

North & South Aberdeenshire Local Action Groups Launch Meeting - Minutes

Tuesday 28 January 2014

Present

Belinda Miller (BM)	Head of Economic Development
David-John McRobbie	Fisheries Project Officer
Alasdair Cunningham	LEADER Project Officer
Martin Brebner (MB)	Team Manager - European Policy & Programmes
Duncan Leece	The Banffshire Partnership
Irene Rowe	Buchan Community Councils
Linda Hope	Manager of Scottish Marine Academy, NESCoL
Penny Montgomery	Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs
Zillah Jamieson	Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership
Moira Gash	Royal Deeside & Cairngorms
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses
Ian Hay	EGCP
Gary McEwan	Enterprise North East Trust
Willie Munro	Area Manager Kincardine and Mearns
Dr Martin Auld	RSPB Scotland
Douglas Milne	Garioch Area Manager
Ian Cowe	Forestry Commission Scotland
Jamie Bell	Scottish Enterprise
Mark Mitchell	Area Project Officer Formartine
Bob Collier	Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
Rod Gunson	Formartine Partnership
John Loder	Formartine Partnership
Emma Kidd	Community Planning Officer Kincardine & Mearns
Philip Smith	Visit Scotland
Liz Scott	Buchan Development Partnership
Anne Simpson	The Garioch Partnership
Anne MacLennan	European Programme Claims Officer
June Jaffrey	European Programme Claims Officer
Gavin Clark	Scottish Natural Heritage
Lizzy Shepherd	Marr Area Partnership
Jean Henretty	Marr Area Partnership
Gina Ford	Scottish Enterprise
Scott Petrie	Scottish Land & Estates
Robert Stevenson	North East of Scotland Fisherman's Organisation

Observers

Ian Wallace	Community Planning Support Officer
Erin Wood	Corporate Policy Officer

Apologies

Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Caroline Smith	Community Planning Officer Banff & Buchan
Dawn Tuckwood	NHS Grampian
Donald Boyd	Huntly Development Trust

1	Welcome and introductions
	Belinda Miller welcomed all to the Launch meeting and round the table introductions were made.
2	Presentation – Community-Led Local Development
	Martin Brebner gave an overview of the CLLD new concept 2014 – 2020 period. Copies of the presentation will be forward to all attendees.
	Question & Answer session
	<p>The following points were raised;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of larger towns in the new programme i.e. Inverurie, Peterhead etc. Clarification was given by MB that larger towns will be included and will have a role to play. • What restrictions will be placed on project applications? All projects must be eligible under EU rules. • Would two distinct strategies be required for rural and fisheries? MB confirmed that two strategies are required. These are currently being drafted with a first draft date of end of March with approved strategies in September 2014. • What comparison to other funds? CLLD being encouraged to link in to ESI funds and other funds. MB currently discussing the use of EI fund in rural areas • What are the definitions of community and local led? MB advised that EU member states would decide on the definitions
3	Presentation – Funding Programmes 2014-20
	Alasdair Cunningham gave a presentation outlining the current and new programmes. Copies of the presentation will be forward to all attendees.
4	Presentation – European Maritime & Fisheries Fund 2014 -20
	David John McRobbie gave a presentation outlining the new programmes. A copy of the presentation will be forward to all attendees.
	Question & Answer session
	<p>The following were raised;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for AEFM Match Funding. The commitment from Scottish Govt is unknown – they are being lobbied currently to fully match. It was acknowledged that public funds will reduce from 2015. • Clarification was sought on the North/South split for the LAG areas. It was confirmed that both areas would support rural and fisheries applications. With strategies being drafted to support ???? • Clarification on funding to the North and South LAGs was sought. It was advised that monies will be allocated by the Scottish Govt to the North and South LAGs separately but that re-allocations of budget may be feasible. • As the new funding will come into effect from April 2015 how will the LAG be shaped between now and then? MB advised that the preparation for delivery of funds will begin in January 2015. <p>Acknowledgement was voiced by Andy Willox on the valued support given by the LEADER secretariat and his hopes that the impetus to engage is continued.</p> <p>Duncan Leece, as a recipient of LEADER funding for tourism projects, gave his view on the effective support given by the LEADER team.</p>

BM advised that the team, as it stands, would be the minimum in place to administer projects. Aberdeenshire Council will continue to administer the LEADER funds. Previous difficulties in securing AEFF funding with public money was acknowledged – the new programme doesn't identify how this matching will be structured.

5 Presentation – Role of Local Action Groups and Local Development Strategies

Martin Brebner presented on the role of the LAGs; today's attendees were invited as experts in the area. As the LAG partnership will be made up of equal thirds public, private and community, it is essential to that the group membership is robust. The remit of the LAG will include development of the LDS, commission of projects etc. The LAG structure will consist of an elected Chair with the proportional 1/3 membership of public, private and community representation. Secretarial support will be provided by the LEADER team with quarterly full meetings. The PAC could continue if the LAG decides this in the Terms of Reference. The LDS document will set out local priorities i.e. projects identified through the community engagement events. Consultation events will take place late February/early March 2014. The Strategy will be drafted by external consultants; £20k has been allocated to the North and South areas for this purpose; with tenders having been issued recently. The timescales for the draft strategy and programme launch are;

31/3/14	31/5/14	30/9/14	January 2015
Draft LDS	Draft Strategy and Business Plan to Scot. Govt.	Final draft	Launch of programme

MB confirmed the next steps will be the appointing of a chair; agreeing LAG membership; draft Terms of Reference and preparation of the LDS. The presentation will be forwarded to attendees.

Question & Answer session

- Clarification was sought on Aberdeenshire Council officer membership on the LAG. It was confirmed that Aberdeenshire would have only one vote. Meetings would be quarterly (LAG) and 8 times yearly (PAC), with both North and South LAGs meeting on the same day.
- Clarification on nomination of the Chair was sought. It was confirmed that the Chair would be independent from the lead organisation. MB will confirm this.
- Representation from Community Councils and Rural Partnerships was queried. MB clarified that one member from Community Planning groups and one from Rural Partnerships was requested.
- It was generally agreed that advising today's attendees in who will sit on the North and South Aberdeenshire LAGs would be useful. The LAG membership will not be finalised until September 2015.
- BM advised that the structure of the Strategy was of the utmost importance with member views on the system being application led or commission led. Comments were voiced agreeing the requirement for both being workable dependent on individual communities. In low uptake areas it is anticipated that increased work with Community Planning colleagues would build capacity for delivering projects.
- It was confirmed a Project Assessment Committee would still be required.
- For frequency of joint meetings MB would clarify with the Scottish Government.
- Clarification was sought on current status re strategy. MB confirmed that invitations to quote had been issued with three responses. The successful tender bid would be shared with the group. Rural Partnerships have been asked to hold community consultation events for each

	<p>of the six areas. The consultant engaged will go out to the consultation events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was queried whether LAG should be split to deal with Rural and Fisheries separately. MB advised that the EU wish for greater co-ordination between funding streams, managing of resources etc rendering a split unlikely although sub-committees within each LAG may be considered. It was clarified however that regardless of the nature of the application all applications would be considered under one set of rules. • It was advised that the Fisheries fund and the Rural fund would be separate amounts; virements may be possible between the two funds however. • It is anticipated that joint projects between the North and South LAG or indeed other Scottish or overseas LAGs would be welcomed. • The LDS was discussed with clarity sought on ownership, buy in and the delivery. MB advised that LAG members had ownership of the LDS and that the document will act as a programme document and vision statement; some of the terminology is bound by EU requirements and Scottish Government requirements.
6	Conclusions and Next Steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BM re-iterated that the basic first draft is anticipated for March. • The successful consultant's information will be forwarded to today's attendees. • A further meeting of today's group will be set for March. <p>Belinda thanked all for their participation today.</p>