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**To:** Economy and Jobs Policy Board

**On:** 3 February 2016

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**Report by:** Director of Development and Housing Services

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**Heading:** LEADER Programme 2014-2020 – Offer of Grant

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**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 Formal approval of the Renfrewshire LEADER Programme was received in December 2015 and an offer of grant of £2,324,196 was subsequently made by the Scottish Government.
  - 1.3 Renfrewshire Council has accepted the role of accountable body and returned the Service Level Agreement paperwork to Scottish Government. The SLA was signed off by the Minister on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2015.
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**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Note the formal approval and Scottish Government offer of grant for Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Local Action Group (LAG).
  - 2.2. Agree that further reports will be brought forward to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board to update on progress
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**3. Background**

- 3.1. Renfrewshire Council is leading the delivery of the LEADER 2014-2020 programme for the rural areas within Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde, acting on behalf of the Local Action Group (LAG).

The Renfrewshire LEADER programme for 2007-2013 supported a number of significant projects in Renfrewshire, for example:

#### The Restoration of Kilallan Kirk

Kilallan Kirk Preservation Trust aimed to arrest the continuing decline of this historic church and churchyard and in so doing to promote the geography and history of the Kirk to the public. They also wanted to educate the public about the Kirk and more importantly involve them in its preservation through a number of community activities.

Project Cost: £206,000, LEADER grant award: £53,000

#### The Bridge, Bridge of Weir

The Bridge community group wished to save a local facility and use the existing library building on Main Street as a community centre. The centre would also house the village Post Office. The group sought funding to renovate the building. The building is now fit for purpose and is used for a range of activities including the Post Office, a community hub, a mothers and toddlers group and a fair trade shop.

Project Cost: £60,360, LEADER grant award £50,000

- 3.2 The LAG submitted the final version of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) to Scottish Government. The Local Development Strategy was duly approved in December 2015, subject to ongoing review processes required of all LAGs and to minor revisions requested by Scottish Government.
- 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 to cover all staff and running costs.
- 3.4 Scottish Government has advised that the indicative allocation is now 'live' but is subject to minor change due to the December spending review and possible exchange rate variances.

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## **4. Timescales and Implementation**

- 4.1 The Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LEADER Programme is now live.
- 4.2 The LEADER staff team will support the LAG in launching the programme in February/March 2016 across the three local authority areas. The LAG has formed a sub group to work on the launch. A series of follow up events across the LAG area will promote the fund in rural communities and encourage those interested in applying to come forward for support in developing their applications.

- 4.3 It is envisaged that the Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LAG's LEADER Programme will be open for applications in April 2016. However we are still awaiting guidelines for the LEADER programme from Scottish Government.
  - 4.4 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 of the Programme. Recruitment for these posts will begin in January 2016.
  - 4.5 Further reports will be brought forward to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board to update on progress.
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### 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. 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** – Renfrewshire Council is the accountable body for the delivery of the LEADER 2014-2020 Programme. The council consulted with the legal department on the features of the Service Level Agreement before committing to this role.
- 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, however careful compliance with LEADER guidance will mitigate this risk.

Prior to signing the service level agreement, the LEADER staff team met with the Risk Manager and further measures will be put in place to manage the risk related to the delivery of the Programme.

11. **Privacy Impact** – None.

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### **List of Background Papers**

- (a) “LEADER Programme 2014-20 – Update” Report to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board, November 2015.

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](mailto:susan.boath@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

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