



**NORTHUMBERLAND UPLANDS LEADER
LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)**

Thursday 7th June 2018

RTC Sports, Otterburn

5.30pm - 8.30pm

Present: Terry Carroll, Steve Jopling, Mike Murray, Anthony Murray, Barbara Sexon, Louise Kirkwood, Tom Johnston, Nicola Bell, Andrew Poad, Jeremy Phillipson, Alan Sharp, David Baird (NCC), Gillian Cowell (Programme Officer), Louise McCreery (Admin Officer)

1. **Apologies:** Alistair Cochrane

SJ opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming

2. **Declaration of Interest**

MM declared an interest in Ingram Valley Venison, and agreed to leave during the discussion

3. **Draft LAG Minutes from meeting on 12 April 2018**

Minutes agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. **Matters Arising & Actions**

Autumn Event

MM advised the LAG he emailed TC after the previous LAG meeting to suggest that Michael Gove MP is invited to the autumn event. Kirkharle has been booked as the venue for 17th October 2018. TC and GC are developing the programme and will be looking for LAG input in terms of the target audience and the speakers.

GC advised she has tried to contact Ian Atkinson regarding his project but has not received a response. The LAG decided to withdraw their approval for the EOI.

TJ updated the LAG on the Young & Sweet launch event. He was very impressed by the facility and the people involved. MM suggested the the LAG invite one of the young members of the organisation to join the LAG.

5. Programme Officer's Update

GC went through the programme officer's report. By the end of the previous meeting the LAG had an overcommitment at EOI stage of approx £21,000. If all the projects to be considered at this meeting are approved in full this will become an overcommitment of £54,000 which is acceptable considering the current attrition rate. There are currently no concerns about any approved projects

Update on Projects in Development

Ingram Venison - to be considered at this meeting

Bays Leap Dairy - FA in appraisal - on hold pending eligibility queries

Ciunam - FA received - appraisal on hold as planning has been withheld until a bat survey has been carried out

Redesdale Equestrian - FA in appraisal - on hold pending planning decision

Hay Farm Heavies - FA received at end of May 2018

GoGilsland - FA received - waiting for confirmation of match funding

Elsdon Village Hall - FA received - waiting for additional procurement info

Henderson Zero Tillage - FA due June 2018

JRG Johnson Zero Tillage - FA due June 2018

Shieling Meats - extension requested to September 2018. This was agreed

Jack's Fast Track Gym - a draft FA has been submitted. GC working with applicant

Churnsike Lodge - FA due June 2018

Gateway into the Community - FA due July 2018

I Howson Hen House Upgrade - FA due July 2018

Reserve List

GC will circulate the updated reserve list to the LAG

6. GC delivered training on the new GDPR regulations

7. Review and Decide on Outline Applications

Fire & Dough - New Wood Fired Pizza Van

The applicant business is currently in its fifth week of trading. They have had a lot of interest from locations and events asking if they will set up a pitch. They currently concentrate on places with little or no competition - locations which generally do not have enough custom to support a full time takeaway but can support one night per week.

They are looking for funding for a second van so that they can take advantage of new opportunities without having to give up the successful pitches they already operate.

Three people are needed to run a van - one to take orders, one on toppings and one to work the oven. The applicants also prepare the next day's dough at night after trading and would like to employ someone to help with this. It is possible the job creation will be higher than stated in the EOI.

The applicants advised that they always take their own bin to a pitch and dispose of any litter left behind.

Depreciation of vehicles has been factored into the business plan and cash flows. Provision will be made for a replacement vehicle.

The applicants collaborate with rural pubs, running events like pizza and pint nights. The applicants will be looking to get additional licenses for pitches in Wark, Bellingham and Humshaugh.

Looking to create 1 FTE job

The applicant is requesting a grant of £13,800 (40% of costs)

The strategic fit score was amended from 2 to 3

Vote - unanimous approval

Physio & Therapy - New Premises

The applicant is a sports physiotherapist who has relocated from London to open a new business in Northumberland. The business was originally based in Corbridge but the a larger premises was needed so a building in Hexham has been leased. The applicant has already started trading from this location and is looking for funding for refurbishment. The applicant would like to change the lower space to a yoga/pilates studio and also provide more treatment rooms in the rest of the building.

The applicant advised that there are another two physiotherapy clinics in Hexham but they focus on a different market. There is competition with a sports therapy clinic in Newcastle.

The applicant confirmed that the costings submitted in the EOI were overly optimistic. Quotes have been received since which place the costs at approx £17,000 which would give a grant of approx £7,000

Looking to create 4 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £4,000 (40% of costs)

The LAG were supportive of the project but concerned that the costs may change considerably. There was also concern regarding possible displacement of yoga/pilates practitioners and venues in the area.

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

Ash Tree Farm Planters

The applicant business started in 2006 and makes and installs artificial trees and hedges. They specialise in large contracts e.g. airports.

They are looking for funding to start manufacturing their own fibreglass planters. Currently, the business exports these from CHina and Holland and the lead time can be anything up to three months. The applicant feels it would be more efficient and cost effective to manufacture these in house as there is already a space on the premises which can be set aside for this activity. The project would create 2 FTE.

The applicant has received letters of support from local businesses who would be interested in the new products

Looking to create 2 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £13,670 (40% of costs)

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

Pit Top Brewery - Bottling Plant

The applicant business is a small pub and brewery which is looking for funding to purchase a bottling machine. This would allow the business to produce small runs of bottled beer for events, craft beers etc. It will also enable them to diversify into soft drinks and infused spirits.

The applicants currently use a trade bottler. This can cost up to 50p per bottle so takes a large portion of the margin on the project. These businesses are also set up to do larger runs than the applicant is looking for so availability can be an issue.

English heritage have expressed an interest in stocking the new product in outlets along Hadrian's Wall. The applicant is capable of installing and maintaining the machinery himself.

Looking to create 2 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £4,460 (40% of costs)

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

Mountain Rescue - Third Rescue Vehicle

The NNP Mountain Rescue team started out as NNPA wardens whose original brief was search and rescue of walkers and shepherds. The organisation is no longer part of the NNPA and their area now covers all of Northumberland and Tyne & Wear. The role of the organisation has also broadened; they now work with the emergency services to look for missing persons, assist paramedics and police with access issues as well as helping with flood resilience operations and extreme weather call outs. Yearly incidents and call outs are increasing, especially since the search and rescue operations were removed from RAF Boulmer.

The applicant is looking for funding the purchase a third response vehicle. The current two vehicles are based in pegswood and the new truck would be based in Rothbury.

The applicant confirmed that they work collaboratively with the North of Tyne rescue team. Calls are split depending on which organisation is closest or can access the call easily. The third vehicle is needed

Looking to create 0 FTE jobs

The applicant is requesting a grant of £52,900 (100% of costs)

The LAG were supportive of the project but not at 100% of costs. It was agreed to approve with the expectation that match funding would be sourced before an FA is submitted

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

8. Full Applications

Ingram Valley Venison

This project will fund capital equipment and website development related to the diversification of an existing livestock holding which currently runs sheep and cattle into deer farming / venison production by establishing a 200 head Red Deer herd in order to supply into the UK market for venison. The venison will be marketed online through a new website or sold direct from the farm to outlets such as local shops and restaurants.

Looking to create 1 FTE job

The applicant is requesting a grant of £25,043.98 (40% of costs) - Eligible amount reduced by appraiser as the cheapest supplier was not chosen for the crush.

The LAG noted that the project has been expanded since EOI stage. Project offers good value for money, especially since there is strong possibility that more than 1 FTE job will be created.

Vote - unanimous approval

9. AOB

GC asked the LAG to consider a variation request from Glampods. An error in appraisal led to fencing costs being removed from the application and the applicant would like this to be reinstated. The LAG declined the request based on lack of funds.

BS advised the LAG she spoke to a potential applicant last week who is setting up a community shop. When she asked the person to consider applying to LEADER the response was that there were too many hoops and processes for the level of funding she was looking for.

MM requested a briefing on the Borderlands Initiative. TC advised he and GC are attending a conference on 18/06/18 so will prepare an update for the next meeting

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday 3rd July. Venue to be Glendale Gateway Trust, Wooler. GC will contact members about the possibility of visiting some projects in the area beforehand

GC reminded the LAG that they are invited to the First and Last Brewery for a tour.