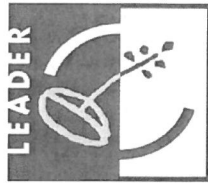


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**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)
Wednesday 15th February 2017**

Executive LAG Members:

Ross Lowrie – Chair
Alex Wallace – Vice Chair
Ross Weddle
Jean Orr
Simon Cox
Chris Rushton
Angus Collingwood-Cameron
Steve Peart
Julien Lake

LAG Members:

Iain Moyes
Carole Moyes
Richard Waters

LEADER Staff:

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

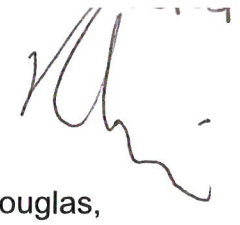
Advisory Group:

David Baird – External Funding Appraisal Manager, Northumberland County Council

1. Welcome to LAG Meeting & Apologies:

Ross Lowrie, Chair opened the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LEADER LAG meeting at 18:03

CS – Confirmed that meeting was quorate



CS - Apologies received and recorded from Executive Members: Milburn Douglas, Julia Plinston, Philip Angier, Robert Brotherton and Iain Robson

CS - Apologies received and recorded from LAG Member: Louis Fell and Carron Craighead

Apology received and recorded from Accountable Body: Heather Smith

2. D.O.I.

None

3. Draft LAG Minutes from 18th January, 2017:

Page 1 – Accepted

Page 2 – Accepted

Page 3 – Accepted

Page 4 – Accepted

Page 5 – Accepted

Page 6 – Accepted

Page 7 – Accepted

Page 8 – Accepted

Page 9 - Accepted

Page 10 - Accepted

Minutes for Coast & Lowlands LAG meeting of 18th January 2017 agreed as a true record. Dated and signed by Ross Lowrie, Chair

4. Matters Arising & Actions to include Chairs Update:

IH - Agenda item 5 - Circulated Programme Officers Report to LAG, can confirm LAG spend is within budget

DB - Some projects have claimed

CS - Agenda item 7 - Arranged initial set up meetings for Communications Working Group, the Evaluation Working Group meeting - tbc

CS - Agenda item 7 - Circulated Applicant Handbook v.4.1 to LAG

Chairs Update:

Ross Lowrie - Meeting with LEADER Staff, useful and engaging, ongoing process to be scheduled monthly

Attended a Rural Farming Event in Alnwick with LAG Programme Officer

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LEADER Process Update:

Google Group for LAG Chairs, shared good practice, ongoing

Reviewed new application forms and practice, in theory should simplify process

Priorities for 2017:

- Spend money (allocation) by end of 2017/18. Role of LAG to commit spend
- Publicise every project - good for LAG profile
- Recognise LAG are doing a good job

AW - Article featured in the Northumberland Gazette, excellent for project and community

5. Programme Officers Report to include Project Expenditure to Date:

IH – Presented Report and LAG had a general discussion about project spend to date. Need to look at Delivery Plan (DP) 2017/18

RL - Have LAG available spend?

DP - Profile expenditure to 2019/20. The DP is required by 15th April, 2017. When programming resources LAG need to be mindful of time. LAG can delegate business to Chair

RL - Asked LAG members if happy to delegate DP business to Chair?

Julien Lake - Agreed

Iain Moyes - Seconded

Alex Wallace - reminded LAG members that a president was set for last DP

RL - LAG preference, question if reprofiling allocation will ask LAG

DB - Review Local Delivery Strategy (LDS)

SC - Email LAG members any issues or questions

DB - LAG members need to be aware of time lines

NOTE - For information 5 LAG's have not approved any projects

6. Consideration of Outline Applications Received by Executive:

a. Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre

DORA Ref: 104572

LEADER Priority Theme Priority 5 - Culture & Heritage

Total project Cost - £30,711.80

LEADER Grant Request - £30,711.80

Summary – The project will improve and resurface access road, car parking facilities and accessible pathways to observation hides at Hauxley Wildlife Centre on the Northumberland coast. This is part of a wider development including a visitor centre which is being separately funded by HLF which aims to double the number of annual visitors to 30,000

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Scored 16 out of 24. Technical Appraiser recommends this project is eligible, offers value for money and fits well with the LAG local priorities as per their LDS. The Full Application requires more detail on a number of key areas including market need and demand and evidence of capability and capacity to run the project.

The identified risks are the potential effect of a delayed start and failure to source match funding if 100% not offered by LEADER

RL – Chair welcomed Doug Hut on behalf of Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre who gave a short verbal presentation

LAG Questions:

CR - Seems you have doubled up your visitor numbers, is it due to LEADER Grant?

DH - Whole package, would be a rough track without the LEADER Grant

JL - What was plan?

DH - We did not think it would get so damaged

SC - Sustainability issues, what are plans for new centre?

DH - Separate from Druridge Bay Centre, keep costs low, will require staff. will see how the income builds. Develop onsite activities but it is going to be tough. The Wildlife Trust has invested a lot of resources. We believe we have a viable future

ACC - What other sources of funding have you got?

DH - Pulling in from various bits and pieces, not especially for the car park

SP - How have you arrived at the £30,000 and is there a seasonal impact?

DH - Seasonality will impact, we do have a core of visitors and open days bring in good numbers. Limiting factor has been the car park. We are looking to broaden our appeal

JO - Have you tried the company Sustrans? they support Improving Footpaths for Tourism

DH - No, had not tried them

RL – Informed applicant that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for his presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

ACC - Confused, is this approach feasible?

RL - Wider project which has already happened, stand alone application for car park. Challenge of timing

JL - Number of jobs is greater than on application, what he told Heritage lottery fund (HLF), complexity regarding double counting?

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DB - RPA, direct response of grant
RW - If Druridge Bay closes, Hauxley Centre will be the only centre left
CR - Brief applicants better on criteria
IH - Don't have to be direct jobs created, justify investment. Delivery Plan can emphasise jobs and growth
SC - Scored 9, lower score than TA as low quality jobs, worried about visitor target. Sustainability issues, consider against £30,000, worries about generating revenue
AW - An economically deprived area, can walk and cycle along. The success of the building has been underestimated
RL - Do LAG want association with building?
IH - Local nature reserve, was sustainable over many years. The WLT would keep it open
RW - Development of whole LEADER, cross over if we support, can be cohesive
JO - Applicants could of done more research
RL - Chair proposed for LAG Executive members to vote
LAG Decision:
5 Vote - Yes, 2 Vote - No, 1 Vote - Abstain, Chair did not vote
LAG Executive Decision - Outline Application - Approved to Full Application
LAG Noted:
SC - Advise applicant not to ask for 100% - Jobs not counted, value for money
Process - Chair signed and dated OA Appraisal Form

b. The Nursery at Whitehouse Farm

DORA Ref: 104809

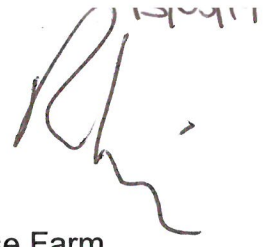
LEADER Priority Theme Priority 2 - Support for Rural Micro and Small Business - Sub Measure - 6.4 Support for Investments on Creation and Development of Non-Agricultural Activities

Total project Cost - £97,500

LEADER Grant Request - £22,400.00

Summary - The project involves setting up a day nursery for ages 0 to 5. The nursery will be opened in a rural location which will involve renovating a large disused barn. In this there will be a baby unit (0 to 18 months), a toddler unit (18 months to 3 years), and an education through play unit for ages 3+. 14 FTE will be created with three years. The premises would be located in the Whitehouse Farm Centre, within a farm environment, 4 minutes from the A1 to the south of Morpeth and on the direct route into Newcastle and Gateshead

Scored 19 out of 24. The Appraiser stated this project is eligible, fits with local priorities provides quality and offers excellent value for money creating 14 FTE for £22,400



RL – Chair welcomed Laura Graham on behalf of The Nursery at Whitehouse Farm who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

JO - Are you aware of Roles and Responsibilities of Childcare?

LG - Registered intent with OFSTED, looked at staffing structure, balancing qualified staff

AW - Recognises big shortage but how will people get to WHF?

LG - Support working families, primarily family-core

SC - Full-time, hands on role, as investing in building at WHF, how would you be?

LG - WHF structure is there responsibility. Reduced 1st year rent. Completed a SWOT Analysis with Agent. Investment in establishment, with more children will require more staffing

SC - What is the minimum lease?

LG - Six years, we have a contingency plan

JL - Husbands background, who's running the day to day basis?

LG - We have identified a candidate to run the Nursery, plus an experienced Child Minder, all qualified. Husband will run the curriculum. I have 18 years experience with Procter & Gamble, my plan is to train up and work in Nursery

RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for her presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussion:

JO - Knows that the younger the children are the more staff required

AW - Thinks this is an excellent idea and would support

ACC - Agrees with AW

SC - Convenient for A1 travelers

RL – Chair proposed for LAG Executive members to vote:

LAG Decision:

8 Vote - Yes, 0 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application approved to Full Application

Process – Chair signed and dated OA Appraisal Form

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c. Hebron Fishing Lakes

DORA Ref: 104651

LEADER Priority Theme Priority 3 - Support for Rural Tourism

Total project Cost - £64,020.00

LEADER Grant Request - £51,420.00

Summary - To set up a coarse lake fishing facility in Northumberland. The project will take an existing lake and stock it with fish and improve access and facilities for fisherman. It will also create a new lake for additional fishing experiences

Scored 12 out of 24. The Technical Appraiser stated that this project is eligible and fits well with the Coast & Lowlands LAG local priorities as per their LDS.

Recommends Approval

RL – Chair welcomed Dave Mount representing the applicant on behalf of Hebron Fishing Lakes who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

RL - Swarland Brick Works, is this a course?

DM - For Trout, links fishing into cycling

RL - Is Get Hooked on Fishing still going?

DM - Yes it's still going run by charity and community

RL - Will this lake fill the gap?

DM - Yes as it will be very cheap for people to use. We have a couple of local schools in Morpeth looking for experience. For 30 youngsters would only cost upto £20/30

SP - How would income be generated, have you any analysis of numbers?

DM - Similar work in Teesside, funding available to take socially excluded

RL - Can it run as a business?

DM - Opportunity to manage whole site, commercial fisheries pay for themselves

SC - What would cost be to turn-up?

DM - Estimate £5/10 for coarse fishing

RL – Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicant for their presentation

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

SC - Scored this 6, disappointed that applicant can't be here. Turnover £8,500 is unsustainable, low income generation

CR - Agrees with SC's comments

IH - Applicant had applied to Angling Trust for match funding

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SC - Need 2,000 people to turn-up to generate income, really poor application
RL - Angling Trust have a different remit to application, not to run business. Working with the Environment Agency, viable business out of it
JL - Not filled with enthusiasm for this application
ACC - Not for LEADER
RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote

LAG Decision:

1 Vote - Yes, 6 Vote - No, 1 Vote - Abstain, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Declined

Process – Chair signed and dated OA Appraisal Form

d. Lesbury Village Hall

DORA Ref: 104846

LEADER Priority Theme Priority 4 - Support for Rural Services

Measure 7.4 - Support for Local Basic Services

Total Project Cost - £129,900.00

LEADER Grant Request - £90,930.00

Summary - The project aims to refurbish Lesbury Village Hall:

- 1) Replacing the current toilet block with facilities that include heating, nappy changing, improved hygiene and can be accessed with buggies and wheelchairs.
- 2) Provide an efficient central heating boiler and heating system with the ability to heat separate zones within the hall.
- 3) Provide a heated and well ventilated kitchen to enable food to be prepared on the premises.
- 4) Provide storage for chairs and large equipment
- 5) Create an additional room expanding the capacity of the venue

Scored 12 out of 24. Technical Appraiser recommends that In its current format, I recommend that this project is rejected

RL – Welcomed Jean Humphrys and Nigel Towers on behalf of Lesbury Village Hall who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

AW - What is your population of the Parish?

JH - About 1,000

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AW - Have the Parish considered a loan?

JH - Not viable at present

N? - Have to be confident that we could pay the bank loan back

RW - Looking at Energy Costs, (question 23) could reduce costs, would expect to see reduction of up to 60%. Look at renewables

JH - Hall is a Listed Building, old boiler and poor windows. We have just had an Energy Survey and waiting on report for options to consider, there is a lot more we can do

JO - Builder will be project manager, a concern

JH - Responsible to committee which have a lot of expertise, will hold builder to account

ACC - What is current cash flow?

N? - Current funds of about £40,000, would need confidence of grant to continue

RL - Informed applicants that the LAG celebrates success of projects. Thanked applicants for their presentation

Applicants left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

JL - Asking for a lot of money

JO - As a listed building, is it viable?

RW - 200 energy community audits, talking to CAN, no mention of above. They would benefit from a conversation

AW - My local Parish puts in 4x more than lesbury Village Hall, the funding should come from the community

SC - Worthy project, high grant and no jobs. Feels not for LEADER as Rural Services has a low budget. As it's owned by Alnwick Castle, where does the responsibility lie?

SP - Application states that figures of 200 will increase up to 220 in use of hall, that's not a lot more people

RL - Proposed for LAG Executive to vote

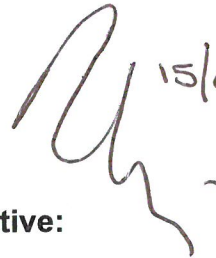
LAG Decision:

1 Vote - Yes, 7 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision - Outline Application Declined

Process - Chair signed and dated OA Appraisal Form

LAG Noted - Did not supply value for money

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7. Consideration of Full Applications received by LAG Executive:

a. Scotts of Alnmouth (The Alnmouth Pantry)

DORA Ref: 104341

LEADER Priority Theme Priority 2 – Support for Rural Micro and Small Business

Total Project Cost - £95,69167

LEADER Grant Request - £36,276.71

Summary - The applicant seeks to refurbish Scotts of Alnmouth (a former village convenience store) to create a destination delicatessen & café

Scored 44 out of 66. Technical Appraiser comments, reflecting that the project is simple in terms of scale and delivery, it is eligible. Procurement is satisfactory however grant has been reduced by the appraiser as the cheapest supplier has not been chosen. The applicant is suitably skilled to deliver this project and has the required level of match funding readily available.

The appraiser's recommendation is to approve the reduced grant amount as shown

LAG Discussions:

RL - Same applicant as Shoreside Shepherds Huts with 1 FTE , this application has .75 FTE for same person

IH - Looked at involvement of Directors, job at their own risk

RL - LAG risk if double counted

CR - LAG seen to do things by the rules

AW - OA said 3 FTE but FA says 2.25, why the difference?

IH - Length of project, same amount of jobs over more time

CR - Problem with time scale, can leave out .75 FTE?

SC - Shoreside Shepherds Huts, a different business, different jobs?

RL - Look at outputs and Audits, LAG can't go back on Shoreside Shepherds Huts

CM - Did Not declare Directorship on application

IH - Can be a director of both businesses, linked businesses. Can still take .75 FTE off, still value for money

SP - Two businesses operating 7 days a week. 1 FTE = 30 hours

CR - Need to be Audit proof and use common sense

SC - We were happy applicant would address in Full Application

DB - As FA has been through RPA and a TA, can't review Outputs

LAG Decision:

7 Vote - Yes, 1 Vote - No – 0, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application – (LAG voted to Approve Full Application dependant on review)

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LAG Noted:

Needs to explain how he doubled claimed on both projects

Process – Chair signed and dated FA Appraisal Form

8. A.O.B:

DB - Defra Guidance, variations on projects need LAG members to give Chair delegation

CR - Is there a limit or percentage?

RL - Variation, can't change project. Limit to delegation/s for Chair/Vice Chair within conditions

RL - Asked LAG members to vote

Decision - LAG Agreed Delegation

a. LAG Training:

IH - Session 1 - arranged for 1st March, venue County Hall

IH - Session 1 - arranged for 8th March, venue Alnwick Youth Hostel

b. LAG Working Groups:

- Evaluation Working Group

CS - Date and venue to be confirmed

- Communications Working Group

CS - Held initial meeting with CR, RB and IH

c. Website:

RW - Unhappy with the NCC branding

RL - Still waiting on LAG members shared area

ACTION: IH/CS to pursue

d. Google Docs:

IH - CS is the only team member migrated over onto Google Docs, ongoing process and training. Will ensure LAG documents are sorted for next LAG meeting

ACTIONS:

CS to circulate LAG Training dates and information

CS to arrange initial Evaluation Working Group meeting

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Date & Time of the next C&L LAG Meeting:

The next Coast & Lowlands LAG meeting will be held at on Wednesday 15th March at St. James Hall, Morpeth from 18:00 – 20:00

Ross Lowrie, Chair closed the Coast & Lowlands LAG meeting at 20:20