

# EVALUATION OF THE KENT DOWNS RURAL ADVICE SERVICE

## KDRAS

**Final Project Report  
July 2005- March  
2007**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*A report identifying the aims and objectives and future development opportunities offered by the Kent Downs Rural Advice Service (KDRAS).*

*The report sets out the background to setting up the project, the achievements, and lessons learned.*

*It provides evidence for use and a model for best practice for Kent and elsewhere.*





A Steering Group of the following organisations oversees the work of the KDRAS Coordinator who was appointed at the end of June 2005.

Business Link Kent (BLK)  
 Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)  
 Government Office for the South East (GOSE)  
 Kent County Council: Environment and Economy Directorate  
 Kent Downs AONB (KDAONB)- line management  
 RTPI SE Planning Aid (RTPI SEPA)  
 SEEDA  
 Sevenoaks District Council (SDC)

The original organisations and their representatives were

<b>Business Link Kent (BLK)</b> (from July 2006)	Kim Fletcher: BLK
<b>BLK</b> (until March 2006)	Graeme Kemsley
<b>Countryside Agency</b> now Natural England (NE) (not actively involved in Steering Group)	Nicola Davies
<b>DEFRA</b> (not actively involved in Steering Group)	Neville Sherlock
<b>Kent Downs Area of outstanding Natural Beauty (KDAONB):</b> Chairman	Nick Johannsen
<b>Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)</b>	Paul Cobb
<b>Government Office for the South East (GOSE)</b>	Mike Gilks
<b>Kent County Council, (KCC):</b> Environment and Economy Directorate	Stuart Gibbons
<b>KCC, Rural Regeneration Team</b>	John Miller
<b>KCC Rural Regeneration Team</b>	Kate Phillips replacing Laurence Tricker
<b>Royal Town Planning Institute, South East Planning Aid RTPI SEPA</b>	Jackie Thompson
<b>South East Economic Development Agency SEEDA</b>	Belinda Knight: (not actively involved in Steering Group)
<b>Sevenoaks District Council (SDC)</b>	Maggie Williams
<b>KDAONB Unit</b>	Jenny Bate: KDRAS Coordinator

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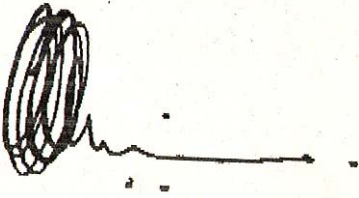
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## The Kent Downs Rural Advice Service (KDRAS)

### **FOREWORD**

I am very pleased to be able to endorse this evaluation of the Kent Downs Rural Advice Service pilot project. Over the last 2 years the project has advised and supported the Kent Downs rural community by providing targeted advice to landholders and training to the planning profession. Integrated, joined up advice is crucial at this time of change to the Common Agricultural Policy and those changes brought about by the formation of Natural England. All those involved in decisions that affect development and land management can benefit from a source of advice that brings together and simplifies sometimes conflicting requirements, and sign posts landholders to relevant advice. In the Kent Downs AONB farmers have benefited from such support through the KDRAS scheme, which recognises landholders' important role in caring for and maintaining our protected landscapes. Farm diversification is needed to help maintain traditional farming practices and lifestyles, so important for rural communities and environment alike, and the KDRAS project is an excellent method of providing help and support to those landholders embarking on new enterprises. The KDRAS approach would be suitable for application in all areas - and a welcome service for all landholders thinking of diversifying their whole farm businesses. This is just the kind of approach that is needed to stand in the gap between regulators, decision makers and landholders, and I give my unreserved support for the future of a Kent-wide Rural Advice Service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, circular scribble followed by a horizontal line and a few small dots.

Chris Older  
Kent County Chairman, National Farmers Union  
Romney Marsh Farms

July 2007

**EVALUATION OF  
THE KENT DOWNS RURAL ADVICE SERVICE  
KDRAS**

*Final Project Report  
July 2005- March 2007*

**Executive summary and recommendations**

**Introduction**

The Kent Downs Rural Advice Service (KDRAS) is a pilot project initiated by Kent County Council (KCC) Environment and Regeneration Directorate and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit (KDAONB).

Drivers for change to the protected landscape of the Kent Downs AONB, such as changes in land use due to climate change, new subsidy regimes and pressures from adjacent growth areas and growth points, means that there is an anticipated growth in development proposals supporting diversification of farming businesses, and introduction of new activities into the countryside.

The dual aims of the KDRAS project are to provide free integrated business, planning and environmental advice and training opportunities to all those involved in decisions affecting the management of protected landscapes: landowners, farmers, small rural businesses and their advisors, and local authority planners and Councillors. This will lead to diversification changes that are financially viable, environmentally sound and acceptable in planning terms.

The lessons learned from this pilot will help inform the development of best practice and a model which could be applied County wide and elsewhere.

KDRAS is fundamentally a practical scheme; the evaluation in this report relates the successes and opportunities, blocks and any problems experienced in achieving the aims and objectives of the project. It also identifies best practice for rolling the pilot forward into the wider area of Kent.

KDRAS promotes working with other organisations in a very practical way which benefits all parties and makes the provision of integrated advice, and the move towards integrated land management a reality. Working together has addressed the blockages to providing integrated advisory and support services and improved their delivery to the client. The approach involves changing behaviours and provides a more efficient, effective and 'joined up' approach for all stakeholders whether they be regulators, advisors, decision makers or landholders. Partnerships are therefore central to the success of the project.

## 1.0 Executive summary

**1.1** The Kent Downs Rural Advice Service is delivering environmentally acceptable, financially viable and sustainable advice on diversification proposals for landholders. The breadth of advice given to landholders through the method of a wide ranging report (the KDRAS 'Action Plan') ensures that proposals are well thought out, tested financially, environmentally sound and relate to the whole farm business and land management. KDRAS is also delivering training to Local Authority Planning personnel, and landholders and their advisors in planning for farming diversification.

### 1.2 A model for rural delivery

Landholders are subject to many regulations which can sometime conflict. Similarly opportunities for grants and subsidies are subject to rules which can close as well as open opportunities for subsequent actions and activities. These all need balancing and investigating before long term decisions are made about use of assets and changes in farming businesses and lifestyles. Promoting integrated land management helps both the landholder and those making decisions about subsidies, grants and planning applications. KDRAS delivers and promotes this approach to both landholders and the planning profession, through the provision of exemplar reports, (the KDRAS Action Plan for landholders) and training and workshops for planners, landholders and their advisors. *KDRAS is proving to be an extremely practical method of delivering an improvement in integrated land management generally and aiding in the planning process in particular.*

### 1.3 An approach for delivering Integrated Land Management

There are a wealth of different approaches to the provision of advice and delivery of Integrated Land Management across the country, and before the KDRAS pilot was launched other projects were visited in Cumbria and North Yorkshire to learn from their experience.

The KDRAS approach:

- **Provides tailored advice to landholders** through individual Action Plans which bring together three strands of professional advice and makes use of the GIS based Kent Lifescape Information system (**KLIS**, [www.kent.gov.uk/klis](http://www.kent.gov.uk/klis)). These are acting as exemplars to landholders, advisors, and local planning authorities.
- **Provides wide ranging training workshops** promoting the use of KLIS, Landscape Character Assessment, The Kent Downs Landscape Design Handbook, the FWAG Farming Resource Pack, and the English Heritage Toolkit for Sustainable Management of Farm Buildings.
- **Raises capacity** across the full range of stakeholders in land management to improve competitiveness of the farming and forestry sectors, enhance the environment and countryside, improve the quality of rural life and support diversification of the rural economy.
- **Links delivery to the objectives of environmental stakeholders, such as** SEEDA Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), GOSE, DEFRA, the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE), English Heritage (EH), and National, Regional and Local Policies. (e.g. KCC's 'Towards 2010', Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Acts, and Local Development Programmes (LDP's)

#### **1.4 The importance of partnerships**

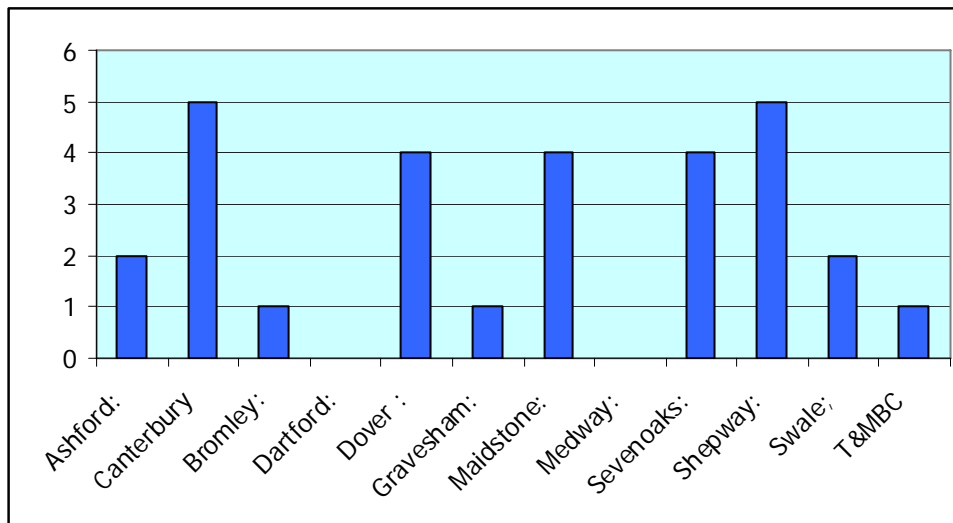
Partnerships are fundamental to the provision of integrated advice. Without them and without the successful relationships of people working in all the sectors having an interest in rural environment and communities there can be few successful truly integrated outcomes. One of the strengths of the KDRAS project is its ability to move forward, *adapt and change* and widen its appeal to all existing and future stakeholders in the rural sphere. The rural economy is in a continual state of flux and any advice service must be flexible enough to take advantage of, and work with, every new element of change as it arises. KDRAS is a scheme that can move and learn with the clients' needs – albeit the planner/ decision maker, or the applicant/ landholder, and continually widen its partnership base to ensure up to date delivery of National, Regional and Local policies.

#### **1.5 Achievements**

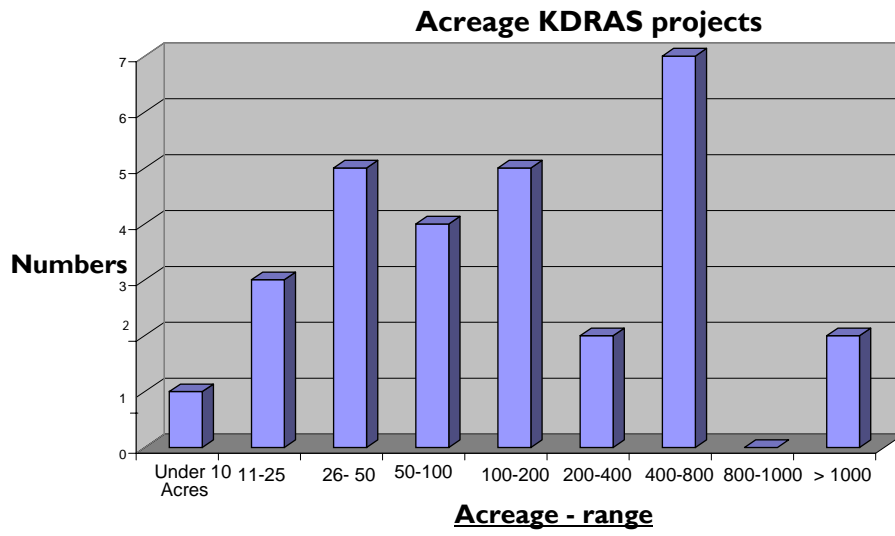
**The provision of Action Plans** benefits farmers and local planning authorities (LPAs) alike in providing:

- individual farmers with a tool from which to make fully integrated planning applications
- exemplars for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs)
- LPAs with higher quality planning applications for speedier determination
- a reduction in the number of unsuitable planning applications and proposals thus avoiding further work by landholders and planning departments
- the landowner with environmental management advice covering cross compliance, and support for entry into stewardship schemes, (ELS, OELS, HLS) landscape enhancement opportunities, woodland grants etc.

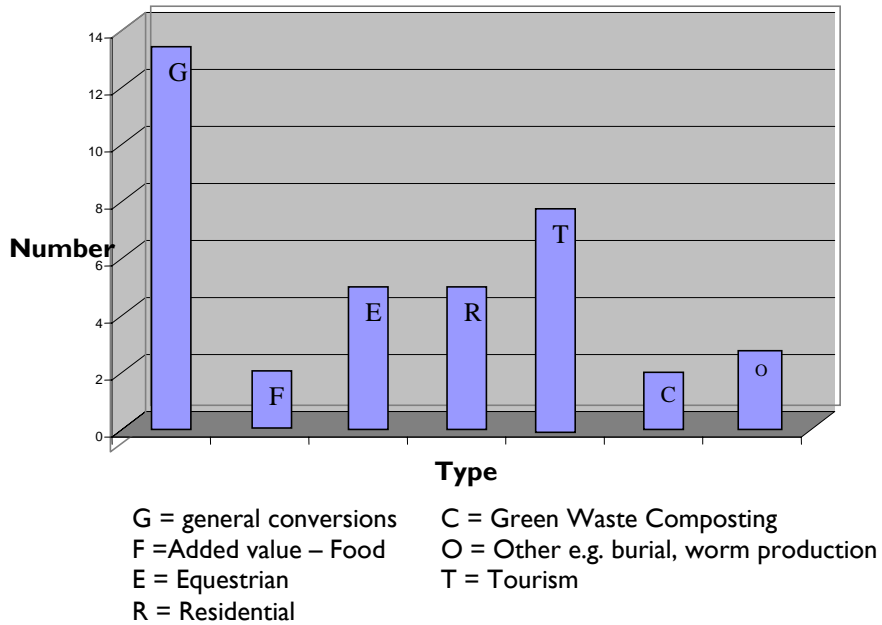
#### **Numbers of clients in each Local Authority**



**Acreage characteristics:**



**Types of Diversification**



**The provision of Training** benefits both Local authority planners and landholders and their advisors by:

- Improving the knowledge base of both applicants and local planning officers.
- Creating a climate for wider understanding of the planning system by landholders and the needs of the farming and rural communities by the LPAS.
- Improving understanding of the integrated approach to land management which leads to better planning decisions and more sustainable business and environmental decisions on the farm.

### **Attendance at Workshops**

<b>Workshop venue</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Numbers attending</b>	<b>Percentage LPA officers and Councillors</b>	<b>Percentage private sector consultants/advisors</b>	<b>Percentage landholders and others</b>
Otford	2/03/06	16	74%	20%	6%
Lenham	23/03/06	28	50%	43%	7%
Ashford	15/10/06	79	18%	14%	68%
Alton	16/11/06	38	76%	16%	8%
Wantage	28/02/07	52	12%	25%	63%
Total		213			

### **Training Workshop Evaluation**

#### **Workshops in Kent:**

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Attend-ance</b>	<b>Forms returned</b>	<b>Supports KDRAS approach</b>	<b>%age met your needs Rated Good/ fair</b>	<b>%age interested in more training</b>	<b>Most interesting: Case study</b>	<b>Most interesting: Equine</b>
Otford	16	6	33%	66% good 33% fair	100%	50%	50%
Lenham	28	10	50%	90% good 10% fair	100%	60%	60%
Ashford	78	41	Not asked	80% good 20% too early to tell.	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked

#### **Regional workshops:**

Alton	38	15	13%	50% good	66%	26%	66%
Wantage	52	24	37%	55% good 45% fair	66%	20%	16%

## **I.6 The main outcomes**

- Delivering training and support for achieving Integrated Land Management
- Delivering support for rural redevelopment and employment
- Delivering raised capacity to cope with rural change
- Delivering a service adapted and tailored to the needs of local farmers, landowners and Planning Authorities
- Delivering joined up, integrated advice from regulatory and decision making authorities by standing in the 'gap' between providers, regulators and land managers thus streamlining advice
- Reaching the landholder with tailor made advice unavailable in an integrated form from elsewhere
- Promoting and piloting the use of the Kent Lifescape Information System (KLIS) [www.kent.gov.uk/klis](http://www.kent.gov.uk/klis)
- Promoting advice on grants and support available
- Supporting Planning Authorities in improving knowledge and skills needed to deal with planning proposals in rural areas
- Delivering uptake of ELS and HLS
- Delivering landscape enhancement through advice and grant opportunities
- Delivering joined up business advice and opportunities which encourages rural community cohesion
- Piloting the method with 29 Action Plans
- Piloting the method with 5 training workshops (2 regional workshops to test suitability and feedback from outside the county)
- 2 pilots of individual sessions to two local authorities
- 1 pilot 'piggy backing' on a District Council Local Development Community Plan workshop
- 2 presentations for NFU groups
- Presence at County Shows, AONB Countryside Days and others

## **I.7 Benefits**

The main benefits of the project have been the development of the KDRAS partners over the course of the pilot to 'stand in the gap' between regulators and landholders, and promote the concept of fully integrated land management and the whole farm plan. In particular this approach is central for making good, sound planning applications which stand a better chance of speedy determination, and successful results. Fully integrated information in the application leads to more balanced planning decisions reflecting good outcomes for land management, landscape, biodiversity and socio-economic consequences.

## **I.8 Delivery of Integrated Land Management Advice**

(Refer Para.7.7 of main report)

### **Opportunities and Blockages addressed by KDRAS**

<b><u>Problems, blockages, and opportunities</u></b>	<b><u>KDRAS input</u></b>	<b><u>Outcomes</u></b>	<b><u>Beneficiaries/ fulfilment of policies and objectives</u></b>
Impartial advice on land management, setting up rural businesses and planning is difficult and expensive to access	KDRAS provides unfettered, confidential advice which is unrelated to regulators. Disclosure of plans and ideas for an impartial and balanced assessment is very valuable and difficult to find elsewhere.	Landholders confidently move forward with their business and land management ideas. Investment is more carefully and successfully targeted.	Landholders Local Planning Authorities and regulators Priorities and targets of RDPE, DEFRA, EA, NE. AONB
Joined up, integrated environmental advice is difficult to find from one organisation	KDRAS brings together expertise from a wide range of specialists to give holistic and integrated advice to land management and rural businesses. This is unique and not matched elsewhere in the public or voluntary sector, and unusually in the private sector, and where found very expensive. It is difficult for a landowner to discern what advice is worth investing in at early stages in their projects.	KDRAS advises on suitable areas to investigate and invest in and thus saves both time and money.	Landholders Local Planning Authorities and regulators Priorities and targets of RDPE, DEFRA, EA, NE. AONB
Free and available integrated advice without form filling and financial assessments is unusual.	The KDRAS approach is simple, direct and requires very little from the client. It is freely available to anyone in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (KDAONB) at whatever stage of decision making and whatever land they hold, however they hold it, and for however long they have held it (big, small, tenant, owner)	Landholders can access integrated advice easily.	Landholder and all stake holders.
New proposals, (e.g. business, development, ELS or HLS entry,) require expensive investment which puts many off applying or	By offering free advice at an early stage, time and money are saved by both client and the system assessing their proposals. Business ideas can be	Benefits for the client in time and money saved. Encouragement to landowners to diversify. Better thought out	Landholders Local Planning Authorities RDPE priorities and targets EA, NE

going ahead with ideas.	improved and business failures averted.	applications for planning, and more and better targeted Stewardship applications.	'Duties of Regard'– Protected landscape and Biodiversity
New landowners have difficulties in taking all the rules, regulations and advice available on board. Expediency, short term strategies and dealing with issues in isolation make for poor decisions and long term sustainability less likely.	KDRAS offers integrated advice which supports sustainability and sound land management and business practice in the long term. New land owners can benefit enormously from the tailor made approach	Better more informed land management decisions	Landholders Local Planning Authorities RDPE priorities and targets EA, DEFRA, NE 'Duties of Regard'– Protected landscape and Biodiversity
Landholders often have a negative view of the planning system	By providing an integrated 'whole farm' approach the client is likely to come forward with better, well thought out proposals which are in line with policies and be more likely to obtain planning permission.	Local Planning authorities receive better applications. Unacceptable ideas do not reach planning authorities and therefore time and resources are saved by both applicant and LPA. In the long term the relationship and understanding of both groups will improve.	LPAs Landholders/applicants
Obtaining advice in advance of a development proposal from statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency, DEFRA, Local Planning Authority, Highways Authority, and other stake holders, on site and fully integrated is extremely difficult. Officers are unlikely to attend such meetings until an idea becomes a proposal and requires permission. Even then such joint meetings are unlikely due to being costly and logistically difficult to organise and require knowledge and contacts to assess relevant stakeholders. Public bodies such as Planning Authorities are	KDRAS offers free advice, fully integrated into one document. Investigations and further information are clearly signposted and contacts given.	Best use of resources of all stake holders and the landholder. Better planning applications. Better cross compliance Better targeting and uptake of Stewardship.	Landholders Local Planning Authority Environment Agency DEFRA RDPE NE Protected Landscapes Biodiversity

<p>under pressure and some are now charging for written advice on pre planning application proposals.</p>			
<p>Planners have difficulty in accessing fully integrated land management advice in a resource efficient way</p>	<p>KDRAS workshops have enabled the messages from a range of stakeholders in integrated land management, and those represented in the KDRAS partnership to get messages across to Local Authority officers, practitioners and decision makers who would not normally have access to information in such an integrated / one stop form. The Integrated Land Management GIS system 'Kent Lifescape Information System' (KLIS) and Kent Landscape Character Assessment (LAK) have also been promoted, used and tested by these groups. Training workshops tailored to the needs of <i>individual</i> Local Authorities has delivered training in an efficient way.</p>	<p>Promotion of the fully integrated approach to land management and decision making</p> <p>Promotion of KLIS and LAK as tools for use by decision makers and landholders alike</p>	<p>Landholders Local Planning Authority Environment Agency DEFRA RDPE NE Protected Landscapes Biodiversity</p>
<p>Slowness in the uptake of use of the GIS based internet technology for Integrated Land Management.</p>	<p>Promotion of the use of KLIS by advisors, landholders and decision makers through its use in the formulation of the Action Plans for the landholder, and through the workshops, has widened its use.</p>	<p>Greater use and awareness of the KLIS website and subsequently better informed proposals and decision making. The information on KLIS covers wide integrated advice of interest to all stakeholders in wishing to promote an integrated approach to land management.</p>	<p>Landholders Advisors Local Planning Authorities All stakeholders</p>

## **I.9 Relationship of KDRAS outcomes with the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)**

*(Refer Para 7.8 of main report)*

### **Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE):**

#### **Key objectives**

The new programme has 3 key objectives (known as Axes)

Axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the farming and forestry sectors

Axis 2: Enhancing the environment and the countryside

Axis 3: Rural quality of life and diversification of the rural economy

Axis 4: LEADER, all of the above.

#### **Key Issues to take into account for funding:**

RDPE are looking to support:

- Larger collaborative projects that will benefit more than one business
- Projects that demonstrate their environmental sustainability
- Projects that invest in the skills and training needed for success

## **KDRAS Outcomes and Rural Stakeholder Objectives**

<b><u>Outcomes of KDRAS pilot</u></b>	<b><u>KDRAS Achievements</u></b>	<b><u>SEEDA, RDPE objectives*</u></b>	<b><u>Objectives of others</u></b>
Delivering training and support for achieving Integrated Land Management	5 workshops	Axis 1,2 and 3 LEADER	All stakeholders, e.g. NE, AONB , KCC, LPAs, EA, DEFRA,
Delivering support for rural redevelopment and employment	5 workshops and 29 Action Plans	Axis 1 and Axis 3 LEADER	KCC, DEFRA, LPAs
Delivering raised capacity to cope with rural change	29 Action Plans, 5 training workshops and other individual training sessions and presentations.	Axis 1 and Axis 3 LEADER	KCC, DEFRA, LPAs
Delivering a service adapted and tailored to the needs of local farmers, landowners and Planning Authorities	29 Action Plans	Axis 1,2 and 3 LEADER	Haskins Report: Simplifying or rationalizing existing delivery mechanisms. Providing better more streamlined services with a unified, transparent and convenient interface with end customers. KCC, LPAs
Reaching the landholder with tailor made advice unavailable in an <i>integrated</i> form from elsewhere.	29 Action Plans	Axis 1,2 and 3	Haskins Report, as above Complimentary and working in coordination with Defra, FBAS advice All stakeholders, e.g. NE, AONB , KCC, LPAs, EA, DEFRA,
Delivering joined up, integrated advice from regulatory and decision making authorities by standing in the 'gap' between providers, regulators and land managers thus streamlining advice.	29 Action plans, 5 training workshops and others as above	Axis 1,2 &3 LEADER	Haskins Report: as above Complimentary and working in coordination with Defra, FBAS advice and all stakeholders, e.g. NE, AONB , KCC, LPAs, EA, DEFRA, NFU, CLBA
Promoting and piloting the use of the Kent Lifescape Information System (KLIS)	Action plans and training.	Axis 2 LEADER (Innovation)	All stakeholders
Introducing the use of English Heritage Tool Kit for Sustainable Management of Farm Buildings	Training	Axis 1,2 and 3 LEADER	English Heritage
Promoting advice on grants and support available	Action Plans Training	Axis 1,2 and 3	All stakeholders, e.g. NE, AONB , KCC, LPAs, EA, DEFRA
Supporting Planning Authorities in improving	Piloting 5 workshops and 1 individual training	Axis 1,2 and3 LEADER	AONB and 'Duties of Regard'

<b><u>Outcomes of KDRAS pilot</u></b>	<b><u>KDRAS Achievements</u></b>	<b><u>SEEDA, RDPE objectives*</u></b>	<b><u>Objectives of others</u></b>
knowledge and skills needed to deal with planning proposals in rural areas.	session to individual authority	(networking and collaboration)	NE LPAs
Delivering uptake of ELS and HLS	29 Action plans with specific advice on ELS, HLS and OELS as appropriate	Axis 1, 2 and 3 LEADER	DEFRA Targets EA
Delivering landscape enhancement, biodiversity and heritage awareness through advice and grant opportunities	29 Action Plans 5 training workshops Individual training	Axis 2 LEADER	AONB, NE objectives
Delivering joined up business advice and opportunities which encourages rural community cohesion	29 Action Plans 5 training workshops Individual training	Axis 1 and 3 LEADER	KCC Environment and Regeneration Directorate, LPAs NE, AONB

### **1.10 Regional findings**

*(Refer Para. 7.5.2 of main report)*

The regional workshops funded by Hampshire Rural Pathfinder have identified a need across the region in both the planning profession and amongst landholders, for education, training and support in the integrated land management and whole farm planning approach. In addition to this there is a need identified for improved working relationships and understanding between landholders, who wish to diversify their activities, and Local Authorities and other statutory bodies with an interest in land management. (e.g. Environment Agency and DEFRA). Feedback from the workshops indicated that the KDRAS model promoting the Action Plan exemplars with landholders, and training through workshops, was a useful approach and would be welcomed in their areas.

## **2 Testimonials:**

'The Kent Downs AONB and KDRAS supportive approach is just the kind of project needed to help farmers cope with the changes and regulations being imposed upon the industry'

### **Comments on the Workshops:**

" **Jackie Thompson** of the RTPI commented that "the continued and rising interest and attendance from the planning profession to this and other similar workshops shows that the profession is aware of the need to understand the effect of the new farming subsidy rules on management of the landscape and the sustainability of rural communities, and the value of taking a fully integrated 'Whole Farm' approach in the decision making process".

**Graham Marshall** from Lloyds TSB Agriculture commented: 'Many farmers will need to consider diversifying and making better use of all those assets around them on the farm. If the traditional farming way of life, and the Kent Downs countryside and rural communities are to be conserved and enhanced, then change must be sympathetically considered.'

**George Jessel** of Jessel Farms, Brabourne who attended the workshop commented: 'The large number of farmers attending the event proves how important it is to achieve a professional approach to the challenging issue of farm diversification. The KDRAS scheme is proving an excellent tool to support farmers in their understanding of the planning system and the links between how we manage the land and the way in which planning applications are determined. I would strongly encourage anyone thinking of diversifying their farm businesses to contact the KDRAS team for support.'

'Thanks also for the Workshop, which we found very useful. It was interesting to have a brief word afterwards with Frances Clayton about the issues surrounding "horsiculture" in particular as this is a subject with a number of nuances that I had not fully considered in the past. Without the KDRAS insight I would have continued to look at proposals in terms of the intended built development rather than looking also to the implications for the landscape.' (A planning Consultant)

Mrs. Nicky Page (Scords Farm) who attended the workshop on 17<sup>th</sup> October said what a very useful session it was, and they have applied for the KDRAS scheme'

### **Comments on the Action Plan:**

We have taken further advice from BLK on business side. Due to BLK visit know where going - going to do a business action plan for long term'

Very helpful indeed specific to us and excellent for long term Gave us more confidence to go ahead'

'The reports focused on the way in which farming has to go in a way that I wouldn't be able to do myself. Such an integrated approach is very useful'

Each person was expert in their field and responded to our specific need. Process and visits very beneficial.'

'Many thanks for all your help so far - the project sounds absolutely brilliant and I am certain that we will see enormous benefit from the various visits. Graeme Kemsley from Business Link has already been on the phone to arrange a visit - I can't believe that things have kicked off so quickly!! Fabulous!

Thanks so much for your help - look forward to speaking with you again soon.'

'Excellent, and very helpful because holistic look at whole farm. Balanced view. Lovely report.

'We are now considering HLS, which we wouldn't have thought of without the FWAG report'

BLK report. Process more important than the report. Confirmed was going in right direction. Would like to see more happen for biofuels and oils

'Was really good to see things laid out logically for us'

'Talking to the advisors was really beneficial because they could say things off the record'

Stephen Jones was most impressed with the BLK response - and phoned to let me know.  
Jenny KDRAS

'Useful for ELS - and information about buildings and how to look after them. It gave us an insight into aspects of character/vernacular of our buildings not realised before.'

'We could well seek further BLK advice, no further advice needed at moment. Will be back in touch if need it. When planning application ready to go in may come back then too.'

'Excellent. All three advisors were very useful for their professional approach and highlighting benefits of our application to the area.'

'We used the Action Plan in our planning application - very useful '(planning permission granted)

'One of the enquiries I received today was effusive in compliments on how helpful and encouraging the information was.'

'It was really instructive - I didn't realise how important it was to get in an expert to help with all the ramifications of green composting - I shall get further expert advice now'

'It was great benefit in our planning application process. We were able to use the action plan at the inspectors visit' (the refusal from the planning authority had been received before KDRAS was involved and the Action Plan was used to show the inspector that they had looked at the whole farm in an integrated way and were aware of the impact of equestrian use on the environment and could mitigate it. The appeal was allowed.

'We found both talking and reports important. Reports highlighted consequences not coming up in visits.' "

### **3.0 Recommendations**

*(Refer Chapter 9 of the main report)*

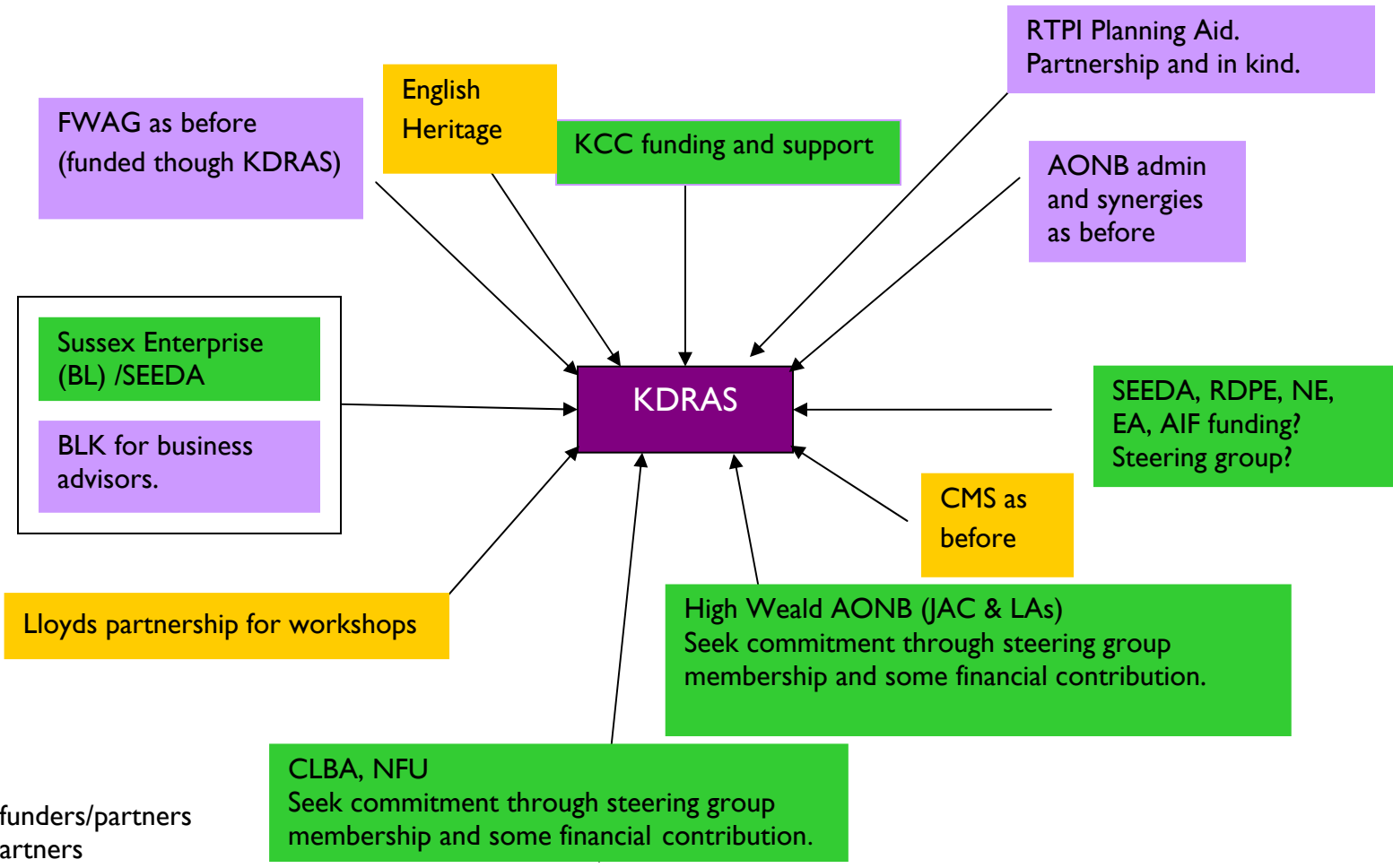
It is recommended that the KDRAS project should:

- Roll out provision to the whole of Kent over the next 2 years
- Provide up to a further 15 exemplar Action Plans for farmers and landholders over the first 18 months. *(Refer Paras. 6.2, 7.4, 8.1, 9.2 of main report)*
- Develop a 'Guide to integrated land management and the Whole Farm Plan' for planners, landholders and advisors
- Provide training in the use of such a 'Guide to Integrated Land Management'.
- Provide 5 workshops/clinics for planners and farmers over 2 years. *(Refer paras.6.3 7.5, 8.2, 9.3 of main report)*
- Provide continual individual training for LPA s over 2 years
- Continue to promote the use of GIS based internet technology for Integrated Land Management.
- Move towards building up a continued help-line of streamlined, integrated advice from one source.
- Continue to build on existing relationships and seek new partnerships with stakeholders who have an interest in integrated land management.
- Seek funding from SEEDA, East Kent Partnership - Natural East Kent (NEK), and others as appropriate
- The KDAONB Unit continues as a base for KDRAS project and Coordinator. *(Refer Para. 9.1 of main report)*

***KDRAS provides opportunities for sensitive and flexible responses to developing and changing local needs of the rural community and offers solutions that are geared to the delivery of complex and changing national, regional and local led initiatives, directives, regulations, subsidies and advice.***

***KDRAS addresses the needs of those with the influence to make good, fully integrated, sustainable socio economic and environmental decisions.***

Scenario: KDRAS AONB / Kent Model 2007/8





## Glossary

Acronym	Meaning
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
KDAONB	Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CLBA	Country Land and Business Association
BLK	Business Link Kent
CROW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
DEFRA	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
ELS	Entry Level Stewardship
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
ES	Environmental Stewardship
FBAS	Farming Business Advisory Service
FEP	Farm Environment Record
FER	Farm Environment Plan
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
GAEC	Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition
GB	Green Belt
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
KCC	Kent County Council
K-LIS	Kent Landscape Information System <a href="http://www.kent.gov.uk/klis">www.kent.gov.uk/klis</a>
LAK	Landscape Assessment Kent
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NEK	Natural East Kent Administered by East Kent Partnership <a href="http://www.eastkentpartnership.org.uk">www.eastkentpartnership.org.uk</a>
NFU	National Farmers Union
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OELS	Organic Level Scheme
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
SEEDA	South East Development Agency

# **KENT DOWNS RURAL ADVICE SERVICE**

