



TYNE ESK LAG MEETING MINUTES
9th February 2017, 09:30 – 13:30pm
Adam Room, Court Street, Haddington

Members present

- Andrew McDonald (AM), Edinburgh Butterfly World, LAG Chair
- Anne Hastie (AH), Private Individual, LAG Vice Chair
- Douglas Reynolds (DR), Bolton Steading Residents Association, LAG member
- Hilary Smith (HS), North Berwick Community Council, LAG member
- Alexandra Duncan (AD), SWRI, LAG member
- Cllr John McMillan (JM), East Lothian Council, LAG member
- Karen Calvert (KC), Papermill Restaurant, LAG member
- Yvonne Stoddart (YS), STRIVE, LAG member
- Cllr Jim Bryant (JB), Midlothian Council, LAG member

In attendance

- John Beveridge (JBev), Midlothian Council Economic Development, LAG Observer
- Susan Smith (SS), East Lothian Council Economic Development, LAG Observer
- Angela Lamont (AL), Leader Project Officer, Leader Team
- Dawne Milligan (DM), Leader Finance Support Officer, Leader Team
- Neil Ramsay (NR), Leader Co-ordinator, Leader Team

Apologies

- Frank Beattie, Scottish Enterprise, LAG member
- Derek Logie, Rural Housing Scotland, LAG member
- Alasdair Mathers, Midlothian Community Planning Partnership, LAG Observer
- Paolo Vestri, East Lothian Partnership, LAG Observer
- Cheryl Brown, Midlothian Sure Start, LAG member
- Pam Ralston, Skills Development Scotland, LAG member
- Kerry Clark, NFU Scotland, LAG member

<p>Welcome and apologies AH welcomed everyone to the meeting as AM was running late. Apologies were noted as above.</p>	
<p>1. Matters arising AH went through the minutes of the last meeting.</p> <p>Ongoing - The LAG has suggested a survey monkey in regards to the LARCS system to find out from members and applicants what their thoughts and issues are with the system so we can then feedback to the Accountable Body.</p> <p>NR went through the newly released co-operation project guidance as the process is markedly different from the previous Programme. In this</p>	<p>Action: DM to explore Survey Monkey.</p>



Programme, the lead LAG in a co-operation project will undertake all the assessment of a project in terms of compliance and technical checks while the minor partner LAGs will only assess a project in terms of the project fit with the Local Development Strategy objectives. The lead LAG will also take on 100% of the risk of a co-operation project and pay all claims with the minor partner LAG budgets being adjusted at a later date. This is thought to streamline project applications for the applicant during application and claiming stage. NR mentioned that Tyne Esk LEADER had been approached by Scottish Borders LEADER to carry out a co-operation project around strategic access routes linking the two rural areas with the total project costs being met from Scottish Borders LEADER and Tyne Esk LEADER. NR asked if this was acceptable and the LAG agreed they'd be happy with this approach.

NR mentioned that the LEADER co-ordinators have been trying to think of how the LEADER approach can be continued post-Brexit so that the investment in rural communities and the mechanism for doing this can be preserved. This had been discussed at the recent co-ordinators' meeting and will be pursued further.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by the LAG and signed off by the Chair. AM arrived and continued to chair the meeting.

2. Feedback on Scottish Government developments

Feedback from the Scottish Government is positive and LEADER is back on track with the situation following the Brexit vote that funds can be allocated till April 2019 and claims and projects able to be completed by March 2020.

3. Update on:

3.1 Budget

DM gave an overview of the current budget. This will kept up to date and put on the Tyne Esk Website so that LAG can peruse. An email will be sent out to LAG members when updates have been done.

3.2 Governance

NR reported that the changes to the Business Plan that had been submitted in early November had now been signed off by the Scottish Government. These included reducing the quorum of the LAG from 9 to 7.

The Governance Subgroup met recently to look at an Appeals and Complaints process, some changes to the Group Protocol in line with the new appeals and complaints process, a procurement system that would explain our requirements to applicants and applications from LAG members. It was agreed that the LAG would look at the last two

Action: DM will update and send out emails as and when required



issues under AOB so that any applicants being awarded funds at this meeting would not be subject to decisions made at this meeting since they had not been informed of these decisions during project development.

The Appeals and Complaints process that was discussed at this meeting will consist of an independent group to review any complaints or appeals. In order to ensure the group had not scored or assessed an application involved in a complaint or appeal then the group could consist of, as a minimum, the 4 LAG observers but it would be likely that there would also be one or two LAG members that could also take part. There will be 4 stages to the Appeals and Complaints process:

1. Informal – to a LEADER staff member or LAG member
2. Complain to Chair and Leader Coordinator
3. Appeals Sub Group:
 - There will be a time limit of 21 days
 - Appellants will have limited grounds of appeal
 - There will be a form that has to be completed justifying the appeal
4. Midlothian Council through normal complaints procedure

AH to send out an updated process to the Governance Subgroup for feedback and then to LAG for comments. The LAG were happy to use this process in the interim between being fully agreed by the LAG at the next meeting.

3.3 Programme Issues

3.3.1 Staffing levels

Staffing levels was discussed as the level of help that is needed from the applicants is increasing and there needs to be a separation of duties for NR and AL. There are time constraints to get applications ready for LAG meeting by applicants and the LAG were not keen to limit the number of applications per meeting.

Application workshops are planned to replace the individual Expression of Interest meetings which will help future applicants and cut down on workload. It was also suggested that mentoring from past applicants may help with this also.

The Governance Subgroup will look at the Job Description for AL's post and make a decision on recruiting a new member of staff

3.3.2 Scottish Government monitoring visit

NR reported that the monitoring visit with the Scottish Government following their check of our files was due to take place within the next few days. Informal feedback received beforehand was that there were

Action: AH to send out Appeals and Complaints documents

Action: AL to take application workshops forward

Action – NR to arrange a Governance Subgroup meeting looking at staffing levels



a number of minor issues raised that were resolvable but it was noted that our red, amber, green status had already been reduced to amber.

3.3.3 Change requests/policy

The paper presented to the LAG is a method for coordinating how change requests will be processed. Change requests will be approved according to how significant the changes are that are requested. Minor changed can be approved by the Co-ordinator, more substantial changes can be approved by the Chairs and AB rep and significant changes will have to go to the full LAG to be assessed. The LAG requested to see all change requests at each LAG meeting and for it to be a standing item on the agenda.

3.4 Local election implications

Purdah starts on 13th March so LAG should be aware of press releases, phone call etc to make the follow the correct Council protocol.

Action: NR will send the LAG the monitoring report once it has been received

5 Assess Applications

5.1 Service Course Limited – Bike Fleet Project

This project was discussed and it was noted that no major issues were raised by the LAG during scoring. That the applicant is based in Dalkeith was discussed but it was considered that the project would principally benefit rural businesses in the Tyne Esk area and so this was thought not to be a concern – NR confirmed the SG had replied to a query that applicants did not have to be based in the eligible area. KC reported back very positively on the site visit that took place at one of the beneficiary rural businesses, which was also partially attended by the manager of the rural business who spoke very highly of the project. Another issue was raised during scoring as to how demand would be stimulated – this was raised during the site visit and it was noted that the applicant had a very experienced and professional Marketing and Events Manager and that the marketing for their current operation was of a very high quality, marketing materials were handed out and passed around. The application was approved by the LAG with a unanimous vote. The LAG felt the application showed clearly how rural businesses would benefit that there would be no displacement and that it fitted well within the LDS. They LAG also liked the likely legacy of additional bikes being bought in the future to expand the number of people using them and visiting the rural businesses in the future.

The LAG overall score for the project was 7 which will be entered onto LARCS.

No specific conditions have been applied to this project by the Tyne Esk LEADER Local Action Group.

5.2 University of Edinburgh: Easter Bush Campus – Signage for Midlothian Science Zone

JB registered an interest in this application and left the room. JBev also



registered an interest and left the meeting. JBev did not return due to other commitments.

This project was discussed and approved by the LAG with a majority vote of 6-2. There was discussion around to what extent this was an appropriate project for LEADER to be investing in and the additionality of the project. It was felt that the site visit had cleared up these issues as it was evident that it was a branding project for one of the LAG's key sectors and that the reason the University was the applicant was because the governance structure recommended in the Bush Framework Masterplan had not yet been created. It was noted that it would not be possible for the applicant to acknowledge the LEADER contribution on all signs as there were rules against this in road signage but the LAG were happy that the contribution could be acknowledged in other ways, such as on their website and in signs on the gateway sign. The LAG was happy with the recommendation that the staff team see and approve a plan for the LEADER acknowledgement as a condition of grant. It was felt that there is no displacement for this project.

The LAG overall score for the project was 6 which will be entered onto LARCS.

The Grant was approved by the LAG but with the following conditions:

1. The LAG requires seeing evidence of ownership of asset for the two remaining signs that this has not already been provided for.
2. The LAG requires seeing and approving a plan for how the LEADER contribution will be acknowledged.
3. The LAG requires confirmation that the necessary permissions are in place before the project can start.

5.3 Susan and George Thomson-Church Street / Winton Place Town Centre Redevelopment

DR excused himself as he had other engagements to attend and left the meeting. JB returned to the meeting.

This project was discussed and approved by the LAG with a unanimous vote. The LAG saw this as complimenting other local projects such as the development of the Fraser Centre, the creation of new parking nearby by East Lothian Council and the redevelopment of the old infant school. The LAG members reported back very positively on the site visit as there had been strong engagement from the community as it had also been attended by the Chairs of the Community Council and the neighbouring Macmerry Community Council who advocated strongly on behalf of the project. Displacement was discussed as there is a nearby ice cream parlour that would have some degree of overlap in offering with this project but it was felt that there was a strong need for additional offer in the centre of Tranent in order to attract more people to the centre and for both



businesses to survive and thrive. There was agreement that this project would benefit the community by improving the use of the building for the community to use and providing jobs at a later stage and the LAG was happy that it fits very well within the LDS.

The LAG overall score for the project was 7 which will be entered onto LARCS.

The Grant was approved by the LAG but with the following conditions:

1. The LAG requires planning permission to be granted before the project can start.

5.4 Paper Scissor Stone Developments Ltd - The Paper Mill Events Space

KC registered an interest in this application and left the room.

This project was discussed and approved by the LAG with a unanimous vote. The LAG members who attended the site visit reported back very positively as it had been shown that the project would create a very high quality facility to the area and that the applicant had a bold vision for a derelict and historically important building in a conservation area. The application had shown very clearly that there was significant need for this facility as seen in the Midlothian and Scottish Border Destination Tourism Audit 2015 and the Midlothian Tourism Action Plan 2016-2020. The LAG felt that the benefits to the area in terms of improved facilities and a future increase in the number of local jobs were very strong. Displacement was discussed but mid-market function and meeting space was mentioned in the Tourism Action Plan as lacking in the area and the nearest competitors are pitched at very different markets so it was thought there was no overlap with nearby businesses. The LAG was clear that this project would make a substantial positive difference to the area.

The LAG overall score for the project was 7 which will be entered onto LARCS.

The Grant was approved by the LAG with the following conditions:

1. The LAG requires planning permission to be granted before the project can start.

6 AOB

6.1 Procurement (from Governance Subgroup meeting)

NR consulted with other LAGs and the Scottish Government to ascertain what procurement methodologies other LAGs required of their applicants. There was no feedback gained from other LAGs and the Scottish Government stated they wanted us to follow the



Tyne-Esk
LEADER



Scottish Rural
Development
Programme



Accountable Body processes. NR completed a diagram for the preferred procurement process after consulting with Midlothian Council's procurement team. Applicants subject to the 2012 Scottish Public Procurement Regulations would have to use Midlothian Council's exact process including using Public Contracts Scotland's Quick Quotes system for costs between £5k and £50k and openly advertising on Public Contracts Scotland for costs over £50k. However, the process will be simplified for applicants not subject to these regulations as Public Contracts Scotland is not appropriate for them. Applicants will have to secure three quotes for all costs up to £50k and will have to write a brief for costs above £50k with a minimum of 5 companies approached and 2 tenders received for all costs over £50k. The LAG was happy with this process and approved it. NR And AL will inform applicants of this in future. Applicants awarded grants prior to this decision will still have to not be subject to it.

6.2 Applications from LAG members (from Governance Subgroup meeting)

NR went through the discussion in the most recent Governance Subgroup where the issue of whether the LAG will welcome applications from organisations linked to LAG members. NR pointed out that the technical guidance states that applications can come from LAG members and NR had received specific guidance from the Scottish Government saying applications from LAG members was allowed. NR had also asked attendees at the most recent LEADER coordinators' meeting if anyone restricted applications from LAG members and the attendees (who represented almost all LAGs in Scotland) were unanimous in saying they actively welcomed applications from LAG members. This was discussed at the most recent Governance Subgroup and it was felt that there was no difference between a local authority application and an application from a LAG member from any other organisation. It was agreed that the LAG will continue to allow applications from LAG members.

6.3 Group Protocol/Code of Conduct Changes (from Governance Subgroup meeting)

Suggested changes to the Code of Conduct by the Governance Subgroup were as follows:

- Site visits to applicants are not mandatory therefore Lag members should score the applications based on the information given on the project in LARCS.
- Appeals and complaints from LAG members to sanctions will be same Appeals and Reviews subgroup that oversee appeals and complaints from applicants.

6.4 LAG Members

Derek Logie, Rural Housing Scotland, LAG member has resigned and

Actions: NR to update Group Protocol and Code of Conduct in LARCS

Action: NR to



new members are needed. It was discussed that MVA should be approached to find new members from the third sector.	send letter to MVA
<p>7 Finish – Date of next meeting</p> <p>11 May 2017 – VENUE TO TBC</p> <p>An Interim meeting will be held in March 17 to discuss further applications that were not ready for this round.</p>	<p>Action: DM to send out Doodle Poll for interim LAG meeting</p>

W. Andrew
3/3/17