

## Draft Minute

LAG Meeting – 9 December 2019

Winchester House, Elgin

<b>Present</b>	Alastair Kennedy (Chair), Bea Jefferson, Fiona Robb, Fabio Villani, Aileen Buchanan, Iain Findlay, Laura Sutherland, Jacqui Taylor
<b>Apologies</b>	Erica Beck, Gavin Clark, Jana Hutt, Drew McFarlane-Slack, Franziska Smith, Alex Walker, Reni Millburn, Fiona Hepburn (FLAG Development Officer)
<b>In attendance</b>	Davina MacLennan (LEADER Finance & Admin Manager – NT) Michelle Gillibrand, Chris Muir (LEADER Development Officers)
<b>Private/Public Split</b>	5 Private, 3 Public

### Details

#### Welcome & Introductions

AK welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted and it was agreed that the meeting was quorate and the public/private balance was observed.

#### Declarations of Interest

BJ declared an interest in the item relating to Low-Carbon Expansion of Car & Bike Sharing in Moray (Item 7 Paper 4)

#### Minutes of LAG meeting 1 October 2019 and matters arising (Paper 1)

AK referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and asked for any changes on the basis of accuracy. Accuracy of minutes moved by FR and seconded by AB.

MG provided an update in relation to the Communications Plan and confirmed that KRC have agreed to hold interviews with applicants and LAG members about the impact of LEADER funding across the Community. Individuals, timeframes and slots are still to be agreed.

#### Accountable Body Update

##### Staffing structure

FV informed members that Scottish Government had formally approved the new staffing model. He further updated that Scottish Government would soon be requesting that Accountable Bodies consider and report on staffing requirements post December 2020.

There was discussion around the risks of retaining skilled staff as the Programme moves into the final year and the importance of ensuring staff feel valued.

##### CLLD

FV gave an update on a recent meeting held with members of the Scottish Government's LEADER Delivery Team, with regards pursuing a continuation of Community Led Local Development in Moray. The outcome was for FV and AK to follow up directly with local elected representatives and the Minister for Rural Affairs, to put forth a proposal in the first instance. The LAG agreed for FV and AK to be tasked with this and report back with any future developments.

### **Internal Audit**

FV updated members that the recent Internal Audit which was carried out in October 2019, produced a report of moderate in relation to operational effectiveness and delivery of the SLA. It recognised areas of good practice and highlighted three key findings. AK congratulated the Team.

### **Replacement of European Structural Funds consultation (Paper 2)**

CM tabled a paper and updated members of the launch of several consultation events across Scotland with the purpose being to help seek views on how to develop thinking on how any replacement funding vehicle can best meet the needs of our Communities.

BJ asked if there would be a consultation specific to LEADER. CM advised that there may be a separate consultation for LEADER although this had not been confirmed. Should this be the case details will be circulated to LAG members in early 2020.

The consultation for the Replacement of European Structural Funds will close 12 February 2020. AK asked members to consider the consultation events and to book places for themselves if available.

AK, BJ, JT all noted an interest to attend.

### **Project Updates**

#### **Status of Projects**

CM and MG presented and talked through the updated Project Register. This showed approved and 'live' projects either being on amber or green status. The main reasons for projects being on amber status is applicants not meeting deadlines set within their project or by the Moray LEADER Team.

More detailed updates were given in relation to Cabrach Distillery and Heritage Centre (Paper 3) and Low Carbon Expansion of Car & Bike Sharing in Moray (Paper 4).

#### **Cabrach Distillery and Heritage Centre (Paper 3)**

MG tabled Paper 3 and provided an update on amended projects costs in relation to capital costs and professional fees within the project. This would be managed through the change request process and would see a reduction in the overall LEADER Grant and match funding.

#### **Low Carbon Expansion of Car & Bike Sharing in Moray (Paper 4)**

BJ noted an interest in the project and was excluded from any decision made by the LAG.

CM tabled Paper 4 and provided an update to members in relation to the request to amend the project activity. This request is due to concerns around the current capacity to complete the project activity within the project timeframe. This is as a result of complications which have led to the delivery of project activity being delayed and changes to grants available through the Energy Savings Trust.

The change of activity is in relation to the car-sharing service in Elgin with a request to change from two electric cars and one hybrid car to three hybrid cars.

AK asked members for comments. There was general agreement that this change would not greatly impact on the overall activity of the project and the LAG were in agreement to support this change.

#### **Enterprising Third Sector Collaborative**

CM informed members that the most recent monthly progress report was recently received and would be circulated to members.

**ACTION: CM to circulate report to LAG members.**

## Cooperation Projects

### Foraging Fortnight

CM reported that the events arranged for Foraging Fortnight were well attended nationally with 297 participants attending events in Moray. Planning for the next festival in May 2020 is already underway, which it is hoped should lead to even better engagement across the region.

### Complaints (MG)

MG informed members that the Scottish Government had received Ministerial correspondence for clarification on the decisions not to reward funding to a couple of projects in August. Information was forwarded to SG. To date there has not been any further action required.

### General Funding Reallocation

CM provided an update on the projects funded from the central allocation.

- 13/P00042 - Hillhead was awarded £70,411.76 on the first round of central funding allocation, to top up the Moray LEADER contribution of £25,650.24
- 13/P00059 - Cullen Eco Museum was awarded £20,751.82 on the second round of central funding allocation

CM confirmed that there would not be a third round for applications to be considered.

### Project Underspends (Paper 5)

CM tabled a report and provided an update to members on the approach for managing underspends within projects. He highlighted that no new project contracts could be issued and any instances of underspend from project de-commitment should be returned to Scottish Government. Underspends on current projects can be managed locally where costs have been underestimated, but cannot support the addition of new project activity.

### Project Assessment and decision (Paper 6)

There were no declarations of interest noted.

Marine Park Pavilion have requested an increase in the amount of their LEADER Award. This is due to a shortfall in the amount of match funding they have been able to source. The reasons for the shortfall in match funding were as a result of funders awarding a lower grant amount.

The additional amount being requested is £45,000. If approved this would increase the LEADER intervention rate from 50% to 62.85714286%.

CM tabled a paper to the LAG for decision and informed members that the project had recently received approval for planning permission and building warrant and that the tendering process was currently being finalised.

There was unanimous decision to support the increase in the LEADER grant.

Project	LAG Decision	Quorum	Project Total	LEADER Grant and additional Award requested	Intervention Rate
13/P00046 - Marine Park Pavilion	APPROVE	5 Public 3 Private	£350,000.00	Current: £175,000.00 Increase: £45,000.00 New: <b>£220,000.00</b>	Current: 50.00000000% New: <b>62.85714286%</b>

### **Monitoring and Evaluation (Paper 7)**

MG informed members that quotes had not been received from companies to conduct the interim evaluation of the Moray LEADER programme which was advertised on Public Contracts Scotland. The Monitoring and Evaluation Sub Group met up on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December to discuss the way forward in relation to:

- The feedback provided by the invited companies to quote
- Building up a picture 'Identifying if Moray LEADER's LDS addressed the changing needs and demands of the local community, and small and micro enterprises in Moray'

It is planned to upload an updated evaluation brief to the Public Contracts Scotland portal before the end of the year.

LAG members were in agreement to increase the budget from £10,000 to £20,000 for this work to be undertaken.

CM reported on the final Survey Monkey results of the evaluation of the application process, to which 64 applicants had responded. Overall, although applicants found the application process challenging they were very complementary on the Moray LEADER team in helping them through the process.

### **Finance update (Paper 8)**

DM tabled a paper on finance which provided information in relation to the budget spend forecast for Admin & Animation costs to December 2020.

The indicative Moray LEADER budget allocation had recently been increased by £70,411.76 following approval of the Hillhead Project from the central allocation in round 2 of the bids. This would be further increased by another £20,751.82 following approval of the Cullen Eco Museum Project from the central allocation in round 3 of the bids.

BJ asked for an update in relation to timescales for project claims being paid. DM updated that this was averaging in the region of 30 days.

### **FLAG Update**

A FLAG update provided by Fiona Hepburn, Highland & Moray FLAG Development Officer, was circulated to all LAG members. The update was noted.

### **AOCB and Dates of future meetings**

Future LAG Meetings agreed: 19 March 2020 and 25 June 2020. Times and venues to be agreed.

**ACTION: CM to send calendar invite for upcoming LAG meetings to LAG members.**

There was no other business noted.

### **Meeting Closed**

AK thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.