

SHETLAND LEADER 2007 - 2013 LAG

MINUTES OF LAG MEETING HELD IN EDU BOARDROOM AT 9.30AM ON THURSDAY 19th April 2012.

Present: Douglas Irvine, SIC (Chairperson)
Alice Mathewson, AB Associates Ltd
David Cormack, SGRPID
Tommy Coutts, SIC
Michael Duncan, SIC
Pete Glanville, Shetland Organics
Kathleen Sinclair, NFU
Sally Spence, SIC
Jennifer Mouat, SSMO;
Ruth Henderson, Seafood Shetland;
Kathy Hubbard, Shetland Arts
Jeemie Smith, FSB
Wendy Hand, VAS
Sheila Tulloch, SIC – LAG Co-ordinator

1. Apologies and Introductions

Apologies were received from Mick Clifton, SIC; Maree Hay, NCDC; Mhari Pottinger, HIE Shetland; Alan Blain, SAT; Ann Johnson, SNH, and Vaila Simpson SIC.

2. Membership Balance

The public/private status of the group was checked and there was an appropriate balance.

3. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of interest regarding the following potential projects were noted;

- 091 – Fetlar Gateway Housing. Tommy Coutts.
- 094 – Aithsvoe Campsite Visitor Facilities – Jeemie Smith.

4. Minutes of 15th December 2011

The minutes were proposed by Ruth Henderson and seconded by Jeemie Smith.

5. Matters Arising – not dealt with elsewhere

Some discussion was held about errors in the voting records which were amended.

6. Budget Updates

Sheila Tulloch discussed the budget update papers and stated that there had been very little changes to the figures since the previous meeting.

The expenditure profile had been updated and shows a small amount of LEADER budget remaining. This will increase due to underspends. The LEADER Co-ordinator post is currently funded up to June 2014 however this may need to be extended. Up to 20% of overall budget can be allocated for admin, currently the spend figure is much less than this. There is £402,000 in the convergence funding budget, and there are also known underspends of up to £70,000. The potential projects which are coming forward to this meeting total more than this, however, the LAG have agreed to overcommit the budget based on anticipated underspends.

7. Potential Projects

091 – Fetlar Developments Ltd - Fetlar Gateway Housing

Tommy Coutts left the room.

It was confirmed that this was a convergence project. The project aimed to provide three family sized “Gateway” houses on the island of Fetlar. The applicant was seeking £237,500 from LEADER, which is 47.5% of overall total project costs of £500,000. The LAG discussed match funding for the project. The Coastal Communities Fund is expected to be heavily oversubscribed and the timescale for applying could be lengthy. It was noted that SIC housing do not currently have a waiting list for housing on Fetlar. There is currently one property available and another is expected to become vacant soon. If there was a considerable waiting list for accommodation the local authority would have a statutory duty to consider provision of additional housing. Other issues discussed included long term sustainability and whether there were suitable employment opportunities for tenants who located to Fetlar.

Value for money was discussed in detail; project costs are high in relation to the LEADER outputs and targets that would be contributed towards. The LAG decided unanimously to reject the application.

Tommy Coutts returned to the room.

092 – North Yell Development Council – Projects Manager

It was stated that the project officer would take responsibility for 3 projects currently being developed by NYDC. It was also stated that the group were finding it very difficult to continue with these projects on a voluntary basis. Overall it was felt that the project was a good model, and represented good value for money by creating 6 jobs. It was agreed that the applicant be asked to submit a full application to the next meeting.

093 – South Nesting Public Hall – Improved Facilities

It was stated that this project involved extending facilities at the hall, replacing the roof and providing electrical hook up/service points for caravans. The project aims to attract more visitors to the area, but it was not thought that this came through clearly in the outputs.

Match funding was discussed and it was stated that SIC funding had yet to be confirmed. It was confirmed that the self-contained caravan facility with toilets and showers could be closed off from the rest of the hall. At a charge of £10-£20 per night, this could bring in revenue of about £3,500 a year for the hall.

Concern was raised over the roof element of the project, it must be demonstrated that a new roof is more than just a replacement, the applicant states they will use an insulated composite panel that will improve energy efficiency.

After some further discussion it was decided to invite the project to submit a full application.

094 – Aithsvoe Marina Association - Aithsvoe Campsite Visitor Facilities

Jeemie Smith left the room.

The LAG felt that this project was very similar to ones approved in Skeld and Collafirth, but with much higher costs. The applicant was seeking £80,000 which is 45.7% from LEADER against total project costs of £175,000. It was felt that there was not enough detail about the project, and that the outputs looked very high. It was stated the applicant had not submitted the potential project form for comment prior to the meeting. The storage element of the project was questioned, what would it be used for and how large was the proposed area? After some discussion it was agreed the applicant should meet with Sheila to discuss the project and revise the potential project form to justify or reduce the high costs and resubmit to the next LAG meeting.

Jeemie Smith returned to the room.

095 – Shetland Amenity Trust–Short Rotation Coppice Trial Phase1

This project was seeking £24,333 from LEADER to undertake a field study trial into growing willow biomass as short rotation coppice to produce renewable and sustainable energy in Shetland. The LAG felt the project would duplicate earlier research work already undertaken, a copy of which was circulated at the meeting. The project undertaken between 2008 and 2010 had investigated growing willow in Orkney and other biomass crops, predominantly grasses in both Orkney and Shetland; the results were inconclusive but it did highlight the high costs of harvesting willow and that yields were higher on better quality land. The LAG felt that growing willow was perhaps not the best use of the limited supply of good quality agricultural land in Shetland.

The LAG also suggested that it would be more appropriate for the project to be undertaken by the private sector and questioned the role of the Shetland Amenity Trust in leading the project.

The LAG decided unanimously to reject the project.

096 – Shetland Skatepark Association – Shetland Skatepark

The applicant proposes to construct a purpose built skatepark in Lerwick providing skateboarders, BMX riders and other wheeled sports enthusiasts throughout Shetland with a safe but challenging facility to develop their skills. There is currently no skatepark in Shetland. The proposed facility has been designed by professionals in this field alongside local young people. The LAG discussed the history of the project; the group have had a lengthy struggle to identify a suitable site and secure funding. Funding has been secured from Shetland Islands Council and a further two applications are still to be submitted to Sport Scotland and the Robertson Trust. A suitable site has been located at the Knab in Lerwick near to the Coastguard station. Discussions have been held with the Coastguard and they have indicated willingness to watch over the site.

The LAG discussed the project and raised several questions including;

- How would the skatepark be run and who would take responsibility in case of an accident?
- Is there suitable evidence of demand?
- Who will benefit from the project?
- How will outputs and outcomes be measured?

After some discussion it was agreed to invite the group to submit a full application that addressed the questions raised by the LAG.

8. Convergence (formerly Action 4) Projects

Douglas Irvine stated that there was a need for the group to take decisions in a more structured way. He had recently attended a presentation by Audit Scotland at the LEADER Strategic Board where it was stated LAGs should discuss value for money, reasonableness of cost and additionality with regard to each application they consider for LEADER funding

090 Islesburgh Drama Group – Workshop (For Theatre Set Building and Storage)

Islesburgh Drama Group were seeking £26,025.50 from LEADER which is 24.3% of total costs of £107,051. The LAG felt more detail would be needed on building materials to fully assess reasonableness of cost. An additional breakdown of costs for the building was then tabled, and it was agreed that they appeared reasonable. It was stated that in line with LEADER guidance the building works would be tendered and 3 quotes sought. It was also stated that the group would need to take advice regarding the need for QS certificates. At £126,000 the project was deemed to be good value for money,

especially as the applicant was contributing £55,000 themselves which represented slightly over half of the project costs. In terms of additionality it was stated that the project could not proceed without external funding. The only other alternative funder identified was the SIC, and it was not felt that they could not fully fund the project. Therefore without LEADER input it was concluded that there would be no project. It was also agreed that the project showed innovation. It was however stated that the LAG would like to see more use of the facility by young people, and it was felt that this could be possible through joint projects with youth theatre and other groups. It was also stated that the project had letters of support from other groups.

The project was then unanimously approved. See attached voting record.

9. Audit Matters

Douglas Irvine stated that when the group last met, Anna Murray had undertaken a monitoring visit reviewing projects where the SIC had been lead partner. A number of relatively minor issues were raised and being dealt with. Audit Scotland had requested a project file and there may be an issue with funding white goods and soft furnishings. The guidelines state that these items can be funded if they are an essential part of the project.

10. LAG Training Day

Sheila circulated notes to those who had been unable to attend. The group reported that the day had went well and been useful.

11. AOB

Michael Duncan said there was a need to meet to discuss umbrella projects, as current advice appears to suggest that every umbrella project has to be treated as an individual LEADER project. Michael asked if he could meet with the LEADER Co-ordinator to clarify if the CEEP scheme files and processes were in order. The results of the meeting could then be fed back to the LAG.

Ruth Henderson queried what was happening with Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) as the scheme is to end in December 2013. It was very frustrating that nothing appeared to be moving forward. Douglas Irvine advised that a bid for funding from EFF Axis 5 had been submitted to fund the administration of Axis 4. The outcome of this bid is still awaited. Sally Spence said she was meeting Lizzie Nicolson to discuss Axis 4 as Lizzie was leaving and she would be taking over her duties regarding Axis 4.

Alice Mathewson said she would arrange a preview tour of the Scalloway Museum for LAG members.

12. Date of next meeting/closure

It was agreed that the next meeting would be on Thursday 31st May 2012.