Tyne & Esk Rural Communities Development Fund

Local Action Group Expenditure Meeting

21st April 2026, The Craigie Hotel and online via Teams

Members Present:

Members In Attendance

A Hastie (Co-Chair), H Smith (Co-Chair), A Macfarlane (Independent/Business), J McMillan (Elected Member), G Lohan (Community), S Ferguson (Community) and Ian Gardner (Independent/Business)

Members Online

D Bowen (MLC Elected Member)**,** S Poole (Independent) and P Playfair (Independent/Business)

Members Apologies

Siobhan Mack (Queen Margaret University)

Observers In Attendance

E Carmichael (East Lothian Council ED), Doug Haig (East Lothian Council Connecting Communities Manager) and L Kelly (arrived 10:40am, MC Community Planning Partnership Rep/Midlothian TSI)

Observers Apologies

A Lang (Midlothian Council Group Service Manager), A Watt (Midlothian Council ED) and L Bluett (East Lothian TSI),

In Attendance

Martin Smith (Edinburgh College) arrived 10:15am on behalf of Neale Gardiner (Edinburgh College)

J Adamson (CLLD Project Officer)

Welcome

AH welcomed attendees and introduced Ian Gardner as a new LAG member.

1.1 Declaration of Interests and Quorum

No declarations of interest were made. A quorum was confirmed.

1.2 Matters arising from the previous minutes

Minutes approved. Actions:

Action: Ian Gardner does not have an 'i' in his surname

Action: JMcM to assist with getting East Lothian Council to approve the MoU. JA to liaise

2. 2025/26 Programme Report

JA circulated the 2025/26 Programme Report to the LAG, which was subsequently approved. In presenting the report, JA highlighted that a revenue overspend of £1,607.81 had arisen due to staffing costs, and that the Accountable Body (AB) has requested the Scottish Government (SG) to cover this amount.

The annual audit of the Programme was considered, including whether it was required.

ACTION: JA to write a letter on behalf of the LAG and AB to the SG asking if an audit is necessary every year.

AH thanked JA for her well-written report and for her work over the past year.

3. Event Feedback

JA reported that she attended the Midlothian Business Gateway Breakfast event in Gorebridge on 20 March 2026. The event was well received, with several businesses expressing interest in applying for support for projects benefiting their communities.

JA also noted that the Idox Tyne & Esk Open4Communities online workshop was attended by 10 organisations. Attendees found the session valuable, particularly the demonstration on how to navigate and use the Open4Communities platform.

It was further noted that the next Idox online workshop will take place in August, aimed at declined Tyne & Esk 2026/27 applicants and other organisations.

4. CLLD Network

The CLLD Network have been awarded £85,000 from the Scottish Government to employ a Co-ordinator for 1 ½ days a week and to retain Urban Foresight to; Ministerial/MSP briefing and CLLD sector communication and options for Network Governance.

There will be a call for expressions of interest to join the Network Steering Group.

Possible CLLD attendance at the Royal Highland Show.

Possible Chairs meeting on 18/05/2026

ACTION: HS and JA to join the Network Steering Group

5. 2026/27 Programme

5.1 Guidance from SG

- **Youth LAG**

The LAG would like to know what the purpose of the YLAG is? There is a concern over safeguarding and the possibility of no additional funding. DH commented that you need to go to the young people to get their opinions not the other way around.

AH highlighted pg122 of the SG review of CLLD, SRN and SRA.

ACTION: A YLAG Working Group consisting of DH, JMcM, HS, AL, Karen Downie (Midlothian Community Action), GL, SM and MS. This group will feed into the five-year strategic plan.

- **Other Funds**

Within the 2026/27 SG Guidance for CLLD it comments that ABs are encouraged to align CLLD funding with relevant local, regional and national programmes where beneficial. LAGs have discretion over match funding and alignment approaches. This may include using a single decision-making body (LAG) or a unified application and assessment process across multiple funds (as adopted by the Highland LAG).

The LAG noted challenges with this approach due to spanning two local authority (LA) areas, differing deadlines, and existing procedures and groups for funding decisions.

JA had met with EC and AW, and agreed that future local authority funding could align with Tyne & Esk to identify overlap and direct applicants to the most appropriate fund.

ACTION: To be looked at within the 5 year Strategy Plan.

- **5yr Plan**

It was agreed that the LAG and JA will write the 5year Strategic Plan. It was felt that there was enough Tyne & Esk documentation, LA documentation to take this forward.

EC recommended for the Programme to apply to East Lothian Council's Economic Development's Expert Help Programme for support with developing the five-year strategy.

ACTION: JA to apply for the support.

5.2 Programme

- **Budget**

Allocation	**£305,017.46**	
		Budget
Expenditure Staffing		
		£70,000.00
Programme Revenue/ Animation		
Stationery, Audit, Website redesign, maintenance and Domain Name, SVE Dashboard annual update, LAG Expenses (Room hire/ Conferences/ travel/ refreshments), LAG Owl Meeting Equipment, six project Filming, PO Mobile and 5yr Plan development to include links with other policies and YLAG/ youth activities?		
		£16,010.00
Project Costs		
Revenue Projects	£151,352.91	
Capital Projects	£49,975.55	
Funder Finder (2years)	£17,679.00	
		£219,007.46
Note: Total Revenue Project Budget	£169,031.91	
	Total Budget	£305,017.46

LAG Approved the budget. There was discussion regarding the requirement for an annual audit.

ACTION: JA to contact the SG to confirm the requirement on an audit on the Programme.

The LAG discussed the funding limits and approved:

Capital Grants:

Minimum £5,000 - Maximum £15,000 75% initial payment and then 25% at end

Revenue Grants:

Maximum £15,000 75% initial payment and then 25% at end

Email: jadamson3@eastlothian.gov.uk

- **Timeline**

The LAG discussed the timeline and approved:

27 April: Applications open
31 May: Deadline
June: Assessment
8 July: Decision meeting
13 July: Notifications

- **Application**

Forms approved

- **Website**

The LAG approved for the website to be updated to allow for achievements to be highlighted and to reflect the SG Guidance.

ACTION: JA to meet with Crocodile Communication that manages the website.

6. Election of Executive Committee

The LAG and Accountable Body were presented with a proposed resolution on the composition of the Tyne & Esk Local Action Group Executive Committee, reflecting the expanded scope of the CLLD Programme.

It was recommended by the current Executive that the Committee be restructured to include four LAG Co-Chairs to distribute workload, enhance representation, and support effective governance as the programme develops.

The proposed structure would include two members from East Lothian and two from Midlothian, ensuring balanced representation across community, business, individual, and third sectors. This approach aims to strengthen local representation, support balanced decision-making, and reflect the diversity of interests within the Tyne & Esk Programme.

Resolution:
That the Tyne & Esk CLLD Local Action Group Members approve that the composition of the Executive Committee be amended from the current two Co-Chairs to four Co-Chairs with balanced representation of two representatives from each of the Tyne and Esk areas together with representation from a diversity of sectors*. This structure will permit any of the four Co-Chairs to sign on behalf of the LAG, except where a conflict of interest applies.*

Note: 10 members voted to agree the resolution prior to the meeting

Co-Chairs voted on: HS, SP, AMacF and SF

It was to be noted that SP was now an Independent not Independent/Business

ACTION: It was agreed that a “jointly severally line” was to be included into the Protocol. JA to action.

7. LAG Members

AH stood down from the LAG.
All other LAG Members will continue.

8. AOCB

The next meeting will be the Application Assessment meeting in July. John Muir House, Haddington will be used as the venue to support a hybrid meeting.

ACTION: JA to circulate a poll to ensure proxy attendance at the meeting.

HS delivered a fond farewell to AH, recognising 11 years of dedicated service to the Tyne & Esk Programme. From LAG Member to Vice-Chair and Co-Chair, AH's knowledge and insight were central to the programme. Provost JMcM also thanked AH and wished her well in her "retirement portfolio."

Lunch and LAG Project Scoring Training commenced until 14:30pm

HILARY SMITH 08/07/2026

Co -Chair Tyne & Esk CLLD Local Action Group