



OUTER HEBRIDES LEADER 2014-2020 PROGRAMME



Note of the Meeting of the Outer Hebrides LEADER Local Action Group
In Committee Room 3, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Stornoway
with video-conference to Comhairle offices in Balivanich, and teleconference to Castlebay

on Tuesday 27th September 2016 at 10.30am

Present: Iain Fordham, Outer Hebrides Tourism (Vice Chairperson) (Private)
Cllr. Alasdair MacLeod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Public)
Alison MacCorquodale, Tourism Outer Hebrides 2020 Leadership Group (Private)
Matt Bruce, Lewis and Harris Horticultural Producers (Private)
Rachel MacKenzie, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Public)
Neil Campbell, Community Land Scotland (Private)
Duncan MacInnes, Western Isles Fishing Association (Private)
Iain MacLennan, Skills Development Scotland (Public)
Stewart Robertson, Scottish Government Agriculture, Food & Rural Communities Directorate (Public)
Murdina Naylor, Tagsa Uibhist (Private)
Andrew Ross, North Uist Development Company (Private)
Sarah MacLean, Scottish Crofting Federation (Private)

In attendance: Donna Matheson, Outer Hebrides LEADER Co-ordinator
Charlene Macmillan, Outer Hebrides LEADER Finance and Project Officer
Eilidh Johnson, Outer Hebrides LEADER Development Officer
Domhnall MacDonald, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Accountable Body Representative

Apologies/ Colin Gilmour, Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (Chairperson)
Absent Cllr. Alistair MacLennan, Federation of Small Businesses
Michael Smith, Mossend Residents Association
Roddy Mackay, Princes Trust
Carola Bell, Community Energy Scotland
Donnie Macdonald, MG Alba
Helen Sandison, Private Individual
Lorna Macaulay, Harris Tweed Authority
Eoin MacNeil, Co-Cheangal Innse Gall
Johanne Ferguson, Scottish Natural Heritage
Kirsty McCormick, Storas Uibhist
Hector MacLeod, Third Sector Hebrides

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	<i>Action for:</i>
<p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Following apologies from the Chairperson, the Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Colin Gilmour, Cllr. Alastair MacLennan, Lorna Macaulay, Eoin MacNeil, and Kirsty MacCormick.</p> <p>The meeting commenced with 3 Public and 8 representatives in attendance; Cllr. Alasdair MacLeod (public) had previously confirmed attendance at the Meeting and it was advised that his presence would be imminent.</p> <p>No decisions were undertaken until a 12 member quorum was present.</p>	
<p>2. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The following Declarations of Interest were declared, however discussion around these specific applications did not occur.</p> <p><u>Item 6:</u> Application: 15/P0009 – Cllr. Alasdair MacLeod and Matt Bruce.</p>	
<p>3. Note of last meeting and matters arising thereof:</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting on 26th July 2016 were agreed to be a true and accurate reflection.</p> <p>Proposed: A. MacQuordale Seconded: N. Campbell</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p> <p>Cllr. Alasdair MacLeod entered the Meeting. (<i>Public members in attendance 4, Private 8</i>)</p>	
<p>4. CnES Feasibility Study</p> <p>This item was withdrawn from the Agenda, however it was noted that the EOI pertaining to the item is to remain live.</p>	
<p>5. Project Applications</p> <p>a) Note of Project Approved</p>	

Round 5: One application, **15/P0008**, was submitted to the 'August Round', which was scored by the LAG. The LAG approved the Project received, commenting that it was a good community partnership Project, and although ambitious, if achieved would provide solid community benefits. It was noted that a cashflow projection for the Project was not provided with the application which would have been useful for the LAG to view; it was agreed that this would be provided in the updated Business Plan that would be compiled as part of the Project. The following conditions were added to the Project's approval, as derived from LAG comments:

15/P00008: Kinloch Historical Society - Balallan Community Hub Staffing

APPROVED: £32,422

i) Written confirmation of funding package approval, through providing originals of all match funding letters is required, including confirmation of your own contribution on signed, letter headed paper.

ii) The new Business Plan is submitted to the LEADER Secretariat on completion

iii) Kinloch Historical Society ensure compliance with the Employment Legislation when undertaking the recruitment process.

iv) A progress report is provided after Year 1 detailing the benefits operationally and financially and to gain insight into progress against objectives and risk around the exit strategy.

b) Project Change Request Guidance

i) The LAG approved the 'Delegation of Authority' paper that was presented; the LEADER Co-ordinator will have delegated authority to approve/ decline Change Request's that are submitted by applicants that will have minimal impact on the Programme, including: small movements of expenditure (up to 10%) of TPC's; extensions; personnel issues and decrease of LEADER grant. All decisions will later be acknowledged and ratified at forthcoming LAG Meetings.

The LEADER LAG will be required to make direct decisions on Change Requests that will have a significant impact on the Programme, including large movements of money; amendment to Project outlines that were not included at application stage; project extensions longer than 6 months and any Requests that may involve the applicant becoming 'high risk'.

ii) **15/P00003** – The LAG were informed of two recently submitted and approved 'Change Requests' by the applicant in relation to movement of Milestone timeframes and change of proposed site situation of Polycrubs, as per the suggestion of the Comhairle Planning Department. The LAG noted and ratified both approvals of the Requests.

iii) **15/P00002** – Following quotes received for required work and as per the

<p>guidance of accountant, the applicant will now apply for VAT registration, with no financial implication on the grant approved or the Programme. The LAG noted and ratified the approval of this Change Request.</p> <p>c) Feedback on Appraisal Report</p> <p>Following Member comments from the first round of applications that were submitted to the LAG for scoring, in relation to the level of paperwork, feedback was sought regarding the recent 'Appraisal' format that LEADER Officers had been compiling and forwarding to the LAG in lieu of several application documents. The LAG agreed that this format was helpful and more user friendly and the preferable method going forward.</p> <p>LAG members were also reminded that they now also have access to LARCs to login and view all and additional information that is provided by applicants to assist their scoring, if required.</p>	
<p>6. Pipeline Applications</p> <p>Details of applications in progress were provided to the LAG, it was noted that the following applicants are likely to be coming forward to the September and October Rounds: 15/P00012, 15/P00010, 15/P00025, 15/P00005, 15/P00024, 15/P00011, 15/P00013, 15/P00026</p> <p>It was noted that there is still a significant level of Community interest in the LEADER Programme.</p>	
<p>7. Financial Report</p> <p>The LAG noted the Financial update of the Outer Hebrides LEADER Programme Commitment and Spend to date that was provided, with it being commented that Outer Hebrides are in a more fortunate position than some other LEADER LAG areas who currently have not yet launched their Programme</p>	
<p>8. OHL Co-ordinators Update</p> <p>a) LEADER Co-ordinator Update</p> <p>The LAG noted the brief providing them with an update on the LEADER Programme in recent months, with any significant points being covered in the Agenda.</p> <p>b) Co-ordinators Meeting Minutes</p> <p>Minutes of the Co-ordinators Meeting in May were noted by the LAG.</p> <p>c) LARCs update</p> <p>All project information has been back-captured onto LARCs and the Programme is now only accepting online applications. One LAG member had logged onto the</p>	

system and whilst initially awkward to negotiate, once familiar navigation is easier and information available logically.

Desk instructions are available online and LEADER Officers are providing training if requested.

d) Autumn Statement

Referencing Fergus Ewing's response letter to Dumfries and Galloway LAG, the Scottish Government LEADER team have informally notified that following the UK's Autumn Statement on November 23rd 2016, SG will be unable to support any offers of grant after this date whilst they draft a response to the Statement, which is expected to be available in early 2017. As the Accountable Body (AB), the Comhairle agreed to continue processing Applications up until the UK statement date, and also following the date, however any approvals after the 23rd November will be advised as only in principle, with formal offers and contracts' not being issued until formal direction from Scottish Government is received.

The LAG discussed all possible avenues, including proceeding as suggested by the AB and closing to applications and EOI's completely during the period of 23rd November and the SG response; it was however **formally decided and agreed by the LAG** that the October application deadline would be brought forward to Wednesday 19th October 2016, and subsequent LAG Meeting scheduled for the end of November be rearranged to Wednesday 16th November in order to ensure applications to the October deadline are scored, and where approved, formally issue and return signed contracts before the UK statement date.

The LAG agreed that following the 23rd of November, EOI's and applications can progress, at their own risk, as normal, however until formal direction from Scottish Government is issued, after the October deadline, there will be no further fixed application deadlines and no applications will be submitted to the LAG for scoring.

The LAG advised all EOI's and pipeline applicants to be contacted directly and advised on the current situation, along with a legally agreed update to be compiled and provided on the Outer Hebrides LEADER website to inform any potential applicants.

After discussion, it was agreed that a formal press release would not be issued at this time as no formal information had been received by Scottish Government, and to avoid communicating and inaccurate message due to the uncertainty of what the UK Statement may outline.

Following the recent signing of contracts from Round 1 applications, a Press Release will be issued to highlight the achievement and significance of the Programme.

<p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seek legal advice regarding release of statement on website</i> • <i>Circulate statement to LAG for approval</i> • <i>Contact all EOI's and pipeline applicants to advise of current climate</i> • <i>Issue Statement on website along with updated Application deadlines</i> • <i>Press Release on Project Approvals to be issued</i> 	<p>DM DM CM/DM DM DM</p>
<p>9. Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>LAG members that have not provided updated 'Conflicts of Interest' forms are requested to do so at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complete and return updated Conflicts of Interest to LEADER team</i> 	<p>LAG</p>
<p>10. Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Report A draft Internal Audit report was made available to the LAG, although it was noted that an update to the Report will be provided in relation to Brexit, following Fergus Ewing's letter. • Scottish Government A review of approved Project files is still being undertaken by SG; the LEADER Co-ordinator did attend a partial 'Wash-up' Meeting with SG regarding the files that had been reviewed to-date with minimal issues reported. Upon a full completion of the Audit, the Report will be supplied and forwarded to the LAG. 	
<p>11. Website</p> <p>The contract for the Outer Hebrides LEADER website has now been awarded to StornoWeb. As the contractor is also a Comhairle employee the necessary procedures were required to be followed before appointment, resulting in the delay experienced, however this is now finalised.</p>	
<p>12. AOCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAG Members – Meetings/ Project Scoring It was noted that a continued level of Members are refraining from scoring Projects and attending Meetings resulting in LEADER Officers pursuing necessary Scores or confirmation of attendance at Meetings from LAG members at the last minute to ensure timeous Project decisions and quorums at Meetings. <p>LAG Members were respectively asked to communicate with LEADER Officers on their</p>	

availability for scoring Projects and attending Meetings in advance. Where it is not possible for a LAG Member to score Projects or attend Meetings their secondary nominee should be contacted and requested to undertake duties in their place.

Continued efforts from the same LAG Members to score and attend Meetings were noted, although the duties of the Programme are to be shared amongst all 24 Members of the LAG.

It was noted that the workload of the LAG was significant, and should any LAG members be unable to offer the necessary time and commitment due to other priorities to contact a member of the LEADER team to advise on their future position on the LAG.

As suggested by the LAG, Diary Appointments will be forwarded to Members in future with times of LAG Meetings and Scoring deadlines to assist in allocating time and reminders for LAG duties.

LAG Members were asked to consider the impending October deadline and level of applications expected and the importance of these Projects receiving decisions at the earliest possible time; therefore should LAG Members be unavailable to score during this period, please make LEADER Officers aware.

Actions

- *Contact LEADER Officer to advise of likely unavailability over October/ November for Project Scoring*

LAG

13. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 16th November, 10.00am



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