

Wealden and Rother Rural Partnership Local priorities

The LEADER programme is based on the Local Development Strategy, which has been shaped by our businesses and communities and aligns with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership’s strategic priorities. Our strategy is to build on our previous success and add value to our growth-oriented enterprises. Our priorities are centred on jobs and growth and projects that demonstrate these priorities will be given preference. The Partnership will seek to:

- Improve the productivity of farming;
- Strengthen links between local food and drink and the visitor economy;
- Build the market and supply chain for wood biofuels and other wood products;
- Support rural business start-ups, home-based businesses and other SMEs.

The minimum grant is £2,500 and the maximum is normally £50,000 or 40% of the project’s eligible costs, whichever is the lesser. The Wealden and Rother Rural Partnership local priorities, and examples of potential projects, are outlined below:

National Priorities	Wealden and Rother Rural Partnership Local Priorities	Applications for Grants could include:
P1. Support for increasing farm productivity	1.1 Improve the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of farms through innovative, niche and higher value farming, and food & drink production	Investment in new technology and farming innovations to increase the productivity and efficiency of the core farm business Purchase of equipment and machinery to support the growing, harvesting and processing of new niche high value foodstuffs Support for contract farming, farm collaboration and cooperation and farm business tenancies Investment in technical assistance for pilot projects to explore new production Support to market new products and services
	1.2 Support ‘new’ and part-time farmers and farms returning to production	Modernisation and refurbishment of redundant farm buildings to allow them to return to active farm use Purchase of new technology and yard space to support mobile farming start-ups
P2. Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification	2.1 Improve the range, availability and market penetration of local provenance produce and other goods and services	Investment in new technologies and equipment to enable shared distribution; Investment in new technologies to enable food and drink producers to “scale up” production and develop new products; Support for collaborative approaches to marketing and distribution of local produce; Investment in new software, including websites, to support more effective online trading and marketing;

		<p>Investment in new technologies to improve business processes;</p> <p>Support to develop business-to-business collaboration and strengthen local supply chains.</p>
	2.2 Modernise and create more appropriate and flexible business spaces	<p>Investment in the conversion of disused farm buildings into commercial business units;</p> <p>Investment in the adaptation of non-farm buildings into commercial business units;</p> <p>Investment in new initiatives that provide business accommodation on flexible terms.</p>
	2.3 Support the 'next-step' development of, and innovation within, home-based and rural small and micro-businesses	<p>Investment in new incubator and move-on business accommodation for home-based and micro businesses.</p>
P3. Support for rural tourism	3.1 Encourage better integration of local food and drink with rural tourism	<p>Investment in collaborative approaches to promoting and branding local food and drink;</p> <p>Investment in combined food and drink visitor packages;</p> <p>Initiatives to support closer collaboration between producers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, event organisers and public house landlords.</p>
	3.2 Support the development and marketing of 'destination' attractions	<p>Investment in upgrading attractions and facilities to attract new visitors, including improved disability access;</p> <p>Investment in new, combined visitor packages, focusing particularly on environmental, education and activity based tourism;</p> <p>Investment in marketing campaigns and initiatives, which jointly promote a range of visitor attractions.</p>
	3.3 Increase the capacity of small, high quality and niche local visitor & tourist accommodation	<p>Investment in upgrading serviced and non-serviced visitor accommodation that increases available bed spaces;</p> <p>Investment in flexible forms of visitor accommodation to enable the area to respond to high demand associated with the peak season and high-profile events, including providing disabled access;</p> <p>Investment in new technologies (including e-booking systems) to improve visitor accommodation efficiency.</p>

P4. Provision of rural services	4.1 Support sustainable village halls, Post Offices, stores and public houses as important community hubs	<p>Investment in equipment to provide public access, information exchange and meeting points;</p> <p>Investment in refurbishing open access and multi-use community centres;</p> <p>Refurbishment of community venues to support schemes to enable agencies to run community interest events/courses.</p>
	4.2 Encourage innovative, collaborative and sustainable approaches to rural transport challenges	<p>Investment in sustainable transport initiatives that improve access to work in rural areas, including car share schemes and transport hire initiatives;</p> <p>Investment in cycle paths and other infrastructure that improve access for visitors, employees and local residents.</p>
P5. Support for cultural and heritage activity	5.1 Extend the development and refurbishment of cultural and heritage attractions with educational, visitor or tourism potential	<p>Investment in new technologies and capital equipment to improve access to cultural and heritage sites;</p> <p>Investment in physical improvements and signage at cultural and heritage sites;</p>
	5.2 Support the development and promotion of sustainable cultural and heritage events	<p>Investment in marketing technologies to jointly promote village festivals events;</p> <p>Investment in capital equipment and revenue support to enable village cultural events and festivals to be organised more efficiently and sustainably;</p> <p>Investment in new sustainable festivals and events with employment generation potential.</p>
P6. Support for increasing forestry productivity	6.1 Encourage more small woodlands back into active management	<p>The purchase of appropriate scaled machinery to harvest and extract timber from small (and overgrown) woodlands;</p> <p>Help to purchase yards for contractors to operate from and grow their business;</p> <p>Support for small woodland owners to develop alternative fuel products and other wood products;</p> <p>Creation of rides, access routes and other woodland visitor activities.</p>
	6.2 Develop the supply chain for more effective marketing & supply of timber for wood fuels & other wood products	<p>Investment to support the conversion of pole barns into woodfuel hubs;</p> <p>Investment in mechanical chippers and firewood processors;</p> <p>Support for developing collaborative marketing agreements and materials;</p> <p>Support for better co-ordination of the supply chain.</p>