

MINUTES

Local Action Group – LEADER Group Meeting

Wednesday 9th December 2015, 2pm

Held at: The Usual Place, Dumfries

Present: **Heather Brash (chair) (HB)** Jenny Wilson (JW)
Harry Harbottle (HH) Chick McKenna (ChM)
Isobel Henkelmann (IH) Heather Hall (HHall)
Norman Burns (NB) Clair McFarlan (CM)

Staff: Nicola Hill (NH) Gary Davidson (GD)
Derek Hextall (DH)

Apologies: Ed Forrest Rob Wells

Welcome

Heather Brash welcomed everyone to the meeting and accepted apologies from Ed and Rob.

Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes were proposed and approved.

Matters arising

HB gave a report on her attendance at the last Strategic Management Group (SMG) meeting. Confirmation of agreements by LAG to allow for delegation of responsibilities to the LEADER team (see previous minutes), NH still putting together a paper for submission to Dumfries and Galloway Council regarding this. Noted that the next SMG meeting would be looking at strategic projects such as Day of the Region.

Publicity of LEADER LAG group members: email to be sent out asking opinion of all LAG members about what information to be made available publicly and how best to publicise this if agreed.

Action: GD – send out email

Update on LEADER Guidance and Application

LEADER team to produce a summary of guidance and the LDS for applicants to guide them through the process. Members were asked to consider any specific guidance or notes to be included pertaining to this group. It was noted that all statutory requirements and specific details provided by Scottish Government will be included by default and that this request was for additional points of focus relative to COMMUNITIES GROUP applications.

Additional points were discussed in general terms but were left until after the discussion around Expressions of Interest (see below for more detail).

Members were shown a draft outline of a grid exercise designed to help applicants determine what outcomes relative to the Local Development Strategy (LDS) their project would achieve and how those outcomes might be measured. This is an early draft to generate ideas and feedback is welcomed from members on both content and layout.

Expressions of Interest

DH presented members with a snapshot of types of EOI received to date in order that members could get a feel for what to expect. Some of these were determined to be not eligible based on lower or higher amounts of requested funding, as well as percentage funding requested. The following points were agreed as important when considering EOI's as well as applications in the future:

- Grants of more than £150,000 previously defined as 'unusual' to be based on combined knowledge of the group following discussion, not strictly by a formula (i.e. when an overall project seems worthy enough – it is important that projects are approved by their ability to achieve LDS outcomes)
- Applicants need to show how a project will be **sustainable** after LEADER funding has been given (i.e. how they will keep a project running once costs are no longer being met by a LEADER grant)
- Applicants are required to show evidence of **need and demand** for a project
- Local knowledge of members will be crucial to identifying possible project **duplication** (this was deemed necessary to help achieve innovation criteria)
- It is important to look at the bigger picture to avoid potential **displacement** when considering options such as new builds
- Applicants are required to show evidence of **cash flow** and balance to ensure that finances are able to cover the retrospective nature of LEADER funding
- Applicants should demonstrate wider **rural** engagement and impact

Amendment (14/01/2016)

Note from Chair: following a minor incident which has been resolved, the Chairs of each group have met and prepared the following statement reminding all members of the need for the confidentiality:

"We would like to reiterate how important it is for LAG members to recognise where and when it is appropriate to share information provided by the LEADER team. When information is given to LAG members regarding the programme, unless the team explicitly confirm it can be shared, all LAG members should assume that this information is not for wider circulation. If a LAG member is also an applicant to the programme, clear separation of roles should be demonstrated to avoid conflict of interest."

15:30 – HH leaves the meeting

AOCB

Members agreed that due to delays in guidance being received from Scottish Government, there should be no round of applications in March as there would not be enough time for applicants, team and LAG members to obtain sufficient knowledge of process for a robust application process.

The next meeting of the SMG will be looking at strategic projects including Day of the Region and it was agreed that this could go ahead to a decision-making panel in March due to the experience and combined knowledge of the applicant. It was noted that it would have been better for this to have been grouped with other public applications but the sense of urgency to allow for a successful Day of the Region allows for this exception.

Question was raised about when members should declare an interest in any applications. It was noted that the Expressions of Interest shown at this and future meetings were in confidence and did not construe official applications.



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Declaration of interest should take place once sight of official applications has been given, usually at the start of each decision-making meeting.

Discussion took place regarding using LEADER funding to support projects that should be covered by other bodies (example given was Local Authority providing play parks for children) and it was determined that LEADER cannot be used to meet any statutory obligations. The applicant will need to demonstrate separation from any such obligations.

LEADER team staff will be arranging pool cars from Dumfries to Newton Stewart for the next meeting to save on fuel and travel expenses. Seats should be reserved via email directly to the team.

HB thanked all for attendance and closed meeting at 15:55

Date of Next Meeting

2nd March 2016, 2pm – Newton Stewart

