



**Scottish Rural
Development
Programme**

ANGUS COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Integrated Local Development Strategy

Wednesday 4 September 2019 at 14:15 to 16:00

Venue – 'The Crickety', Brechin Buccaneers

Guthrie Park, Brechin, DD9 7EB

Minute of Meeting – Approved 15/01/2019 by Mark Cessford and seconded by Mike Strachan

Present: LAG MEMBERS

Private Sector:

Douglas Pond (DP) (Chair) – Individual
Graham Galloway (GG) – DD8 Music/Kirrie Connections
Hugh Campbell Adamson-Scottish Land & Estates
Jeremy Parker (JP) – NFU Scotland, Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce
Jenny Adamson (JA) – Individual
Lol Scragg (LS) – Dundee & Angus College (D&A)
Mark Cessford (MC) – General Manager, RIY Shipping (Scotland) Limited

Public Sector:

Alison Smith (AS) (Vice Chair) – Service Manager (Economic Development) - Angus Council
Gina Ford (GF) - Scottish Enterprise (by Skype)
Mike Strachan (MS) - Forestry Commission Scotland

Angus Council:

Shelley Hague (SH) Business Manager (Funding, Policy & Projects)
Bruce Thomson (BT) Angus LEADER/EMFF Financial Officer
Karen Hamilton (KH) Angus LEADER/EMFF Clerical Officer

1. Apologies:

LAG Members

Caroline Warburton (CW)-Visit Scotland

Gill Lawrie (GL) (Vice-Chair) - Angus Countryside Initiative

Graham Hewitson – Individual

Angus Council

Kim Ritchie (KR) Angus LEADER/EMFF Assistant Coordinator

-David Valentine (DV) – Temporary leave of absence.

Welcome:

DP, The Chair, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming.

It was noted that the LAG attendance at today's meeting was quorate with seven private and three public members present.

Grant Hutchison who had welcomed us to the Crickety, has been the driving force for this development and members noted the positive press release circulated, and also another about ADHD. Gina commented that it was great to see that we are appreciated.

2. Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising

Correction noted in that Gina attended by Skype when in fact she was at the last meeting in June.

There were no matters arising from the minutes and that are not on the agenda.

Minutes of 6 June 2019 meeting were proposed by Hugh and seconded by Alison and agreed with the LAG members present.

3. Budget

i. Administration Budget

Following decision at the last meeting, £15,000 was removed from the Admin Budget and put into the awards budget.

Q - Dougie asked if an increase of Salaries is covered.

A - Increase in salaries is built into the current year's budget so the 2019 projected outcome is based on salaries increased from April 2019.

Q - Hugh asked when the scheme (spend) finished

A - Dave answered that he foresees there is sufficient funds to the end of Budget/Staff Contract spend in December 2020.

ii. Project Budget*

Staff continue to ask Projects about likely underspend.

There are two further identified underspends after the last LAG committed all further funds, totalling £4,564.01. A significant number of projects are nearing completion, and their final reconciliations will soon be known.

Most projects have started.

Claims are coming in on 30 projects and around 15 of them are due to finish soon so that will substantially put down the volume of claims coming in. Staff are coping with the volume of claims, at present, and suspects it will be the same volume for the rest of the year.

iii. Drawdowns from Scottish Government.

Monthly drawdowns are going well and we track the money coming back to Angus Council from the Scottish government. Drawdowns have been submitted to the end of July. We are still waiting to hear about the June and July drawdowns and are expecting one for April this week (if not next). We are up to date.

We have not had any significant compliance issues. SG still have the right to ask for papers if they need (the SG would deny us any monies if there are any irregularities) but to date we have successfully managed to stay clear.

Q - Alison asked how this compares with other LAGS.

A - Shelley - SG giving some of the LAGs programmes a bit of a hard time with submitting project and other areas are not up to date. SG are finding it difficult to forecast their costs if drawdowns are not moving through.

LEADER team will continue to monitor project milestones.

Forecasts from other areas and the redistribution of any area underspends are dealt with at Accountable Bodies meetings (attended by Shelley and will be reported when information comes to hand).

4. Awards for Noting

Cooperation re-allocations – At the last meeting we agreed that these awards be made. They were dependant on applications to the Scottish Government for cooperation drawdown from a national underspend fund, and all were successfully awarded by SG as follows

- i. **'ENGINE'** led by ourselves, £1,800
- ii. **Dementia Friendly Communities** led by Lanarkshire £8,759.70 to Dementia Friendly Communities Project. Graham Galloway is the lead for Angus with main part based in Lanarkshire.
- iii. **Rural Youth Project** led by Perth & Kinross £38,234.00. There are 5 LAGS throughout Scotland contributing the same amount of money: Angus, Perth & Kinross, Outer Hebrides, Scottish Borders and Lanarkshire. They have just appointed their staff and the project will roll out over the next two years.

5. Underspends and Reallocations

Members reviewed what could happen if we were to get underspend back from projects e.g. the further two totalling £4,564.01, noted above.

Tourism feasibility follow up - £50,000 top one – too much money to find.

ATC part-time development officer. Not well formed. Haven't heard too much more about that.

DT suggested it appropriate for smaller projects development to be continued against returned underspend e.g. Feasibility Study for Auchmithie Village Hall for £3,500 and to

continue talking to Arbirlot Hall along similar lines, with regard to small value applications, perhaps also Easthaven and coastal festival. The LAG consented to develop only the small projects against underspend, with staff to use the written procedure route for these, 'as and when' underspends are identified. DT reassured members that they will still have the opportunity to comment on the detail of applications, e.g. ref. issues related to 'feasibility' grants, during the written procedure process.

Shelley outlined the new SG proposal to accept 'spent-up' areas' bids for making further awards, funded by national programme reallocations. Around about ½ million may be in the central pot. Two extra reallocation criteria were proposed by SG but SEGS (Social and Economic Geographical Sciences) was rejected by accountable bodies. SG will however screen applicants against their second criterion, which combines four themes, climate change, equalities, reducing child poverty and mental health & wellbeing. Brechin Band (approx. £21K request) is reasonable as in that area, and staff will develop this. The cooperation one with the Swedes still not developed and will not be ready to go, again members will have opportunity to comment, noting the applications already awarded to Brechin-based applicants. The LAG have no objections to the team going forward with the Brechin Brass Band project.

6. Projects

- i. **Legacy project** – the remaining balance at June LAG was allocated to the project approx. £9,500. Shelley had requested £15,000 – DT proposed to now award it £15,000, funding it fully with already visible underspends £4,564.01 plus minor over-commitment of budget by approx. £500, funded through savings across remaining period to 31/12/2020. Member approval requested by the Chair (Dougie), Mike proposed and it was seconded by Lol. Approved.

- ii. **Denfind** This project was awarded money some time ago and they were given considerably less than they had requested. Denfind have appointed a contractor and have done some preliminary works so the project is about to start and spend our part of the money, however, Denfind is trying to get the price down with the contractor. We now have the documents for planning permission, regulations and specifications which has brought us a step forward. DT has faith that it will still go ahead and we have no further concerns at the moment.

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Alison Smith took over the Chair – Dave handed out a paper on Friockheim Hub for information only, no decision required.

Declarations of interested were noted ref DP and MC; no others were made. The meeting agreed that DP and MC should continue to be present for the discussion, to answer questions.

- iii. **Friockheim Hub** – LAG members discussed the report on the Hub's financial difficulties and the management of these by the Hub's board. They also discussed the completion by the Hub of the actions funded by the award of LEADER grant, which has now been fully and properly claimed.

It was also noted that LEADER monitoring continued beyond the last financial claim, to monitor deployment of the Hub's temp. part-time development staff posts, a key item of the original LEADER application, but not funded by LEADER grant. This monitoring was due to conclude soon.

It was noted that the Hub first reported the financial issues via their May 2019 routine quarterly LEADER-award monitoring. This was considered by DT, with AS and GL; the two vice-chairs, including a written report received from the Hub July 2019. LEADER was also then promised monthly reports from the Hub on their financial situation; this meeting's report being the August 2019 report.

The Hub's Board were asked to provide details on progress with requests for funding to Lottery funders and others in the next monthly report.

Back to the Chair

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7. Monitoring & Evaluation.

- i. **SG National programme statistics** noted; HCA asked SH for clarification (post-meeting) on the table of data

8. Governance & Operational Issues

- i. Dates for future meetings, future business. No need for extraordinary meetings was agreed – we can do things by written procedure as much as we can. Leave the item for further discussion.

9. Animation, Networking and Communication

- i. **Rural Skills Report** (SDS) –AS report. A new [Rural Skills Action Plan](#) had been launched and Alison Carrington from SDS had been invited to the Angus Community Planning board meeting to speak about that report. In August the Regional Skills Investment Plan ([insert link](#)) was launched, which has been developed as part of the work on Skills and Employability for the Tay Cities Deal, looking at skills right across the region. As the Rural Skills Action Plan had been launched at around the same time Alison Carrington was asked to talk about what is happening: locally, regionally,

nationally etc. A board to oversee delivery of the Rural Skills Plan is going to be put in place but no actual plan has been established yet. Within the plan they are looking at a number of priorities. It is not focusing on any one particular rural area of Scotland but there has been a wide consultation and there was a lot of discussion about it. Is it meeting employers' needs? How do we marry up skills offer with employer needs- we hear from a number of employers in Angus that "we can't recruit"? D&A College and AC have been discussing how to better engage with employers.

There is a need to better understand the issues in Angus, e.g. need for soft skills, general employability skills, need for digital skills, etc. and that whole anticipation of what future jobs might look like and what are the kind of skills they would want employees to have.

In summary it is a bit early to know how the Rural Skills Action Plan will be implemented.

There is a range of useful data available from SDS as well such as Regional Skills Sector plans

Of note over the next two years 250,000 jobs will need replaced in rural Scotland to replace those currently in employment – there will be demand in lower paid jobs, although a lot of employers in Angus are saying that we have gaps around higher paid jobs as well. Employment overall in Angus is likely to drop over the next 5 years. Key sectors for this area, Wholesale and Retail, Manufacturing (which we know is significant in Angus) and Human Health & Social Work.

There was also discussion on impact of Brexit, and analysis on the impact of no deal in Angus on Sectors: not surprisingly, Agriculture but also Manufacturing & Construction – key sectors of the Angus economy. Angus is identified as an area of highest risk. And then when you look at the profile of local authority areas, Angus is up there in the red – so couple of significant slides around that.

Dave asked how high level strategic reports, such as that, would feed into the LEGACY project. The LAG is looking forward to developments post LEADER and the mechanism of who can deal with that. There is complementarity in the stats presented with priorities of the Angus Community Plan. Keen to get that imbedded within the LEADER Legacy.

Recognising the plethora of plans, the lack of health related skills in the Rural Skills Action Plan had been highlighted to SDS.

- ii. **Tay Cities Deal** – Key progress updates: launch of the Tay Cities Skills Investment Plan covering rural as well as urban areas.
- iii. **Angus Fund** - £26.5 million focusing on Innovation and Research. We have recently had a number of stakeholder events to explore that and the third one will be in a few weeks' time. There are 3 themes emerging, but what has become very clear is that while the money may fund certain things it is starting to bring in other sources of funding, and other activities and partners on a bigger and more regional scales and this has been branded as 'The Mercury Programme'. The Mercury Programme is an over-arching programme capturing the high level ambitions of what we are trying to do, to make Angus and the Region, a low carbon sustainable place to live, work and visit.

The three themes emerging are:

- **Clean Growth – Component one** – building on what is happening around the Montrose area particularly North Angus, looking at investments by Rix Shipping, Montrose Port, looking at the potential of offshore wind, development of land for operations and maintenance. That requires new skills, business start-up, brings in innovation and research. Really exciting discussions around drone technology. We are looking at the infrastructure – a new corridor from Montrose to A90. Looking at potential reopening of the railhead to encourage shift from road to freight.
- **Low Carbon – Component two** –We have identified two or three stakeholders that have really exciting ideas about shifting from traditional fuel supply, to e.g. hydrogen, solar wind, electric vehicles etc. Potential for oils of different technologies around transport, improving connectivity, looking at Angus being a hub for connecting North to South.

Also looking at new fuel technologies to tackle fuel poverty. Looking at alternative fuels for use in Agriculture etc. Also looking at Zero Carbon and Smart Housing – so how do you make houses more digital to support Care at home, Telehealth, etc. as much as making them fuel efficient. Working with the John Forster, Forster Group, in Brechin.

- **Agritech - Component three** (led by Agrico and Soil Essentials) looking at new technologies. There has been a huge interest in this sector and James Hutton are part of this over and above their own projects. (Looking at new technologies and new plants, new crops, how do we farm differently, how we use soil and water, robotics, drones, etc. to make it more efficient and sustainable?)

Looking at new plastic recycling technology with regard to waste plastic to create new products

There will be further events and we have very tight deadlines. We submitted a strategic outline case to government and we have had feedback so SOC being reworked and this has to go back within the next few weeks. Whole Tays Cities Deal should be signed off in November.

We recognise this project probably won't spend until 2021.

Digital - £1m allocated for rural broadband network. Working up at how this will be used. There is also a Regional Project which is around the Local full fibre network and we are looking at additional funding for that. What could be done – at a regional level and what would that £1m add to in the local area. So we are looking at local providers and wireless. Speaking to a cooperative in Stonehaven – SMART Rural; they use that technology for connecting up sensors, etc. but actually how does that technology work for connecting up to homes, business and agriculture, etc. . We are going for an early spend in terms of that project looking to start at the beginning of next year in terms of Rural Broadband.

- i. **Flourishing Destinations** – GL was with this project today, with visiting parties from Romania and from Flanders. It's part of an almost two year project. Next event in March 20 in Belgium – Angus will travel to that.
- ii. **ENGINE Project** -The young Swedes were across in a combination of Angus, Fife & Perth-Kinross. In Angus they were based at Rossie Young People's Trust, near Montrose, at DD8, Murton Trust and Angus Council Communities Service in the Forfar/Kirriemuir area. We are just about to have a de-brief team in a couple of weeks' time and will feed back to you a report on all that. We have another tranche of people coming from Sweden next year, and Scots going there too.
- iii. **The Chairs 'Rural Enterprise futures' Meeting 19th Sept** – Gill Lawrie, Gina Ford and Dave Tollick are attending. Fergus Ewing the Cabinet Secretary will attend to do the 'Closing Address', SG staff and several interesting speakers, involved in enterprise projects for the rural community.

10. NESFLAG

SH report – We have fully spent £114,960.00 for four projects which has covered our priorities for local development strategy very well. We are pulling together an end of spend report and will bring that to the next LAG meeting so that you can see more detail.

Everyone from the LAG is invited to the launching of **Arbroath Signal Tower Museum** project on Saturday 21st, starts at 1.00pm (they received some investment from us to expand on their archiving and teaching & learning for fishing industries). SH is the representative for NESFLAG.

NESFLAG are having their next meeting in Angus, and looking to do a tour of all the Angus Projects. The meeting will be in October and Shelley will give us details of dates which will be circulated to the LAG.

11. Any other business

- i. **Projects Visit** – was cancelled in August due to the inclement weather. Another day is to be organised and Karen will send out another Doodle Poll to try and get a date.

12. Date of next Meeting

4 December 2019 – Venue to be organised at 1:00 – 4:00pm.