

MINUTES

Local Action Group – Communities Group Meeting (Rescheduled from 2nd March 2016)

Tuesday 15th March 2016, 2pm

Held at: KirkbankHouse, Dumfries

Present: Heather Brash (Chair) (HB) Clair McFarlan (CM)
Norman Burns (NB) Chick McKenna (CM)
Heather Hall (HH) Rob Wells (RW)
Isobel Henkelmann (IH) Jennifer Wilson (JW)

Staff: Nicola Hill (NH) Derek Hextall (DH)
Stephanie Carrick (SC)

Apologies: Ed Forrest
Harry Harbottle

1. Welcome & Apologies

1.1 – no declarations made.

Apologies noted above.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 9th December 2015

Minutes agreed. Proposed by JW and seconded by CM.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 – SMG reviewed and fed back on website tender. Actions will be taken forward once Gary Davidson is back from leave. Email will be circulated round the LAG once completed.

NH has circulated the scoring information.

Change to approved minute circulation has not yet been done as there have been no other meetings.

IH mentioned not always receiving correspondence circulated to the group. DH to check contact information on the circulation list. It was suggested it would be beneficial for members to acknowledge receipt of emails and attachments.

4. Update on Expressions of Interest received to date

137 EoIs received by 09/03 deadline, 95 of which come under the Communities remit. Formal feedback has now been sent out to each individual client along with application packs. DH handed round a spreadsheet with a breakdown of Communities summary:

Total EoIs - 95. 47 progressing. 2 not eligible. 10 withdrawn. 36 pending.

The summary also outlines where in the region these applications are from. All agreed it would be beneficial to have this document for review at each meeting. If there were a lower volume of EoIs from one or more parts of the region this would highlight where to do some targeted promotion.

Application workshops being held 16th and 17th March 2016. These will help give an idea of how many EoIs will progress to full application for the June deadline.

Expectation management is key from LEADER team. To date an overwhelming number of EoIs have been submitted. Going forward, the team will encourage EoIs to be submitted from those whose projects are more fully formed. With the June deadline applicants are being made aware that the full project application must be complete, including all supporting documentation. It is not feasible to have 40 applications on the table at one time. Also it is important to keep in mind each applicant will require a one to one for support in completing the cash flow and milestones. The more feedback given by the group, the easier it makes the process. We want the applications that hit the table to have the best chance of being supported.

Next deadline is 6th April (stage 2/draft application). If this deadline is not met by applicants they cannot progress to a decision at the June meeting and would be deferred to September.

5. Update on LEADER Guidance and Application Materials

5.1 Overview provided

5.2 NH talked the group through the scoring sheet. This scoring sheet is used to assess the final submission of the application and supporting evidence. Final submissions will go to DH, who will check that all required information is included. This will then be circulated to the group who will use the scoring sheet on an individual basis prior to the LAG decision making meeting. This also provides members with an opportunity to declare an interest prior to the meeting and should be noted at the top of the individual scoring sheet. A member declaring an interest would not then carry on to score. Important to note here it is acceptable to be part of the scoring process if a member is simply involved with the organisation but had no involvement with the development of the project. The individual scoring sheets will then be handed in at the LAG meeting and filed with the corresponding application. A group scoring sheet will be used to record the final, overall decision made on the application.

NH talked through each of the fifteen questions on the scoring sheet. The group asked that the questions be put in order of the information provided within the application and project plan. NH going to annotate the scoring sheet to direct members to the relevant section to find the information and supporting evidence required for that question. Specific attention drawn to question 11 on the scoring sheet – if a member thinks the applicant is not suitable for LEADER funding, because if they put in a final submission and it is rejected this could prohibit them from making application to other SRDP funding streams. LEADER does not want to have a negative impact on their organisation or funding opportunities. Deferrals can be notified via email if there are only a small issue for addressing, otherwise letters will be sent out to clients informing them of this decision. Finally the scoring sheet is signed off at the bottom, signed by the Communities LAG Chair and Dumfries and Galloway Council as an accountable body.

DH will provide an overview and update on applications at the start of the LAG. A discussion and scoring sheet will then take place for each application, resulting in a decision for each applicant. DH then call applicants the following day to inform them of the decision.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have it minuted that the LAG are happy to use the scoring sheet.

6. Consideration of Applications

6.1 – Day of the Region application.

The group reviewed the application before going forward to complete the group scoring sheet. The group scoring sheet comments and decisions were as follows:

Q1. Does the project clearly tackle at least one of the LDS themes: Economy / Land, Coast and Marine Environments / Sustainable Settlements.

Agreed its primary fit is with 'Sustainable Settlements', but that it also fitted with the other two LDS themes 'Economy' and 'Land, Coast and Marine'. Score 4 – agreed by all.

Q2. Does the project clearly demonstrate what will be achieved by the project – Outcomes / Indicators / Target Groups?

Part 6: Project Results, Outputs and Outcomes section of the application referenced. Theme 3 on application reviewed, also additional two themes included and reviewed. Score 4 – agreed by all.

Q3. Does the project demonstrate value for money?

Full Cost Breakdown within the project plan was viewed. All felt based on these figures that there was a good return on investment. Score 3 – agreed by all.

Q4. Does the project embody originality, embrace experimentation or demonstrate innovation?

Development of transnational element demonstrates innovation within an original idea. New communities would also have to engage. Score 4 – agreed by all.

Q5. Does the project demonstrate clear linkages to other related local activities or strategies?

Project Plan section 4 (*Evidence of need/demand*) reviewed. Content discussed - Group could see links with Economic Development Strategy, Local Communities Strategy and Regional Tourism Strategy, however not all links made explicit in the body of the application. Score 3 – agreed by all.

Q6. Does the project demonstrate evidence of community, market or business need/demand?

Project plan section 4 (*Evidence of need/demand*) reviewed. Based on details provided as a result of the evaluation of the previous Day of the Region programmes, the group felt clear evidence had been provided to demonstrate the need and demand and engaged with communities across the region and was of benefit to the wider market. Score 4 – agreed by all.

Q7. Does the project adequately recognise and address participation barrier or risk?

Project Plan section 11 (*Managing Risk*) reviewed. The Group felt that this section demonstrated the applicant had assessed risk fully and agreed that risk has been managed. Score 4 – agreed by all.

Q8. Does the project applicant demonstrate adequate knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to deliver?

Project Plan section 3 (*Competence of delivery organisation/s*) reviewed. The group agreed that details contained in this section demonstrated thought on delivery and that the recruitment process for the Project officer had been built

around this. The applicant also demonstrated success in delivering Day of the Region in the previous LEADER programme. Score 4 – agreed by all.

Q9. *Does the project clearly demonstrate additionality?*

Project Plan section 7 (*Added value of the LEADER investment*) reviewed. If LEADER did not fund the Day of the Region project, it would not go ahead. Score 4 – agreed by all.

Q10. *Are you happy that this project fits comfortably within the LEADER Local Development Strategy (LDS)?*

All agreed that this project fitted within the LEADER Local Development Strategy. Score 4 – agreed by all

Q11. If not, are you confident that there is another more suitable fund?

n/a

Q12. *Any key technical / budget issues to be clarified*

Group agreed that on reviewing the full application there were no technical or budget issues that required clarification. They felt it was good value, especially with the transnational aspect of the project.

Q13. *Any suggestions for connections / contacts*

No comments made.

Q14. *Any suggestion for "Specific Conditions of Grant"*

No conditions of grant set.

Q15. *Recommendation for approval / deferred decision via email / deferred until next LAG / rejected*

Unanimous decision to approve the Day of the Region application. 7 members voted project for approval.

7. AOCB

NH and DH asked the group to have a think of any other individuals who could become part of the Communities LAG. Currently 10 members, looking to increase to 12 as 7 plus the chair is the minimum requirement for holding a meeting, which left little room for absence. Any names that NH could make a targeted approach to should be sent directly to NH. This will be done in advance of the fisheries LAG advert going out. If no names are provided, then the advert will be used to recruit for the Communities LAG.

Reminder - any interest needs to be declared at feedback stage.

There will be a scoring workshop for LAG members at the end of April 2016.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting 1st June 2016, Dumfries.

Meeting closed at 15:40