in excess of 6,000 tourism visits a year and increasing annual turnover by approximately £145,000.

Similarly the Inspire Grant scheme for community buildings also had a positive impact helping to increase the number of bookings of participant buildings by approximately 1,150 per year.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The RDP Round 1 programme has been delivered effectively with the vast majority of outputs and results met, and in many cases, surpassed with project participants universally positive about the support they have received.

Furthermore, project participants and the Rural Partnership have attributed much of the success of the various projects, to the hard work of the Creative Rural Communities team.

Role of the Rural Partnership

The Rural Partnership appears to be a very useful resource for the benefit of the RDP programme. It has a membership of wide ranging interests and leads to high levels of participation at each meeting with a great deal of interaction and contribution from all attendees.

The Partnership therefore provides multiple roles; a scrutiny role, a role as a steering group and an advisory role, utilising the various specialist expertise which exists amongst the representatives to facilitate the success of the various projects being delivered.

Project Management

A number of project leads and Rural Partnership representatives referred to some issues arising where the project was not led from within the CRC team and where a project did not benefit from a dedicated project manager. The lack of a project manager had in some instances delayed the progression of a project by having insufficient capacity to proactively promote the project or to react to enquiries or issues as they emerged. From a participant's perspective there was a concern that these factors provided some element of confusion as to who was the lead contact.

Recommendation

To include resource for a dedicated project manager for all projects and, where this necessitates a project lead from within the council (for example, rather than within the CRC team), ensure clear lines of communication and clarity in all associated promotion.

Overcoming Bureaucracy

The CRC team appear to have dealt extremely well with overcoming the bureaucracy associated with RDP projects. Streamlining project application forms and rewording points of clarification from the funders are two key methods that were adopted with success. Furthermore, the assistance and support provided to potential participants in applying for grant aid was widely welcomed.

Broadening Success

The rapid response to opportunities for grant aid and similar types of support within the community are welcomed. Whilst a variety of promotional routes have been explored to encourage project participation, many of the projects have secured a significant number of their participants via word of mouth. It is important that RDP resources are invested in those “harder to reach” participants and organisations as well as those that are well-networked. Whilst project promotion can only do so much, it is also important that potential participants of projects are only able to benefit from (for example) grant aid once per project.

Recommendations

That for all RDP projects a clear limit is placed on the scale of support that an organisation / participant can receive.

That the CRC team are targeted with gaining a number of participants “new to RDP” in those schemes where there is a danger of repeat participants from previous RDP funding rounds or from other RDP projects.

Impact Data

The success of the projects delivered as part of the Round 1 programme has perhaps been underplayed and this partly reflects the lack of results and impact data obtained from participants as part of delivery. Whilst this additional data can act as a further burden on project participants and/or interested parties it provides useful evidence to help identify the success of an intervention or to justify its consideration for further investment.

Recommendation

Ensure robust data collection methods are adopted across Axis 3 and 4 projects within RDP Business Plan Round 2.

Consider and Respond to the Strategic Case

Section 6 has begun to explore the latest and emerging evidence of need and opportunity within the rural Vale. It is important that this is explored further, particularly in light of the production of the latest census statistics at the end of the year to ensure that a sound and up-to-date evidence base exists to justify future RDP interventions.

However, the impact and the future need of RDP interventions in the rural Vale should not draw on secondary data alone. The primary research undertaken as part of this evaluation has been overwhelmingly positive about the impact and support associated with the programme. The programme is overseen by a large and diverse Rural Partnership which is an active and enthusiastic guide for the Creative Rural Communities team, which anecdotally, is seen both within the Vale and elsewhere in Wales as being very successful. Were RDP funds to be lost to the Vale it is very unlikely that the goodwill and involvement of the Partnership, combined with the momentum and enthusiasm generated through effective RDP delivery would be maintained to anything like the current level.

1. Introduction

In February 2012, Wavehill were commissioned by the Vale of Glamorgan Rural Partnership to undertake an evaluation of the Axis 3 and 4 activities funded as part of Business Plan 1 of the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013.

The Vale of Glamorgan RDP Round 1 programme ran from 2008-2011 and was made up of 11 Axis 3 and 4 projects totalling approximately £2.6m.

1.1. Evaluation Aims:

The principle tasks of the evaluation have been to:

- Confirm all monitoring data is being captured
- Confirm compliance with the Common Monitoring Evaluation Framework
- Evaluate the Creative Rural Communities systems
- Assess the overall success or otherwise of Business Plan 1 projects
- Assess progress against project targets
- Review whether the method of delivery worked (strengths and weaknesses)
- Assess the impact of the programme in the Vale – soft as well as hard outcomes – Have there been any other outcomes beyond the CMEF Performance Indicators? e.g. Other economic and social benefits
- Consider whether the projects worked well collectively / integrate?

1.2. Our Methodological Approach

Our approach to the evaluation has broadly been split into two elements:

- A process evaluation which will review how the projects and the ‘business plan’ as a whole was managed and delivered focusing on lessons learnt and identifying ‘good practice’ that can be taken forward by future projects; and
- An impact evaluation which will consider what have been the benefits of the projects to those they have been supporting.

Our approach commenced with a review of documentation and management information, particularly in relation to the nature of projects delivered, the value of resource invested and the number of participants benefiting from the investment. This initial analysis informed the budgeting of resource and methodological approach for each of the constituent projects that make up the RDP Round 1 Programme within the Vale.

The findings of the desk research led to the compilation of an evaluation framework which provided detail on the methodological approach proposed, alongside the justification for applying the selected approach to each of the projects within Axes 3 and 4. The evaluation framework can be found in Annex 1 of this report and highlights the adoption of a suite of approaches to the evaluation, namely:

- One-to-one consultations (either face-to-face or over the phone);
- Telephone surveys (with participants/beneficiaries of a particular project);
- Online surveys (with participants and/or key stakeholders associated with Business Plan Round 1 projects); and
- On site visits (specifically in relation to the Inspire Grant Scheme).

1.2.1. Management and Strategic Consultations

Prior to engaging with each of the projects a focus group session was undertaken with the representatives of the Rural Partnership. The study team "piggy-backed" upon an existing Rural Partnership group meeting and held a brief session to get a strategic insight into the success of Business Plan Round 1 and perceptions of the impact of the projects that have been delivered, and the added value of the Creative Rural Communities (CRC) team in managing the delivery of the programme.

The focus group also provided the opportunity to gain an insight into the shaping of the research tools for each subsequent project evaluation. Further insight into the approach to take with each project was informed through consultation with the project lead officers, the majority which were based within Creative Rural Communities. The scoping consultations provided additional insight into the approaches for evaluating each of the projects.

2. Context

2.1. The Rural Development Programme

The projects discussed in this report were funded by the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 (hereafter referred to as the RDP) which is one of the mechanisms by which the Welsh Government is delivering European funded activities which support the countryside and rural communities². The RDP secures EU funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, with Wales managing a budget of roughly £795 million over the lifetime of the programme with about £195 million (25%) coming from Europe. The RDP is organised into four Axes:

- Axis 1: The competitiveness of agriculture and forestry
- Axis 2: The environment and countryside
- Axis 3: The quality of life in rural areas
- Axis 4: The Leader approach: locally based approaches to rural development

In broad terms, the types of activities the RDP supports include working with the countryside and rural communities and, encouraging the sustainable management of agriculture and the environment. The Welsh Government is managing and implementing Axis 1 and Axis 2 activities nationally. Axes 3 and 4, which this evaluation is focused upon, are however being implemented on the basis of Local Authority areas.

The requirements of the Welsh Government for the delivery of the Axes 3 and 4 note that two local governing entities are required: a Partnership to devise and oversee the delivery of a Local Development Strategy (LDS) for Axes 3 and 4 including steering the activities that are being run under Axis 3; and a Local Action Group (LAG) to steer activities that are being run under Axis 4. One of the roles of the Partnership is to appoint a Lead Body (in this case the Creative Rural Communities arm of the Vale of Glamorgan Council) that administers the RDP projects on the Partnership's behalf. This includes working with the projects to monitor the delivery of projects and ensuring that all of the requirements of the funding agreement with the Welsh Government are met.

The projects that will deliver Axes 3 and 4 are the basis for business plans that cover two periods. Business Plan 1 – which is the subject of this evaluation - covered the period 2008-2011 (specific months to be included). Business Plan 2 (currently in the process of being delivered) covers the period March 2011 to the end of December 2013.

² Further information about the Rural Development Plan for Wales can be found here:
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/ruraldevelopment/?lang=en>

Each Axis of the RDP consists of a series of 'measures' under which specific projects can be funded. The measures under Axis 3 are:

- Measure 311: diversification into non-agricultural activities
- Measure 312: support for business creation and development
- Measure 313: encouragement of tourism activities
- Measure 321: basic services to the rural economy and population
- Measure 322: village renewal and development
- Measure 323: conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
- Measure 331: training and information for economic actors operating in the fields covered by Axis 3 (i.e. the measures above).

Axis 4 is used to fund projects eligible under each of the above measures as well as the Axes 1 and 2 measures, the difference being that Axis 4 projects are developed by the LAG to be delivered using the 'Leader approach'³.

Another feature of the RDP is that the European Commission has specified a framework for the monitoring and evaluation of RDP activities across the EU known as the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework or the CMEF for short. That framework (set out in Wales with the Performance Framework: Guidance Notes & Definitions issued by the Welsh Government) sets out a common set of indicators that must be used to monitor the implementation of RDP funded projects. As outlined earlier, analysis of that data was an element of this evaluation. The CMEF also includes a set of 'evaluation questions' that need to be addressed which also formed part of this evaluation and were integrated, where appropriate, into the discussion guides compiled for each project.

2.2. The Rural Development Programme in the Vale of Glamorgan

Within the Vale of Glamorgan, the majority of the area (excluding the urban areas of Barry, Llandough and Penarth) is eligible for RDP monies.

More specifically, the following wards are eligible for support under the RDP within the Vale of Glamorgan, this equates to around 80% of the population within the Vale.

- Peterston-Super-Ely
- Rhoose
- Dinas Powys
- Wenvoe
- Llantwit Major
- Llandow/Ewenny
- Cowbridge
- Sully
- St Athan
- St Brides Major

³ Leader stands for *links between actions of rural development* or, in French, *liaison entre actions de développement rural* (Leader). As its name suggests, it is a method of mobilising and delivering rural development in rural communities, rather than a set of measures to be implemented. Further information regarding the approach is available in the following document - *The Leader Approach: A basic guide* - http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/pdf/factsheet_en.pdf

2.2.1. The Rural Partnership

The rural partnership for the Vale of Glamorgan includes broad representation from 33 partner bodies⁴. Its role, as identified within the Local Development Strategy (LDS) for the Vale is to;

- Develop and review a LDS to target available Axis resources to local areas of need and opportunity
- Monitor and approve reports on progress in implementing the projects that form part of the LDS and identify gaps in provision
- Monitor the activities of the delivery organisation
- Ensure that robust, good value for money and well developed projects are put forward and selected for appraisal and funded, and
- Promote the programmes locally.

2.2.2. Creative Rural Communities

Creative Rural Communities has taken lead responsibility for delivering the Axes 3 and 4 projects, a team of 12 (it is understood that the number of personnel within the team has increased following the commencement of Business Plan Round 2) deliver the projects developed by the Rural Partnership and Local Action Group (LAG – see below).

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has provided the role of ‘lead body’ on behalf of Creative Rural Communities, which includes: taking responsibility for procedural and administrative matters such as employment contracts, discipline and grievance relating to any staff employed on behalf of Creative Rural Communities to deliver the LDS.

2.2.3. Local Action Group (LAG)

The Local Action Group (LAG) consists of a group of 14 local people. As the LAG they are specifically responsible for all Axis 4 activities with representatives of the Creative Rural Communities team attending the LAG as and when required.

2.2.4. LDS Priorities

The vision for the rural Vale, as set out within the Local Development Strategy is for an area where: *“rural communities actively and fully participate and, therefore, benefit fully from the growing prosperity of the region as a whole”*.

⁴ Based on organisations listed on:
http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/working/regeneration/rural_regeneration/about_us/partnership.aspx

To deliver this vision the LDS identifies five thematic areas for delivery:

1. **COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING** - Building the capacity of existing community groups and establishing new community groups within the eligible wards
2. **WOMEN & YOUNG PEOPLE** - Developing the role of the young people and women in community regeneration and enterprise in the Rural Vale
3. **BUSINESS NETWORKING & COOPERATION** – Encouraging businesses in the Rural Vale to cooperate and to develop new and innovative products and services
4. **ACCESS TO AND PROVISION OF SERVICES** – Allowing individuals and businesses in the Rural Vale to have access to all the services that they require
5. **MAKING THE BEST USE OF LOCAL RESOURCES** - Allowing the Rural Vale to make full use and derive the maximum benefit from its local resources.

The project activities that deliver against these thematic areas are set out below. Table 2 below highlights strong alignment to these areas although, perhaps, is limited in terms of specific targeting of support towards women.

2.3. Business Plan Round 1 Projects

The following projects were delivered as part of the Business Plan Round 1 programme:

Table 2: Axes 3 and 4 Projects Vale of Glamorgan RDP Business Plan 1

Project	Measure	Delivered By	Project Outline	Value ⁵
Tourism Matters Grant Scheme	313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	Creative Rural Communities	A grant scheme aimed to improve the sustainability of the tourism industry	£350,000
Inspire Grant Scheme	322: Village Renewal and Development	Creative Rural Communities	A grant scheme split into two elements; Enterprising Community Building (assistance for community buildings) and Village Renewal & Development (support to improve and develop access to basic services)	£979,416
Places for Young People	321: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population	Creative Rural Communities	A grant to support the development of facilities for young people	£279,765
Heritage Tourism	Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies	Creative Rural Communities	A project to brand, improve and market a group of heritage tourism locations	£171,067
Rural Community Transport Project/Green Links	321: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population	Vale of Glamorgan Council	A community transport project	£232,158

⁵ Value as illustrated in the Evaluation tender brief

Project	Measure	Delivered By	Project Outline	Value⁶
Rural Footpath / Styles Project	323: Conservation and Upgrading of Rural Heritage	Vale of Glamorgan Council	Refurbishment and rebuilding of historic stone stiles	£101,722
Rural Bridleways	313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	Vale of Glamorgan Council	Development of bridleways around the Llansannor area	£51,722
Rural Events Network	313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	Vale of Glamorgan Council	The establishment of a network of event organisers and a stock of equipment	£55,901
Inspire the Vale Bursary	Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies	Creative Rural Communities	A bursary scheme for young people to implement their ideas for a business or community enterprise	£147,977
Business Networking	313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities	Creative Rural Communities	Promoting linkages between businesses in the area	£54,977
Visit Vale+ Grant Scheme	Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies	Creative Rural Communities	Grants to support new and innovative tourism products and/or services	£176,161

As the chart on the next page highlights, the scale of funding for each project varied widely, from £50,000 through to close to £1m (it should be noted that these figures relate to the approved values for projects and therefore do not include any subsequent fluctuations in budget size).

⁶ Value as illustrated in the Evaluation tender brief

Figure 1: Spend by Project

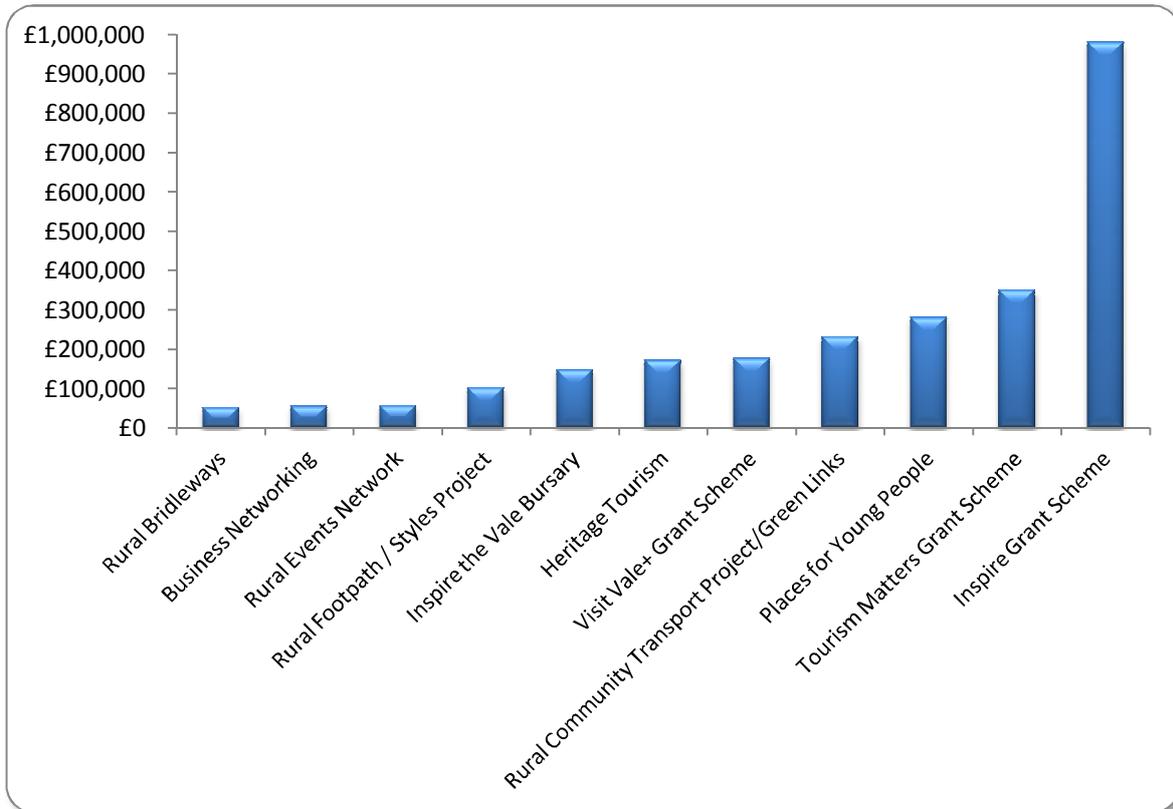
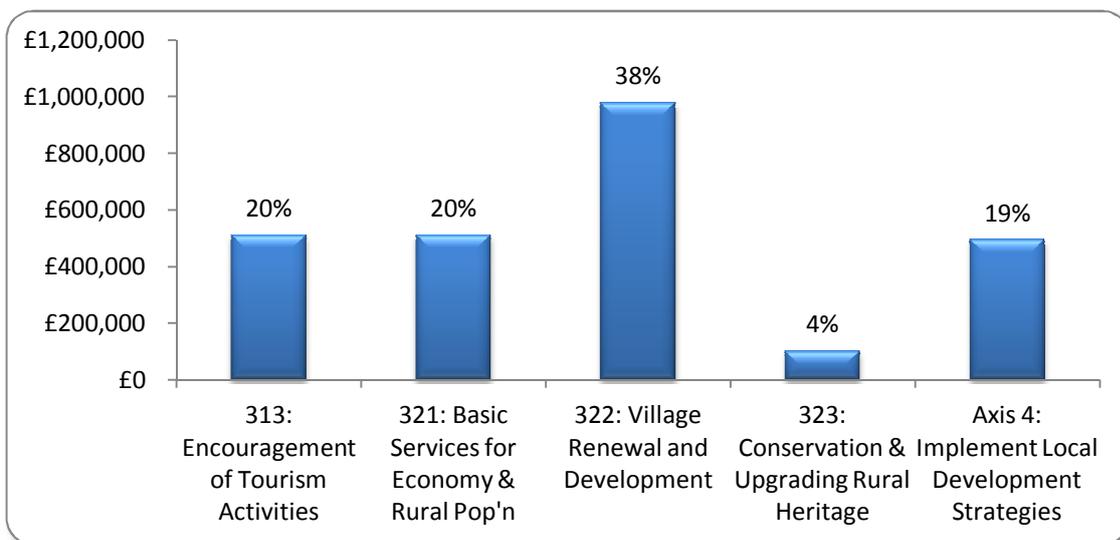


Figure 2 below highlights that whilst just one project sits within Measure 322 (Village Renewal and Development) its value still dominates total spend, even on a measure-by-measure basis (securing 38% of the allocated project spend). Just over £500,000 (20% of the budget) was allocated to projects within Measure 313 with a similar amount allocated to Measure 321: (Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population).

Figure 2: Spend by Measure



3. Strategic Perspectives of Vale of Glamorgan RDP

3.1. Introduction

Members of the Rural Partnership were consulted as part of the workshop/focus group approach to gain their perspectives on the impact and success of the Round 1 Business Plan and also their perceptions on the role and added value of Creative Rural Communities in overseeing (as well as directly) managing the delivery of the Axes 3 and 4 projects in the rural Vale.

3.2. Perceptions of the Creative Rural Communities Team

The Creative Rural Communities (CRC) team were widely regarded as being a real asset to the RDP programme within the Vale. Specifically, Partnership members referred to the CRC team's ability to communicate with a wide variety of audiences by overcoming some of the complexities associated with the RDP programme, particularly when disseminating information in relation to schemes, eligibility and points of clarification. There was also recognition of the team's role in distilling some of the more bureaucratic elements from project application forms or in providing support to help applicants in the completion of these.

There was recognition amongst the Partnership of significant improvement in the performance of the team as the programme has progressed. Initially communication was considered to be fairly narrowly focused but increasingly diverse streams of promotion and communication have been used (including the effective use of social media) which it is perceived has helped to boost the profile of the RDP projects.

The strategic positioning of the team - considered to be at "arms-length" from the local authority (whilst being conscious that they were employed and line managed from within the local authority) was also seen to be a real positive for the team, giving a level of independence which enabled more constructive discussions and debate with the Partnership.

Whilst the CRC team are considered as being at arms-length, there was also recognition of the value that the Partnership gained from being able to draw upon the Council's considerable resources (expertise from amongst the council's personnel rather than specifically financial resources).

There were however some negative elements associated with the relative independence of the CRC team. Concerns were largely associated with projects that were managed elsewhere as it meant that there were multiple contacts with an interest/role in overseeing the delivery of an initiative. It was perceived that on occasion, this perhaps offered additional complexity to the potential users/participants of a project.

The staff themselves were also recognised as being of particularly high quality. Their creativity in approach was acknowledged by many and was seen as important in regards to the refining and support of project development and delivery, as well as their ability to think on their feet and respond to unforeseen circumstances and situations.

There were concerns however that the short term nature of the programme funding had led to some perceived “tailing off” in levels of delivery from the CRC team towards the end of Round 1 (although it was widely recognised that this reflected an inevitable refocus amongst staff towards alternative jobs as their contracts came towards what was perceived to be a potential “end”).

The partnership also felt that the team have been quick to learn, utilising the wide ranging and diverse expertise contained within the Rural Partnership to add value to the effectiveness of project delivery.

4. Project Delivery and Achievements

This section discusses the activities, outputs, results of the Axes 3 and 4 projects (the net additional impact of the projects is explored within Section 5) undertaken as part of the RDP Business Plan Round 1 programme in the Vale of Glamorgan. It draws upon the monitoring data reported by projects as well as interviews with businesses and individuals supported.

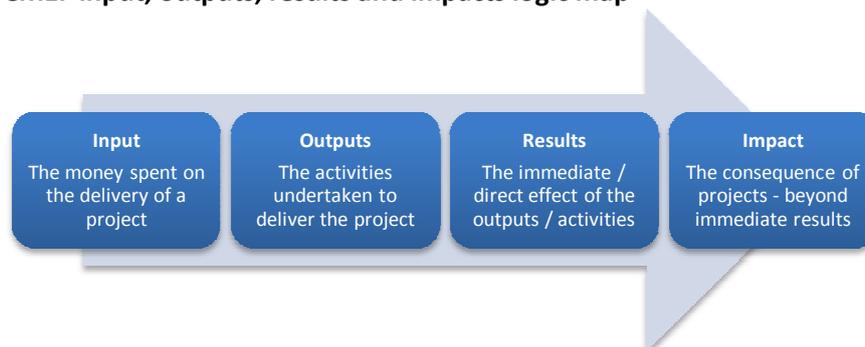
Summary of key findings

- In terms of expenditure the Business Plan Round 1 programme has delivered effectively falling less than 3% short of expenditure targets with (aside from the Stone Styles project which suffered a significant shortfall) little variance from project to project.
- The success in expenditure was replicated in the delivery of outputs/indicators with the vast majority being met or surpassed.
- Tourism projects were widely praised for their impact, in terms of leveraging in private sector funding and in raising the profile of tourism in the Vale outside of the authority.
- Infrastructure investment associated with basic services and village renewal collectively drew almost half of the programme budget. The Places for Young People Project was a great success and was reported to be vastly over-subscribed. The renewal of facilities in villages also proved popular.

4.1. Introduction

A Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) was developed by the European Commission to provide a framework for the monitoring and evaluation of all the rural development schemes that it funds during the 2007-2013 period including the RDP in Wales. At the heart of the CMEF and the accompanying 'performance framework' developed by the Welsh Government for the RDP is a 'logic map'⁷ as illustrated below.

Figure 3: The CMEF input, outputs, results and impacts logic map



In line with the above model, this section will consider the input, outputs, results and impacts that have been generated by the Business Plan 1, Axes 3 & 4 projects in the Vale of Glamorgan.

⁷ Logic mapping is a systematic and visual way of presenting the key steps required in order to turn a set of inputs into activities that are designed to lead to a specific set of changes or outcomes. It is also a process for identifying the indicators (i.e. evidence) that are going to be collected to demonstrate what the scheme has achieved. The process is referred to by a number of different terms including "outcome mapping", developing "programme logic", "intervention logic", "programme theory" and "theory of change" all of which refer to essentially the same process.

4.2. Inputs – Project-by-Project Expenditure

Table 3 below outlines the original funding position for each of the Business Plan Round 1 projects and the final financial position for these.

Table 3: Vale of Glamorgan Business Plan 1 – Final Financial Position

	Funding Letter Details				Final Financial Position				
	Total Project	RDP	Match		Total Project	RDP	Match	Overall Underspend	Percentage Underspend
Tourism Matters	£505,909	£314,561	£191,348		£498,425	£309,907	£188,518	£7,484	1.5%
Inspire	£1,106,597	£768,416	£338,182		£1,098,466	£762,769	£335,697	£8,131	0.7%
Places for Young People	£301,397	£214,765	£86,632		£295,454	£208,943	£86,511	£5,943	2.0%
Heritage Tourism	£194,846	£146,852	£47,994		£194,846	£146,852	£47,994	£0	0.0%
Greenlinks Bus	£186,158	£143,543	£42,615		£191,068	£143,258	£47,810	£-4,910	-2.6%
Stone Stile Restoration	£101,722	£81,377	£20,345		£55,910	£44,722	£11,188	£45,812	45.0%
Bridleways	£34,222	£27,377	£6,845		£31,004	£24,798	£6,206	£3,218	9.4%
Rural Events Network	£43,401	£34,721	£8,680		£43,401	£34,721	£8,680	£0	0.0%
Inspiring the Vale Bursaries	£135,375	£108,296	£27,079		£131,955	£105,560	£26,395	£3,420	2.5%
Business Networking	£67,579	£54,063	£13,516		£57,832	£46,266	£11,566	£9,747	14.4%
Visit Vale +	£167,339	£130,919	£36,420		£163,254	£126,983	£36,271	£4,085	2.4%
Total	£2,844,545	£2,024,890	£819,655		£2,761,615	£1,954,778	£806,837	£82,930	2.9%

The table highlights that the Business Plan Round 1 programme broadly spent to profile (with the total spend falling less than 3% short of profile) with the only significant shortfall in spend incurred on the Stone Stile restoration project. It is reported that the underspend on this project reflected a lower than anticipated cost per stone stile and that the procurement for the stone stile works only took place in 2011 thereby allowing insufficient time to reallocate the budget.

4.3. Project Delivery

To gain further insight into each of the Axes 3 and 4 projects delivered as part of Business Plan 1 a series of scoping and subsequent consultations were undertaken with the project officer leads for each project, in addition to the inclusion of a strategic perspective of project performance in each measure, offered by Rural Partnership representatives.

4.3.1. Measure 313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities

Across the partnerships there was a lot of praise for the success of the tourism schemes and a perception that these had, in turn, led to both an increase in the scale of usage of facilities and also of raising awareness of the Vale as a visitor destination. Specifically the presence of the Vale on the front of a recent Visit Wales magazine was cited as evidence of an increased awareness of the Vale as a viable tourist destination.

The grant based tourism schemes; it was felt, had levered in significant private sector investment and in doing so, had offered good value for money and a high rate of return. There were concerns however of the extent of market failure that may exist amongst tourism businesses and therefore to what extent some of the upgrades undertaken may have happened regardless of the need for additional investment.

Tourism Matters Project

Project Summary

The Tourism Matters project provided grant support to improve the sustainability of the tourism industry in the rural Vale of Glamorgan by raising the quality of facilities, improving accessibility of individual tourism products and improving the performance of tourism businesses & attractions. The project aimed to encourage visitors to stay longer and return more often and thereby support the local economy and environment. The scheme offered grants of up to £10,000 to tourism businesses & attractions located within the rural Vale. The maximum grant rate was 75%. The priority for grants would be projects which, inter alia, add value to the area's tourism product, promote wellbeing and outdoor activities.

It is understood that latent demand existed within the tourist sector within the Vale for grant support of this nature and that the CRC team were inundated with grant related enquiries from the start of the project.

The flood of enquiries and subsequent grant applications created pressure on the project officer appraising the applications who had to manage this caseload. In responding to the level of demand there was felt to be less scrutiny than there would have liked to have been of the project applications. Some organisations also exploited the opportunity of returning for additional, subsequent grant aid later within the project.

In hindsight it was felt by the team that a more strategic approach could perhaps have been applied to the project, enabling a more considered assessment of grant applications and (perhaps) greater return on the level of grant invested. There was awareness that the grant scheme was filling a gap in the market (in terms of grant funding of this particular scale, targeted at this particular sector) but the level of demand for this grant support was perhaps under-estimated. In addition, it was felt a more strategic approach could have helped encourage participant businesses to network more, particularly where they were operating in a similar market and where, collectively there could be opportunity for collaboration to offer a more varied deal that may lengthen a visitor's stay (for example with B&Bs and hotels coming together for walking holidays).

Table 4 outlines the project's performance against key outputs and results and identifies that the project delivered close to, or surpassed targets. The greater than anticipated levels of demand are reflected in the returns relating to the number of enterprises assisted and the number of projects supported. The gross number of visitors to projects that have been supported were far in excess of the anticipated target, the subsequent primary research (see Section 5) provides further details on the results and impacts of these interventions.

Table 4: Tourism Matters – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of projects for the development and/or marketing of rural tourism services financially supported	7	6
Number of enterprises advised or assisted to develop and/or market a rural tourism product	25	44
Number of small scale tourism infrastructure projects financially supported	7	6
Number of local recreational infrastructure projects financially supported (as a means of encouraging tourism)	9	28
Number of enterprises introducing changes that enhances the environment or improves sustainability (Level 3)		4
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability	5	5
Number of marketing and promotional activities undertaken	5	13
Results		
Number of new or improved products, processes or services launched		3
Number of new products or services launched	14	15
Gross number of visitors to a tourism project that has been supported	13,000	224,533
Gross number of jobs created	1	1

Rural Bridleways

Project Summary

This project developed bridleways around the Llansannor area with the aim of opening up areas of bridleways to promote both active living and tourism. Improvements to infrastructure sought to provide the additional benefit of helping the wider community to access the countryside as the route will be stile and step free. The project also sought to improve links between the rural communities of Craig Penllyn, Llansannor, City and Ystradowen. Works will include the provision of bridle-gates, surface improvements, vegetation clearance, information boards and a promotional leaflet.

The project was led by the Vale of Glamorgan Council with the support of the CRC team. The focus was on a nest of restricted byways where it was recognised that they could be linked together to create two small circular routes. It is reported that more could have perhaps been achieved were a dedicated officer in place for the project. A further constraint cited was the poor weather which often served to inhibit progress in the creation of the bridleways however the relatively long project timescales provide sufficient scope for slippage without impacting upon overarching project spend.

The performance indicator table below highlights that the project delivered to target (at least) across all performance indicators

Table 5: Rural Bridleways – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of local recreational infrastructure projects financially supported	1	1
Number of marketing and promotional activities undertaken	1	2
Number of interpretive material produced	1	1
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability	1	1
Results		
Gross number of visitors to a tourism project that has been supported	300	410
Number of new markets accessed	1	1

Rural Events Network

Project Summary

This project established a Rural Events Network and purchased a stock of small equipment required by organisers of rural events. The network will provide an opportunity for event organisers to access advice and share best practice, whilst the stock of equipment provided the opportunity to add value and an increased sense of professionalism to events within the rural Vale. It was hoped that this investment would lead to an increased number of events and an increased scale of attendance at events.

The promotion of the Rural Events Networks is reported to have been one of the key factors in driving the success of the project. A variety of local promotional routes were adopted including active promotion within the local press, which had a snowball effect in terms of organisation enquiries and interest. However, a lack of dedicated staff resource to the project did create challenges in terms of monitoring and managing the hire of the equipment and unfortunately some of the equipment got damaged. It is reported that the subsequent utilisation of a warehouse to store equipment has helped to address this.

The level of demand for the hire of equipment was greater than anticipated and as the project has grown it has become apparent that a clearer eligibility statement should have been put in place, unfortunately this has meant that a handful of organisations that are profit making and therefore ineligible for the project had in fact utilised the equipment available for hire. An eligibility statement has now been put in place to close this loophole as the project continues within Round 2 of the Business Plan.

The table below illustrates the success of the project in surpassing anticipated membership numbers and also the success in terms of promotional activity related to the project. In terms of results, the project over achieved on visitor numbers mainly as a result of a number of large community groups forming part of the network.

Table 6: Rural Events Network – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of enterprises advised or assisted for the development/marketing of tourism projects	20	48
Number of interpretive materials produced	1	2
Number of marketing & promotional activities undertaken	8	15
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability	1	1
Results		
Gross number of visitors to a tourism project that has been supported	5,200	16,650
Number of new products or services launched	1	1
Number of individuals accessing new services & facilities	14	54

Business Networking (The project was subsequently moved to Measure 313: Developing Tourism Activities)

Project Summary:

This project aimed to provide a lead role in developing linkages between businesses in the rural Vale operating within a similar sector to maximise added value. It was hoped that networks created through the scheme would then be able to tap into Tourism Matters grants.

The project it is reported, faced challenges in relation to attracting private sector investment (in terms of the level of time committed) to the project, without a dedicated project manager assigned to the project it was felt that there was insufficient resource to drive the success of this initiative, it was felt that the private sector needed to see what was in it for them and this demanded specific resource. The constraints associated with the business support measure that project originally operated under meant that the team were not initially allowed to promote any tourism related businesses or large businesses and this was reported to have been very limiting.

One specific network was particularly successful – the Vale Golf Breaks (which now has its own website), and particularly so following the projects move to the tourism measure, however, other networks have struggled a little to replicate this success.

Table 7 below illustrates fluctuating performance against target; this reflects the fact that the project's success was largely centred upon one network, hence the significant over-achievement against the number of enterprises advised and engaged but underachievement against the number of groups engaged.

Table 7: Business Networking – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of new and existing micro enterprises advised and assisted	32	56
Number of consultation exercises undertaken	4	8
Number of women participating in the project	7	40
Number of marketing & promotional activities undertaken	15	11
Results		
Number of enterprise groups, cooperative and producer groups or formal networks created	0	1
Number of groups engaged	10	5
Number of projects developed	2	4
Number of markets potentially accessed	3	2

4.3.2. Measure 321: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population

The Rural Partnership were universal in their praise for the Places for Young People grant scheme in particular, which reportedly it was felt could have been spent four times over. The process of community consultation was also cited as an important element of project activity and was said to aid community cohesion and active participation in some areas.

Places for Young People grants

Project Summary

The 'Places for Young People' grant scheme offered grants of up to £40,000 (with a maximum intervention rate of 75%) for the development of young people's facilities in the rural Vale of Glamorgan. Examples of projects funded under this theme include play areas, youth shelters, other recreational facilities such as skateboard ramps/adventure play areas, multi-use facilities and I.T facilities specifically targeted at young people. The cornerstone of this project is the requirement for the applicant to involve young people (up to 30 years old) in project development and need identification.

A key element of this project was the initial support provided to groups looking to apply for the grant helping to build the confidence to submit an application, it is reported that many applicants felt they would have been unable to apply for the grant without the support they received from the CRC team.

The claim form for this project was also said to be particularly bureaucratic with the CRC team having to simplify the language and approach in the form which led to its reduction in length from seven pages to four.

Encouraging and in some cases facilitating wider community consultation with emerging applicants was said to be particularly important as in some instance what the core applicant group sought did not necessarily always reflect the desires of the wider community. Support was also provided by the CRC team to engage and consult with young people to ensure that the schemes sought reflected their desires as well as those of the adult community. The types of projects supported included a gazebo for events, mobile skate equipment which could be transported around the rural areas and also the refurbishment of play areas.

The table on the next page highlights that the project, in the main, achieved or surpassed most of the target outputs and results. The greatest overachievement was gained against the number of individuals accessing services and facilities, this is a reflection on methodological approach (which incorporated a multiplier as part of the calculation) as well as on greater achievement than anticipated.

Table 8: Places for Young People Grants – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of projects relating to basic services for the economy and the rural population financially supported	6	9
Number of consultation exercises undertaken	6	9
Number of participants in consultation exercises undertaken in the development of a project	n/a	
Number of marketing & promotional activities undertaken	6	6
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability	1	0
Results		
Population in rural area benefiting from improved services	26,264	26,264
Number of new services/facilities available to the rural population	3	8
Number of existing services & facilities sustained	3	1
Number of individuals accessing services & facilities	2,000	22,034

Rural Community Transport / Green Links

Project Summary

A demand responsive community transport project for the young, old, tourist and community groups in the rural Vale. The project was designed to add value to existing public and community transport provision in the rural Vale.

It is reported that the project has benefited from a large amount of promotion which has driven demand for the usage of the Green Links bus. Whilst the service was set up for a wide variety of groups it is reported that the service has been more of a community transport vehicle for those unable to travel independently (particularly the elderly and/or infirm). In addition by attempting to serve the entire rural Vale the vehicle has struggled to get significant numbers to travel with the transport often used by one or two people at a time and typically used to take people to and from the hospital (for example) with the destination often being outside the rural Vale, in Bridgend. The project is also said to have suffered from a lack of appropriate record keeping with most evidence captured in hard copy, staff changes have led to the team exploring how best to interpret and relay this information in electronic form.

The table below highlights a number of outputs and results the key indicators suggest an over achievement on promotional activities and that the project came close to target in terms of the number of individuals accessing services and facilities.

Table 9: Rural Community Transport / Green Links – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance Indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of projects relating to basic services for the economy and the rural population financially supported	1	1
Number of marketing and promotional activities undertaken	2	6
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability	1	1
Results		
Number of new or improved services/facilities available to the rural population	1	1
Population in rural area benefiting from improved services	36,727	36727
Number of individuals accessing services and facilities	800	741

4.3.3. Measure 322: Village Renewal and Development

There was significant praise amongst the Partnership for the grants towards community buildings with many citing the significance of the impact derived from investment in these facilities. Again, the process of community consultation was cited as an important element of project activity and was said to aid community cohesion and active participation in some areas.

Inspire Grant Scheme

Project Summary

The Inspire Grant Scheme project was split to deliver projects under the following themes:

- **Enterprising Community Buildings** - This element of the scheme provided grant aid to support community facilities to become more sustainable, thus adding to the economic asset of the area. Capital and limited revenue funding were made available to community facilities who wished to deliver projects which benefited the community. The aim of the investment was on increasing revenue and promoting the opportunity for entrepreneurial activity in community facilities, which in turn would support long term sustainability.
- **Village Renewal & Development** - This element of the Inspire scheme aimed to improve and develop access to basic services to rural communities. Local communities were to be assisted to develop projects that included improvements to village amenities and other small scale capital investments.

The Community Buildings element of the scheme was deemed to be particularly successful; this was reported to be, in part, due to the fact that the team had existing relationships with some of the community halls in the rural Vale.

The Village Renewal and Development element of the project is reported to have generated less interest, with a number of small scale initiatives throughout the rural Vale generally associated with notice boards, a wildlife garden and other schemes of a similar scale. There was one anomaly however, a public realm regeneration project in Llantwit Major which itself secured c.£260,000 of funding to install new paving, a new seating area and new planters along Boverton road in the centre of the town.

The performance indicator table on the next page reiterates the reported success of the project in terms of key outputs and results, further research in relation to the impact of the project is set out within section 5.

Table 10: Inspire Grants Scheme – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of villages where renewal and development projects have taken place	14	23
Number of projects relating to village renewal and development financially supported	25	38
Number of consultation exercises undertaken	0	33
Number of participants in consultation exercises undertaken in the development of a project	N/A	965
Number of groups advised or assisted to develop projects relating to village renewal and development	27	29
Number of awareness raising events held	28	29
Results		
Number of new services and/or facilities available to the community as a result of actions supported	9	9
Number of new products or services launched	2	7
Number of existing services & facilities sustained	19	22
Population in rural area benefiting from improved services	36,726	36,726

4.3.4. Measure 323: Conservation and Upgrading of Rural Heritage

The Partnership felt that the rural footpaths/stiles scheme (the only one within this measure) formed an important role in the preservation of the rural Vale's heritage. However, whilst the Partnership welcomed the initial cost savings arising from the procurement process for the project, there were concerns raised regarding the quality (and therefore sustainability) of the stiles and also the shortfall of spending incurred. Furthermore, proposals were also made for kissing gates to create access for the less able but it is reported that some farmers refused to have these on their land.

Rural Footpaths/Stiles

Project Summary

This project aimed to secure the continued existence of the historic stone stiles which are such a distinctive feature of the landscape of the Western Vale. Refurbishment and rebuilding were undertaken using traditional techniques and materials in a sympathetic way. Kissing-gates were planned for installation next to the stiles where possible to improve access to the wider community.

The procurement process on the stiles project resulted in the award of the works to a contractor at a much lower cost than anticipated. Further challenges emerged when it was found that not all landowners were equally willing for the installation and upgrade of stiles on their land.

As the project progressed it also became apparent that landowners were unwilling to have kissing gates placed on their land (which would have made pathways more accessible to the less abled). The project officers felt that with hindsight perhaps a more detailed research of need should have been undertaken however there is limited scope for this when there is no ultimate guarantee of funding for this measure.

The general lack of willingness amongst landowners for kissing-gates (and to a lesser extent stiles) combined with the lower than anticipated costs for the construction of the stiles limited the ability to spend the entire project budget. The project ultimately closed with an underspend of £45,000, equivalent to 45% of the project budget.

Whilst the majority of outputs and results illustrated on the following page offer little insight into the success of the project, the one return of note is the far higher than anticipated number of users of the routes (captured through the use of a pedestrian counter). This may have simply been an underestimate but nevertheless provides a useful insight into the popularity of pedestrian routes within the rural Vale.

Table 11: Rural Footpath/Stiles - Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of studies undertaken relating to the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the rural heritage	1	1
Number of projects in support of maintaining, restoring or upgrading the rural heritage financially supported	1	1
Results		
Number of marketing and promotional activities undertaken	1	1
Number of interpretive materials produced	1	2
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability	1	1
Number of individuals accessing services & facilities	800	6,193
Number of new or improved services/facilities available to the rural population	1	1
Population in rural area benefiting from improved services	13,540	13,540

4.3.5. Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies

Visit Vale + Grant Scheme

Project Summary

The Visit Vale+ grant scheme provided grants of up to £10,000 for activities that could include trialling new and innovative approaches to tourism products and services in the rural Vale of Glamorgan. This project took a less risk adverse approach to tourism grants, encouraging the trialling of new and innovative ideas; the project had a maximum grant rate of 75%. Tours and experiences could be trialled using this funding to get them to a pre-market stage and test their viability in the local economy.

In addition, green tourism activities in the form of physical activity experiences could be trialled and developed using this funding.

The project, whilst closely linked to the Tourism Matters grant scheme, demanded additional promotion to raise awareness to potential tourism projects which were seeking to exploit a niche in the local tourism market.

It is understood that a number of new initiatives came forward, with grant funding assisting them in successfully starting up as businesses.

Discrepancies in terms of delivering against target outputs mainly related to the fact that the investment focused more on developing and marketing rural tourism rather than on tourism infrastructure. In terms of results, the project over-delivered in relation to visitor numbers due to the supporting of website related initiatives that typically have a far wider audience or generated a lot more footfall than typical tourism ventures.

Table 12: Visit Vale+ – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of local recreational infrastructure projects financially supported	8	1
Number of projects to develop and/or market a rural tourism product or service financially supported	6	12
Number of enterprises advised or assisted to develop and/or market a rural tourism product	14	15
Number of individuals advised or assisted to develop and/or market a rural tourism product	13	11
Number of marketing and promotional activities undertaken	6	7
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability	1	0
Number of information dissemination actions undertaken	N/A	3
Number of local recreational infrastructure projects advised or assisted (as a means of encouraging tourism)	N/A	8
Results		
Gross number of visitors to a tourism project that has been supported	5,000	31,971
Gross number of jobs potentially created	2	3
Number of enterprises potentially created	3	3

Inspire the Vale Bursary

Project Summary

The bursary scheme sought to promote conditions that would help young people to implement their ideas for businesses or community enterprises. This would include providing advice and expert support to develop a business idea, providing the necessary equipment or resources to start a business, helping with business location costs, etc. Bursaries were awarded for up to 75% of the cost of the support needed and were available to young people who currently live in the rural Vale of Glamorgan, or who wished to return to the rural Vale of Glamorgan having sometime previously lived in the area for at least five years.

The establishment of relationships with the likes of Venture Wales and Prince's Trust at an early stage within the project proved to be a useful source of referrals. This helped to boost a strong level of interest in the grants.

The project also funded the first ever Enterprise week for over 2,000 pupils at Llantwit Major School, the week included 20 different companies coming to the school where they held workshops and worked with young people on a variety of business related elements including marketing plans. An end of project networking event was also held to assist young people in networking with their peers.

The performance indicator table for the project below highlights that again the project has delivered far in excess of the anticipated outputs and results with almost double the anticipated number of individuals supported to start a business. The impact analysis in Section 5 provides further insight into the added value of the initiative.

Table 13: Inspire the Vale Bursary – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Individuals or groups financially supported to set up or develop ideas for new micro enterprises (pre-start)	8	23
Number of individuals financially supported to create a new micro enterprise	8	19
Number of groups financially supported to create a new micro enterprise	0	2
Number of individuals advised or assisted to support the creation of a new micro enterprise (pre-start)	31	61
Number of marketing & promotional activities undertaken	25	25
Number of enterprises adopting or improving environmental management systems	1	1
Number of information dissemination actions undertaken		16
Results		
Gross number of jobs created	7	12
Number of individuals retained, regained or attracted to the rural area	7	21
Number of enterprises potentially created	7	21
Number of projects securing alternative finance	3	0
Number of micro enterprises created		2

Heritage Tourism

Project Summary

This project aimed to brand, improve and market a group of heritage tourism locations in the rural Vale, through the provision of comprehensive and innovative interpretation facilities, promoting the wealth of heritage tourism attractions in the Vale. The project was overseen by a Heritage Projects Group made up of community heritage representatives. Interpretation was provided in several forms: Web; video; podcasts; etched panels and 'Audioposts'. Emphasis was placed on the web based interpretation in line with current trends and to minimise maintenance costs.

The aims of the project were reported to be very broad (in terms of the range of activities the project sought to deliver) and the project therefore focused on the development of a website to share heritage related information about the Vale along with the development of four interactive kiosks sited throughout the Vale.

The procurement process for the kiosks took far longer than anticipated and then staff changes meant that the installation of these has been delayed significantly (with only one installed at the time of the research).

The heritage related information has however been successfully collated on one central website for ease of access and interpretation.

The performance table below outlines that the series of outputs associated with the project have been achieved. The results figure for the project currently stands at zero whilst the CRC team await confirmation of the visitor numbers from the project.

Table 14: Heritage Tourism – Performance against Key Indicators

Performance indicator	Target	Achieved to project end date
Outputs		
Number of projects to develop and/or market a rural tourism product or service financially supported	1	1
Number of consultation exercises undertaken	6	8
Number of interpretive materials produced	0	11
Number of marketing & promotional activities undertaken	8	17
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability	3	5
Results		
Gross number of visitors to a tourism project that has been supported	5,500	0

5. Impact of RDP Investment

5.1. Introduction

As described in Section 2 of the report, a wide range of primary research approaches were adopted for the evaluation of each project, (with detail of the specific approaches adopted outlined within the evaluation framework in Annex 1).

Summary of Key Findings

- Project participants were overwhelmingly positive about the support they'd received and particularly so about the support offered by the Creative Rural Communities team with all projects rating the support from the team as at least 9 out of 10.
- Whilst negative feedback was a rarity, respondents were consistent in being least positive about the completion of the application forms, particularly due to their complexity.
- Tourism Matters was particularly successful in generating positive impacts for tourism businesses within the Vale, generating in excess of 6,000 tourism visits a year and increasing annual turnover by approximately £145,000.
- Similarly the Inspire Grant Scheme for community buildings also had a positive impact helping to increase the number of bookings of participant buildings by approximately 1,150 per year.

The study team did not undertake primary research on several of the Axis 3 projects, namely:

- **Footpaths and Stiles** - the nature of the project meant that a lot of resource could be expended waiting on a pathway to speak to users with very little return. With a finite resource it was therefore considered unfeasible to undertake primary research for this project.
- **Bridleways** – primary research was not undertaken on this project for similar reasons to those described for the Footpath and Stiles Project.
- **Rural Community Transport/Greenlinks** – A hard copy survey was developed for bus users to complete however after further investigation by the CRC team it was felt that this approach would have been unworkable.

For the remaining Axes 3 and 4 projects, table 15 below outlines the rate of success in terms of engaging participants associated with each project.

Table 15: Rate of Participant Response to Primary Research

Project	Contacts available	Interviews completed	Completion Rate
Tourism Matters	22	19	86%
Visit Vale+	10	5	50%
Inspire Vale Bursaries	23	15	65%
Places for Young People	6	9	67%
Heritage Tourism	6	4	67%
Business Networking	4	2	50%
Golf Networks	11	6	55%
Inspire – Physical	8	6	75%
Inspire – Village Hall	27	17	63%
Rural Events Network	54	7	13%

The table highlights a very strong completion rate of at least 50% across the majority of Axis 3 and Axis 4 projects where additional primary research of participants was undertaken. This high rate of return is particularly important given the low participant “population” which therefore demands a high proportion of participants to be consulted in order that the findings can be considered significant. Furthermore, some project findings have been amalgamated with other projects of a similar nature or measure to help generate a substantive pool of events to draw upon.

5.2. Measure 313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities & Axis 4

5.2.1. Visit Vale + and Tourism Matters

Despite being in different Axes, the two grant based initiatives for the tourism industry in the rural Vale have been grouped together for analysis given their similarity in approach (with the key difference being that Visit Vale+ investment was targeted at groups looking to commence trading and to exploit a niche market within the tourism industry in the Vale whereas Tourism Matters provided investment to enhance the competitiveness and financial sustainability of existing businesses within the Vale). A total of 24 participants were interviewed over the telephone (equivalent to 75% of the contacts made available to the study team).

Awareness

For both Visit Vale+ and Tourism Matters, organisations primarily (19 of the 24 consulted) became aware of the support via word of mouth whilst the remaining five of the organisations consulted became aware through promotional material (three) or via a referral from Business in Focus (two – both of whom were beneficiaries of the Visit Vale+ initiative).

Participants were asked for feedback on the grant application process. Table 16 below provides analysis on the average rating out of 10 for a number of elements in relation to applying for a grant. The table highlights that participants were positive about all elements and particularly so regarding the quality of support they received from the CRC team. Participants also welcomed the efficiency with which their applications were dealt with. The least positive feedback (albeit that this gained an average of 7.7 out of 10) related to the application form itself.

Table 16: How would you rate the following aspects for applying for the grant?

How would you rate the following aspects for applying for the grant (out of 10)	Average
Generally, the process for applying for the grant	8.4
The application form	7.7
The efficiency which your application was dealt with	9.0
The process of claiming your grant funds	8.6
Quality of the support from the CRC team	9.5

When asked for feedback as to why they had scored in this way, the majority of negative comments related to the complexity associated with applying for the grant, however many referred to the importance of the support from the CRC team in assisting them through these complexities:

- *It was fairly complicated and time consuming, doing it on your own would be tricky. With the process of claiming the funding going through everything took a long time, to sit and process the invoices etc. was all very time consuming.*
- *They gave me a lot of help and were always on hand to answer any questions I had. There was rather a lot of paperwork involved with the application and a lot of questions.*
- *The deadlines were sometimes unrealistic as there were delays with planning and you had to explain why you couldn't spend the monies before the 31st March which was unrealistic.*
- *We had a lot of help from Nicola, we have tried in the past to get funding from Wales Tourism but couldn't get past the first hurdle and never bothered taking it any further as the support wasn't there like it is with this project.*

In terms of specific feedback in relation to support received comments included:

- *The whole team are absolutely amazing, they are all extremely positive and I wouldn't have finished the whole process without them, I would have given up had it not been for all their support.*
- *They were very good, they got back to us straightaway if we'd contacted them about anything, they were tremendous.*
- *They are always at the end of a phone, are very energetic, very helpful and enthusiastic, if there is anything that you have any questions about they will come back to you. They are very positive and are one of the best teams that we have got here.*

All of the participants of the Tourism Matters scheme and four of the five Visit Vale+ participants would recommend the support to others, the remaining participant was unsure (as they felt the quality of support had been inconsistent within the team).

Impact

Participants were asked to rate, out of 10, the scale of impact the support has had on their organisation. The average rating across the Tourism Matters project was 8.9 whilst the average rating out of 10 across the Visit Vale+ project was 6.4. The main reason given the lower average rating for Visit Vale+ participants was that it was simply too soon to assess impact, with the expectation that this would emerge over the longer term.

Participant businesses were then asked whether the support had impacted upon a number of specific areas for the business, table 17 below highlights that all participant businesses felt the support had improved the quality of existing services/products and the majority felt it had helped to develop new products/services or improved the marketing of the business. Whilst the responses were closely aligned across each of the impact elements, some divergence did emerge in relation to the proportion citing improved contacts with other businesses in the local area, with all Visit Vale+ participants citing this as being the case compared to 61% of Tourism Matters participants.

Table 17: Impact of Visit Vale+ and Tourism Matters

In what ways has it impacted upon your business	Percentage citing
Improved how the business is managed (e.g. better processes)	35%
Improved the quality of existing services and products	100%
<u>Introduced /developed</u> new services and/or products	78%
Improved the marketing of the business	83%
Made new or better contacts with other businesses in the local area	61% (100% Visit Vale+)

Participant businesses were asked whether they agreed with a number of statements in relation to the impact of the support on their business. Table 18 below outlines the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement. The quality of service and product was again most commonly cited as having improved whilst almost three quarters believe the organisation is more likely to grow. Only 55% were sufficiently confident that their business will indeed grow following receipt of support.

Table 18: Business Perception of Support

Proportion of businesses agreeing or strongly agreeing that:	Percentage citing
The product we produce / service we provide is better due to the support I received	96%
The business is more likely to be successful due to the support I received	87%
The business is more likely to grow (increase turnover or number of employees) due to the support I received	73%
The business will grow (increase turnover or number of employees) <u>quicker</u> due to the support I received	55%

Net additional Impact – Tourism Matters

Additional Tourism Visits

Organisations that participated in the Tourism Matters project were asked to estimate the additional visitors that they had received since benefiting from the grant investment. Forty-two percent of surveyed organisations felt sufficiently confident to estimate this number which collectively, equated to an estimated 6,704 additional visitors per year for those organisations supported through the Tourism Matters project. Respondent businesses estimated that over 40% of these additional visitors (equivalent to around 2,750 visitors) visited from outside of Wales (either from the rest of the UK or overseas) and therefore brought additional spend into Wales. When this visitor figure is “grossed up” to encompass all (22⁸) available contacts of the Tourism Matters project this would equate to around 3,200 additional visitors from outside of Wales (including overseas visitors) to the organisations supported through the project.

⁸ Whilst there were 28 grant investments, it is understood that some organisations were the recipients of multiple grants, the figure of 22 organisations reflects management information provided by the CRC team.

Economic Growth – Jobs created

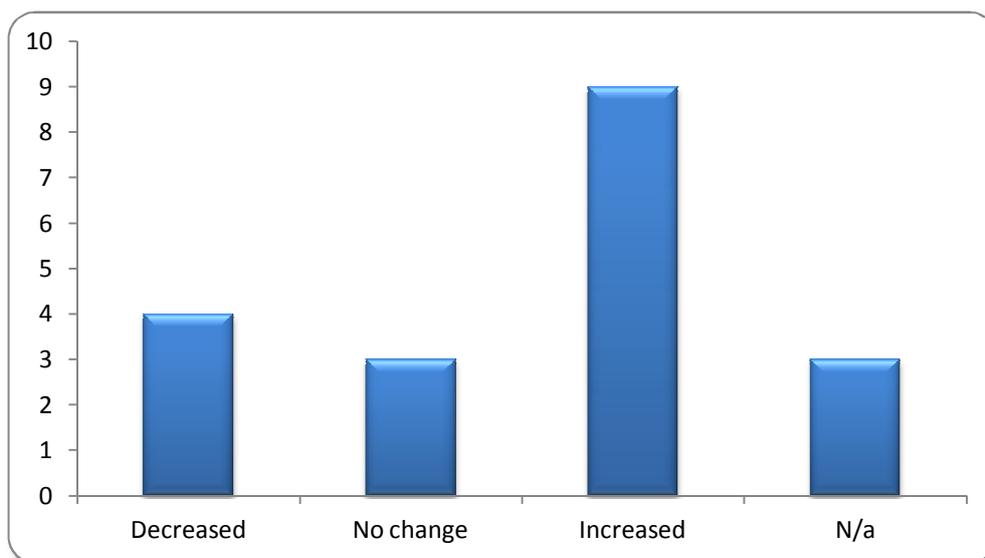
Whilst ten of the organisations participating in the Tourism Matters project had no additional employees, the remaining 8 businesses collectively employed 48 people. Furthermore, six of the participant organisations stated that levels of employment within their business had increased over the past 12 months. Participant businesses were then asked to state whether they felt the support they had received had been a contributory factor in this employment change, four of the respondent businesses stated that it had.

In total, 12 additional employment posts were felt by respondent businesses to have been generated as a result of the support received; one full-time staff member, seven part-time staff, and four seasonal staff.

Economic Growth – Turnover

Businesses were also asked about any changes in turnover within their business. Figure 4 below illustrates that, when asked about trends in their business' turnover during the last two years, the majority had experienced an increase in their turnover.

Figure 4: Turnover Trends – Participant Businesses



The businesses were then asked whether any change in turnover could be attributed to the support received. Seven of the nine participants who had experienced an increase in turnover felt that yes, they could attribute the increase in turnover to the support they'd received. A further four organisations who had either experienced no change in turnover or a decrease in turnover felt that the support they had received had reduced the scale of turnover reduction that they may have otherwise experienced.

When asked to estimate the scale of additional impact, five of the nine businesses that had experienced an increase in turnover felt they had the ability to estimate the level of additionality, which collectively totalled almost £104,000 amongst these businesses. Again, if these figures are grossed up to reflect all seven businesses that attributed turnover increase to the support received this would equate to an estimated £145,000 of additional annual turnover.

Net additional Impact – Visit Vale+

The majority of Visit Vale+ participants were unable to quantify the additional impact arising from the support received as it was still “too early to tell”, but many described it as “significant”. Whilst two organisations had recruited, one of these felt the support had a role to play in this (with that particular organisations having recruited an additional four part-time staff).

Three of the five respondent businesses had experienced an increase in turnover and also felt they could attribute this to the support received. Of these, two felt able to quantify the scale of additional turnover arising from the support, which equates to an estimated £24,000 of additional turnover.

5.2.2. Rural Events Network

The organisations that participated in the Rural Events Network project were all provided, via email, with a web link to an online survey. A total of seven organisations responded to the survey, which out of an entire network that is understood stands at 48 is a slightly disappointing rate of return.

Respondents were first asked whether they had attended any networks meetings, five of the seven had with four of those rating them (in terms of usefulness) as 10 out of 10 (with the remaining respondent rating the meetings 8 out of 10).

Six of the seven respondents had borrowed the equipment available for events which ranged in scale from those with an attendance of around 100 through to events that attracted 20,000 attendees.

Respondents were asked where they had heard about the project, three had heard via word of mouth, three directly from the CRC team and one saw an advert in the local paper.

Respondents were asked what they felt was best about the project, responses included:

- *Quality of equipment and the relative ease of borrowing the equipment for events, plus saving us a LOT of money!*
- *The willingness to help of all the staff involved.*

In terms of improvements one cited some confusion associated with the use of two booking diaries, whilst another referred to the storage facility in Barry, others felt that it would help if further networking opportunities could be created outside of the network meetings and also there was desire for an expansion in the range of equipment on offer (which has subsequently occurred in the succession project to this one as part of Business Plan Round 2).

All would recommend the project to others, a number of comments were made in relation to why, including:

- *Without the advice and support and the loan of equipment my fund raising would have been difficult, expensive and hardly worth doing.*
- *It has helped us greatly as a non-profit making organisation to cover things we would have to pay for.*

Impact

Respondents were asked to rate out of 10 the impact of the support for their event which generated an average rating of 8.8. Comments associated with these ratings included:

- *Without the support we could have held the events, but it would have incurred a cost and reduced our profit*
- *Gave us an edge without eating into our fund raising*
- *Without the various pieces of equipment we use we would have to contract several outside contractors to provide their services*

Respondents were asked whether they felt that the support had led to an increase in the number of visitors to their events. Two were sure it hadn't, three were unsure and two respondents felt that it had.

Respondents were then asked to rate the impact of the event on tourism in the rural Vale. The average rating (out of 10) was 6.3. The ratings reflected a general perception that the events that the respondents were involved in were relatively small in scale, were awareness raising or that respondents were simply unable to estimate with a rating of this nature.

5.3. Measure 321: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population

5.3.1. Places for Young People Grants

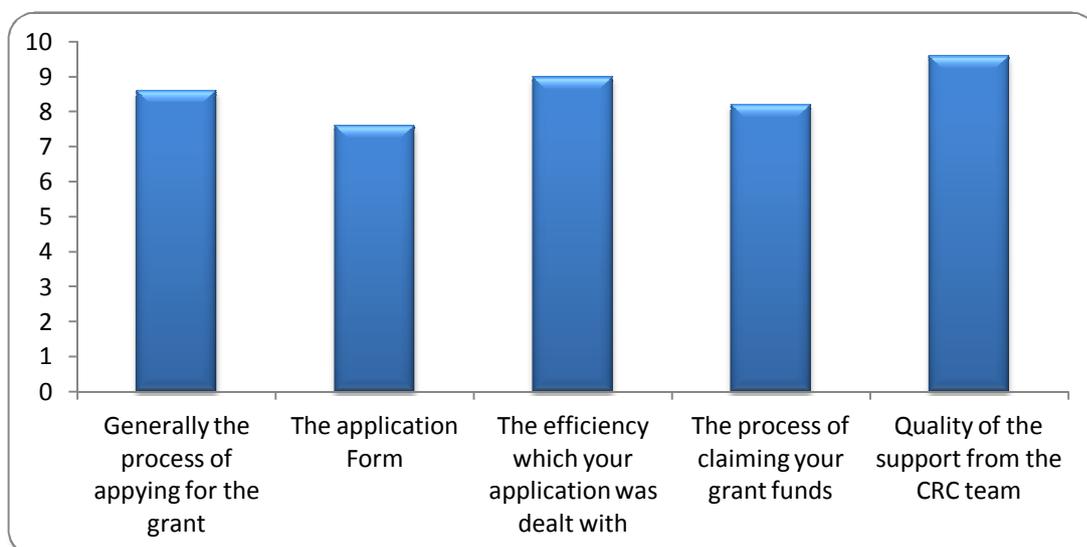
Primary research in relation to the Places for Young People Grants focused on a series of telephone interviews with grant applicant/recipients. Through this approach we were successful in consulting with five of the successful applicants for six (one applicant successfully applied for two play areas) of the nine play areas supported.

The following play areas were in receipt of grant support (along with grant aid descriptions provided by the respondents)

- **Wick Road play area, Ewenny, Bridgend** – the removal and replacement of play equipment, including a seesaw, spider web climbing frame, and communal swing along with improvements to make the park more accessible for pushchairs
- **Downs View Play Park, Aberthin, Cowbridge** – installation of play equipment along with safety surfaces
- **Play area on Wick Village Green, Vale of Glamorgan** – a grant for the purchase of a swing and the safety surface beneath it
- **St Athan Skate Park, St. Athan Recreation Ground, St Athan** – the refurbishment and replacement of two skateboard ramps
- **Pendoylan Playground, Pendoylan, Vale of Glamorgan** – the repair of some play equipment and the refurbishment of the playground.

The respondents were asked to rate their experiences in relation to the grant application process and also in relation to the quality of support they received from the CRC team. Figure 5 below illustrates very positive feedback across all areas of the grant application and particularly so in relation to the quality of the support received.

Figure 5: How would you rate the following aspects of applying for the grant/How would you rate the quality of the support and service that you received?



Comments were generally positive about the process, particularly in terms of encouraging community engagement “a good process which enabled us to work with communities to do something the community wanted” although one referred to challenges and confusion associated with VAT.

In terms of the support received the comments were very positive:

- *There was always support available, if there was any query they were there to clarify anything and the application form was fairly straightforward. The process of claiming the funds has to go through Welsh Government so that took a bit of time.*
- *They were excellent, Jane helped and supported us throughout the whole process, we needed a bit of guidance with the application but it was all very appropriate and she liaised with the Vale on one or two things on our behalf.*
- *Because of the ease of access, there was nothing too small however insignificant it seemed to us it wasn't to Jane, she gave us pointers to amend the application etc and was also very supportive on reminding us of deadlines.*

When asked about the best bit of the project interviewees again referred to the direct support from the CRC team and the only improvements respondents could recommend related to less complexities/bureaucracy.

Impact

Respondents were asked to provide a rating out of 10 for the significance of impact of the grants on their local area. Four of the five respondents rated impact as nine, with the remaining respondent rating it as eight.

Comments included:

- *It is has made a vast improvement to the playground, the children like going there now, it looks modern and inviting and it is now a safe place for toddlers and older children. There are picnic benches there as well now and mums are able to meet up as they have somewhere to sit, chat and watch their children*
- *It provided a diversionary activity for young people on both sites*
- *Because it was reintroducing a facility for the young people and children of the area as well as those who attended the playgroup, a facility that had previously been taken away.*

Two of the respondents were aware of data being captured to measure changes in usage of the play areas, however the remaining respondents were reliant on anecdotal evidence.

Table 19 below outlines more specific elements of perceived impact arising from the investment.

Table 19: Perceived Impact of Places for Young People Grants

Benefit to Local People by...	Yes	No	Reasons for response (examples)
Involving local people in the regeneration of their local area	5	0	With the community consultation involved with this project local people realised that they needed community participation in order to make anything happen and more people came and got involved.
Engaging <i>different</i> groups of people in the regeneration of their local area (i.e. those who haven't been involved in the past)	5	0	The children were involved with choosing the equipment for the park and it has allowed grandparents with their grandchildren and parents with their children to spend more time together in a safer environment.
Improving local people's satisfaction with the local area as a place to live	5	0	Because it is a nice area for mums and children to go to now, there is more for the children to play on, it is safer and there are a couple of picnic benches. People come up to me and say that they went there and it's really nice and it's a nice place to go to now.
Increasing local people's pro-environmental behaviour (e.g. less littering)	1	3	
Improved local people's general well-being	5	0	There is a feel good factor as there is something for young people to do now and there is somewhere for social interaction with the children outside the school environment and for parents too. The healthy living outcome as the young people now have an up-to-date facility to use for skateboarding.

Finally, the interviewees were asked whether any knock-on effects had arisen from the investment. One respondent felt that a real sense of civic pride in involvement had emerged... "*...people have now realised there needs to be community participation in order to make changes and this is happening, we have a lot of events going on in the village for the Jubilee and people are coming to us with ideas like allotments and a pavement in the village...*".

5.4. Measure 322: Village Renewal and Development

5.4.1. Inspire Grant Scheme

The Inspire Grant Scheme had two distinct elements, one specifically related to community buildings and one associated with the public realm in the rural towns and villages.

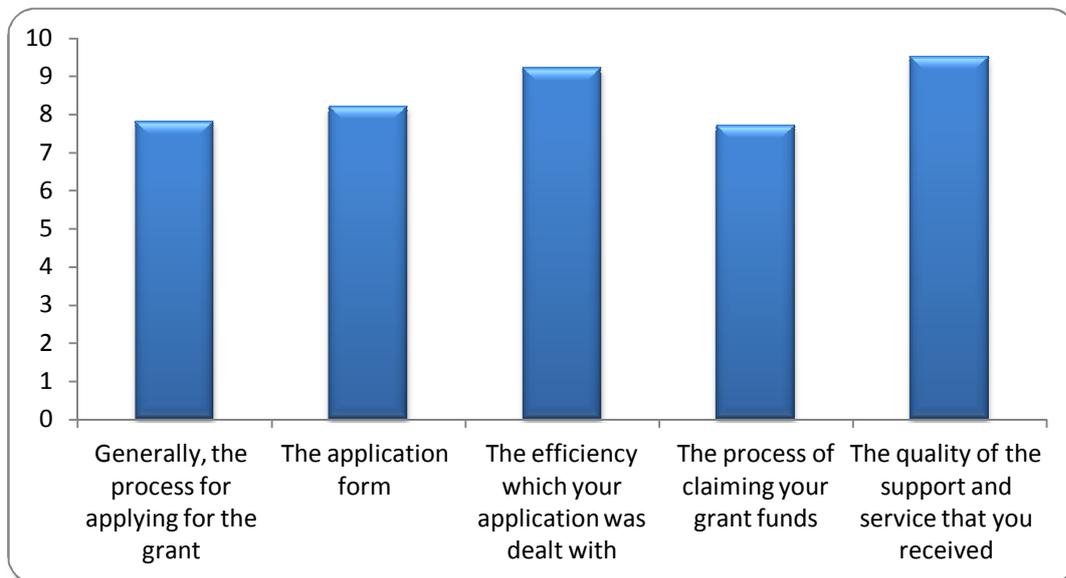
Inspire Grant Scheme – Enterprising Community Buildings

Applicants to the Community Buildings element of the Inspire Grant Scheme were contacted by telephone. A total of 17 were consulted with the majority seeking grant aid to support the refurbishment or replacement of existing facilities whilst a minority (4/24%) of respondents sought grant aid for the extension of community buildings.

Figure 6 below provides details on the average rating (out of 10, with zero being very poor and 10 being very good) for the grant application process and the support provided by the CRC team. Again the responses were on the whole very positive, with efficiency and the CRC support particularly well received.

Any negativity was largely associated with the complexity of the application form and/or the grant payment process.

Figure 6: Perceptions of the Grant Application Process



Sixteen of the 17 respondents felt that they would recommend the project to others largely because of the impact of the support on the community facilities. Comments included:

- *I have recommended them to other groups. The grant scheme is a great benefit to the whole community; it is generous to us all*
- *Definitely because of what can be achieved for the benefit of the community, it is not totally arduous and because of the support you can see there is an end in sight*
- *It really improved the hall and we get far more bookings for parties and weddings now.*

Impact

Respondents were asked, on a scale of one to 10, how significant the impact of the support had been. The average rating of respondents was 9.2 highlighting the perceived significance of this investment. Some of the comments underpinning these ratings included:

- *By law we had to have disabled toilets and we would not have been able to afford to install them, so the hall would have had to close*
- *Before the improvements the hall was looking very shabby and we were losing bookings because of the state it was in*
- *Absolutely, hugely significant and favourable. We now have a brand new kitchen and a disabled toilet, which means we also have 2 different disabled groups that meet here now.*

Respondents were then asked to estimate the change in the number of bookings for the community centre on a week by week basis. When these figures are collated and multiplied to represent an annual figure it equates to 1,144 additional bookings per year. It is unclear how many community buildings (specifically, as output data for the project related to both community buildings and public realm investment) were in receipt of support but 25 separate contacts were provided and if the assumption of a similar impact was generated across all 25 community buildings then this equates to almost 1,700 additional bookings in community buildings per year (or 32 additional bookings per week).

In addition, 12 of the 17 respondents confirmed that new services had been delivered from the community buildings as a result of grant investment. This included the following services/groups:

- A film club
- The provision of a table tennis table
- A skittle alley
- Provision for indoor football in the winter
- Zumba classes
- Drama classes
- Baby classes (sing and sign, clap and tap)
- Youth provision
- Pupil referral unit

Respondents were also asked in which of the following ways (outlined in the table below) the support had benefited local people.

Table 20: Impact of the Project on Local People

Impact on local people	Yes	No	Examples
Involving local people in the regeneration of their local area	14	3	Use of local tradesman for works Consultation events at the halls
Engaging <i>different</i> groups of people in the regeneration of their local area (i.e. those who haven't been involved in the past)	12	5	See above in terms of the types of groups now in attendance
Improve local people's awareness of the local heritage	7	10	With specific groups (e.g. the History Society) now using the centre
Improving local people's satisfaction with the local area as a place to live	12	5	Through the provision of additional services for certain groups within the community
Improved people's ability to access basic services in the local area	6	11	Particularly in relation to enhancements in accessibility for disabled users
Increasing local people's pro-environmental behaviour (e.g. less littering)	5	12	Respondents cited greater respect for the local area as a result of the refurbishments
Improved local people's general well-being	13	4	Respondents mainly cited the greater diversity of services on offer and their contribution to well-being
Improved local people's work-life balance	1	16	One respondent felt that the introduction of fitness classes may help in regard to this area

Inspire Grant Scheme – Village Renewal

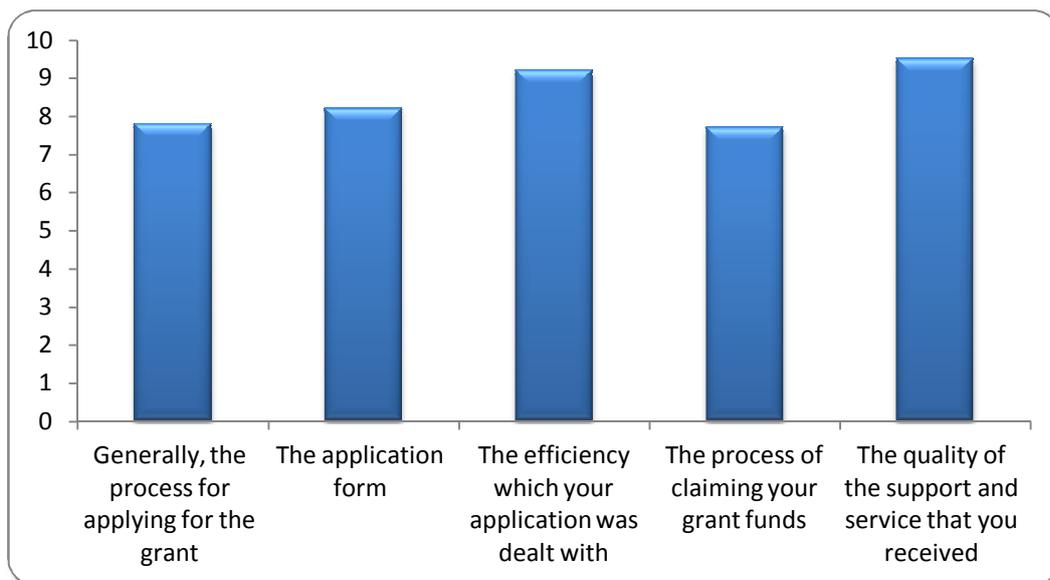
Six of eight individuals involved in applications to the Inspire Grant Scheme were contacted as part of the primary research. In addition, a site visit was undertaken in Llantwit Major (where the Boverton Road Public Realm Scheme secured a major portion (£260,000) of the resource available) to consult with local businesses affected by the works as well as additional telephone consultations with other strategic stakeholders involved in that specific scheme.

Applicants of the following schemes were consulted over the phone:

- Fferm Goch Footpath, Llangan (creation of a footpath to link the school, community centre, bus stop and playground)
- Wenvoe Upper Orchid Field, between Wenvoe and Twyn-yr Odyn (purchase of three benches, a notice board and tools to enable maintenance of the field)
- Llangan Primary School, Nr Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan (creation of a garden at the school)
- Winchfield Project, Craig Penllyn, Cowbridge (creation of a multi-purpose path between two villages and the installation of six benches and four picnic tables)
- Colwinston Wildlife Garden, Colwinston Village Hall, Colwinston (cleared a patch of wasteland and created a wildlife garden)
- Old Hall Grounds, Cowbridge (external garden area cleared, pond upgraded and wall repaired and re-rendered).

As with the other schemes, interviewees were asked to rate out of 10 how well the grant application process went and to rate the quality of the support received from the CRC team. Figure 7 below highlights that again, there was very positive feedback across all elements of the application process and in relation to the support received (where five of the six respondents rated the support as 10 out of 10).

Figure 7: Perceptions of the Application Process and of the Quality of Support Received



Impact

When asked to rate the impact of the support out of 10, all bar one respondent stated 10 (with the remaining respondent saying nine), some of the thoughts behind these extremely positive numbers included:

- *Before there was no alternative than for adults and children to walk on a very busy road to gain access to school, the playground, community centre and bus stop. Parents were always contacting us to request a footpath. Safety aspects were vital on the impact this footpath has had on the community.*
- *The impact was huge, it created such a beautiful area and it is in memory of everyone who is or has worked or attended the school.*
- *It has totally changed the whole village for the better. The whole community is using the new path, joggers, cyclists, wheel chairs and walkers. It is much safer for children to cycle there and not on the road.*
- *The general public have a much more pleasant area to walk around now. It is also a good advertisement for the Vale of Glamorgan County Council and the Cowbridge Trust.*

Inspire Grant Scheme - Llantwit Major, Boverton Road Scheme

The major grant recipient within the physical renewal element of the project was the public realm improvements on Boverton Road, in Llantwit Major. The project secured approximately £260,000 for public realm works within an area of the town which suffered from the lack of a safe pedestrian walkway and formal car parking as well as being the main route through the town towards the beach.

The resultant works are visually impressive as illustrated in figures 9 and 10 on the following page. It is understood that one of the drivers for investment in the town related to pedestrian safety, the works now highlight a clear demarcation between the pedestrian walkway and the road and have also provided a more visually attractive area for town centre users.

Anecdotal feedback had also suggested that the works may have triggered additional investment in the town, included the upgrading of Filco Foods and the recent arrival of an additional sandwich shop.

This feedback was explored with the handful of shops operating alongside the Boverton Road works. Through the consultation with these shops it became apparent that whilst they all welcomed the improvements to the road, many didn't feel that this had offset the impact to trade whilst the works were being undertaken. Respondents cited that the works impacted upon trade by up to 30%. Furthermore, whilst they did appreciate the quality of the area, unfortunately it had no impact on the level of trade in their business (prior to when the works started) with all citing wider economic circumstances and changing consumer trends as having a far greater impact on their current trading experience.

Figure 8: Boverton Road prior to works



Figure 9: Public Realm Works, Boverton Road, LLantwit Major



Figure 10: Public Realm Works, Boverton Road, Llantwit Major



5.5. Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies

5.5.1. Inspire the Vale Bursary

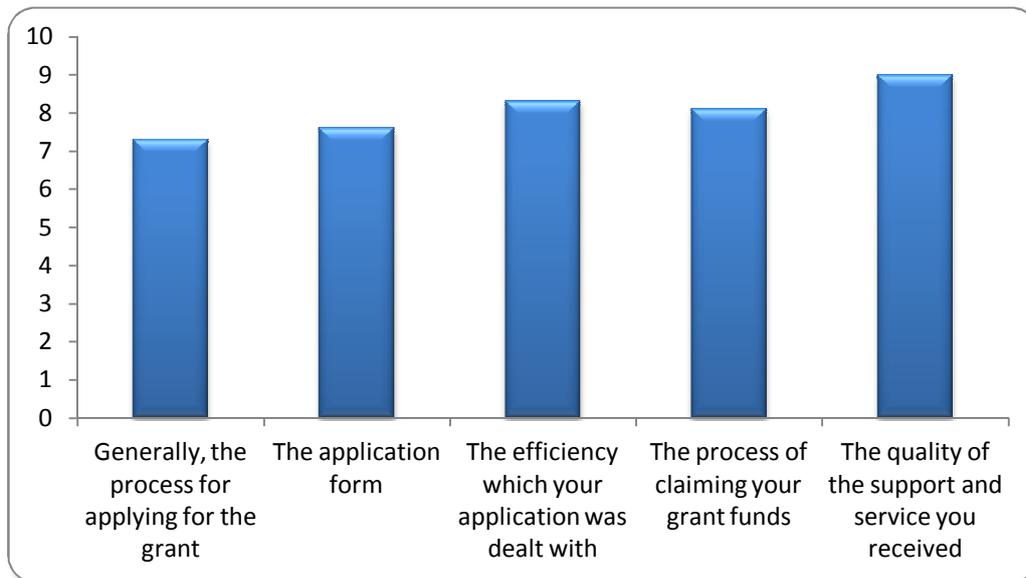
The research team undertook telephone consultations with recipients of the Inspire the Vale Bursary. Of the 23 individuals in receipt of a bursary the study team consulted with 15 (equating to a response rate of 65%).

The majority of respondents (53%) became aware of the bursary via word of mouth whilst several were referred from Visit Wales and several more saw advertisements for the project. Again, participants were asked for their ratings (out of 10) on the process for applying for the grant and on the quality of the support they received. Figure 11 below highlights that again, on average, a high rate of response was received.

The process for applying for the grant and the application form were consistently given the lowest ratings, individuals described the process as “*complicated*”, “*long winded*” in addition a number cited some changes in the criteria and requirements which were met with some frustration.

Again the specific support from the CRC team was very highly praised with an average score of nine out of 10. Comments regarding the support received included:

- *She was incredibly supportive all the way through, she always had an answer to my questions and if she didn't she'd get back to me within an hour; she was on the ball and very good.*
- *Just knowing that if you had any questions you had someone you could contact who would answer quickly and who didn't make you feel stupid.*
- *I'm an artistic person and not business minded and Nia answered all of my questions and queries without making me feel inadequate giving me the confidence to feel I could really do this and run my own business.*

Figure 11: Participant Perceptions of the Application Process

When asked if they'd recommend the project to others, all 15 respondents said that they would, with many having already done so. Almost half of the respondents had accessed business support elsewhere (some of whom had then been referred to this project). Other support received was secured from either Business in Focus or Venture Wales and related to mentoring support and/or business planning support.

Impact

Respondents were asked to rate out of 10 the support they had received, the average rating was 8.7. Some of the highest ratings reflected those who felt that support had enabled them to start their own business. Others however, who still weren't trading felt the impact had been less significant.

Eleven of the 15 interviewees (73%) had started trading. Those that are yet to start trading were asked to rate the likelihood that they would. The average rating of the likelihood to start in business was 8.3 which is clearly promising and all felt they were more likely to start because of the support they had received.

The interviewees who had started in business were asked whether they would still have started if they hadn't received the support. Three felt that they wouldn't have started without the bursary and nine were unsure as to whether they would have still started their business without the bursary. However, nine of those who felt they were unsure or would have started their business anyway believed that the bursary had accelerated the process of starting their business.

Some of the comments in relation to the role the bursary had in starting their business included the following:

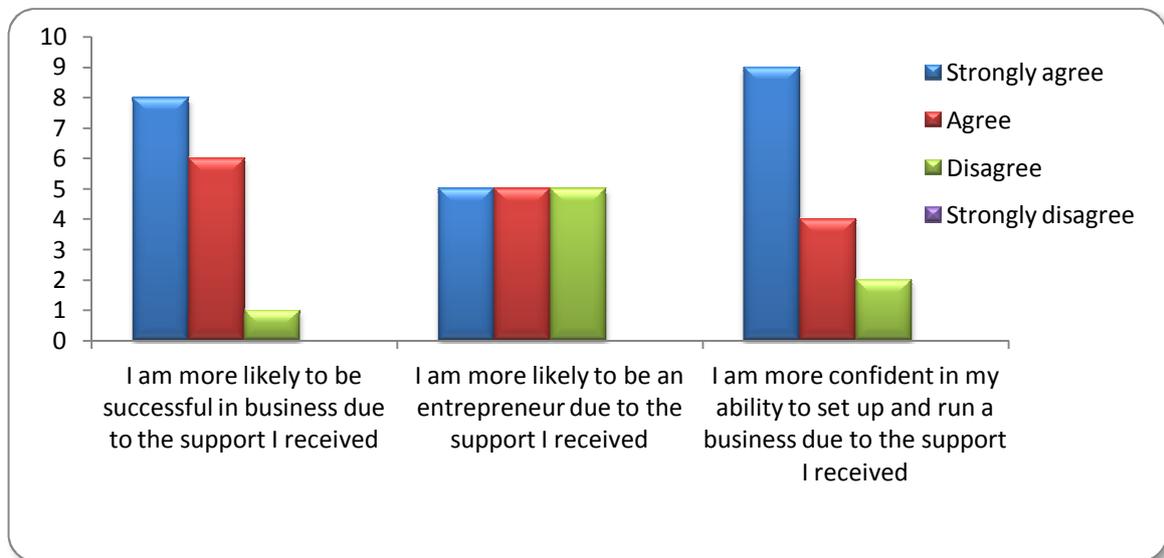
- *It wouldn't have started then, not at that stage as we were two new mums; it turned our dream into reality.*
- *I would have had to have sourced money elsewhere and it would have taken me longer to set up.*
- *It would have taken a lot longer and when I started I would not have had a full range of products.*
- *It would have taken longer and it would not have been of the same high quality.*

In terms of employee numbers, the majority of the businesses started up were small in scale. None had recruited additional employees and only three were operating their business on a full-time basis with the remainder operating their business as a part-time venture.

Turnover figures were also low, ranging from a few hundred pounds up to £10,000, however all those who were in business had ambitious plans for its growth.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with a series of statements relating to their business confidence and entrepreneurial spirit. Figure 12 below highlights that the vast majority feel that they are now more likely to be successful in business and indeed are more confident in their ability to run a business as a result of the support that they received. Whilst the level of agreement was a little less with the statement relating to the likelihood of becoming an entrepreneur this may in part be due to the fact that many are already entrepreneurs.

Figure 12: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



5.5.2. Business Networking

Golfing Breaks Network

For the business networking project representatives of the Golfing Breaks Network (widely considered to be the most successful network to emerge from the project) were contacted via email and encouraged to complete an online survey. Five people responded to the survey all of whom had very positive comments about the network, citing how it is well managed and facilitated.

Respondents were asked about the impact of the network and most felt that it was too early to tell. One respondent felt that whilst there had been a marketing push they were yet to see much return from this effort.

Most of the respondents felt that they would recommend the support to other potential networks however they felt that currently it was too soon to have had any major impact on their business, consequently the average rating of impact was only one out of 10.

However despite this rather poor return on impact, all businesses that responded felt that the project had helped to improve both the marketing of the business and the strength of the network of their business.

Other Network Leads

Lead representatives of two other networks that hadn't progressed to the same extent as the Golfing Network were also consulted as part of the evaluation. Both respondents rated the quality of the support they had received from the CRC team as 10 out of 10, with the following comments to substantiate these ratings:

- *Because they are always very informative, discussion is always very open, they're helpful and continually understanding of where the parameters are about funding available and what is going on within the Vale*
- *They gave us all the help that we wanted and supported us with meetings*
- *It helped raise our professionalism in the early days, it encouraged people to join and it helped us as a network association ourselves to promote the work of the tourism association*

5.5.3. Heritage Tourism

For the Heritage Tourism project, the primary research targeted representatives of the steering group rather than typical participants. Four representatives on the steering group were consulted as part of the evaluation and they were asked whether their participation had benefited them in any way. Three of the four felt it had presented them with good opportunities to network and also to gain a broader perspective on the key elements of the project.

Whilst the interviewees were pleased with the innovative nature of the project and felt that it had been a successful approach to adopt there was a degree of frustration associated with some of the objections to the installation of kiosks and more generally the time it had taken to install the kiosks around the Vale. Similarly there were concerns as to whether the installation of kiosks had been communicated effectively and to whether the content was too generalist in nature.

Despite some of the frustrations encountered, two of the four respondents were keen to be involved in a similar project in the future.

Impact

The average estimated rate of impact for the project was four out of 10 with a feeling that the project was not significant enough in its own right to have a major impact and that this had been compounded by the delays in the installation of kiosks. There was also recognition that it is extremely difficult to measure impact on a project of this nature.

6. Strategic Importance of RDP to the Rural Vale

6.1. Introduction

Throughout the research study there was underlying concern regarding the likelihood in future of the rural Vale continuing to benefit from RDP funding.

There are initial indications which suggest that future European programmes may experience increased prioritisation towards those areas considered to be most deprived and that similarly, RDP programme budgets may be “regionalised” to reduce the scale of individual projects to enable a more strategic approach to be adopted and to reduce the level of administrative costs associated with the project. It is currently unclear as to whether this may in fact take place, however confirmation has been received of a removal of Axes (and their associated Measures) to be replaced by six priorities, namely:

- Knowledge Transfer and Innovation
- Competitiveness of Agriculture
- Food Chain and Risk Management
- Supporting Ecosystems
- Low Carbon Economy
- Social Inclusion, Poverty Reduction, Economic Development.

Negotiations between Member States are ongoing in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy which is beginning to have an influence (delaying) the next Rural Development Programme, Welsh Government are in the process of providing guidance for RDP partnerships to access a small pot of continued funding to overcome a potential gap in investment.

In relation to the Vale, there is a concern that the hidden pockets of deprivation and associated challenges within the rural Vale may be hidden by the affluence that also exists within the rural area and that this, coupled with an enhanced focus on those areas perceived as deprived alongside a potential rationalisation of funds, may see the Vale miss out on future resources of this nature.

This section explores the latest statistical research for the rural Vale to help identify any existing and emerging issues for consideration as part of any future funding programme. Unfortunately key evidence to explore the issues in the rural areas of the Vale are most likely to emerge from Census data. 2011 Census data is due for release at a local geography level and is expected between November 2012 - February 2013, as such, only 2001 data is currently available, and, being over 10 years old, is of little use. **It will be key when this data is released to undertake a full socio-economic profiling and needs assessment of rural Vale of Glamorgan in order to inform strategy and direction.**

However, despite the limitations associated with a lack of available census 2011 data, a series of key issues have been identified. These are summarised below with additional statistical analysis following the summary.

Summary of Issues:

Demography

- In 2010, there were lower proportions of people younger than 40 in rural Vale of Glamorgan compared to the Welsh average (and the LA average) and greater proportion of people aged over 40.
- Between 2005 and 2010, rural Vale of Glamorgan saw much larger increases in the percentage change of the proportion of the population, over 65 compared to Wales as a whole.
- Further to this, for age groups between 25 and 60, the majority of the working age population, there have been bigger decreases (or smaller increases) in rural Vale of Glamorgan compared to the Welsh average.

Unemployment

- Whilst JSA claimant rates in rural Vale of Glamorgan compare favourably with averages for Wales in 2012, there are big variations within rural Vale of Glamorgan with some areas experiencing twice the level of unemployment of others.
- The proportion of working age people claiming JSA has increased dramatically, by an average of 85%, in rural Vale of Glamorgan in the past 5 years.

Benefits

- The proportion of people receiving benefits who fall into the job seekers, incapacity and lone parent categories is lower in the Vale of Glamorgan than the average for Wales as a whole. This shortfall is primarily made up by a higher proportion in rural Vale of Glamorgan who are classified as disabled – those receiving Disability Living Allowance.

Employment

- A lower proportion of the working age population in rural Vale of Glamorgan were employed in businesses within the rural Vale of Glamorgan in 2010 compared to the average for Wales, suggesting a high level of commuting.
- In terms of both business employees and employment, rural Vale of Glamorgan has seen bigger percentage falls between 2007 and 2010 than either Wales or the Vale of Glamorgan.

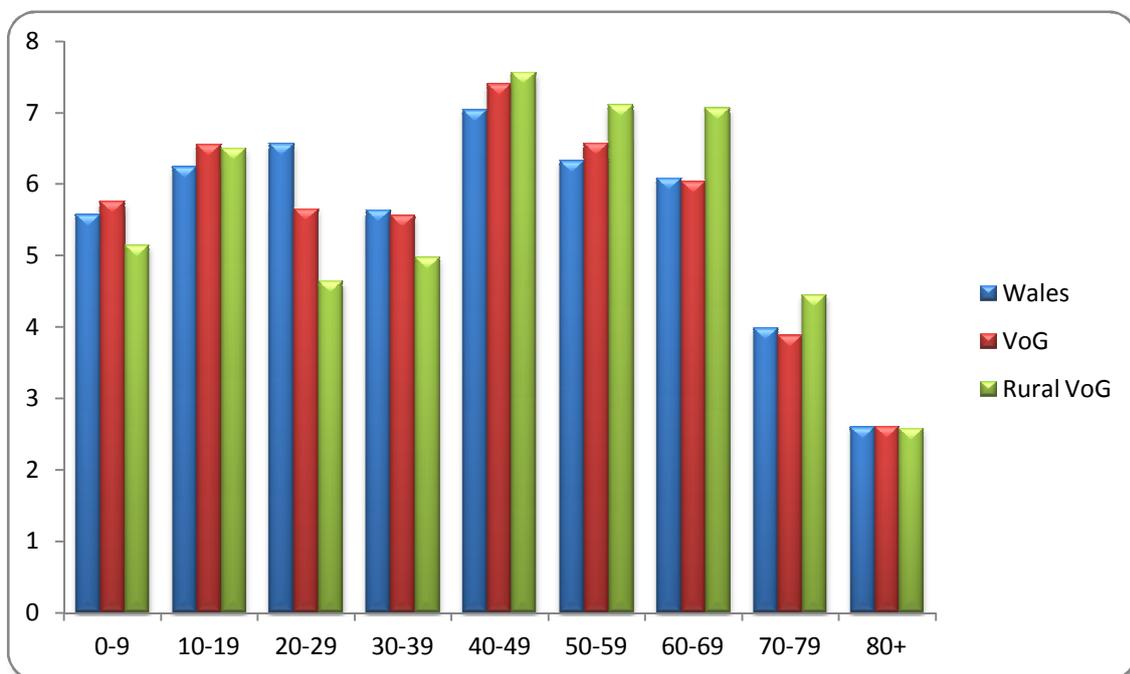
Access to services

- Twenty-one of the 31 LSOAs that encompass rural Vale of Glamorgan fall in the bottom 40% (most deprived) of all LSOAs in Wales for the access to services domain. Further to this, 12 of these LSOAs are also in the bottom 20% of Welsh LSOAs

6.2. Population of the Rural Vale

Figure 13 below outlines the latest age distribution for the population of the rural Vale. The chart highlights that rural Vale of Glamorgan has a greater proportion of people aged 40-49, 50-59, 60-69 and 70-79 than either the local authority as a whole or Wales. Conversely, it has lower proportions of people aged below 40, with the difference particularly striking for the 20-29 age group. 6.6% of the Welsh population are 20-29, compared to only 4.6% of the population in rural Vale of Glamorgan. This older profile suggests that there continues to be an out-migration from rural communities of the Vale of people of a working age between 20-40 and an inward migration of people aged over 40.

Figure 13: Population estimate 2010, % in each age band.⁹

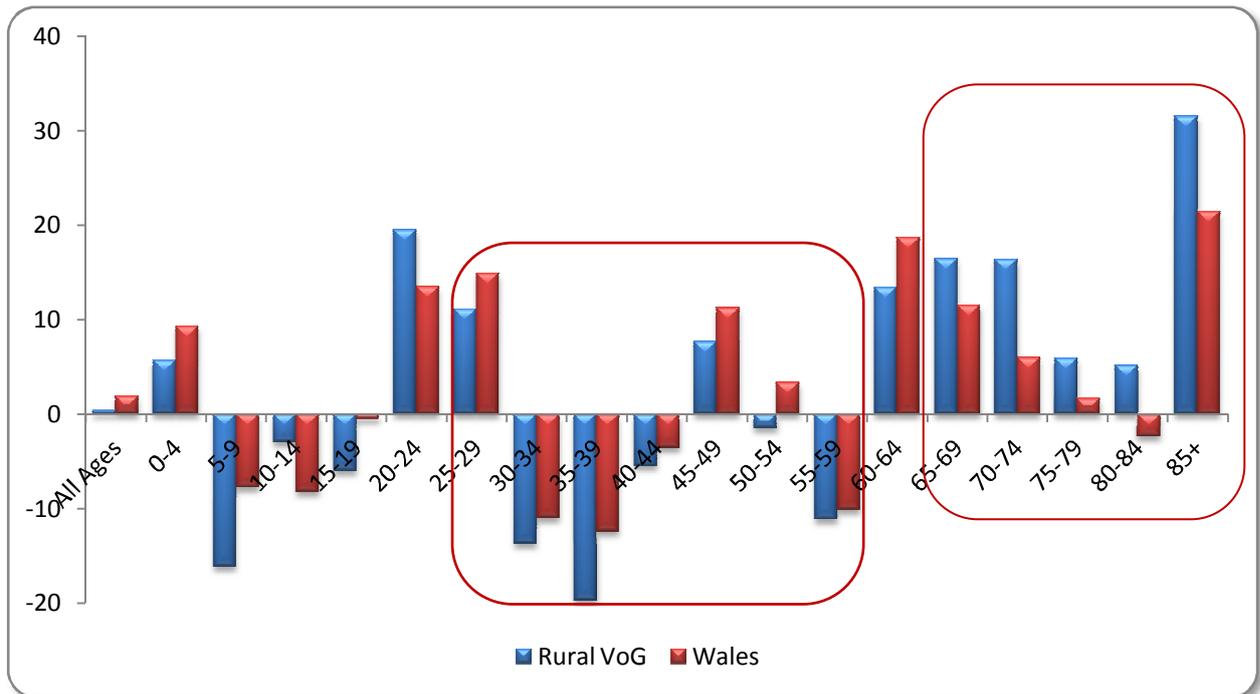


⁹ Derived from Small Area Population Estimates (ONS – 2010). These estimates will be superseded by more accurate data derived from the 2011 Census between November 2012 and February 2013

6.2.1. Population Change – 2005-2010

The population of rural Vale of Glamorgan is estimated to have increased 0.4% between 2005 and 2010. This is a much smaller increase than that estimated for the wider Vale of Glamorgan (2.6%) or Wales as a whole (1.9%). What is more interesting than these headline trends is the demographic breakdown of this increase in population in rural Vale of Glamorgan. Figure 14, gives the % change in population age groups for rural Vale of Glamorgan and Wales as a whole between 2005 and 2010.

Figure 14: % change in population age groups 2005-10¹⁰



The graph shows that, for all age groups beyond 65, there has been an increase of the number of people in rural Vale of Glamorgan between 2005 and 2010. Not only is there an increase, but this is a bigger increase than that for Wales as a whole for each of these age groups. Further to this, for age groups between 25 and 60, the majority of the working age population, there have been bigger decreases or smaller increases in rural Vale of Glamorgan compared to the Welsh average.

Taken together, these findings suggest that whilst an ageing population is a facet of the whole Welsh population, in rural Vale of Glamorgan, this is more of a significant issue. Further to this, the retention of the working age population is a key issue for rural areas, and it seems that this is also the case for the rural wards in the Vale of Glamorgan.

¹⁰ Small area population estimates ONS (2005-2010)

6.3. The Rural Vale's Labour Market

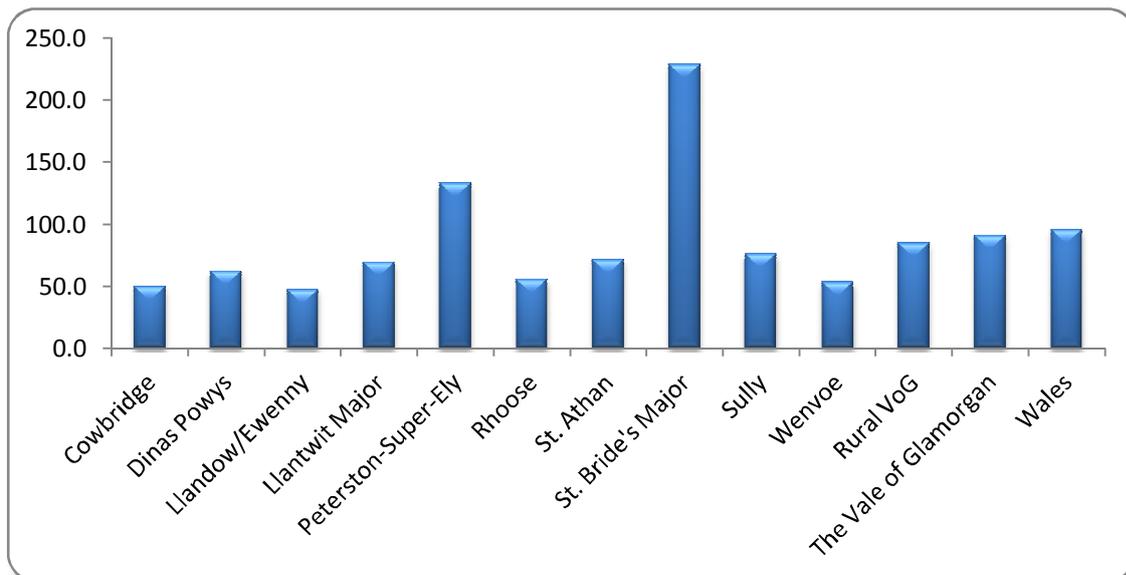
The claimant count provides a proxy measure of unemployment. It measures the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits; since October 1996 this has been the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Claimant counts are not an official measure of unemployment, but are the only indicative statistic available for areas smaller than local authorities.

The number of unemployed people in the UK is substantially higher than the claimant count. Not everyone who is unemployed is eligible for, or claims, Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).

6.3.1. Changes in claimant count levels 2007-2012

The impact of the recession on claimant (unemployment) levels in the UK is not just confined to urban areas. The rural wards of Vale of Glamorgan have seen huge rises in the proportion of the working age population receiving JSA in the past five years. Figure 15 below, gives the % change in the proportion of the working age population receiving JSA between 2007 and 2012.

Figure: 15: % change proportion of working age population claiming JSA June 2007-12



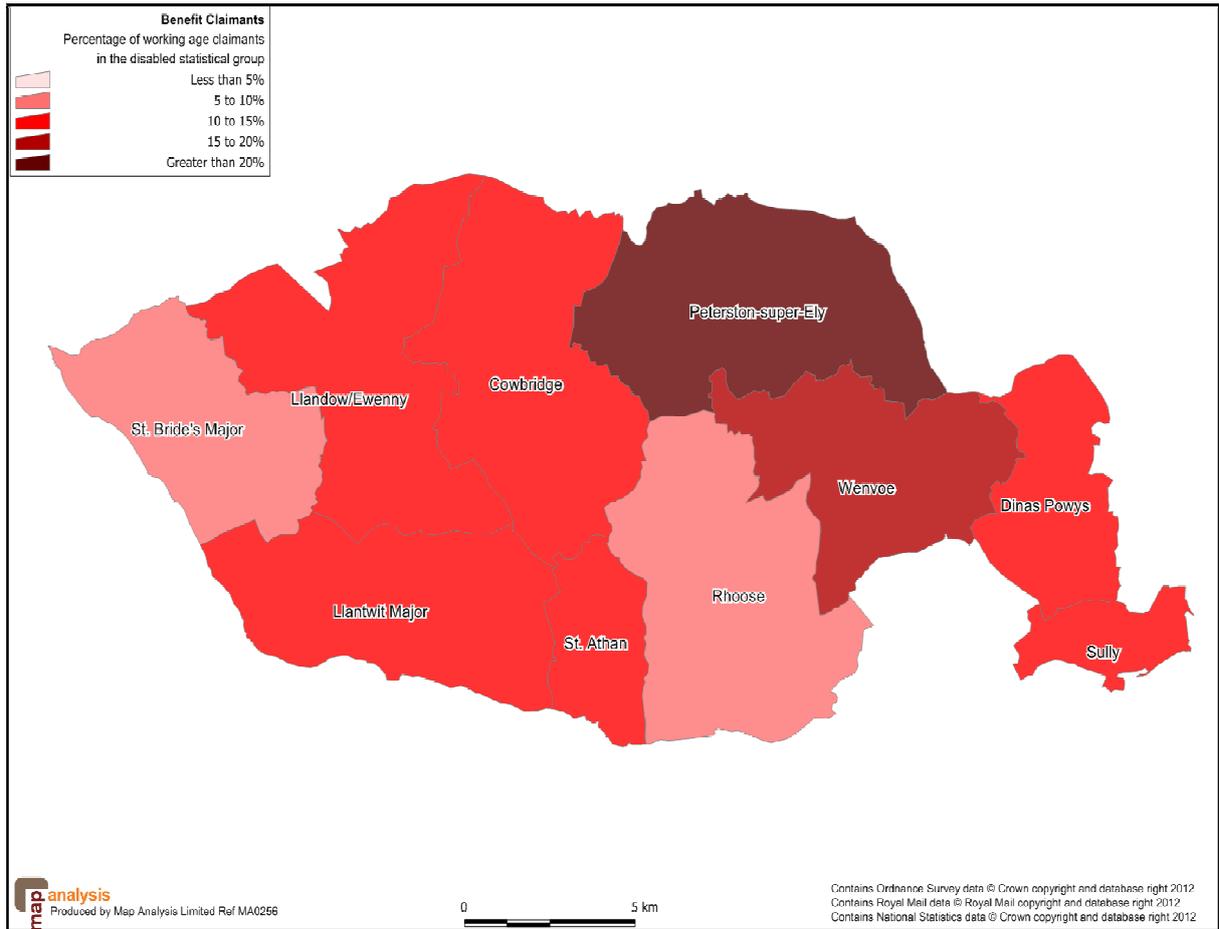
These increases demonstrate how need has increased significantly in recent years across all wards in rural Vale of Glamorgan, with an overall increase of 85% in the proportion of the working age population claiming JSA.

The proportion of people receiving benefits who fall into the job seekers, incapacity and lone parent categories is lower in the Vale of Glamorgan than the average for Wales as a whole. This shortfall is primarily made up by a higher proportion in rural Vale of Glamorgan who are classified as disabled – those receiving Disability Living Allowance. The proportion of carers (those receiving carers allowance) and bereaved (those receiving Window's Benefit, Bereavement Benefit or Industrial Death Benefit) are also higher in rural Vale of Glamorgan than in Wales as a whole.

These trends can chiefly be explained by the relatively older make up of the population of rural Vale of Glamorgan, explored earlier within this section. This is because older people are more likely to be bereaved, disabled or carers than younger people¹¹.

Exploring the disabled group (those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance) in more detail reveals variations within wards that make up rural Vale of Glamorgan. One-fifth of benefit claimants are classified as disabled in Peterson-Super-Ely, compared to just 6.5% in St. Bride’s Major.

Figure 16: Percentage of working age claimants in the disabled statistical group



¹¹ EHRC (2011) How Fair is Wales?

6.3.2. Changes in Business Employment 2008-2010

With the Annual Business Inquiry having only run for three years so far (2008-10), estimations of the changes in business employment can only be explored over this period. However, this period covers a key epoch - the initial economic downturn, recession and anaemic upturn prior to the double dip recession experienced in early 2012.

The % change in the number of employees, employment, full-time employees and part-time employees in rural Vale of Glamorgan, the local authority as a whole and Wales are presented in Figure 17, below.

Figure 17: % Changes in numbers employed in businesses 2008-10



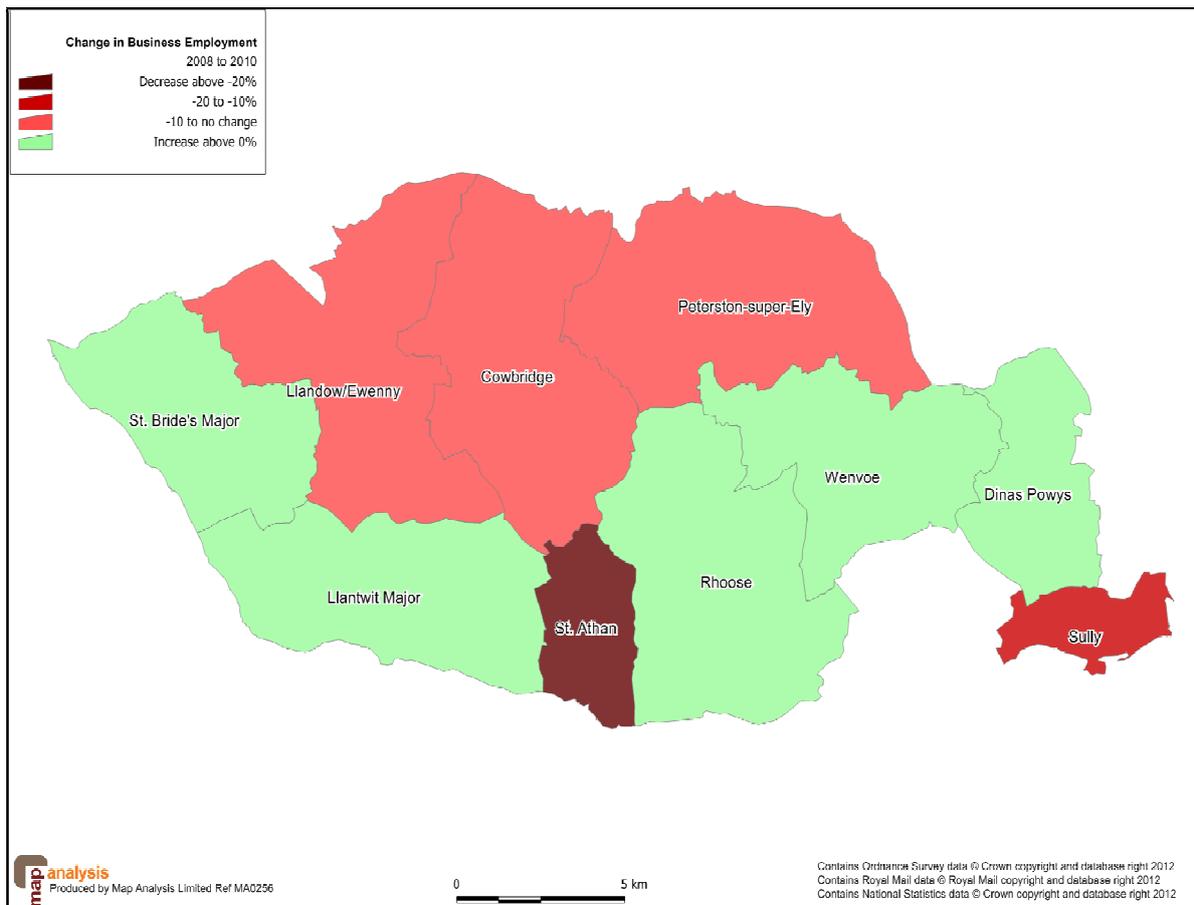
In terms of both business employees and employment, rural Vale of Glamorgan has seen bigger percentage falls between 2007 and 2010 than either Wales or the Vale of Glamorgan. This gap is more pronounced for employees rather than employment, suggesting that a greater proportion of larger businesses have been lost (or have reduced their number of employees) in rural Vale of Glamorgan in comparison to the other two areas. There is an increasing reliance therefore in rural Vale on sole traders and small businesses - these are increasingly making up a larger proportion of the business community.

Changes in the type of employees in businesses contributes to explaining trends in the overall numbers of employees in businesses. Rural Vale of Glamorgan has seen a more significant fall in the numbers of full-time employees (a reduction of 7.9%) than either Wales (-6%) or the local authority as a whole (-5%). Some of this difference has been made up by a larger rise in the numbers of part time employees in businesses in rural Vale of Glamorgan (in comparison to Wales and the Vale of Glamorgan as a whole), but overall this leads to the overall relatively large fall in business employees in rural wards over this time period.

6.3.3. Variations in business employees in rural Vale of Glamorgan

Variations within rural Vale of Glamorgan are particularly visible in relation to changes in employment between 2007 and 2010. Overall, the rural Vale has seen a 4.3% decrease in the number employed (employees plus working proprietors) in businesses. However, this figure masks significant variations within rural wards. The map below shows that half of the 10 wards have actually seen an increase in business employment over this period, with the other half seeing a decrease.

Figure 18: % Change in business employment 2007-10



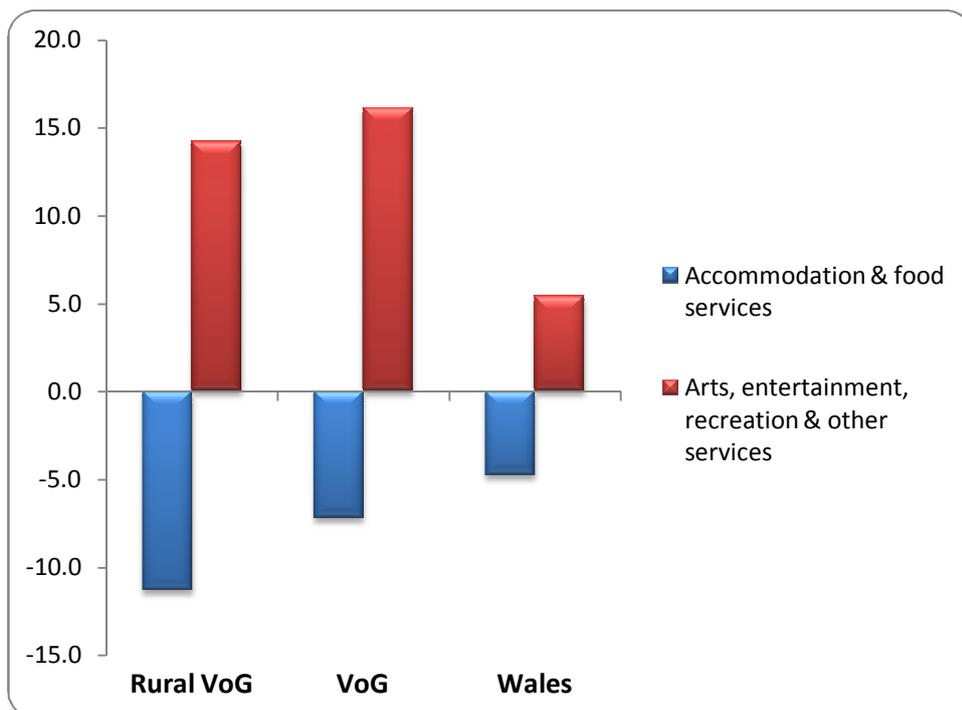
Despite half of rural wards seeing an increase in business employment between 2007 and 2010 and half seeing a decrease, the overall figure for rural wards shows a decrease. This is due to the increases in St. Bride's Major, Llantwit Major, Rhoose, Wenvoe and Dinas Powys all being under 6%, leaving the decreases in St. Athan of 22% and Sully of 10.4% to tip the balance negatively.

6.3.4. Employment by Industry

When analysing the number of employees by industry the Vale is far more reliant on employment in tourism and hospitality (14.3% of total employment) compared to the Vale of Glamorgan and Welsh averages (9.1% and 7.3% respectively). It is also more reliant upon employment in relation to arts, recreation and other services and when the two sectors are combined they make up almost one-fifth (20%) of the rural Vale's employment. This is almost double the Welsh average of just 11%.

Figure 19 below outlines employment changes within the accommodation and food services and the recreation and other services sectors between 2008-2010 in the rural Vale, the Vale of Glamorgan and across Wales. There is an element of similarity between each of the geographical areas however; importantly the decline in accommodation and food services is most significant in the rural Vale (an 11.3% reduction in employment in the sector) equivalent to the loss of 248 jobs. This has been counteracted to some extent by growth in the recreation sector of over 14%, however as a smaller sector this growth equates to 115 additional posts created over the same period.

Figure 19: Percentage changes in numbers of employees from 2008 to 2010 in the accommodation and food services sector and the arts, entertainment and recreation sector.



6.4. Access to Services: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011

6.4.1. Definition

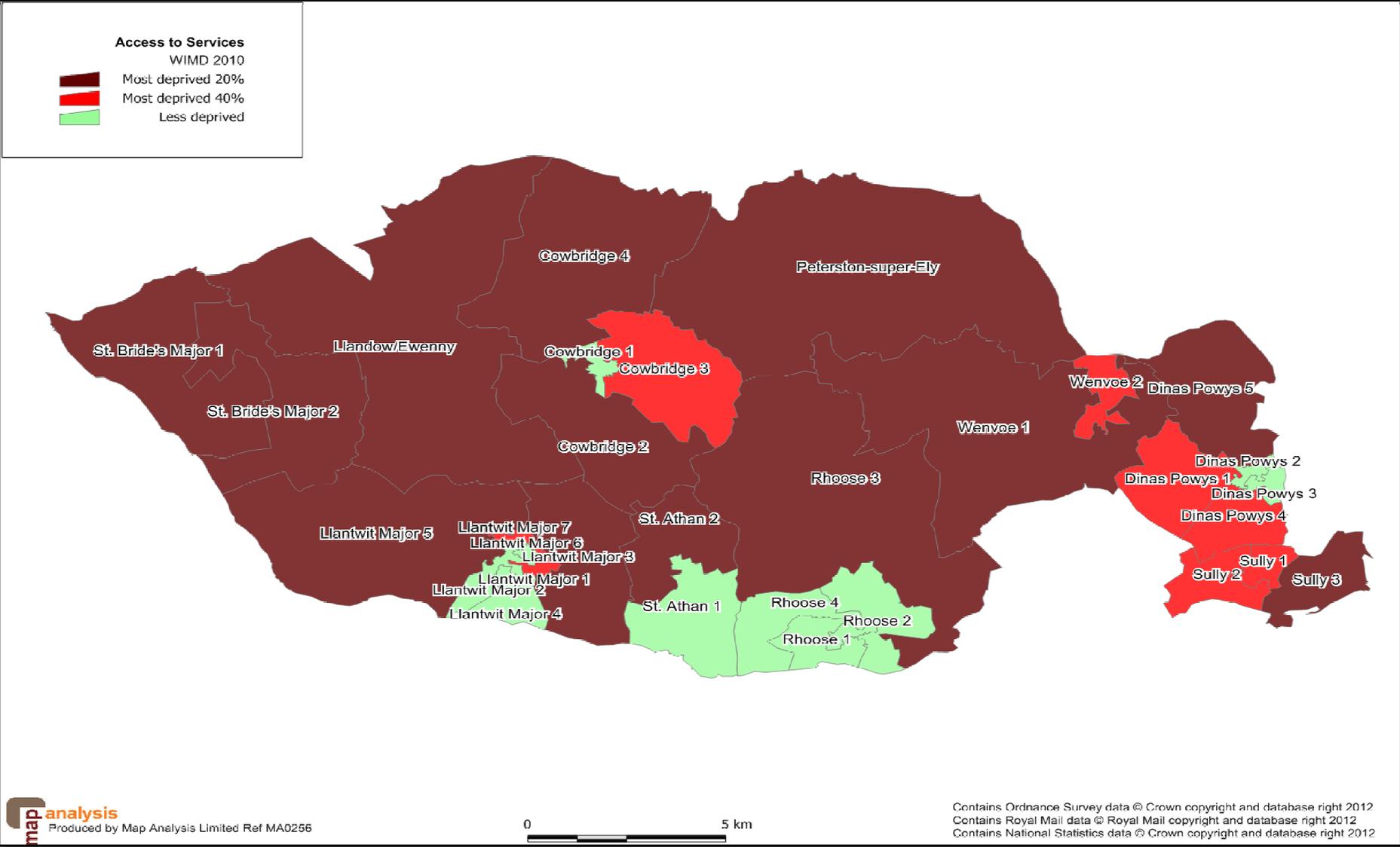
The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) encompasses eight types of deprivation, or domains. They are: employment, income, education, health, community safety, geographical access to services, housing and physical environment. The domains are measured for Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), each of which are made up of at least 1,000 households, and on average 1,500 households.

The most illuminative domain in terms of need in rural Vale of Glamorgan is access to services.

6.4.2. Access to Services

The 10 wards classified as rural Vale of Glamorgan are made up of 31 LSOAs. Twenty-one of these 31 LSOAs fall in the bottom 40% (most deprived) of all LSOAs in Wales for the access to services domain. Further to this, 12 of these LSOAs are also in the bottom 20% of Welsh LSOAs. This data is illustrated in the map overleaf, which shows that the LSOAs which fall into the bottom 20% are those which are furthest away from the main population (urban) centres in the authority - Barry and Penarth.

The access to services measure shows high proportions of the population in rural areas of Vale of Glamorgan have poor access to services. This finding, combined with the older population profile of rural Vale of Glamorgan (relative to Wales and the local authority as a whole) and the relatively high proportion of benefit recipients who are classified as disabled, carers or bereaved suggests that social exclusion represents a key issue for the area.



7. Conclusions

Introduction

The RDP Round 1 programme has been delivered effectively with the vast majority of outputs and results met, and in many cases, surpassed with project participants universally positive about the support they have received.

Furthermore, project participants and the Rural Partnership have attributed much of the success of the various projects, to the hard work of the Creative Rural Communities team.

The Partnership also highlighted the creativity of the team particularly in relation to project development, refinement and promotion which has helped in generating interest in the available initiatives.

Role of the Rural Partnership

The Rural Partnership appears to be a very useful resource for the benefit of the RDP programme. It has a membership of wide ranging interests and leads to high levels of participation at each meeting with a great deal of interaction and contribution from all attendees.

The Partnership therefore provides multiple roles; a scrutiny role, a role as a steering group and an advisory role, utilising the various specialist expertise which exists amongst the representatives to facilitate the success of the various projects being delivered.

Project Management

A number of project leads and Rural Partnership representatives referred to some issues arising where the project was not led from within the CRC team and that furthermore, a project was not the beneficiary of a dedicated project manager. The lack of a dedicated project manager had in some instances delayed the progression of a project by having insufficient capacity to proactively promote the project or to react to enquiries or issues as they emerged. From a participant's perspective there was a concern that these factors provided some element of confusion as to who was the lead contact.

Recommendation

To include resource for a dedicated project manager for all projects and, where this necessitates a project lead from within the council (for example, rather than within the CRC team), ensure clear lines of communication and clarity in all associated promotion.

Overcoming Bureaucracy

The CRC team appear to have dealt extremely well with overcoming the bureaucracy associated with projects of this nature. Streamlining project applications forms and rewording points of clarification from the funders are two key methods that were adopted with success. Furthermore, the assistance and support provided to potential participants in applying for grant aid was widely welcomed.

Broadening Success

The rapid response to opportunities for grant aid and similar types of support within the community are welcomed. Whilst a variety of promotional routes have been explored to encourage project participation, many of the projects have secured a significant number of their participants via word of mouth. It is important that RDP resources are invested in those “harder to reach” participants and organisations as well as those that are well-networked. Whilst project promotion can only do so much it is also important that potential participants of projects are only able to benefit from (for example) grant aid once per project.

Recommendations

That for all RDP projects a clear limit is placed on the scale of support that an organisation/participant can receive.

That the CRC team are targeted with gaining a number of participants “new to RDP” in those schemes where there is a danger of repeat participants from previous RDP funding rounds or from other RDP projects.

Impact Data

The success of the projects delivered as part of the Round 1 programme has perhaps been underplayed and this partly reflects the lack of results and impact data obtained from participants as part of delivery. Whilst this additional data can act as a further burden on project participants and/or interested parties it provides useful evidence to help identify the success of an intervention or to justify its consideration for further investment.

Recommendation

Ensure robust data collection methods are adopted across Axes 3 and 4 projects within RDP Business Plan Round 2.

Consider and Respond to the Strategic Case

Section 6 has begun to explore the latest and emerging evidence of need and opportunity within the rural Vale. It is important that this is explored further, particularly in light of the production of the latest census statistics at the end of the year to ensure that a sound and up-to-date evidence base exists to justify future RDP interventions.

However, the impact and the future need of RDP interventions in the rural Vale should not draw on secondary data alone. The primary research undertaken as part of this evaluation has been overwhelmingly positive about the impact and support associated with the programme. The programme is overseen by a large and diverse Rural Partnership which is an active and enthusiastic guide for the Creative Rural Communities team, which anecdotally, is seen both within the Vale and elsewhere in Wales as being very successful. Were RDP funds to be lost to the Vale it is very unlikely that the goodwill and involvement of the Partnership combined with the momentum and enthusiasm generated through effective RDP delivery would be maintained to anything like the current level.

Annex 1: Project level Evaluation Framework

Project by project:

Project	Tourism Matters Grant Scheme
Delivered by	Creative Rural Communities
Description	The Tourism Matters grant scheme aims to improve the sustainability of the tourism industry in the rural Vale of Glamorgan by raising the quality of facilities, improving accessibility of individual tourism products and improving the performance of tourism businesses & attractions. The aim is to encourage visitors to stay longer and return more often and thereby support the local economy and environment. The scheme offers grants of up to £10,000 to tourism businesses & attractions located within the rural Vale. The maximum grant rate is 75%. The priority for grants would be projects which, inter alia, add value to the area's tourism product, promote well-being and outdoor activities.
Value	£350,000
RDP Measure	Measure 313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of projects to develop and/or market a rural tourism product – 6 • No. of local recreational infrastructure projects financially support – 28 • No. of enterprises advised or assisted to develop a tourism product – 26 • No. of new products or services launched – 18 • Gross visitors to a supported tourism project – 190,150
Indicators / evidence of impact	<p><i>Tourism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder perception of the contribution made by the attractions supported • Visitor perception of the attractions supported and tourism in the County generally • Number of visitors / users of the attractions • Pattern of visits / users of the attraction (i.e. time of year) • Economic value of the attractions supported • Economic value of the tourism sector in Vale of Glamorgan as a whole <p><i>Economic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in turnover and profitability • Increase in non-agricultural GVA • Gross number of jobs created • Gross number of jobs safeguarded <p><i>Environmental impacts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of activities that actively encourages or promotes action to address environmental sustainability • Number of enterprises adopting or improving environmental management systems
Data available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of grant recipients • Organisation performance data for each grant recipient
Proposed fieldwork	<p>Telephone survey with grant recipients</p> <p>One-to-one consultation with project manager</p> <p>Telephone interviews with key stakeholders</p> <p>Review video footage (website)</p>

Project	Inspire Grant Scheme
Delivered by	Creative Rural Communities
Description	<p>The grant scheme is split to deliver projects under the following themes:</p> <p>Enterprising Community Buildings - This element of the scheme will aim to assist community facilities to become more sustainable, thus adding to the economic asset of the area. Capital and limited revenue funding will be available to community facilities who wish to deliver projects which benefit the community. Projects funded under this part of the scheme will focus on increasing revenue with an opportunity for entrepreneurial activity in community facilities, which in turn will lead to long term sustainability. Applicants will be encouraged to promote partnerships with local businesses. Projects should result in an increase in turnover and income generation for the buildings supported.</p> <p>Village Renewal & Development - This element of the Inspire Scheme aims to improve and develop access to basic services to rural communities. Local communities will be assisted to develop projects such as improvements to village amenities and other small scale capital investments.</p> <p>'Inspire' will offer grants of up to £40,000 with grants awarded at 75%.</p>
Value	£979,416
RDP Measure	Measure 322: Village Renewal and Development
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of groups advised or assisted to develop village renewal and development projects - 31 • No. of consultation exercises undertaken – 32 • No. of existing services and facilities sustained – 29 • No. of new products or services launched – 9
Indicators / evidence of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population in rural areas benefiting from improved services • Gross number of jobs created • Gross number of jobs safeguarded • Number of new services and facilities available to the rural populations • Number of existing services sustained • Demographic profile of users (women/elderly/young/children) • Investment catalysed by activity (specifically Llantwit Major)
Data available	<p>Monthly reports on usage (for parks that have been grant recipients)</p> <p>Consultation forms</p> <p>Database of village halls</p>
Proposed fieldwork	<p>Interview with the project manager</p> <p>Consultation with community representatives – directly/indirectly influenced by investment</p> <p>Telephone consultation with grant applicants/recipients</p> <p>Site visit to Llantwit Major to capture visual impacts</p>

Project	Places for Young People Grants
Delivered by	Creative Rural Communities
Description	<p>The 'Places for Young People' grant scheme will fund the development of young people's facilities in the rural Vale of Glamorgan. It is aimed at young people up to and including 30 years old and will encourage the development of facilities for that age group. Examples of projects that could be funded under this theme include play areas, youth shelters, other recreational facilities such as skateboard ramps/adventure play areas, multi-use facilities and I.T facilities specifically targeted at young people. The cornerstone of this project is the requirement by the applicant to involve young people (up to 30 years old) in project development and need identification.</p> <p>'Places for Young People' will offer grants of up to £40,000 with grants awarded at 75%.</p>
Value	£279,765
RDP Measure	Measure 321: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of projects relating to basic services – 9 • No. of consultation exercises undertaken – 9 • No of new services/facilities available to the rural population – 9 • No. of existing services/facilities sustained – 1 • No. of individuals accessing services and facilities – 22,034
Indicators / evidence of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population benefiting from improved services • Children and young people benefiting from improved services • User feedback on the quality of the service pre and post the project
Data available	<p>Photographic evidence and press release info</p> <p>User numbers for play parks and skate parks</p>
Proposed fieldwork	<p>Interview with project manager</p> <p>Telephone interview with key stakeholders</p> <p>Telephone interview with grant recipients</p> <p>Consultation with community representatives</p>

Project	Heritage Tourism
Delivered by	Creative Rural Communities
Description	This is a project to brand, improve and market a group of heritage tourism locations in the rural Vale, provide comprehensive and innovative interpretation facilities and promote the wealth of heritage tourism attractions in the Vale. The project has been developed and will be overseen by a Heritage Projects Group made up of community heritage representatives. Heritage has emerged in several consultation events as a potential key driver of tourism growth in the area. Interpretation will come in several forms: Web; video; podcasts; etched panels and 'Audioposts'. Emphasis has been placed on the web based interpretation in line with current trends and to minimise maintenance costs.
Value	£171,067
RDP Measure	Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects to develop and/or market a rural tourism product or service financially supported - 1 • Number of consultation exercises undertaken - 6 • Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability - 3
Indicators / evidence of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor perception of the attractions supported and tourism in the County generally • Number of visitors / users of the attractions • Pattern of visits / users of the attraction (i.e. time of year)
Data available	Website usage numbers
Proposed fieldwork	Interview with project manager Telephone survey with key stakeholders/volunteers/steering group members/heritage contacts

Project	Rural Community Transport Project / Green Links
Delivered by	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Description	A pilot volunteer led, demand responsive community transport project. Primary user groups will include young, old, tourist and community groups. The project is designed to add value to current public and community transport provision in the rural Vale. It aims to 'plug the gaps' where this is possible.
Value	£232,158
RDP Measure	Measure 321: Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects relating to basic services for the economy and the rural population financially supported - 1
Indicators / evidence of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders perception of the viability of the service • Costs of providing the service pre and post the project • Coverage of the service pre and post the project • Number / type of users of the service • User feedback on the quality of the service pre and post the project
Data available	Spreadsheet of all members
Proposed fieldwork	Interview with project manager

Project	Rural Footpath/Stiles Project
Delivered by	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Description	This project will aim to secure the continued existence of the historic stone stiles which are such a distinctive feature of the landscape of the Western Vale. Refurbishment and rebuilding will be undertaken using traditional techniques and materials in a sympathetic way. Kissing-gates will be installed next to the stiles to improve access to the wider community. The project will be promoted through the production of a leaflet and installation of notice boards at key locations, which will explain the construction and historical significance of these features and their place in the geological and agricultural landscape.
Value	£101,722
RDP Measure	Measure 323: Conservation and Upgrading of Rural Heritage
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of studies undertaken relating to the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the rural heritage – 1 • Number of projects in support of maintaining, restoring or upgrading the rural heritage financially supported - 1
Indicators / evidence of outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population in rural area benefiting from improved services • Local perceptions of the attractiveness of the local area • Local perceptions of the value of local heritage <p>Local satisfaction with the quality of local amenities and life / standard of living</p>
Data available	People counters are available with user numbers
Proposed fieldwork	Project management interview Analysis of user data

Project	Rural Bridleways
Delivered by	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Description	This project will develop bridleways around the Llansannor area. It will open up areas of bridleways to promote both active living and tourism. The project will provide a figure of eight routes for horse riders using the existing restricted byway network and quiet lanes. Improvements to infrastructure will provide the additional benefit of helping the wider community to access the countryside as the route will be stile and step free. The project will improve links between the rural communities of Craig Penllyn, Llansannor, City and Ystradowen. Works will include the provision of bridle-gates, surface improvements, vegetation clearance, information boards and a promotional leaflet.
Value	£51,722
RDP Measure	Measure 313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of local recreational infrastructure projects financially supported - 1
Indicators / evidence of outcome	<p><i>Tourism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor perception of the attractions supported and tourism in the County generally • Number of visitors / users of the bridleways • Pattern of visits / users of the bridleways (i.e. time of year)
Data available	Individual surveys of routes Potential for project manager to go out and do subsequent route survey analysis (but would need to give notice)
Proposed fieldwork	Interview with project manager Analysis of data Consultation with any prominent users of the bridleways (e.g. local stables)

Project	Rural Events Network
Delivered by	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Description	This project will establish a Rural Events Network together with a stock of small equipment required by organisers of rural events. The network will provide an opportunity for event organisers to access advice and share best practice. This project will be aimed at local event groups wishing to develop new, or add value to existing events within the rural Vale. Larger events such as Cowbridge Food & Drink Festival and The International Storytelling Festival, along with smaller community led tourism events will benefit from participation in the network.
Value	£55,901
RDP Measure	Measure 313: Encouragement of Tourism Activities
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of enterprises advised or assisted for the development/marketing of tourism projects – 20
Indicators / evidence of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder perception of the contribution made by the events supported • Number of visitors / users of the events • Pattern of visits / users of the event • Economic value of the events supported
Data available	Database of network group members (email/telephone) Post event reports
Proposed fieldwork	Interview with project manager Online survey of network group members Documentation review of post event reports

Project	Inspire the Vale Bursary
Delivered by	Creative Rural Communities
Description	The bursary scheme will promote conditions which will help young people to implement their ideas for businesses or community enterprises. This will include providing advice and expert support to develop a business idea, providing the necessary equipment or resources to start a business, helping with business location costs, etc. This will be a non risk adverse approach to encourage innovation, with an emphasis on support and encouragement. Schools would be involved in promotion of the project and an amount has been allocated for activities during enterprise week. Bursaries may be awarded for up to 75% of the cost of the support needed and will be available to young people who currently live in the rural Vale of Glamorgan, or who wish to return to rural Vale of Glamorgan having sometime previously lived in the area for at least five years.
Value	£147,977
RDP Measure	Axis 4: Implement Local Development Strategies
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals financially supported to create a new micro enterprise – 21 • No. of groups financially supported to create a new micro enterprise – 2 • Individuals advised or assisted to create a new micro enterprise – 24 • Gross number of jobs created - 12
Indicators / evidence of outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of enterprises created • Number of jobs created • Number of individuals retained within the area
Data available	Application forms with contacts for 25 individuals who set up a business
Proposed fieldwork	<p>Interview with project manager</p> <p>Telephone interviews with stakeholders</p> <p>Telephone survey with participant individuals</p> <p>Documentation review of application forms</p>

Project	Business Networking
Delivered by	Creative Rural Communities
Description	This project will provide a lead role in developing linkages between businesses in the rural Vale to maximise added value. An example could be links between self catering accommodation providers, outdoor activity providers and local food producers/suppliers, etc. Some funding will be available to develop small projects, but it is hoped that networks created through the scheme will be able to tap into Tourism Matters grants. e.g. Golf clubs promoting short breaks.
Value	£54,977
RDP Measure	Axis 4: Implementing Local Development Strategies
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new and existing micro enterprises advised and assisted – 32 • Number of women participating in the project - 7
Indicators / evidence of outcome	Gross number of potential visitors attracted
Data available	Group monitoring forms for all golf breaks members and some other organisations Report from (forthcoming – 28 th Feb) meeting of members to discuss impact
Proposed fieldwork	Interview with project manager Analysis of report form Online survey with members of golf network Consult with several other network “leads” where the networks are more embryonic in nature

Project	Visit Vale+ Grant Scheme
Delivered by	Creative Rural Communities
Description	<p>The Visit Vale+ grant scheme will provide grants of up to £10,000. The maximum grant rate is 75%. Funded activities could include the trialling new and innovative approaches to tourism products and services in the rural Vale of Glamorgan. This project would take a less risk adverse approach to tourism grants, encouraging the trialling of new and innovative ideas. Tours and experiences could be trialled using this funding to get them to a pre market stage and test their viability in the local economy.</p> <p>Green tourism activities in the form of physical activity experiences could be trialled and developed using this funding</p>
Value	£176,161
RDP Measure	Axis 4: Implementing Local Development Strategies
Key outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of enterprises advised or assisted to develop/make a tourism product – 6 • No. of individuals advised or assisted to develop and/or market a tourism product – 6 • No. of local recreational infrastructure projects financially supported – 1 • No. of projects to develop and/or market a rural tourism product or service financially supported - 12
Indicators / evidence of outcome	<p><i>Tourism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder perception of the contribution made by the attractions supported • Visitor perception of the attractions supported and tourism in the County generally • Number of visitors / users of the attractions • Pattern of visits / users of the attraction (i.e. time of year) • Economic value of the attractions supported • Economic value of the tourism sector in Vale of Glamorgan as a whole • Jobs created/safeguarded <p><i>Environmental</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of activities that actively encourages or promotes action to address environmental sustainability • Number of enterprises adopting or improving environmental management systems
Data available	<p>Database of 40 contacts</p> <p>Video examples</p>
Proposed fieldwork	<p>Interview with project manager</p> <p>Review videos for case studies</p> <p>Telephone interviews with grant recipients</p> <p>N.B. (West Farm secured funding from this and Tourism Matters)</p>

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