

Western Somerset Local Action in Rural Communities (LARC)

Local Action Group (LAG)

Vision “Towards a low Carbon Economy”

The area includes the Quantock Hills AONB, the Sedgemoor Quantock Cluster, the whole administrative district of West Somerset, including Exmoor National Park up to the County Boundary, and the market town of Wiveliscombe plus its recognised hinterland of 10 parishes.

The total population is 57,434, totaling 75 parishes. The area includes the market towns of Minehead, Wiveliscombe, Williton and Watchet.

Strategic Objectives:

A) Broadening the Economic Base

- A1 Pilot the next generation of connectivity for West Somerset.
- A2 Develop a renewable energy programme through a Western Somerset Network for renewable energy, training renewable energy advisors, developing supply chain.
- A3 Feasibility assessment for the production and supply of paper based insulation.
- A4 Train to build – sustainable construction course on a current eco homes development

B) Increase the value added across existing supply Chain

- B1,2,3 Developing and supporting wood fuel networks/co-operatives, linking to supply and demand.
- B4,5 Feasibility assessment for the production and supply of sheep’s wool as an insulation material.

C) Reduce the amount of revenue leaving the local economy

- C1,2 Support the development of a part/wholly community owned Energy Services Company or similar
- C3,4 Establish a community owned Resource and Waste Partnership

D) Establish sustainable accessible services to benefit the local community and tourists

- D1 Feasibility study to assess the business case for improving rail links to West Somerset.
- D2 Implementation of rail links improvement.
- D3 Integrated community transport with private and public transport
- D4 Community Car Club Network – promotion and establishment of 5 community based car clubs.

E) Make best use of our Natural Assets in terms of sensitive economic outputs, landscape protection and enhancement and the built environment

- E1 Silvanus Trust – working with woodland owners to address climate change issues through management practices
- E2 Western Somerset Heritage Skills Development Project. To increase the pool of people with heritage building conservation and land management skills (Collaborative project with North Devon & Torridge LAG)



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Strategic Objectives:

F) Maximise the role of the market towns and larger villages within the rural hinterland to provide access to services

F1 Cluster knowledge based industries through the establishment of a hub/s

F2 Steam Coast Trail - multi-user (cycling, walking, horse riding) green transport network

G) Build capacity of community led initiatives to mitigate diminishing local services and to enable community grass route actions and activities

G1 Community capacity builders

G2 Small Grants pot

G3 Skills.FM – collaborative project with North Devon & Torridge (and potentially other LAGS)



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