

Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) in the Northwest - Newsletter



The Rural Development Programme for England is an integrated programme delivering funding allocated to England from the EU and Defra via the European Fund for Rural Development (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) from 2007 until 2013.

There is a national budget of £3.9bn, of which approximately £300m is allocated to the agri-environment and other land management schemes in Northwest England. These schemes are managed by Natural England and the Forestry Commission.

Around £75m is being managed by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) to deliver the socio-economic elements of the programme in the region. This funding is targeted at making agriculture and forestry more competitive and sustainable, and enhancing opportunities in rural areas.

The Northwest Regional Implementation Strategy provides the overall strategy for the delivery of RDPE in the region. It breaks it down into 4 themes:

Theme One: Making agriculture and forestry more competitive and sustainable.

Theme Two: Conserving and enhancing the environment and countryside.

Theme Three: Enhancing opportunities and quality of life in rural areas.

Theme Four: Developing skills, knowledge transfer and capacity building.

To review the full details of the Northwest Regional Implementation Plan please visit: www.nwda.co.uk/rdpe

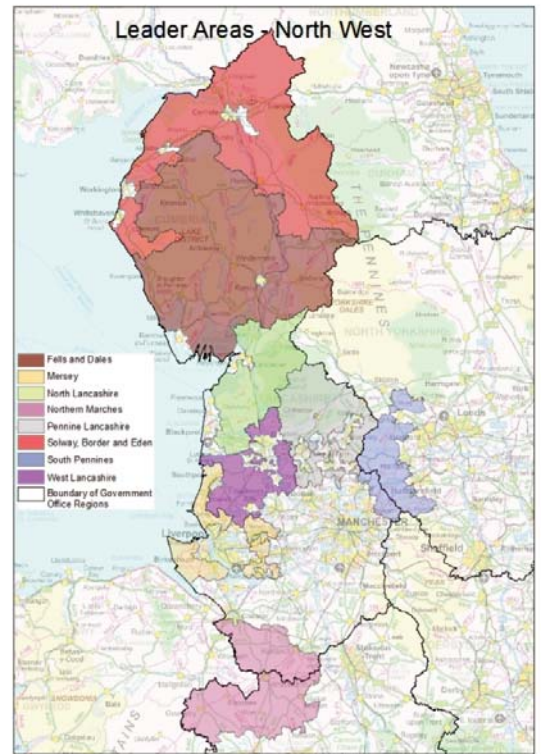
Delivery in the Northwest

The main delivery method for the NWDA's RDPE programme is by Local Action Groups (LAGs) using the LEADER approach.

This is a bottom-up, community-led approach to the delivery of RDPE funds. Following a thorough assessment process during 2007/08, the NWDA has 8 local action groups across the 5 Northwest sub-regions which will deliver £26.5 million worth of funding under RDPE. So far this year 55 projects have had funding committed to them to a value of £850,000 with many more projects in progress.

For those areas in Cheshire and Greater Manchester not covered by a Local Action Group the NWDA is delivering the funding direct. So far £400,000 has been committed to projects with a further £163,000 of grant funding applications currently being processed.

Visit the NWDA website at www.nwda.co.uk/rdpe for further details.



The NWDA is also developing a £20 million regional Livestock Programme. This is an integrated programme consisting of technical advice, demonstration events, monitor farms and performance grants.

Livestock farmers can have produced, at a cost subsidised by the NWDA, a technical plan in one of the following areas:

- Nutrient Management
- Animal Health and welfare
- Resource Efficiency

A technical grant is also available to support the applications for capital investment up to £8,000. Since the launch of the performance grants at the end of July this year 19 livestock holdings have benefited from the performance grants to the value of £125,000 and over 500 holdings have had or are in the process of having their technical plans produced.

For more information please visit www.nwda.co.uk/rdpe and www.livestocknw.co.uk





English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS)

EWGS is part of a package of environmental support measures provided by the Defra family. The Forestry Commission operates the scheme under the RDPE. The purpose is to develop a co-ordinated delivery of public benefit from England's woodland. The grant scheme has a national framework but funding is allocated and grants are targeted at regional level.

The overarching objectives for EWGS are:

- To sustain and increase the public benefit derived from existing woodlands in England.
- To invest in the creation of new woodlands in England of a size, type and location that most effectively delivers public benefit.

The component grant types of EWGS have their own objectives. For example, some grants are focused regionally to meet the priorities of the North West Forestry Framework.

Key Target Areas of EWGS:

Applications for grants under EWGS will be considered if they deliver key targets in the areas of:

- New woodland creation.
- Area of woodland under certified sustainable forest management and approved management schemes.
- Expanding the area of woodland with public access.
- Bringing woodland SSSIs into favourable condition.
- Assisting delivery of Priority Habitat and Species Action Plans for woodlands.
- Improving the environment of disadvantaged urban communities.

Current Availability of Funds

Grant Type	FY 09 /10 (£000)	Status	FY 10 /11 (£000)
WAG - Woodland Assessment Grant	9	Open	17
WPG – Woodland Planning Grant	35	Open	53
WIG – Woodland Improvement Grant	275	Open	700
WMG –Woodland Management Grant	8	Open	77
WCG – Woodland Creation Grant	595	Open – will close 30/09/09	578
Total RDPE	922		1425
WRG – Woodland Regeneration grant	24	Open	288
WMG Access	38	Open	12
Total Non-RDPE	62		300

To find out who the woodland officer is in your area please contact the **Cumbria Office** on 01524 565800 or the **Delamere office** on 01606 889912 or via email at northwest.fce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

Alternatively please look at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/northwestengland-grants> for full details of grant schemes and contact details.

Natural England is urging Northwest farmers and land managers to apply to the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme this year as exceptional levels of funding mean that a wider range of applications can now be supported.

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) is a targeted grant scheme that offers good levels of dependable payments to farmers and land managers in return for sensitive management of environmental features on their holdings.

The level of payments on any particular farm depends on what features are present and the level of management that the farmer can offer. HLS guarantees a set payment to farmers every six months for ten years, with a five year opt out clause.

With ten years' experience of delivering environmental schemes to farmers, and running a flock of sheep near Longtown, Natural England's Ewan Nugent comments; "We have more than three times the amount of money for HLS than we had last year and I would encourage farmers and land managers across the Northwest to consider HLS.

"In the ten years that I have been involved in agri-environment grant schemes in England, this has been the best year to make an application to higher paying schemes like HLS."

"With the average first year value of a HLS in the region being £18,500, and monies available for capital works such as hedging or fencing, this really is a lucrative opportunity. We have advisers on hand now to help with the application process and anybody thinking of applying, please don't delay."

To find out more, telephone Natural England's Environmental Stewardship helpline on 0300 060 1113 or speak to your usual land agent



Natural England is particularly interested to hear from people with some of the following features on their farms:

Wildlife Habitats: Old grasslands, rich in flowers that have not received artificial fertilisers for a decade or more, Moorland, Heathland, Saltmarsh, Wetlands, Bogs and Native Woodlands.

Breeding Birds: Lapwing, Curlew, Snipe, Redshank, Tree Sparrow, Grey Partridge, Yellow Wagtail, Corn Bunting, Hen Harrier, Golden Plover, Merlin, Black Grouse and Twite.

Other Animals: Natterjack Toads, Dormouse.

Butterflies: Marsh Fritillary, Pearl Bordered Fritillary, High Brown Fritillary, Duke of Burgundy and Large Heath.

Public Access: Opportunities to improve public access to the countryside through new footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths and offers of facilities for educational access for school children.

Watercourse Protection: land adjacent to rivers, lakes and wetlands.

History: Archaeological and historical features such as old water mills, lime kilns, scheduled ancient monuments, designed landscapes, roman earthworks, vernacular farm buildings and field barns.

www.naturalengland.org.uk