

MINUTES

Local Action Group – Rural Enterprise Group Meeting

Wednesday 14th of September 2016, 2pm

Held at: Midsteeples, Dumfries

Present: Gill Khosla (Chair) (GK) Peter Ross (PR)
Sharon Glendinning (SG) Gill Dykes (GD)
Eva Milroy (EM)
Doug Wilson (DW)

Staff: Nicola Hill (NH) Ellen Grant (EG)

Apologies: Judith Johnson Lesley Jackson
Teresa Dougall David Gardiner

Action points from this meeting

1. Welcome & Apologies

Chair, Gill Khosla welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Peter Ross for stepping in to score the application in order for the group to be quorate.

Apologies were noted from Judith Johnson, Lesley Jackson, Teresa Dougall and David Gardiner.

1.1 EG updated members on LAG membership. Amanda Hannah from CEIS (Communities and Enterprise in Scotland) will be joining the Rural Enterprise Group. Her application has been accepted by the chairs and an induction is scheduled for the 3rd October. David Gardiner has taken on the position of Service Manager for Business and Enterprise. This change of role means he can no longer sit on the Rural Enterprise LAG but has confirmed he will put forward a replacement from the Business and Enterprise team.

1.2 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 GK re-stated the roles and responsibilities of group members. GK highlighted that too much time was being spent by the LEADER team chasing LAG members for responses and confirmation of meeting attendances. She encouraged group members to respond to emails as quickly as possible, to provide feedback and to be proactive in confirming attendance at meetings. Communication is key to the smooth running of the group.

2. Minutes of previous Meeting held 8th June 2016

EG informed members that an amendment would be made to the previous minutes in point 5. This is a small note to inform members that Applications were assessed on Scottish Government Guidance version 2.0. Minutes were proposed by EM and seconded by SG. Minutes were approved.

3. Update on Expressions of Interest

EG updated members on EOIs, with 223 in total, 63 of which are pending under the Rural Enterprise group. However, EG informed members that of these 63 there could potentially be around 10 who wish to progress to the next LAG meeting.

EG also informed members that there had been an increase in interest and felt this was because of the more targeted promotion towards rural enterprise as well as the Teams presence at events such as agricultural shows and Day of the Region. The Team also delivered several funding roadshows in August and felt they had played a part in the increase of interest.

4. Update on EU Brexit

GK provided update on the Brexit Group meeting. We have now received confirmation that the Chancellor's Autumn Statement will be on 23rd November 2016. The Cabinet Secretary's letter confirmed that all decisions taken on projects prior to the Autumn Statement will be honoured even if the projects run beyond the period of the UK still being in the EU. The full LAG has taken a decision to hold an extraordinary meeting on the 17th November to consider applications that would have come to the December meetings. Applicants are being made aware of the updated deadlines.

5. Discussion around Start-up Businesses

Discussions took place around the appropriateness of LEADER supporting business start-ups. EG presented a paper that detailed information around start-ups taken from Scottish Government Guidance and the Local Development Strategy. Information was also presented regarding Business Gateway's support of start-ups. The group members felt that considering applications from start-up businesses would not duplicate the work of Business Gateway and it was felt LEADER funding could potentially add value to support currently offered to business start-ups. It was agreed unanimously that the Rural Enterprise LAG will now consider applications from business start-ups.

6. Project Criteria/ priorities

6.1 Examples of EOI's

EG presented a number of examples of EOI's for the group to discuss. It was agreed that self-catering accommodation applications should not be progressed as these were not seen as innovative, struggled to demonstrate additionality, and would not attract the volume of visitors suggested. EG will feed this back to applicants at EOI stage. Where a business simply wants to purchase equipment, EG should request additional information to determine whether the project demonstrates wider business community benefit or if this would be utilised solely for business expansion. The applicant must also provide evidence of having exhausted private financial sources and must be able to demonstrate that the equipment is not available to outsource the work elsewhere to the region.

In regards to 'Glamping' applications, the group agreed that LEADER should only consider supporting these types of projects where there is a clear unique selling point. Applicants would need to demonstrate partnership working, evidence of need/demand and additionality.

6.2 Avenue for Promotion

The group suggested a presence at the Annual Tourism Conference, the NFU website as well as Biosphere promotions.

7. Consideration of Applications

All project decisions are based on Scottish Government issued Guidance version 2.0

C018 – Upland Creative Network

The total eligible project cost is £83,976.22 with a grant request of £41,988.11 (50%)

The group acknowledged a lot of work had gone into the preparation of the application. It was felt, however, that there was a lack of partnership working. SG felt that although the application refers to working with young people and potentially employing a graduate, there was lack of communication and support from Academic partners. As well as this, the group felt there should be more links to employability partners. Concerns were raised around the capacity of the organisation to deliver this project and the group requires further information to demonstrate this. The group felt that

although they feel positively about the Application, further information on the above points would need to be provided in order to make a decision. The group then scored the Application.

SCORING

1. Does the project embody originality, embrace experimentation or demonstrate innovation?	3
2. Does the project applicant demonstrate adequate knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to deliver?	3
3. Does the project demonstrate clear linkages to other related local activities or strategies?	2
4. Does the project demonstrate evidence of community, market or business need/demand?	2
5. Does the project demonstrate value for money?	2
6. Does the project clearly demonstrate additionality?	2
7. Does the project adequately recognise and address participation barriers or risks?	2
8. Does the project clearly tackle at least one of the LDS themes: a. Economy b. Land, Coast and Marine Environments c. Sustainable Settlements	3
9. Does the project clearly demonstrate what will be achieved by the project – Outcomes/Indicators/Target Groups?	2
10. Are you happy that this project fits comfortably with the LEADER LDS?	YES
TOTAL SCORE	21

Number of Members APPROVING: 0

Number of Members DEFERING: 5

The decision was taken to **DEFER** the application for consideration at the LAG meeting. Reasons for deferral were:

- To allow time to provide further information to demonstrate the sustainability of the organisation – a Business Plan and Strategy should be provided here
- To allow time to provide further information around the organisation's capacity to deliver this project
- To allow time to demonstrate further partnership working with Academic and Employability partners
- To allow time to provide further information on Evaluation of the project and how this will be undertaken.

AOCB

The Group requested an update on the Scottish Government Monitoring visit. NH confirmed we are still awaiting the report from this visit but that the audit had not raised any concerns.

NH confirmed the team would like LAG members to retain the December meeting dates in their diaries until further clarification is received post the Autumn Statement.

With no other business GK thanked members for the discussions and closed the meeting.



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Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting **17th November, Woodbank, Dumfries**

Meeting closed at 15:40

