



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 UHI Lews Castle College
Learning Centre, Castlebay

on Wednesday 31st January 2017 at 10.00am

Present: Colin Gilmour, Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (Private) (Chairperson)
Ian Fordham, Outer Hebrides Tourism (Private) (Vice Chairperson)
Alison MacCorquodale, Tourism Outer Hebrides 2020 Leadership Group (Private)
Matt Bruce, Lewis and Harris Horticultural Producers (Private)
Bill McMillan, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Public)
Neil Campbell, Community Land Scotland (Private)
Deirdre Steele, Storas Uibhist (Private)
Andrew Ross, North Uist Development Company (Private)
Cllr. Alistair MacLennan, Federation of Small Businesses (Private)
Eoin MacNeil, Co-Cheangal Inne Gall (Private)
Michael Smith, Mossend Residents Association
Roddie Mackay, Princes Trust
Donnie Macdonald, MG Alba
Helen Sandison, Private Individual
Duncan MacInnes, Western Isles Fishing Association (Private)
Iain MacLennan, Skills Development Scotland (Public)
Cllr. Alasdair MacLeod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Public)

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

**Apologies/
Absent** Hector MacLeod, Third Sector Hebrides
Sarah MacLean, Scottish Crofting Federation (Private)
Murdina Naylor, Tagsa Uibhist (Private)
Lorna Macaulay, Harris Tweed Authority (Private)
Johanne Ferguson, Scottish Natural Heritage (Public)
Carola Bell, Community Energy Scotland (Private)

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	Action for:
<p>1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES</p> <p>Alasdair MacLeod accepted the position of acting Chair for the initial agenda items, to oversee the annual appointment of the new Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Bill McMillan and Deirdre Steele; Bill McMillan is now the primary representative for HIE, as is Deirdre Steele for Storas Uibhist, replacing Rachel Mackenzie and Kirsty McCormick, respectively.</p> <p>Apologies were noted from: Carola Bell, Murdina Naylor, Johanne Ferguson and Lorna Macaulay</p> <p><i>Representation from 4 Public and 13 Private members of the LAG were present.</i></p>	
<p>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Prior to the Meeting an email had been circulated to the LAG by Colin Gilmour, in his capacity as Chair, reiterating to LAG members the importance of declarations of Interest, and when in doubt at all, to declare an interest.</p> <p><u>Item 6:</u> Ian Fordham – Co-operation Projects; Ian’s representative organisation OHTCIC will likely be involved in the submission of a co-operation enquiry and as such he refrained from participating in discussion regarding this agenda item.</p>	
<p>4. ELECTION/ RE-APPOINTMENT OF LAG CHAIR & VICE CHAIR</p> <p>Item 4 was taken before agenda item 3 to allow the Meeting to continue with the elected Chair’ and Vice Chair.</p> <p>The acting Chair took nominations for the position of Chairperson first, followed by the Vice Chair:</p> <p>Chair Person Nominations Nomination - Colin Gilmour; Proposed by Duncan MacInnes, Seconded by Matt Bruce</p> <p>Vice Chair Nominations Nomination - Ian Fordham; proposed by Neil Campbell, Seconded by Matt Bruce.</p>	

Colin Gilmour and Ian Fordham accepted their nominations for Chair and Vice Chair, and assumed these positions for the remainder of the Meeting.

Alasdair MacLeod departed the Meeting.

3. NOTE OF THE LAST MINUTE AND MATTERS ARISING

The note of the last Meeting was agreed to be a true and accurate reflection.

Matters Arising:

- Item 5** – Possible Byelaws affecting applications were researched and confirmed to have no implications on applications approved.
- The Monitoring of capital assets has been queried with SG and is currently awaiting a response; this will be forwarded to the LAG via email once received.

Actions

- *Circulate SG Response to LAG*

DM

5. BUSINESS PLAN

An updated copy of the Outer Hebrides LEADER & EMFF Business Plan 2014-2020 was presented to the LAG for consideration, which was **approved**.

It was noted that financial aspects of the Business Plan will be updated at the end of the financial year.

6. CO-OPERATION PROJECTS

Ian Fordham declared an Interest and refrained from discussion.

Following the release of Co-operation Guidance from SG, the LAG was tasked with determining the local intervention rate for applicants, which was permitted to be up to 100% as per the Guidance. It was noted that preparatory Projects were set at 100% up to £5,000 however Co-operation Project costs intervention rate is at the LAGs discretion.

Through discussions it was noted that 10% of the budget is required to be allocated to co-operation Projects, a task that the previous 2007-2013 programme did not meet (although it was not stipulated) with an intervention rate of 70%, as such the LAG were proposing an increased rate above this, possibly 90%.

Variable Project and intervention costs were also discussed i.e. Projects up to £50k would receive 70% and Projects over £100k receive 90% along with differentiating rates for

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Communities and businesses.

The LAG agreed to set the Co-operation intervention rate at **up to 70% of total eligible project costs for business** applications and **up to 90% for community** applications, with the ability of increasing these amounts in exceptional circumstances if required. It was thought that with this differing intervention rate agreed, the addition of variable TPC's also as a requirement would be too complex and therefore not applied.

Actions

- *Circulate co-operation guidance and news of intervention rates.*

CM

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7. REPORTING/ APPRAISAL/ INTERVENTION RATES

- **Appraisal document** – The LAG were satisfied with the amendments made to the Appraisal document.
- **Decision Making Board** – A further revisit to the discussion of a separate DMB to score Projects was made. It was highlighted that offering the whole LAG the opportunity to score provides an overall larger ‘pool’ of LAG members, especially taking into consideration the possible number of increased ‘Declarations of Interest’ that may arise. It was noted that now more established in the Programme the number of LAG members scoring was increasing with members were becoming more accustomed to the process. **The LAG agreed to continue with the full LAG scoring projects** and not to establish a DMB.
- **Application Deadlines** – The possibility of increasing the timescale between application rounds from monthly to 6-weekly was considered; it was noted that Rounds set every 6 weeks would result in some applications possibly waiting approximately 2 months to receive a decision due to schedule of LAG Meetings – unless LAG Meeting dates were also amended. **It was agreed that the application rounds would remain at the set monthly intervals.**
- **Business Projects** - Whilst discussing applications it was noted that a number of EOI's are being submitted for camping pods and glamping style accommodation; having already approved a few similar applications of this type the LAG considered whether or not this was another area that could become saturated.
 It was noted that camping pods can still remain innovative to some areas in the Outer Hebrides and did not want to preclude such applications coming forward, but also that there was no data on the success/ uptake of the glamping market in the Outer Hebrides as it is still in its infancy.
 The Vice Chair advised the LAG that a survey is currently being undertaken that will provide a needs analysis of accommodation requirements and sub-categories, along

was noted and ratified by the LAG.

- **15/P00028** – A Change request was submitted to update match funding payments – this was noted and ratified by the LAG.
- **15/P00014** – A Change request was submitted to update delivery milestones and Project start date – this was noted and ratified by the LAG.
- **15/P00013** – A Change request was submitted to update delivery milestones and exchange costs, along with update the Project start date – this was noted and ratified by the LAG.

It was confirmed that none of the Changes Requests submitted had any financial implications nor altered the priorities of the Projects.

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9. PIPELINE APPLICATIONS

The LAG was presented with a list of current pipeline applications for their information.

It was noted that a recent unsuccessful stage 1 EMFF enquiry has submitted an EOI to LEADER; the LAG had stipulated at a previous meeting that LEADER and EMFF officers were to discuss between them what applications were more suited to apply to which Fund; however LEADER were not aware of this particular application until it applied to LEADER after its EMFF refusal. The EOI meets the LEADER criteria to progress to application stage, however further information from FLAG members in attendance at the LAG, was sought on their issues with the enquiry.

It was noted that the EOI submitted to EMFF scored low against their set criteria on a number of points including Value for Money and over-estimated economic impact, both criteria which are included in LEADER also. It was also noted that the current proposed location for the pontoon was possibly not in the most prime area. The application has already received match funding from the Comhairle and HIE based on its perceived community impact benefits.

It was noted that whilst LEADER and EMFF have some differing scoring criteria the Programmes do operate a joint strategy and as such **it was agreed that the LEADER application criteria should be upheld** in relation to rejected projects which is that rejected applications can only re-apply if there is a significant change to their application. The LEADER officer is to convey this information to the applicant and any updated ,altered submissions will be compared with the previous EMFF application and presented to the Chair and Vice Chair of the LAG in the first instance, to then discuss with the FLAG if required to determine any significance differences in applications and how to proceed.

Eoin MacNeil departed the meeting (technical issues)(Quorum was still present and public/private percentage split upheld)

10. OHL CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

- a) **LEADER Co-ordinator Update Report** – The LAG was presented with an overview of Programme progress since the previous meeting, and it was noted that Claims and Co-operation aspects of LARCs are now ‘Live’.

The next Accountable Body Meeting will be held in March, the AB representative will report back on this at the next LAG Meeting.

11. AOCB

- It was queried whether the 60 day stipulation to meet LEADER requirements as per Letters of Offer were set locally or by SG; it was noted that applicants who are offered an award in Principle have 60 days to achieve their full match funding package before the formal offer of grant contract is issued, a timescale which was proving difficult for some applicants who are co-ordinating multiple match funding applications; as not all LAGs issue an offer in principle, and only a contract offer, this is something that was set locally – although this is to be confirmed – therefore it was confirmed that there is, and has been leeway and extensions granted to this timescale.
- The level of grant intervention rates was requested to be reviewed at the next LAG Meeting with a report prepared for consideration, with a differing intervention rate or cap on grants between business and community applications a possibility for discussion, as there was some concern that funds are being committed so quickly; it was also noted that a quick level of commitment could also put the OH LAG in a prime position for applying for underutilised funds in other LAG areas throughout Scotland; the AB representative is to raise the issue of under-spent funds in LAG areas and the likelihood of when and if this will be considered by SG.
Consideration was asked to be given regarding the implications of possibly amending both the Tourism Policy and intervention rates simultaneously.

Eoin MacNeil was welcomed back to the Meeting (technical issue resolved)

- It had been considered that the LAG was receiving an increased number of business applications, however upon review, both approved Projects and current level of EOI’s evidenced an approximate 50/50 split.
- A Co-operation event is being held in Ayrshire to try and establish links with Irish LAGs. Two positions are available, with the suggestion of one LAG member and one member of staff to attend; it was agreed Bill McMillan and Charlene Macmillan will attend.

- Project Support Assistant post is now advertised, shortleeting is to take place in February and interviews in early March.
- **HIE Membership** – Bill McMillan is the new primary representative for HIE, with Rachel Mackenzie now the secondary nominee.
- **Internal Audit report** – This has been signed off and returned to IA.
- **Latest Cabinet Secretary Letter** – this was provided to the LAG for information, providing an update on guarantees on funding for this Programme period
- **Website** – Due to extenuating circumstances there have been some delays on the website, however it is still hoped to go ‘live’ in February; the work is being undertaken by StornoWeb.
- **2017 LAG Meeting Timetable** – Proposed times and dates of all LAG Meetings for 2017 was agreed by the LAG.

It was noted that Kathlene Morrison will be returning to the post of LEADER Co-ordinator on 28th February 2017, with a 3 week hand-over period before Donna Matheson leaves the Team. The Chair Thanked Donna for her services to the LAG and the Programme during such a transitional period and wished her well in the future. ‘Thanks’ was also reciprocated to the LAG and Chair from Donna Matheson.

Actions

- *Project intervention rate paper to be compiled for next LAG*
- *AB representative to seek clarification from SG on if and when reviews of LAGs underspent budgets will be undertaken, and made available to other areas.*
- *Confirmation sought on 60 day requirement – is this set at local or national level*

CM
AB -
(DMD)
CM/DM

12. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 28th March 2017 at 9.30am, Committee Room 3, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

The LAG were asked to note the earlier start time of the next Meeting, due to availability of meeting space.



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