



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

Tuesday 7th November 2017

Twice Brewed Inn

5.30pm - 9.00pm

Present: Terry Carroll, Nicola Bell, Mike Murray, Barbara Sexon, Sally Shortall, Alan Sharp, Anthony Murray, Louise Kirkwood, Jeremy Phillipson, David Baird (NCC), Gillian Cowell (Programme Officer), Louise McCreery (Admin Officer)

1. Welcome and Apologies

TC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jeremy Phillipson as a substitute for Sally Shortall. TC also introduced Liz Brooks as an observer of the meeting. Liz is undertaking the UK element of a pan-European spatial justice study (RELOCAL) and has selected NULAG as the rural case study. The meeting was confirmed to be numerically and thematically quorate.

Apologies: Steve Jopling, Andrew Poad, Tom Johnston, Ruth Dickinson (NNPA)

2. Declaration of Interest

BS declared an interest in JT Murray and agreed to leave the meeting during discussion of this project

AM declared an interest in Dod Barns but it was decided there was no pecuniary interest so no need to leave the meeting

3. Draft LAG Minutes from meeting on 17 August 2017

TC advised the LAG he has written to Andy Tordoff and received confirmation that international cooperation is not currently a priority. TC agreed to write to LEADER LINNE advising that we cannot undertake any cooperation projects and thanking them for their contribution to the LAG.

NB and LK visited the East Todholes project. Both were impressed by the applicants and the potential of the site. The applicants have made good progress with planning and market research and have appointed an agent to help them complete the full application. There is potential for further expansion on site if the initial project is a success.

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record

4. **Matters Arising & Actions**

none arising

5. **Programme Officer's Update**

GC confirmed that funds have been vired as agreed at the previous meeting.

The programme is underperforming on job creation outputs, achieving 33.5 against a target of 65. If all projects in development complete as planned then the target will be achieved.

GC gave an update on current projects:

- The full applications for Colin White tree Surgery, S & J Smith haulage, Corbridge Business Premises and Langley Dam Glamping have now been received
- The Hemmel and Glampods full applications are being appraised, will hopefully be presented at the next meeting
- Planning permission has been granted for Halls of Heddon so they are hopeful they will be able to go ahead
- Falstone playpark has been granted one month's extension. MM advised he has spoken with the applicant and they are progressing with the application
- Ciunam and Haltwhistle Swimming Pool are both hoping to submit their full applications shortly
- High Staward Barns have withdrawn as planning permission has not been granted
- Northumberland Logs have withdrawn, the feeling is that this is not the right time for the project

The LAG looked at the pipeline of projects coming forward and asked that the following EOIs are presented at the next meeting:

- GoGilsland
- VisitEarth
- Black Bull at Etal
- Cattle pregnancy Detecting
- Elsdon Village Hall

6. **Review and Decide on Outline Applications**

Karen's Cottages

The applicant started the business a year ago as wanted a change from the corporate environment. Wanted to run a business that shows her passion for working and living in the area. The business provides high quality accommodation. The applicant currently has one cottage in Harbottle which has had 98% occupancy for the last six months and one campervan and has very good user ratings.

The applicant currently has a sale going through on a cottage in Fourstones which is in need of renovation. The refurbishment usually takes about three months so should be ready to rent by Easter. The applicant is looking for funding to help with the refurbishment

Looking to create 0.25 FTE job for cleaning and maintenance role

The LAG felt that the applicant was credible and that this was a modest grant request

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

JT Murray - EID Weighing and Autodraft Facility

Presented by R Packer

The applicant is a 3rd generation farmer. The business is trying to implement an improvement plan, made more necessary by changes to the political landscape. They are looking to reduce fixed costs by 10%. The business is required to have EID capabilities but currently does not have the technology in place to be able to make full use of the data. The equipment requested would increase productivity and decrease the burden of regular weight checks. The business would not be able to invest in this equipment without assistance.

The purchase would enable the business to take on a part time shepherd. The business does not hire shepherds but contracts out the role - shepherds are not paid by the business but are allowed to graze their own flock on the land in exchange for shepherding the applicant's flock as well

Looking to create 0.5 FTE job

The LAG were supportive of the project. The business model is very different from other local farmers and clarification is needed as to whether the job will actually be an employee of the business

The strategic fit score was agreed

Vote - unanimous approval

7. Full Applications

The Dod Barns

Presented by Margaret Brown (accompanied by Pam & Barry Brown)

The applicants are looking for sustainable ways to develop their land and property. They have disused livestock buildings which they are looking to convert into accommodation as a diversification from the existing hill farm business.

The applicants intend to convert one building into a one bed cottage and turn the other into a 10 berth camping barn for cyclists, walkers and possibly horse riders as they have stabling space. The applicants have spoken to other providers of similar accommodation and all were supportive and keen to build a network of venues. They currently have a stewardship arrangement so have lots of birdlife and a mixed woodland on their land. There are various trails and paths locally such as the Sandstone Way and Cheviot Route.

Planning permission is already in place. The applicants are looking to finish the conversion by November 2018, ready for first guests in Spring 2019.

Marketing plans are still being drawn up but the applicants are looking at outlets such as the Independent Hostel Guide.

Vote - unanimous approval

Conditional upon the applicants confirming that the project will be completed within the LEADER programme timescale

8. AOB

First and Last Brewery - Variation

GC advised the LAG the applicants have asked to delay the project until the end of February 2018 due to delays by Northern Powergrid

Vote - unanimous approval

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 6th December - Breamish Hall, Powburn