

## MINUTES

### Local Action Group – Rural Enterprise Group Meeting

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015, 10am

Held at: Midsteeples Meeting Room, Dumfries

Present: Gill Khosla (Chair) (GK) Chris Churms (CC)  
Sharon Glendinning (SG) Paula McDonald (PM)  
Eva Milroy (EM)

Staff: Nicola Hill (NH) Gary Davidson (GD)

Apologies: Teresa Dougall Gill Dykes  
Lesley Jackson Judith Johnson

### Welcome

Gill welcomed everyone to the meeting and accepted apologies from missing members.

### Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes were proposed and approved.

### Matters arising

NH gave an update on mentoring and coaching: she has spoken to a few organisations about bespoke training and hopes to have details in early January for training sessions. Expectations are for two, one-day sessions of up to 20 attendees each. Provision will also be made for future ad hoc refreshers or induction of new members.

NH gave an update on Guidance and Application process: attended a frustrating meeting at Saughton House. No guidance or form has been produced that is fit for purpose. Have been promised a final document by end of January. Concern was raised that more potential delays might occur. NH counselled patience but acknowledged need for programme to continue moving forward. Possibility of LAG chairs coming together as one voice if deadline is not met.

### Local Criteria/Parameters for Applicants

Members were asked to consider what additional criteria or points of focus should be included in the local guidance documents for applicants once the final approved guidance is received. Discussion took place regarding what was important to the Rural Enterprise Group in relation to the LDS and the following key points were identified:

- Innovation – this has to be the driving factor behind all decisions and applicants must clearly demonstrate this  
**Action point: NH to circulate definition of INNOVATION in relation to LEADER Programme**

Members felt that decisions needed to be clear enough that they could be confident when discussing why an application was successful or not. This led to discussion around the scoring system to be used by LAG members when making decisions on applications.

Previously it had been understood that an approved scoring system would be imposed by Scottish Government, however it has been revealed that this will now only be a guideline and LAGs are free to implement localised versions based on approved LDS. It was noted that more detailed minutes around decisions would be necessary in order to support a local scoring and decision-making process.

**Action point: NH to share scoring template which can be rationalised for local use**

### **Mentoring and Evaluation Draft**

Members were shown a draft document which would allow applicants to identify key areas of delivery to be built into evaluation of a project. It was agreed that the document was a good idea but a consistency of message would be necessary to maximise its use. Outcomes as listed in the document would be mirrored in guidance for applicants, guidance for LAGs, as well as in the scoring system and the digital application process (LARCS).

It was noted that this document was in the very early stages of development and NH welcomed feedback from all LAG members before 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

**Action point (optional): LAG members to submit feedback to NH before 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016**

### **LAG Membership List**

Members were asked to consider what level of information they would be comfortable making public for the benefit of potential applicants. Discussion took place around this and the following key points were identified:

- Members are not a fan of 'biographies' but felt a short few sentences about relative interests would be useful to show broad range of knowledge
- Members were disinclined to include email or contact information as this opened the door to potential lobbying which it was agreed could cause difficulties for LAG members. Members are reminded that any direct contact from applicants which may be construed as lobbying should be re-directed to the team in the office and that interests should be declared at the relevant meetings.

### **Expressions of Interest**

Discussion took place around the EoI's already received which are considered to be of interest to the Rural Enterprise Group. A number of potential applications were considered to be more in line with traditional business development and the group felt it was necessary to make clear the innovative nature of LEADER funding.

Members were encouraged to offer feedback on these EoI's at this stage to help highlight what steering should be offered by the team on these and future EoI's. The following initial general feedback was offered:

- A number of EoI's are above the cap of £50k or intervention rate of 50% - it was recommended that this be the minimum amount of steer offered to all applicants
- More focus – costs listed don't always seem to match the general statement, applicants should be more clear about what they plan to spend and how
- More detail – applicants should demonstrate how LEADER funding will fit into a bigger picture including sustainability and the long-term plan (post-LEADER funding)

It was acknowledged that more detailed and specific information would be included in the Stage 1 applications but it was felt that some potential Stage 1 applications may be discouraged based on the EoI's if they were not given the correct steer.

NH clarified that Agents cannot be Applicants and that agent fees were not an eligible cost. Also reminded that accredited training was not eligible for funding through the LEADER programme.

Members agreed that a general steer for all potential applicants should include a need for new, innovative projects that create a community benefit. They also agreed that given the relatively low amount of funding available through this group, potential applicants should be encouraged towards a 'cocktail' of funding options.



Kirkbank House, English Street, Dumfries  
Dumfries and Galloway, DG1 2HS, Scotland  
Tel: 01387 260028 Web: [www.dgleader.co.uk](http://www.dgleader.co.uk)

#### **AOCB**

NH and GK completed an interview process for the position of Project Officer for the Rural Enterprise fund and were pleased to announce that the successful candidate was the best choice by a clear margin. Final stages of the recruitment process are underway but with the Christmas break approaching it was expected that the Project Officer would not be in post until early February 2016.

GK wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and closed the meeting at 12:00

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

Next meeting to take place w/c 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016 – Doodle poll to be conducted for majority availability

