

Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group Meeting
SNH Boardroom, Cameron House, Albany Street, Oban
Thursday 21st September 2017 10.30 AM

MINUTE OF MEETING

LAG Attendance	Name	Organisation	Sector
	Iain MacInness (Chair)	Cowal Area Network	private
	David Adams McGilp (Vice Chair)	Visit Scotland	public
	Colin McLean	HIE	public
	Marina Curran Colthart	Argyll & Bute Local Biodiversity Partnership	public
	Reeni Kennedy Boyle	Fyne Futures	private
	Iain Johnston	Kintyre Cultural Forum	private
	Lucy Sumsion	NFU Scotland	private
(teleconference)	Arlene Cullum	Argyll & Bute Council	public
	Joan Best	Third Sector Interface	private
LAG Apologies	Hannah Robinson	LLTNP	public
	Alison McGrory	NHS	public
	Alastair Fleming	Scottish Islands Federation	non-public
	Stuart Shaw	Scottish Natural Heritage	public
	Stewart MacLennan	MacLennan Motors	non-public
	Elaine Jamieson	Forestry Commission Scotland	public
In Attendance	Colin Fulcher	Strategic Co-ordinator Argyll & Bute Council (Accountable Body)	
	Mary Simpson	Development Officer	
	Kirsty Moyes	Development Officer	
	Kwasi Addo	Development Officer	
	Annemarie McLean	Compliance Officer (minutes)	



1) Sederunt and Apologies

1.1 Sederunt

Iain MacInnes welcomed all to the meeting and explained how crucial it was at a decision making meeting to obtain a quorum.

1.2 Apologies

Attendance and apologies were noted as above.

2) Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest are noted at each application.

2.1 Quorum

9 LAG Members participated with 7 LAG members in attendance and 2 participating by teleconference, 5 non-public members and 4 public members, the meeting was quorate.

3) Minutes of previous meetings (16th March 2017)

Actions

No points were raised

Decision

Minutes were proposed by Reeni Kennedy Boyle

Minutes were seconded by David Adams McGilp

Minutes were signed by Iain MacInness

4) Matters arising

4.1 Information Sessions

A total of 13 Information Sessions were held in various locations throughout Argyll and the Islands LEADER area.

A total of 62 people attended these sessions, with 11 expressions of interest having been submitted from those who attended. Some of those who attended were current applicants, who gained from the opportunity to discuss their application face to face.

This was well advertised throughout the area and via the internet and social media. However we did hope for a better attendance.

Overall, it was a valuable exercise and feedback received was positive in that it was good to talk to someone face to face to understand what LEADER was about. No more information sessions are planned for the near future.

General discussion about future sessions and the possibility of linking in with Third Sector Interface, as they have provided workshops and 1-1 sessions for other funders and potential applicants. Members discussed LEADER staff attendance at various events over the next 3 months.

4.2 Farm Diversification

CF summarised current situation, members felt that the current scoring criteria doesn't lend itself well to scoring Farm Diversification projects and are looking for a consistent approach to scoring. CF met with Lucy Sumsion to discuss this. Members discussed the issues with the low scoring questions, the 3 main questions relate to equality; engagement & partnership.

LAG members wanted it that noted that, as there is specific monies ring fenced to be allocated for Farm Diversification projects, these applications are only compared to other Farm Diversification applications and not the Community Projects. As such, when members are scoring Farm Diversification applications they are considered within a competitive norm and therefore it is not necessary to amend the scoring criteria.

In summary:

- No amendments will be made to the scoring;
- Applications will be considered against other Farm Diversification applications;
- No minimum score will be set;
- Although key comments are all that is required for the minutes, the discussions members have at the meetings are about the potential quality, value and social and economic drivers that projects can bring to the area.

All Members Agreed

Action Point – For benchmarking purposes, CF to bring information on the number/scores of projects previously considered.

4.3 LARCs applications status & common application issues

CF provided members with a summary of the current applications on LARCs, table below.

Current Application	20
Future applicant	19
Not suitable	11
Inactive	12
Withdrawn	1
Total	63

There was a general discussion regarding this information, how applicants are finding LARCs, what reasons there are for applications not progressing and if these are common among LAGs. Most common barriers relate to match funding; establishing Reasonableness of Cost/Procurement; obtaining building warrants and with Farm Diversification sometimes it's difficult to establish who the applicant is e.g. is it a sole trader or partnership; also LARCs is not a user friendly system.

Note: CF proposed that staff would contact inactive projects to ask if they intend to progress their applications and to give them a time scale for this. Members suggested email be sent to applicants

giving them 60 days to respond with update or applications will be removed from the system. This would then provide clarity over pipeline and helps aide discussions.

4.4 Local Development Strategy update

CF informed Members about progress towards this. At previous meeting a number of administrative updates were suggested, however these have not yet been completed yet. For example updating EMFF sections to mention the merge between Argyll and Ayrshire. Members asked if they could be provide any assistance towards this and CF thanked them, but as the delays are currently external he agreed to provide regular feedback and ask for assistance when required.

5) Progress Reports

5.1 Co-ordinator's Report

5.1.1 Finances

CF issued members with a finance report summarising the current financial position with the information that members had asked for. There was general discussion regarding the budgets and financial figures. Members raised concerns about the low level of claims submitted and paid out and the issues surrounding this and the long chain of repercussions to the applicants, the supply chain and risk to personal and professional reputations these delays cause.

Action point - DAM to draft letter from chair raising LAG members concerns. This will be issued to LAG members for comment before being issued by IMacI Chair.

5.1.2 Budget Options

Following on from previous meetings, CF invited members to discuss this. There was a general discussion regarding the low level of Farm Diversification applications, clarity was given that applications can only be Farm Diversification if the applicant is not currently engaging in or undertaking the activity in the application as if they are it is not diversification, it is small business support/ enterprise.

Members agreed that this item should be a standing agenda item and that no amendments be made just now.

All members agreed

5.1.3 Co-operation Update

CF provided update that there have been 4 Expressions of Interest received and provided background information on each of these. This was followed by general discussion.

John Muir Way – specific feedback/comments from LAG members

- What kind of engagement have the applicants had/will they have with Argyll & The Isles Tourism Co-operative and Love Loch Lomond, both are destination organisations with good business membership as applicants need to talk to the business community and the people who deliver this;
- Applicants should provide details of current usage;
- Opportunity to promote existing links to and from the route;
- Need to understand what level of engagement this group have with the destination;



- Do the group have a track record of engaging with the business community? (Have they possibly worked in Glasgow with the Green Network?)
- Applicants would need to provide evidence that they have considered the impact on farmers/land owners, have they engaged with these to try to minimise impact and the ongoing maintenance?

Soil Association

Applicants not progressing this EOI.

Dalriada Project

CF to distribute information to LAG members

Sustrans – Caledonia Way

Applicants are looking to market leisure cycling with 1 collaborative campaign. Project would create a post to promote and market the route. Group has already made contact with various groups in our area including AITC and Fyne Ness.

5.2 Accountable Body Report

5.2.1 Accountable Body Meetings Update

MS informed members that she was attending LAG as Isabel was attending the Accountable Body meeting today and provided the members with an update on the topics on the agenda. This was followed by a brief discussion.

5.2.2 Scottish Government Managing Authority Update

MS provided members on an update regarding the two recent audits. The Accountable Body was subject to a monitoring visit from the Business Support Assurance Team. A copy of the report was circulated. There were a few points to be addressed, and the LAG status is currently amber. Responses have been issued to most of the points raised, but some of the points raised were for the LEADER team at SG. Currently outstanding a response to one of the items.

One of the issues raised was the low number of LAG members attending meetings and the concerns over the potential impact that this has on the requirements for meetings and decisions to be quorate. There was a general discussion about membership and current process for monitoring attendance, no decisions were made.

5.2.3 Accountable Body Internal Audit

Internal audit carried out a check for the Annual Confirmation Certificate. There were a few issues raised here which are being addressing.

5.2.4 Procurement Update

MS provided update on the progress made towards clarifying what is required from applicants. Members had a discussion regarding the level of evidence required in order to meet the strict EU audit requirements.

Decision: Applicants would be sign posted to Public Scotland Contract portal if they are struggling to provide a clear audit trail.

All Agreed



6) Consideration of Applications

1 – 04/P00058 – Jura Community Business – Creating Business Space for a Sustainable Jura

No declarations of interest.

LDS Theme
Theme 3: Farm Diversification and Small Business Support
Objective
Small Business Support

Scoring submitted prior to meeting			
Average Score	Number Scoring	High	Low
35	11	41	31

Applicants seeking a decision in principle, awaiting confirmation of SIS bridging loan.

Comments

Creates potential for employment for one of the most fragile areas;
Services growth potential for a number of markets;
Innovative approach to service provision;
Secures a vital service;
Fits well with LDS;
No State Aid issues.

APPROVED – DECISION IN PRINCIPLE

2 – 04/P00030 – Shellfield Farm - Shellfield Farm Direct Sales Expansion

No declarations of interest.

LDS Theme
Theme 3: Farm Diversification and Small Business Support
Objective
Small business support

Scoring submitted prior to meeting			
Average Score	Number Scoring	High	Low
29	11	36	22

The applicants are seeking a decision in principle to secure private match funding.

Comments

Really well put together application that considers all relevant aspects;
Young innovative couple, prepared to invest in own training and skill set, good strong application;
Identified market opportunity is a growth market;
Good equality- looking at getting young people to help at festivals;
Working closely with already established group in area – Food from Argyll.

APPROVED – DECISION IN PRINCIPLE



6.1. Review of Applications

LAG members were asked to discuss two applications, who have narrowly missed the submission deadline but due to time constraints imposed by other match funders, may need to be scored and decided by email before the next LAG meeting. The LAG members' discussions/comments would be recorded today. **All members agreed**

1 – 04/P00050 – Cairndow Community Childcare - Cairndow Family and Childcare Centre

Lucy Sumsion and Arlene Cullum declared High levels of interest. Lucy left the room and the phone call to Arlene Cullum was ended with the agreement that she would not be called back as she also declared a High level of interest for the next application to be discussed.

7 members were present for the discussion- 4 private (DAM; RKB; IJ; JB) 3 public (IMaCl; CMcL; MCC) Quorum preserved.

LDS Theme
Theme 2: Enhancing the services and facilities in the Argyll and the Islands area to attract individuals, families, visitors and investors to grow and maintain economically viable communities.
Objective
Objective 1: To support community-based initiatives to improve and or retain access to services for those living within rural areas and to encourage people to come and live in these communities

Comments

The catchment area could be wider as this project is happening in tandem with other projects in the area;

Provision of such a facility may support the increase in provision in early years education;

Concerns

Number of children in the area is dropping;

Possible displacement as the village hall currently hosts the child care although this may free the space for the wider community to use, the effect on the income to the village hall would need to be established;

Narrow set of positive outcomes;

No direct correlation between the availability of child care and the number of jobs in the area;

Concern that people travel to work in this area but positive risk may be that this facility would encourage families to move to the area.

Require clarification as to whether the access road that is being upgraded is the same access road that was mentioned in different application to the LAG from another applicant. If yes, are there any implications for the match funding for these projects?

Questions for the applicant

Can you advise whether the project would result in a loss of income to the hall?

Please provide evidence of the number of children currently being cared for and the projections for growth, advising of any increase or decrease experienced in the uptake of the childcare in recent years.

What is the In Kind contribution from Ardkinglas Estate?



Lucy Sumsion was asked back into the room. 8 members back in participation.

2 – 04/P00060 – Scottish Canals – Gleaner Oil Site

8 members were present for the discussion- 5 private (DAM; RKB; IJ; JB; LS) 3 public (IMaCl; CMcL; MCC) Quoram preserved.

As noted above, Arlen Cullum declared a High level of interest and as agreed was not called back.

LDS Theme
Theme 1: Strengthening the rural economy by maximising the sustainable use of our natural, cultural and heritage resources as an economic driver.
Objective
Objective 2: To improve collaborative working to increase opportunities for sustainable economic growth.

Comments

Potential to transform the area in a positive way;

Distinct lack of detail regarding the potential uses of the facility;

The issue of this building/area has been a common feature on the local development plans for many years, this shows that the community for something positive to be done.

Concerns that not enough information has been provided yet to enable members to make a decision.

Questions for the applicant

What is the community space going to be used for?

There are currently 2 village halls within the area and there is no mention of these in the application form. What will the impact be on these?

What does the planning permission say?

Have SEPA been consulted?

Have the decontamination issues been addressed?

What is the sustainability of the project?

Next steps for the consideration of these applications

There was a general discussion regarding this. Members agreed that should the applicants should be in a position to submit their applications an email should be issued allowing members 1 week to return the scores and any additional comments/questions. **All members agreed**

7) AOCB & Date of Next Meeting

Members had a general discussion regarding the change requests submitted and agreed that these be put to the Chair/Vice Chair to consider. **All members agreed**

The next meeting will be held on 7th December 2017, in HIE offices Lochgilphead. I MacInnes thanked everyone for their attendance and input to the meeting and closed the meeting.

Signed _____ date _____

