



## 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

**on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 09.30am**

**Present:** Colin Gilmour, Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (Private) (Chairperson)  
Lorna Eller, Outer Hebrides Tourism (Private)  
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)  
Andrew Ross, North Uist Development Company (Private)  
Cllr. Alistair MacLennan, Federation of Small Businesses (Private)  
Helen Sandison, Private Individual  
Duncan MacInnes, Western Isles Fishing Association (Private)  
Donnie Macdonald, MG Alba  
Murdina Naylor, Tagsa Uibhist (Private)  
Johanne Ferguson, Scottish Natural Heritage (Public)

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

**Apologies/  
Absent** Hector MacLeod, Third Sector Hebrides  
Sarah MacLean, Scottish Crofting Federation (Private)  
Lorna Macaulay, Harris Tweed Authority (Private)  
Carola Bell, Community Energy Scotland (Private)  
Eoin MacNeil, Co-Cheangal Innse Gall (Private)  
Michael Smith, Mossend Residents Association  
Roddie Mackay, Princes Trust  
Iain MacLennan, Skills Development Scotland (Public)  
Cllr. Alasdair MacLeod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Public)

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	<i>Action for:</i>
<p><b>1. WELCOME &amp; APOLOGIES</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting and noted apologies from Carola Bell, Eoin MacNeil, Hector MacLeod, Iain MacLennan and Cllr. Alasdair Macleod.</p> <p><b><i>Representation from 2 Public and 10 Private members of the LAG were present, initially.</i></b></p>	
<p><b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p><u>Item 4a:</u> Rachel Mackenzie – Scalpay Care Unit  <u>Item 5:</u> Matt Bruce – Point &amp; Sandwick Coastal Community Path  <u>Item 5:</u> Neil Campbell – North Harris Trust</p>	
<p><b>3. NOTE OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>The note of the last meeting was agreed to be a true and accurate reflection.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising:</u>  <b>Item 7</b> – AB representative met with Bill McMillan, HIE, and Norman MacLean, Business Gateway, to discuss aftercare for LEADER Projects; it was noted that HIE and BG both provide aftercare for projects they support and are not resourced to provide additional support to LEADER applicants not in receipt of HIE or BG funding.  The LAG considered whether or not funding should be set aside to provide additional support to business applications and <b>agreed to defer the decision</b> pending further research by LEADER staff on the demand for such a service.</p> <p>As part of the discussions on aftercare assistance, it was noted that applicants are experiencing delays due to Water and Electricity connections which are significantly delaying the anticipated timescales; <b>it was agreed that LEADER Officers will advise all potential applicants to consider this delay when constructing their project milestones.</b></p> <p>Alison MacCorquodale entered the Meeting <b>(2 public, 11 private members present)</b></p> <p><b>Item 11</b> – AB Meeting taking place later than planned, arranged for April, and as such clarification on potential LAG area underspend has not been obtained.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>LEADER Business Aftercare paper to be compiled and presented to LAG at May</i></li> </ul>	<b>OFFICERS</b>

<p><i>Meeting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>LEADER Staff to advise Capital Project applicants on potential delays with connections to Services</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>OFFICERS</b></p>
<p><b>4. PROJECT APPLICATIONS</b></p> <p><b>a) Note of Projects Approved</b></p> <p><b>Round 10:</b> Two applications were received, with both receiving an ‘Approval’; however due to one application being over the £75k threshold, further discussion and ratification was required. The LAG were supplied with a Late Paper containing specific ‘conditions’ to the Project, resulting from comments/ advise at scoring stage:</p> <p><b>15/P00030: North Harris Trust – Scalpay Care Unit Development</b> <b>APPROVED: with conditions £124,165.67</b></p> <p>As a HIE Account Managed applicant, <b>Rachel MacKenzie declared an Interest</b> and refrained from any discussion in the Project.</p> <p>The LAG agreed it was an innovative project that provides a fundamental need in community development – housing – and as such approved the Project. Concern, however was raised about the potential to set a president and receive an influx of similar applications from private organisations; however given the organisational structure of the applicant, the LAG were content that additional funds generated by the Project would go back into the development of the Community.</p> <p>Confirmation was requested that HHP had been consulted as part of the application process.</p> <p>The LAG agreed to approve the conditions attached, on the basis that project timescales were renegotiated as the current dates provided were perceived to be optimistic.</p> <p><b>15/P00039: Kilbride Campsite/ Donald John MacIssac – Kilbride Hostel</b> <b>APPROVED: with conditions £72,530</b></p> <p>The Project was approved as a clear demand had been identified with all conditions agreed except those pertaining to an item regarding the pricing structure of nightly bookings; the LAG considered this condition and noted the reasoning behind it, however <b>agreed that pricing structure should be at the applicants discretion</b> as any restrictions could affect the viability of the business. In line with previous accommodation applications, <b>it was agreed that nightly</b></p>	

<p><b>bookings would be made available to users; however no further comment regarding pricing would be included.</b></p> <p><b>b) Postponed Projects</b> Projects 15/P00009 and 15/P00035 were withdrawn from LAG scoring at a late stage due to the applications being unsuccessful with their recent Lottery funding bids.</p> <p>The LAG noted that no projects from the Outer Hebrides had been successful and raised concern that funding for rural areas from big funders such as the Lottery is reducing and becoming more focused on inner cities.</p> <p><b>The Chair advised</b> that the issue be raised at the CPP, with the Executive Board asked to consider the issue and write to the Lottery to clarify and address the concerns</p> <p>Donnie MacDonald left the meeting <b>(2 public, 10 private members present)</b></p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Confirm HHP consultation in 15/P0039 application process and circulate to LAG</i></li> <li>• <i>Withdrawal of Lottery funding in Rural areas and concentration of Strategies on Inner Cities to be raised with CPP Executive Board; letter to be written to Lottery by either CPP or LAG.</i></li> </ul>	<p>KM</p> <p>RMK(HIE)</p>
<p><b>5. PIPELINE APPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>A list of potential applications was provided to the LAG for consideration, no comments were noted.</p>	
<p><b>6. OH LEADER LAG POLICIES REVIEW</b></p> <p><b>a) OH Tourism Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>OHT Survey Analysis Update</i></li> </ul> <p>In anticipation of his absence at the Meeting, Ian Fordham, Vice Chair, had written to the LAG providing an update on the Heb Way Analysis Survey, the results of which will not be available until the end of April; it was therefore requested that a <b>review and update of the LEADER Tourism policy be deferred until the next LAG Meeting in May, when an informed decision can be made; the LAG agreed.</b></p> <p>It was noted that there had been an increase in accommodation provider in the Outer Hebrides by approximately 100 in the past year, which results in an estimated 300 more bed spaces; the LAG requested whether this information could be presented</p>	

<p>geographically, including further accommodation mapping such as availability/ location of various types of accommodation and star ratings, along with any evidence relating to whether or not occupancy rates were increasing also. <b>It was noted that OHT could compile this information</b> with relative results from the Heb Way analysis feeding into this.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> that LEADER staff would also extract this information from approved applications during their In-situ visits.</p> <p><b>b) Harris Tweed Policy</b></p> <p>The LAG commented that the current policy was quite restrictive and that this was possibly reflected by the lack of applications and enquiries from the sector that were forthcoming. <b>It was agreed that LEADER staff would liaise with Lorna Macaulay regarding the review of the LAG’s Harris Tweed Policy.</b></p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tourism policy to be reviewed at May LAG Meeting</i></li> <li>• <i>Geographical map of accommodation provision to be compiled and made available to LAG, along with evidence of occupancy rate trends</i></li> <li>• <i>LEADER Staff to ensure occupancy rates are sought from approved accommodation applications.</i></li> <li>• <i>LEADER Staff to liaise with Lorna Macaulay regarding review of Harris Tweed policy</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">LAG OHT OFFICERS KM</p>
<p><b>7. INTERVENTION RATE LEVEL/ PROJECT CAP AMOUNT</b></p> <p><b>a) Sectoral Funding</b></p> <p>With the Programme now being ‘open’ for a full year, an overview of approved applications and incoming enquiries was undertaken and it was noted that a higher than average level of tourism projects were being supported/ applying, 50% of which equated to accommodation, with some sectors aimed to be supported by the Local Development Strategy receiving minimal to no support.</p> <p>Following discussion, <b>the LAG agreed that a temporary suspension on all accommodation enquiries</b>, including campsites etc. would be implemented effective immediately to stem the over subscription of these types of applications; the LAG will review this position at their May Meeting when the results of the Heb Way analysis is available. Current applications that are going through the process will be advised of a delay in any decisions.</p> <p><b>b) Project Cap Amount</b></p> <p>Review of applications noted a higher turnover of applications from businesses than community groups; level of grants and intervention to businesses were also slightly above the average amounts.</p>	

<p>The LAG raised the concern that Community groups cannot access loan funding, and whilst businesses can, they appear to be opting for grant funding ahead of consideration of alternate avenues; <b>it was suggested that business applicants be required to provide evidence of bank loan consideration</b> i.e. letters of refusal, unaffordable interest rates.</p> <p>Further discussion resulted in the <b>LAG agreeing to reduce the intervention rate to private Businesses up to 30% with a cap on available funding up to £100,000</b>. Community applicants can still access the previous rate of 50% up to £125,000. Should an exceptional case present itself, LEADER Officers can use discretion of up to 20%, for both business and community applications, to seek an increase from the LAG.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Update applicants with change of intervention rates</i></li> </ul>	OFFICERS
<p><b>8. OHL CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE</b></p> <p>An overview of the work undertaken by the team since the previous LAG Meeting was provided.</p> <p>It was noted that the new Outer Hebrides LEADER Project Support Assistant had been appointed; Catherine Myles will be starting in post on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017.</p>	
<p><b>9. CO-OPERATION PROJECTS</b></p> <p>Bill McMillan and Charlene Macmillan recently attended the Co-operation Exchange visit in Ayrshire which proved to be useful with some encouraging project ideas coming forward and good links with Northern Irish and Southern Scottish LAGs being made. Should the LAG wish to pursue any Co-operation projects in particular arising from the Event they should advise a member of the LEADER team.</p> <p>The LAG was advised that the Co-ordinator from the Aland LAG, who visited the Outer Hebrides LAG 2013, has extended at return-visit invitation to their Islands. Should the LAG wish, the LEADER Team can investigate co-operation project opportunities with the Aland LAG. It was noted that it is an option for the Accountable Body to act as the applicant in order to commission any Project the LAG wishes to take forward.</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>LAG to review Co-operation Projects report and advise on thoughts to pursue opportunities</i></li> </ul>	LAG

<p><b>10. AOCB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to staff absences, Storas Ubhist will not have a representative on the LAG for a period of time</li> <li>• SG has provided guidance on how the LAG can amend the Local Development Strategy, which can be undertaken twice annually; LAG to consider any amendments they would like in advance of next meeting</li> </ul> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>LAG to review LDS and consider any amendments to be made, prior to next LAG Meeting in May</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>LAG</b></p>
<p><b>11. Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May at 10am, Committee Room 3, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, with v/c links to Comhairle offices in Balivanich and Castlebay</b></p>	





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