

Making it Local
(Blackdown Hills & East Devon Local Action Programme)

Terms of Reference,
Membership and Working Arrangements

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1. Background to Local Action

Local Action is the community-led element of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) in the South West. It implements the principles developed under the previous European Union (EU) funded LEADER programme. It is governed by both EU regulations for the programme as a whole and by DEFRA guidance. The delivery of local Action is administered by the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWERDA).

The ethos of the programme is one of collaboration, community participation and decision making through partnership. It is a six year European Union (EU) initiative to support small scale rural development projects, with this programme running from October 2008 - December 2013.

A glossary of terms used in this document is in Appendix 4.

2. The Local Development Strategy and Delivery Plans

In 2007/2008, the Blackdown Hills AONB & East Devon AONB led on the creation of the Local Development Strategy called '**Making it Local**'. This was successfully awarded funding by the Regional Selection Panel as part of Local Action in 2008.

Each year a **delivery plan** has to be submitted and approved by SWERDA. This describes the way in which *Making it Local* will carry out actions and achieve the outcomes outlined in the Strategy. It identifies indicative projects which will address needs as outlined in the Development Strategy.

The **aim** of *Making it Local* is to use the outstanding environmental quality and local human potential of this area as a springboard for sustainable economic growth. The common threads running through the strategy are:

- The importance of using the rich local environment as a springboard to new and improved local economic activity, including the development of social enterprise and community initiatives;
- The need to strengthen local connections and existing business and community networks as a base for collaboration and profitable exchange of ideas.

The **area** covered includes all the parishes within the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs, together with the surrounding gateway market towns of Axminster, Honiton, Wellington, Chard, Seaton, Sidmouth and Ottery St Mary. The total population of the area is 125,000; area map and eligible parishes are shown in the Scheme Guidance Manual.

There are **three strategic objectives**:

Strategic Objective A: Raise business performance and local employment. To increase the number of well planned, productive, ambitious businesses who create more local jobs and maximise both local and wider markets for sustainable economic growth

Strategic Objective B: Connecting Communities. Support our communities and businesses to make connections and work together, to build local assets and sustainable solutions

Strategic Objective C: Optimise Sustainable Local Resource Use. To realise the economic potential of the local environment, both as a resource and as a marketing

tool, as a means to enhance prosperity and to sustain environmental quality

3. The Local Action Group (LAG): Development and Structure

The Local Action Group or LAG is the **Partnership** body which directs the delivery of the Local Action Programme in our area. (LAG is a term that is used by most of the Local Action Groups across the UK and the rest of Europe). The Partnership's broad **purpose** is to deliver an 'integrated rural development strategy'. It needs to have representation across social, environmental and economic interests. At a decision making level, non-public sector representation must make up at least 50% of the Partnership.

The **Making It Local LAG** has been developing as the Programme has been put together and will continue to develop over the life of the Programme. It has grown local from consultation processes, with support from all the Local Authorities and leadership from the Blackdown Hills AONB and East Devon AONB.

The Local Action Group (LAG) has **two** layers:



The **Consultative and Advisory Group (CAG)** gives the programme its accountability with a wide membership from the local and wider communities, and informs the overall direction for the Programme.

The **Programme Management Group (PMG)** is the decision making body and managing group for the LAG. It is made up of people with a range of skills, knowledge and interest needed to make the Programme work.

There are also **Programme Stakeholders**: interested groups, organisations, businesses and individuals from the programme area's wider community. They will receive regular programme information, will be invited to events and will be able to submit projects and activities for funding.

There is a more detailed structure diagram in Appendix 5 and a diagram of Stakeholders and Sectors is shown in Appendix 6.

4. The Consultative and Advisory Group (CAG): Role, Membership and Working Arrangements

4.1 Role

The Consultative & Advisory Group (CAG) of the Blackdown Hills & East Devon Local

Action Programme is in effect the Local Action Group (LAG). It is made up of representatives of organisations and individuals from the area covered by the *Making it Local* Programme.

The role of the CAG is:

- a) To be the consultative body for the Programme, especially for the development of the Annual Delivery Plan and for monitoring effectiveness of work
- b) Devolve decision-making responsibilities to the Programme Management Group
- c) Act as a web of connection across the area, represent the interests of sectors and stimulate general interest in the programme
- d) To help generate projects and activities that fit the overall aims of the programme and meet the needs of the area
- e) To offer general advice and guidance to the Programme Management Group and Staff
- f) To provide intelligence on the programme's operation and reach in the area
- g) To supply people and thus expertise to the Programme Management Group
- h) To be consulted with on policy-making

4.2 Membership

Membership of the Consultative and Advisory Group is drawn from stakeholders across the area of the Programme. A diagram of this is to be found in Appendix 6. It includes individuals or organisations that can represent:

- a) the Accountable Body (Devon County Council)
- b) The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership and East Devon AONB Partnership
- c) Local business networks
- d) woodlands & forestry sector
- e) art & creative sector
- f) food & farming sector
- g) tourism & recreation sector
- h) ICT & communication technologies
- i) renewables and sustainable technologies
- j) MCTI and town groups
- k) Parish Plan (or other parish level groups) and Parish councils
- l) Transport and access organisations
- m) Community and voluntary organisations
- n) Equality and Diversity groups
- o) Funders
- p) Local Authorities
- q) Other partners as identified by the group as the Programme develops

There is no maximum membership of this group. Members of the CAG will be required to sign up to the 'code of conduct' and attend at least one meeting per year. A list of current members will be maintained by Programme staff, which will be collated at meetings and through correspondence.

4.3 Working Arrangements

The CAG **will meet twice yearly** in the spring (March/April) and the autumn (September/October). The autumn meeting will focus on the annual Delivery Plan. Members shall attend at least one of the meetings each year or give good reason for not attending. If they do not attend without good reason, they will no longer be considered members. Other business will be conducted through direct correspondence /

email newsletters, website and other communications. For a meeting to be quorate, 15 or 40% of members shall be present, whichever is the lesser.

The **Chair** of the CAG will be a member of the CAG and the Chair of the PMG. They will be nominated by the CAG on the basis of appropriate skills, experience and knowledge to carry out the role. The Chair's position will be reviewed annually, taking into consideration the needs for both continuity and fresh thinking.

The CAG will be able to feed **any queries** or concerns to the PMG through a regular slot on the monthly PMG meeting agenda. This agenda space shall be used wisely and with discretion.

5. The Project Management Group (PMG): Role, Membership and Working Arrangements

5.1 Role

The CAG devolves authority for decision making to the PMG on behalf of the Local Action Group as a whole. The PMG will oversee the **implementation** of the programme including the **final decision making** on grant applications and delivery of outputs in line with the annual Delivery Plan and the overall Development Strategy.

Members of the PMG are expected to act in the **best interests of the programme** and recognise the collective nature of their decision making. PMG members must be aware that they are not voting on behalf of their parent organisation or interest group, rather they vote as individuals with specialist knowledge of the Blackdown Hills & East Devon.

The role of the PMG is to:

- a) Implement the Local Development Strategy (LDS)
- b) Oversee the creation of an Annual Delivery Plan
- c) Make final decisions on project applications based on their fit with programme aims and priorities, financial viability, identified project need, clear targets and objectives, sustainability, innovation, additionality and displacement, project management and delivery and a risk assessment. All decisions will be made in line with the Scheme Guidance Manual and technical guidance from the Staff Team.
- d) Make final decisions on Strategic Grants (£10,000-£100,000) on quarterly basis and of Small Grants (£1000-£10,000) on a monthly basis.
- e) Give overall direction and provide support to the Programme Manager
- f) Communicate funding decisions to the CAG and programme stakeholders
- g) Consult with CAG on programme policy, strategic direction and decisions
- h) Formulate policy and make decisions on the strategic direction of the Making it Local programme
- i) Monitor and review progress against targets, the reach and profile of the programme, through reports received and direct local knowledge.
- j) Ensure robust financial management of funds on behalf of accountable body
- k) Ensure integration of programme with other axes of RDPE
- l) Promote transnational and inter-territorial co-operation
- m) Formulate exit strategy to ensure that benefits of the Making it Local approach continue once programme funding comes to an end.

5.2 Membership of the PMG

In the first instance members of the Shadow LAG will be asked to stand for PMG membership. Where there are skills or sector knowledge gaps during the first year, the PMG will recruit additional members from the CAG to address these gaps. Thereafter, members will be drawn from the CAG membership at the autumn meeting, with decisions being made according to the needs of the Programme.

- a) The PMG will consist of no fewer than 10 and no more than **13 voting members**
- b) **At least** 50% of these members will be from local groups, agencies, organisations or businesses; no more than 50% will be from public sector organisations or agencies
- c) At least one voting member will be from the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership and at least one from East Devon AONB Partnership.
- d) As lead Partners, the AONB Managers will be entitled to attend but not vote
- e) As Accountable Body, Devon County Council will be entitled to attend but not vote.
- f) At least 50% of voting members need to be present in order to be **quorate** and to conduct proper business
- g) Membership must include **one** non-voting representative from SWERDA, until such time as they can delegate full decision making to the LAG.
- h) Each full member has one vote.
- i) Programme Staff and do not have voting rights, but will attend meetings to inform and advise as appropriate.
- j) The PMG may also co-opt other non-voting members to address skills and knowledge gaps.
- k) The nomination and election (if needed) of new members to the PMG will take place at the autumn meeting of the CAG. The voting procedure will be dealt with at a meeting or two beforehand. To enable the PMG to make effective decisions, members must have an understanding and involvement in one or more of the Programme's sectors. If elections are needed, decisions shall be made on the skills, knowledge and expertise of those standing for the PMG.
- l) Every two years, i.e. 2009 and 2011, existing members must stand down, but can stand for re-election. This will allow in new experience, whilst providing continuity over the life of the programme. The Chair shall be elected first, and then other elections (if needed) will take place.
- m) As existing members leave, new members can be co-opted from the CAG as voting members by the PMG pro tem.
- n) The position of Chair will be reviewed annually at the autumn CAG meeting.
- o) All members of the PMG shall complete a Register of Interests when they join, which they should update as needed. This will be kept by the staff team and updated at least on an annual basis (except those on Local Authority list of interests).

In order to be able to carry out this role the following knowledge and skills will be required of members:

- a) Knowledge of the Making it Local area
- b) Understanding of the aims of the Making it Local and the wider RDPE
- c) Particular knowledge or experience in one or more area identified in 4.2 (Membership of the CAG) above
- d) Ability to make informed decisions as a member of the group

- e) Ability to think strategically and apply the principles of sustainability

Members will be asked to describe their skills before nomination / election and will also be encouraged to attend training, networking or other developmental activities.

5.3 Working Arrangements

- a) The PMG will normally meet on a **monthly basis**. It may convene less frequently if required, or alternatively business may be conducted through written or electronic correspondence. Their business will be conducted by consensus. In the event of disagreement, it will be for the Chair to seek to resolve differences.
- b) Members are expected to **attend** regularly and to give apologies in advance for absence when able. In the event of regular failure to attend without good reasons, the PMG has the power to dismiss the member. In this case, the PMG will retain the right to seek a replacement member.
- c) The **Chair** of the PMG will be a member of the CAG and nominated by them to carry out the role.
- d) All **papers** will normally be issued seven days in advance of meetings although late papers relating to urgent business may be considered at the meeting subject to the Chair's discretion. Secretariat will be provided by programme staff.
- e) **Decisions** of the PMG will be made by consensus or simple majority.
- f) The PMG **meeting structure** will maintain an agenda space to enable CAG concerns to be aired and addressed between CAG's bi-annual meetings. The PMG will approve, reject or refer for further development, small & strategic grant applications based on written reports from Project Appraisers. The programme Development Worker & the project applicant may be called to a PMG meeting should further detail and clarification be required.
- g) The PMG can set up discrete **Working Groups** on particular issues or topics if needed, which will report back to the whole PMG; the PMG will make final decisions.
- h) The PMG will nominate one or two members to provide **direct support** to the Programme Manager on a regular basis.
- i) The PMG will at all times have regard to the views of the Accountable Body (Devon County Council), CAG and Programme Manager, Development Workers or his/her substitutes as to the conformity of proposed projects with the programme funding guidelines, aims, objectives and priorities, eligibility for funding, and issues of probity.
- j) The PMG will nominate a representative to the Regional Programme Monitoring Committee (RPMC) if required.

6. Accountable Body

The Accountable Body refers to Devon County Council who is acting in that capacity for *Making it Local*. The Accountable Body contracts with SWERDA and with the LAG for delivery of the scheme. As such, Devon County Council holds itself responsible for the successful conclusion of the programme and undertakes to ensure that financial propriety is observed in its management and administration. Responsibilities are:

- The proper management of finances
- Administer and audit MiL grant budgets on behalf of PMG
- Supply programme with up-to-date information on spend against budget

- Employ staff and carry out HR / Personnel functions
- Bankroll the Programme to ensure consistency of cash flow

A partnership agreement will be in place between the LAG (PMG) and the Accountable Body.

7. Conflicts Of Interest

All members of the PMG , CAG and Project Appraisers, will be required to act in the interest of the initiative as a whole and declare any interests that they may have as individuals, or as an employee of, or member of any other organisation/initiative. Members are required to read and sign the code of conduct proforma at Appendix 1.

8. Confidentiality

PMG, CAG members and project Appraisers may be party to information contained on project application forms, or similar, which is of a confidential nature (i.e. personal details or sensitive financial information). This information should not be disclosed or discussed outside of meetings. Any member found to have done so will be requested to vacate their position.

9. Project Appraisers Pool

The Programme will draw a pool of Project Appraisers from the CAG and the wider Programme Stakeholders network (See appendix 6). Members of this group will independently appraise projects in compliance with SWERDA guidelines and with the guidance set out in the Scheme Guidance Manual.

Role and membership:

- The pool of Appraisers will be drawn from programme stakeholders and the CAG. Membership will be reviewed each year at the Autumn CAG meeting and new Appraisers drawn in if needed.
- Projects will be appraised in timely fashion as part of the approval process, which is described clearly in the Scheme Guidance Manual
- All Appraisers will need to have a range of experience and expertise across the Programme's sectors.
- All members will undertake Appraisal training at least once over the life of the Programme, provided for them by SWRDA or another agent.
- Appraisers will attend the PMG if requested

10. Terms of Reference - Review

These Terms of Reference can be reviewed by the CAG at the annual autumn meeting. Proposals for change must be circulated to all current members of the CAG and PMG at least 21 days before the meeting. For changes to be accepted they need to be agreed by a majority at the meeting.

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for LAG Members

Members of the Consultative and Advisory Group, the Programme Management Group and Appraisers are asked to read and sign a copy of the Code of Conduct set out below and to return it to the Programme Staff.

All PMG, CAG Members and Appraisers, have a responsibility to treat all Project Applicants equally and impartially and must therefore declare whether they, or their organisation has either a direct or indirect interest in any of the projects to be considered by the PMG. For these purposes, 'interest' is defined as:

- i. The PMG Member, or their organisation, acting as the project sponsor, or applicant.
- ii. Any project which results in the PMG Member, or their organisation, being a beneficiary from that project.
- iii. Any project in which the applicant is a close family member, a person living in the same household or a firm, business or other organisation with which the Member is connected

In considering whether a real danger of bias exists in relation to a particular decision, Members should assess whether they are likely to be affected by more than the generality of the project should it be successful/unsuccessful.

General Principles

- PMG, CAG members and Appraisers will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest at the beginning of the meetings or as soon as they become apparent, and these shall be minuted.
- General (i.e. non-financial) conflicts of interest will be minuted and a record of members Interests kept. The member concerned will normally be able to remain for discussion of the item, unless a majority of the Group indicates otherwise.

A Member shall not use their position as such, directly or indirectly, for personal gain or political purposes.

All applicants will receive structured, fair and consistent feedback on their projects. The Programme Manager will provide the feedback to the applicants on the basis of comments agreed by the PMG.

Signed

Name (in block capitals)

Organisation

Date

Appendix 2: Staffing Structure and Responsibilities

The programme is hosted with the lead partners, the Blackdown Hills AONB and East Devon AONB.

Programme Manager

- Part-time (4 days/week)
- Co-located in Honiton and Hemyock
- Ensures local accountability, communications, smooth delivery of Programme and provides technical direction and advice to the LAG
- Responsible for the management, monitoring and reporting of programme reach and progress in line with the Annual Delivery Plan.
- Manages delegated funds up to £1000 (subject to agreement by SWERDA)
- Ensures compliance with EU, SWERDA, D. C. C. and any other national or regional systems and structures
- Responsible for development of the Annual Delivery Plan on behalf of the LAG
- Reports to PMG and CAG

Programme Administrator

- Located primarily in Hemyock
- Part-time (4 days/week)
- Provides first point of contact and admin /support to the Programme Manager & Development Workers
- Undertakes first checks on project financial and monitoring claims and returns
- Maintains communications for the programme

Programme Finance Officer

- Employed by and based primarily with Accountable Body, based some of the time in local offices
- Contracted to the Programme for 1-3 days/week
- Actions project financial and monitoring claims and returns
- Provides up-to-date financial reports and support to the programme

Two Development Workers, 3 days per week-*Development Worker Project*

- One based in Blackdown Hills AONB Offices Hemyock, the other at East Devon AONB offices in Honiton
- Provide project planning, development and funding support to applicants
- Make funding recommendations to programme Management Group
- Connect groups, networks and strategies
- Work directly with groups, communities and businesses
- Report to Programme Manager

Specialist Advisers – *Specialist Help Register*

- Pool of specialists and consultants, with expertise relevant to programme priorities registered with MiL
- Provide specialist expertise and guidance as per programme priorities to applicants
- Applicant projects are referred by the Development Worker to a named Specialist(s) for specific development support. Costs are covered via Programme Manager's delegated pot
- Managed on behalf of MiL by suitable body e.g Blackdown Hills Business Association
-

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Appendix 3: Membership of the Shadow LAG

This list shows those people who have been involved in the *development* of the bid and the early stages of the programme.

LOCAL REPS

'sector'

Renewables	Andrew Lovering	Greenthinking
Town/MCTI	Bob Buxton	Honiton MCTI Group
Food and Farming	Catherine Broomfield	East Devon Farmers Markets
Parish / Parish Plan	Clive Stone	Colyton Parish Council
Business Networks	David Hinshelwood	Business Information Point
Tourism and Recreation	Gavin Saunders	Neroche Partnership FC
BH AONB	Heather Stallard	Blackdown Hills Business Association
Wood and Forestry	John Greenshields	Blackdown Hills Woodland Association
ICT & Connectivity	Julie Harris	Cosmic
ED AONB	Malcolm Florey	District Councillor
ED AONB	Mike Ellingham	Chair / NFU rep
BH AONB	Paul Diviani	EDDC/BH / Business
Arts and Creative	Tracey Bell	Bhamm

FUNDING PARTNERS

Taunton DBC	Alex Stevens
Natural England	Allison Wallis
Mid Devon DC	Gordon Cleaver
Devon CC	Heather Hillman
East Devon DC	Nigel Harrison
Somerset CC	Paul Chadwick
Devon CC (Accountable Body)	Richard Hayman
South Somerset DC	Zoe Harris

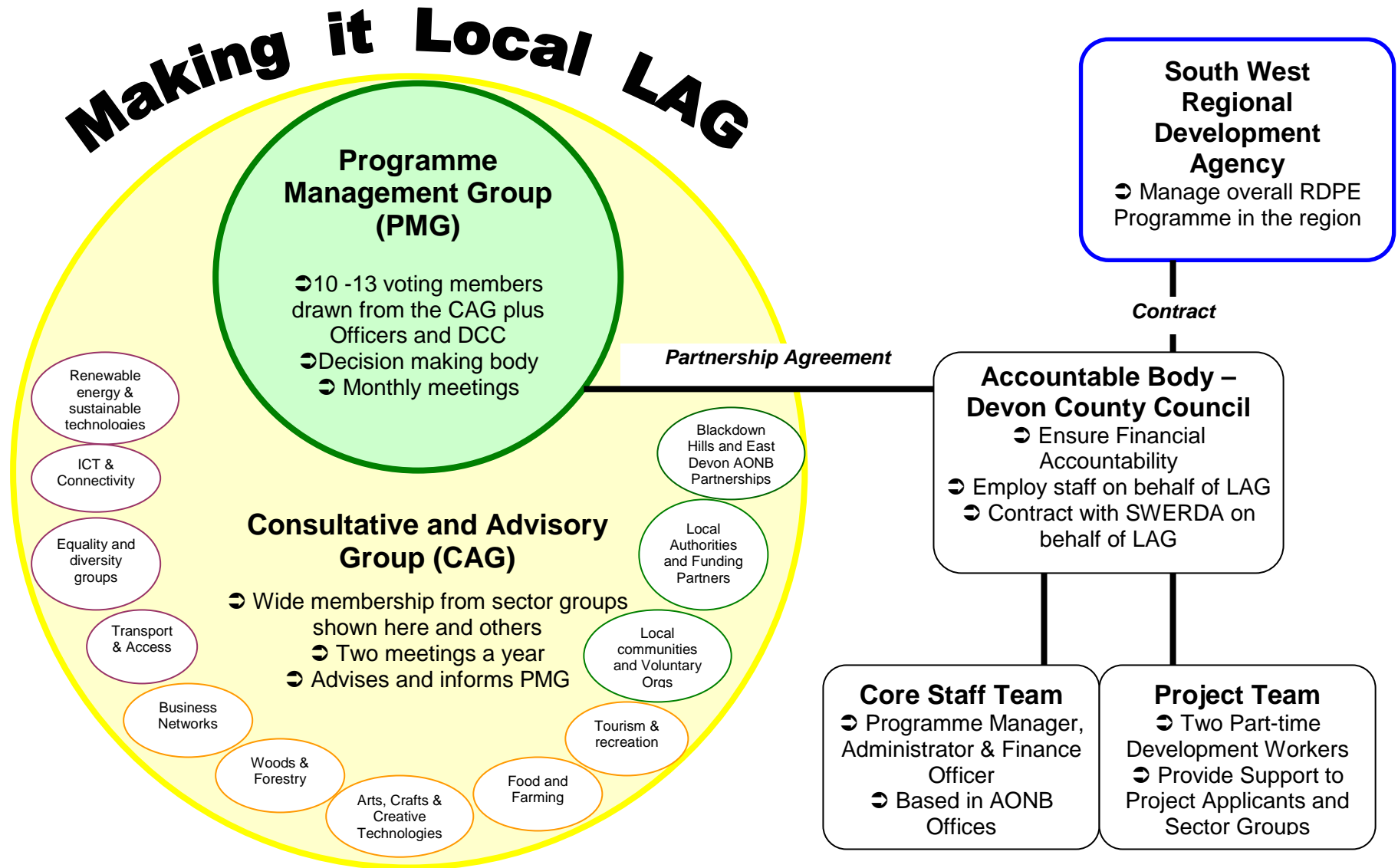
STAFF

East Devon AONB	Chris Woodruff
Blackdown Hills AONB	Lisa Turner / Linda Bennett
Leader + (Blackdown Hills)	Jenny Archard

Appendix 4: Glossary of Terms

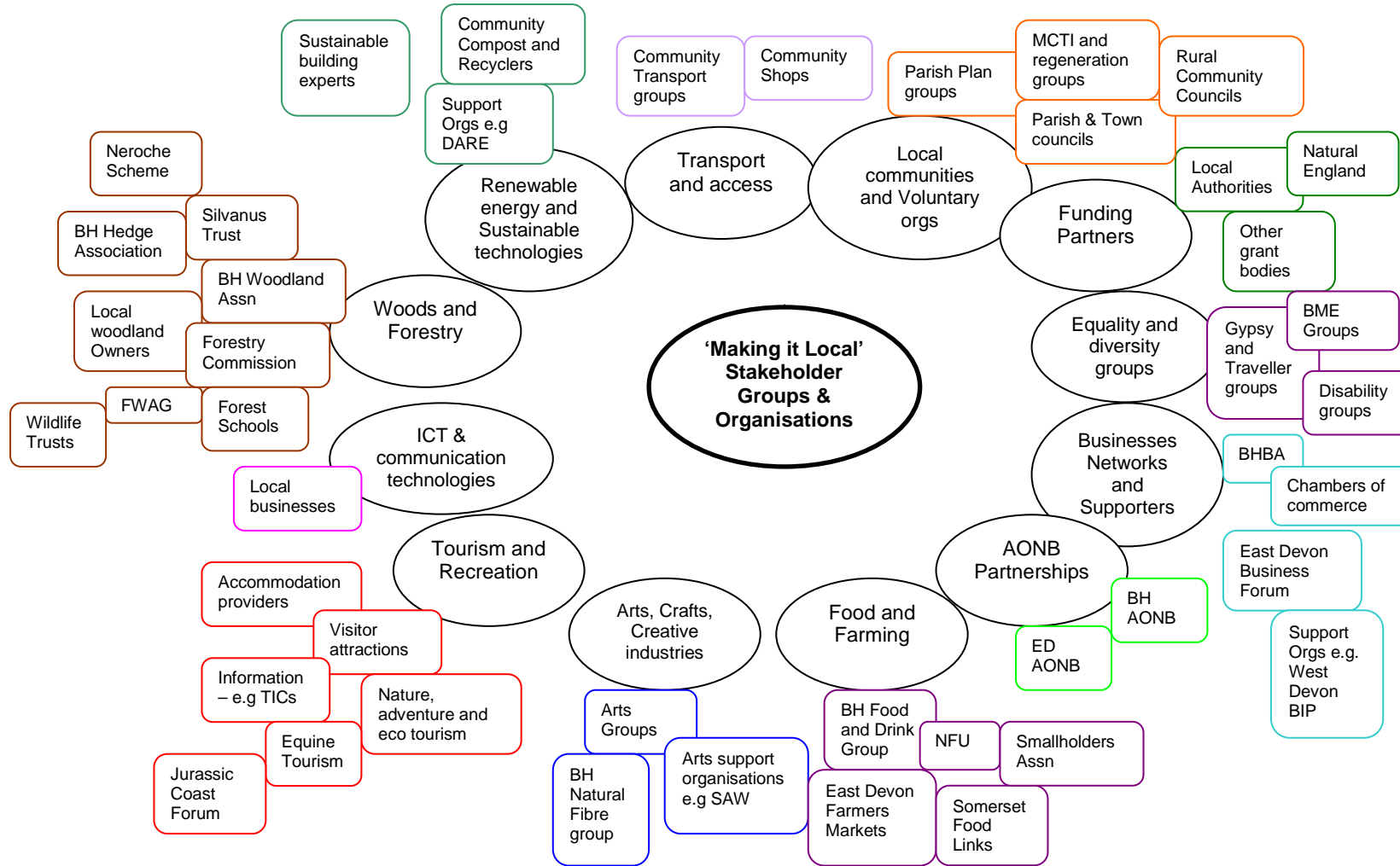
LOCAL ACTION	Local Action for Rural Communities (also abbreviated to LARC)
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England.
SWERDA	South West Regional Development Agency
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EU	European Union
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CAG	Consultative and Advisory Group
PMG	Programme Management Group
MiL	<i>Making It Local</i>
Stakeholders	Those individuals, groups or organisations which have an interest in the Blackdown Hills & East Devon LOCAL ACTION Programme including, staff, CAG & PMG members, PS, i.e. local residents, farmers, producers, businesses, social enterprises, funders and communities.

Appendix 5: Making it Local: Structure Diagram



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Appendix 6: Programme Stakeholders



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Appendix 7: PMG Membership

Voting Members		
Town/MCTI	Bob Buxton	Honiton MCTI Group
Food and Farming	Catherine Broomfield	Hoop Associates/East Devon Farmers Markets
Parish/Parish Plan	Clive Stone	Colyton Parish Council
Business Networks	David Hinshelwood	Business Information Point
BH AONB (2)	Heather Stallard	Blackdown Hills Business Association
Wood and Forestry	John Greenshields	Blackdown Hills Woodland Association
ICT and Connectivity	Julie Harris	Cosmic
ED AONB (1)	Mike Ellingham	Chair of ED AONB/NFU
BH AONB (1)	Paul Diviani	Chair of BH AONB and EDDC
Arts	Fiona Hamilton	Blackdown Hills Artists and Makers
South Somerset DC	Zoe Harris	Community Regeneration Officer, Area West ,SSDC
Natural England	Allison Wallis/Amanda Newsome	Local Delivery Teams
East Devon DC	Nigel Harrison	Economic Development Officer
Non-voting Staff		
ED AONB	Chris Woodruff	East Devon AONB Manager
BH AONB	Linda Bennett	Blackdown Hills AONB Manager
Making it Local	Jenny Archard	Making it Local Programme Manager
SWRDA	Bruce Douglas	Partnership Delivery Manager
DCC	Heather Hillman	Rural Development Manager
DCC	Sarah Creedy	Finance Officer