

APPROVED Minute of SALAG Meeting
Tuesday, 28th February 2017 at 2.00pm
Council Chamber, Gordon House, Inverurie

Present

Liam Smyth	Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (Chair) (Private)
Gavin Clark	Scottish Natural Heritage (Public)
Ian Cowe	Forestry Commission Scotland (Public)
Dawn Tuckwood	NHS Grampian (Public)
Jean Henretty	Marr Rural Partnership (Private)
Gina Ford	Scottish Enterprise (Public)
Douglas Milne	Aberdeenshire Council (Public)
Kyrsten Black	Scotland's Rural College (Public)
Catriona Dougherty	Garioch Community Councils (Private)
Ruth Fisher	Visit Aberdeenshire (Private)
Elaine Sinclair	Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (Private)

Officers in Attendance

Alasdair Cunningham	European Programmes Co-ordinator (South)
June Jaffrey	European Programmes Claims Officer (South)

Apologies

Belinda Miller	Aberdeenshire Council (Public)
Jo Robinson	Visit Scotland (Public)
Gerald Banks	National Farmers' Union Scotland (Private)
Dawn Brown	Garioch Rural Partnership (Private)
David Nelson	Kincardineshire Development Partnership (Private)

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed those present.
- 1.2 Apologies were noted as above.
- 1.3 It was noted that the meeting was not quorate and therefore the project under consideration will be subject to written procedures for a final decision.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 The following LAG member has an indirect interest in, although not directly involved with the following project for commissioning;

- Elaine Sinclair – Tolbooth project. For noting only. Elaine knows the architect personally but is not directly involved in the project and may therefore participate in discussions.

2.2 The following LAG substitute member has a direct interest in the following project for commissioning;

- Douglas Milne – Uryside Park, Inverurie - as the Area team is leading on this. The project proposal is at draft stage only therefore Douglas is permitted to take part in project discussions.

3. Re Minute of LAG Meeting 02 November 2016.

3.1 The minute of the LAG meeting of 02 November 2016 was approved as an accurate record. Proposed by Gina Ford and seconded by Ian Cowe.

4. Project Assessment Committee (PAC) Minutes 03 February 2017

4.1 The minute of the PAC meeting of 03 February 2017 was noted with an amendment to remove Elaine Sinclair from the list of those present.

5. LAG Quarterly Monitoring Report

5.1 The Co-ordinator presented a report outlining the four projects currently approved in the South.

5.2 Alasdair advised that two claims have been submitted by Aberdeenshire Highland Cattle Ltd and are currently being scrutinised by the Claims Officer. There are some queries with the claims which are being resolved. The applicant has changed some items within the approved application but this does not impact on the outcome of the project. The business is trading well and has garnered interest with a growing client base.

5.3 Ringlink Scotland has withdrawn from the LEADER contract process due to the claiming process, as the applicants felt the Scottish Government process was too onerous and laborious, with too much information required in terms of supporting evidence. It was noted that the project is going ahead without the LEADER funding.

Ringlink Scotland's comments will be fed back to the Scottish Government.

5.4 It was clarified that the project currently at claim stage has been supported in advance of them submitting their claim by the Co-ordinator and Claims Officer with guidance and information being given.

5.4 The LAG agreed:

5.4.1 The noting of the Quarterly Monitoring report.

6. Projects

6.1. It was noted that the meeting was not quorate therefore all recommendations will be ratified by circulating the project discussions by written procedure to the full SALAG.

6.2. 02/P00006 – Refurbishment of Drumoak Church - Support for the Community

The Chair asked PAC members to give the LAG an overview of PAC discussions regarding this project. Gina advised that the PAC felt this was a good use of a facility in an area with clear demand. It was felt this was an imaginative way of providing a range of facilities in the community. It was noted there was lots of supporting information provided by the applicants and that focusing in on the relevant documents was at times challenging. Outstanding queries around ownership and value for money for the chosen contractor were highlighted.

Alasdair advised that the ownership issue is still outstanding, further dialogue has been undertaken with the Church of Scotland Trustees and the group and it has now been referred to Aberdeenshire Council legal department for their view. The groups' legal right to function in the building is yet to be addressed. The LAG could apply conditions of grant if they felt appropriate regarding quotes and the legal issues of ownership if they were minded to approve the application. The Co-ordinator clarified that no actual work has begun on the church building.

LAG voted on the project as follows: (5 private votes/6 public votes)

Approve	Reject	Defer	Abstain	DOI
Ian Cowe (Pub)			Liam Smyth (Priv)	
Kyrsten Black (Pub)				
Gavin Clark (Pub)				
Catriona Dougherty (Priv)				
Gina Ford (Pub)				
Jean Henretty (Priv)				
Ruth Fisher (Priv)				
Douglas Milne (Pub)				
Dawn Tuckwood (Pub)				
Elaine Sinclair (Priv)				

No decision was made as the LAG were not quorate; this will be followed-up by written procedure.

6.3 02/P00009 – Clubhouse Extension

The Chair asked PAC members to give the LAG an overview of PAC discussions regarding this project. Gavin advised that the PAC was ambivalent towards this project as it was considered to be a standard refurbishment; further benefits to the community require clarification. Clarity was sought on the availability and open use to the wider community. There is some doubt on the group being equipped to deliver and manage a complex project and LEADER process.

There were issues raised on; public use and survey work done (as the survey supplied was an Aberdeenshire Council survey on Kintore area sporting facilities). The Co-ordinator advised that a review of the village hall bookings revealed that demand outstripped availability but conceded that the concerns regarding the groups' capacity as regards fulfilling the claim requirements and any potential penalties were valid as well as undertaking the additional work involved with opening up the venue to community use. It was noted that the LARCS system could see the group struggle as there may not be the capacity/knowledge there to complete as required; help from out with the group may be beneficial. Douglas Milne advised that the group had received Area Top-up grant but had taken some time to be able to draw down the monies which intimated that the group may struggle with the greater complexities of the LEADER process.

Whilst the LAG acknowledged that the project may suit a particular demographic, there were no letters of support supplied to demonstrate this. It was noted that the Community Sports Hub advisor for Inverurie area could have supported the preparatory work of this application had they been approached. The LAG felt it was unfortunate that no health element was raised in the project application. The LAG felt there were other funds that could have been approached.

The LAG voted as follows: (5 private votes/6 public votes)

Approve	Reject	Defer	Abstain	DOI
Kyrsten Black (Pub)	Jean Henretty (Priv)		Liam Smyth (Priv)	
Douglas Milne (Pub)	Ian Cowe (Pub)		Ruth Fisher (Priv)	
Catriona Dougherty (Priv)	Gina Ford (Pub)		Gavin Clark (Pub)	
			Dawn Tuckwood (Pub)	
			Elaine Sinclair (Priv)	

No decision was made as the LAG were not quorate; this will be followed-up by written procedure.

6.4 **02/P00008 – Furniture Lodge Social Enterprise**

This project was put forward for discussion, but not approval as there were still outstanding technical issues to be resolved. A steer from the LAG on whether or not the project would theoretically be supported at 100% was sought.

The Co-ordinator advised that the PAC raised several queries some of which were addressed by the applicant but outstanding queries are to be clarified before a formal vote. As the Scottish Government had changed its guidance during the application submission with it no longer acceptable to use income as Match Funding. The Co-ordinator felt that the best approach would be LEADER funding at 100%; to be given over a shorter period thus enabling the group to become self-sufficient. The groups' cash flow projections for future years suggest that this model would work.

Gina advised that the PAC had felt this project was interesting and worthwhile and would deliver a valuable service. The group was unable to approach other suggested funders as funds suggested they do not support this type of activity.

The Co-ordinator asked the LAG for its view on supporting the project at 100%. It was noted that loans/funding are available from Social Investment Scotland to bridge any short term cash flow capacity. The Chair advised that funding from “Zero Waste Scotland” could be applied for. The building is subject to a CAT transfer on the basis of receiving LEADER funding, with a condition that a set figure be spent by the applicants per annum on building maintenance.

The LAG had concerns with 50% of the project costs going on staff salaries and the remainder on daily operating costs with no clear indication of any lasting legacy should no self-funding be in place at the end of the LEADER funding. The revenue projections were seen as ambitious but it was noted that due to the current financial climate and downturn in the oil industry there has been an increase both in donations and sales (from Magpie etc.). The group also felt that mentoring and business advice could be useful from the likes of Magpie and that this could potentially lead to accreditation. Further concerns regarding the building were discussed with the Co-ordinator reassuring the group that an Aberdeenshire Council Quantity Surveyor had reviewed the premises, with the refurbishment costs being based on this.

The LAG suggested that LEADER could support the re-development of the building with the applicants investing in the running costs i.e. fuel, utilities etc. And that the applicants approach local organisations such as AVA and KDP to tap into the wealth of specialist advice and national knowledge in this field.

No vote was undertaken on the funding model proposed (100% grant); this will be followed-up by an electronic vote by written procedure.

- 6.5 Gavin suggested it would be useful if when written procedures are in place that a guidance paper from the LAG Chair for project recommendations be produced. The Chair agreed that a short discussion and recommendation paper will be issued to LAG members prior to the written procedure.

Action;

- LAG Chair and Vice Chairs to write a short discussion and recommendation paper.

7. Discussion – 3 Project Proposals for Commissioning Approach

- 7.1 Further to an earlier call for commissioned project proposals, the Co-ordinator advised that further preparatory work has been undertaken on the following potential projects. Alasdair advised that there are further proposals which will be worked-up and presented at the next LAG meeting for consideration.
- 7.2 **Tolbooth project** – discussions on this project were undertaken with the Co-ordinator, LAG Chair, Council Officers and members of the Tolbooth Museum. This project would see the funding of a Development Worker for a 2 year period with a grant of around £100k.

The Tolbooth Museum is a Council owned building with the Tolbooth Museum group managing the day to day business. The museum group do not have the staff nor capacity to make any developments/improvements to the Museum. It is anticipated that the Area Management team within Aberdeenshire Council would develop a Business Plan and manage branding, promotion etc. This would then be handed back to the Museum group, who are well supported by volunteers to continue with the work. There would be the potential for a CAT of the building to the museum trust group in the future.

LAG members queried if NESFLAG had been approached as they felt to be more within the FLAG remit; Alasdair advised that NESFLAG have met with the group but are not yet at commissioning stage.

The LAG would like to see the Museum stand on its own merits as an exciting destination facility without relying on a café element; particularly when there are numerous cafes in the town.

7.3 **The LAG agreed:**

7.3.1. To fully develop this proposal into a commissioned project.

7.4 **Uryside Park project** – discussions on this project were undertaken with the Co-ordinator, LAG Chair, Council Officers and Martin Auld of RSPB.

A Development Officer post would be created and capital works would be undertaken from this £300k environmental and destination tourism project proposal.

The area of works is the land between Inverurie and the housing developments on the Oldmeldrum Road and will provide a town park for community use. It was confirmed that the Allotments and football pitches originally planned are no longer being considered as new facilities have been created since the development of the Uryside Park Masterplan. Douglas confirmed that there will now be informal open green space with a wetlands area, a belt of trees and a path network. The Uryside Path group are now constituted. It was noted that due to the geographical nature of this area as a floodplain there will be occasion when it may in part be inaccessible.

The LAG are asked to consider which elements of the Uryside Park plan they would wish to support as projects.

- i. Tree belt – the forestry commission will supply trees
- ii. Wetlands – it is intended that “natural ponds” will be created with indigenous plants and wildlife.
- iii. Path network – for walking and cycling
- iv. Connectivity – to Meldrum Meg project

7.5 **The LAG agreed:**

7.5.1. To fully support this proposal into a commissioned project.

7.6 **Huntly project** – discussions on this project were undertaken with the Co-ordinator, LAG chair and Donald Boyd of Huntly Development Trust.

The project proposed is town centre redevelopment along with renewable energy, car and bike share schemes. The Marr Area Management team is currently doing work around this along with Huntly Development Trust. HDT have drafted stakeholder to create a project. Huntly is seen as deprived with empty shops and business being unsupported over the last few years, however it was noted that there is capacity and activity for regeneration but suffering a lack of funding. It would be proposed that practical tools for retailers copying the Fraserburgh model of advice and guidance would be beneficial.

7.6 The LAG agreed:

7.6.1. To fully support this proposal into a commissioned project.

7.7 The Co-ordinator asked that LAG members consider becoming directly involved with some of the proposed commissioned projects.

8. AOCB

8.1 The Chair advised that his position of Chair ends today (28 Feb 2017) and that he intends to step down due to work commitments.

8.2 Vice Chair Jean Henretty advised that she also rescinds her position due to a change in employment circumstances.

8.3 Liam indicated he would consider the Vice Chair position. Nominations are sought for the Chair and Vice Chair positions and should be forwarded to the Co-ordinator.

LAG members expressed their gratitude to the Chair and Vice Chair for their commitment and guidance.

8.4 Luther Farms – this organisation wish to create a largescale service station project replicating the “Tebay Services” facility. This project will increase employment and business opportunities for local producers in the immediate area. It is unclear as yet what part and involvement LEADER could play in this project as the delivery outcomes could potentially be delivered without LEADER funding. The Co-ordinator is to meet with Business Gateway shortly.

9. Date of next SALAG LAG meeting; Tuesday 27 June 2017, Ury room, Gordon House, Inverurie

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
LAG Chair and Vice Chairs to write a short discussion and recommendation paper.	LS/JH/BM

Minute Taker – June Jaffrey, European Programmes Claims Officer 06/03/17



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: **Europe investing in rural areas**