

Lower Wensleydale – Aiming High

How did the project come about?

- 1.1 In 2009 members of the Leyburn and Mid-Wensleydale Business Association (LMWBA) took part in a series of consultation workshops to guide the future economic, social and environmental development of the Lower Wensleydale area. The work was aligned with the Richmondshire's Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Local Development Framework (there are two Local Development Frameworks covering each of the planning authority boundaries). Miller Research was commissioned by Richmondshire District Council (RDC) to produce two reports for the market towns of Leyburn and Middleham. A copy of the final reports can be requested from the RDC Economic Development Department (01748 829100) or by visiting the Council's website www.richmondshire.gov.uk or www.lower-wensleydale.com. The Branding and Promotions Business Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the evidence base provided in the Miller Research reports.
- 1.2 During the same year RDC established Area Partnerships for five geographic areas within the district defined by the boundaries of town and parish councils. Their purpose is to be the mechanism through which the Council works with local communities and partner organisations to make sure local services meet local needs and that the voice of the community is heard within the service development process. It enables Councillors, residents and partners to come together to influence priorities and take decisions in the light of local needs and circumstances. It focuses on local actions to help the Council and its partners to tackle inequalities and narrow the gap between different areas. It also delivers locally agreed improvements that are important to communities within its area.
- 1.3 Members of the Lower Wensleydale Area Partnership agree to work together to achieve the aims of the Area Partnership on the basis of the following principles:
- Mutual trust and respect
 - Openness and transparency
 - Effective communication and accountability
 - Removal of barriers to equality of access and opportunity
 - Effective performance management
- There are two elements to the Area Partnership; the Forum, and the Board. The Forum provides an opportunity for community engagement and consultation. It has no formal decision making powers or budget but can make recommendations to the Board as to how its budget should be spent. The Board is made up of Councillors, Partner Organisations and General Public. It has decision making powers and a budget to further the purposes of the Partnership and address priorities identified by the Forum. Priorities for spend are set annually by the Council's Strategy Board and will assist the Council in delivering its corporate priorities and support the local resolution of local issues and problems. Part of the budget is available in the form of grants.
- 1.4 The findings of the Miller Research reports were intended to be used to work with the local community and key organisations to develop jointly inspired and owned action plans. Participants in the initial consultation agreed that the Lower Wensleydale Area Partnership was the best vehicle to take forward the recommendations of the reports (Table 1 & 2 – Miller Research Recommendations). It was agreed that sub groups would be established to take the action planning process forward focussing on i) Branding ii) A Leyburn Town Leaflet iii) Empty shops iv) Access and signage to car parks. Leyburn and Mid-Wensleydale Business Association agreed to facilitate the Lower Wensleydale Branding and Promotions Sub Group. The Group have met on a regular basis since March and have developed a series of initiatives that will raise the profiles of Leyburn, Middleham and their hinterlands. This is based on a three year rolling programme of activity. This Business Plan has been prepared to guide and monitor the delivery process 2010-2013.