

14/08/2017



**NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)
Wednesday 19th July, 2017**

Executive LAG Members:

Ross Lowrie – Chair
Alex Wallace – Vice Chair
Ross Weddle
Iain Robson
Jean Orr
Julien Lake
Carron Craighead
Angus Collingwood-Cameron

LAG Members:

Richard Waters

LEADER Staff:

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

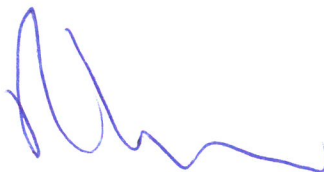
Advisory Group:

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 at 18:00

Introduced and welcomed Guy Renner-Thompson as Northumberland County Council's representative for Coast & Lowlands, acting as a LAG Executive member.



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

CS - Apologies received and recorded from Executive Members: Philip Angier, Simon Cox, Louis Fell, Ian Moyes and Robert Brotherton

Apologies received and recorded from LAG Member: Nic Best and Carole Moyes

Apology received and recorded from Accountable Body: Heather Smith

2. D.O.I

Louis Fell LAG Executive (Non attendee) - agenda item 6c - South Berrington Shepherd Huts - Pecuniary

3. Draft LAG Minutes from 17th May, 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

Page 11 - Accepted

C&L LAG Minutes recorded as a true record. Dated and signed by R. Lowrie Chair

4. Matters Arising & Actions to include Chair's update:

RL - No matters arising or actions

Chair's Update:

RL - Informed meeting that Chris Rushon and Steve Peart have submitted their resignations from Coast & Lowlands LAG Executive. Thanked them for their time and commitment to the LAG and LEADER Programme 2014 - 2020

AW - Professional people can be taken for granted, DEFRA need to recognise volunteers. Liaise with members to see if there is a better way forward.

RL - Aware that C&L LAG members have an additional meeting next week, unusual. Look to use technology but recognises value of LAG members conversations

a. Richard Waters - Executive Co-op:

AW - Proposed that Richard Waters, LAG member be co-opted onto LAG Executive
Seconded by Ross Weddle



RL - Asked Richard Waters if he accepted nomination

Richard Waters - Accepted

5. Programme Officers Report:

IH - Gave Programme Officers Report and informed LAG of current project budget commitments and spend. Asked that LAG agree to consider project applications on the basis of those figures

As of July 2017 LAG has committed £446,986.78, with a balance of £1,017,795.60 remaining to commit.

Note - LAG approved and agreed Budget profile

DB - LAG are able if need to, to via budget heads or make specific priority theme calls

IH - Specific calls for Forestry and Rural Services sooner rather than later

RL - Feedback from LEG/RPA meetings

IH - Key messages are that LAGs should continue to consider and approve appropriate projects, and that projects once approved should be encouraged to defray committed grant.

DB - Some LAG's are not committing against their budget allocation. RPA may recycle funds

CC - C&L LAG meetings have good attendance

ACC - Is there a potential mechanism to claim funds?

DB - Better we can be seen to do, technical issues from RPA as can't decommit projects, funding will sit to end of programme we need all approved projects to deliver

RW - Can LAG add an addendum to get projects moving rather than decommit. Can LAG ask for money back?

DB - Underspends can be recycled

RL - If LAG allowed underspend, will that be at the 18%?

DB - Currently asking for 25% with ministers

RL - Bigger pot would be happy with 18%

DB - The Accountable Body (AB) may wish to recover more

AW - Last thing LAG want is a reduction in Admin Staff

RL - Transnational approach?


AW - FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group) have highlighted opportunity, joint thoughts

JL - Status of Scotland?

IH - Co-operation counts as transnational

RL - DEFRA see value in cross border rural development

JL - Transnational allocation maybe easier with Scotland



6. Presentations of EOI's received by Executive:

a. Craster Play Area

DORA Ref: 106314

LEADER Priority Theme 4 - Rural Services

Total Project Cost - £22,000.00

LEADER Grant Request- £15,816.00

Summary - The aim of the project is to replace the safety surface of Craster Playground to ensure that the playground continues to be open for all who live in Craster

RL – Chair welcomed Karen Oxley and Jackie Reeves on behalf of Craster Play Area who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

IR - If you have some donations to the fund, why asking LEADER for 100%?

CO - Looking to future, not asking for 100% as Parish Council have donated £6,000

IR - Is that counting as match?

JO - NCC are closing schools, how does this effect?

CO - Sustainable from other villages around as well as second home owners

JR - We also have the grandchildren coming into the village, used by all residents

AW - I have a good knowledge of play area's. If you were saying play area for just 22 children, not a chance. What is the total cost of the Play Area?

CO - £22,000 for installation as a large area

AW - A lot of money. Not asking for play equipment?

CO - Just for surfacing

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

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

IR - Completely confused by applicant

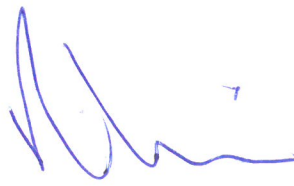
ACC - Same concerns, why asking for 100%? but can see need

AW - C&L LAG support local people, agree with IR's comments

ACC - Applicant gave same answer twice, confusing

IR - Also confused with the £6,000?

GRT - Lots of other places to get money from, have they looked?



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JL - Also confused, look at EOI sense this is a wider project. LAG are struggling with Rural Services, ensuring rural communities are prospering and have infrastructure.

Opportunity to help community

RL - Agrees with JL, useful to have packaged better.

Read comments emailed from Louis Fell (LAG Executive)

DB - Be careful replacing new for old, eligibility criteria?

RL - Is this a new surface?

IR - Is it maintenance or capital?

IH - £6,000 from Parish Council, total project costs are £22,000 for mating

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

- 6 Vote - Yes
- 3 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application

LAG Scored - 2 on strategic fit

LAG Notes:

Review finance

Identify tourism benefit

Process – Chair signed and dated E.O.I. Appraisal Form

Note - David Baird (AB) advised LAG need to monitor 30/70 split

b. Precision Beef Farming

DORA Ref:106488

LEADER Priority Theme 1 - Farm Productivity

Total Project Cost - £177,925.00

LEADER Grant Request- £71,170.00

Summary - This project will future proof the long term sustainability of the core farming business, specifically the cattle enterprise. Through investment in cutting edge, precision technology, the project will enable innovative beef production methods that will fine tune and optimise performance, improve animal health, reduce environmental impact and underpin a more effective labour contribution

RL – Chair welcomed Conor Colgan and Ali Grey on behalf of Precision Beef Farming who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

CC - Salers steers, heifers or bulls?



CC - Both as linkages

RL - Data question, are farm labourer and data analysis same people?

CC - Varied tasks, as all adds value to efficiencies and value. Parts are automated, working together as a team

IR - Is the expansion of herd reliant on LEADER funding?

CC - Part of business plan, pinch points

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

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

GRT - Farmer's son, don't need extra 2.5 jobs, not necessary as point of mechanism is less labour intensive

IR - Tied up with herd increase

RL - View is part of project

CC - Worthwhile project, feels can add value. Need extra care for cows coming into system. Some costs like LED lighting, worry they are unrealistic

RL - Readout comments email from Louis Fell

ACC - Good project, worried about the increase in jobs. Try to increase productivity, reduce labour. Hard for LAG to do

RL - Inbuilt mechanism

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

- 7 Vote - Yes
- 2 Vote - Abstain, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application

LAG Scored - 3 on strategic fit

LAG Notes:

Realism around job creation

Value for money

Advice on procurement and eligibility

Process – Chair signed and dated E.O.I. Appraisal Form

c. South Berrington Shepherd Huts

DORA Ref:106447

LEADER Priority Theme Priority 1 - Support for - Farm Productivity

Total Project Cost - £96,000.00



LEADER Grant Request- £38,400.00

Summary - The project will create a new tourist accommodation site through installation of 3 new, self build, shepherd huts / converted horseboxes. It will also renovate an old outbuilding / dog kennel to provide a communal area with cooking and washing facilities and provide wifi

RL – Chair welcomed Rachel Stuart on behalf of South Berrington Shepherd Huts who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

IR - C&L LAG have had other applications for Shepherds Huts, others close by. Are we at saturation. What sets yours apart?

RS - Each hut is bespoke, bring your horse, pony. I have idea's for developing and adaptations

AW - How much would it cost per night, how many nights?

RS - Average £600 per week, breakdown to £100 per night. Flexibility sliding scale

RL - Developing costs, £50,000 for Shepherd Huts?

RS - Four people involved in build. Cost breakdown - estimated 200 hours to build, cost my own labour at £14 per hour for 175 hours

IH - Related to costs, communal room and landscaping will be done by others?

RS - Yes, I am in discussions for costs

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

Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

IH - Own labour not eligible, add special condition

ACC - Could be structured better. How is she operating?

RL - Applicant is Rupert Wailes-Fairbairn

IR - Shepherd Huts are popular, matter of time before saturation

CC - £100 per night per couple?

IR - Add extra for kids

RL - High rate per job of £38,000

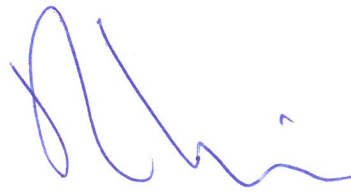
DB - RPA have changed the benchmark per job up to £30,000

CC - Can LAG offer a smaller amount

DB - Applicant wants to do the carpentry herself

JL - Job at £30,000, what market research has she done?

IR - Occupancy figures are optimistic, better if earer the coast



LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

- 6 Vote - Yes
- 3 Vote - No, Chair did not vote

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application

LAG Scored - 2 on strategic fit

LAG Notes:

Occupancy rate

Identify need for Shepherd Huts

Intervention rate to high

Advice on procurement

Process – Chair signed and dated E.O.I. Appraisal Form

d. Smales Secure Storage

DORA Ref:106533

LEADER Priority Theme Priority 2 - Support for Farm Diversification

Total Project Cost - £80,000.00

LEADER Grant Request- £32,000.00

Summary - The project will enable the applicant to grow a self storage business by increasing their services aimed at businesses. These include new storage rooms, a new archive facility, stock storage and a document management service

RL – Chair welcomed Laura Gribbin and sister Anna on behalf of Smales Secure Storage who gave a short presentation

LAG Questions:

JO - What type of storage?

LS - Large storage for materials. Fireproof for high value

JO - 5-10 storage of documents?

LS - Destruction and archive plan. Sign contract. Bar coding system for life span

RW - Where are you going to put this?

LS - 3960 cubic feet build, propose to lift roof and double height to create archive space. Also a self contained area.

CC - Do you need planning permission?

LS - No

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



Applicant left LAG meeting

LAG Discussions:

RW - Feels this is a really practical project, identified local need

JL - High on jobs cost

ACC - Thoroughly good presentation

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Outline Application Approved to Full Application

LAG Scored - 3 on strategic fit

LAG Notes:

Price per job

Building regulations

Process – Chair signed and dated E.O.I. Appraisal Form

7. Consideration of EOI's received:

Note - CS minuted under 6a,b,c,d

8. FA's for consideration by Executive:

a. Nursery at White House Farm

DORA Ref:104809

LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Micro Enterprise

Total Project Cost - £46,043.18

LEADER Grant Request- £18,417.27

Summary - Project intends to open the nursery in a rural location which will involve renovating a large disused barn. To include a baby unit (0 to 18 months), a toddler unit (18 months to 3 years), and an education through play unit for ages 3+. The key aim of the nursery will be to offer high quality, flexible childcare in a stimulating environment within a rural setting.

LAG Discussions:

JL - Good job creation, keen to support

AW - Agrees with JL, wonderful venue for children

JO - Feels applicants did their research, happy to support

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote to approve :



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

LAG Executive Decision – Full Application Approved
Process – Chair signed and dated FA Appraisal Form

b. GM Craig Building Contractors

DORA Ref:105845

LEADER Priority Theme 2 - Micro Enterprise

Total Project Cost - £78,706.00

LEADER Grant Request- £31,482.40

Summary - The applicant has been monitoring demand and considers that it is now the right time to look to expand their business. They have identified and purchased a larger facility allowing room for further future expansion. This will increase the size of the property from 141m² to 500m². The land for this project was acquired in 2015. Work started on the building in October 2016 once planning permission was in place. LEADER funding is sought to provide new joinery plant and logistics equipment to enable greater productivity and efficiency at the new premises.

LAG Discussions:

RW - Is the JCB eligible?

IH - Yes, under this measure

LAG Decision:

RL - Proposed LAG Executive members vote:

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

LAG Executive Decision – Full Application Approved
Process – Chair signed and dated FA Appraisal Form

9. A.O.B:

a.RC&A Budget:

IH - An updated version is ready to circulate, LAG need to review and discuss

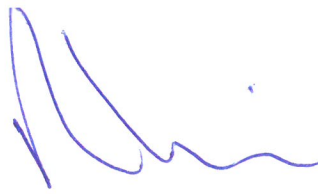
ACTION - CS to circulate RC&A budget with papers for next meeting

b.Communications Working Group:

RL - Good ideas around milestones, advertising brexit strategy

AW - Happy to attend comms meeting

ACTION - IH to update on IT / Website access



14/08/2017.

Date & Time of the next C&L LAG meeting - Wednesday 16th August at Bell View Community Hall, Belford. Time tbc

Ross Lowrie, Chair closed the Northumberland Coast & Lowlands LAG meeting at 20:30