

Approved Minute
LAG Meeting – 5 November 2020
Zoom Meeting

Present	Alastair Kennedy (Chair), Bea Jefferson, Fiona Robb, Fabio Villani, Aileen Buchanan, Erica Beck, Alex Walker, Jana Hutt, Drew McFarlane-Slack, Jackie Taylor
Apologies	LAG Members - Iain Findlay, Gavin Clark FLAG Members - Richard Greene, Natalie Palmer
In attendance	Davina MacLennan (LEADER Finance & Admin Manager – NT) Michelle Gillibrand, Chris Muir (LEADER Development Officers) FLAG Members - Fiona Hepburn (FLAG Development Officer), Duncan Pocket, Donnie McKay, Ashley Mowatt, Alistair Farquahar EKOS, Senior Consultant - Liam Turbett
Private/Public Split	8 Private, 2 Public

Details	Action
<p>Welcome & Introductions</p> <p>AK welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>AK introduced Liam Turbett (LT) from EKOS and all FLAG Members present, who had been invited to the meeting to receive the feedback on the interim findings of the Programme Evaluation and LDS review, which includes the EMFF. The Evaluation and Review was being conducted by EKOS.</p> <p>Apologies were noted.</p>	
<p>Presentation of interim findings of programme evaluation and review by EKOS</p> <p>EKOS provided a presentation on the Moray LEADER Evaluation and Review of the Local Development Strategy which includes both the LAG and EMFF. He informed the meeting that there were two studies one covering the Evaluation of the Programme which was considering the LEADER approach, progress against the LDS objectives, relationships between key partners, unique delivery of the model through tsiMORAY, the impacts and benefits of funded projects (LEADER and EMFF) and lessons learned.</p> <p>The other study covering a review on the Local Development Strategy and how effective it has been whilst considering how the LDS responded to meet the needs of the Moray rural economy over 2014-20, how the implementation met the core LEADER objectives, and any objectives/themes missing from the LDS and the future.</p> <p>LT informed the meeting that the consultation with LAG and FLAG members, LEADER Staff and key stakeholders had gone well and feedback to date was positive. There was the feeling that the programme was genuinely community-led and that feedback showed a general agreement for a need for future funding to continue.</p> <p>Feedback from projects in relation to the application process was that it was difficult and support from LEADER & FLAG teams were vital. Feedback showed that many projects would not have gone ahead without LEADER or EMFF funding.</p>	

<p>LT said that an interesting point highlighted was the potential benefit from a closer working relationship with the FLAG and LAG.</p> <p>There was discussion in the meeting in relation to the fund being bureaucratic and a more flexible and simplified approach and process to applying for funding would have attracted and supported smaller community groups.</p> <p>LT said that everything to date has reflected very well on both the LEADER Team and FLAG Team and the membership of both.</p> <p>LT closed his presentation and informed members that these were the interim findings and that more comprehensive data and detail would be presented at the meeting in December 2020.</p> <p>ACTION – CM to circulate the EKOS presentation on interim findings to all members.</p> <p>AK again thanked all FLAG members for attending and EKOS for their presentation. They then left the meeting.</p> <p>AK then continued with the agenda for LAG business.</p>	<p>CM</p>
<p>Quorum It was agreed that the meeting was quorate and the public/private balance was observed.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were noted.</p>	
<p>Minutes of LAG meeting 14 September 2020 and matters arising (Paper 1) AK referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and asked for any changes on the basis of accuracy.</p> <p>AW queried the updated intervention rate referred to in the minute against the Hillhead Experience Breaks project and thought that there were too many decimal points.</p> <p>ACTION – MG to check the intervention in the minute and update if necessary.</p> <p>Other than the correction to the intervention rate the accuracy of minutes was proposed by EB and seconded by FR.</p> <p>Matters arising from minute of 14 September 2020 CM provided an update in relation to AB56 Futures project and said that Scottish Government had agreed to the proposed changes to the project, removing costs in relation to activity that could not be delivered and reducing the match funding in line with this.</p> <p>AK confirmed that both he and Fabio Villani had recently met with Richard Lochhead MSP in relation to the feasibility to continue a new CLLD programme in Moray.</p> <p>FV said that Richard Lochhead had written to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy, Fergus Ewing to make contact with LAG members to assess the appetite to take forward a new CLLD Programme in Moray, beyond March 2021, with a focus on how to retain existing expertise for any future CLLD programme.</p>	<p>MG</p>

<p>Project Updates - Project Register (Paper 2)</p> <p>CM presented the Project Register which provided an overview of all projects and the split against the LDS objectives. Some costs still had to be updated against some projects and this will be done when change requests had been finalised. CM said that some projects will fit into several objectives.</p> <p>MG and CM provided an overview of projects and said many were at varying stages working towards completion of final reports and in-situ inspections.</p> <p>CM said that due to issues with delivering some aspects of their projects that both Moray Car Share and GEN would be delivering activity to the end of December 2020. He said that applicants would be working on the detail of final reports and claims during this time to avoid any possible delays.</p> <p>MG raised possible concerns about two projects which have been further delayed due to weather and the restrictions with COVID. This could result in delays with receiving completion certificates, which means that some claims will now be pushed into January 2021. This should be manageable should there be no issues with the final in-situ inspections and reports.</p> <p>MG informed members that all final reports for projects could be found on LARCs in the in-situ tab.</p> <p>CM said that due to current restrictions as a result of COVID-19, it was difficult to arrange LAG visits to projects that were nearing completion. He said that final reports and feasibility studies could be circulated to members for information or applicants could be invited to LAG meeting to give a short presentation on their project.</p> <p>AK asked the members for comments and there was general agreement that it would be beneficial to invite some applicants where projects have been completed, to provide a short presentation to the LAG.</p> <p>ACTION – LEADER Team to consider potential applicants for future LAG meetings</p>	<p>CM/MG/DM</p>
<p>Accountable Body update (Paper 3)</p> <p>FV tabled a paper which covered the future of CLLD focusing on the key elements of the LEADER approach that the LAG may want to take forward/leave behind in a new programme.</p> <p>FV said that tsiMORAY would be happy to develop a proposal to continue CLLD in Moray and to build on the success of the current programme. tsiMORAY would be willing to do so on behalf of the LAG. FV asked for members to give consideration to the following questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appetite to take forward a new programme? • Willingness to work with tsiMORAY or an alternative body? • Willingness to continue as a LAG member in a new programme? • Identify any additional partners and stakeholders? <p>There was discussion between members in relation to these points. AK mentioned that it was difficult to agree to continue as a LAG member when it was not known what any future programme would look like. There was general consensus that it was important to agree the continuation of a new programme first and members agreed to have an appetite to take this forward. There was unanimous agreement with continuing the partnership with tsiMORAY.</p> <p>ACTION – FV to circulate paper and email questions to all LAG members</p> <p>FV said that the next steps would be to develop a draft Local Development Strategy for a future programme. FV will keep LAG informed to ensure there are opportunities for people to come together and shape what this will look like.</p>	<p>FV</p>

<p>Internal Audit of Moray LEADER Programme 2019-2020</p> <p>FV gave an update on the final Internal Audit report of the Moray LEADER Programme and that he was pleased to report that the audit provided the highest level of assurance, being substantial assurance, over the design and operational effectiveness of the controls in place relating to LEADER administration.</p> <p>A number of areas of good practice was highlighted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of the LAG, Accountable Body and staff have been clearly defined within the SLA, Memorandum of Understanding and the Business Plan. • The project application process has been clearly defined in the guidance documents available to both staff and applicants, and is transparent and fair. • Progress reports have been completed for all projects which were reviewed. <p>There were a number of Key findings which were noted as very minor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAG declarations of interests: One member had not completed a Declaration of Interests Form. The individual has been on secondment for the last 6 months. • Monitoring & Evaluation Plan: The Plan was due for review in September 2020, it was last reviewed in September 2019. The review was delayed due to time taken to source a suitable external evaluator. • Expression of Interest Technical Assessment: Out of a sample of five applications tested: The Programme Manager's assessment was not dated on the EOI Technical Assessment Checklist for two samples and the incorrect signature was used to document completion of the first assessor's assessment on the EOI technical assessment Checklist for one application. <p>Fabio thanked the Leader Team for their input.</p> <p>Scottish Rural Action</p> <p>Fabio mentioned to LAG members that there was an invitation from Scottish Rural Action for a table top discussion with up to 8 people from various groups across Moray to highlight issues for the next Rural Parliament to address at the next meeting in 2021. FV would like to extend the invitation to LAG members for 1 person to contribute.</p> <p>Fabio to send out further information to members and those interested to advise Fabio.</p>	<p>FV</p>
<p>Finance update (Paper 4, Appendix A, and Appendix B)</p> <p>DM spoke to the finance papers which had been circulated to members. This provided an overview on budget allocated against projects and operational costs for Admin and Animation costs to March 2021.</p> <p>DM gave an update both funds committed and actual spend against projects and Admin & Animation costs.</p> <p>As it stands the projected allocation for admin and animation budget is still within the 25% limit.</p> <p>DM said that information would be coming out from Scottish Government in relation to reconciling budget allocations and underspends.</p> <p>BJ asked what was happening with paperwork and audit trails in the light of continued home working by the LEADER team. DM advised that all required evidence was being submitted and stored on LARCs just now. Some original documentation for claims will still need to be sent in to the office to be stamped and retained on file. This will relate to claims processed from April 2020. This information will be communicated to applicants and staff will be able to attend the office to deal with this. All paper files in the office are in locked storage. DM said that there was no original documentation being stored at home addresses.</p>	

<p>Communications</p> <p>End of programme videos – CM will look to send out a meeting request with those members in the M&E sub group to steer discussion around this. There will be a draft ITQ prepared before the meeting so this can be discussed.</p>	CM
<p>Date of the next meeting and other competent business</p> <p>CM informed members that he had received an email from Forestry and Land Scotland to say Tim Gordon-Roberts have moved role so will no longer be a member of the LAG.</p> <p>His contribution to Moray LAG was noted and thanked by all. AK to send letter of thanks.</p> <p>CM further said that during the summer Fransiska Smith also resigned from the LAG. Both the Chair and Vice Chair of the LAG were informed of this at the Chair and Vice Chair meeting. AK had forwarded an email to Fransiska to thank her for her time on the Moray LAG.</p> <p>MG informed members that EKOS would be due to give a further presentation to LAG and FLAG members and is penciled in for December and said this could be part of the next LAG meeting.</p> <p>Members agreed on this. Proposed date for this meeting is 16 December 2020.</p>	