



**Scottish Rural
Development
Programme**

Angus LAG Meeting

1 March 2017

VAA Office, Guthrie Port, Arbroath

Draft Minute of Meeting

Present:**Private Sector:**

Douglas Pond (DP) (Chair) - Fricockheim & District Community Council
Charles Goodall (CG) (Vice Chair) - Care about Angus
Graham Galloway (GG) - DD8 Music
Jeremy Parker (JP) - NFU
Hugh Campbell Adamson (HCA) - Scottish Land & Estates
Jenny Adamson (JA) – Individual (previously Angus Glens Community Broadband Cooperative)
Veronica Lynch (VL) - Dundee & Angus College

Public Sector:

Graham Hewitson (GH) Service Manager (Communities) - Angus Council
Gina Ford (GF) - Scottish Enterprise

Attending:**Public Sector:**

Shelley Hague (SH) Business Manager (Funding, Policy & Projects) – Angus Council

In Attendance:

David Tollick (DT) Angus LEADER/EMFF Coordinator
Kim Ritchie (KR) Angus LEADER/EMFF Assistant Coordinator
Bruce Thomson (BT) Angus LEADER/EMFF Financial Officer

Apologies:**Private Sector:**

Bill Sturrock (BS) Brechin & Area Partnership
Bill McLeod (BMC) Federation of Small Businesses
Gill Lawrie (GL) – Rural Leadership Group & Angus LAG
Mark Cessford (MC) - Montrose Community Council
David Valentine (DV) - Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce

Public Sector:

Alison Smith, Service Manager (Economic Development) - Angus Council
Jim Clarkson (JC) - Visit Scotland
Mike Strachan (MS) - Forestry Commission Scotland

1 Welcome & Apologies

Apologies

KR ran through apologies all noted above.

DP welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming. He also asked thanks to be passed onto VAA for hosting the meeting. DT confirmed meeting was quorate since 9 of the 17 members are present. The public/private balance of members attending is 2/9, which is within the regulatory balance of a maximum of 49% public.

2 Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of previous meeting approved, proposed VL and seconded CG.

No matters arising.

3 Budget

The group was issued with two spreadsheets one showing final position for 2016 and the current 2017 summary report. DT advised there was a slight error on the 2017 spreadsheet where the carry forward column had omitted approx. £4,600 salary costs underspend from 2015. The corrected 2017 spreadsheet would be circulated with the minute. CG asked if budget can be vired across budget headings, DT confirmed this is possible, provided that decisions on these changes are considered by the LAG and clearly minuted. Discussion around underspend within admin and animation budget and agreed the underspend would be held as a reserve to be reviewed in September.

4 Awards Updates

DT ran through agenda item 4a awards update, no claims to date. The group were advised one project was now complete; CAB, Financial Inclusion Group would be looking to claim £4,000 before the end of March. Larger construction projects should have some spend over the next couple of months. Artisan Tea – P&K will make a decision on 23rd March. All projects will be continually monitored through the post approval meetings with applicants. Project spend profiles will be monitored to ensure all project costs are delivered within the programme timeline. Any project failing to deliver on time may face de-commitment.

Friockhub Decision

DP handed chair over to CG while change request for Friockhub was discussed. CG asked the group if there were any questions for DP to address before he left the room. No questions arose. DP left the room. DT ran through the change request process. Staff team have delegated authority for simpler change requests i.e. virement between budgets however material changes require decision by the full LAG. Friockhub change request discussed. DT confirmed no compliance changes.

HCA joined meeting 9.55am.

GF agreed sensible approach to the change, as did GH. VL asked if consultancy work would follow procurement guidelines and a tender issued before appointment of consultant to evidence value for money (VFM) /reasonableness of costs (ROC). DT advised this would be written in as a condition agreeing the change request. GF confirmed that consultancy costs should also include expenses. DP asked to join meeting. CG advised DP that change request was approved on the condition the consultancy work was tendered to ensure VFM/ROC.

5 APPLICATIONS

Caledonian Railway

DT gave an overview of the Caledonian Railway application submission with reference to its strong links with Visit Scotland, it being one of the top tourist attractions in Brechin. Application approved with no objections.

Greenhillock Glamping

DT gave a brief overview of the application. Recommendations were discussed and the group were asked for feedback on R1. VL advised that she would be willing to make contact with the applicant to discuss opportunities for working with A & D college to enable alignment with any existing college activity. This could allow the college to complement any of the work already being done. She also felt the Development worker post would be needed to make the project work. The project was approved with two conditions.

- 1 The approval of any expenditure on the full-time temporary education development staff is deferred for further consideration of market demand and displacement.
- 2 Completion of the outstanding technical checks before capital works (car-park, drive, education centre/store) progress

Development and Enquiries

DP highlighted the fact that the LAG should be aware that projects requesting significant sums can bring greater risks, the team were advised to be weary of this. SH advised that the equestrian centre application was likely to be substantially less than the £750,000 indicated and that the Centre was, at present, a long way away from making an application to LEADER. DP congratulated the team on the current level of interest.

Broadband and connectivity

This strand of the LAG's 4 objectives is attracting fewer applications than the others. There was some discussion around possible cooperation with the neighbouring LAG area, Perth & Kinross. DT had recently attended a meeting with Angus Council broadband representatives Merlyn Dunn and Ally McLeod to discuss possible ways forward. A report will be available in early April with

recommendations. The group agreed CG would develop a small working group to help applicants create viable applications and to support any applicant groups to achieve results. GH highlighted that connectivity also includes physical connectivity and felt the group should not lose sight of this.

6 Governance & Operational Issues

LAG Member Recruitment

Debbie Donald has resigned from the group due to personal circumstances. DP and DT previously discussed the need for replacement and felt that the current membership of the LAG was sufficient for now, which was supported by the meeting.

Business Planning

DT explained the purpose of the report; the main difference is the involvement of assessors as soon as an application is received. Assessors should have an initial look at the project and provide any feedback to the staff team highlighting any initial concerns they may have. This means the assessors will be looking at the project while the staff team carry out the technical checks. There is also an option for assessors to meet the applicant face to face. The report was approved.

Fast track/de minimus

Chair asked the group to consider increasing the de minimus value for fast track applications, currently £5,000. The group agreed to increase to £10,000.

Written Procedure

DT summarised the report. He gave as an example a recent project change request that had worked well using the written procedure, resulting in a quick decision for the applicant. It was agreed that the written procedure option did not require the assessors to be delegated with the task.

Cooperation Procedure

DT introduced a report which recommended that a working group was established to approve cooperation activities including foreign visits and any resulting expenses. GG is currently working on various transnational projects and the LAG has received recently invitations to nominate delegates to attend partnership activities requiring foreign travel. The report proposed a specific cooperation budget of £5,000, which was approved. Details of any future cooperation events would be circulated to the full LAG. DT advised that Angus Council LAG members can apply to access the funds. JP would like the group to consider holding an event in Angus towards the end of the programme inviting delegates from Europe. This would increase the opportunity for cooperation towards the end of and following BREXIT. DP advised this could be a viable proposal at any time and not just towards the end of programme.

7 Monitoring Evaluation

Staff team are creating a feedback survey to be issued to applicants on completion of their projects.

8 ANIMATION

Press Calls

DP would like the attendance at such events shared round the LAG members. DP proposes everyone could be available to represent the LAG for press releases. The team will contact DP initially and he will nominate an appropriate LAG member, bearing in mind location and the application strand. If that person is unable to accept the invitation, DP will cover. Any member who does not wish to be included in these arrangements should alert the staff team. DT advised the applicant should be encouraged to take ownership of the actual press release arrangements.

Networking

SG has established a number of groups at national level, chairs coordinators, AB's. They are now proposing new working groups, LARCS, Communications and SLA's. Angus will be directly involved in the communications group, dates to be circulated.

Website

The website is now up and running. LAG members were asked to provide any feedback to KR. The website will be updated regularly and used to promote the programme along with social media, Facebook and twitter.

ESEC Event

DP thanked all who attended and noted it was very worthwhile for Angus. ESEC are interested in the future after LEADER. LAG members were requested to contribute to a report that is being developed targeting this issue. It is being led by the ESEC Officer, Joanne Scobie.

Business Cards

Blank business cards are now available for LAG members. These will be issued to all members. Members were encouraged to add their name and contact details to the rear of the card if appropriate.

9 LARCS

General consensus around LAGs is that the system is not fit for purpose. Due to financial constraints imposed during its build, it seems is not likely to fully address some audit and compliance issues. SH asked group members when they are representing the LAG on other groups, to be aware that the compliance element of LARCS is of major importance. The Team and members should be sympathetic to applicants working with the LARCS system; time and support should be given.

10 SRP Update

Main update – AGM meeting in Skye in September. If any LAG member is interested in attending, expenses will be covered from within the budget.

11 NESFLAG

SH gave an update to the group. No applications were received from Angus for the last round. It is anticipated that there will be more applications for March/April, with some innovative projects likely to come forward. 2 Angus projects, Montrose harbour pontoons and a social enterprise development in the Arbroath harbour area. There is a possibility of an event to promote the programme sometime in April/May. The future VAA event will promote both LEADER and NESFLAG. GF highlighted the presentation Portsoy gave at Laurencekirk, which was very successful in raising awareness. GF asked about cooperation projects with LEADER/EMFF. DP asked for clarification on the eligibility for LEADER funding of areas surrounding FLAG areas. DT indicated that any area out with Arbroath/Montrose can access LEADER funds subject to the maximum population cap of 10,000.

12 AOCB

Nothing.

Date of next meeting

14 June 2017 – Venue TBC

DRAFT