

Highland LEADER 2014 – 2020 Programme
Inner Moray Firth North LAP Meeting
6.30 – 8.30, 16 March 2016, Alness Heritage Centre

Attendance:

Jennifer Barclay
Tom Davis
Robert James
Angela MacLean
Iain McCallum
John McHardy (Chair)
Jillian Munro
Martin Rattray
Jodi Riddler
Helen Ross

Sophie Mitchell, Highlife Highland
Judith Wainwright, Highland LEADER Programme

Apologies

Apologies were received from Helen Barton, Val Cameron, Betty Lochhead, Sarah MacKay, Ana MacPherson, Franca Reid, Alasdair Rhind, and Carolyn Wilson.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 February 2016 were proposed as an accurate record of that meeting by Iain and seconded by Angela.

Actions Arising from Minutes

All actions completed.

Judith confirmed that she had raised with the Strategic LAG the suggestion that IMFN LAP might want to allocate a specific percentage of their budget allocation in the first year. The Strategic LAG confirmed it would be unlikely that funds would be taken from a LAP that had set out a spending profile, provided it was spending to this. In the event that any further funding becomes available during the Programme, however, LAPs that had already committed their full allocation would be better placed to take advantage of the additional funding. She suggested that as this may disadvantage IMFN, it might be better to avoid committing a spend profile in the LAAP and this was agreed.

Judith also pointed out that given the duration of the programme, should the LAP wish to consider a funding profile, 40% allocation in the first year may be too low, given that effectively there will only be a period of around three years during which all projects will need to start and finish. This was illustrated later in the Highland

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Programme Update Presentation (Appendix 1)

LAP Chair

John advised the meeting that he would need to stand down as Chair; Guidance from the Scottish Government, issued last week, prevents anyone employed by the Accountable Body (The Highland Council), from chairing a decision-making group.

The meeting thanked John for chairing the meetings to date, and John confirmed his continued commitment to the LAP.

It was agreed that John would chair this meeting, giving members time to digest the information and consider if anyone would like to put themselves forward for the position, which would be picked up again at the end of the meeting.

Subsequently Tom agreed to put himself forward. It was agreed that Judith would speak to members who were not at the meeting to see if anyone else would like to stand. In the event of opposing candidates, a vote would be arranged. Otherwise, Tom would be appointed Chair.

JW

Update from Pre-LAP Meeting

A Pre-LAP meeting was held 11 March in Alness Academy. It was attended by Ana, Franca, Sophie and Judith. Apologies were received from Betty and Sarah.

Judith gave a brief update:

Meeting arrangements were discussed and Ana confirmed that holding meetings on the Monday prior to the LAP meetings worked well for her.

There was a general discussion about the work that has been done by the LAP, so far, and the arrangements for reviewing applications, once the programme is launched.

It was agreed that some sample applications will be assessed at the next Pre-LAP meeting, and video footage from the LEADER Conference covering some successful projects from the last programme, will be shown.

Sophie is to speak with Hannah to check whether she is still interested in sitting on the LAP.

SM

Judith agreed to speak with Alan to see whether he wants to join the next session – if so a slightly later start time will be needed to give him time to travel from Dingwall.

JW

The next Pre-LAP meeting will be held on 11 April at Alness Academy – start time t.b.c.

Highland LEADER – Programme Update

Judith presented a few slides which provided a brief update on Programme timescales and the high level process for applications. The slides are attached as Appendix 1.

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Local Area Action Plan (LAAP)

Judith thanked those who had given feedback to the draft Plan. Proposed text changes were reviewed and agreed.

It was agreed that the IMFN LAAP will be presented to the Strategic LAG for approval at their meeting on 30 March 2016; therefore any final suggested changes will need to be submitted to Judith by 23 March at the very latest.

ALL

A number of LAP members had fed back that it was difficult to comment on the Plan before they see applications coming through.

The meeting then proceeded to review mock Pre-Applications to try and simulate the experience they would have post launch. The meeting split into two groups. Each group was given the same two completed Pre-Applications, both seeking a similar level of LEADER funding, and draft assessment sheets. They were advised to assume there was insufficient funding to fully support both applications.

The groups were asked to review and score each application and to specifically consider

- how useful a tool the draft LAAP was in helping them to determine whether to support the applications
- how helpful they felt the two phased application process would be to them and to applicants
- feedback on the draft Pre-Application and Assessment Forms.

After 40 minutes, the meeting reconvened. Everyone felt it had been an interesting and worthwhile exercise. Key points of feedback were:

- The LAAP had been helpful in determining whether the Pre-Applications should be supported
- The two stage process was felt to be a good idea and important in being able to set applicant's expectations
- Some people felt that more information/evidence would have been helpful at the pre-application stage, but it was accepted that there is a balance to be struck; if too much information was requested, this would negate the rationale for having this stage.

As a minimum, however, the group felt the level of financial information requested at this stage was insufficient; a Business Plan, even in draft form would have been very helpful. It was suggested that applicants should be considering the financial implications of their projects in greater detail than that requested on the form, before submitting a Pre-Application, and therefore some form of Business Plan should be submitted along with the Pre-Application.

Additionally it was felt that more information about the Applicant should be captured – for example if groups are constituted, how many members, how long they've been formed, previous LEADER/grant funding experience etc.

Judith will take forward and feedback these comments to the Programme Manager.

JW

Projects funded in last LEADER Programme

In the last meeting it had been agreed that it would be a useful exercise to look at projects funded in the previous Programme to see whether it is possible to identify project types more likely to be successful in terms of delivering lasting benefits to the community. It may also help identify assessment criteria. Time did not permit this discussion, however it was agreed that Judith will circulate the list of projects. All members are to review the list to identify any projects they are aware of which:

- have delivered a clear legacy
- have not delivered a legacy.

Examples of such projects to be advised to Judith, with rationale for why you feel they have/have not delivered a legacy, a week before the next meeting.

ALL

Meeting Attendance

The Operating Guidelines had been circulated as part of the LAAP and no amendments were raised, therefore these have been adopted by IMFN LAP. John drew attention to Section 6.1 which states that if a member of the LAG (LAP) or their substitute does not attend over three consecutive meetings, the presumption is that their membership will be terminated at the discretion of the chair.

Expressions of Interest (EOI)

Three new Expressions of Interest have been submitted since the last LAP meeting. These are summarised on the final slide of Appendix 1. John advised the meeting that he would have to declare an interest in respect of the EOI submitted by the Kiltarn Community Council for modernisation of the Diamond Jubilee Hall.

Any Other Business

Communications – Martin asked whether there could be some communication to Community Councils as he is getting a number of questions regarding LEADER (when will it be up and running?). Judith confirmed that there are likely to be a number of communications issued shortly as a decision on the launch date will be taken by the Strategic LAG on 30 March. She will feedback the requirement to ensure CCs are included.

JW

Next Meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13 April 2016 at the Alness Heritage Centre from 6.30 to 8.30pm. Tea/coffee/sandwiches will be available from 6.00pm. At this meeting, video footage from the LEADER Conference will be shown, and the Equalities Training will be completed. Judith suggested that some time should also be devoted to looking at any LAP specific requirements for assessing Pre-Applications and Applications.

A Pre-LAP meeting will be held at Alness Academy on Monday 11 April 2016, just after school – exact start time to be confirmed.

JW

An additional meeting date was agreed – 25/05/2016 on the basis that there are some pre-applications for the group to consider. This meeting will be held at the Alness Heritage Centre from 6.30pm.