

24/10/2018  
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**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER  
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)  
Wednesday 24th October, 2018**

**Executive LAG Members:**

Ross Lowrie - Chair  
Alex Wallace - Vice Chair  
Simon Cox  
Richard Waters  
Ian Moyes  
Robert Brotherton  
Jean Orr  
Philip Angier  
Julien Lake  
Louis Fell

**LAG Member:**

Carole Moyes

**LEADER Staff:**

Ivan Hewitt – Northumberland Coast and Lowlands Programme Officer  
Christine Stevenson – LEADER Administration

**Advisory Group:**

David Baird - External Funding Appraisal Manager, Northumberland County Council

**1. Welcome to LAG Meeting & Apologies:**

Ross Lowrie, Chair opened the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER meeting at 18:00

CS/IH – Confirmed that meeting was quorate by Voting Members attending and by Theme

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Alex Wallace

Apologies received and recorded from Executive Members: Ross Weddle, Angus Collingwood-Cameron, Carron Craighead, Iain Robson and Guy Renner-Thompson  
Apology received and recorded from Accountable Body: Heather Smith

## **2. D.O.I.**

Louis Fell for Agenda Item 7 - EOI Reserve List Prioritisation for Preston House B&B  
- Non Pecuniary

## **3. Draft Minutes from 19th September, 2018:**

Page 1 - Accepted

Page 2 - Accepted

Page 3 - Accepted

Page 4 - Accepted

Page 5 - Accepted

Page 6 - Accepted

Minutes agreed as a true record, dated and signed by Alex Wallace, Vice Chair

## **4. Matters Arising & Actions to include Chair's Update:**

Actions to report from 19th September LAG meeting:

IH to circulate revised EOI Reserve List - circulated to EOI Reserve LAG Subgroup

IH / CS to develop potential event proposals with a view to organising future C&L event - Ongoing

## **5. Chair's Update to include LAG Budget proposal:**

RL - Apologies for not being able to attend the last two LAG meetings.

Through September and early October I have attended various meetings/events as LAG Chair, thanked Alex (Vice Chair) for Chairing meetings.

Attended an operational meeting with NULAG Chair at County Hall, felt positive as LAG to keep on making decisions and being heard, very important.

NULAG held an event attended by some Coast & Lowlands LAG members and LEADER staff. Coast & Lowlands will hold an event to communicate their success.

NEFRAN feedback - influencing key individuals in North East to take case forward for rural funding after Brexit.

Lining up the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) - a regional entity (partnership) has certain responsibilities but not massively rural focused, pass rural message onto government. Spoke to a member of Community Landowners Association (CLA) who said that in some areas the LEP have a rural focus.

DB - LEP support the strategic management of the Growth Programme and Rural Growth Network.

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dw allan

RL - More about having a rural voice, reached out to the LEP to attend LAG meetings at start of 2014 - 2020 LEADER Programme, LEP had no capacity  
Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Consultation should begin by December 2018/  
January 2019, submission together with NEFRAN, so there's work to do.

**Budget Update:**

RL - Received a Budget Position Report from Heather Smith (Accountable Body) outlining the:

- Increased programme budget following an exchange rate change in August 2018
- Ability to spend more than 18% on RC&A costs
- Pressure in programme delivery
- Ask questions of LAG for 2019
- Decisions on EOLs
- Coast & Lowlands Programme Evaluations
- Future after LEADER

Scenario A - reduced level of activity including quarterly meetings and no celebration event in 2019 - total for period 01/02/2015 - 31/12/2019 £418,067.00 at 19.21% RC&A

Scenario B - maintaining the existing level of activity including monthly meetings and a final celebration event - total for period 01/02/2015 - 31/12/2019 £422,771.00 at 19.43% RC&A

RL - Feels the ability for LAG to carry on into the future is very important

AW - The Accountable Body will need to know what the LAG's decision will be

AW - Proposed LAG accept Scenario B

RL - Asked LAG members to vote on AW's proposal

RL - LAG members decision is to support Scenario B

SC - Question about exchange rate, if changes in future what happens?

DB - Capped at 0.88 exchange rate until end of programme. LAG also need to make a decision on the proposal to extend the commitment date for a period of 2-3 months up to 30th June 2019 to maximise the funding committed to projects

AW - Proposes LAG agree to the extension of the commitment date to 30th June 2019

JO - Seconds AW's proposal;

RL - LAG members approved the extension

DB - Accountable Body will need to submit a business case to the RPA for extension

AW - Asked DB to thank author of the Budget Position Report for all work undertaken



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#### **6. Programme Officers Report to include RC&A Update:**

IH - Gave Programme Officers report and informed LAG of current project budget commitments.

Asked that LAG agree to consider project application on the basis of figures as of 24th October 2018 that the LAG has issued GFAs totalling **£1,500.876.00 (92.22% of target spend)** with a balance of **£126,659.12** remaining to commit against original allocation

IH - Informed the LAG that the revaluation of the Euro/Sterling exchange rate has resulted in additional funds becoming available to the LAG taking the original project budget of £1,627,538.00 to **£1,753.557.00**

#### **Note - LAG approved and agreed project budget profile**

RL - Going forward - refine programme officers report with less of a focus on headings

DB - LAG have vired allocation between priorities and re-balanced in past. RPA happy for LAG not to have to vire going forward

IH - Informed LAG members that project Alnwick Arch Climbing Centre has officially withdrawn application due to being unable to secure premises

SC - Would the extension for the LAG to bring project forward until 30th June 2019 be of any assistance to the project Alnwick Arch Climbing Centre?

IH - Application has been through the RPA's formal withdrawal procedure

RL - What consequences if he had not withdrawn?

IH - Would have still been in the process

RL - Question about Credence Brewing, application has been going a long time?

IH - Still in business, one of the Director's left, so business split. Regularly contacted. for progress. FA still the same and coming forward

IH - Full Application (FA) is currently in Technical Appraisal (TA), applicant has been sent an email requesting information and given a deadline as per RPA programme guidelines. If the applicant does not comply within this deadline then the Technical Appraiser will recommend application is rejected

#### **7. EOI Reserve List Prioritisation:**

RL - Held an EOI Reserve List subgroup to review EOI applications received and currently held on list. The subgroup discussed and proposed EOIs on criteria of:

- Ability to deliver
- Value for money
- Fit with LAG Local Development Strategy (LDS)

RL - The subgroup proposed seven EOIs for LAG to review and discuss on the above criteria

IH - Is it the LAG's intention to progress all seven to next meeting?

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for all

SC - They are longer to take through the LEADER process

IH - Can the LAG tell an EOI applicant to revise their EOI before LAG will formally consider it?

RL - Yes

AW - Will we have any FAs at November's meeting?

IH - Coast & Lowlands are still receiving EOI enquiries. CS emails EOI information out to enquiries but states due to the high volume of applications already approved or in process of approval, our funding budget is notionally committed and we are having to add new Expressions of Interest to a project reserve list pending available funds

RL - Proposed that LAG agree to take seven EOIs forward

LAG Decision - Agreed and Approved

LAG Note - Prioritise top five EOIs for November's meeting

#### **8. FA for consideration by Executive:**

**Purchase of Still & Ancillary Equipment**

**DORA Ref:106939**

**LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Support for Micro Enterprise**

**Total Project Cost - £15,050.00**

**LEADER Grant Request - £6,020.00**

Summary - The aim of the project is to purchase a 250 litre still. This will enable the applicant to distill their own spirit, particularly Alnwick Gin, as opposed to buying in spirit and compounding it. New products including vodka and rum are also proposed

LAG Discussions:

LAG members discussed and considered Full Application and Technical Appraisal Application

RL - Asked LAG members to vote:

- 9 Vote - Yes
- 0 Vote - No
- 0 Vote - Abstain, Chair did not vote

LAG Decision:

Full Application Approved. Technical Appraisal dated and signed by Chair, Ross Lowrie

Special Condition:

Project to display appropriate LEADER logos in business, website and advertising

#### **9. Communications Working Group:**

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RB - After recent project visit to Carroll's Heritage Potatoes with Anne Marie Trevelyan (MP) and LAG Chair waiting on a quote to add to a press release and working up publicity on other projects to be sent in to various publications.

RL - This is a lot of work and much appreciated. If further support needed other LAG members can assist

JL - For information, LAG supported project Northern Edge Coffee and due to their success they have relocated to a larger premises in Berwick, good news story for LEADER

RB - Attended the NULAG Event which had a good turn out and was held at Kirkharle, Northumberland. Networked with discussions around the rural strategy for Northumberland and the LEADER Approach. Well received

DB - The North Of Tyne Devolution (NoT) deal is unlikely to involve a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programme of grants.

RL - Updated LAG on NoT & Borderlands

DB - There is a rural element within NoT and funding will be available for rural projects.

RL - From influencing, LAG can highlight

AW - NoT agreement is going before the Lords next week, expect an announcement by the Chancellor soon. Parish Council have been emailed by Peter Jackson asking to submit projects for Borderlands

RL - Invitation for LAG to influence through every route

RB - There was a push from the NULAG Chair for a CLLD approach. Would like to see the C&L LAG hold an influencing event followed by a celebration LAG event

RL - C&L LAG influencing event to correspond with the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Consultation

DB - The SPF Consultation is expected before Christmas 2018, but may be delayed

JL - What's the target audience?

RL - Persons who have decisions about NoT / Borderlands will be Northumberland County Council (NCC) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

RB - Would like to arrange a subgroup to discuss the influencing event mid-November

IH - Question is what do LAG want to influence on CLLD?

RL - LEADER is about local individual groups

AW - Coast & Lowlands are unique as we have Coastal communities

RB - As well as Rural Coalfields

PA - Point of LEADER is that volunteer time and make up of the LAG makes it possible to have informed decisions at a local level

**ACTION: IH/CS to email LAG members for subgroup meeting to discuss Coast & Lowlands LAG influencing event**

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*Michael*

#### **10. Evaluation Working Group:**

SC - 27 projects closed and satisfactorily evaluated = £756k value

2 projects newly closed / evaluations required = £81k value

5 projects part drawn down (recent first payments to Shoreside Shepherd Huts, Masons Arms) approx. £60k released to date

14 projects newly contracted / nil payment to date

48 projects fully approved, of these 34 projects have had claims partially / fully paid = £897K TOTAL (60% GFA)

JO - Good evaluation visit to Children's Play Area at Northumberland Country Zoo, found volunteers working hard

SC - Friendly, informative staff. Park was well laid out

RL - Thanked all members of the evaluation group, their time and effort is much appreciated

#### **10. A.O.B:**

a. LAG meeting dates for 2019

Note - as LAG have agreed to carry on through 2019 CS to draft schedule of meeting dates and bring to November's meeting

b. Community Action Northumberland (CAN) are holding their annual event on November 6th, as Chair can't attend asked for LAG members available to attend on behalf of Coast & Lowlands LAG

c. LAG project Alpha Strength & Fitness have delivered their project for a lower grant, applicant will ask for a variation as they are requesting additional works to what LAG approved in FA but within spirit of the project application

**Ross Lowrie, Chair closed the Coast & Lowlands LEADER LAG meeting at 19:50**