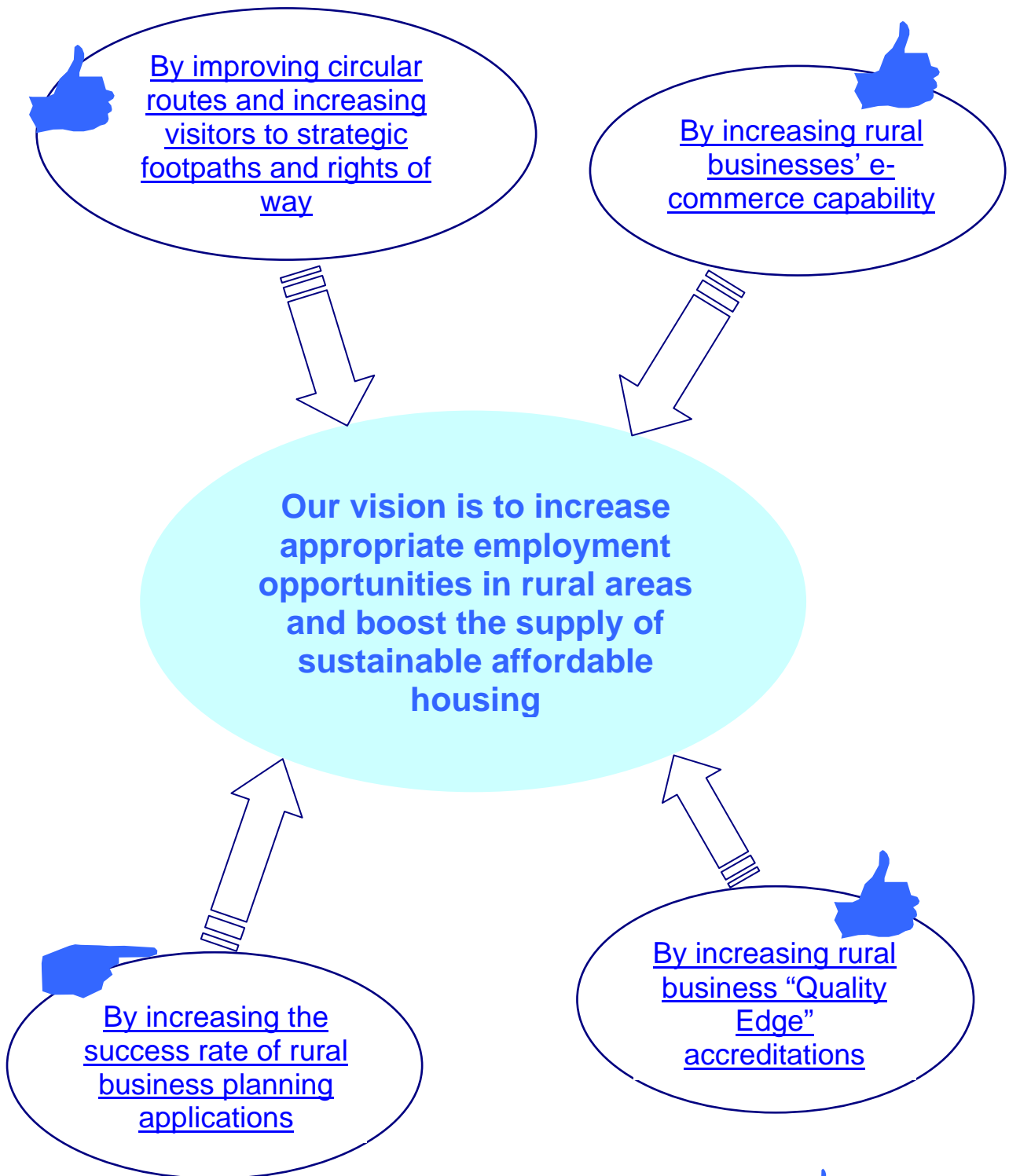





Regenerating Rural Communities



-  On or exceeding target
-  Progress unclear
-  Not yet on target



Regenerating Rural Communities

Target 1: Improving circular routes and increasing visitors to strategic footpaths and rights of way



What did we say we would achieve?

We said we would:

- Improve up to 50 circular routes, amounting to 25% of the strategic rights of way network.
- Co-ordinate marketing of these routes and develop a website.
- Increase the number of visitors to strategic footpaths and rights of way over three years.

How does this target help achieve our vision?

Improved rights of way bring people into the countryside potentially providing more customers for local businesses.

What did we achieve?

By the end of March 2006, the total number of recorded visitors that had used the strategic rights of way network totalled 604,782. This represented an increase of almost 26% (85,000 visitors) above the expected increase of 8%. The total number of routes completed over the last three years is 47, including three added as part of Rotherfield Community Tourism Initiative (RCTI).

In order to achieve the increase in user numbers and promote rural businesses, a self guided walk leaflet was produced for each circular route, which included details of local businesses. In addition to this three extra leaflets were produced for the RCTI routes. Two extra leaflets have also been produced – promoting both the Wealdway and the Sussex Diamond Way. A total of 580,000 of these leaflets were printed over the three years with more than 375,000 being distributed to date.

Is this a future focus for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership?

No. The future targets for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership, through the Local Area Agreement, will concentrate on skills training and developing the economy in the most deprived areas of the County.

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Target 2: Increasing the success rate of rural planning applications



What did we say we would achieve?

We said we would increase the success rate of rural business planning applications by 30% by the end of 2004/2005.



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How does this target help achieve our vision?

Helping businesses set up and expand in rural areas plays an important part in regenerating deprived rural communities.

What did we achieve?

Unfortunately, after setting this target, we found it very difficult to establish a baseline and accurately monitor the success rate of all rural business planning applications.

Consequently, we concentrated on monitoring the rateable value added to rating lists due to loss of agricultural exemption. This shows the level of diversification from farming into other activities which is taking place in our rural areas. We managed to exceed our hoped for target of a 30% increase over two years, compared with 31 March 2003, and achieved a 39.25% increase as at 31 March 2005.

Is this a future focus for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership?

No. The future targets for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership, through the Local Area Agreement, will concentrate on skills training and developing the economy in the most deprived areas of the County.

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Target 3: Increasing the percentage of rural businesses at level 3 e-commerce capability



What did we say we would achieve?

We said we would increase the percentage of rural businesses with significant e-commerce capability.

Significant e-commerce capability means having achieved a minimum threshold, which consists of elements such as e-mail and internet access, plus capacity, measured against the "UK online for business ladder", to undertake e-messaging, e-marketing, e-ordering, e-procurement, e-payment and e-order processing.

How does this target help achieve our vision?

The ability of businesses to thrive in rural areas is vital to the economy of East Sussex, as well as to keeping rural communities alive. However, access by public and private transport can often be relatively slow. The development of fast and reliable internet connections and e-commerce capability is therefore very important, reducing reliance on physical transport and enabling speedy communications and trading via the web.



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What did we achieve?

By April 2006, we had increased the proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises with significant e-commerce capability to 61.5%.

Is this a future focus for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership?

No. The future targets for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership, through the Local Area Agreement, will concentrate on skills training and developing the economy in the most deprived areas of the County.

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Target 4: Increasing the uptake of “Quality Edge” accreditation by rural businesses



What did we say we would achieve?

We said we would increase the uptake of “Quality Edge” accreditation by rural businesses by training 120 delegates by March 2006.

How does this target help achieve our vision?

The ability of businesses to thrive in rural areas is vital to the economy of East Sussex, as well as to keeping rural communities alive. Knowing that customers can trust the quality of local businesses will help develop local markets and ensure their survival.

What did we achieve?

During 2005/06, 120 more employees from rural businesses received training under the Quality Edge Programme. This means that a total of 431 employees were accredited under the Programme during the last three years.

Is this a future focus for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership?

No. The future targets for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership, through the Local Area Agreement, will concentrate on skills training and developing the economy in the most deprived areas of the County.

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