

**North York Moors, Coast & Hills LEADER Programme
Executive Group Meeting
NPA Offices, Helmsley, 10.00 – 12.00 pm
19 January 2016**

Notes of the meeting

Attending:

Name	Representing
Steve Arnold (Vice Chair)	Community and Voluntary Sector
Robin Asquith	Agriculture
Liz Barker	North Yorkshire County Council / York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership
Malcom Bowes (Chair)	Community and Voluntary Sector
Nick Cooke	Forestry
Jane Cranston	Hambleton District Council
Liz Dowson	Scarborough Borough Council
Helen Gundry	Community and Voluntary Sector
Chris James	Rural Action Yorkshire
Anna Lupton	Tourism and the Visitor Economy
Helen Patchett (non-voting)	North Yorkshire County Council – Accountable Body
David Renwick	North York Moors National Park Authority
Lydia Scarth	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Abigail Stokell -Beckett	Micro and Small Businesses
Amy Thomas (non-voting)	LEADER Co-ordinator / Programme Manager
Howard Wallis	Ryedale District Council
Will Watts	Tourism and the Visitor Economy

Apologies:

Name	Representing
Sarah Brackenborough	Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership
Tony Gatehouse	Community and Voluntary Sector
Helen Kemp	Hambleton District Council
Rita Lawson	Tees Valley Rural Community Council
Will Terry	Agriculture

(1) Welcome and apologies

MB welcomed the Group. Apologies had been received as listed above.

(2) Minutes from the last meeting of 27 October 2015

The minutes of 27 October 2015 were agreed as accurate.

(3) Matters arising from the minutes of 27 October 2015

HP clarified that self-employment, initiated through a LEADER project, could be counted as a job created.

The discussion on the Call for Project was an agenda item.

With regard to the possibility of alternative venues for Executive Group meetings, AET reported that this would be looked into for later in the year, for maybe alternate meetings to be in Helmsley and elsewhere. It was noted that there was a very limited budget for hire of rooms.

(4) Programme Update

HP presented the report that had been circulated, which outlined the current position.

Regarding the signing of the contract with the RPA, this had not moved forward from the last meeting. There was a discussion as to whether a Call for Projects should be issued 'at risk' if the contract still hadn't been signed by the end of January. The preference was for contracts to be complete before Calls were issued.

It was agreed that the Delivery Plan for 2016-17 (due for submission by 15th April 2016) would re-distribute a third of each priority's budget into 2017-18, based on the delay in programme start. It was noted that, should the programme manage to spend more than this revised lower budget, it will be able to draw down funds from future years. However, any failure to spend a budget will result in that budget being lost to the programme.

Action: HP

(5) Executive Group discussion – 2016 Call for Projects

AET introduced this paper. She outlined current level of interest (from no publicity) and explained how output targets for next year would be reduced pro-rata as budgets were reduced by one third.

Application Process

The first issue for discussion was that of Outline Application Appraisals, which the Group had previously agreed as necessary under certain conditions (maximum budget and percentage of total budget for the year). It was agreed that the Outline Application Appraisal stage would be deleted, and all Outline Applications that were deemed 'eligible and complete' would be invited to proceed to Full Application. It was acknowledged that this could be introduced again via an annual Delivery Plan should the Executive Group feel the need for this. In light of this, recommendations (a) and (b) of this section of the report were no longer relevant.

Capital and Revenue Expenditure

The Group agreed with the recommendations:

- a) To include a reference to the availability of revenue funds in each Call for Projects but state it will be considered on a case-by-case basis and that it must offer significant longer term value to the Programme.
- b) To allow for the claiming of salary and on-costs only. All other costs including overhead should be ineligible.

Timescales

It was agreed to have two windows of opportunity to apply (5th April 2016 and 7th June 2016 deadlines for Outline Applications) for all four priorities, with applications during the second window being at risk.

Farm Productivity

There was an acceptance that small projects under this priority in particular may help productivity but will not create jobs. This must be observed after the first year.

The following recommendations were agreed:

- a) Due to the level of interest so far it would be sensible to continue with the original decision of the Executive Group to operate an open call under this priority in 2016. Applications from groups or clusters of farms should continue to be encouraged with individual applications being acceptable. In order to add value to the LEADER investment and ensure it makes a significant impact, applicants should be able to demonstrate that the application can be linked to a wider plan for the holding such as a business plan, whole farm plan or similar.
- b) To reduce the minimum grant under this priority only to £2,500. At a 40% intervention rate this would mean a total project cost of just over £6,000.
- c) Applications for activity which is more innovative in its approach and sees applicants 'trying something new' should continue to be encouraged.
- d) The opportunity to support some limited revenue funding should also be explicitly mentioned within this call to allow us the opportunity to support some of the activity identified in the LDS under the Farmer Information Exchange if this were to come forwards as an application. This type of project for example would be able to give support to a number of farms in the area to develop farm business plans or support co-operative approaches which benefit both the farm business and the environment and which would then subsequently assist them in making individual applications to the Programme in future years.

Micro & Small Business and Farm Diversification

The following was agreed:

- a) It was agreed that there was a need to remain flexible and see what applications were received, without allocating specific budgets.

- b) As a general rule, all applicants should be required to create new employment opportunities as a result of the LEADER intervention but applications offering other significant wider benefits to the local economy and / or a large number of local businesses will also be considered.
- c) Following on from the LDS ambition to encourage more collaborative activity within the Programme, priority should be given to applications for collaborative activities. This preference would be emphasised in the call, but all businesses would be eligible to apply for the intervention rate of 40%.
- d) To apply the same principles with regards to applications around accommodation as per the Rural Tourism priority (see below).

It was queried whether personal services were eligible as they appeared on the list of potential applicants but had not previously been eligible for European funding. AET confirmed that they weren't listed as ineligible in the LEADER Applicant Handbook, but undertook to check this point with RPA.

Action: AET / HP

It was also requested that AET get a 'feel' from potential applicants as to whether £11k was too large a project size, i.e. whether the minimum grant should be reduced at a later date, along the lines of Farm Productivity.

Rural Tourism

The following was agreed:

- a) contributions towards the cost of upgrading existing or solely creating new accommodation of any kind should be ineligible unless the project was to 'extend the offer', such as to make dog-friendly or bike-friendly. Standard upgrades will not normally be supported. The only exception to this should be where an applicant is seeking to deliver a new service, facility, product, amenity or experience for visitors and a small element of accommodation is required in order to achieve the project as a whole. For example new tree top shelters which are necessary for a new nature tourism or dark skies experience.
- b) That the priority for all applications needs to be job creation, but those applications which may be able to offer significant wider benefits can also be considered. The Call for Projects should specifically refer to the value we would place on businesses working collaboratively to build good relationships within both the private and public sectors to share and promote some of the fantastic opportunities in the area.
- c) That those applications linked to tourism activities, services, facilities or amenities which are based on or linked to improving the visitor offer / experience in terms of Outdoor Activities and Heritage, and local food, will be strongest and most desirable. This will help to ensure we receive applications which deliver activity identified in the LDS and whilst still allowing a

wide range of different applications to apply, it should also help us manage the potential volume we could receive with an open door policy.

With regard to recommendation (c), HP emphasised that this must be clear in the Call, as there will be no other opportunities in the scoring to make these applications 'strongest and most desirable'.

Forestry Productivity

It was agreed to maintain the 'open door' policy as originally agreed by the Executive Group under this priority for 2016 and continue to encourage applications from cluster groups or partnerships but as per the LDS, individual applications will also be considered.

AET would amend the Calls for Projects on the basis of the above discussions.

Action: AET

(6) Communication, Promotion and Publicity

AET reported that the Calls for Projects would be accompanied by press releases and information on the website.

There would be a LAG event at the end of February, whereby Executive Group members could assist AET by chatting to potential applicants about eligibility and appropriateness. The Support Group could assist AET with the launch event.

Action: AET

All applicants must discuss with AET before completing an application form, to avoid unnecessary work.

(7) Dates of 2016 Executive Group meetings

The following meeting was set for 5th April, although this may be cancelled if not enough issues to warrant travel. There would be no decisions to be made on applications at this stage.

The following meeting would be 27th April, which would be a Joint Training event with the Executive Group of the Yorkshire Dales LEADER programme. This would take place in Northallerton.

(8) Any other business

It was requested that the Conflict of Interest Policy be attached to the next set of papers, as a reminder to all. Once the Group starts to consider projects, Declarations of Interest will form a standard agenda item.

Action: HP

(9) Date and time of next meeting

5th April 2016, 10 am Helmsley – possibility that this may be unnecessary

27th April 2016, 10.30 am, Northallerton – Joint Training session with the Yorkshire Dales Executive Group.

Summary of Action Points

	Action	To be completed by
1	Submit 2016-17 Delivery Plan to RPA by 15 th April 2016, showing budgets for 2016-17 reduced by one third.	HP
2	Check whether personal services are eligible	HP / AET
3	Amend the Calls for Projects to reflect the discussion	AET
4	Arrange the LAG event for end of February	AET
5	Attach Conflict of Interest Policy as reminder to next set of papers	HP

*Helen Patchett,
NYCC, 2/2/2016*