



To: Economy and Jobs Policy Board

On: 18 November 2015

Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services

Heading: LEADER Programme 2014-2020 - Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Economy and Jobs Policy Board on progress made in securing a new LEADER funding programme for the wider Renfrewshire rural area in 2014-2020.
 - 1.2 A revised Local Development Strategy and Business Plan has been developed incorporating feedback received from Scottish Government and the Local Action Group (LAG).
 - 1.3 Scottish Government has now provided confirmation of the indicative allocation of EU grant funding to the Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LAG area as £2,324,196.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Agree that Renfrewshire Council should act as the accountable body (lead partner) for the Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LAG.
 - 2.2. Agree that following acceptance of grant, Renfrewshire Council should begin implementation of the new programme.
 - 2.3 Note the revised Scottish Government timetable for the implementation of the new LEADER 2014-2020 programme.
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3. **Background**

- 3.1. Renfrewshire Council is leading on the development of a new LEADER programme for the rural areas within Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde, acting on behalf of the Local Action Group (LAG).
 - 3.2 Each LAG must submit a Local Development Strategy as the basis for their local programme. The draft LDS was brought to this Board in November 2014. The Development Strategy outlines the priorities for the area and the LEADER programme financially supports the delivery of new local services with match funding from local applicants. The programme additionally provides 100% funding for the staff and running costs required to deliver the programme.
 - 3.3 The Scottish Government has provided confirmation of the indicative allocation of EU grant funding to the Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LAG area as £2,324,196 of which 25% is available for staff and running costs.
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4. **Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Development Strategy**

- 4.1 The final version Local Development Strategy for Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde has been submitted and is currently being considered by the Scottish Government. An approval is anticipated later in the year.
- 4.2 The Local Development Strategy is based around three key themes – Economy, Environment and Community. Four high level objectives reflect the main aims of the programme:
 - To support **SMEs, micro-businesses and social enterprises**
 - To promote tourism and **increase the number of day visitors**, encompassing support for leisure and hospitality-related businesses
 - To secure **a high quality environment** for residents and visitors
 - To build **stronger, more self-reliant and inclusive rural communities**
- 4.3 Following approval from the Scottish Government the next stage will be for Renfrewshire Council to formally accept the offer of grant and to sign the Service Level Agreement. Renfrewshire Council will then be the accountable body, acting on behalf of the Local Action Group (LAG).
- 4.4 A Business Plan has been developed as a companion paper to the Local Development Strategy. The Business Plan details the operational aspects of the programme such as the operation of the LAG, the application process, the assessment process, claims procedure etc. Further information on the rules

regarding these processes will be provided by Scottish Government in due course.

5. Timescales and Implementation

- 5.1 The timescale for the start of the new LEADER Programme has slipped considerably. It was anticipated that the Programme would begin in summer 2015, however there have been further delays in the preparation of the Programme rules and the online IT system operated by Scottish Government. It is now expected that the LEADER 2014-2020 Programme will start early in 2016.
- 5.2 Early actions for Renfrewshire Council will include promoting the new Programme, working with potential applicants and establishing the new LEADER team. The increased size and value of the Programme for the wider Renfrewshire area means that the technical funding provided has also increased. The new LEADER team will include two additional posts, one part-time post focused on compliance to mitigate any audit risk, and one full-time post focused on development to support the community outreach aspect of the Programme across the 3 local authority areas.
- 5.3 The Local Action Group (LAG) for the new LEADER programme is meeting regularly and a cross section of the public, private and voluntary sectors from the three local authority areas are represented. Recruitment to the LAG to date has been informed and supported through the developments and discussions generated at consultation events. So far all volunteers have been accepted onto the LAG, representing a wide range of relevant interests. The LAG is still seeking LAG members to represent young people and will consider applications for further membership on an ongoing basis.

The current membership of the LAG is as follows:

| Private | Third Sector | Public |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Scottish Land and Estates | CVS Inverclyde | Renfrewshire Council |
| Ardgowan Estate | Engage Renfrewshire | East Renfrewshire Council |
| Finlaystone Country Estate | Belles on Bikes | Inverclyde Council |
| | Kilbarchan Community Council | Visit Scotland |
| | Neilston Community Council | Scottish Natural Heritage |
| | West Region Scouts | Forestry Commission |

- 5.4 Further reports will be brought forward to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board to update on progress.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Applications to the LEADER fund will require match funding sourced by applicants. It is anticipated that LEADER will generally support 50% of the costs of projects.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – delivery of the new programme over a larger area with a larger budget will require two additional members of staff as detailed within the Business Plan. These posts will be fully funded through technical grant funding from LEADER.
3. **Community Planning** –
Jobs and the Economy – the programme has a key aim of supporting the rural economy.
4. **Legal** – none
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** – IT equipment will be required for new staff
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report as LEADER is an EU fund subject to equalities legislation and best practice. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** - None
10. **Risk** – acceptance of the role of accountable body requires Renfrewshire Council to also take responsibility for the correct delivery of the programme in line with LEADER guidance. All EU funds contain an element of risk through the audit process of elements of activity being rules ineligible for funding. However careful compliance with LEADER guidance will mitigate this risk.

11. **Privacy Impact** - none

List of Background Papers

- (a) “ Development of LEADER Programme 2014-20” Report to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board, November 2014.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Development and Housing for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Susan Boath, Assistant Manager (Funding and Development), ext 7729, susan.boath@renfrewshire.gov.uk

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