

Local Development Strategy LEADER 2014-2020

Summary Document
(Revised 2020)

CYNNAL Y CARDI:
DELIVERING THE LEADER
PROGRAMME IN CEREDIGION



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

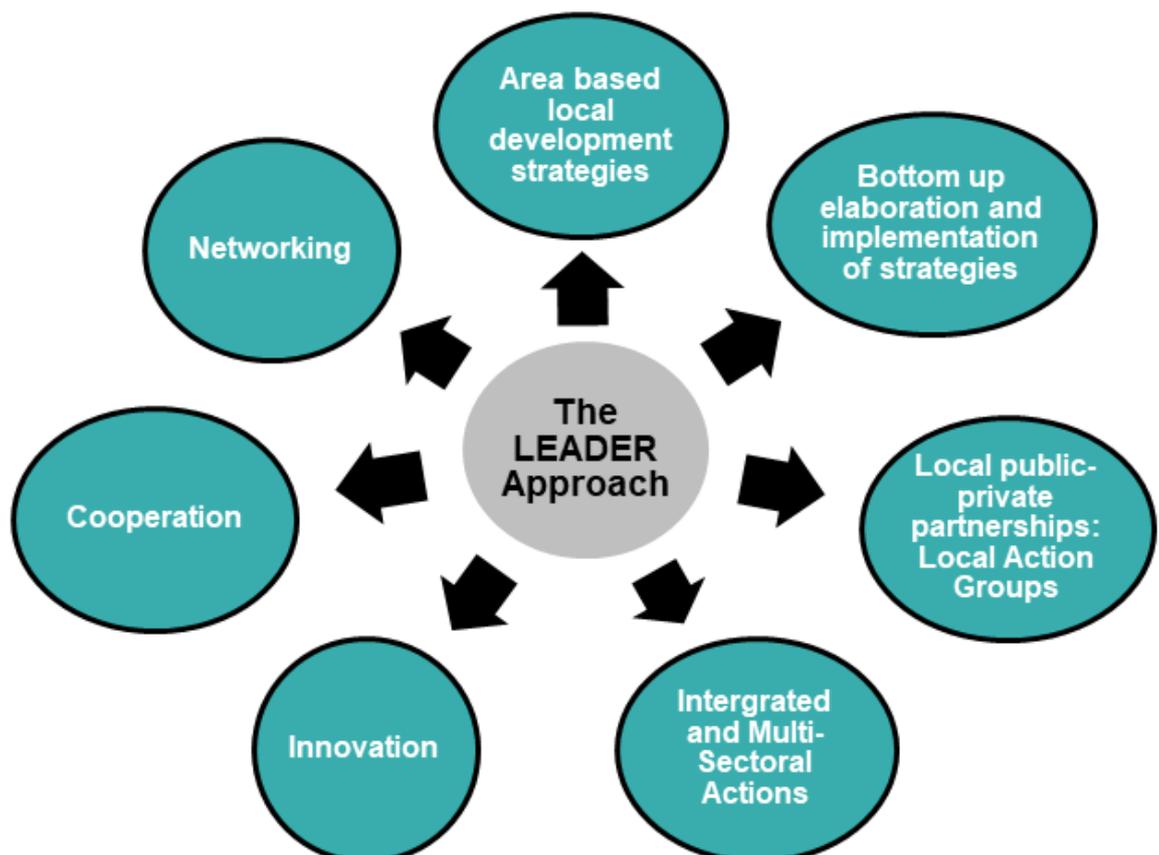


The Cynnal y Cardi Local Action Group (LAG) initially prepared a Local Development Strategy (LDS) document following consultation with the community back in 2015. This is an updated version reflecting the changing priorities developed in Sept 2020, with a particular focus on the impact of Covid-19 on the needs and challenges of Ceredigion. In many respects, the challenges we were already facing remain the same but some issues have been heightened. Despite these challenges, the impact of Covid has led to changing attitudes and behaviours, which now offers new opportunities. We also now face other challenges and opportunities having left the European Union.

During 2020, Ceredigion County Council undertook a significant consultation in the development of a new Economic Strategy for the county. The 'Boosting Ceredigion's Economy: A strategy for Action (2020-2035)' document was published in April 2021. The findings from this engagement process provided a sound basis for informing the future priorities of the LAG alongside capturing the experiences and learnings from the Group's Members.

The strategy priorities are focused on what local people believe is important for the development of their area, what the challenges and opportunities are. These form the priorities and potential actions for distributing European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development (EAFRD) to support LEADER activity.

All activity supported must fit with the aims of this LDS and must utilise the seven key features of LEADER:



Ceredigion Context

Population:

The population of Ceredigion according to the latest ONS Mid-Year Population estimates for 2018 is 72,992. During the 2001 to 2018 period, the population has decreased by 3.2%, whereas the population of Wales has increased by 7.8%.

The median age of the county's population has increased from 42.9 in 2011 to 45.1 in 2018; in comparison, for Wales as a whole it has remained static at 41.5. The population of Ceredigion is ageing and, in 2018, 24.9% of the population is estimated to have been aged 65 and over. Trends show that the working age population (16-64) has decreased by 14% since 2001, while the 65+ population has increased significantly by 29.5%.

Students play a large role in the County, both from an educational and economic perspective. Aberystwyth University, for example, has over 8,000 students who account for 11.2% of the County's population. In recent years the numbers have been showing a decline.

Earnings:

Analysis of earnings provides some evidence to support the assumption that some of Ceredigion's workforce commute out of county for higher paid employment in neighbouring counties.

Data from the latest Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2019 show that the average annual earnings are lower in Ceredigion than across Wales, and with the exception of Powys, also lower than the rest of Mid and South West Wales. The average annual earnings for those who live in Ceredigion are £24,126, over £2,000 less than the £26,267 across Wales.

Welsh Language:

The 2011 Census shows that 47.3% of the population of Ceredigion say they can speak Welsh. However, these figures are supplemented through the Annual Population Survey, and the latest results provide strong evidence to suggest that the County remains a bastion of the Welsh language. Over the last six years, the proportion of people saying they can speak Welsh has increased consistently each year, rising from 52.7% in 2014 to almost 60% by 2019.

Progress has been made during the previous and the current programme on developing a successful approach in engaging communities to support Ceredigion's rural communities. It has been a vehicle by which this type of funding has been used to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, promote the area's rich culture and heritage and has promoted active and empowered communities, by working with them to seek solutions to local issues.

The experience of implementing LEADER activities in this programme has influenced some of the approaches but furthermore these priorities now identifies further opportunities for local innovation, partnership working within destination areas and more network and cooperation between LAG's.

Ceredigion SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- High quality environment
- Strong social capital.
- Resilient communities and networks.
- Cultural and linguistic identity.
- High potential quality of life.
- Established tourism product.
- Loyal, well qualified/skilled and flexible workforce with low labour costs.
- Substantial higher education / research sector.
- Established population.

Weaknesses

- Peripheral to main economic centres with ICT & Transport infrastructure often inadequate.
- Higher costs to trade, provide services and to live.
- Labour and skills shortages.
- Low productivity and incomes with high % of public sector employees.
- Lack of community capacity.
- Image and perception.
- Low population density.
- Vulnerable to pandemic and emergency occurrences.

Opportunities

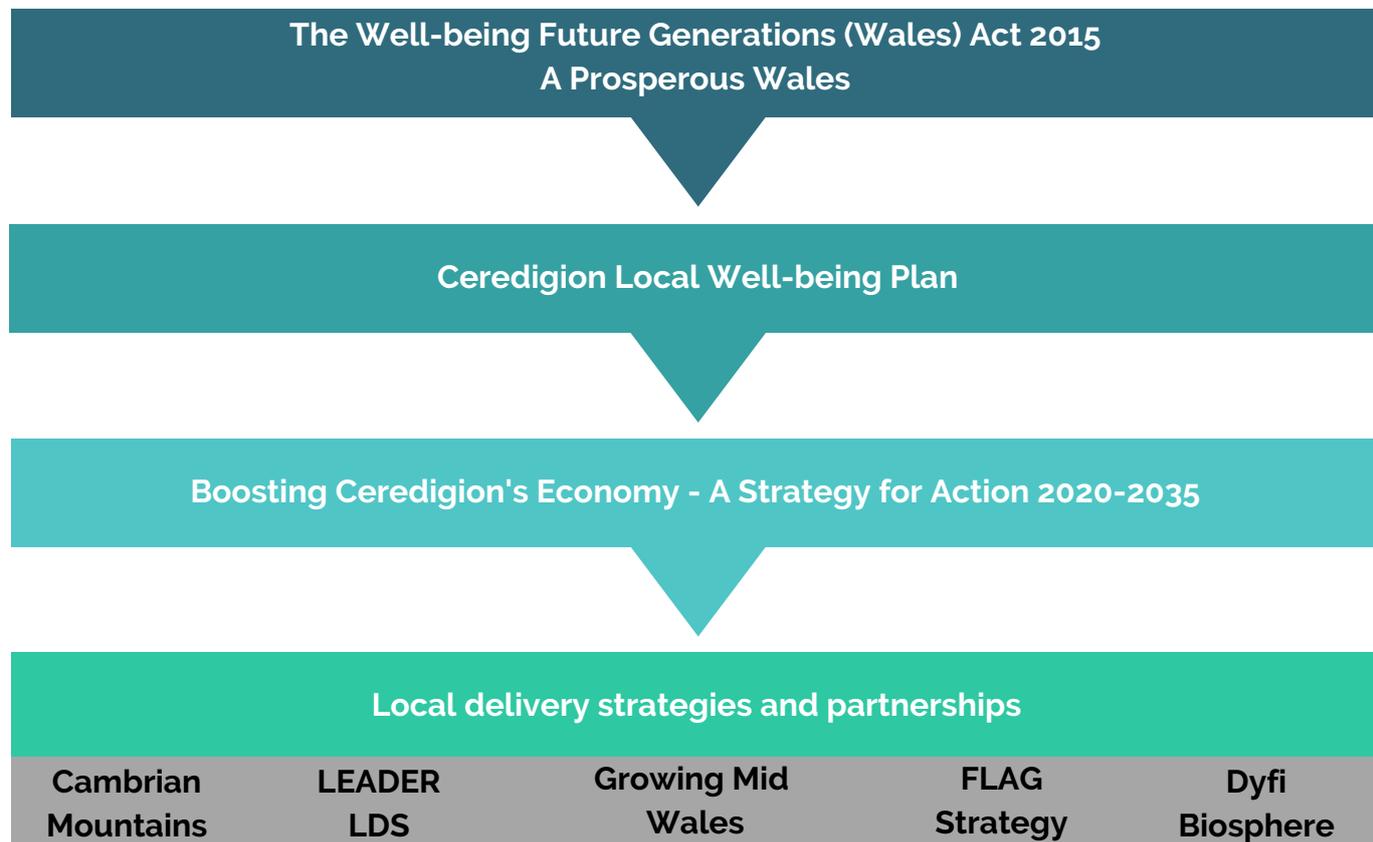
- Improving access to and exploitation of IT.
- Opportunities post covid.
- Growing community capacity post covid to explore opportunities for creating more proactive resilient communities.
- Destination management approach to tourism and developing sense of place.
- Optimising land management in the upland areas to increase incomes.
- Continued population change through migration, with net out-migration of young people and net in-migration in middle adulthood.
- Strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area.
- Cross border partnership working to develop collaborative approaches that will benefit the rural economy.
- Increase opportunities for workforce development incl. staff training, skills acquisition, apprenticeships, and better transport to access the workplace & training.
- Utilise the natural environment and landscape of the area.
- Facilitation of a substantially knowledge-based economy to support new & innovative opportunities & develop & strengthen short supply chains to yield optimum benefit for businesses.

Threats

- EU changes / Government reorganisation, centralisation, which is a threat to rural communities.
- Demographic change. Out migration of young & qualified resulting in a declining working age population. Projected rise in older people's population groups over the next decade resulting in social exclusion & erosion of social capital.
- Ongoing impact of Covid pandemic.
- Climate change - The greater likelihood in future years of extreme weather events such as flooding.
- Declining number of businesses.
- Pressure on public services due to measures to reduce public debt, such as reduced spending on welfare and reduction of other public sector budgets.
- Affordability of living due to low labour costs and long-term rises in transport and heating fuel costs.
- Problems with accessibility to a range of services.
- The location of Ceredigion on the periphery of Wales and the UK and the EU centres.
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Strategic Aims and Objectives

The key strategic relationships for the LDS in Ceredigion are highlighted below. The following chart shows the relationships:



Ceredigion County Council has formally published a new strategy considering the economic future of Ceredigion over the next fifteen years. Detailed engagement and consultation with young people, businesses and residents has taken place, resulting in four priority areas being identified where action will be taken to make a difference. These relate to:

- People** – inspiring people, developing skills, health and wellbeing
- Place** – promoting Ceredigion as a place to live, work and visit
- Enterprise** – assisting businesses to start up and grow
- Connectivity** – connecting businesses and communities

It is clear from the focus of these four priority areas that all are relevant to the LEADER programme and the LDS has been revised to deliver against each of the thematic areas identified. The strong match between the LDS priorities and the Economic Strategy show that there is a great degree of complementarity.

The strategy document can be found at: <https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/your-council/strategies-plans-policies/economic-strategy2020-35/>

The LDS Strategy, as revised in 2020 sets out the following priorities:

Theme 1: Adding Value to local identity and natural and cultural resources	
To make Ceredigion a distinctive place where people want to live, work and visit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support and sustain Ceredigion's market town economy. • To support and grow the impact of the arts, culture and heritage sectors as economic drivers. • To strengthen the identity of the area using the cultural assets of the area. • To promote and support activities including social and economic activities that will strengthen the position of the Welsh language
Theme 2: Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains	
To create an entrepreneurial focused culture, promoting Ceredigion as a positive place to live, study, work and grow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage leadership skills to grow. • To upskill and develop new opportunities for Ceredigion's employment workforce. • To support initiatives that assists individuals to access work, training, volunteering opportunities and other services. • To create opportunities for Welsh speakers through economic growth.
Strengthen / Capitalise on key opportunities for Ceredigion's key sectors particularly food and drink sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen local supply chains within Ceredigion. • To access market leading Intelligence that will allow Ceredigion businesses to access data in order to support growth in the private sector. • To investigate the opportunities for the circular economy model in Ceredigion. • Adding value to local products.
Theme 3: Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services	
To build capacity and resilience within Ceredigion's rural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support and develop capacity and resilience within Ceredigion's rural communities. • To support social innovations that help find solutions to societal challenges. • To pilot activities that improves the well-being of individuals and communities
Theme 4: Renewable energy at Community level	
Transition to a low carbon future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate the pre-development work for local renewable energy initiatives • To develop opportunities for sustainable low carbon initiatives.
Theme 5: Exploitation of digital technology	
To improve digital connectivity and digital exploitation levels across Ceredigion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve utilisation of digital technology by individuals, businesses and communities to promote sustainable rural economic growth. • To ensure digital inclusion for people in rural communities to combat social exclusion and provide improved access to services. • To exploit the opportunities for digital trading by businesses and increase the productivity, diversity and efficiency of businesses in rural areas

Monitoring and Evaluation

The LAG considers the outputs – results – impacts will provide a sound basis for achieving its vision across the whole of Ceredigion. LAG discussions focused on fostering and building on a “can do” attitude by communities, institutions, businesses and individuals within this rural county. LEADER activities within Ceredigion will focus on “what's local matters,” taking a grass roots, innovative and ambitious approach to any developments. It is therefore important that the LEADER programme recognises and records the ‘journey’ or the process taken by those individuals, businesses and communities during the course of time as well the more concrete based outputs and results. Therefore the data on “How” as well as “What” will be monitored and captured to evidence the achievements of the LEADER programme.

The outputs are set out as follows:

Indicator Name	Proposed Target
Implementation	
Number of feasibility studies	4
Number of networks established	3
Number of jobs safeguarded	2
Number of pilot activities	25
Number of promotional and / or marketing activities undertaken to promote the LDS and / or its projects	183
Number of stakeholders engaged	1292
Number of participants supported	2166
Number of jobs created	1.5
Number of Community Hubs	7
Cooperation	
Number of Networks established	2
Number of Information dissemination actions	19
Number of stakeholders engaged	114
Number of participants supported	98

The LAG has also identified a number of additional outputs to be collated during the programme period, which includes:

Number of communities engaged
Number of groups engaged
Number of young people participating
Number of women participating
Number of welsh speakers participating
Number of elderly participating
Number of individuals with disabilities participating
Number of projects aimed at environmental enhancement/sustainability
Number of consultation exercises
Number of cluster groups / informal networks

The LAG's approach to **evaluation** will be strategic, establishing a strategy of evidence collection, setting the mid-term and final points for formal external evaluation. The process of evaluating the scheme is well underway with a final report due at the end of the programme period.

As part of evaluating the legacy of the Cynnal y Cardi LEADER scheme over the last two programme periods an evaluation exploring the impact and success of Cynnal y Cardi is being carried.

For further information related to evaluation please visit:

<https://www.cynnalycardi.org.uk/evaluation/>