

South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy



October 2015

South Aberdeenshire

Local Development Strategy – Executive Summary

The South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy (SALDS) sets out a vision for South Aberdeenshire from 2014 to 2020. This vision has been developed through extensive community and stakeholder engagement and analysis of other key strategies. Resources will be made available to deliver the SALDS, mainly from the European Union (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) and the Scottish Government. These Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programmes will replace and build upon the previous Rural LEADER and Aberdeenshire European Fisheries Fund programmes.

The South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (SALAG) has been established to manage and animate the rural development elements of the strategy and its funds, with fisheries elements being managed and animated by the North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG). Both partnerships bring together a range of community, private and public-sector organisations.

SALAG Membership

Community	Public	Private
Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action	Aberdeenshire Council	Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
Garioch Community Councils	Forestry Commission	Federation of Small Businesses
The Garioch Partnership	NHS Grampian	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Kincardineshire Development Partnership	North East Scotland College	Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society
Marr Local Community Councils	Scotland's Rural College	Scottish Land and Estates
Marr Rural Partnership	Scottish Enterprise	Visit Royal Deeside
	Scottish Natural Heritage	
	Visit Scotland	



NESFLAG Membership

Community	Public	Private	Fisheries
Banffshire Partnership	Aberdeenshire Council	Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce	Aberdeen Producers' Association
Buchan Development Partnership	Angus Council	Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership	Mackay Boat Builders
Fraserburgh Development Trust	Scottish Enterprise	Federation of Small Businesses	Moray Firth Inshore Fisheries Group
Kincardineshire Development Partnership	Scottish Maritime Academy		North East Scotland Fisheries Organisation
	Visit Scotland		P&J Johnstone
			Peterhead and Fraserburgh Fish Producers' Association
			Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishing
			Scottish Fishermens' Organisation
			Scottish White Fish Producers' Association
			Seafood Scotland
			Scottish Seafood Association

The South Aberdeenshire area broadly corresponds to the administrative areas of Garioch, Kincardine and Mearns and Marr (excluding the Cairngorms National Park Area). All communities within the SALDS area will be eligible for support from rural development funding, with fisheries funding targeted on Gourdon, Inverbervie, Johnshaven, St. Cyrus and Stonehaven.

Two Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analyses have been carried out:

Rural SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality of life • High skills base • High levels of education • Low levels of unemployment • Natural and diverse landscape including Natura Sites • Arts, culture and heritage of the area • Vibrant voluntary sector with experience of project delivery • High rates of volunteering and civic pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport • Road network connections between villages • Broadband • Training and vocational opportunities for young people • Quality and availability of affordable visitor accommodation • Facilities and services, especially in remote rural areas • High unemployment in fishing communities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using existing facilities (e.g. community halls, schools, sports facilities) more creatively (e.g. community ownership, multi-purpose hubs) • Building on key industries: tourism; energy; food & drink; arts & culture. • Community transport • Developing cycling and footpath networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable housing to rent and buy • Lack of affordable business spaces • Lack of key workers (carers, teachers) • Income inequality • Public sector funding cuts • Out-migration of young people • Ageing population and pressure on services • Danger of dormitory coastal towns • Declining town centres



Fisheries SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stocks are healthy • Diverse range of seafood • Big industry and strong brand (Scottish Seafood) • Unique products • Marine Environment • Coastline, wildlife and heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor promotion of locally-caught seafood • Perception of industry as a single body rather than segmented by different products • Lack of young entrants, skilled workers and career progression • Supply chain for locally-consumed fish • Connectivity between communities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seafood as a healthy choice • Short supply chain • Secondary processing • Traceability/sustainability • Education and promotion of career opportunities • Promotion of the processing sector • Job opportunities • Centre of excellence • £40 million investment in Peterhead Harbour • Diversifying coastal communities into new business areas • Ecotourism • Learn from successful communities • Use of redundant buildings • Move beyond retail focus in communities • Access to local employment and remote working • eServices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFP reform • Landing obligation • Oil and gas pull • World affairs (e.g. Russian import ban) • Environmental organisations and public perception • Loss of local control and quotas moving • Revised EMFF structure – potential duplication between 'Axis 4' and others • Definition of a fishing community could exclude some settlements • Economic viability of small harbours and returns on investments • Landing obligation could be costly to implement and use up entire programme budget

The SALDS identifies the following themes and priorities:

1. **Connecting People and Places;**
2. **Developing Key Economic Sectors;**
3. **Promoting and protecting the environment;**
4. **Enriching and positive activities for all;**
5. **Cooperating with other countries and areas.**

Theme 1: Connecting people and places

Objective: By 2020, people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire are better connected, physically, emotionally and digitally, through a range of active, affordable and sustainable solutions.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following priorities:

Priority 1.1: Sustainable & active travel to connect rural communities

Projects and initiatives which contribute to community transport initiatives, low carbon travel solutions and promote active travel such as walking and cycling will be supported.

Priority 1.2: Community facilities for the modern age

Multi-purpose and sustainable community hubs (e.g. for service provision, leisure and business) which have realistic business plans will be supported, particularly those which incorporate broadband and/or ICT provision..

Theme 2: Developing key economic sectors

Objective: By 2020, South Aberdeenshire realises its full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for its people provided through creating or enhancing micro and small and medium-sized rural and fisheries enterprises (including Social Enterprises), increasing the skills base and creating new jobs.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to enhancing and growing businesses in the priority sectors of **Tourism, Food & Drink, Fisheries, Land-based, Retail and Creative Sectors.**

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following priorities:

Priority 2.1: Improving priority sector competitiveness and co-operation

Projects/initiatives which build business capacity and skills; identify and develop new markets for products and services; and/or support new bespoke training initiatives to encourage business development in the priority sectors of tourism, food and drink, fisheries, land-based, retail and creative sectors will be supported.

Priority 2.2: Facilitating diversification from agriculture

Projects/initiatives which build business capacity and skills; identify and develop new markets for products and services; and/or support new bespoke training initiatives to encourage business development will be supported.

Priority 2.3: Facilitating diversification within and outside of the fisheries sector

Projects/initiatives which identify and develop new markets, infrastructure, products and services within or outside of the fisheries sector will be supported, as will projects which help small and declining fishing ports to maximise their marine potential through developing a diversified infrastructure.

Priority 2.4: Supporting lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas

Projects/initiatives providing training to enhance existing SMEs and assist in the start-up of new companies in fisheries areas will be supported.

Priority 2.5: Adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries seafood supply chain.

Projects/initiatives which support measures to adapt to the landing obligation; new product and/or market development; the adoption or development of innovative processes and/or supply chain integration; and co-ordinate in a way which empowers local communities and makes the best use of their assets in fisheries areas will be supported.

Theme 3: Promoting and protecting the environment

Objective: By 2020, South Aberdeenshire will be a lower carbon society that enjoys, conserves and makes the most of its natural environment and assets.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following priorities:

Priority 3.1: Promoting low carbon futures

Projects/initiatives which contribute to the low carbon economy, such as community energy projects, community-led food growing and supply initiatives, community resilience and awareness-raising activities will be supported.

Priority 3.2: Protecting, exploring & enhancing the natural environment

Projects/initiatives which contribute to protecting, exploring and enhancing the natural environment, such as research and awareness raising activities; conservation activities; will be supported.

Theme 4: Enriching and positive activities for all

Objective: By 2020, people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire will have better access to opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing and to participating in local arts, culture and heritage.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following priorities:

Priority 4.1: Leisure & recreation for wellbeing

Projects/initiatives which contribute to improving leisure and recreational opportunities, such as the provision of facilities, activities and events which have health and wellbeing benefits, including to people in disadvantaged groups, will be supported.

Priority 4.2: Celebrating and supporting arts, culture & heritage

Projects/initiatives which celebrate and support arts, culture and heritage by raising awareness of and increasing participation in local arts, culture and heritage will be supported.

Priority 4.3: Community Capacity Building

Projects/initiatives which build capacity and social capital within communities through the provision of activities such as training and support to community organisations will be supported.

Theme 5: Cooperating with other countries and areas

Objective: By 2020, South Aberdeenshire will have established co-operation projects which, through innovation, networking and knowledge exchange, contribute to meeting the objectives of the other four LDS themes and associated priorities.

Priority 5.1: International Co-operation

Projects/initiatives which facilitate co-operation across LAG boundaries with other EU Member State, contributing to at least one other priority of the LDS or exchange of experience with another LAG will be supported.

Priority 5.2: National Co-operation

Projects/initiatives which facilitate co-operation across LAG boundaries within Scotland, contributing to at least one other priority of the LDS will be supported.

Each priority has a provisionally-allocated budget which will support projects in South Aberdeenshire. The majority of funds will be awarded through a competitive application process, with application rounds held approximately quarterly (rural) or four-monthly (fisheries). The SALAG and NESFLAG may commission project activities as well. Projects must contribute to at least one of the following targets:

1. Number of projects supported
2. Number of individuals benefiting from projects
3. Number of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises benefiting from projects
4. Number of new or enhanced facilities supported
5. Number of new products/services created
6. Number of new companies established
7. Number of new jobs created
8. Number of new training initiatives supported
9. Number of people receiving training and/or developing new skills

Projects will also be expected to demonstrate a contribution to the following themes:

Innovation – Projects must demonstrate ways in which their activity is innovative. Innovation is defined as:

- the emergence of new products and services which incorporate the distinctiveness of the local area;
- new or improved methods permitting the combination of the area's human, natural and/or financial resources, resulting in better use of indigenous potential;
- the combination of and links between economic sectors which are traditionally separate;
- novel ways of involving the local population in the decision-making process and in implementing the project.

Sustainability – Projects must demonstrate at least a neutral, and ideally a positive environmental impact. They must also demonstrate sustainable business models which will reduce the need for continued public support beyond the lifetime of the project.

Equal Opportunities - Projects must demonstrate at least a neutral, and ideally a positive equalities impact. They should take account of their impact on people with protected characteristics, as set out in the Equalities Act.

Community empowerment and social capital – Projects must demonstrate how they will engage with and develop social capital within the communities within which they are located.

The implementation of the SALDS will be monitored and evaluated throughout the lifetime of the programme. Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out in three areas:

- 1) Implementation of the Local Development Strategy
- 2) Governance of the LAG/FLAG
- 3) Implementation of projects

A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will aim to:

- i) Quantify outputs, outcomes and results from project to strategy level
- ii) Demonstrate the contribution of funds to wider local, national and European policy objectives
- iii) Assess the effectiveness of interventions and the overall strategy
- iv) Provide an evidence base upon which to review and revise the strategy
- v) Provide the LAG/FLAG with the information required to ensure that the strategy is delivered

Presented below are the specific objectives the SALDS Communications Plan will seek to achieve:

- actively promote the work of SALAG and NESFLAG, including our LDS' vision, aims, and objectives within the local and business community, across Scotland and beyond;
- undertake regular and robust communications and engagement with key stakeholders, including rural and fisheries communities and businesses, other (F)LAGs and the Managing Authority;
- publicise and share our achievements and impacts widely;
- encourage local residents and businesses from across our diverse communities to further engage in the development of rural and fisheries areas and engage with the (F)LAG; and
- increase the level of understanding and awareness within the local community of the role which the EC plays in rural economic development.



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Introduction



Local Action Groups (LAGs) across Europe are tasked with delivering European Union-funded programmes to support Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). European funding programmes for the 2014-20 period will support CLLD programmes delivered by LAGs and enshrined in one overarching Local Development Strategy (LDS).

This LDS is for South Aberdeenshire and has been developed through consultation with people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire. The LDS will guide the funding decisions made by the South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (SALAG) and the North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG) for rural and fisheries-dependent communities in the area. The SALAG will be funded by LEADER through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the NESFLAG for coastal communities will be funded through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). This LDS aims to deliver these funds complementarily to achieve the objectives of territorially-focussed LDSs.

LEADER has been in existence since the early 1990s and is a bottom-up, partnership based approach to multi-sectoral rural development. LEADER is a French acronym, standing for Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale, meaning 'Links between the rural economy and development actions'.

LEADER links with high level European Union (EU) development policy but also enables individuals, communities and businesses within local areas to come together to design and implement Local Development Strategies (LDS), an approach that is termed Community Led Local Development (CLLD).

The LEADER approach is about the proactive 'animation' of a territory and developing links between initiatives, programmes, organisations and people for the development of the rural economy. In this way the LEADER approach builds social and economic capital. LEADER is also about the added value that flows from the bottom-up and partnership approach with better identification of local needs and local solutions, more engagement on the part of local stakeholders and greater scope for innovation¹.

The **EMFF** is the fund for the EU's maritime and fisheries policies for 2014-2020. It aims to promote competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible fisheries and aquaculture; foster the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP); promote a balanced and inclusive territorial development of fisheries and aquaculture areas; and foster the development and implementation of the Union's Integrated Maritime Policy in a manner complementary to Cohesion Policy and the CFP.

The South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy (LDS) therefore focuses on the priorities for both rural and fisheries areas, which the South Aberdeenshire LAG and NESFLAG have responsibility for implementing over the 2014 – 2020 programming period.

¹ Scottish Government, Consultation on Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) 2014 – 2020, p. 73

01

The South Aberdeenshire LAG Area

*Our vision is for a strong, thriving
South Aberdeenshire where people
in rural communities are motivated
to make change happen*

South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group

1. The South Aberdeenshire LAG Area

Aberdeenshire is a very large and diverse area, and in recognition of this, Aberdeenshire Council delivers many of its services through six decentralised areas:

- Banff & Buchan (pop. 35,317)
- Buchan (pop. 40,302)
- Formartine (pop. 41,450)
- Garioch (pop. 49,950)
- Kincardine & Mearns (pop. 41,381)
- Marr (pop. 37,380)

The South Aberdeenshire LAG (SALAG) operating area covers approximately three of the six area committees of Aberdeenshire Council: the Garioch, Kincardine and Mearns and Marr areas of Aberdeenshire, except for the area within the Cairngorms National Park Authority boundary which is covered by a separate LAG. The North Aberdeenshire LAG (NALAG) covers approximately the administrative areas of Banff and Buchan, Buchan and Formartine administrative areas of Aberdeenshire (see Map 1)². As datazone geography does not fit with local administrative boundaries, datazones have been assigned to North or South Aberdeenshire using a 'best fit' model. Fisheries funding will be targeted on coastal settlements with demonstrable associations with the fisheries sector.



² A list of the datazones (and proportion of datazones that straddle boundaries) is included in Appendix 1.



ABERDEENSHIRE
North, South, Cairngorms

0 49900 metres
Map Scale 1:700000

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Aberdeenshire Council
Printed on 20/7/2015

The SALAG area therefore represents a coherent geography in that it operates within existing administrative arrangements and falls under the overarching strategic vision of the Aberdeenshire Community Plan. The SALAG areas of Garioch, Marr and Kincardine & Mearns each have their own Community Plan.

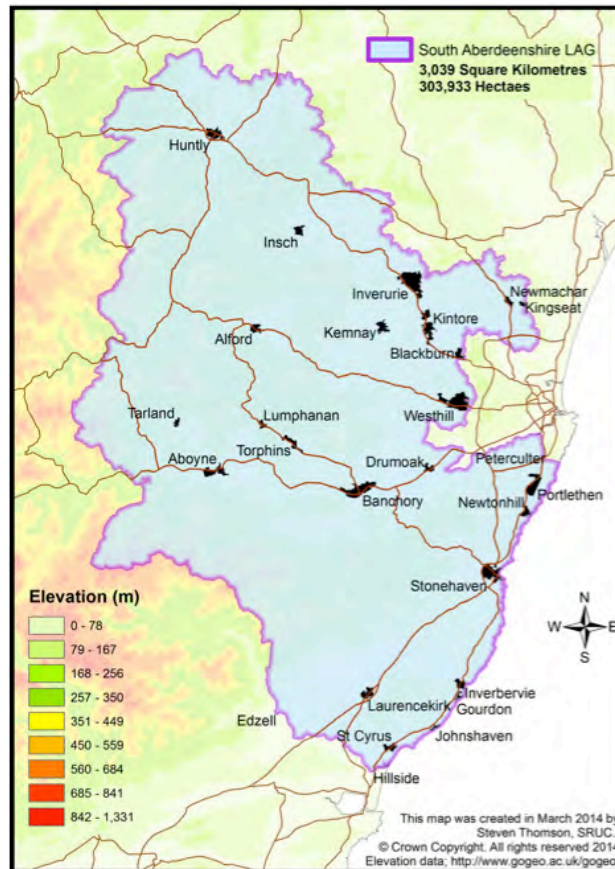
The SALAG geography is also coherent socio-economically, with the culture of the area having been shaped by long-standing links to primary sectors and a tangible inter-dependency between rural and urban economies and communities. The SALAG area builds upon the existing geography of the former Rural Aberdeenshire LAG and Aberdeenshire European Fisheries Fund FLAG through enhancing linkages between the two broadly similar structures in which there is currently some overlap.

The following settlements will be eligible for EMFF support:

- Gourdon
- Inverbervie
- Johnshaven
- St. Cyrus
- Stonehaven

As Map 2 depicts, the South Aberdeenshire LAG area covers approximately 3,039 km squared and includes the main towns of: Banchory (pop. 7,030), Huntly (pop. 4,570), Inverurie (pop. 11,590), Portlethen (pop. 7,130), Stonehaven (pop. 10,820) and Westhill (pop. 11,220). Other less major settlements such as Kintore, Inch and Alford are also included and highlighted on Map 2.

Map 2: Main settlements



The SALAG operating area therefore includes three towns with populations over 10,000: Inverurie, Stonehaven and Westhill. These small towns included because whilst they are technically classified as ‘other urban’ areas (see Map 4), they are important population centres, important retail and service centres for residents and tourists, and centres of employment for adjacent rural settlements and the wider rural hinterland. These towns are therefore important for the sustainable viability of the SALAG area as a whole.

The rationale for including the settlements of Inverurie, Stonehaven and Westhill is as follows:

- the towns represent important population centres which act as important service centres for adjacent rural settlements and the wider rural hinterland;
- the towns are inextricably linked to the wider rural area in socio-economic terms;
- the towns are not large enough to be self-sustaining in the same way that may be the case for a city or a more densely-populated area;
- many residents commute to Aberdeen and are less likely to use services in the towns, meaning that they face many similar challenges to villages;
- they are ideal locations for the provision of services to the wider rural hinterland in terms of accessibility to the largest number of rural residents;

Inverurie is a historic market town in the Garioch area of Aberdeenshire which plays an important role as a service centre to the wider rural area. It is home to a number of agricultural, food and drink businesses and hosts a farmers' market on a monthly basis. The town is also the location of a number of leisure facilities and shops which serve the town and rural communities in Garioch.

Stonehaven was historically a fishing village which has grown to become a service centre in the Kincardine and Mearns area. Its economy is closely linked with the surrounding rural area and marine environment through food and drink and marine engineering companies. Tourism is also an important sector for the town and Kincardine and Mearns area, with Stonehaven the location of several prominent tourist attractions.

Westhill is an expanding small town on the outskirts of the City of Aberdeen, contiguous with a large rural area to which it acts as a service centre. The settlement boundaries of Westhill include the village of Elrick following significant expansion of the town in recent years. Westhill is an important part of the local economy as a centre of employment and benefits the rural area through initiatives such as the hosting of farmers' markets, acting as bridge between rural and urban environments.

The **population** of the South Aberdeenshire LAG area is approximately **128,122**.



02

Analysis of Development Needs and Opportunities



2. Analysis of Development Needs and Opportunities

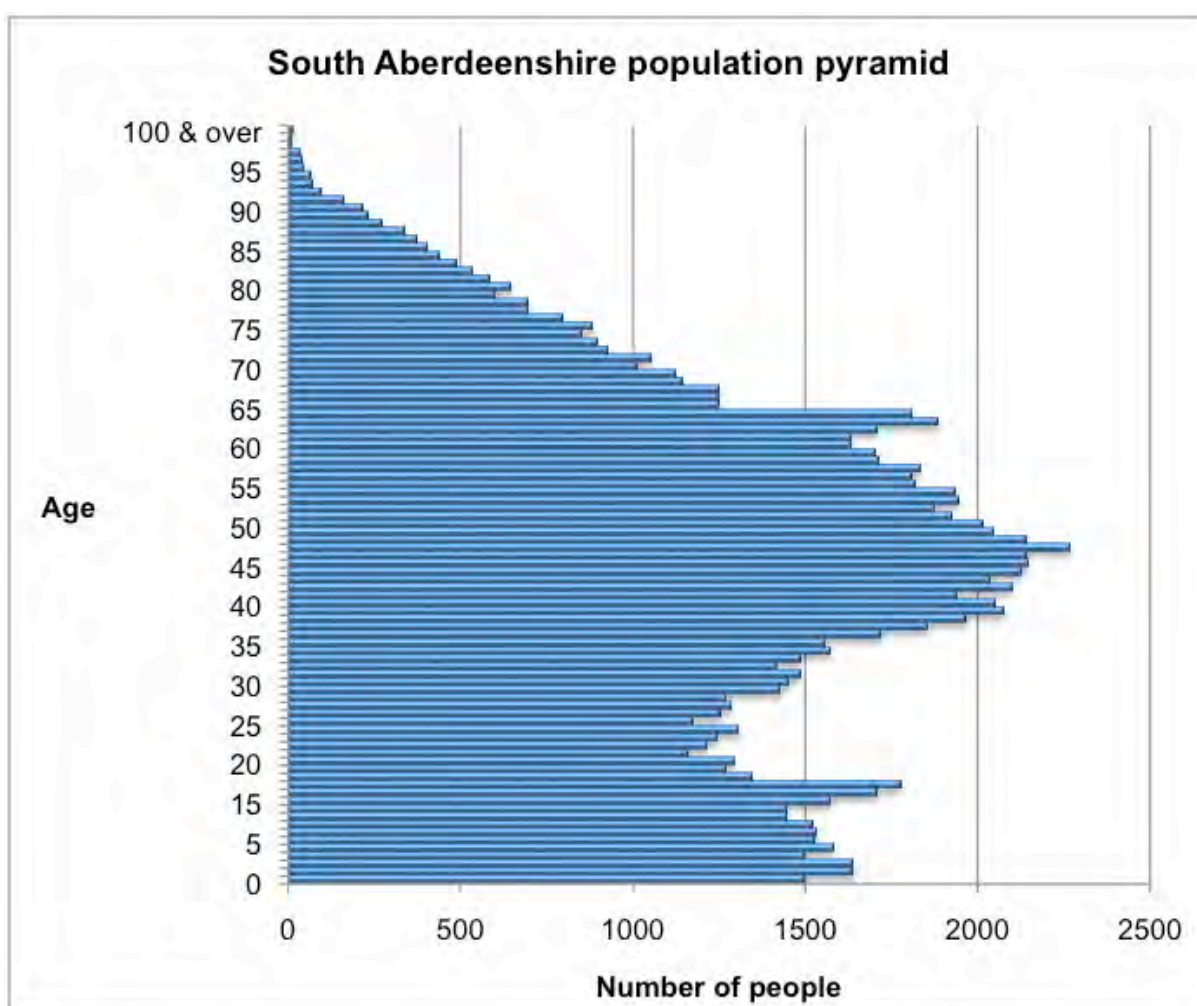
This section outlines the development needs and opportunities of the SALAG area based on key topics of: demographics; population density; economy and industry; skills and education and culture and natural heritage.

Demographics

There are 64,844 women (50.6% of the population) and 63,278 men (49.4% of the population). The mean age across the area is 40.5 years (Scotland's mean is 40.3), with a median age of 42.4, compared to a Scotland median age of 41.

The distribution of ages is illustrated the population pyramid in **Chart 1**.

Chart 1: South Aberdeenshire population pyramid



Aberdeenshire has 23.2% of residents over the age of 60, and will have the highest proportion of older people in Scotland by 2020. An increasing and ageing population provides unique challenges in delivering services, additional housing and the resulting demand in community facilities. In the SALAG area, the proportion of the population aged over-65 is 15.3%, compared to a Scottish average of 16.8%.

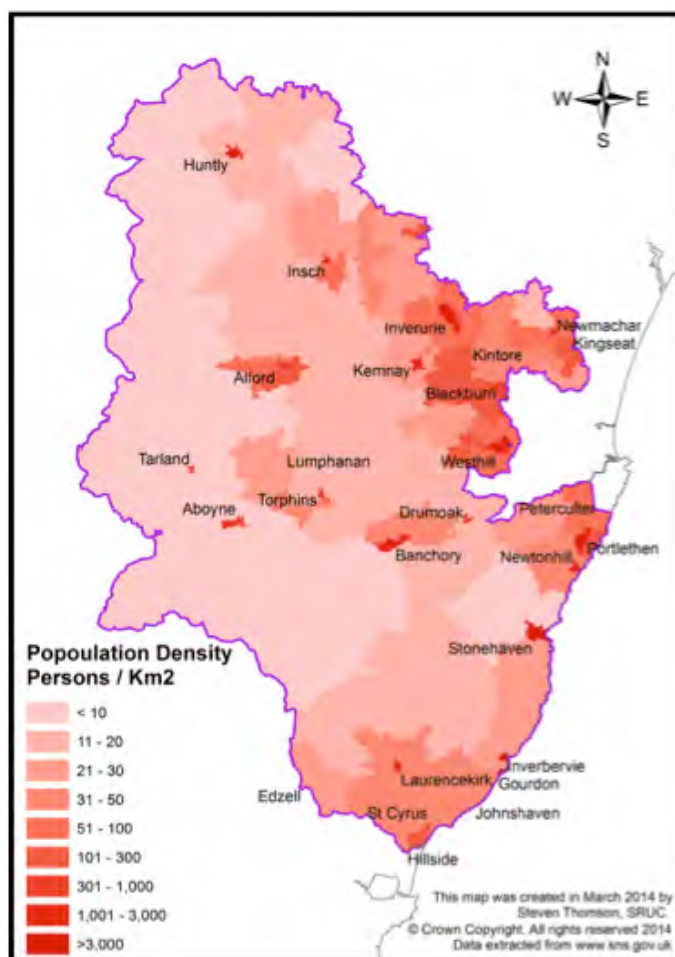
There are similar numbers of young people in the 16-19, 20-24 and 25-29 age groups which together comprise 14.6% of the population, which is almost 4% lower than the Scottish average of 18.5% for these combined age bands.

Consultation exercises identified demographics as being a key threat for the SALAG area because of the out-migration of young people, who are leaving for work, housing, education and ease of travel, and of an ageing population which has implications for services required in rural areas.

Population density

Population density varies substantially across the LAG area, and averages 17 people per hectare. The most densely populated datazone is within Stonehaven South (71 people per hectare) and the least populated datazone is in Insch, Oyne and Ythanwells (0.026 people per hectare). Map 3 illustrates the population density across the LAG area.

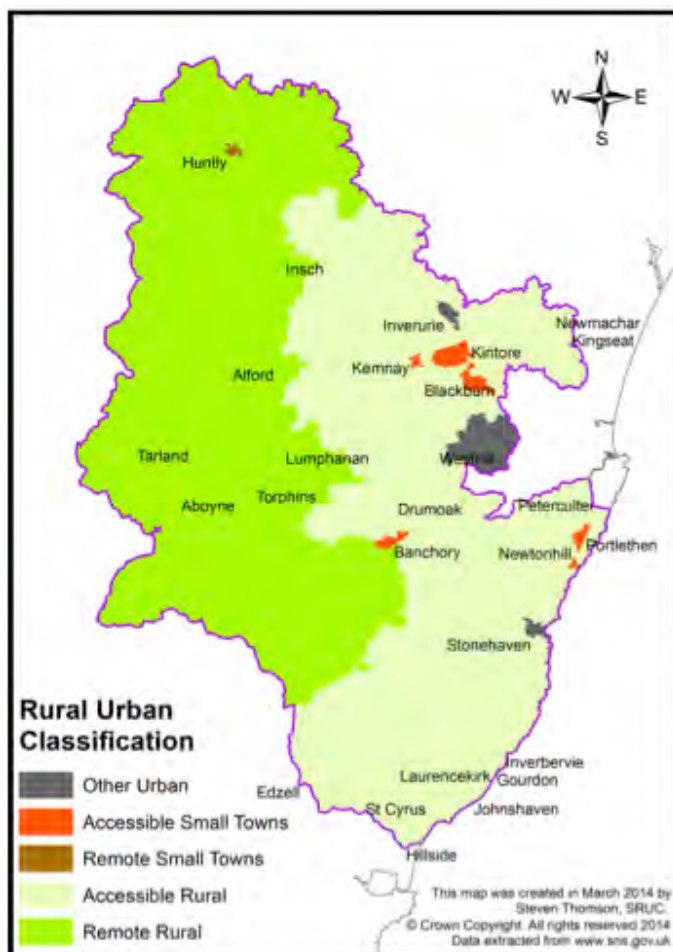
Map 3: Population density



Population density matters for the LDS because there may be fewer projects emerging from more sparsely populated areas to reflect that there are fewer people to organise and come forward to lead projects. This may not however reflect the level of need for support in the more sparsely populated areas. Pressure on volunteers may be even greater in the more sparsely populated areas. However, a key strength of the SALAG area identified through consultation are its people and communities. High rates of volunteering, with many (but not all) communities possessing high levels of capacity and skills, a vibrant voluntary sector and a strong 'track record' in project delivery and a sense of pride and community spirit amongst a number of communities were highlighted. Opportunities exist to work further with young people to engage them in decision making, building their capacity and skills.

Map 4 illustrates which parts of the LAG area fall into the 6-fold rural/urban classification, and highlights that besides Huntly, the western half of the LAG area is classified as remote rural.

Map 4: Rural/urban classification



Infrastructure and services

Community consultation highlighted important challenges in the SALAG area regarding connectivity and infrastructure. The road network between villages was felt to be poor, with trains often full and not frequent enough. Bus services were felt to be infrequent, too expensive, insufficiently joined up with other services, poorly advertised and not viable for tourists. Problems with transportation, both private and public, impacts on people in different ways, from young people being unable to travel to further education establishments to older people being unable to access services such as doctors and post offices.

Facilities and services were often felt by consultees to be poor and to require further development or support, however it was felt that available facilities are generally well used and opportunities were identified for communities to address some of the connectivity, infrastructure and facilities challenges identified including:

- Engaging with community transport activities
- Developing the cycling and footpath network(s) to support links, improve health and engage further with the tourist market.
- Identifying ways for sports and other community facilities operate in an innovative way (via community ownership/social enterprise/co-location)

Consultation exercises also noted the different needs between areas, with priorities within and between small towns such as Huntly and Stonehaven being very different and different again to remote rural areas such as much of Marr.

Economy and industry

GDP

Aberdeenshire's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated at £3,698m (2013), representing 3.6% of the Scottish total. Average Gross Weekly Earnings (for full-time employees employed in work places in Aberdeenshire in 2012) were £595.10, compared to a Scottish average of £584.90 and a rise of 1.4% on the 2011 figure. The average gross weekly pay of people resident in Aberdeenshire was much higher (£660.60) as many people commute out of Aberdeenshire, principally into Aberdeen City³.

Whilst the high standard of living is generally seen as a strength of the area, the divide between rich and poor and the hidden nature of rural poverty was a key threat identified in community consultation. High wages fuelling high house prices were a further threat to the area as young people and workers on lower wages are unable to afford to live there.

House prices

The average house price in Aberdeenshire for 2013 was £212,469 which is considerably higher to the Scottish average of £153,153⁴. Of the 52,223 households in the LAG area, 40% own their home (with a mortgage or loan), and 34% own their home outright. Rented accommodation comprises a total of 22% of accommodation (Local Authority rented 9%; private rented from a landlord or letting agency 9%; other rented 4%). The availability and affordability of housing, both to buy and to rent, and the appropriateness of size of housing (e.g. smaller houses are needed) for older and younger populations were raised as threats in the community consultation.

Employment

Table 1 shows the percentage of the 94,434 aged 16-74 in the SALAG area who are in full- and part-time employment, unemployed and retired⁵.

	SALAG area	Scotland
Full-time employees	46%	40%
Part-time employees	15%	13%
Unemployed	2%	4.7%
Retired	13%	15%

The low levels of unemployment were seen in the community and SALAG consultation as both a strength and a threat because communities find it extremely difficult to recruit for certain jobs e.g. carers/teachers and this impacts upon various services and because young people may face more challenges to securing employment which are masked by the high employment figures.

Of unemployed people in the SALAG area, 31% are aged 16-24. The national youth unemployment level in June 2014 was 18.8%, which is more than double that of the working age population⁶. The Wood Commission for Developing Scotland's Young noted that:

- More than 50% of Scotland's young people don't go to university and, of these, very few leave school with vocational qualifications with labour market currency.
- A minority of employers offer work experience (27%) which for school pupils is generally limited to one week in S4.
- Only 29% of employers recruit young people from education and only 13% of employers take on apprenticeships.

³ Aberdeenshire Profile, Aberdeenshire Council (July 2013). Source: National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

⁴ Source: Scottish Government Local Authority Housing Bulletin June 2013

⁵ Scotland's Census 2011 – National Records of Scotland.

⁶ The (Wood) Commission for Developing Scotland's Young (2014).

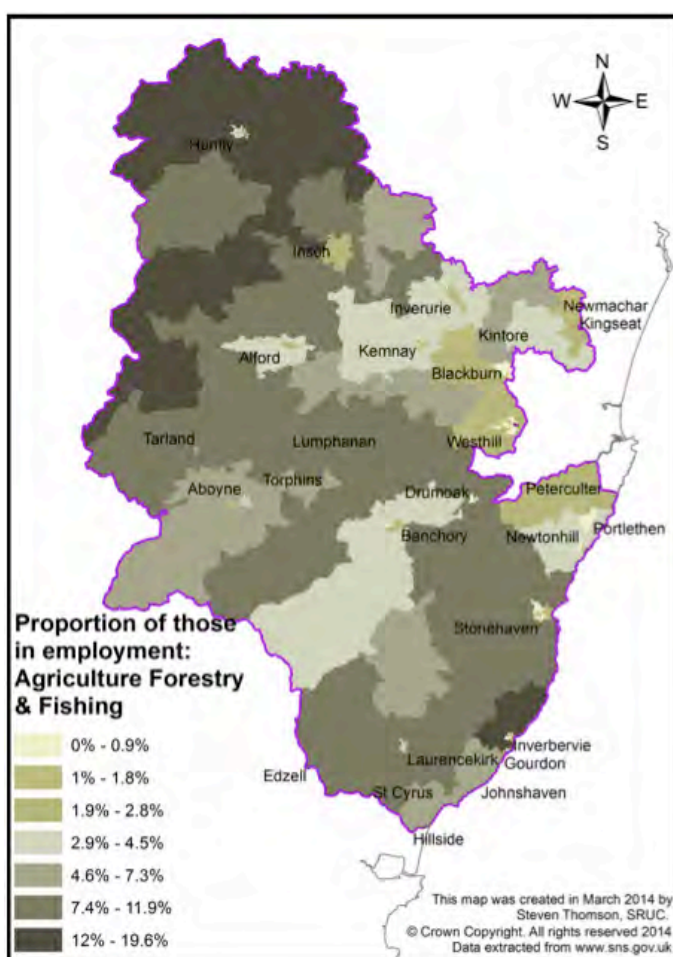
A key finding from the community consultation was that young people were felt to experience particular challenges, including accessing employment opportunities and buying their first home. Some felt the perception that South Aberdeenshire is generally affluent and well served meant those who were not in this position (individuals or communities) were overlooked and that variation across South Aberdeenshire is significant and needs to be acknowledged. The declining public sector budget and implications for service delivery was also highlighted, with a recognition of the threat that communities will need to 'pick up the slack' and a danger of LEADER and EMFF funding being used to 'substitute' activity which would have previously been delivered by the public sector.

Industry

Main industries in Aberdeenshire include the energy industry and engineering, agriculture, fisheries and tourism. In the SALAG area, Westhill is a centre of excellence in subsea engineering while Inverurie is home to a growing number of energy service, supply and manufacturing companies⁷. In the SALAG area, of the 69,906 people aged 16-74 in employment, 10% are employed in 'professional, scientific and technical activities', with 9% employed in construction.

Aberdeenshire has 26% of the total national arable land and is Scotland's foremost fishing area, accounting for over half of all fish landings into Scotland and 49% of landings into the UK (2011). South Aberdeenshire's forestry areas are also an important part of the rural economy and provide a range of employment opportunities, mainly in the management and production of timber and tourism. In the SALAG area 2,636 people were employed in Agriculture, forestry and fishing (4%). **Map 5** depicts the geographic spread and proportion of those employed in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

Map 5: Proportion of people employed in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing



⁷ Aberdeenshire Profile 2013, Aberdeenshire Council.

Aberdeenshire's tourist industry continues to grow and contribute to the economic well-being of the SALAG area with 5% being employed in 'Accommodation and food service activities'. An estimated total of 1,291,490 tourists visited Aberdeenshire between January and December 2012, an increase of 2% from the previous year. Over the year, revenue spent by visitors in Aberdeenshire totalled £238,336,000. This represents an increase of 6%, over the previous year⁸.

The tourism industry was acknowledged in the LDS consultation activities as being important to the SALAG area, it is a current strength as well as representing further opportunities. These include raising the profile of the existing tourist offer and supporting linkages between businesses; to further identify USPs and opportunities; to build further on geographical opportunities; to provide more affordable accommodation; and to synthesise with other agendas, such as tying in with improved public transport or supporting improved infrastructure of paths and cycleways and health outcomes.

The arts, culture and heritage of the area are an asset, and there is potential to do more to support and engage with these. This includes the high quality food and drink industries; built and natural heritage; and history of the area. There are opportunities to further focus on these strengths through festivals and profile raising, for example.

Besides tourism, agriculture, food, drink, and high quality produce were highlighted as being key local strengths, along with the arts and culture sectors whilst the oil industry was felt to present both opportunities and threats due to its finite nature and due to the divisions between those with 'oil money' and those without.

Fisheries

Aberdeenshire is Scotland's foremost fishing area. There are 18 fishery harbours in the Aberdeenshire FLAG area with 7 of these being owned, operated and maintained by Aberdeenshire Council (those in bold in the South Aberdeenshire area). These are:

- Banff
- **Gourdon**
- **Johnshaven**
- Macduff
- Portsoy
- Rosehearty
- **Stonehaven**

Many of the fishery harbours owned by Aberdeenshire Council are small, with only Macduff sustaining a large commercial trawler fishing fleet. The rest of the harbours tend to be former fishing ports which are now used for recreation and use of a small inshore fleet.

⁸Source: Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor, STEAM, 2012

The remaining 11 harbours are Trusts which differ in size and overall operations, with the majority having some form of fisheries operations present. The Trust harbours can be found at

- Fraserburgh
- Peterhead
- Cairnbulg
- Port Errol
- Boddam
- Catterline
- Collieston
- Gardenstown
- Pennan
- Sandhaven & Pitullie
- Whitehills

While Fraserburgh and Peterhead are the largest active fishing ports in Aberdeenshire, a number of other settlements in North Aberdeenshire maintain an active fisheries sector⁹, but face different challenges to larger ports. Communities which have or are facing decline of fisheries are required to diversify their infrastructure and economies to adapt to changing circumstances (with small harbours facing particular challenges).

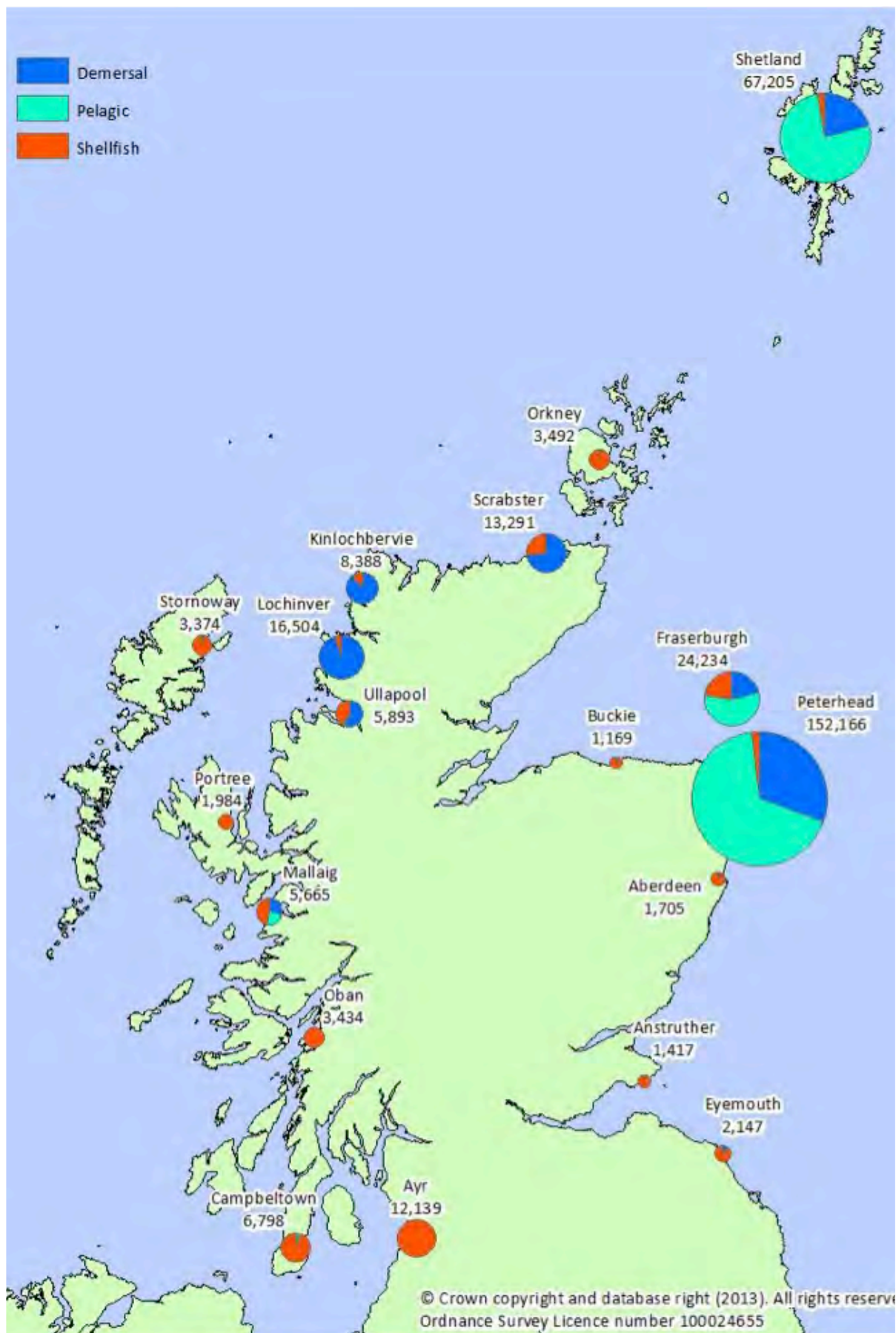
Statistics published by the Scottish Government show that there was 365 thousand tonnes of sea fish and shellfish landed by Scottish based vessels in 2012, with a value of £466 million. Compared to 2011, a record high year for landings value, real term value dropped by nine per cent although a two per cent increase in the quantity of fish landed. This decrease in the overall value of landings was driven by reductions in the value of all species types. The value of:

- Pelagic landings decreased by 11 per cent to £166 million
- Demersal landings decreased by eight per cent to £143 million
- Shellfish landings decreased by six per cent to £157 million

Many of the decreases in the value of key fish species stem from reductions in price. Mackerel is the most valuable stock to the Scottish fleet, accounting for 28 per cent (£131 million) of the total value of Scottish landings. In 2012 it decreased in real terms value by 21 per cent from 2011, driven by a 14 per cent fall in price and an eight per cent decrease in the quantity landed to 134 thousand tonnes. However, the value of herring, the other key pelagic species, increased by 68 per cent in real terms to £29 million.

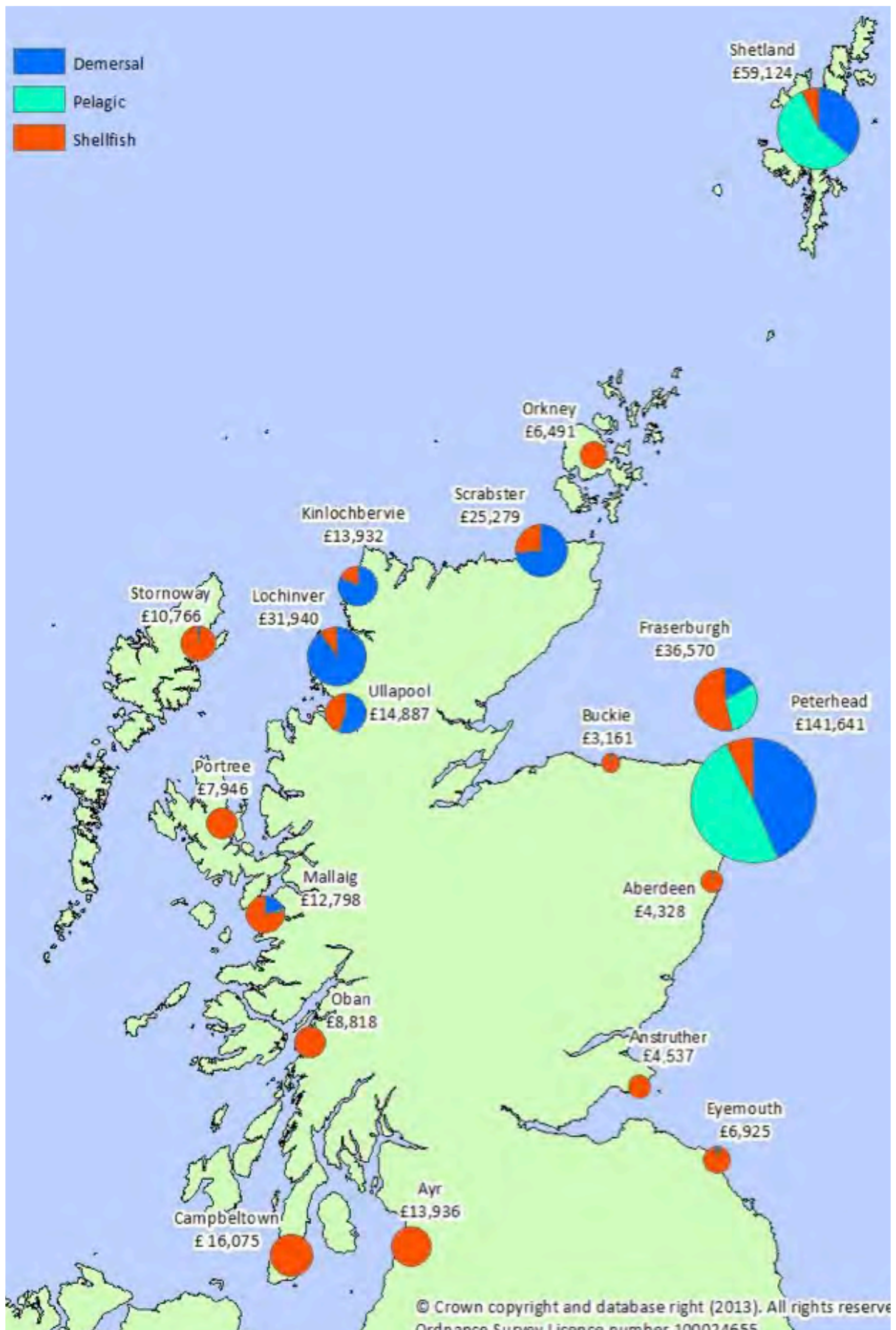
⁹Source: Aberdeenshire Council – Employment Port Data, 2011.

Quantity of landings into Scotland by all vessels by district: 2012 (tonnes).¹⁰



¹⁰ Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics 2012

Value of landings into Scotland by Scottish vessels by district: 2012 (£'thousand).¹¹

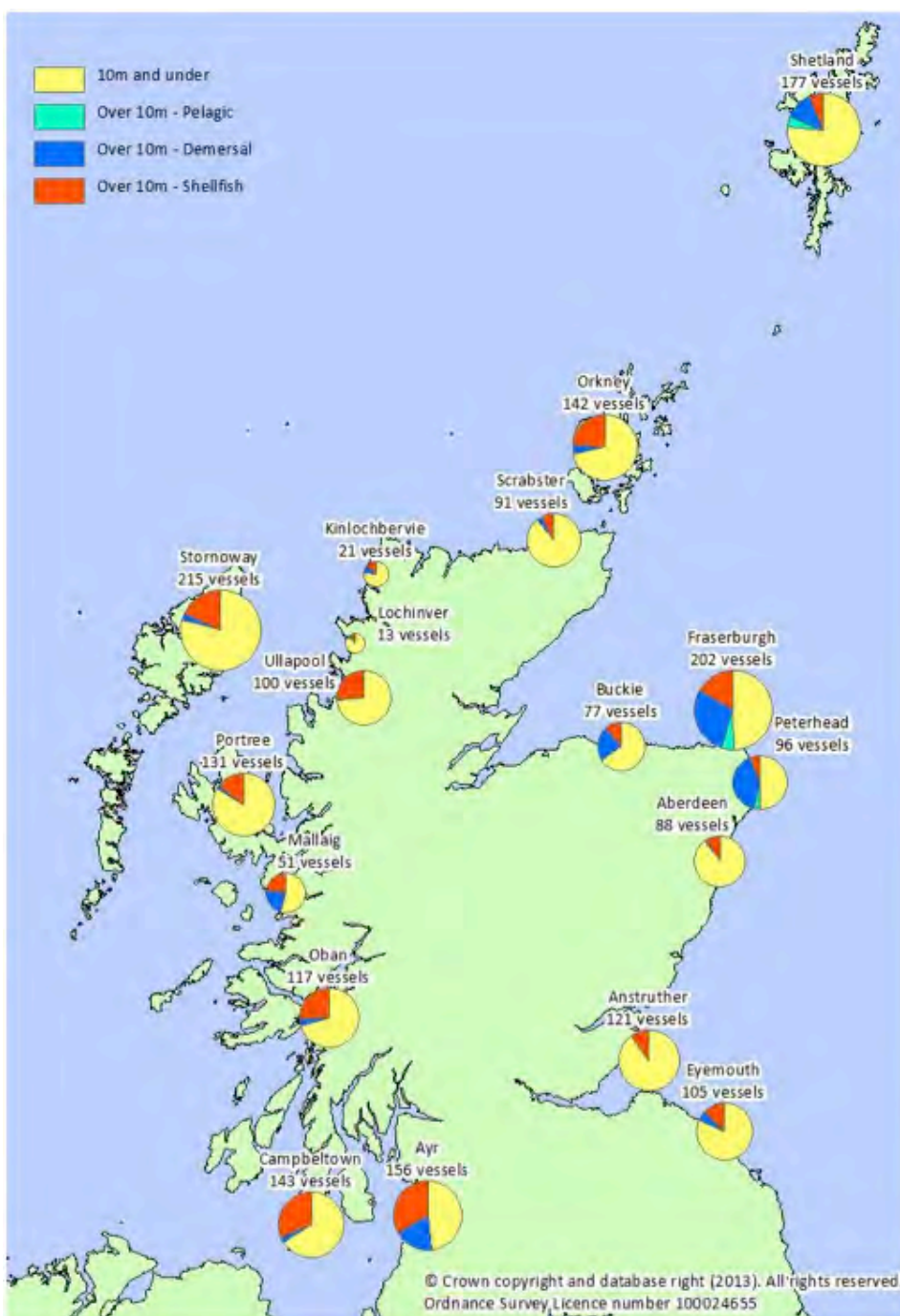


¹⁰ Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics 2012

The number of active fishing vessels based in Scotland was 2,046 at the end of 2012, representing a decrease of 49 vessels (two per cent) from 2011, and the smallest recorded fleet size. From the end of 2011, there was:

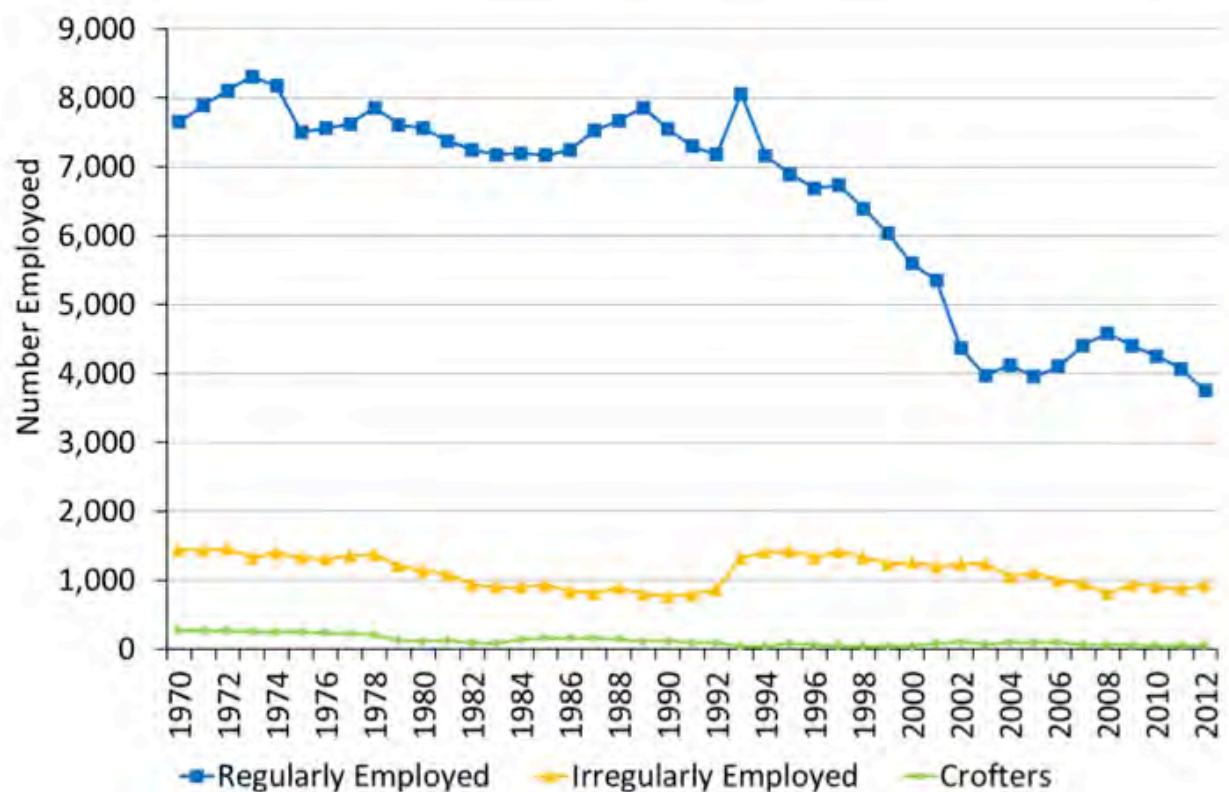
- A loss of 22 vessels in the 10m and under fleet to 1,448 vessels
- A loss of 27 vessels in the over 10m fleet to 598 vessels
- Demersal sector reduced to 215 vessels
- Shellfish sector reduced to 359 vessels
- Pelagic sector remains the same with 24 vessels

Number of vessel in the Scottish fleet by district: 2012



As of 2012¹³, there were 378 fishermen employed in Peterhead district (on Scottish based vessels), and 797 employed in the Fraserburgh district (on Scottish vessels) –accounting for 3% of the total North Aberdeenshire employment of 39,130. Fraserburgh is the district with the largest number of fishermen in Scotland, accounting for 17 per cent of the total number of fishermen on Scottish vessels in 2012. Combined employment within these two districts accounts for 25% of all fishermen employed nationally in 2012 (4,747).

Number of fishermen employed on Scottish based vessels: 1970 to 2012.



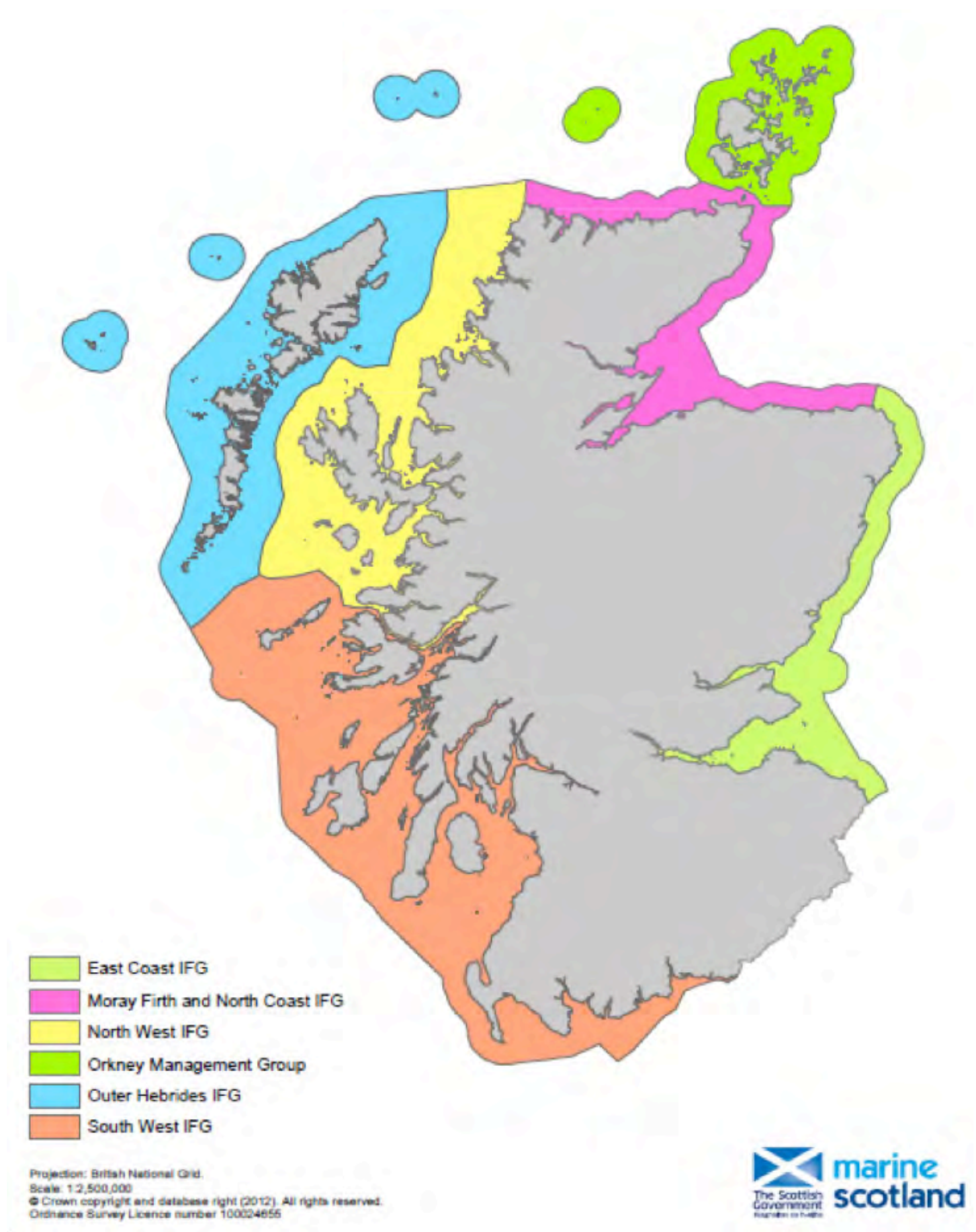
There are two Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs) that cover the Aberdeenshire area: the East Coast IFG and the Moray Firth IFG. IFGs are non-statutory bodies that aim to improve the management of Scotland's inshore fisheries (out to six nautical miles) and to give commercial inshore fishermen a strong voice in wider marine management developments.

Six IFGs were established in 2009 to cover Scotland's coastal areas and allow commercial inshore fishermen to have a voice in wider marine management developments. Both the Moray Firth IFG and East Coast IFG have developed a detailed management plan.

A map of the six IFG areas has been attached below with those highlighted in pink and lime highlighting IFGs covering Aberdeenshire.

¹³ Source: SSFS, 2012. Table 2.9.

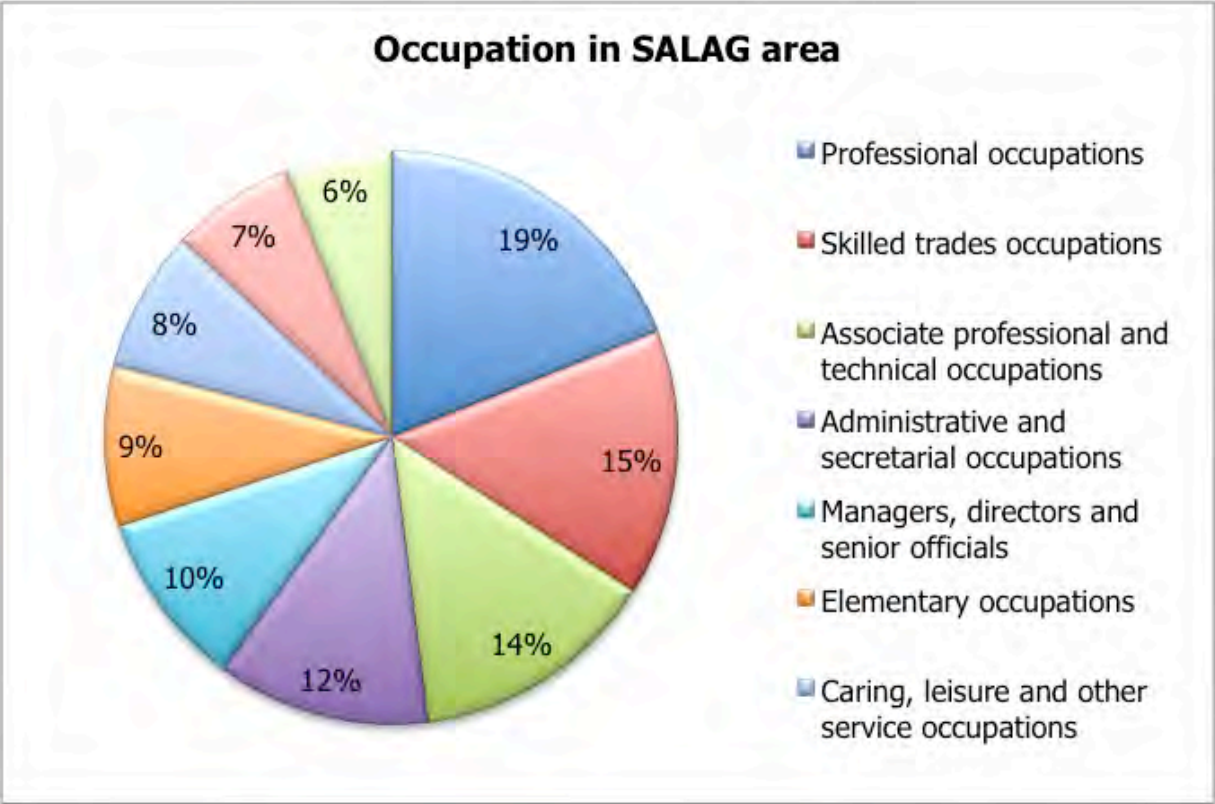
Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs) 2013



Skills and Education

As **Chart 2** illustrates, the LAG area has a highly skilled workforce, with almost one in five employed in professional occupations, followed by skilled trades (15%) and associated professional and technical occupations (14%).

Chart 2: Occupation in LAG area



In terms of **education**, almost a third (32%) of the 103,219 people in the LAG area aged 16 or over have a high level of education (Level 4 and above) compared to a national average of 26%, whilst almost one in five (19%) have no qualifications which is considerably lower than the national average of 27%¹⁴ (see **Chart 3**).

¹⁴ Scotland's Census 2011 – National Records of Scotland.

Chart 3: Highest level of qualification



In the community consultations, people felt that educational facilities could be further developed in areas where there are population increases and that training and vocational opportunities in rural (including land-based) skills should be supported. A lack of people with specific skills such as teaching, caring and rural skills was a perceived threat to the SALAG area and as such more training and vocational opportunities for them should be provided as well as support through affordable housing schemes and marketing of the attractiveness of the SALAG area as a place to live and work.

Culture and natural heritage

Aberdeenshire is renowned for its rich abundant wildlife and natural heritage and the South Aberdeenshire LAG area includes a small number of 'Natura Sites' which represent the very best of Scotland's nature. Natura is the term given to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). These internationally important sites are designated under two of the most influential pieces of European legislation relating to nature conservation: the Habitats and Birds Directives. The LAG area contains four SACs and two SPAs. There is also one Ramsar Sites, designated as an internationally important wetland, at Loch of Skene. In addition, the south Aberdeenshire area also includes part of the National Nature Reserve of Glen Tanar and a small number of Local Landscape Designations and Sites of Interest to Natural Science.

The North East Scotland Local Biodiversity Action Plan (NELBAP) is a local partnership with representatives drawn from a range of organisations including local authorities, conservation, environmental and research organisations, statutory agencies and local businesses and individuals. The NELBAP is very active in the South Aberdeenshire area where they aim to work together to protect and enhance local biodiversity through the delivery of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan. This provides an innovative and constructive opportunity for all local stakeholders through the encouragement of community involvement in projects and programmes aimed at protecting, raising awareness of and enhancing local habitats and species.

South Aberdeenshire's forest and woodland areas often have a dual purpose; not only are they highly timber-productive, they also contain a high proportion of native species and are therefore important for biodiversity and landscape, they also continue to be some of the busiest forests in Scotland with many people regularly using the area for activities such as walking,

cycling, running and horse-riding¹⁵. The Forestry Commission Scotland hosts a wide range of events and activities, every year seeing thousands of people taking advantage of the area's landscapes, tracks and trails, and various habitats and terrains. Events vary from a class of school children enjoying their education outdoors, to whole school sponsored walks with over a thousand pupils. There are also events such as hill running, triathlon, and orienteering.

With the recognition of Scotland's natural assets as being a huge national and international attraction and driver in the development of the country's tourism industry, it also means they play a key part in Scotland's economic recovery. Royal Deeside is considered to be the 'Birthplace of Scottish Tourism'¹⁶ with tourism across the whole Aberdeen City and Shire estimated to be worth £340 million every year, ensuring it remains a priority for Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF). In 2013 ACSEF launched their new Tourism Strategy¹⁷ aimed at making the area a sustainable tourist destination whilst enhancing the region's outstanding assets. The Strategy outlined the markets that offer the greatest potential to grow including, amongst others, nature, heritage and activities, and events and festivals/culture/arts.

The natural environment of the SALAG area was highlighted as a key strength with its rich and diverse landscape offering opportunities for work/industry, recreation and tourism and supporting a high quality of life. Town and village centres were felt to be a potential asset but often currently in decline: support is required to redevelop these areas and attract people to them.

Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality of life • High skills base • High levels of education • Low levels of unemployment • Natural and diverse landscape including Natura Sites • Arts, culture and heritage of the area • Vibrant voluntary sector with experience of project delivery • High rates of volunteering and civic pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport • Road network connections between villages • Broadband • Training and vocational opportunities for young people • Quality and availability of affordable visitor accommodation • Facilities and services, especially in remote rural areas • High unemployment in fishing communities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using existing facilities (e.g. community halls, schools, sports facilities) more creatively (e.g. community ownership, multi-purpose hubs) • Building on key industries: tourism; energy; food & drink; arts & culture. • Community transport • Developing cycling and footpath networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable housing to rent and buy • Lack of affordable business spaces • Lack of key workers (carers, teachers) • Income inequality • Public sector funding cuts • Out-migration of young people • Ageing population and pressure on services • Danger of dormitory coastal towns • Declining town centres

¹⁵ [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Aberdeennewsetter.pdf/\\$FILE/Aberdeennewsetter.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Aberdeennewsetter.pdf/$FILE/Aberdeennewsetter.pdf)

¹⁶ <http://visitroyaldeeside.com/>

¹⁷ ACSTP, Our Strategy for growth, building on our strength, 2013 – 2020.

Following additional guidance from Marine Scotland on the use of EMFF funds, a further SWOT specific to the fisheries elements of the Strategy has been undertaken. This is based on input from a stakeholder meeting convened (please see Appendix 3 for further information).

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stocks are healthy • Diverse range of seafood • Big industry and strong brand (Scottish Seafood) • Unique products • Marine Environment • Coastline, wildlife and heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor promotion of locally-caught seafood • Perception of industry as a single body rather than segmented by different products • Lack of young entrants, skilled workers and career progression • Supply chain for locally-consumed fish • Connectivity between communities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seafood as a healthy choice • Short supply chain • Secondary processing • Traceability/sustainability • Education and promotion of career opportunities • Promotion of the processing sector • Job opportunities • Centre of excellence • £40 million investment in Peterhead Harbour • Diversifying coastal communities into new business areas • Ecotourism • Learn from successful communities • Use of redundant buildings • Move beyond retail focus in communities • Access to local employment and remote working • eServices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFP reform • Landing obligation • Oil and gas pull • World affairs (e.g. Russian import ban) • Environmental organisations and public perception • Loss of local control and quotas moving • Revised EMFF structure – potential duplication between 'Axis 4' and others • Definition of a fishing community could exclude some settlements • Economic viability of small harbours and returns on investments • Landing obligation could be costly to implement and use up entire programme budget



03

Description and Objectives of the Strategy



3. Description and Objectives of the Strategy

Five themes therefore guide the LDS that aim to tackle the weaknesses and threats and build on the strengths and opportunities in South Aberdeenshire and are:

- Connecting People and Places
- Developing Key Economic Sectors
- Promoting and protecting the environment
- Enriching and positive activities for all
- Cooperating with other countries and areas

Theme 1: Connecting people and places

Objective: By 2020, people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire are better connected, physically, emotionally and digitally, through a range of active, affordable and sustainable solutions.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following priorities:

Priority 1.1: Sustainable & active travel to connect rural communities

Projects and initiatives which contribute to community transport initiatives, low carbon travel solutions and promote active travel such as walking and cycling will be supported.

Priority 1.2: Community facilities for the modern age

Multi-purpose and sustainable community hubs (e.g. for service provision, leisure and business) which have realistic business plans will be supported, particularly those which incorporate broadband and/or ICT provision.



Theme 2: Developing key economic sectors

Objective: By 2020, South Aberdeenshire realises its full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for its people provided through creating or enhancing micro and small and medium-sized rural and fisheries enterprises (including Social Enterprises), increasing the skills base and creating new jobs.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to enhancing and growing businesses in the priority sectors of Tourism, Food & Drink, Fisheries, Land-based, Retail and Creative Sectors.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following priorities:

Priority 2.1: Improving priority sector competitiveness and co-operation

Projects/initiatives which build business capacity and skills; identify and develop new markets for products and services; and/or support new bespoke training initiatives to encourage business development in the priority sectors of tourism, food and drink, fisheries, land-based, retail and creative sectors will be supported.

Priority 2.2: Facilitating diversification from agriculture

Projects/initiatives which build business capacity and skills; identify and develop new markets for products and services; and/or support new bespoke training initiatives to encourage business development will be supported.

Priority 2.3: Facilitating diversification within and outside of the fisheries sector

Projects/initiatives which identify and develop new markets, infrastructure, products and services within or outside of the fisheries sector will be supported, as will projects which help small and declining fishing ports to maximise their marine potential through developing a diversified infrastructure.

Priority 2.4: Supporting lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas

Projects/initiatives providing training to enhance existing SMEs and assist in the start-up of new companies in fisheries areas will be supported.

Priority 2.5: Adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries seafood supply chain.

Projects/initiatives which support measures to adapt to the landing obligation; new product and/or market development; the adoption or development of innovative processes and/or supply chain integration; and co-ordinate in a way which empowers local communities and makes the best use of their assets in fisheries areas will be supported.

Theme 3: Promoting and protecting the environment

Objective: By 2020, South Aberdeenshire will be a lower carbon society that enjoys, conserves and makes the most of its natural environment and assets.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following priorities:

Priority 3.1: Promoting low carbon futures

Projects/initiatives which contribute to the low carbon economy, such as community energy projects, community-led food growing and supply initiatives, community resilience and awareness-raising activities will be supported.

Priority 3.2: Protecting, exploring & enhancing the natural environment

Projects/initiatives which contribute to protecting, exploring and enhancing the natural environment, such as research and awareness raising activities; conservation activities; will be supported.

Theme 4: Enriching and positive activities for all

Objective: By 2020, people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire will have better access to opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing and to participating in local arts, culture and heritage.

Initiatives under this theme would need to demonstrate how they contribute to the following priorities:

Priority 4.1: Leisure & recreation for wellbeing

Projects/initiatives which contribute to improving leisure and recreational opportunities, such as the provision of facilities, activities and events which have health and wellbeing benefits, including to people in disadvantaged groups, will be supported.

Priority 4.2: Celebrating and supporting arts, culture & heritage

Projects/initiatives which celebrate and support arts, culture and heritage by raising awareness of and increasing participation in local arts, culture and heritage will be supported.

Priority 4.3: Community Capacity Building

Projects/initiatives which build capacity and social capital within communities through the provision of activities such as training and support to community organisations will be supported.

Theme 5: Cooperating with other countries and areas

Objective: By 2020, South Aberdeenshire will have established co-operation projects which, through innovation, networking and knowledge exchange, contribute to meeting the objectives of the other four LDS themes and associated priorities.

Priority 5.1: International Co-operation

Projects/initiatives which facilitate co-operation across LAG boundaries with other EU Member State, contributing to at least one other priority of the LDS or exchange of experience with another LAG will be supported.

Priority 5.2: National Co-operation

Projects/initiatives which facilitate co-operation across LAG boundaries within Scotland, contributing to at least one other priority of the LDS will be supported.

Several topics that were raised as weaknesses or threats to South Aberdeenshire in the desk-based research and consultation are not included in this LDS. The rationale for excluding certain topics is that they are being tackled as a priority by (an)other organisation(s), for example:

- Broadband, which is the responsibility of the Scottish Government with a budget and target attached for Aberdeenshire-wide coverage by 2015.
- A dedicated theme for 'Skills development and employability' as again, this is the responsibility of other organisations including the ACSEF partnership and local Community Planning Partnership.
- Affordable housing and town centre regeneration were felt by South Aberdeenshire LAG members to be outwith the remit and available budget of the LDS.

SMART Objectives

In order to focus action and resources and demonstrate the value of CLLD to South Aberdeenshire, a number of objectives have been identified which are:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time bound

The chosen indicators for the overall strategy (in addition to those set by the European Commission/Managing Authority) are as follows:

1. Number of projects supported
2. Number of individuals benefiting from projects
3. Number of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises benefiting from projects
4. Number of new or enhanced facilities supported
5. Number of new products/services created
6. Number of new companies established
7. Number of new jobs created
8. Number of new training initiatives supported
9. Number of people receiving training and/or developing new skills

Theme 1 - Connecting people and places

By 2020, people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire are better connected, physically, emotionally and digitally through a range of active affordable and sustainable solutions.

1.1 Sustainable and active travel to connect rural communities

Specific: Projects and initiatives which contribute to community transport initiatives, low carbon travel solutions and promote active travel such as walking and cycling will be supported.

Measurable: 5 sustainable and active travel projects will be supported;
100 individuals will benefit from sustainable and active travel projects;
1 SME will benefit from sustainable and active travel projects;
2 new products/services will be created.

Achievable: This is an area which was identified as a strong priority for action in the LDS preparation project, but for which there has been limited experience in 2007-13 figures upon which to base targets. It is estimated that at least 20 people would benefit from each project, 1 businesses would benefit and 2 supported projects would result in a new service being created (with others focusing on marketing of existing facilities, for example).

Realistic: Targets set based on provisional allocated budget of £217,763.

Time: By 2020.

1.2 Community facilities for a digital age

- Specific:** Multi-purpose and sustainable community hubs (e.g. for service provision, leisure and business) which have realistic business plans will be supported, particularly those which incorporate broadband and/or ICT provision.
- Measurable:** 4 community facilities projects will be supported;
400 individuals will benefit from community facilities projects;
2 SMEs will benefit from community facilities projects;
4 community facilities will be created or enhanced.
4 new products/services will be created
2 new jobs will be created.
- Achievable:** There was significant demand for community facility projects in the 2007-13 period which is expected to increase in the 2014-20 period given increased awareness of funding opportunities. Figures are based on adding value to facilities to make them multi-functional and grants of around £50k per project. It is expected that projects should aim to attract/support new users such as businesses, use energy efficiency measures and ideally provide ICT facilities in order to help them to become sustainable.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous LEADER experience and provisional allocated budget of £217,763.
- Time:** By 2018.

Theme 2 - Developing key economic sectors

By 2020, South Aberdeenshire realises its full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for its people provided through creating or enhancing micro and small rural enterprises, increasing the skills base and creating new jobs.

2.1 Improving priority sector competitiveness and co-operation

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which build business capacity and skills; identify and develop new markets for products and services; and/or support new bespoke training initiatives to encourage business development will be supported.
- Measurable:** 8 priority sector competitiveness and co-operation projects will be supported.
8 individuals will benefit from priority sector competitiveness and co-operation projects.
8 SMEs will benefit from priority sector competitiveness and co-operation projects.
8 new products/services will be created.
1 new companies will be established.
6 new jobs will be created.
- Achievable:** There is limited experience of delivering this type of activity through the LEADER model. However, input from rural and agricultural sector meetings suggested that a grant award of around £25k would be realistic.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on input from stakeholder meetings and provisional allocated budget of £217,763.
- Time:** By 2020.

2.2 Facilitating diversification from agriculture

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which build business capacity and skills; identify and develop new markets for products and services; and/or support new bespoke training initiatives to encourage business development will be supported.
- Measurable:** 10 agricultural diversification projects will be supported.
10 individuals will benefit from agricultural diversification projects.
10 SMEs will benefit from agricultural diversification projects.
10 new products/services will be created.
2 new companies will be established.
5 new jobs will be created.
- Achievable:** There is limited experience of delivering this type of activity through the LEADER model. However, input from rural and agricultural sector meetings suggested that a grant award of up to £20k would be realistic.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous LEADER experience and provisional allocated budget of £217,763.
- Time:** By 2020.

2.3 Facilitating diversification within and outside of the fisheries sector

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which identify and develop new markets, infrastructure, products and services within or outside of the fisheries sector will be supported, as will projects which help small and declining fishing ports to maximise their marine potential through developing a diversified infrastructure.
- Measurable:** 3 fisheries diversification projects will be supported.
3 individuals will benefit from fisheries diversification projects.
3 SMEs will benefit from fisheries diversification projects.
3 new products/services will be created.
1 new company will be established.
1 new jobs will be created.
- Achievable:** Demand for diversification projects in the 2007-13 period was strong, although it must be recognised that there are fewer fishing businesses in South Aberdeenshire than in the North.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous AEFf experience and provisional allocated budget of £86,215.
- Time:** By 2020.

2.4 Supporting lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives providing training to enhance existing SMEs and assist in the start-up of new companies in fisheries areas will be supported.
- Measurable:** 3 lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas projects will be supported.
30 individuals will benefit from lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas projects.
15 SMEs will benefit from lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas projects.
3 jobs will be created.
3 new training initiatives will be supported.
30 individuals will receive training and/or develop new skills.
- Achievable:** There is limited experience of supporting fisheries training projects from the 2007-13 Axis 4 programme. However, given the involvement of education stakeholders in the FLAG it is estimated that 3 training initiatives could be provided, each benefiting 10 people and 5 SMEs.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on provisional allocated budget of £86,215.
- Time:** By 2020.

2.5 Adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries seafood supply chain

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which support measures to adapt to the landing obligation; new product and/or market development; the adoption or development of innovative processes and/or supply chain integration; and co-ordinate in a way which empowers local communities and makes the best use of their assets in fisheries areas will be supported.
- Measurable:** 3 fisheries supply chain projects will be supported.
3 individuals will benefit from fisheries supply chain projects.
3 SMEs will benefit from fisheries supply chain projects.
3 new products/services will be created.
1 job will be created.
- Achievable:** Demand for supply chain projects in the 2007-13 period was strong, although it must be recognised that there are fewer fishing businesses in South Aberdeenshire than in the North.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous AEFF experience and provisional allocated budget of £86,215.
- Time:** By 2020.

Theme 3 - Promoting and protecting the environment

By 2020, South Aberdeenshire will be a lower carbon society that enjoys, conserves and makes the most of its natural environment and assets.

3.1 Promoting low carbon futures

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which contribute to the low carbon economy, such as community energy projects, marine renewable energy projects, local food initiatives and awareness-raising activities will be supported.
- Measurable:** 4 low carbon future projects will be supported.
200 individuals will benefit from low carbon future projects.
1 SME will benefit from low carbon future projects.
1 new product/service will be created.
1 new job will be created.
2 marketing initiatives will be undertaken.
- Achievable:** There was limited experience of supporting low carbon projects in Aberdeenshire through the 2007-13 programmes. It is estimated that there will be a mixture of capital and revenue projects and that each project should aim to provide benefits to at least 50 people.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous LEADER experience and provisional allocated budget of £217,763.
- Time:** By 2020.

3.2 Protecting, exploring and enhancing the natural environment

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which contribute to protecting, exploring and enhancing the natural environment, such as research and awareness raising activities; conservation activities; will be supported.
- Measurable:** 7 natural environment projects will be supported.
70 individuals will benefit from natural environment projects.
1 SME will benefit from natural environment projects.
1 new job will be created.
- Achievable:** A number of environmentally-themed projects (including those related to tourism activities) were supported through the 2007-13 programmes. It is estimated that there would be a mixture of revenue and capital projects.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous LEADER experience and provisional allocated budget of £217,763
- Time:** By 2020.

Theme 4 - Enriching and positive activities for all

By 2020, people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire will have better access to opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing and to participating in local arts, culture and heritage

4.1 Leisure and recreation for wellbeing

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which contribute to improving leisure and recreational facilities, such as the provision of facilities, activities and events which have health and wellbeing benefits, including to people in disadvantaged groups, will be supported.
- Measurable:** 6 leisure and recreation for wellbeing projects will be supported.
600 individuals will benefit from recreation for wellbeing projects.
1 SME will benefit from recreation for wellbeing projects.
4 community facilities will be created or enhanced.
3 new products/services will be created.
2 marketing initiatives will be undertaken.
- Achievable:** A number of leisure projects were supported through LEADER in 2007-13, with the majority being small-scale capital projects. It is estimated from the community engagement events undertaken that demand remains for such projects and that these could be accompanied by more revenue activities such as events.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous LEADER experience and provisional allocated budget of £217,763.
- Time:** By 2020.

4.2 Celebrating and supporting arts, culture and heritage

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which celebrate and support arts, culture and heritage by raising awareness of and increasing participation in local arts, culture and heritage will be supported.
- Measurable:** 12 arts, culture and heritage projects will be supported.
600 individuals will benefit from arts, culture and heritage projects.
3 SMEs will benefit from arts, culture and heritage projects.
12 marketing initiatives will be undertaken.
- Achievable:** Several arts projects were supported by LEADER from 2007-13 and the importance of these activities was highlighted at community engagement events. It is envisaged that events/festivals would be supported which could benefit significant numbers of people and businesses but would require marketing support.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous LEADER experience and provisional allocated budget of £217,763.
- Time:** By 2020.

4.3 Community Capacity Building

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which build capacity and social capital within communities through the provision of activities such as training and support to community organisations will be supported.
- Measurable:** 12 community capacity building projects will be supported.
120 individuals will benefit from community capacity building projects
1 SME will benefit from community capacity building projects
12 new training initiatives will be supported
120 individuals will receive training and/or develop new skills
12 marketing initiatives will be undertaken
- Achievable:** A need for capacity building in South Aberdeenshire has been identified, as reflected by lower participation of this part of Aberdeenshire in the previous Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER programme. Both applicant-led and commissioned activity could be used to achieve these targets.
- Realistic:** Targets set on provisional allocated budget of £217,763.
- Time:** By 2020.

Theme 5 - Co-operating with other countries and areas

By 2020, South Aberdeenshire will have established 8 cross-border co-operation projects and 2 transnational co-operation projects that, through innovation, networking and knowledge exchange, contribute to meeting the objectives of the four LDS themes and priorities

5.1 International co-operation

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which facilitate co-operation across LAG boundaries with other EU Member State, contributing to at least one other priority of the LDS or exchange of experience with another LAG will be supported.
- Measurable:** 2 transnational co-operation projects will be undertaken. (1 rural, 1 fisheries)
20 individuals will benefit from transnational co-operation projects.
2 SMEs will benefit from transnational co-operation projects.
- Achievable:** There have not been inter-(F)LAG co-operation projects in Aberdeenshire so far, but interest has been expressed in projects from other (F)LAGs, notably in Finland and Denmark. It is expected that FLAG and community members would benefit from the projects.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on provisional allocated budget of £21,776 EAFRD + £2,874 EMFF = £24,650.
- Time:** By 2020.

5.2 National co-operation

- Specific:** Projects/initiatives which facilitate co-operation across LAG boundaries within Scotland, contributing to at least one other priority of the LDS will be supported.
- Measurable:** 6 inter-territorial co-operation projects will be supported. (5 rural, 1 fisheries.)
60 individuals to benefit from inter-territorial projects.
2 SMEs to benefit from inter-territorial projects.
- Achievable:** Several co-operation projects have been facilitated in the 2007-13 programme period. Targets for this priority have been limited as it is expected that projects will contribute to targets for other priorities.
- Realistic:** Targets set based on previous LEADER experience and provisional allocated budget of £195,987 EAFRD + £25,865 EMFF = £221,851.
- Time:** By 2020.

Overview of Indicators and Targets

Indicator	EAFRD Target												EMFF Target					Total
	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	5.1	5.2		
Number of sustainable and active travel projects supported	5																5	
Number of community facilities projects supported		4															4	
Number of priority sector competitiveness and co-operation projects supported			8														8	
Number of agricultural diversification projects supported				10													10	
Number of fisheries diversification projects supported												3					3	
Number of lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas projects supported													3				3	
Number of fisheries supply chain projects supported														3			3	
Number of low carbon future projects supported					4												4	
Number of natural environment projects supported						7											7	
Number of leisure and recreation for wellbeing projects supported							6										6	
Number of arts, culture and heritage projects supported								12									12	
Number of community capacity building projects supported									12								12	
Number of transnational co-operation projects supported										1					1		2	
Number of inter-territorial co-operation projects supported											5					1	6	
TOTAL No. of PROJECTS	5	4	8	10	4	7	6	12	12	1	5	3	3	3	1	1	85	

Indicator	EAFRD Target											EMFF Target					Total
	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	5.1	5.2	
Number of individuals benefiting from sustainable and active travel projects	100																100
Number of individuals benefiting from community facilities projects		400															400
Number of individuals benefiting from priority sector competitiveness and co-operation projects			8														8
Number of individuals benefiting from agricultural diversification projects				10													10
Number of individuals benefiting from fisheries diversification projects												3					3
Number of individuals benefiting from lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas projects													30				30
Number of individuals benefiting from fisheries supply chain projects														3			3
Number of individuals benefiting from low carbon future projects					200												200
Number of individuals benefiting from natural environment projects						70											70
Number of individuals benefiting from leisure and recreation for wellbeing projects							600										600
Number of individuals benefiting from arts, culture and heritage projects								600									600
Number of individuals benefiting from community capacity building projects									120								120
Number of individuals benefiting from transnational co-operation projects										10					10		20
Number of individuals benefiting from inter-territorial co-operation projects																10	60
TOTAL No. OF INDIVIDUALS	100	400	8	10	200	70	600	600	120	10	50	3	30	3	10	10	2224

Indicator	EAFRD Target												EMFF Target					Total
	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	5.1	5.2		
Number of SMEs benefiting from sustainable and active travel projects	1																1	
Number of SMEs benefiting from community facilities projects		2															2	
Number of SMEs benefiting from priority sector competitiveness and co-operation projects			8														8	
Number of SMEs benefiting from agricultural diversification projects				10													10	
Number of SMEs benefiting from fisheries diversification projects												3					3	
Number of SMEs benefiting from lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas projects													15				15	
Number of SMEs benefiting from fisheries supply chain projects														3			3	
Number of SMEs benefiting from low carbon future projects					1												1	
Number of SMEs benefiting from natural environment projects						1											1	
Number of SMEs benefiting from leisure and recreation for wellbeing projects							1										1	
Number of SMEs benefiting from arts, culture and heritage projects								3									3	
Number of individuals benefiting from community capacity building projects									1								1	
Number of SMEs benefiting from transnational co-operation projects										1					1		2	
Number of SMEs benefiting from inter-territorial co-operation projects																1	2	
	1	2	8	10	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	15	3	1	1	53	

Indicator	EAFRD Target											EMFF Target					Total
	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	5.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	5.1	5.2	
Number of community facilities created or enhanced		4					4										8
Number of new services/products created	2	4	8	10	1		3					3		3			34
Number of new companies established			1	2								1					4
Number of jobs created		2	6	5	1	1						1	3	1			20
Number of new training initiatives supported									12				3				15
Number of individuals receiving training and/or developing new skills									120				30				150
Number of marketing initiatives undertaken					2		2	12	12								28

Inputs	Themes	Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes
Strategies: Europe 2020 SG Economic Strategy Aberdeenshire Community Plan Business & Community Engagement: Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats Regulations: EAFRD EMFF Common Provisions Partnership Agreement	Connecting People & Places	By 2020, people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire are better connected, physically, emotionally and digitally, through a range of active, affordable and sustainable solutions.	Sustainable & active travel solutions	Better connected communities
	Developing Key Economic Sectors	By 2020, South Aberdeenshire realises its full economic potential with more & better employment opportunities for its people provided through creating or enhancing micro and small and medium-sized rural & fisheries enterprises (including Social Enterprises), increasing the skills base & creating new jobs.	Enhanced community facilities	More competitive economic sectors and businesses
	Promoting & Protecting the Environment	By 2020, South Aberdeenshire will be a lower carbon society that enjoys, conserves and makes the most of its natural environment and assets.	Enhanced community facilities	More sustainable and energy efficient communities
	Enriching & Positive Activities for All	By 2020, people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire will have better access to opportunities to improve their health & wellbeing and to participating in local arts, culture and heritage.	Integrated supply chains	Healthier people who are more engaged in the cultural fabric of their communities
	Co-operating with Other Countries and Areas	By 2020, South Aberdeenshire will have established co-operation projects which, through innovation, networking and knowledge exchange, contribute to meeting the objectives of the other four LDS themes and associated priorities.	Diversified economic sectors	More innovative and knowledgeable communities
			Enhanced skills and more jobs	
CLLD Added Value	Community engagement	Common purpose	Low carbon solutions	
			Environmental benefits	
			Increased recreational opportunities	
	Partnership working		Enhanced arts, culture and heritage	
			Shared learning and knowledge transfer	
				Strong, resilient & empowered communities and businesses

Target Groups

Throughout the development of the LDS, SALAG members discussed the merits of targeting resources on specific groups and concluded that setting rigid boundaries on the groups which could benefit from the CLLD approach would be overly bureaucratic and counterproductive to the achievement of an integrated, territorially-based development approach. For example, intergenerational links were recognised as an opportunity to be explored to enhance community cohesion which precluded the targeting of certain age groups. Nevertheless, SALAG recognises the need to focus attention on opening up the CLLD programmes to groups and communities which have not traditionally accessed LEADER/EFF Axis 4 programmes and individuals who are more isolated from their communities. As such, capacity building and promotional activities will specifically target under-represented groups and individuals across South Aberdeenshire.

Capacity Building & Animation

The South Aberdeenshire area is characterised by an active civil society, supported by long-established networks and organisations including voluntary bodies, rural partnerships and development trusts. Recognising the need to avoid duplication with these already successful and active organisations, SALAG membership includes many of these organisations to facilitate co-ordination and assist with the promotion of the CLLD approach. Groups and communities which have not traditionally benefitted from LEADER/EFF Axis 4 support will require additional support in terms of capacity building. This is particularly the case for Kincardine & Mearns which has not traditionally benefited from LEADER/EFF Axis 4 support as much as other areas of Aberdeenshire and whose rural partnership is relatively new. Existing structures within South Aberdeenshire will be used to animate the territory through events, networking and community engagement. Capacity building will be supported through the provision of guidance, advice and support to groups by LAG members and staff.

Cross-cutting themes and adding value

There are connections between the themes that are prioritised within this Strategy, and initiatives will be expected to demonstrate how they contribute to at least one theme and in doing so can contribute to multiple priorities and bring multiple benefits

Initiatives will be expected to highlight how they add value to existing provision, given that whilst the funding available within the LEADER and EMFF Programmes is significant, alone is not sufficient to address all of the development needs and challenges of South Aberdeenshire. There already exist a significant number of statutory, private and third sector initiatives designed to meet some of the development needs of the area and initiatives will therefore need to demonstrate how they add value to existing provision and do not duplicate what is already there. Information to support applicants to assess their unique contribution is available in this Strategy in the reviews of local, national and EU level strategies, and will be made available throughout the lifetime of the Programme via the South Aberdeenshire LEADER website.

Projects will be expected to demonstrate a contribution to the following themes:

Innovation – Projects must demonstrate ways in which their activity is innovative. Innovation is defined as:

- the emergence of new products and services which incorporate the distinctiveness of the local area;
- new or improved methods permitting the combination of the area's human, natural and/or financial resources, resulting in better use of indigenous potential;
- the combination of and links between economic sectors which are traditionally separate;
- novel ways of involving the local population in the decision-making process and in implementing the project.

Sustainability – Projects must demonstrate at least a neutral, and ideally a positive environmental impact. They must also demonstrate sustainable business models which will reduce the need for continued public support beyond the lifetime of the project.

Equal Opportunities - Projects must demonstrate at least a neutral, and ideally a positive equalities impact. They should take account of their impact on people with protected characteristics, as set out in the Equalities Act.

Community empowerment and social capital – Projects must demonstrate how they will engage with and develop social capital within the communities within which they are located.

Co-operation

Co-operation encourages and supports LAGs to undertake joint initiatives with other (F)LAGs, or with a group taking a similar approach, in another region, Member State, or even a third country. There are two main forms of co-operation projects:

- National/Inter-territorial co-operation - this refers to co-operation between different rural and maritime areas within a Member State. Co-operation within a Member State concerns at least one (F)LAG and is open to other local groups using a similar participatory approach;
- International/Transnational co-operation - which is defined as co-operation between different rural and maritime areas from at least two Member States. Transnational co-operation covers at least one LAG and additional partners could include other local groups using a similar participatory approach. It is also possible to extend this co-operation to groups in third countries following a similar approach.

There are many benefits to inter-territorial and transnational co-operation, from making projects more ambitious by reaching critical mass and improving competitiveness through finding new business partners and positioning on new markets to supporting work and promoting innovation through new skills. Softer benefits include broadening people's mind by considering differences as a source for enrichment and ideas, the acquisition of new skills and developing European citizenship and sense of identity.

Co-operation initiatives will need to address issues and themes important for South Aberdeenshire and complement the four themes and associated priorities outlined within this Strategy. Co-operation projects will need to bring some significant added-value to the LDS areas, the activities targeted, the actors involved or, more widely, the local population; and be implemented with well-defined and realistic objectives.

SALAG is open to receiving ideas and invitations to co-operate from other LAG areas and has therefore consciously not prescribed a limited number of co-operation themes or objectives. Instead, co-operation projects and activities will be required to demonstrate a contribution to the achievement of the other themes and priorities set out in the LDS. With regards to the initiation of co-operation projects by SALAG, tourism, health, farm diversification, apprenticeships/training, animation and linkages between the public, private and voluntary sectors will be prioritised.

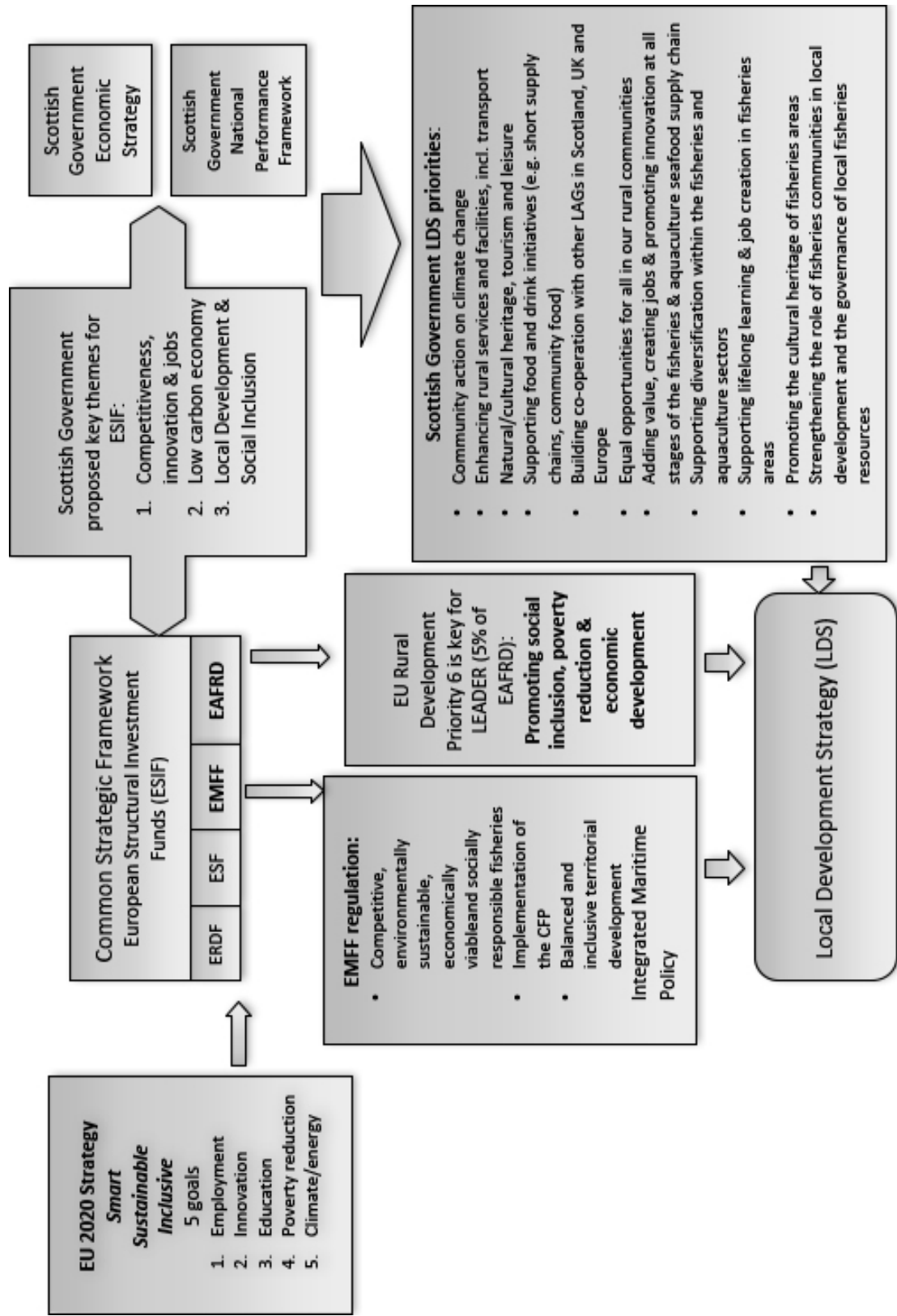
There were limited transnational and co-operation projects under the previous rural Aberdeenshire LEADER programme. Under the new Programme, there is an emphasis on co-operation, with an associated ring-fenced budget. It is therefore critical that (F)LAG members are involved in promoting and championing co-operation projects.

Strategic context

The South Aberdeenshire LDS also needs to link with actions, policies and strategies from the international (EU), national (Scottish Government) and local (Aberdeenshire) levels as well as being based on the needs and wishes of people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire. This section places the South Aberdeenshire LDS within this wider strategic context, outlining the key EU strategic priorities and funds, the Scottish Government drivers and directives that frame the creation of LDSs including the Partnership Agreement and the SRDP, and the local Aberdeenshire strategic context.

EU priorities & funds

The South Aberdeenshire LDS must demonstrate its coherence with the other relevant programmes under the funds in the **Common Strategic Framework (CSF)** and the **Europe 2020 Strategy**. It also needs to link with Scottish Government priorities. Diagram 1 illustrates the complex international and national strategic and funding landscape within which the South Aberdeenshire LDS sits.



The EU2020 Strategy sets the context for the Common Strategic Framework priorities in terms of creating the conditions for a more competitive economy with higher employment. It is concerned with delivering economic growth under three objectives: 'smart' (through investments in education, research and innovation), 'sustainable' (through moving towards a low-carbon economy) and 'inclusive' (through emphasising job creation and poverty reduction). The EU2020 Strategy has five goals regarding employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy.

In 2012, the European Commission set out three challenges it believes the UK should address to contribute to EU2020 targets:

- Increasing labour market participation, promoting business competitiveness and research and development investment
- Addressing social exclusion and unemployment
- Developing an environmentally friendly and resource efficient economy

Four key EU funds, European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF), are being drawn together by the Scottish Government under the strategic and overarching direction of the under the umbrella of the Common Strategy Framework (CSF): the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Funds (EMFF). These funds are expected to support 11 thematic objectives and in doing so contribute to the EU2020 smart, sustainable and inclusive goals. The activities of all the Funds must complement each other and work in conjunction with other EU funding streams, including Horizon 2020, ERASMUS and COSME.

For rural development, pursued through the EAFRD, the EU sets out six priorities which contribute to the EU2020 Strategy goals and which translate into the relevant thematic objectives of the CSF. The six priorities are:

1. Fostering knowledge transfer, co-operation and innovation
2. Enhancing competitiveness, promoting innovative technologies and sustainable management of forests
3. Promoting food chain organisation & risk management
4. Restoring, preserving & enhancing ecosystems
5. Promoting resource efficiency & transition to low carbon economy
6. Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development

Local Development Strategies must demonstrate how they meet one or more of the six rural development programme priority areas, with priority six – promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development – being the key priority for LEADER.

In terms of marine and fisheries, the EMFF Regulation identifies the following objectives for Local Development Strategies:

1. Adding value, creating jobs, attracting young people and promoting innovation at all stages of the supply chain of fishery and aquaculture products;
2. Supporting diversification inside or outside commercial fisheries, lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries and aquaculture areas;
3. Enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets of the fisheries and aquaculture areas, including operations to mitigate climate change;
4. Promoting social well-being and cultural heritage in fisheries and aquaculture areas, including fisheries, aquaculture and maritime cultural heritage;
5. Strengthening the role of fisheries communities in local development and the governance of local fisheries resources and maritime activities.

Scottish Government: the national context

Partnership Agreements will set out how Member States will invest Structural Funds (ESIF) to meet European ambitions. The Scottish Government will have its own chapter in the UK Partnership Agreement and has proposed the following three key themes to deliver the European Commission's agenda across the EU funds:

- Competitiveness, innovation and jobs
- Low carbon economy, the Environment and Energy Efficiency
- Local Development and Social Inclusion

These thematic objectives align with the Scottish Government Economic Strategy and the National Performance Framework. In terms of the Local Development Strategy, as well as the six rural development priorities outlined by the EU, the Scottish Government also expects Local Development Strategies to contain actions that contribute to:

- driving community action on climate change
- enhancing rural services and facilities, including transport initiatives
- enhancing natural/cultural heritage, tourism and leisure
- supporting food and drink initiatives (e.g. short supply chains, community food)
- building co-operation with other LAGs in Scotland, UK and Europe
- equal opportunities for all in our rural communities
- sustainable development of fisheries areas (for fisheries)

Marine Scotland guidance (July 2014) states that EMFF priorities for Local Development Strategies must complement Scottish Government policy and reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and to this end, LDS' should focus their EMFF priorities on:

- Adding value, creating jobs, and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries and aquaculture seafood supply chain
- Supporting diversification within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors
- Supporting lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas
- Strengthening the role of fisheries communities in local development and the governance of local fisheries resources

Aberdeenshire – Strategic context and priorities

Aberdeenshire's Community Plan (2013-2023) identifies a set of long-term outcomes, which include: children having the best start in life (identifying those localised areas where outcomes are less favourable); reducing unemployment rates in areas of deprivation; reduction in inequalities in health outcomes; and older people remaining independent for longer (recognising that within rural areas, access to services and amenities remains a challenge). The outcome perhaps of the most direct relevance to the development of the Local Development Strategy is that there will be 'successful, inclusive and resilient communities with the confidence, capability and capacity to tackle things that matter to them'. A key theme underpinning these outcomes is being preventative in the support of communities.

The Aberdeenshire Community Plan is supplemented by other strategies including Aberdeenshire Council's Aberdeenshire 2050 vision, Economic Development Strategy, Strategic Priorities, Regeneration Strategy and Local Transport Strategy.

In August 2014, Aberdeenshire Council launched a vision for Aberdeenshire – Visioning 2050. The purpose of the vision is to provide guidance to the council as it considers its strategic long term aims in order to secure economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability.

The vision is aspirational, however it is based on what we know today and what can be achieved to improve and protect Aberdeenshire. Focusing on four key themes, it sets out a future Aberdeenshire that has:

- A society that is renowned for being welcoming, modern, safe and healthy;
- An economy that is prosperous, diverse and attractive to investors, employers and employees;
- Communities that are dynamic, culturally diverse and locally active; and
- An environment that is beautiful, bio-diverse, accessible to all, and sustainably used.

The Aberdeenshire Council's Economic Development Strategy (EDS) states that 'Aberdeenshire is recognised as an attractive place to live and work, with a high-quality environment, above-average incomes and low unemployment'.

However, both the EDS and the Aberdeenshire Community Plan note that 'there are significant differences in wealth and opportunity across the area and real challenges to be met as we move forward.' In relation to employment, for example, both documents point to 'pockets of deprivation and rural isolation' within a wider context of Aberdeenshire having one of the lowest rates of unemployment of all 32 Scottish Local Authorities.

Based on data from the EDS and Community Plan, the ageing population is highlighted as a key potential challenge. Specifically, Aberdeenshire has 23.2% of residents over the age of 60, and will have the highest proportion of older people in Scotland by 2020. An increasing and ageing population provides unique challenges in delivering services, additional housing and the resulting demand in community facilities. The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan identifies a requirement for 36,000 new households by 2030 with much of the wider development focussed in the Huntly – Laurencekirk and Aberdeen – Peterhead corridors. Accommodating the workforce who will be required to deliver services for older people will be necessary, and the Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy (2012-2017) sets out plans for building more affordable housing, an acknowledged and significant challenge in the area.

Given this backdrop, the Aberdeenshire EDS 2011-2016 (the timeframe of which therefore overlaps with the new Programming period of 2014-2020) has ten Strategic Objectives which have been identified following community consultation. Of most direct relevance to the LDS development are: communities benefiting and becoming self-sufficient through renewable energy schemes (e.g. through Aberdeenshire Sustainable Community Halls); businesses and communities contributing to tourism and the Food and Drink industry; enhancing the resilience of fisheries and agriculture-dependent communities; and encouraging social enterprises, residents and businesses to work together to seize opportunities and become more knowledgeable about how to take ideas forward.

Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) is a partnership between Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish Enterprise. ACSEF's Economic Action Plan for Aberdeen City and Shire (2013-18) sets out an annual economic growth target for the region of 2.5%, to be achieved through developing four key sectors – life sciences, energy, tourism and food & drink. Strategic priorities through which economic growth will be delivered include digital connectivity, including building an open access fibre network and developing and implementing a rural access strategy, with an £18 million commitment by Aberdeenshire Council towards the deployment of Broadband infrastructure across the Council area. Improving roads and rail infrastructure including local rail capacity are further priorities.

Skills and Intellectual Capital is a broad priority area in the ACSEF Economic Action Plan, delivered through the implementation of the ACSEF Skills Strategy in the Aberdeen City and Shire Business Enterprise Programme. This programme includes:

- Building links between Business and Education (both teachers and pupils)
- Working with Councils to develop Curriculum for Excellence
- Generate better dialogue between educationalists and industry sectors
- Develop approach to talent attraction and retention
- Develop the partnerships required to ensure our young people have versatile skills to capitalise on job opportunities and are not isolated from the job market
- Development of work placement scheme
- Host ACSEF Youth Summits

Tourism across the whole Aberdeen City and Shire estimated to be worth £340 million every year, ensuring it remains a priority for ACSEF. In 2013 ACSEF endorsed the Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Partnership's (ACSTP's) new Tourism Strategy aimed at making the area a sustainable tourist destination whilst enhancing the region's outstanding assets. In order for the area to make the most of the opportunities offered through its natural assets ACSTP's Tourism Strategy highlights that the area needs to:

- Improve and expand accommodation provision
- Improve access to IT infrastructure
- Develop leadership and management skills
- Improve the quality of the customer journey
- Reduce seasonality by increasing weekend city occupancy,
- Ensure the area is easily accessible by improving road infrastructure.

The need for **improved transport** is also supported by the vision outlined in Nestran's Regional Strategy which states that the region requires 'A transport system for the north east of Scotland which enables a more economically competitive, sustainable and socially inclusive society.' **Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy (2012)** outlines the key transport issues affecting Aberdeenshire and is guided by five objectives:

- Promote Sustainable Economic Growth
- Promote Social Inclusion and Accessibility
- Protect the Environment
- Improve Safety
- Improve Integration

The Local Transport Strategy is guided by the principle to encourage individuals and business to consider ways to travel less, travel more actively and, where vehicular travel is necessary, how journeys could be undertaken more effectively.

The current **Aberdeenshire Local Fisheries Development Strategy** (2011) notes the issues of a downward trend in employment in the fisheries area, a decline in fisheries related employment, unemployment in the FLAG area being double that of Aberdeenshire, and that larger coastal towns are increasingly becoming dormitory. It aims to:

- Improve social and community cohesion;
- Improve infrastructure that allows for diversification from fisheries only related activities;
- Improve tangibly the local environment and access to it;
- Improve the conditions for economic development and regeneration;
- Add value to fish products;
- Promote the cultural heritage of Aberdeenshire's fishing communities

It is within the above strategic context, at EU, national and local authority level that this South Aberdeenshire LDS sits.

This complex funding and strategic landscape means that the formulation of the Local Development Strategy takes on even greater significance. This is because it needs to bring in a greater range of players, navigate a broader and different range of funding mechanisms, tools and delivery, whilst still maintaining a focus on CLLD. This represents a number of key challenges: identifying common strategic outcomes and priorities (including those at European and national levels, as well as at regional level); using strategic and multiple-outcome tools; and balance these with addressing community needs and opportunities.

The following sections focus on South Aberdeenshire's development needs and opportunities, through analysis of statistical data and through consultation with local communities including the South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (SALAG)¹⁸.

¹⁸ For a description of how local people were involved in the LDS development see Appendix 2.



04 | Process for LDS Preparation and Implementation



Approach to Community Engagement in LDS Preparation

People who live and work in South Aberdeenshire were engaged in the initial LDS development process through being invited to attend one of four community engagement events, and through an online survey. The results of the community engagement exercises were analysed and formed the basis for an online consultation with the South Aberdeenshire LAG to help refine and prioritise the overarching themes and priorities sitting beneath the themes for the LDS, which was followed by a SALAG workshop to create the vision, themes and priorities for the LDS.

The initial priority themes that were presented for consideration in the bottom up community consultation exercises (four community workshops and an online survey) were based on the strategy review conducted for the Expression of Interest to form a LAG. Participants in both the online survey and community engagement workshops were given the opportunity to highlight additional priorities and discuss particular equalities considerations.

The findings from the community consultation were analysed and presented back to the SALAG in an online consultation. This consultation exercise was used as a basis for a visioning and prioritisation workshop with the SALAG which helped refine and prioritise the key themes and priorities for the LDS.

Three additional sectoral workshops (farm diversification, rural business and fisheries) were subsequently held and used to refine the strategy.

The final draft LDS was then written and agreed by SALAG on 29 September 2014.



The findings from this consultation work are included in Appendix 2.

Implementation

The **2007 – 2013 LEADER Programme** significantly developed capacity in rural areas and supported over 2,200 initiatives across the country across a range of themes – from tourism to youth and employment to health. However, the Scottish Government noted that under the 2007 – 2013 programme, LEADER was widely regarded as a rural communities grant scheme rather than an integrated territorial development tool on a local level. EU-wide research identified cross-cutting issues with LEADER 2007-13 including LAG capacity constraints, an unclear division of labour and roles, LDSs of variable quality and weak LDS monitoring and evaluation.

Therefore, the **Scottish Rural Development Programme** consultation document (2013) stated that the 2014-2020 programme intends to retain many features of the previous programme such as remaining community-led, but with three key changes:

1. Greater coherence between Rural and Coastal areas through submission of an integrated and single Local Development Strategy.
2. Providing clarity over eligibility rules that will apply throughout the period.
3. Emphasis on local coherence, with links between LEADER, Community Planning Partnerships and the local implementation of other EU and National Funds.

As well as the alignment and integration of strategic funds, the European Commission has proposed a range of new integrating tools which may be considered for national, pan-regional and local level provision. Community-led local development (CLLD) is a key mechanism for translating the EU level objectives to the local level. The EU general regulation states that CLLD shall be:

1. Focused on specific sub-regional territories
2. Community-led, by local action groups composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, where at the decision-making level neither the public sector nor any single interest group shall represent more than 49 % of the voting rights
3. Carried out through integrated and multi-sectoral area-based local development strategies
4. Designed taking into consideration local needs and potential, and include innovative features in the local context, networking and, where appropriate, co-operation.

The previous **Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme 2007 – 2013** delivered actions under two main themes: 'revitalising rural communities' and 'progressive rural economies', prioritising:

- Sustainable communities
- Sustainable tourism
- Versatile rural workforce
- Sustainable energy
- Micro enterprise
- Conservation of rural environment
- Innovative value added products and markets

The programme funded 144 projects which addressed a number of priorities set out in the LDS, in particular those relating to improving community facilities, as well as local culture and traditions, tourism and the environment. Some priorities were under-addressed, in particular sustainable energy, transport and housing, and very few of the funded projects undertook work relating to supporting businesses and enterprise.

A wide range of impacts were achieved under the previous programme, including improvements in community facilities and increases in wellbeing and skills development through being a volunteer or project participant. However, there were two main challenges associated with achieving and demonstrating impact. Firstly, owing to issues with monitoring and evaluation processes, capturing the impact of projects was difficult and project leads often lacked time, knowledge and skills to be able to capture appropriate data. Secondly, some areas of potential impact, highlighted in the LDS as priorities, were not addressed through the projects that were funded, for example, sustainable housing and rural transport initiatives.

In order to achieve broad-based and inclusive involvement in LDS delivery in the 2014 – 2020 Programme, the LAG and FLAG will need to work with key partners to maximise involvement and impact; people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire will need to be supported to be involved, and innovation and networking will need to be encouraged. Information about key roles of the LAG, FLAG and partners and how the involvement of local people in LDS delivery will be maximised is captured in the LDS Communication Plan.

Engaging with Communities, Local People and Businesses

While South Aberdeenshire is indeed a coherent area in socio-economic terms, it is large in geographical and population terms. SALAG membership reflects this in terms of the inclusion of local agencies that have active and meaningful engagement and dialogue with local people, communities and businesses. LAG members' roles will be to act as a conduit between SALAG and local people, communities and businesses, consulting them on development needs and priorities throughout the implementation of the programmes. Their long-established and effective networks and mechanisms of engagement, tailored to the needs of stakeholders, will be used to achieve this two-way dialogue.

It is recognised that there are a number of communities in South Aberdeenshire that have lower capacity than others to participate in the delivery of the LDS. The LAG will work with existing structures and organisations including the Rural Partnerships to identify and address the barriers to participation which these communities face. Specific projects to overcome these barriers will be developed by the LAG, that will also pro-actively promote the CLLD approach in these communities. Lessons from other areas in how best to overcome lower community capacity will be explored through networking with other LAGs and co-operation projects.

Working with key partners

Co-operation and joint working will be essential in linking the priorities and objectives of the LDS and their delivery with the wider Aberdeenshire, Scottish, national and transnational context. Indeed, the Aberdeenshire SOA states that 'Wherever partners involve communities in the priority-setting, policy development and decision-making processes, people are more likely to buy into the decisions that are made.'

In South Aberdeenshire, a number of existing channels are likely to support the delivery of the LDS including:

Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership

The CPP is charged with focusing on the delivery of six national priorities: early years; economic recovery and growth; employment; health inequalities and physical activity; older people; safer and stronger communities, including reducing reoffending. Given that many of the organisations represented on the LAG and FLAG also sit on the CPP, LAG members can feed upwards to their respective CPP representative and cascade information and actions downwards from the CPP to the LAG. Local Community Planning Groups have been invited to participate in the LAG and FLAG. In terms of engagement, the CPP has developed a Community Engagement Strategy and a Youth Engagement Strategy to ensure a more coordinated and systematic approach to engagement which the LDS will need to complement.

Rural Partnerships

An aim within the Aberdeenshire Economic Development Strategy is to further develop the network of Rural Partnerships to cover the whole of Aberdeenshire, and to ensure that they are the 'contractors of choice' when undertaking work within communities. The Rural Partnerships were instrumental in recruiting participants for the CLLD engagement events as part of the LDS development process. Their role on the LAG and FLAG should ensure they are embedded in the development and realisation of the LDS.

Rural Partnerships are independent organisations, created and managed by community representatives; they therefore embody the aspirations of Community Led Local Development. Their core purpose is to help to build stronger, more sustainable, communities and in particular to:

- Help communities develop prioritised action plans
- Support and encourage community led projects
- Facilitate networking, engagement and involvement between communities and statutory agencies
- Build capacity for groups and individuals involved in projects, mentoring and assist groups to source funding
- Contribute as a partner on Local Community Planning Groups and Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership.

The existing expertise and local knowledge in Rural Partnerships should be used to support the delivery of projects initiated by the LAG or other organisations where appropriate.

Other LAGs and FLAGs

North Aberdeenshire LAG: There are many common members of the North and South Aberdeenshire LAGs, which should support synergies between LDSs, reduce duplication and support the cross fertilization of ideas. A single FLAG covering both the North and South Aberdeenshire and Angus LDS will ensure co-ordination of fisheries activities. Regular meetings of the LAG and FLAG Chairs will support the co-ordination of rural and fisheries activities.

Neighbouring LAGs: Aberdeenshire Council representatives have good working relationships with the Cairngorms, Moray and Angus LAGs. Once each area has agreed its LDS priorities, synergies will be explored and joint projects developed.

Sector co-operation

At a more general level, the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) Manifesto (2007), as well as the EDS, identified the importance of co-operation and partnership between public and private sectors and between the community/social sector and public sector. The EDS, for example, highlights that community groups and social enterprises are to be assisted in taking over assets and services from the Council, and of particular relevance to the new LEADER Programme, there is a proposal to initiate an Aberdeenshire Town Centres Plan of Action.

Involving people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire

This will link with the above as it will include the role of the LAG and FLAG in animating the local population. It will need to take into account the variations across the area, including the different levels of capacity and previous experience of LEADER/EMFF, and be linked with Monitoring and Evaluation. Besides strategic animation by the LAG and FLAG, there will need to be sections on how the LEADER team will communicate with people who live and work in the area. Channels may include the website, social media, newsletters, outreach through a Development Officer and workshops/events. Targets could be attached to these different activities.

Innovation will be supported in several ways:

- The inclusion of innovation as a horizontal theme to which all projects should contribute
- Fostering knowledge exchange through networking, co-operation projects), and the Communication Strategy
- Risk-taking and learning lessons from failure – creating the processes and culture for this

Social innovation will be fostered through the targeting and inclusion of groups which have not traditionally accessed LEADER/EMFF Axis 4 support, as well as the use of information and communication technologies. Projects will be assessed on innovation and their contribution to LDS SMART objectives which are based on societal needs and challenges for the South Aberdeenshire area. This assessment approach will encourage and facilitate socially-innovative projects which simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. The LAG structure itself will also facilitate social innovation in the same way by bringing together key representatives from different communities and sectors in the South Aberdeenshire area to collaborate jointly on initiatives for the benefit of society.

Networking

Networking is a critical part of innovation as it is through connecting with others that knowledge can be exchanged and new ideas generated. At a local level, the LAG and FLAG are themselves networks of key rural and fisheries stakeholders and will act as forums to exchange ideas and facilitate co-operation. LAG and FLAG members will in turn network with local contacts and stakeholders to ensure that the work of the LAG is communicated at the grass-roots level. Co-operation projects and involvement in national networks will build upon this local activity to facilitate networking at a national and international level.

05

Turning objectives into practical actions



Funding of the Strategy

The Business Plan and targets set in this LDS are based on an estimated allocation of EAFRD and EMFF broadly in proportion to previous allocations to the South Aberdeenshire Area, with co-financing provided by the Scottish Government.

SALAG and NESFLAG will work to identify potential additional resources out with allocations from the European Union and Scottish Government to increase resources available to deliver the LDS. Both public sector and private sector contributions (e.g. corporate social responsibility) will be explored.

Initially, LAG and FLAG partners will be invited to contribute resources to the delivery of the LDS. An exercise will also be undertaken by the Lead Partner to identify potential additional sources of income which will be presented to the LAG and FLAG for consideration. Following this analysis of potential resources, the LAG and FLAG will decide upon which avenues to explore further.

Mechanisms for Co-ordination with Third Parties

LAG and FLAG membership is based on identification of key stakeholder groups from the South Aberdeenshire area. As such, the primary mechanism for co-ordination will be the LAG and FLAG themselves which will act as vehicles for co-operation and networking for rural and fisheries activities.

Networking and co-ordination with organisations which are not LAG or FLAG members will be facilitated through LAG and FLAG members and the Communication Plan. There will be significant cross-membership between the LAG, FLAG and Community Planning Partnership which will help to ensure co-ordination of activities. Furthermore, regular reports will be given to the Community Planning Partnership from the LAG and FLAG.

Co-ordination between SALAG, NALAG and NESFLAG will be facilitated through regular meetings of the Chairs and Co-ordinators of each group, as well as through the shared Secretariat for each body. Co-ordination with other LAGs and national and international stakeholders will be facilitated through networks and partnerships including the National Rural Network (NRN), the European Fisheries Area Network (FARNET), the European LEADER Association for Rural Development, the LEADER strategic board and LEADER and fisheries co-ordination meetings.

Action Plan for Implementation

The targets and priorities set out in the LDS and business plan will be the main driver and focus for the implementation of the LDS. Annual financial targets and specific priority outcome targets are set out in these documents. The LAG and FLAG will aim to achieve these through supporting applicant-led projects and the commissioning of activity. Application rounds for projects will be held regularly (3-4 times per year), with commissioning of activity taking place where the LAG has identified a particular project need which is not being addressed adequately through this mechanism. The Monitoring and Evaluation framework will help to guide and steer implementation of the LDS.

Objectives for Equalities Actions

An Equalities Impact Assessment of this strategy has been carried out and has identified the following actions:

- Groups will be invited to engage with the (Fisheries) Local Action Group, either as members or consultees on the implementation of the Local Development Strategy.
- Statistics will be compiled on project beneficiaries as part of a wider Monitoring and Evaluation framework.
- Projects supported by the LDS will be required to demonstrate at least a neutral, but ideally positive contribution to advancing equalities issues.

06 | Business Plan



Governance

The vision of the South Aberdeenshire LDS is:

“...for a strong, thriving South Aberdeenshire where people in rural communities are motivated to make change happen”

To achieve this vision, the strategy will be focused on 5 themes:

- 1) Connecting People and Places
- 2) Developing Key Economic Sectors
- 3) Promoting and Protecting the Environment
- 4) Enriching and Positive Activities for All
- 5) Co-operating with other Countries and Areas

Resources will be targeted towards the following priorities:

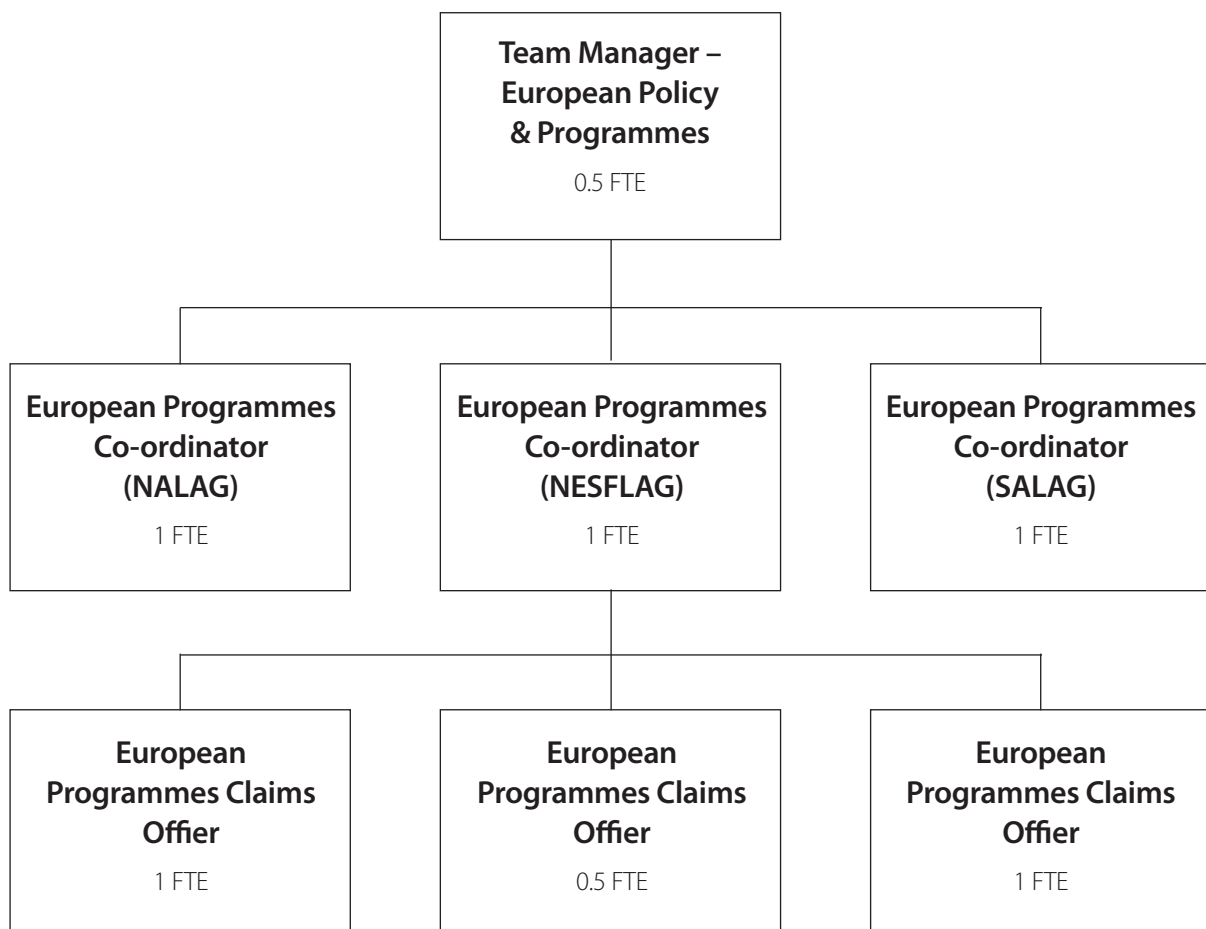
- 1.1 Sustainable and active travel to connect rural communities
- 1.2 Community facilities for the modern age
- 2.1 Improving priority sector competitiveness and co-operation
- 2.2 Facilitating diversification from agriculture
- 2.3 Facilitating diversification within and outside of the fisheries sector
- 2.4 Supporting lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas
- 2.5 Adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries seafood supply chain
- 3.1 Promoting low carbon futures
- 3.2 Protecting, exploring and enhancing the natural environment
- 4.1 Leisure and recreation for wellbeing
- 4.2 Celebrating and supporting arts, culture and heritage
- 4.3 Community capacity building
- 5.1 International co-operation
- 5.2 National co-operation

The South Aberdeenshire LAG (SALAG) and North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG) will be responsible for the delivery of the strategy. SALAG and NESFLAG will operate autonomously using an Accountable Body model, with Aberdeenshire Council acting as Accountable Body. Roles and responsibilities of LAG/FLAG members and the Accountable Body will be set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between the parties. A constitution will also be adopted for each (F)LAG. This will ensure that the Local Development Strategy (LDS) is managed and delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible.

It is proposed that the secretariat would be shared between the North and South Aberdeenshire LAGs and a single Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) for Aberdeenshire and Angus, which would bring the following advantages:

- Increased flexibility to transfer resources between (F)LAGs as and when required
- Increased transparency and delineation of responsibilities between project support/administration and compliance checks
- Each LAG and FLAG would maintain a dedicated Co-ordinator who would be the primary point of contact for LAG/FLAG members, project applicants/managers and the Managing Authority for each LAG/FLAG.

Secretariat Structure



Post Responsibilities

Task	Team Manager	Co-ordinator	Claims Officer
Overall responsibility for financial and compliance management to ensure robust delivery	✓		
Develop & strengthen relationships with MA, EC and other national bodies and EU rural/fisheries actors – liaising with SNRN	✓		
Create a strong partnership of private, public and voluntary sector partners by creating communications channels and opportunities for networking	✓		
Establish an effective communication strategy with fisheries interest, local communities creating knowledge exchange opportunities and working with local and national press, handle publicity and set up awards ceremony, websites and workshops and exhibitions		✓	
Devise, implement and oversee a robust programme of monitoring and evaluation that meets Scottish Government and EU Audit requirement	✓		
Engage with applicants		✓	
Establish a rural/fisheries mentoring system		✓	
Influence rural/coastal development through policy meetings, conferences, workshops and links with wider programmes and funds	✓		
Identify additional funding sources/partners	✓		
Development, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of the strategy		✓	
Liaise and communicate with strategic partners	✓		
Monitor physical and financial performance reporting to LAG and Accountable Body		✓	
Liaise with Accountable Body and Managing Authority		✓	
Technically appraise projects and ensure strategic fit		✓	
Measure results and review the processes	✓		
Take part in cooperation and networking locally and nationally		✓	
To manage the CLLD team prioritising workloads, providing support and managing team performance in delivery of agreed team objectives	✓		
Support the Local Action Group to co-ordinate and manage the successful implementation and on-going delivery of the Local Development Strategy and Business Plan		✓	
Implement an efficient framework of procedures for the application, evaluation and monitoring of projects benefiting from CLLD funding		✓	
Ensure that the CLLD Programme is properly publicised and promoted, and that the Communications and Publicity Strategy is implemented		✓	

Task	Team Manager	Co-ordinator	Claims Officer
Overall sight of financial returns and monitoring data albeit supported by other staff		✓	
Liaison on small business support locally		✓	
Provide comprehensive support to programme beneficiaries. Assisting in development and maintenance of key information and quality systems			✓
Advice and guidance to projects		✓	
Administer and record project claims, monitoring physical and financial records and project files			✓
Collation of statistical information			✓
Liaise with Internal Audit to ensure that claims are fully eligible and compliant			✓
Process all financial information relating to grant funding programme as well as collating information for board meetings and presentations			✓
Ensure claims to SG and reports are completed within the timetable			✓
Implement and manage programme of monitoring and evaluation		✓	
Engage with applicants to process claims and ensure effective collation of evidence and recording of important financial and impact information at each stage of the programme			✓
Design training locally around project and financial issues and EU monitoring requirements for all applicants and other training areas as required		✓	
All office administration relating to the Programme			✓
Supporting colleagues in the CLLD team, with a particular emphasis on finances (e.g. assisting claims, financial reports)			✓
Supporting events and workshops			✓

The **Team Manager** will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the joint secretariat; line management of the Co-ordinators and Claims Officers; and facilitating the co-ordination of activities between the LAGs and FLAG to ensure delivery of the LDS outcomes and objectives. The Team Manager will also be responsible for liaising between the Secretariat and the Accountable Body and for authorising expenditure such as payments to projects/contractors in line with LAG-approved agreements and claims by the Accountable Body to the Managing Authority for administrative expenses. The Team Manager will also be responsible for facilitating monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of the LDS in collaboration with the (F)LAG.

Each (F)LAG will have a dedicated **Co-ordinator** who will be responsible for supporting the (F)LAG and implementing its actions. The Co-ordinator will work closely with the (F)LAG Chair to establish and action priorities and activities and will also support communities and businesses to engage with the programmes, providing guidance and advice. The Co-ordinator will also carry out technical assessment of applications to assist the (F)LAG to make informed decisions and carry out monitoring and evaluation of individual projects. In order to ensure transparency of these activities, no Co-ordinator will assess applications or carry out monitoring/evaluation for projects applying to or funded by their own LAG (e.g. NALAG Co-ordinator will assess SALAG applications).

The **Claims Officer** will be responsible for supporting the (F)LAG administratively, arranging and minuting meetings and maintain programme/project files. They will also assess the eligibility of and pay project claims authorised by the Team Manager, providing advice and guidance to project sponsors on how to use the claims system and the supporting evidence/documentation required as and when required. Where additional checks are required on project claims, Claims Officers from other (F)LAGs will carry these out (e.g. NALAG Claims Officer will check SALAG claims prepared by SALAG Claims Officer).

Full job descriptions are set out at the end of this section.

In terms of recruitment, employees will be selected in line with the Accountable Body's recruitment processes and procedures. The (F)LAG Chair and one Vice Chair will be invited to sit on the interview panel. Where existing staff are in place to deliver 2007-13 programmes, they will be automatically transferred to the new programmes in line with employment legislation and the Accountable Body's policies.

EAFRD

The body which will have ultimate decision-making powers relating to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) elements of the Local Development Strategy and accompanying budgets will be the South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (SALAG). SALAG will be an autonomous partnership composed of representatives of community, private and public sector bodies. The balance of membership between these sectors will be approximately 1/3 per sector. Suitably qualified individuals may also be appointed to the LAG to ensure that the LAG maintains a full and balanced set of skills and expertise.

Where a gap in LAG membership is identified (either from a geographical, sectoral or skills/experience perspective), an open call for new members will be launched. Applicants will be required to fill in an application form which will be considered by the LAG, who will make the ultimate decision by simple majority (but ideally consensus) on new LAG members. Each member organisation must complete a membership application form and will have one vote on the LAG. Membership records will be maintained by the LAG Secretariat. At the invitation of the LAG, non-members may participate in meetings as observers or experts. Non-members may participate in discussions where appropriate and agreed by the Chair/Vice Chairs but may not vote on decisions. All decisions on funding awards must remain confidential until applicants are formally notified. A quorum of at least five members will be required to be met for decisions to be taken.

A Chair and two Vice Chairs will be appointed from the SALAG membership. The position of Chair will not be held by the Accountable Body, although one of the Vice Chair positions may be. The Secretariat will issue a call for expressions of interest from LAG members to undertake the Chair or Vice Chair positions. Nominations will be presented to the full LAG who will make the decision on appointments. Where agreement cannot be reached by consensus, a vote will be held where a simple majority will be required for a candidate to be appointed. Each position will be held for a period of two years, after which the process will be repeated. Incumbent Chairs/Vice Chairs will be eligible to stand for re-election.

The LAG may be supported by thematic sub-groups which will be convened to technically assess project applications (a Project Assessment Committee) and carry out joint work on LDS priorities and themes. Membership of these groups will be drawn from the wider LAG membership and will aim to mirror the FLAG balance between the community, private and public sectors. Ultimate decisions on policy and funding allocations will remain with the LAG, which will meet approximately 4 times per year. Delegated authority for certain LAG functions may be given to The Chair, Vice Chairs and Accountable Body with the agreement of the LAG (e.g. approval of changes to project budget headings). The LAG may also delegate project approval to thematic subgroups provided that clear terms of reference and operating procedures are established for each group and subject to regular review by the full LAG. Sub groups will also meet the decision making quorum conditions of a minimum of 5 people.

EMFF

The body which will have ultimate decision-making powers relating to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) elements of the Local Development Strategy and accompanying budgets will be the North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG). NESFLAG will be an autonomous partnership composed of representatives of community, private and public sector bodies. Suitably qualified individuals may also be appointed to the FLAG to ensure that the FLAG maintains a full and balanced set of skills and expertise.

Where a gap in FLAG membership is identified (either from a geographical, sectoral or skills/experience perspective), an open call for new members will be launched. Applicants will be required to fill in an application form which will be considered by the FLAG, who will make the ultimate decision by simple majority (but ideally consensus) on new FLAG members. Each member organisation must complete a membership application form and will have one vote on the FLAG. Membership records will be maintained by the FLAG Secretariat. At the invitation of the FLAG, non-members may participate in meetings as observers or experts. Non-members may participate in discussions where appropriate and agreed by the Chair/Vice Chairs but may not vote on decisions. All decisions on funding awards must remain confidential until applicants are formally notified. A quorum of at least five members will be required to be met for decisions to be taken.

A Chair (or Co-Chairs) and two Vice Chairs will be appointed from the NESFLAG membership. The position of Chair will not be held by the Accountable Body, although one of the Vice Chair positions may be. The Secretariat will issue a call for expressions of interest from FLAG members to undertake the Chair or Vice Chair positions. Nominations will be presented to the full FLAG who will make the decision on appointments. Where agreement cannot be reached by consensus, a vote will be held where a simple majority will be required for a candidate to be appointed. Each position will be held for a period of two years, after which the process will be repeated. Incumbent Chairs/Vice Chairs will be eligible to stand for re-election.

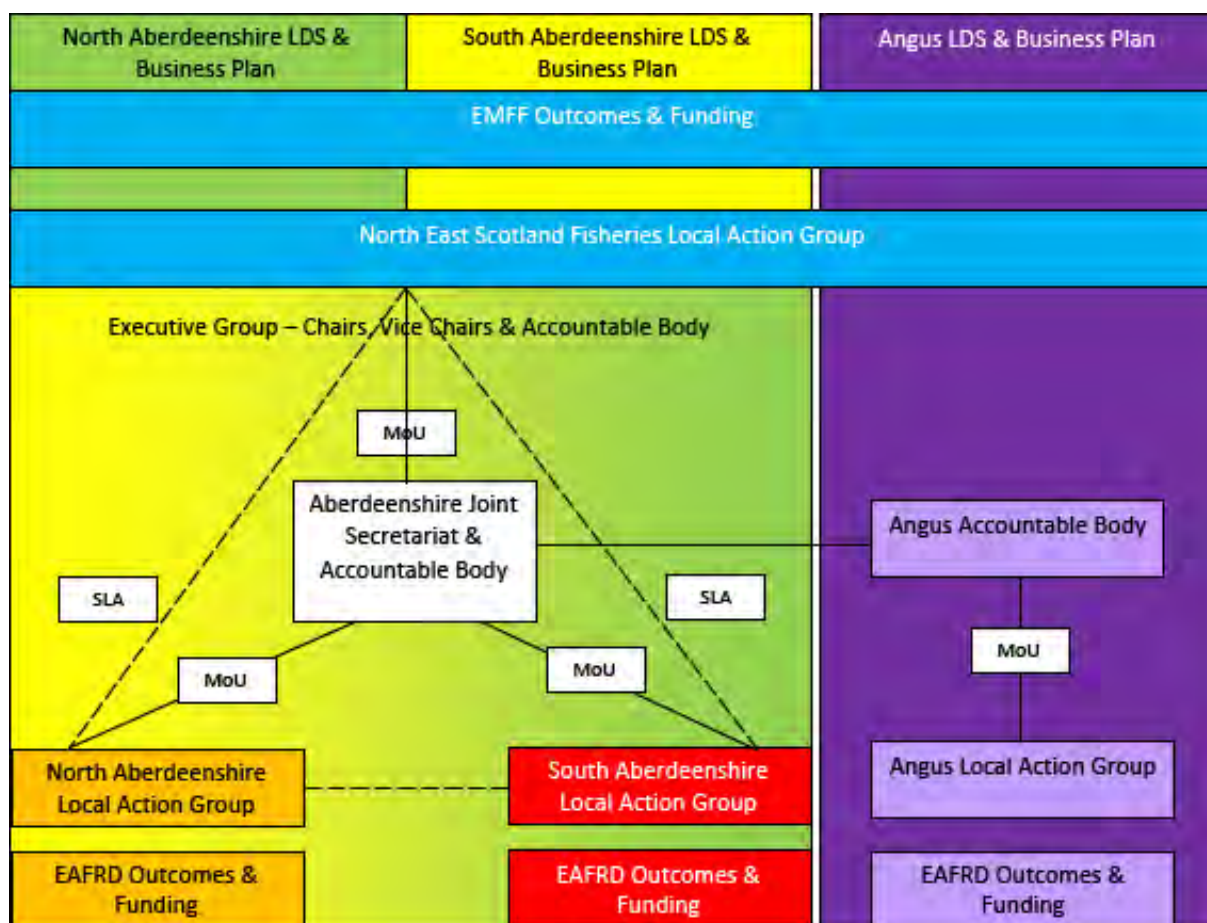
The FLAG may be supported by thematic sub-groups which will be convened to technically assess project applications (a Project Assessment Committee) and carry out joint work on LDS priorities and themes. Membership of these groups will be drawn from the wider FLAG membership and will aim to mirror the FLAG balance between the community, private and public sectors. Ultimate decisions on policy and funding allocations will remain with the FLAG, which will meet approximately 3 times per year. Delegated authority for certain FLAG functions may be given to the Chair, Vice Chairs and Accountable Body with the agreement of the FLAG (e.g. approval of changes to project budget headings). The FLAG may also delegate project approval to thematic subgroups provided that clear terms of reference and operating procedures are established for each group and subject to regular review by the full FLAG. Sub groups will also meet the decision making quorum conditions of a minimum of 5 people.

Linkages between SALAG and NESFLAG

As there will be two independent bodies tasked with implementing the South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy (SALDS), co-ordination between the two will be of paramount importance. Demarcation of priorities and/or activities will be set out in the SALDS to ensure that accountability for achievement of these objectives is clear. Regular meetings between the Chairs of SALAG and NESFLAG (and potentially the two groups themselves) will be held in order to facilitate co-operation between the two bodies. In addition, regular updates will be given to the LAG and FLAG on each other's activities. An Executive Group will be established, comprised of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Aberdeenshire (F)LAGs which will meet at least once per year to ensure co-ordination of the delivery of the LDS.

A joint LAG/FLAG Secretariat will also support joint working between the two bodies and help to facilitate a 'one stop shop' for applicants. This will be achieved through identifying synergies between the work of both organisations and signposting applicants to the most appropriate fund. Several organisations will be members of both SALAG and NESFLAG in order to further build links between the two groups.

Aberdeenshire LDS & (F)LAG Structure



Application Rounds

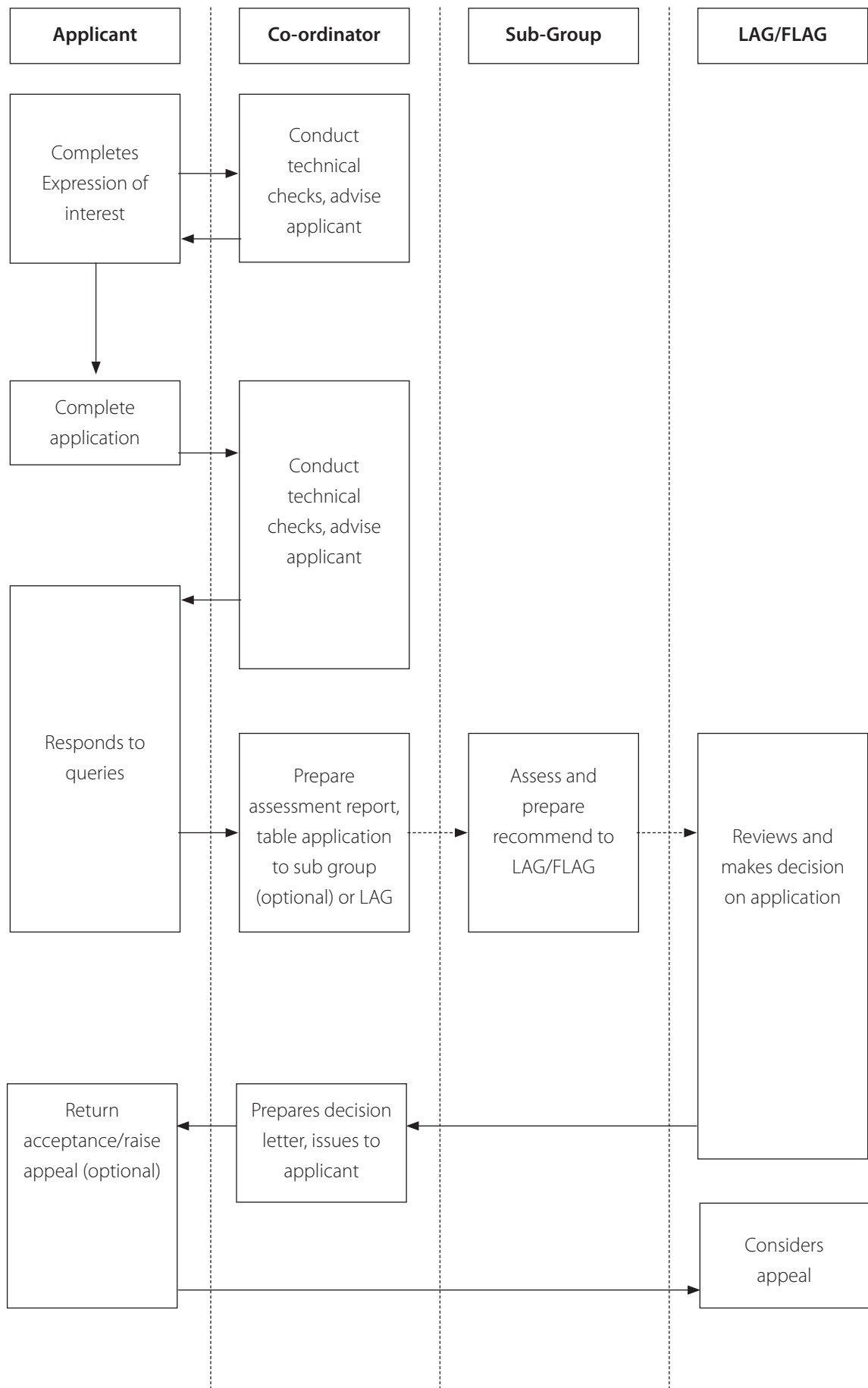
SALAG will set timings for funding calls on an annual basis, at which time decisions will also be made as to whether or not these will be open or targeted. Application rounds will take place up to 4 times per year. Applications will be completed using an online system. Technical checks will then be carried out by the European Programmes Co-ordinator who will work to resolve any issues with the applicants before applications are referred to SALAG. Applications may be assessed in more detail by a Project Assessment Committee or thematic group before going to the full group for decisions.

NESFLAG will set timings for funding calls on an annual basis, at which time decisions will also be made as to whether or not these will be open or targeted. Application rounds will take place up to 3 times per year. Applicants will be required to complete a short Expression of Interest (EOI) form to provide an initial outline of their proposed project idea. This will allow the Co-ordinator the opportunity to evaluate project proposals to ensure that they align and fit within the terms of the EMFF programme before receiving a full application. If the Co-ordinator is unsure if the project fits with the eligible criteria then the EOI will be forwarded to Marine Scotland for clarity. The Expression of Interest form and Application will be obtainable online. The Co-ordinator will be able to assist with but not complete applications where the applicant does not hold the necessary expertise. This will ensure that the fund is accessible to the widest range of applicants. The Co-ordinator will also meet, visit or hold e-mail correspondence with the applicant to ensure that all supporting information is supplied.

Projects will be assessed on the following general criteria:

- 1) Eligibility (based on EU and Scottish Government legislation and guidance)
- 2) Fit with the Local Development Strategy
- 3) Deliverability (in terms of capacity of applicant, business plan, cash flow and timeframe)
- 4) Value for Money (in terms of cost of project in relation to outputs and cost of similar projects, procurement, return on investment)
- 5) Innovation (whether a new idea or a new approach for the applicant)
- 6) Sustainability (both environmental and project sustainability)
- 7) Equalities (at least a neutral impact, but preferably a positive one)
- 8) Community empowerment and social capital (in terms of engagement with and benefits to the wider community)

A scoring framework will be developed which LAG/FLAG members will be required to complete in advance of project discussions. Projects which do not meet a minimum threshold for each criterion will not be supported. Applicants will be notified of the LAG/FLAG decision in writing after the meeting. The Scottish Government's appeals process will be applied.



Where appropriate, SALAG/NESFLAG may commission projects. However, given the desire to maximise the 'bottom-up' approach to delivery, this will be the exception rather than the rule. Projects may be commissioned where there is evidence of need and where a commissioned approach adds value (e.g. animation and capacity building). Commissioning may also be used to target areas of the LDS which are not being delivered through the applicant-led approach. Any projects commissioned by the LAG/FLAG will be subject to Public Procurement rules and the Accountable Body's procurement policy.

Conflicts of Interest

Conflict of interest is commonly defined as a situation that has the potential to undermine impartiality due to the possibility of conflict between individual or collective self-interest, professional interest or public interest.

The LAG must:

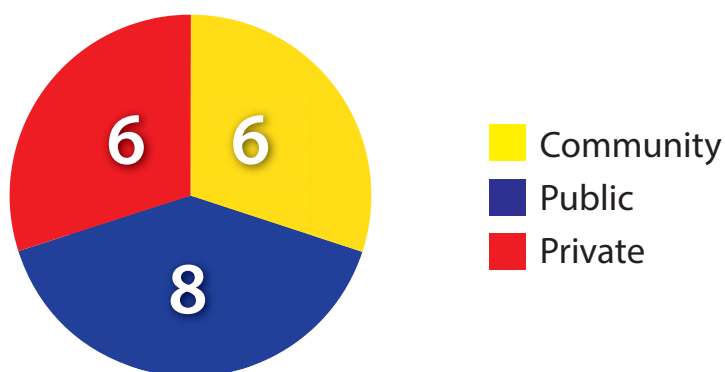
- hold an up-to-date register of interests of LAG members
- make sure that no close relative of an individual applicant or an employee or representative of an organisation applying for funding can:
 - (i) participate in the LAG decision making process
 - (ii) score an application from that applicant (which, for the avoidance of doubt, may include the accountable body)
 - (iii) be involved in any monitoring activities relating to the applicant

The meeting chair (or LAG chair) must make sure that minutes of LAG meetings record when a conflict has been raised and the steps taken. The chair will have ultimate responsibility to resolve any conflict of interest questions or queries, regarding a LAG member's right to be involved in the decision-making process and right to vote.

LAG Membership

SALAG Membership

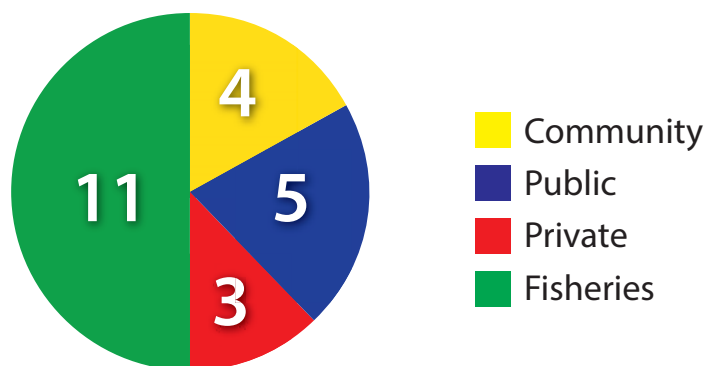
SALAG is a new partnership, reflecting a new LEADER geography for the 2014-2020 period. Given that the partnership did not exist at the Expression of Interest stage, SALAG member organisations were initially approached by the Accountable Body to form an interim LAG. The selection of members was based on assessment of active groups and key stakeholders within the South Aberdeenshire area, as well as membership from the previous Rural Aberdeenshire LAG. Emphasis was placed on identifying organisations which are representative of wider community/sectoral interests and ensuring an appropriate balance of organisations between sectors and communities in the South Aberdeenshire area. LAG member organisations were then required to formally confirm their participation in and commitment to form a LAG, as well as nominate dedicated individuals. A Chair and Vice Chairs were appointed at a meeting on 29 September 2014 at which time the interim LAG confirmed membership of the full LAG and agreed a proposal to allocate approximately 1/3 of the seats to the community, private and public sectors respectively. In early 2015, additional LAG members (who had not met the initial deadline for applying to join the LAG) were appointed by the LAG, who also decided that no further recruitment of members was required at this stage, based on the LAG skills matrix. LAG membership will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be amended throughout the implementation of the LDS.



Community	Public	Private
Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action	Aberdeenshire Council	Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
Garioch Community Councils	Forestry Commission	Federation of Small Businesses
The Garioch Partnership	NHS Grampian	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Kincardineshire Development Partnership	North East Scotland College	Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society
Marr Local Community Councils	Scotland's Rural College	Scottish Land and Estates
Marr Rural Partnership	Scottish Enterprise	Visit Royal Deeside
	Scottish Natural Heritage	
	Visit Scotland	

NESFLAG Membership

NESFLAG is a new partnership, reflecting revised requirements for FLAG structures for the 2014-2020 period. Given that the partnership did not exist at the Expression of Interest stage, NESFLAG member organisations in Aberdeenshire were initially approached by the Accountable Body to form an interim FLAG. The selection of members was based on assessment of active groups and key stakeholders within the fisheries sectors and fisheries-dependent communities in the Aberdeenshire area, as well as membership of the existing AEFF FLAG. Emphasis was placed on identifying organisations which are representative of wider community/sectoral interests and ensuring an appropriate balance of organisations between sectors and communities in the Aberdeenshire area. The need to ensure that all parts of the fisheries sector supply chain were represented was also taken into account. FLAG member organisations were then required to formally confirm their participation in and commitment to the FLAG, as well as nominate dedicated individuals. At a meeting on 29 September 2014, the interim FLAG confirmed membership of the full FLAG. In February 2015, co-Chairs were appointed by FLAG members and potential gaps were discussed. Following guidance from Marine Scotland, discussions were held with the Angus FLAG to explore a single North East of Scotland FLAG (NESFLAG). The FLAG boundaries and membership were therefore expanded to include Angus. NESFLAG membership will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be amended throughout the implementation of the LDS.



Community	Public	Private	Fisheries
Banffshire Partnership	Aberdeenshire Council	Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce	Aberdeen Producers' Association
Buchan Development Partnership	Angus Council	Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership	Mackay Boat Builders
Fraserburgh Development Trust	Scottish Enterprise	Federation of Small Businesses	Moray Firth Inshore Fisheries Group
Kincardineshire Development Partnership	Scottish Maritime Academy		North East Scotland Fisheries Organisation
	Visit Scotland		P&J Johnstone
			Peterhead and Fraserburgh Fish Producers' Association
			Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishing
			Scottish Fishermens' Organisation
			Scottish White Fish Producers' Association
			Seafood Scotland
			Scottish Seafood Association

LAG Procedures

Aberdeenshire Council has the necessary experience and systems in place to act as Accountable Body, having done so for the Rural Aberdeenshire LAG and Aberdeenshire European Fisheries Fund FLAG. Its systems are rigorously assessed by Audit Scotland and have proven effective in the administration of the aforementioned programmes. Furthermore, Aberdeenshire Council can draw upon a wide range of professional services from within the organisation which can assist the (F)LAG to deliver the Local Development Strategy.

Aberdeenshire Council can bring the following skills to the (F)LAG:

- Secretariat staff with key community engagement, financial management, European policy and funding, monitoring and evaluation, business support and management experience and qualifications (as set out in the job descriptions in Appendix 1 to this document) to support the LAG and FLAG
- Qualified Accountants, Auditors and Surveyors to support financial administration, monitoring and evaluation
- The ability to access a pool of expertise from key sectors including Economic Development, Planning & Environmental Services, Transportation, Education, Learning and Leisure, Housing and Social work.
- Robust and accountable financial procedures subject to scrutiny by Audit Scotland

Aberdeenshire Council's responsibilities as Accountable Body will include:

- Ensuring that LAG & FLAG funds are managed appropriately in a way which complies with legislative requirements
- Underwriting and guaranteeing LAG & FLAG expenditure
- Providing advice and support to the LAG & FLAG
- Providing advice and support to project applicants and managers
- Processing and paying project claims
- Providing a bank account and cash flow
- Provision of professional services including accountancy, audit, legal, human resource, quantity surveying, public relations and communication, design and print and travel
- Provision of office space and IT equipment
- Provision of a (F)LAG secretariat

LAG/FLAG Members responsibilities will include:

- Identifying development needs and funding priorities for the area, as set out in the South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy
- Ensuring the delivery of the LDS
- Project appraisal and approval
- Animation of the LAG/FLAG area – stimulating and enthusing the territory
- Active and regular participation at LAG/FLAG meetings
- Networking with other LAGs/FLAGs and stakeholders
- Dissemination of best practice

Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

A full Monitoring and Evaluation Plan has been agreed by the LAG and FLAG and is set out in a separate document.

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out in three areas:

- 1) Implementation of the Local Development Strategy
- 2) Governance of the LAG/FLAG
- 3) Implementation of projects

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will aim to:

- 1) Quantify outputs, outcomes and results from project to strategy level
- 2) Demonstrate the contribution of funds to wider local, national and European policy objectives
- 3) Assess the effectiveness of interventions and the overall strategy
- 4) Provide an evidence base upon which to review and revise the strategy
- 5) Provide the LAG/FLAG with the information required to ensure that the strategy is delivered

Regular reports will be given to the LAG/FLAG on the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, which will be led by the Team Manager – European Policy & Programmes. A wide range of stakeholders will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process including LAG/FLAG members, LAG/FLAG staff and project sponsors.

Monitoring and evaluation will take place throughout the programme period, with data gathered from project applications/claims, surveys and input from key stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Indicators will be selected based on the European Commission's core indicators and guidance from the Scottish Government.

An internal mid-term review of the LDS and governance will take place at which time consideration may be given to revising/ updating the LDS. An independent evaluation of the overall programme will take place at the end of the programme.

The outcomes of the plan will be disseminated both within and beyond the LAG/FLAG through the mechanisms set out in the Communication Plan.

Implementation of the Local Development Strategy

SALAG and NESFLAG will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy. Reports will be provided to each LAG and FLAG meeting by their Co-ordinators highlighting financial and delivery performance, based on allocated budget commitment and spend and achievement of the strategy's SMART objectives. A mid-term review of the Strategy will be undertaken to assess performance and identify any areas of refinement required. This process will be led by the LAG Secretariat in collaboration with LAG members. Consultation with external stakeholders will also take place as part of the mid-term review. A final review will be undertaken by an external body to assess the overall implementation of the LDS towards the end of the programme period. Each review will be reported internally to the LAG and FLAG as well as published externally and disseminated to relevant stakeholders.

Governance of the LAG/FLAG

Governance issues for the LAG/FLAG will be reviewed on an annual basis. This work will be carried out by the Co-ordinators in partnership with LAG and FLAG members. The purpose of the exercise would be to review partnership and decision making structures to ensure that the partnerships operate as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Implementation of Projects

Projects will be monitored in accordance with regulatory requirements to ensure that they are complying with the conditions of grant and achieving their objectives and outputs. In order to ensure transparency of monitoring, a Co-ordinator from another (F)LAG will carry out any compliance/monitoring checks on projects (e.g. the North Aberdeenshire Co-ordinator could carry out checks on South Aberdeenshire projects). Regular reports on the implementation of projects will be given to the LAG at each meeting.

Financial Arrangements

Match Funding

SALAG and NESFLAG will work to identify potential additional resources out with allocations from the European Union and Scottish Government to increase resources available to deliver the LDS. Both public sector and private sector contributions (e.g. corporate social responsibility, social benefit clauses and planning gain) will be explored.

Initially, LAG and FLAG partners will be invited to contribute resources to the delivery of the LDS. An exercise will also be undertaken by the Accountable Body to identify potential additional sources of income which will be presented to the LAG and FLAG for consideration. Following this analysis of potential resources, the LAG and FLAG will decide upon which avenues to explore further.

Indicative allocations will be given to each LDS priority (although SALAG/NESFLAG may vire funds between these allocations at any time). Furthermore, a minimum allocation of 10% of the total EAFRD budget will be allocated to co-operation; a further 10% to enterprise and a final 10% to farm diversification.

Aberdeenshire's population has grown steadily over recent years, increasing by 11.5% since the Census 2001: the highest population growth experienced by any Scottish local authority over this period. Scotland's population grew by 4.6% over the same period.

Indicative Expenditure Profile

SALAG Priorities		%	Indicative Rural Allocation	%	Indicative Fisheries Allocation	%	Indicative Total Allocation
Connecting People & Places	Sustainable & active travel to connect rural communities	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
	Community facilities for the modern age	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
Developing Key Economic Sectors	Improving priority sector competitiveness and co-operation	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
	Facilitating diversification from agriculture	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
	Facilitating diversification within and outside of the fisheries sector	0%	£0	30%	£86,215	3%	£86,215
	Supporting lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas	0%	£0	30%	£86,215	3%	£86,215
	Adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries seafood supply chain	0%	£0	30%	£86,215	3%	£86,215
Natural Environment & Sustainable Living	Promoting low carbon futures	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
	Protecting and enhancing the natural and marine environment	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
Enriching & Positive Activities for All	Leisure and recreation for wellbeing	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
	Celebrating and supporting arts, culture & heritage	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
Co-operation	Community capacity building	10%	£217,763	0%	£0	9%	£217,763
	International co-operation	1%	£21,776	1%	£2,874	1%	£24,650
	National co-operation	9%	£195,987	9%	£25,865	9%	£221,851
Total available project budget		100%	£2,177,628	100%	£287,384	100%	£2,465,012
Administration Budget		23%	£654,114	£0	£0	21%	£654,114
Total Indicative SALAG Budget			£2,831,742		£287,384		£3,119,126

Indicative Annual Budget % Spend

SALAG Priorities		2015%	2016%	2017%	2018%	2019%	2020%	Programme %
Connecting People & Places	Sustainable & active travel to connect rural communities	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	Community facilities for the modern age	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
Developing Key Economic Sectors	Improving priority sector competitiveness and co-operation	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	Facilitating diversification from agriculture	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	Facilitating diversification within and outside of the fisheries sector	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	Supporting lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	Adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries seafood supply chain	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
Natural Environment & Sustainable Living	Promoting low carbon futures	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	Protecting and enhancing the natural and marine environment	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
Enriching & Positive Activities for All	Leisure and recreation for wellbeing	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	Celebrating and supporting arts, culture & heritage	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
Co-operation	Community capacity building	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	International co-operation	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	National co-operation	12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
Total available project budget		12%	13%	19%	21%	21%	14%	100%
	Administration Budget	10%	17%	17%	17%	18%	21%	100%
	Total Indicative SALAG Budget	12%	14%	19%	20%	20%	15%	100%

Indicative Annual Budget Allocation

SALAG Priorities		2015 £	2016 £	2017 £	2018 £	2019 £	2020 £	Programme £
Connecting People & Places	Sustainable & active travel to connect rural communities	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
	Community facilities for the modern age	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
Developing Key Economic Sectors	Improving priority sector competitiveness and co-operation	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
	Facilitating diversification from agriculture	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
	Facilitating diversification within and outside of the fisheries sector	£10,346	£11,208	£16,381	£18,105	£18,105	£12,070	£86,215
	Supporting lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries areas	£10,346	£11,208	£16,381	£18,105	£18,105	£12,070	£86,215
	Adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries seafood supply chain	£10,346	£11,208	£16,381	£18,105	£18,105	£12,070	£86,215
Natural Environment & Sustainable Living	Promoting low carbon futures	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
	Protecting and enhancing the natural and marine environment	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
Enriching & Positive Activities for All	Leisure and recreation for wellbeing	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
	Celebrating and supporting arts, culture & heritage	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
Co-operation	Community capacity building	£25,959	£28,122	£41,101	£45,428	£45,428	£30,285	£216,323
	International co-operation	£2,941	£3,186	£4,656	£5,146	£5,146	£3,431	£24,506
	National co-operation	£26,467	£28,672	£41,905	£46,317	£46,317	£30,878	£220,555
	Total available project budget	£294,073	£318,579	£465,616	£514,628	£514,628	£343,085	£2,450,610
	Administration Budget	£66,907	£112,953	£115,817	£115,835	£118,007	£138,997	£668,517
	Total Indicative SALAG Budget	£360,980	£431,532	£581,433	£630,463	£632,635	£482,083	£3,119,126

Administration/Animation Budget

The following table sets out estimated costs for the administration and animation of the North Aberdeenshire and South Aberdeenshire LDS. Given the concentration of the fisheries sector predominantly in North Aberdeenshire, a greater proportion of the administration and animation costs would be attributed to the North LDS than the South (provisionally based on 0.75 FTE of the NESFLAG staff's time to the North and 0.25 to the South). The overall administration and animation budget for each LDS is subject to budget allocations and will only be confirmed when allocations to each LDS are confirmed.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	NALDS	SALDS
1 Staffing	£119,956	£234,818	£239,515	£244,305	£249,191	£254,175	£1,341,961	£769,021	£572,939
Team Manager - European Policy & Programmes 0.5 FTE	£14,674	£28,976	£29,556	£30,147	£30,750	£31,365	£165,466	£82,733	£82,733
European Programmes Co-ordinator 3 FTE	£66,435	£130,281	£132,886	£135,544	£138,255	£141,020	£744,421	£434,246	£310,175
European Programmes Claims Officer 2.5 FTE	£38,847	£75,562	£77,073	£78,614	£80,187	£81,790	£432,073	£252,043	£180,030
2 Travel & Subsistence	£10,500	£10,500	£10,500	£10,500	£10,500	£10,500	£63,000	£31,500	£31,500
Staff travel & subsistence	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	£36,000	£18,000	£18,000
LAG Members' travel & subsistence	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£18,000	£9,000	£9,000
Catering for meetings	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£9,000	£4,500	£4,500
3 Premises & Overheads	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£24,000	£12,000	£12,000
Rental of meeting rooms	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£9,000	£4,500	£4,500
Printing/photocopying/postage	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£6,000	£3,000	£3,000
Phones	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£6,000	£3,000	£3,000
IT equipment	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£3,000	£1,500	£1,500
4 Marketing	£13,000	£1,750	£3,500	£1,750	£1,750	£4,000	£25,750	£12,875	£12,875
Websites	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£10,000	£5,000	£5,000
Publications	£1,500	£250	£2,000	£250	£250	£2,500	£6,750	£3,375	£3,375
Events	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£9,000	£4,500	£4,500
5 Other costs	£3,100	£3,100	£3,100	£100	£100	£40,100	£49,600	£24,800	£24,800
ELARD subscription	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£600	£300	£300
Consultancy	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£40,000	£40,000	£20,000	£20,000
Training	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£0	£0	£0	£9,000	£4,500	£4,500
TOTAL	£150,556	£254,168	£260,615	£260,655	£265,541	£312,775	£1,504,311	£850,196	£654,114
TOTAL LAG BUDGET								£4,439,774	£3,119,126
ADMINISTRATION %								19%	21%

Communications Plan

Introduction

This Section provides details of SALAG and NESFLAG's Communication Plans. Each body will develop and approve a communications plan within six months of the approval of the South Aberdeenshire LDS. The effective communication and promotion of the LAG/FLAG and the LDS' aims and objectives is crucial in ensuring the successful delivery and achievement of our overall objectives.

This Communications Plans will build upon our initial engagement activity undertaken as part of the community engagement events held across South Aberdeenshire to inform and shape the development of the LDS.

Our Communication Plan

Presented below are the specific objectives our Communications Plan will seek to achieve. We aim to:

- Actively promote the work of SALAG and NESFLAG, including our LDS' vision, aims, and objectives within the local and business community, across Scotland and beyond;
- Undertake regular and robust communications and engagement with key stakeholders, including rural and fisheries communities and businesses, other (F)LAGs and the Managing Authority;
- Publicise and share our achievements and impacts widely;
- Encourage local residents and businesses from across our diverse communities to further engage in the development of rural and fisheries areas and engage with the (F)LAG; and
- Increase the level of understanding and awareness within the local community of the role which the EC plays in rural economic development.

Our communications and promotional activity will be underpinned by the following principles:

- Use of simple language and clear messages - all communications and publicity will be written in Plain English, avoiding unnecessary jargon or technical terms to ensure it is understandable to all;
- Identification of a clear referral process - communications and publicity will include a "next point of contact" or "for further information" to raise awareness within local communities where feasible and appropriate;
- Explicit acknowledgement of funding partners - all appropriate EU and Scottish Government logos will be used in information, materials and publicity related to actions funded through the South Aberdeenshire LDS where feasible and appropriate. Commission Regulations on publicity guidelines will also be incorporated into the grant award letter which all applicants will be required to sign and return. Guidance will be provided on appropriate use of logos by supported projects and on signage for any capital projects taken forward; and
- Monitoring of communication and publicity effectiveness - as part of the annual review, communication and publicity activity will be reviewed to assess its effectiveness in engaging with the local community. The evaluation of the programme will also seek feedback on communication and promotional activity with a view to identifying what has worked well and not to well.

Quotes from the LAG/FLAG Chair/Vice Chairs will be included in publicity materials as and when appropriate. SALAG and NESFLAG members will have a role to play in promoting the work of these partnerships, for example participating in events and other promotional or networking opportunities.

The Chairs, Vice Chairs and European Programmes Co-ordinators will have lead responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the communications and publicity plan, including stakeholder engagement. This will ensure a co-ordinated and tailored approach to publicity across SALAG and NESFLAG's communications with their various external stakeholders groups.

Our Approach

The Communications Plan will contain the following elements:

- SALAG website and NESFLAG website - dedicated websites for the programme will be developed and routinely updated. This will include the approved LDS and Business Plan, details of funding available, eligibility criteria, application and guidance forms, application submission dates, minutes of LAG/FLAG meetings, details of awards made, case studies, annual reports, links to partners' websites;
- Events - a launch event, information and awareness workshops across the programme area to make as many people as possible aware of opportunities to become involved;
- Legacy event towards the end of the programme period - to showcase project achievements and impacts;
- Promotional leaflets - for example, with a link to website for more information and to raise the profile of the programme; and
- External communications - we will aim to engage (where possible and appropriate) with a host of local, regional, national and transnational partners, to ensure that the South Aberdeenshire LDS is promoted and connected to the wider strategic operating environment.

An early task will be to develop a detailed marketing plan with key milestones, which will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Target Groups

There are a wide range of internal and external target audiences with whom SALAG and NESFLAG would wish to communicate with:

Key Communication Audiences

Key Target Group	Sub Groups	Communication
Local Community	Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General awareness • Opportunities for support • Sources of applications • Information on success • Input into strategy development
	Young people	
	Education sector	
	Community Groups	
	Voluntary sector Minorities	
Business Community	Local employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General awareness • Opportunities for support • Sources of applications • Source of matched funding • Information on success • Input into strategy
	Social Enterprises	
	Local investors/ developers	
	Property owners	
	Farmers	
	Fisheries businesses Tourist/visitor organisations	
Public Agencies	LAG Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of joint projects • Source of funding • Strategic support • Information and good practice • Joined up services/ delivery
	Other local and national Agencies	
	LA operating departments	
	Local Politicians	
Media	Local press	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General awareness • Publicise success • Source of applications • Publicise events
	Regional/National press	
	Other media	
External organisations	Other LAGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation projects • External funding • Sharing best practice • Shared evaluation approach
	Transnational organisations	
Managing Authority	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal reporting • Promoting success • Sharing good practice • Joint approaches across LAGs
	Rural/Marine	

Communication with other funding bodies will be undertaken through LAG Members' and the Accountable Body's existing networks. Any resources and outputs from the Communication Plan will be made available to bodies assessing the impact of the CLLD model in order to identify and demonstrate the added value of this approach.

Equality Statement

SALAG and NESFLAG aspire to be productive groups which value diversity and utilise the widest possible sources of talent from all sectors of the community. SALAG and NESFLAG will promote and expect equal treatment in accordance with legislation, and will strive to provide an environment free of prejudice and unlawful discrimination. Whilst SALAG and NESFLAG are aware that any person can be affected by unfair treatment, they recognise that certain social and cultural influences may lead to groups or individuals being disadvantaged for reasons relating to one or more of the protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief and employment status. Discrimination on these grounds is viewed as unacceptable and is often unlawful.

A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the LDS which will assess the impact of the strategy on people with protected characteristics and identify means of positively addressing equalities issues.

Job Descriptions

Team Manager – European Policy & Programmes (CLLD tasks in bold, 0.5FTE attributable to CLLD)

1. JOB IDENTITY

Post Title: Team Manager	Service: Infrastructure Services
European Policy and Programmes	
Section: Economic Development	Location: Flexible
	Base WHH
Reports to: Service Manager	Grade: Team Manager N

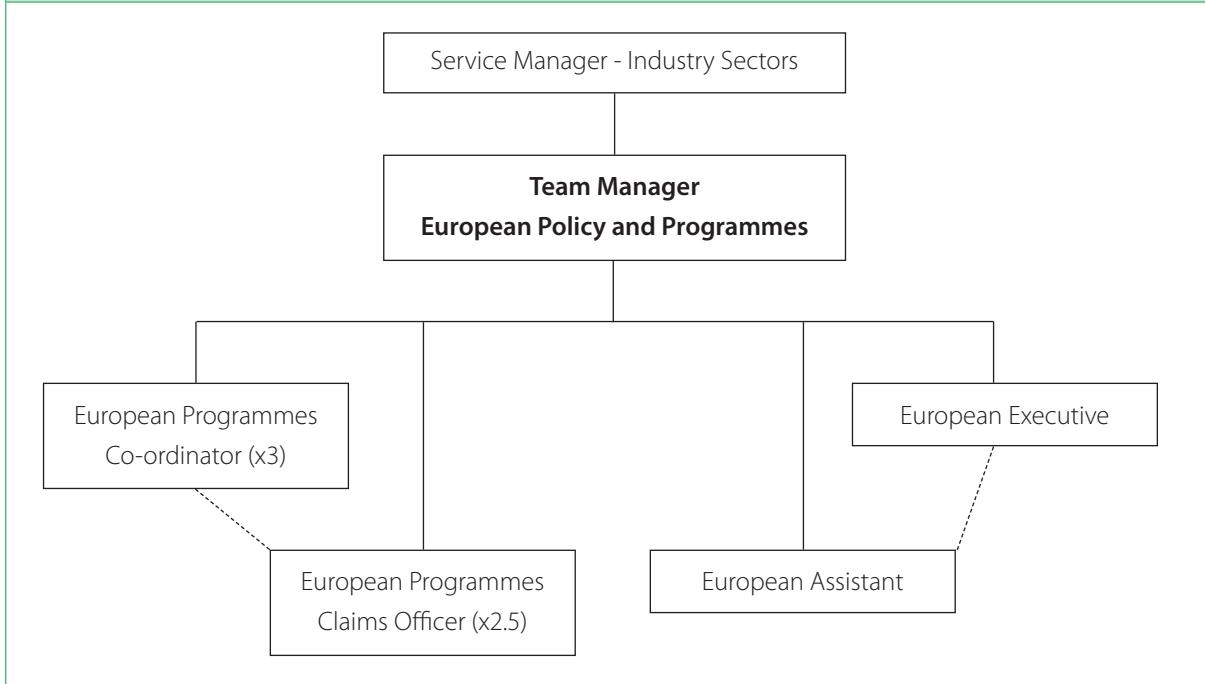
2. JOB PURPOSE

- Lead the development and delivery of European services, which includes line management of a team of employees.
- This role will involve regular travel to locations in the UK and Europe.

3. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES / DUTIES

- **Lead, manage and develop the European Policy and Programmes Team, including all dimensions of management.**
- Promote, develop, represent and support Aberdeenshire's engagement with European bodies and groups such as ESEC, NSC, CPMR, CoSLA and LAGs, ensuring Aberdeenshire's interests are represented.
- Communicate, interpret and provide advice on developments on relevant European legislation, policies, programmes and networks to officers, Elected Members and Committees.
- Provide advice and guidance to senior management, Council committees and elected members on European policy and its implications on all Council Services.
- Represent the Council on European groups (both internal & external) and provide support for corporate involvement in European networks or programmes.
- Co-ordinate and manage research to prepare informed responses to European consultations on policies, plans and strategies which could impact upon Aberdeenshire.
- **Ensure the effective and financially-sound implementation of European funding programmes managed by Aberdeenshire Council on behalf of devolved delivery partnership/s in compliance with EU rules.**
- Promote relevant European funding programmes within the Council and oversee and provide advice on funding bids from Council Services and monitor adherence by project managers to record keeping, claims standards and timetables.
- **Manage all European funding programmes within the Council and devolved delivery partnership(s), ensuring standard to Aberdeenshire Council Audit, Scottish Government and European audit requirements.**
- **Manage the gathering of evidence of the impacts of European programmes and submit to relevant bodies for scrutiny.**
- **Manage Scottish Government claims for European programmes administration costs and project grant funding.**
- Support and manage the expectations of Elected Members, Service Executives and community organisations across Aberdeenshire.

4. REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS



5. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic achievement to Honours degree level in a relative discipline or equivalent transferrable skills and experience • Computer literate with the ability to design and maintain finance packages and Excel spreadsheets
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further qualifications in related subject, business management or similar disciplines combined with practical work experience in European funding

6. EXPERIENCE

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable knowledge and experience of accessing European Funds and Transnational European funding initiatives including their application and claims processes • Knowledge and experience of EU institutions, regulations and related agencies, including national agencies, in particular knowledge and practical experience of transnational working across the geographical commissions of the EU, both operationally and in support of Council members • Knowledge and experience of implementation of national and local economic development policy initiatives • Wide experience of working with public and private or third sector bodies • Experience of supervising staff • Knowledge of committee working & experience of briefing senior colleagues including Council members
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant employment with public sector organisations in European funding roles • Membership of advisory groups to European funding partnerships with Experience of project management of EU funded projects • Experience of marketing / publicity campaigns • Experience in organising and co-ordinating meetings and seminars, collating and using feedback from them to support Service objectives

7. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to analyse business plans and report writing to a high level• Knowledge of Local Economic Forums strategies and membership• Ability to analyse, collate and access information from a number of sources and to accurately summarise documents• Knowledge of assisting organisations to source and claim funding• Ability to travel around Aberdeenshire, national and international destinations• Ability to draft reports for Council committees and speak in support to Council committees and working groups
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of other sectoral applicants to EU Structural funds and established working relationships with these groups



European Programmes Co-ordinator

1. JOB IDENTITY

Post Title: European Programmes Co-ordinator	Service: Infrastructure Services	
Section: Economic Development	Location: Flexible GH	Base Inverurie
Reports to: Team Manager (European Policy & Programmes)	Grade: Practitioner K	

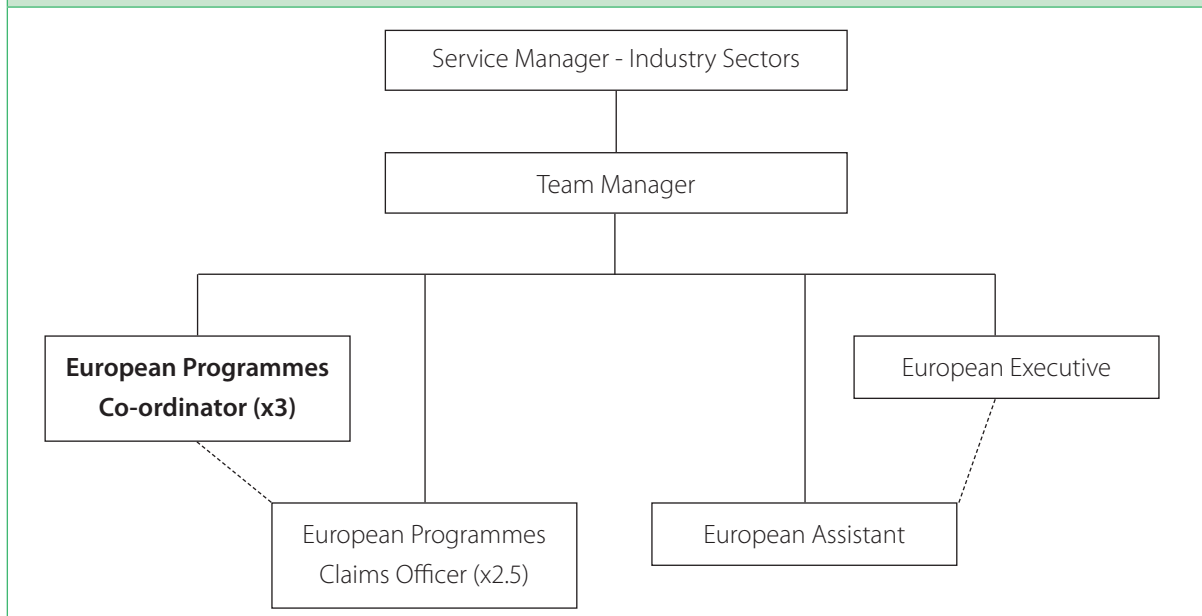
2. JOB PURPOSE

- Promote and oversee the delivery of European-funded programmes for community or small medium enterprise led local development with the Local Action Group (LAG) Partners in line with European and Scottish Government guidance.
- Work with the Local Action Group(s) and with potential and existing applicants in order to ensure the delivery of Aberdeenshire's Community Led Local Development Strategy.
- This role will involve regular travel to locations in the UK and occasional travel to Europe.

3. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES / DUTIES

- Active promotion of community-led local development programmes managed on behalf of the LAG by Aberdeenshire Council through presentations, meetings and on line.
- Encourage and stimulate potential applicants to the programmes facilitating on the delivery of completed and robust funding applications for submission to the LAG.
- Process and evaluate project applications, preparing Project Assessment Reports.
- Provide ongoing advice and support to external project managers of approved projects.
- Undertake project monitoring and evaluation through gathering evidence and reporting on the impacts of the programmes to rural communities in Aberdeenshire.
- Organise and undertake pre-completion visits and final monitoring reports of projects.
- Undertake on the spot and ex-post checks to meet Scottish Government, EU and internal audit reporting requirements.
- Identify and report specific project under spend and maintain a record of overall programme budget commitment.
- Assist with submission of Scottish Government reporting requirements.
- Arrange and participate and present at all LAG meetings

4. REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS



5. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic achievement to degree level in a relative discipline or equivalent transferrable skills
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further qualifications in related subject, business management or similar disciplines combined with practical work experience in European funding Evidence of continual professional development

6. EXPERIENCE

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post graduate experience of working with organisations in an advisory or support capacity including identifying and sourcing funding Experience of working with a range of individuals and public and private sector organisations and communities in a professional capacity Experience in organising and coordinating meetings and seminars, collating and using feedback from them to support Service objectives
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of analysing and assessing the validity of project applications Demonstrable experience of project management

7. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding European and public sector programmes including development issues and funding Excellent organisational, interpersonal, communication and negotiating skills with the ability to work to tight and often conflicting deadlines and secure positive outcomes Knowledge and understanding of Economic Development and business communities Proven analytical and numerical skills Computer literate with the ability to establish recording and monitoring spreadsheets producing statistics and reports in relation to ongoing programme and / or project analysis and evaluation Ability to travel independently across Aberdeenshire where public transport may not be available
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to deal with conflicting demands, priorities and situations Creation and delivery of presentations to a range of audiences

European Programmes Claims Officer

1. JOB IDENTITY

Post Title: European Programmes Claims Officer	Service: Infrastructure Services	
Section: Economic Development	Location: Flexible GH	Base: Inverurie
Reports to: Team Manager European Policy & Programmes	Grade: Administrative H	

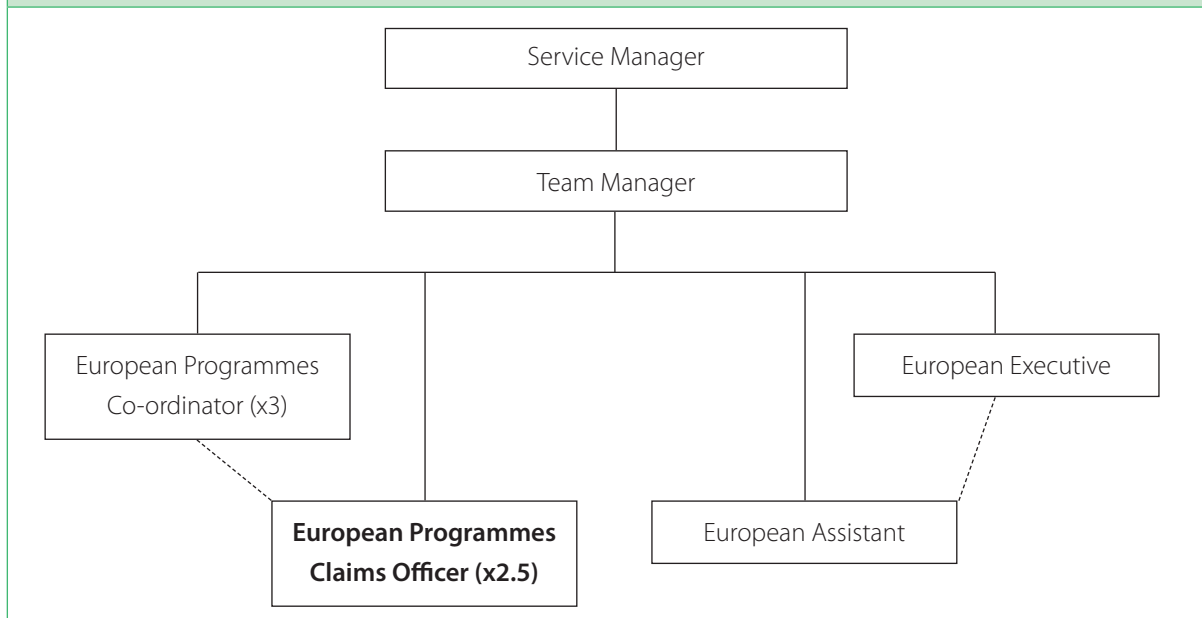
2. JOB PURPOSE

- Support the activities of the European team and the Local Action Groups in the delivery of the Community Led Local Development Strategy through the analysis and processing of European funding from communities, organisations and small medium enterprises

3. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES / DUTIES

- Process claims for community-led local development projects and support in the delivery of programmes in a timely and accurate manner.
- Provide advice to communities, organisations and small medium enterprises on eligibility of claims both face to face and written.
- Prepare financial claims, undertake monitoring of financial claims and help maintain auditable records in relation to externally European programme funded projects.
- Maintain auditable files on all funded programmes
- Maintain financial information on spend, claimed, outstanding and due claims to be submitted to the Scottish Government on a monthly, quarterly and ad hoc basis.
- Responsible for maintaining accurate financial database and provide monthly spend forecasting programme expenditure to the Team Leader and Local Action Group Chair
- Arrange and provide secretarial administration at Local Action Group meetings, providing detailed and accurate minutes to a standard suitable for audit purposes and public accountability.
- Provide administrative support to Local Action Groups, including arranging meetings, booking facilities, issuing papers and taking minutes.
- Advise and support project managers with preparation and timely submission of project grant claims.
- Ensure accuracy and eligibility of project grant claims of cumulative multi-million pound value and process payments through the Council's Oracle Payment System.
- Issue orders to and process payments for suppliers through electronic systems.
- Update the community-led local development programmes' websites and social media feeds.
- Liaise with internal and external auditors and finance officers, obtaining and providing them with requested documents and responding to queries.

4. REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS



5. QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic achievement to HND level in Secretarial / Office Administration or relevant subject or equivalent transferrable experience and skills
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven use of Oracle Proven use of IProc

6. EXPERIENCE

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended experience of working in an administrative post with responsibility for financial record keeping Experience of organising and maintaining filing and records systems Proven experience of arranging meetings, preparing agenda, minutes and managing effective meetings Experience of operating payment systems
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of providing administrative support to specific initiatives such as European funding programmes Experience of acting as a secretariat for a group or organisation

7. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Essential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer-focussed with excellent organisational, interpersonal, communication written and oral and negotiating skills with the ability to work to tight and often conflicting deadlines and secure positive outcomes Good numerical and accuracy skills to prepare Scottish Government quarterly financial claims Computer literate with excellent keyboard skills, the ability to record and produce reports, minutes of meetings, design and maintain finance packages and Excel spreadsheets Ability to assess the accuracy and eligibility of project grant claims
Desirable:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of online procurement and ordering systems Ability to deal with conflicting demands, priorities and situations

07

Equalities Impact Assessment



Equalities Impact Assessment

The South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy is aligned with the EU2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) priorities, specifically Priority 6 'Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development'. The Scottish Government expects Local Development Strategies to contribute to 'equal opportunities for all in our rural communities'.

Through the four themes and associated priorities of the South Aberdeenshire LDS, certain groups will be targeted to ensure they receive the specific help they require; and so that all people in rural communities can and do benefit from the actions and initiatives from the 2014-2020 Programme.

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out to determine what impact the South Aberdeenshire LDS may have on the protected characteristics and what measures the SALAG can take to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity	
Title of the activity etc.	South Aberdeenshire Local Development Strategy
Aims of the activity	To facilitate community/industry-led local development in the South Aberdeenshire Area
Author(s) & Title(s)	Ellie Brodie, SRUC and Martin Brebner, Aberdeenshire Council

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.	
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	In the four community consultation workshops, participants were asked to comment on if there were any equalities considerations that needed to be taken into account.
External data (census, available statistics).	To compile the EIA, equalities data from a range of sources were collected and analysed relating to the protected characteristics which may be impacted by the LDS.

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	None apparent

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:
	N/A	

Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups?				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger	✓			
Age – Older	✓			
Disability	✓			
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)	✓			
Religion or Belief			✓	
Gender – male/female	✓			
Pregnancy and maternity			✓	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			✓	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			✓	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			✓	

Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	Younger people – community consultation and statistical analysis identified a lack of facilities and employment opportunities, plus difficulty in accessing affordable travel for young people in rural and fisheries-dependent areas. Funds have therefore been targeted towards community facilities, transport, leisure and wellbeing and creating jobs.	N/A
	Older people – access to services, either through a lack of community facilities or transport links has been identified as an issue. In particular, the need to provide social opportunities for older people (particularly men) has been flagged up through community consultation. Funds have therefore been targeted towards leisure and wellbeing.	N/A

	Disability - access to services, either through a lack of community facilities or transport links has been identified as an issue. Funds have therefore been targeted towards community facilities, transport and leisure and wellbeing.	N/A
	Race – the need to provide social activities and cultural events has been identified as a priority. Funds have therefore been targeted towards community facilities and leisure and wellbeing.	N/A
	Gender - the need to provide social activities (e.g. for older men who may be socially isolated) has been identified as a priority. Funds have therefore been targeted towards leisure and wellbeing.	N/A

Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?

If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	In order to shape the strategy and identify priorities, open public events were held along with an online consultation and meetings of key local stakeholder groups from the public, private and community sectors.
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Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?

These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
	N/A	N/A

Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?

These should be included in the action plan.

Groups can be invited to engage with the (Fisheries) Local Action Group, either as members or consultees on the implementation of the Local Development Strategy.

Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?

The Strategy has identified a number of groups with protected characteristics who could benefit from additional support which can be provided through projects supported by associated funds. All projects will be required to consider equalities implications in their applications for funding which will focus the attention of applicants on ways in which they can advance equalities in Aberdeenshire's communities.

Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place?

These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).

Statistics will be compiled on project beneficiaries as part of a wider Monitoring and Evaluation framework. Equalities will also form part of periodic reviews of the governance of the LAG/FLAG and the implementation of the LDS.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?

These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | No negative impacts have been identified –please explain. |
| | Projects supported by the LDS will be required to demonstrate at least a neutral, but ideally positive contribution to advancing equalities issues. The LDS will support enhancement of facilities and services for all groups. |
| 2 | Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. |
| | |
| 3 | The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. |
| | |

Action Plan						
Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications	
Groups will be invited to engage with the (Fisheries) Local Action Group, either as members or consultees on the implementation of the Local Development Strategy.	2015	2020	Team Manager – European Policy & Programmes	Balanced representation on the LAG and refinement of the LDS on an ongoing basis.	Use of existing staff.	
Statistics will be compiled on project beneficiaries as part of a wider Monitoring and Evaluation framework. Equalities will also form part of periodic reviews of the governance of the LAG/FLAG and the implementation of the LDS.	2015	2020	European Programmes Co-ordinators	Refinement of the LDS on an ongoing basis to address any equalities issues identified.	Use of existing staff.	
Projects supported by the LDS will be required to demonstrate at least a neutral, but ideally positive contribution to advancing equalities issues.	2015	2020	Project Applicants	Greater consideration and mainstreaming of equalities issues 'on the ground', with additional facilities and services provided for people with protected characteristics.	N/A	

Gender

Two ways in which gender inequality manifests itself is through the income gap, the pay gap and in the care gap. Women earn less than men and provide more unpaid care than men.

In South Aberdeenshire, 27% of the economically active population works part-time, and 73% full time. The gender pay gap in Scotland is 13% for full time work and 34% for part time work¹⁹, and female-dominated occupational and industrial sectors are low paid and undervalued. The gender pay gap represents 'persistent and widespread differences in women's experiences of the labour market'²⁰.

18% of the economically inactive population in South Aberdeenshire (5.6% of the total population aged 16-64) are classified as 'looking after home or family'. Five per cent of the total population provide between 1-19 hours of unpaid care a week, whilst 2.5% provide 20 or more hours a week. 62% of unpaid carers are women²¹. In a survey commissioned by Carer's Scotland in 2012²², 96 per cent of respondents reported that providing care impacted negatively on their health and well-being, and that existing health problems suffered by carers were made worse by fulfilling the caring role. More than half of survey respondents also said they felt isolated and restricted in taking part in leisure activities.

The community consultation workshops highlighted the challenges of identifying those living in poverty or on lower incomes within the context of a region which is perceived by many to be affluent. Workshop participants also noted the need to support those on lower incomes, such as essential workers and carers.

Young People

Unemployed people represent 2.8% of the economically active population in South Aberdeenshire (2011 Census). Whilst this is not high by Scottish standards, of unemployed people in the area, 31% are aged 16-24. The national youth unemployment level in June 2014 was 18.8%, which is more than double that of the working age population²³.

A key finding from the community consultation was that young people were felt to experience particular challenges, including accessing employment opportunities and buying their first home.

¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (2013) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2013 Provisional Results. Quoted in Gender Equality and Scotland's Constitution Future, Engender (2014).

²⁰ Gender Equality and Scotland's Constitution Future, Engender (2014).

²¹ Scottish Government (2010) Caring in Scotland: Analysis of Existing Data Sources on Unpaid Carers in Scotland. Quoted in Gender Equality and Scotland's Constitution Future, Engender (2014).

²² Carers Scotland (2011): Sick, tired and caring: The impact of unpaid caring on health and long term conditions. Sourced via <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/re/census/2011-census/detailed-characteristics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/sty-unpaid-care.html>

²³ The (Wood) Commission for Developing Scotland's Young (2014).

Older People

Aberdeenshire has 23.2% of residents over the age of 60, and will have the highest proportion of older people in Scotland by 2020. An increasing and ageing population provides unique challenges in delivering services, additional housing and the resulting demand in community facilities.

As with younger people, in the community consultation workshops, challenges were identified around housing and transport which older people may require specific support for. Further, social isolation was identified as an issue to be aware of with regard to equalities considerations. There were distinctions made within the elderly population in terms of the 'younger old' and 'older old' categories as well as between men and women.

Disability

Just less than 14% of the population of South Aberdeenshire experience limitations to their day-to-day activities due to a long-term health problem or disability. This is a notable proportion of the population. Over 8% of people living in South Aberdeenshire are classified as 'long-term sick or disabled'.

The 'promoting social inclusion' theme of the EAFRD is a cross-cutting or horizontal theme in the LDS and we would anticipate specifically Theme 4 – Enriching and Positive Activities for All – and through Theme 1 – Connecting People and Places - to have a positive impact of people living with a long-term illness and/or a disability and their carers.

Ethnicity

The South Aberdeenshire area is predominantly White, with only 1.8% of the population identifying themselves as 'Non-White'. Just under 80% of the population were born in Scotland, with 13% from England and 0.6% from Wales and 0.6% Northern Ireland. The largest proportion of people born outside of the UK are from 'Other countries' (3.4%). In terms of religion, 48.5% are Christian, 43% have no religion and 7.4% did not state their religion. Less than 1% of the population is Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or Sikh.

The ethnically homogenous nature of South Aberdeenshire could make it important to ensure that people who are non-White British are not excluded or overlooked through pursuing the themes of the LDS. This will be through the overarching RDP theme of 'promoting social inclusion'.

1

Appendix 1



Appendix 1: List of South Aberdeenshire Datazones

<i>S01000268</i>	S01000306	S01000344	S01000384
<i>S01000269</i>	S01000307	S01000345	S01000386
S01000270	S01000308	S01000346	S01000387
<i>S01000271</i>	S01000309	S01000347	S01000389
S01000272	S01000310	S01000348	S01000390
S01000273	S01000311	S01000349	S01000391
<i>S01000274</i>	S01000313	S01000350	S01000392
S01000275	S01000314	S01000351	S01000393
<i>S01000276</i>	S01000315	S01000352	S01000394
<i>S01000277</i>	S01000317	S01000353	S01000395
<i>S01000278</i>	S01000318	S01000354	S01000396
S01000279	S01000319	S01000355	S01000397
S01000280	S01000320	S01000356	S01000398
S01000281	S01000321	S01000357	S01000399
S01000282	S01000322	S01000358	S01000400
S01000283	S01000323	S01000359	S01000401
S01000284	S01000324	S01000361	S01000402
S01000285	S01000325	S01000362	S01000403
<i>S01000286</i>	S01000326	S01000363	S01000404
<i>S01000287</i>	S01000327	S01000364	S01000406
<i>S01000288</i>	S01000328	S01000365	S01000407
<i>S01000289</i>	S01000329	S01000366	S01000408
<i>S01000290</i>	S01000330	S01000367	S01000409
<i>S01000291</i>	S01000331	S01000368	S01000410
<i>S01000292</i>	S01000332	S01000371	S01000415
<i>S01000293</i>	S01000333	S01000372	S01000418
<i>S01000294</i>	S01000334	S01000373	S01000421
<i>S01000295</i>	S01000335	S01000374	S01000422
<i>S01000296</i>	S01000336	S01000375	S01000426
<i>S01000297</i>	S01000337	S01000376	S01000440
<i>S01000298</i>	S01000338	S01000377	S01000441
S01000299	S01000339	S01000378	S01000453
S01000300	S01000340	S01000379	S01000456
S01000302	S01000341	S01000381	S01000457
S01000304	S01000342	S01000382	S01000459
S01000305	S01000343	S01000383	S01000460
S0100046	S01000462	S01000464	

*EMFF - eligible datazones in italics

2

Appendix 2



Appendix 2: Community consultation findings

CLLD Workshops

Community-led Local Development Workshops were held from 18.30 – 21.30 on the following dates and in the following locations:

Location and venue	DATE
Huntly, Stewarts Hall	26th February 2014
Banchory, Finzean Hall	27th February 2014
Inverurie, Kintore Arms	6th March 2014
Stonehaven, Invercarron Resource Centre	13th March 2014

The following activities were carried out to promote the event to people who live and work in the area:

- Aberdeenshire Council issued a press release, invited LAG members and local Councillors directly and contacted all businesses registered on its Business Tracker system to advertise the events. Rural Partnerships across the three administrative areas in South Aberdeenshire sent invites to their contacts:
- Garioch Partnership's general mailing list (approx. 150 organisations and individuals in the Garioch area) were invited, the invitation was circulated to local press contacts (there was an article in a local Inverurie paper), information was published on the Garioch Partnership's Facebook page, with an event created for the occasion as well as a status update and the Development Worker spread the word through word-of-mouth.
- The Kincardine & Mearns Community Planning Officer sent specific invites to known contacts (a database of about 450 private, public, voluntary and community contacts), advertised on K&M Communities Facebook Page and issued a local Press release in Mearns Leader & Kincardine Observer. The existing rural area partnership (KMAP) also sent invitation to known contacts.
- The invitations to the two community engagement events in Marr were circulated via the Marr Area Partnership email circulation list (approx 300 individuals and organisations are on this list) with a request to all organisations to cascade the invitation as widely as possible. Membership of the email list includes Aberdeenshire Councillors, Community Councils, Community Planning Partners, local development trusts, community organisations, third sector organisations, business associations, hall committees, Parent Councils and Churches. In addition, posters were put up in Huntly and all local libraries were asked to put up posters in the community centres.

Each event followed the same format, which started with a presentation from Aberdeenshire Council on Community Led Local Development, a Q&A session and facilitated group work on three questions:

- 1) What are the development needs, opportunities and threats for the South Aberdeenshire area from 2014-20?
- 2) Which priority themes are most relevant for the South Aberdeenshire area from 2014-20?
- 3) Are there any specific projects which should be taken forward through the Local Development Strategy?
- 4) Are there any particular equalities considerations to take into account?

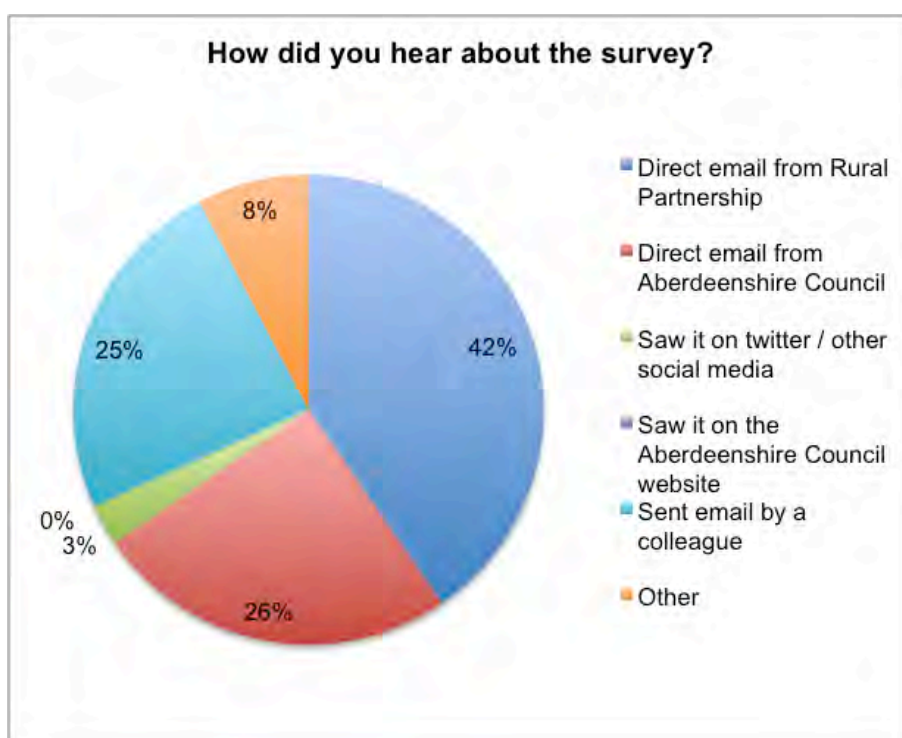
Online survey (community)

The online survey aimed to gauge local opinion on the draft priorities that were included in Aberdeenshire's EOI on whether these were the right priorities to take forward into an LDS, and if any were missing. The survey also asked participants about the deliverability of the priorities, and whether respondents have any suggestions about who should play a part in delivering actions under the LDS.

The online survey was distributed through direct emails from Rural Partnerships, direct emails from Aberdeenshire Council, promotion through Aberdeenshire Council's website, promotion at the community engagement events and through encouraging respondents to send the survey to other people who live and work in South Aberdeenshire.

There were **108 respondents** in total. Chart 5 illustrates how respondents heard about the survey, with the majority hearing about it through a direct email.

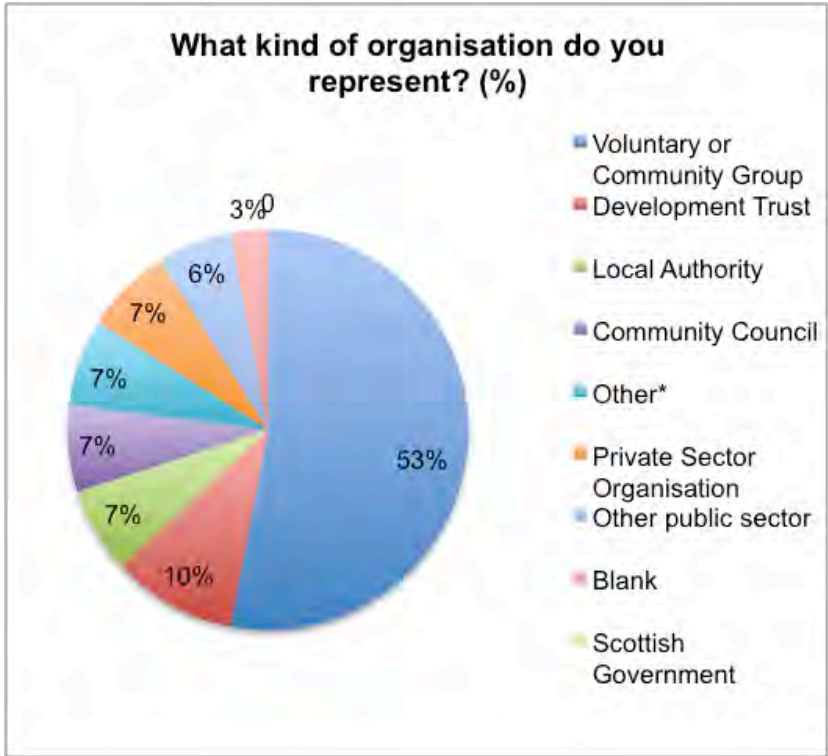
Chart 5: Channels through which survey was communicated



The majority of respondents completed the survey in their capacity as a volunteer (68%), although just less than a third (31%) responded in their capacity as a paid professional (1% left no response).

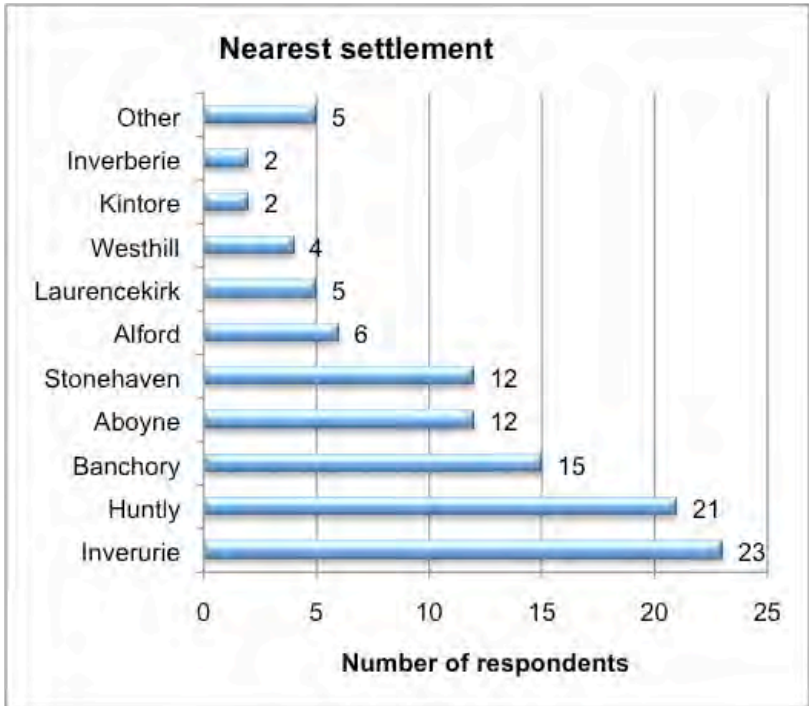
Over half of respondents were from a Voluntary or Community Organisation (VCO), and when Development Trusts and the 'Other' (4) respondents from charitable organisations are included with VCOs, we can see that 67% of respondents were from the community sector (see Chart 6). Public sector respondents included people from the Local Authority, Community Councils, 'other public sector' and responses from local planning partnerships (2) and made up 22% of respondents. People responding from a private sector organisation made up 7% of responses. The remaining 4% of respondents either left the question blank, or responded as an individual member of the public.

Chart 6: Organisation respondents represent



Most people (87%) considered themselves to be part of an **inland** rather than a **coastal** area. Chart 7 illustrates the nearest major settlements to respondents, with the highest number of respondents from Inverurie (23) and Huntly (21), and with a good spread across the three administrative areas of South Aberdeenshire though with a clear majority from the Marr area. 'Other' respondents included Ballater and Braemar which are in the Cairngorms National Park LAG area, Montrose and Forfar.

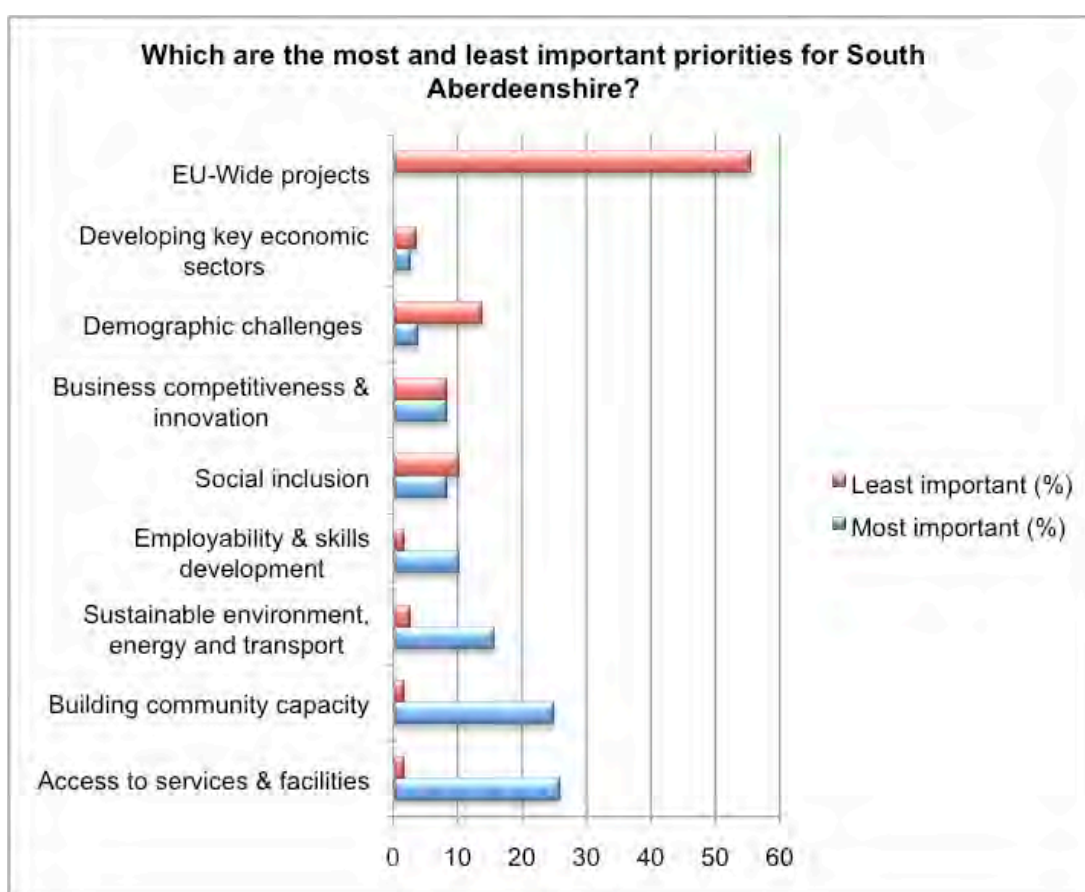
Chart 7: Nearest settlement of survey respondents



Survey respondents were asked about their level of **existing knowledge of LEADER and the European Fisheries Fund**. The vast majority of respondents (86) had heard of LEADER before, and a quarter had applied for LEADER or AEFF funding in the past. In terms of project delivery, 22 had previously delivered a LEADER or AEFF funded project. Ten respondents had previously been a member of a LEADER Local Action Group, and two had been a member of a FLAG.

Survey respondents were asked to choose from a list which priority they thought was the **most important** and which the **least important** for South Aberdeenshire. The responses, shown in Chart 4, highlight that 'Access to services & facilities' (26%) and 'Building community capacity' (25%) were the most important priorities for respondents. Third most important to respondents, with 16% selecting it as their top priority for the area was 'Sustainable environment, energy and transport'. No respondents selected 'EU-Wide projects/transnational Co-operation' as the most important priority, with 3% selecting 'Developing key economic sectors'.

Chart 4: Most and least important priorities



Least important priorities were felt to be 'EU-wide projects/Transnational Co-operation' (56%), with 'Demographic challenges' (14%) and 'Social inclusion' (10%) following. 'Access to services & facilities' (2%), 'Building community capacity' (2%) and 'Employability & skills development' (2%) were the least important priorities to the fewest respondents.

Based on the survey results, and from the above list that respondents were presented with, it therefore appears that priorities for South Aberdeenshire in ascending order are:

1. Access to services & facilities

Reasons for focussing on this priority the perceived poor quality of services and the quality of access to them. Specific services cited as being required include: transport; broadband; shops and services; education and play services, as well as innovative approaches to service delivery such as using rural schools as a hub.

2. Building community capacity

Reasons for focussing on this priority included the feeling that community members were best placed to prioritise needs and allocate funds; that this would support sustainable change; and that strong communities are the building blocks of subsequent ambitions.

3. Sustainable environment, energy and transport

Reasons for focussing on this priority included that it is this priority on which others depend; concerns regarding climate change and flooding; the links between the environment and the importance of business and tourism; and the direct relationship between the quality and provision of transport and vibrancy of communities.

4. Employability & skills development

Particularly for young people, employability was linked to other outcomes including economic and social outcomes. It was felt this would retain young people, keep people in the area, and develop skills (eg rural skills) that are lacking.

5. Business competitiveness & innovation

Some felt it was important to focus on this to raise the profile of the area, attract people in, and lead to the achievement of other priorities such as employment; services and improved infrastructure. Others felt it less important given the pre-existing entrepreneurial spirit; that this was less essential; or that they felt all priorities to be equally important.

6. Social inclusion

Those seeing this as important focussed on the ways that rural living can create social exclusion (eg: isolation, poor transport, inadequate housing) and that inequality can be masked by perceived affluence of Aberdeenshire. Some felt that inequality was increasing between the most affluent and least. Those not prioritising this did not perceive there to be an issue with regard to social inclusion in South Aberdeenshire.

7. Developing key economic sectors

Few textual responses were given for this priority. Those that felt it was important focussed on the capacity for tourism to 'leverage' in more income and people and the importance of diversifying beyond employment in the oil and gas sectors. Those feeling it unimportant focussed on support already being available and it being more influenced by market forces than development strategies.

8. Demographic challenges

The increasing elderly population; the rise of particular settlements as commuter towns without associated infrastructure; and communities shopping outwith their community led some to prioritise this. Those not choosing this priority felt that it was interconnected with the other issues (and would be addressed through these); that it was not an issue; or that it would not be easily influenced.

9. EU-wide projects

Reasons given for this being least important included being unconvinced of potential benefits; the importance of prioritising local needs; that EU-wide projects were already taking place elsewhere in the area; that such projects should take place at different scales (eg LA or national level); or that the focus should be on working between communities, LAs or with the rest of the UK first. Some however were keen to stress that this priority was not a 'bad thing', but that they selected this as they were required to select a 'least important' option.

Missing priorities

Synthesising responses from both the online questionnaire and also the community engagement workshops, the following priorities were felt to be missing from those proposed:

- Affordable housing (and land, e.g. community ownership)
- Arts & culture
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and employment
- Infrastructure
- Town centre regeneration
- Tourism
- Natural environment and sustainability
- Built environment
- Specific demographic groups (retaining/focussing on young people, older people, those with mental or physical disabilities, families, disadvantaged groups)
- Networks and approaches (importance of working in partnership within and across sectors; minimising bureaucracy; pursuing a 'fairer society' or 'sustainable economic development' or 'social inclusion').
- Communications (Broadband and ICT issues)
- Village halls
- Human welfare
- Civic pride
- Links between priorities
- Leisure
- Services and facilities for all

Some also felt that the existing priority headings could be amended, for example by removing 'energy' from sustainable environment... and transport'. Finally, many participants in the workshops felt that the proposed priorities suggested were interlinked, and not possible to separate.

LAG Consultation

Online consultation with LAG on themes and priorities for LDS

The SALAG were invited to participate in an online consultation exercise to gather LAG members' views on questions which would form the basis for collectively agreeing upon the vision, objectives and priorities of the South Aberdeenshire LDS at a subsequent LAG workshop.

The purpose of the online consultation was to gather individual LAG views on:

- The breadth of the LDS
- Utilising South Aberdeenshire's strengths
- Addressing South Aberdeenshire's weaknesses
- Refining the themes and priorities emerging from the community consultation

Eight members of the SALAG completed the consultation and include the following organisations:

- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Area Rural Partnerships
- NHS Grampian
- Scottish Land & Estates

- The Garioch Partnership
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Marr Area Partnership
- Scottish Enterprise

Respondents' had a range of previous LAG/FLAG experience, from over five years (1 respondent) to less than five years (3 respondents), less than one year (2 respondents) and no experience (2 respondents).

The consultation document including responses is presented in the remainder of this Appendix.

Breadth of LDS

One important consideration for the LAG is whether you want to develop a broad LDS, covering a range of rural development/ fisheries activities, or whether you want your strategy to be focussed and specific on a few areas of activity.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both. For example, having a broad strategy could allow the widest range of projects to be funded, but may also dilute the impact of the funding or result in smaller grants being awarded to projects.

Focusing on fewer priorities could create opportunities for strategic projects across South Aberdeenshire and with other LAGs (e.g. for community transport), but could also restrict the number and breadth of people who could apply for project funding.

Would your preference be for a broad or focussed LDS, and why?

Broad Strategy: 6 responses

Reasons included allowing for a range of projects to come forward and not excluding projects; being responsive to the different needs of different areas in South Aberdeenshire and having the flexibility to respond to changing needs over time.

Focussed Strategy: 2 responses

Reasons given included aligning with the Community Plan and SOA, and because of indications from the Scottish Government that funding should be focused given budget restrictions and the emphasis on economic development.

One person suggested **having both**:

'No reason why we cannot do both, that is have a Broad Strategy but with annual key themes (eg Revitalising Communities, Rural Community Capacity, New Markets and Products, Progressive Rural Economies etc) and target groups. Greater weighting could be applied to the key themes and target groups.'

Utilising South Aberdeenshire's strengths

The LDS needs to be founded on utilising the strengths and opportunities of the South Aberdeenshire area. The following strengths and opportunities were identified in the community engagement phase of work.

Strengths and opportunities
Vibrant voluntary sector with experience of project delivery
High rates of volunteering and civic pride
Natural and diverse landscape
Arts, culture and heritage of the area
Low levels of unemployment
Industry: Tourism, agriculture, food & drink, arts & culture, energy (oil – both opportunity and threat)
Existing facilities (e.g. community halls, sports facilities) being used more creatively/differently

Do you think there are any missing?

NO: 5 responses

YES: 3 responses

If yes, please say below what you think is missing and why it is important for LDS development.

- Landbased skills and training (opportunity)
- Quality of life (strength)
- Niche enterprise (opportunity)
- Local food production both by the commercial farming sector and in a community setting e.g. orchards, allotments, and links between the two (opportunity)
- Health and wellbeing
- Youth as a key target group

Are there any strengths/opportunities that are included that you think should be omitted from LDS development? If yes, please say below what you think should be omitted, and why

NO – 6 responses

YES – 2 responses

Low levels of unemployment as both a strength and a threat:

- communities find it extremely difficult to recruit for certain jobs e.g. carers/teachers and this impacts upon various services
- young people may face more challenges to securing employment

Using the table below, please explain how the strength/opportunity might be utilised through new solutions, innovative ideas or practices that can be adopted by individuals and organisations in South Aberdeenshire.

This might, for example, be about developing a project (if so, what project, who would need to be involved) or a network or perhaps making a clear link between the LDS and another more relevant strategy. You are welcome to be specific about project ideas if you have them, or to keep to more general ideas, e.g. 'promoting and celebrating new and existing opportunities for outdoor activities'.

Strengths and opportunities
<p>Vibrant voluntary sector with experience of project delivery</p> <p>How may strength/opportunity be utilised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify strong groups and utilise them to initiate and manage projects and educate the weaker communities, knowledge and experience exchange• Create a pool of experts that VCOs can hire• Support projects that already exist and are proven to work e.g. Walks to Health – requires very little funding as is delivered mostly through volunteers.• Continue to provide funding to support the employed workforce which provides necessary support for volunteers• Promote volunteering opportunities and local third sector projects• Building on strengths of the Rural Partnerships and the communities they work for• Consider Community Asset Transfer options - how to assist & make it more successful/ innovative.• Additional capacity within RP's to respond to requests for support would allow communities to take on more aspirational/ challenging projects• Alignment with Community Plan SOA objectives• This isn't a universal strength across the SALAG area

High rates of volunteering and civic pride**How may strength/opportunity be utilised**

- This isn't a universal strength across the SALAG area
- Don't over-use and abuse volunteers - reward and award their efforts
- Acknowledge the need for and invest in support for volunteers
- 'Pride of Aberdeenshire' events and opportunities to become involved in volunteering

Natural and diverse landscape**How may strength/opportunity be utilised**

- This isn't a universal strength across the SALAG area
- Fund initiatives where there is already partnership work going on and we can share resources (financial and otherwise) e.g. path developments where the Council, NESTRANS, SUSTRANS, forestry and others are involved - need to maximise spend.
- Tap the potential of less well-known areas for tourism related to outdoor activities (walking or cycling, bird watching etc).
- Would be good to see community interests taking a more active role in managing their environment
- Learn from National Parks - employment, tourism, use of resources, traditional industry
- Tourism opportunities; quality of life
- Attract visitors to South Aberdeenshire, especially green/eco tourism initiatives
- Working with other LAG areas to continue the work type in terms of non-native invasive species, work on biodiversity obligations etc

Arts, culture and heritage of the area**How may strength/opportunity be utilised**

- The golden thread that holds communities together and not used enough as an engagement tool.
- Include health and wellbeing in here too - important to recognise the arts/culture as this enhances and contributes to quality of life
- Enhance what already exists and think about whether we start new initiatives or are better supporting strong existing projects.
- Tourism opportunities; WW1 commemorations
- Use the current infrastructure and expertise to promote and celebrate arts, culture and heritage
- Wide scope on community arts, tourism provision of heritage centres, opportunities for collaborative projects/ exchanges

Low levels of unemployment**How may strength/opportunity be utilised**

- Re-educate the educators to provide skills for local jobs that are available.
- Skill development and encouraging school leavers into more rural/ fisheries industries
- Support those who are out of work or on benefits to become socially included via CLLD projects
- Oil economy sucks in all the talent & resources from a wide area and leaves other lower-paying industries struggling to find enough skilled resources.
- Need to look at statistics for this as there may be groups where this is not true and we need to reflect this in our LDS so that we are able to fund initiatives around this if we so wish.

Industry: Tourism, agriculture, food & drink, arts & culture, energy (oil – both opportunity and threat)**How may strength/opportunity be utilised**

- Food to Fork type events; school education activities e.g. RHET; Champion Estates pairing with local classes in P1 and working with them through to P7; develop Industry Champions
- Revitalise local trades and rural jobs. Ireland has good examples of rural colleges for tourism and hospitality in rural locations. Scottish rural training courses, colleges and universities are in the cities.
- Development sessions for the SALAG to help plan for this whole agenda; have a discussion around the local plans for each area in Central/South.
- Wide scope to work on these area - however missing is forestry and fishing from this list. Energy is not an area that justifies intervention given high salary/ employment.

Using existing facilities (e.g. community halls, sports facilities) more creatively/differently

- The facilities have been built and now need to be utilised eg through community/private enterprise.
- Some of the facilities are in good condition and well-used, others need a refresh/rebuild/refocus as community hubs. There is a lot of enthusiasm from volunteers to create a sustainable future for their local facility.
- Community halls could act as a hub etc and be provided with broadband for use by the community where speeds/access is limited.
- Nice halls are useless if no-one coordinates their activities - proactive programming. NEAT utilises halls but only if invited. A central event calendar and coordinator to kick start activity.
- Could support existing facilities but there should be a cap on how much funding goes into this area.
- Support sport/physical activity outwith buildings e.g. mountain biking, walking - activities which are more accessible to all.
- Identify where need is greatest.
- Innovation is key here - not the same types of enhancements/ better roofs/ heating - use must be different - encompassing range of services for private and public use.

Responding to South Aberdeenshire's weaknesses and threats

The LDS also needs to be founded on new solutions, innovative ideas or practices to address South Aberdeenshire's weaknesses and threats. The following weaknesses and threats were identified in the community engagement phase of work.

Weaknesses and threats
Public transport
Road network connections between villages
Broadband
Affordable housing
Affordable business spaces to rent
Lack of key workers (carers, teachers)
Income inequality
Public sector funding cuts
Out-migration of young people
Ageing population
Declining town centres
Training and vocational opportunities for young people
Health and wellbeing
Quality and availability of affordable visitor accommodation

Do you think there are there any weaknesses/threats missing? If yes, please say below what you think is missing and why you think it is important for LDS development.

NO: 4 responses

BLANK: 2 responses

YES: 2 responses

- Each of the issues identified needs further analysis to identify issues and highlight good areas of work. Need to identify key areas which we could support that also considers what government agencies will be supporting as we should not be duplicating effort. Need to have a real discussion about what are our priorities as think we cannot be everything to everyone.
- Declining village services/facilities
- Impact of climate change on infrastructure, communities (e.g. food production) and environment/landscape. The impact of climate change could affect all aspects of community development and is therefore of huge significance to the LDS.

Are there any weaknesses/threats that are included that you think should be omitted from LDS development? If yes, please say below what you think should be omitted, and why.

NO – 4 responses

YES – 4 responses

- Road network - not LEADER's function although I agree that public and sustainable transport needs to be looked at (and included) i.e. don't exclude cycle routes, or community transport.
- Public sector funding cuts - this is a real issue, but not something that LEADER can hope to address directly, unless by making it's award procedures less cumbersome so that it is less difficult for applicants to meet the requirements of several potential funders.
- We should analyse who is doing what e.g. broadband access - is the Council doing enough around this and is this our responsibility? If it is, how can we enhance what is already taking place only. Income inequality - what can be done about this and are we/should we be involved. Think again each needs to be teased out further and we decide collectively which we can support and which we cannot. E.g if we have an ageing population what does this mean - should we target keeping older people well and support initiatives to do this as many other agencies will be supporting those who are ill and frail.
- In some ways I think all could be omitted! Some of these issues should be dealt through Community Planning, either centrally or through the local community planning groups, or indeed other partnerships such as NESTRANS. I think it would be impossible for the LDS with the limited resources at its disposal to tackle all of these. The LDS needs to complement and add value to existing partnership work.
- Public sector funding cuts - LEADER and AEFf can't be used to substitute this.

Using the table below, please explain how the weakness/threat might be addressed through new solutions, innovative ideas or practices that can be adopted by individuals and organisations within South Aberdeenshire. This might, for example, be about developing a project (if so, what project, who would need to be involved) or a network or perhaps making a clear link between the LDS and another more relevant strategy.

You are welcome to be specific about project ideas if you have them, e.g. 'creating a community transport hub', or to keep to more general ideas.

Weaknesses and threats
<p>Public transport</p> <p>How may weakness/threat be addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to see more community / post-bus type services and better provision for tourists (e.g. capacity to take bikes on buses). • Demand-led transport options • Probably not possible for LDS to address this directly. Alternative solutions could be explored eg facilitating car sharing projects, establishing community bus services where they do not exist • Possible provision of 'missing link' services - although this will be difficult due to high costs involved • Learn transport policy from developing countries - small minibus/ taxis supported. Open competition to private transport companies, free the market. • Look at solutions to make routes more sustainable/ community solutions • Issue is about transport not just public transport. About active travel generally which includes car sharing, car loans, cycling, walking etc • Local ideas which could be enhanced and utilised e.g. Silver Circle in Donside • Focus on disadvantages e.g. young people getting to work, older adults and shopping, solo parents in rural areas without transport, disabled youth and socialising.
<p>Road network connections between villages</p> <p>How may weakness/threat be addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any innovative solution welcome. Some of it may be paths between settlements as at moment hard to move from one to other on very busy B roads. • As above - encourage private buses/ taxi services. Car sharing Car pool. Create the need to travel more frequently. • Suggest you leave this out so far as it relates to motorised transport. Perhaps focus on shorter walking & cycling connections. • We need to include this under transport heading and involve/include the Council. Depends on what we are trying to achieve here and what will be the priority e.g. shopping for older people links, quality of roads - is this our responsibility or do we link more closely with Council developments.

Broadband

How may weakness/threat be addressed?

- Currently being addressed
- What has the Council planned? We should add value not replace.
- Only for those areas not getting Government intervention. Or interventions that enhance business in a rural/ remote area by providing new solutions.
- Improved broadband is currently being rolled out throughout Aberdeenshire via funds secured by Aberdeenshire Council so probably not appropriate for this to be addressed via LDS.
- Pressure to improve provision is essential to avoid areas being left behind - timescale for BT should be obtained, and any areas not likely to be scheduled could become project targets.
- It is coming but needs to be used to encourage the market. If there is greater demand in rural areas BT etc will provide the service. A few farms not enough demand but a college outreach, rural businesses, more home working will increase demand.
- Certainly an important issue to cut down commuting travel and allow home working from more remote places, which could go a long way to stimulating sustainable rural economies. Previous LEADER toyed with this at Kinmuck, but difficult to roll out and probably a far bigger and more expensive solution is needed than the programme could hope to support.

Affordable housing

How may weakness/threat be addressed?

- Encourage community trusts and give support to access land. Look at co-housing. Lots of empty rooms in old houses - look at support to take in lodgers
- There is scope to include this in the LDS but only where additionality is 'needed' not desired, e.g. essential workers. This could be done in conjunction with Housing Associations working with local estates.
- Not sure what the programme could do to resolve it? Grants to landowners to release land?? However money probably isn't the only issue that is limiting supply.
- Would like us to have a much bigger discussion around this regarding what we might support, if anything.
- Project to develop community owned/managed properties (social enterprise) for rental to key workers, but may have limited impact in relation to addressing lack of housing available.
- Real issue of housing affordable to the key workers - are there solutions on community ownership/ development to ensure capacity exists within community to manage this.

Affordable business spaces to rent

How may weakness/threat be addressed?

- Difficult to address as demand will be high from cash rich businesses. A positive bias is required for local rural businesses.
- Plenty of land, just need a change to planning policy then support new businesses.
- Project to develop community owned/managed properties (social enterprise) for rental. Important to ensure capacity exists within community to manage this.
- Not sure of evidence on this beyond key areas around Aberdeen city. Is it more about finding a way to promote/ support new businesses.
- Think this is a good idea - however, are there examples in Scotland/Britain and overseas which we could examine - does this need to be built into our sustainable community along with the more affordable housing. Again could we have a workshop on this issue to tease out what might be the issues. We could do this involving North LAG and Cairngorms/ Moray.

Lack of key workers (carers, teachers)**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- Not sure LEADER can address this.
- Due to above. Chicken and egg - need to solve above but also need to renew respect for these lower paid jobs so people choose them rather than a life in oil.
- Again the agencies themselves are working on trying to resolve this issue e.g. Council, NHS. Need to know about their strategies and how we might build communities which enhance their work/approaches. Our support of other initiatives e.g. housing, small business development, Broadband might be better focus for encouraging people to live in the area. Might support initiatives which welcome/engage with people coming into area to take on lower paid jobs e.g. other ethnic groups, young families.
- Yes - along with housing / cost of living being the issue. So needs innovative approach to sell remote areas to key workers.

Income inequality**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- Developing job clubs/bespoke support to help those out of work into positive destinations
- Developing food buying cooperatives to reduce costs of food
- Developing fuel cooperatives to reduce costs of fuel purchases and linked to Credit Unions to make available to those without access to credit
- We should have a profile of deprivation for the area and have more of an understanding of how income affects lifestyle
- Not sure LEADER can address this.

Public sector funding cuts**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- Communities are likely to need to take on more complex projects to fill gaps, where the capacity does not exist locally to do this, additional locally placed village development officers or town coordinators could be recruited to build capacity locally.
- Where demand for a service/facility is evidenced then LEADER could fill the gap but only when it is not a statutory requirement of the Local Authority to deliver said service/facility.
- Suggest leave this out.

Out-migration of young people**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- Respect local jobs, trades, rural jobs etc.
- Developing local business to try and keep young people in the area e.g. apprenticeships, more technical training courses
- Local skills/training courses and encouragement by the land-based sector to promote itself as a destination. Jobs and housing also.

Ageing population**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- Community led initiatives to reduce social isolation eg. walking groups, community cafe's, lunch clubs etc
- Should be seen as an asset not a burden
- Should be targeting initiatives which support wellbeing, rather than illness
- Not sure LEADER can address this

Declining town centres**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- Community led social enterprises in town centres/villages NB it is not just towns that are declining, many villages are losing shops, post offices, garages etc and this impacts upon their viability as functioning communities
- Promote local pride.
- Using experience of good examples
- Need to get a feel for what is already happening and who is supporting what/where (e.g. Huntly Development Trust)
- Greater promotion of 'use it or lose it'. If civic pride is high, then why are the local town centres not supported?
- Linked to all else. More people = more demand for shops and businesses=more vibrant towns.

Training and vocational opportunities for young people**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- Developing job clubs/bespoke support to help young people(NEETS)into positive destinations
- LEADER has the opportunity to provide clear lines of support here, not only for young people, but upskilling of current rural workforce and creating opportunities as well as career progression on the 'Rural Skills Learning Ladder'. Scottish Land & Estates is currently doing lots of work in relation to this and will be involving Primary and Secondary Schools as well as individual estates, estate hubs and industry champions.
- Need to know who is doing what/where
- Schools should promote game keeping and forestry as much as engineering.

Health and wellbeing**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- 1. Supporting/developing additional walking to heath groups 2. Supporting/developing additional healthy eating/cooking projects 3. Supporting/developing additional community growing projects eg. allotments, community gardens 4. Supporting/developing school food growing project
- Promote more outdoor activity
- If you get all else fixed this will improve.
- Would like to see us support more capacity building for individuals, groups and communities, particularly by supporting good existing agencies e.g. signposting, walks to health, Grampian 50+ network - focus on areas of wellbeing rather than illness.
- Promotion of all abilities pathways, healthy eating initiatives etc

Quality and availability of affordable visitor accommodation**How may weakness/threat be addressed?**

- Understand the market - the disposable money is in families and 50-70 year olds but we don't cater for them. Learn from Speyside.
- Project to develop community owned/managed visitor accommodation (social enterprise). Important to ensure capacity exists within community to manage this

LDS Priorities

Scottish Government guidance states that the LDS will need to 'comply with the principle of sustainable development by supporting economic growth and social cohesion whilst addressing the challenges of climate change and protecting the environment.'

The priorities that are selected for the LDS must arise from the analysis of the current situation and where appropriate learning from previous LEADER experiences. This is so that everyone is clear about what they are collectively aiming to achieve and will know when they have achieved each element.

The themes and priorities below are based on feedback from the community engagement workshops, online survey and desk-based research.

For each theme and priority, please state if you think it is of High (H), Medium (M) or Low (L) importance for the LDS. Please use the open text box for suggestions or comments on the themes and priorities (e.g. wording, breadth or focus, additional ideas).

Theme 1: Connecting people and places	High priority: 5
Medium priority: 3	
Priorities:	
Public and community transport	High: 4 Medium: 2 Low: 2
Broadband coverage	High: 3 Medium: 1 Low: 3 [Blank:1]
Car travel	High: 0 Medium: 3 Low: 5
Mobile phone coverage	High: 3 Medium: 3 Low: 2
Community facilities (e.g. hubs, centres)	High: 3 Medium: 5 Low: 0
If you have any comments or suggestions about Theme 1 (e.g. content, wording) or for additional or revised priorities please use the space provided below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the need to connect then people will connect if they have a good reason • Think of active travel options • Transport given lower priority as it will be much more difficult to establish projects to provide solutions with the resources available to the LAG • Community hubs are of much more significance locally and could be used for quick interventions as hubs eg providing subsidised broadband access

Theme 2: Skills development and employability	High: 3 Medium: 4 Low: 3
Priorities	
Apprenticeships	High: 3 Medium: 4 Low: 1
Training	High: 4 Medium: 3 Low: 1
If you have any comments or suggestions about Theme 2 (e.g. content, wording) or for additional or revised priorities please use the space provided below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This issue is being tackled via other partnerships - Tackling Poverty, Financial Inclusion, More Choices More Chances, Community Learning & Development, TSI - hence it's low for me. • This is important but I have given it a lower priority because of the low levels of unemployment in the area. • Real demand for multi-employer shared apprenticeships. A pilot scheme in Aberdeenshire could allow us to establish a land-based apprenticeship. This would follow on from work already undertaken including a rural skills seminar and a rural skills audit. It also has national implications.

Theme 3: Developing key economic sectors	High: 1 Medium: 4 Low: 0 Blanks: 3
Priorities	
Tourism	High: 4 Medium: 4 Low: 0
Food & Drink	High: 3 Medium: 5 Low: 0
Agriculture	High: 3 Medium: 5 Low: 0
If you have any comments or suggestions about Theme 3 (e.g. content, wording) or for additional or revised priorities please use the space provided below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of Agriculture, I would like to see this widened out to Land-based. • Being taken forward by ACSEF, but there is potential for local projects that would enhance provision at a very local level • Agriculture is supported by other means and probably shouldn't be a high priority for this programme (unless to address things that are excluded from other pillars of support)

Theme 4: Environment, localism and self-sufficiency	High: 3 Medium: 4 Low: 0 Blank: 1
Priorities	
Affordable housing	High: 5 Medium: 2 Low: 3
Community energy	High: 4 Medium: 2 Low: 3
Town centre regeneration	High: 0 Medium: 6 Low: 2
Shop and eat local	High: 2 Medium: 5 Low: 1
If you have any comments or suggestions about Theme 4 (e.g. content, wording) or for additional or revised priorities please use the space provided below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to see natural environment as a specific priority. • Are there better areas of funding to support these e.g. climate funds, Lottery • Affordable housing is likely to be outwith scope of the LAG • Additional priorities: Local food production (eg, schools, community led projects) Community capacity building (increase capacity in community groups and support for them) • Town centre regeneration in the South LAG is less of an issue than it is in North Aberdeenshire

Theme 5: Enriching and Positive Activities For All	High: 3 Medium: 4 Low: 0 Blank: 1
Priorities	
Arts, culture and heritage	High: 2 Medium: 6 Low: 0
Health & wellbeing	High: 3 Medium: 5 Low: 0
Leisure & recreation	High: 3 Medium: 5 Low: 0
If you have any comments or suggestions about Theme 5 (e.g. content, wording) or for additional or revised priorities please use the space provided below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on supporting wellbeing rather than sickness • These are all “quality of life” issues which communities can enhance through their own efforts and where I think the LDS could have maximum impact

Do you have any additional comments on the proposed themes and priorities?

- Natural environment is missing.
- Think there are areas within this that I need to learn more about before making decisions. Don't know if members of the group can provide this and/or whether we have enough time? Think we need to unpick some of the issues highlighted and get a better insight into how we might be able to add value and not duplicate resource. Perhaps we could produce some short papers on some areas to give us a better idea of what the issues are e.g. affordable housing - for whom, where, what is it we want to achieve, who is doing this already, can we add value and how.
- I think the LDS needs to be focussed very much on community led projects not those promoted or led by agencies. This will allow local priorities and projects for specific communities to be supported. The main thing is to support communities to achieve their own aspirations and to help them to do that where necessary by providing specialist input (eg Rural Partnership Development Officer support or equivalent). There are already a number of organisations that provide support locally and are embedded within local communities. It is important that this landscape is not complicated further, so any additional resource should be provided via utilising existing organisations/partnerships.

SALAG Consultation Workshop

In May 2014, 11 members of the SALAG plus members of the LEADER team and SRUC facilitators came together to work on a vision for the LDS, to receive feedback from the SALAG online consultation and to refine and prioritise themes and priorities for the LDS.

Visioning exercise

Three groups were invited to form and create their vision for the South Aberdeenshire LDS. The three visions were 'pitched' to the other participants and each SALAG member was invited to vote on their preferred option.

Group 1: South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group: Supporting our communities to be more vibrant, diverse, sustainable, empowered.

Group 2: Our vision is for a strong, thriving South Aberdeenshire where people in rural communities are motivated to make change happen.

Group 3: To have successful, vibrant, capable communities where people are actively engaged and have a sense of belonging.

Group 2 was the preferred option of the SALAG members present, with 5 votes/endorsements for using this in the draft LDS. Others wanted more time to reflect however agreement was reached that this would be used in the draft LDS which the SALAG would have a further opportunity to comment on.

In small groups, participants carried out a prioritisation exercise to determine which themes and priorities they felt should form the basis for the LDS.

Group 1 - Priorities to include

Theme 3: Developing key economic sectors

- Tourism – yes
- Food and drink – small/sole trader
- [added in] Energy sources – i.e. forestry

Theme 1: Connecting people and places

- [added in] Sustainable and active travel – connecting rural communities [merge of car travel and public and community transport]
- Community facilities (e.g. hubs, centres) – Innovation – alternative uses

Theme 5: Enriching and Positive Activities for All

- Health and wellbeing – positive approach
- Arts, culture and heritage
- Leisure & recreation [& outdoor activities]

Theme 4: Environment, localism and self-sufficiency

- Community energy
- Shop and eat local
- [added in] Explore natural environment / Protect and enhancements

Group 2 - Priorities to include

Theme 1: Connecting people and places

- Community transport
- Community facilities (e.g. hubs, centres) – should incorporate ICT as part of funding package – a prerequisite of applications

Theme 3: Developing key economic sectors

- Food and drink – shop and eat local projects supported where they demonstrate a commitment to promoting local produce
- Tourism
- Skills development and employability

Theme 4: Environment, localism and self-sufficiency

- Land-based industry
- Skills
- SRDP ineligible
- Sustainable living? Ecosystems for people and nature? Ecosystems services?

Theme 5: Enriching and Positive Activities for All

- Arts, culture and heritage
- Leisure and recreation – outcomes should focus on delivering health and wellbeing

Note – there should be crossover – adding value between themes. Key role for the LAG to help applicants add value across themes to achieve multiple outcomes/priorities.

Group 3 - Priorities to include

Theme 1: Connecting People and Places

- Public and community transport (links to public transport only)
- Broadband coverage (community focused resource) – linked to next point
- Community facilities (e.g. hubs, centres, community halls) including other shared facilities/resources

Theme 3: Developing key economic sectors

- Tourism (local projects)
- Food & Drink (promotion & social enterprise)
- [Added in] Social enterprise

Theme 4: Environment, localism and self-sufficiency

- Grow, shop and eat local
- Support to rural services – town and village centres regeneration in preparation for further council work?
- Affordable housing – targeting community initiatives
- Community energy
- Climate change adaptation/resilience – fuel poverty/energy efficiency

Theme 5: Enriching and Positive Activities for All

- Leisure & recreation
- Health & wellbeing
- Arts, culture & heritage

NB: Matched funding research on community benefit funds and development contributions.

NB: Wind turbine – invest all money

Priorities to not include / have as low

- Broadband coverage (Group 1, 2, 3)
- Mobile phone coverage (Group 1, 2, 3)
- Theme 2: skills development and employability (Group 1; Group 3 removed and said 'more info needed')
- Apprenticeships and training (Group 1, 2) **although** Group 1 would like to review if see an a downturn and unemployment
- Affordable housing (Group 1 as done elsewhere, Group 2 unsure)
- Town centre regeneration (Group 1, 2)
- Health and wellbeing (Group 2 – done through leisure & recreation)
- Community Energy (Group 2)
- Car travel (Group 2)
- Shop and eat local (Group 2)

3

Appendix 3



Farm diversification, rural business and fisheries meeting notes

Farm Diversification Meeting 29.7.14 - Meeting Notes

Aberdeenshire Council staff in attendance;

Martin Brebner - Team Manager – European Policy & Programmes

Alasdair Cunningham - European Programmes Coordinator

David John McRobbie - European Programmes Coordinator

June Jaffrey – European Programmes Claims Officer

Derek McDonald – Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime)

Alasdair outlined the purpose of the Meeting.

Martin gave an overview of the North and South strategies outlining the indicative themes & priorities which the externally appointed consultants have collated in response to consultation events and surveys.

North

- Place
- Connectivity, community Services & facilities
- Business Competitiveness
- Better Opportunities
- Community Capacity Building

South

- Connecting People & Places
- Developing Key economic sectors
- Natural environment & sustainable living
- Enriching and Positive activities for all

Attendees were split into groups for workshops with the following identified below:

What does Farm Diversification mean to farmers in the North East

- Benefits (to Farmer)
 - Broaden farming base
 - Utilisation of all farm resources
 - Expansion potential (access to more land difficult)
 - Opportunities for sons/daughters
 - Non-core activity could become a core; needs parameters set as % definition
 - Start point;
- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Ownership | Assets |
| Location | Skills |
| Resources | Successful business already? |
| Infrastructure | Other sources of income |
| Capital | |

Project Ideas

- Bed & Breakfast
- Haulage
- Quarrying
- Farm Shop
- Farmers markets
- Horticulture
- Holiday Home
- Milk Bar
- Internal diversification on top of primary production ie Pigs, Hens
- Outdoor pursuits/recreation etc
- Garden centres
- School visits – open farms
- Natural heritage
- Trekking/Livery
- Storage
- Recycling – on a local level
- Renewables
- Co-ops
- Rural Tourism
- Footpaths/Woodland walks
- Kennels
- Services eg Landscaping/financial/engineering
- Should on case-by-case basis - business ideas assessed

Project funding & Intervention Rate

- Fixed Intervention Rate
- 25% or £25k (whichever is the lesser)
- Own contribution of c10% (or guaranteed by someone) – to demonstrate commitment
- Enhanced intervention rate for young/new entrants
- How it effects the business
- Viability vs profitability
- Insist on WFR (Whole Farm Review)

Considering the fact that funds are limited what are the top 3 diversification sectors we should support?

- Rural Tourism
- Community projects; linking the community to agriculture
- Recreation

Other comments arising from the workshops included:

A need for clear and concise guidance

Clear assessment guidelines

Annual budget very small - £5k for 20 Business Adviser

Grants/Loans/pay for Business Adviser

Fixed rates preferable

Max £20k grant

- Would only fund c6 projects per year (avoid overlap with SRDP)

Scrutiny/challenge of application

Alternative use of buildings – renovation/vernacular

Skills/education/human capital

Technology/innovation (novelty)

Broadband

Could be large scale projects – limiting one off projects

Flexible- not prescriptive

Consider costs & realism

Costs of bureaucracy dissuades applicants

Consultancy fees contribution useful in SRDP

Possible neighbouring young/new farmers

More uniform application process between strands

BG signposting and training

Loan scheme could have longer benefits

- Subsidised interest rate
- But could be extra bureaucracy
- Need to set up new bodies
- Could be based on CARE wind turbine scheme

Rural Business Meeting 1.8.14 - Meeting Notes

Aberdeenshire Council staff in attendance;

Alasdair Cunningham - European Programmes Coordinator

Alasdair outlined the purpose of the meeting and gave an overview of the North and South strategies outlining the indicative themes & priorities which the externally appointed consultants have collated in response to consultation events and surveys.

North

- Place
- Connectivity, community Services & facilities
- Business Competitiveness
- Better Opportunities
- Community Capacity Building

South

- Connecting People & Places
- Developing Key economic sectors
- Natural environment & sustainable living
- Enriching and Positive activities for all

What support does Rural Business require in the North East

- Marketing support/advice
- Efficiency
- Machinery
- Access to development scheme
- Sustainability
- Growth in the retails sector
- Support existing business
- Allowing business to tap into local wealth
- Assistance with green measures
- Lack of skills/people
- Broadband (satellite/communications)
- Training
- Support existing business

Project Ideas

- Training
- Employability schemes
- Tapping the female resource
- Accommodation
- Incentive
- Career progression

Project funding & Intervention Rate

- Guide of 30%
- £100,000 Max
- Flexibility
- Loans

Considering the fact that funds are limited what are the 3 support requirements?

- Efficiency – greening of business
- Connectivity
- Business enhancement
- Skills training increase labour supply

Note of AEFF FLAG Meeting & Workshop

Thursday 14th August 2014

Council Chamber, Arbuthnot House, Broad Street, Peterhead

1. Welcome and Introductions

Martin Brebner welcomed all to the meeting. David John introduced himself to the attendees and outlined the purpose of the meeting. Those present were;

David John McRobbie	Aberdeenshire Council
Martin Brebner	Aberdeenshire Council
Nicola Graham	Ekos
Ian	Ekos
Zillah Jamieson	Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership
Robin Maddock	The Banffshire Partnership Ltd
David Anderson	Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation
Michael Bates	Development Officer PFFPA
Dr Ian Moir	BDAPlus
Linda Hope	Scottish Maritime Academy at North East Scotland College
Darren Broadley	Peter & J Johnstone Ltd
John Cox	PFFPA
Bill McKenzie	Don Fishing
Liz Scott	BDP
Derek McDonald	Aberdeenshire Council
Robin Maddock	The Banffshire Partnership Ltd
Steve Murray	Fishermen's Mission
Ian Watson	Fraserburgh Development Trust
James Buchan	NEFTA Training Manager
Willie Munro	Aberdeenshire Council

2. Introduction to the Aberdeenshire European Fisheries Fund

David John presented on Axis 4 Funding, advising of the Aberdeenshire European Fisheries Fund. The presentation focused on the:

- ***The past AEF programme (2012-2014);*** DJ advised there were twelve programmes running across Scotland. Aberdeenshire covers an area from Portsoy to St Cyrus. DJ advised the attendees of the current FLAG membership. Aberdeenshire EFF had £1.1million of funding in the previous programme, which is now closed. There were a total of 27 projects with a spend of over £804,000; all projects are monitored by David John. DJ outlined the differences between the AXIS funds. Concerns from the previous programme were identified as the application process being too bureaucratic; difficulties in match funding on the £ for £ basis (difficult to get from private bodies); meeting quorum at meetings has proved difficult previously due to members' commitments and the lack of industry project applications (due in part to match funding issues).
- ***Previously approved projects;*** DJ advised that all projects have to be completed by October 2015. He gave an overview of "Taste of Grampian" project and "PFFPA Development Officer" project. Community led projects included the "Apex Centre" and "Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership Project Officer". Whitehills seafood restaurant "The Galley" was a successful renovation of a disused building into a restaurant. AEF contribution of £45k assisted with the total project costs of £126,000. Attendees were invited to look at the AEF website more detailed information on previous projects.
- ***The future EMFF programme (2014-2020);*** David John outlined the purpose and outcomes of consultation events which were held earlier in the year and advised that two Local Development Strategies (LDS) are consequently being developed by external consultants. The LDS is currently being drafted along with the Business Plan which is to be submitted on 15.8.14. The FLAG will decide how to break down the two strategies into North and South areas. Nominations for a FLAG Chair and Vice Chair are welcomed. It is anticipated that Aberdeenshire Council will remain as the Lead Partner. The project application process will remain the same i.e. contact is made by the application to the Programme Co-ordinator with an Expression Of Interest submitted and checked, then the applicant would submit a formal application for consideration at the Project Assessment Committee (PAC), and who may (if required) request additional information, the application would then be presented to the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) to score the project against set criteria and make a formal decision on the application.
- ***Differences between the new EMFF funding programme and EFF (Axis 4 context);*** The types of project which can be supported in the next programme could include; data collection, support for small scale fisheries, training initiatives, feasibility studies, short videos and the development of new products. The rules on the composition of the FLAG are that 51% of votes must come from non-public bodies. Two or more FLAG areas can combine to create a "superFLAG". Inter-regional projects are managed by Marine Scotland.

3. Governance Presentation

Martin Brebner gave a brief presentation on the Governance of the Fisheries Local Action Group and how it will be delivered. Martin advised that the LDS is a bottom up approach covering both Rural and Fisheries; Marine Scotland had decided on a separate Fisheries LAG and that Marine Scotland is looking more this time at an industry focus. As there is a maximum population threshold of 150,000 residents therefore creating a requirement for separate North and South LAG areas; they will be tasked with administering Rural projects/funds. Martin focused on:

51% split between other private, public and community stakeholders.

- **Role of FLAG members;** members will identify development needs and funding priorities for the area, ensure the delivery of the LDS and project appraisals. Meetings will be held approximately three times a year ensuring best attendance possible. There will be a requirement to have a Chair and two Vice Chairs and there may be sub groups set up.
- **Lead Partner;** Aberdeenshire Council will act as the delegated managing authority, accountable for implementation.
- **North and South Local Development Strategies;** Martin advised that the strategies are being developed to ensure they meet EU requirements.

4. Q & A Session

Q How many members are on the FLAG?

A 40 Organisations have been approached in order to get a range of relevant stakeholders. It will be up to the FLAG to decide on the final membership.

Q Has advice on the minimum quorum been received from Marine Scotland?

A No minimum quorum number has been advised by Marine Scotland; currently it is 4. The FLAG can decide on the quorum required.

Q Can the timescale for the £2.2 million spend be clarified?

A It is confirmed as 2020 for the spend. There is scope for the FLAG to determine the allocation of future funds i.e. there could be a decision to spend a fixed amount per year.

Q What is the deadline for the final strategy document?

A There will be a further FLAG meeting in September with the formalisation of the FLAG at the end of September.

Q What is the deadline for the finalisation of the Business Plan?

A End of September.

Q Is the EMFF start date of 1 January 2015 achievable?

A Yes, it is scheduled to begin on 1.1.15. It is anticipated that application forms will be ready for the first round of applications in approximately April 2015. It is usual practice to have an application deadline date with the PAC meeting shortly after, followed by a FLAG meeting. This is ordinarily within a six week timeframe.

Q What will go in the Local Development Strategy?

A A bottom up approach analysis has been done regarding coastal communities allowing scope for further applications from fishery sectors.

Q Can the funding rates change per project?

A There can be differing intervention rates. Current intervention rates for Business are 60%/40%, for Business and Community 70%/30% and for Community only 90%/10%. Other LAGs for example Moray have previously used a fixed rate of 50%/50%. The FLAG can decide on the intervention rates bearing in mind it cannot exceed the public contribution (as per EU regulations).

Q Do applicants have to find match funding?

A It has been advised by Marine Scotland that they will allocate match funding. Only the private contribution from business is to be found.

Q Is there a duplication of funding streams for Fisheries projects?

A Applicants will be advised as to the most relevant AXIS fund to apply to.

5. FLAG Facilitated Workshop discussions (with Ekos the North Strategy Consultants in attendance) focused on the following points;

- 1) What are the development needs, opportunities and threats for Aberdeenshire's Coastal areas from 2014-20?
- 2) Which EMFF priority themes are most relevant to Aberdeenshire's Coastal areas?
- 3) Are there any specific projects which should be taken forward through Axis 4 funding?

6. Conclusions and next steps

Martin advised that the Aberdeenshire Fisheries Local Action Group membership application forms would be emailed to all today's attendees. With interested parties asked to complete and return the application forms by 31.8.14. Martin clarified that the Business Plan would be submitted in 15.8.14.

7. Date of Next Meeting

To be advised to all as Tuesday 16th September 2014, 1pm at the Palace Hotel, Prince Street, Peterhead.

www.local-development.eu
salag@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
nesflag@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



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

The South Aberdeenshire LAG is being part-financed by the Scottish government and the European Community LEADER 2014-2020 programme



Part-funded by the European Union's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Economic Development
Gordon House
Blackhall Road
Inverurie AB51 3WA