

MINUTES

LEADER Local Action Group – SMG Group Meeting

Wednesday 4th November 2015, 2pm

Held at: Solway House, Dumfries

Present: **Peter Ross (Chair) (PR)** Cathy Agnew (CA)
Heather Brash (HB) Barry Dunne (BD)
Caroline Graham-Brown (CGB) Gillian Khosla (GK)
Alastair McNeill (AMcN) David Rennie (DR)
Colin Smyth (CS) Claire Thirlwall (CT)
Karen Ward Boyd (KWB)

Staff: Nicola Hill (NH) Gary Davidson (GD)
Derek Hextall (DH) Simone Tyrie (ST)
Chris Brown (CB)

Welcome

Peter Ross welcomes everyone to the first meeting of the Strategic Management Group and reminds us that all members of all groups are full Local Action Group members – there is no hierarchy between groups, each performs a different function within the whole.

Dissolution of Management Group

Peter Ross officially dissolves the management group from the previous programme which was in place to assist with the transition between the close of the previous programme and the launch of the current. Thanks were given to those members of the dissolved group.

5% private 'match' funding

Previous programme had a requirement for applicants to provide a minimum of 5% match funding from a private source, which could include in-kind donations. This requirement is not present in the guidance for the current programme but it has also been stated that in-kind donations will no longer be recognised as eligible for matching.

HB reported from the LEADER Group that they had voted to remove any minimum requirement from the application criteria, but chose instead to require evidence of 'buy-in' to projects. With 'in-kind' contributions no longer eligible to be used as match, evidence of these contributions would be recognised as an example of 'buy-in'.

GK reported from RURAL ENTERPRISE Group that discussion had taken place about possibly increasing the limit above 5% but the consensus was that 5% would be the absolute minimum and it was agreed to keep this in place for applications to this group.

Discussion took place around the strategic projects which may seek approval from the Strategic Management Group and what criteria for minimum private match may be required.

Agreed: an agenda point should be added to the next meeting of the SMG to discuss strategic projects in more detail.

Agreed: the SMG approve the decisions of the other groups regarding their own criteria for private match funding.

Delegation of Responsibilities to LEADER team

Delegation of certain responsibilities allows daily operations to continue more easily without requiring individual approval from LAG meetings.

Agreed: £1500 ceiling for expenditure on a single purchase, anything higher would require approval from LAG prior to spend. It was noted that expenses of this magnitude are expected to be minimal and that threshold could be reviewed at the programme mid-point.

Agreed: the following change threshold criteria, barring any changes by Scottish Government, which are the same as in the previous programme.

- Any budget changes up to 25% in any budget heading can be decided on by the finance coordinator.
- Any budget changes between 25% and 50% can be decided on by the LEADER coordinator.
- Any budget changes between 50% and 75% can be decided on by the Chair of the group under which the project was supported.
- Any budget changes between 75% and 100% of any budget heading must be circulated to the group members. The decision will be made based on the majority of the answers received.
- Any new budget headings must be circulated to the group members. The decision will be made based on the majority of the answers received.
- Any other changes such as new contact details etc. can be decided upon by the finance coordinator and the LEADER coordinator.

Agreed: that the LEADER team are given general approval for travel both nationally and overseas, as well as for attendance at conferences, where appropriate for business needs. HB and GK confirmed same approval given from respective group meetings. With full LAG approval this can be incorporated into a business case to Dumfries and Galloway Council which aims to streamline the process for approval each time requests are made.

Action: NH and CB to develop business case to Dumfries and Galloway Council

LEADER Group Update

HB reported that a discussion had taken place regarding the name of this group. It was felt that the term LEADER should apply to the whole LAG and that this group should use something else for clarity. Suggestion has been made to adopt whatever term describes this fund on the final application as approved by Scottish Government. This is an agenda point for the next meeting of this group.

RURAL ENTERPRISE Group Update

GK reported that this group had discussed in detail the terms of the brief. They identified a need for setting clear criteria to help applicants understand the process and give clearer definition of 'innovation'. Exceptional meeting of RURAL ENTERPRISE Group has been set for 10th Nov 2015 to discuss and set criteria.

Meeting locations/venues

Discussion took place regarding frequency and location of meetings of SMG with options considered for higher and lower frequency than the other groups.

Agreed: Quarterly meetings for first year then option to review based on needs. Meetings to take place outside of holiday conflict dates in January, April, July and October. Meetings to take place in Dumfries during business hours.



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Expressions of Interest

Discussion took place regarding EoI's already received and the process of allocating these to an officer, as well as the levels of communication being returned to the applicant. It was felt that there may be a need for a mapping exercise to clearly show compatibility of funding streams (e.g. money from other EU sources cannot be used as match for LEADER funding)

AOCB

Declaration of Interest: Register of Interest for LAG members to be sent out electronically. LAG members are asked to complete this for records, which will be reviewed annually, and where possible to inform the team of any changes as they occur. PR proposed that the Chairs of each group liaise with each other in the event that a Chair must declare an interest and another Chair may be required to step in.

HB departs at 15:55

Memorandum of Understanding: Has been circulated electronically. LAG members are asked to return any comments before the deadline.

Staff Report: LEADER team members will produce a report on their work activities prior to each meeting of the SMG and this will be made available to all LAG members in order that everyone is kept informed and updated.

Steering Groups: There will be a call for LAG members to join steering groups for both the LDS summary and the website tender. Members are asked to consider what they might be able to contribute to these groups.

Day of the Region/Strategic Projects: These will be a focus of the next SMG meeting so members are asked to consider options and revisit the Local Development Strategy document prior to that meeting.

FLAG: No news on status of new FISHERIES fund. NH looking to meet with Alistair Prior of Scottish Government for an update.

Date of Next Meeting

January 2016 – date and venue TBC

Meeting closed at 16:05

