



Heart of Wessex Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday 25th January 2017

Minutes

SSDC Offices, Churchfields, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 9AG

Present: Lizzy Ralph (LR), Michael Mounde (MM), Sue Place (SP), Susan Jonas (SJ), Bridget Wayman (BW), Tim Carroll (TC), Helen Rutter (HR) (Advisor), Naomi Kimber (NK), Mike Lewis (ML) and Andrea Witcombe (AW)

In attendance: Ali Morgan (AM) – Wiltshire Council, Sarah Dyke (SD) – Programme Manager and Emma Curtis (EC) – Programme Officer

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** MM welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that due to recent poor health, Lizzy Ralph had agreed to Chair the meeting on his behalf. LR commenced chairing the meeting and asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

1a) Apologies: Received from Jean Boulton (JB), Anne Carney (AC), Jeremy Gaunt (JG), Jenny Pitcher (JP), Peter Wheelhouse (PW), Martin Woods (MW) and Simon Cullum (SC)

1b) Declarations of Interest: None received

1c) Minutes of previous meeting held on 16th November 2016: Approved and signed as an accurate record of the meeting

1d) Matters Arising: None

2. Project Applications

a) Yarcombe Woodland Products Ltd – 21st Century Manufacturing (Project ref: 104417) – Confirmation of Out of Committee Agreement

LR confirmed that after additional information had been received from the applicant showing value for money and extra marketing information provided the RPA had passed the QC allowing an out of committee approval to take place as agreed at the meeting held on 16th November 2016. Out of committee approval was granted. SD confirmed that the Grant Funding Agreement had been drafted and was awaiting signature. LR commented that she felt the round robin of emails to seek out of committee approval had worked well and asked for other comments. AM commented that in order to ensure good practise and governance it may be an idea to circulate any questions raised by other committee members for all to see. BW commented that it would not be good to see how others have voted as this may influence decisions. SJ stated that as the application would have been discussed in-depth at a meeting, that further discussion, providing the conditions had been met, should not be needed. SD said that out of committee approval would only occur if it had been agreed in principle at a meeting ensuring community led decision making and that a summary of those voting would be prepared and circulated after the decision making process. The process of out of committee approval was discussed in depth with various options considered. MM felt that the out of committee approval had worked well and practically and suggested that the process be decided, if

necessary, on each and every appropriate application. All agreed that the process had worked well this time and the process could be used again in future on a case by case basis.

- 3. Managing Agent Update:** MM commented that he was very appreciative and thankful for all that Wincanton Community Venture had done as Managing Agent throughout a difficult year. MM praised and thanked WCV for taking on the role of Managing Agent and for aiding a smooth transition to Wiltshire Council, whom MM also thanked. LR seconded MM's comments. TC explained the reasons behind WCV's decision to terminate being Managing Agent confirming that the arrangement would cease on 31st January 2017 when the HoW team would retain their office at The Balsam Centre and WCV would become landlords. TC commented the transition from WCV to WC had been seamless with minimal disruption and thanked WC for this. SD stated that as WCV is a core member of the LAG it will continue to have an automatic post on the Executive Committee.
- 4. Update from the Accountable Body:** AM referred all to the report she had distributed prior to the meeting (Appendix A). AM commented that due to delays caused by Brexit, LAG's nationally were behind on progress but that all WC LAG's were doing well. AM commented that it was good to see the HoW enquiries increasing since the Chancellors statement which had given increased confidence in the programme. AM praised the recent press release from the HoW. AM informed the meeting that the new Wiltshire Council website was now live and that it had a good page on business advice which was easily found from the homepage. AM confirmed that the Rural Growth Programme was being launching imminently and that there would be a launch event on 8th February 2017. She gave information on the funding amounts, intervention rates and calls for activity. SD and AM agreed that there would be some overlapping of programmes and applicants would need to be signposted to the correct pot of money. SD confirmed that the RGP applications would only be eligible when there was a live call.
- 5. Programme Update:** SD summarised the report she had distributed prior to the meeting (Appendix B). Main items discussed were the impending purdah periods during the Somerset County Council elections in spring 2017. SD confirmed that the RPA were putting together a lot of new guidance and processes with the Outline Application being changed to an Expression of Interest. The RPA will be providing training on the new processes. SD stated that the LAG was still waiting for the new Applicant Handbook to be signed off and that new Delivery Plans were not required yet as the RPA had not yet confirmed what changes would be made, most LAG's were still working on their 2015 Delivery Plans and had been told from the RPA the main objective was to focus on investing in projects. No questions were asked.
- 6. Programme Running Costs & Animation (RCA):** LR referred everyone to the document distributed prior to the meeting (Appendix C). MM commented that he had surmised the current RCA spend was underspent by about £14,000 and that the exact % of RCA, (RCA should not be more than 18% of total programme allocation), would not be known until the end of the programme, until project spend had been completed. SD stated that the RPA appreciated that RCA appeared higher, as project spend, due to last year's restrictions, is lower than originally profiled. AM commented that the HoW were currently on 57% RCA and that PA were on 100% as they are yet to invest money. SD commented that it was important to note that the delivery of the HoW programme was due to close a year earlier than other LAGs AM replied that this did mean there was an increased risk as the HoW is a shorter programme to which SD responded that it was no longer relevant as all LAGs would now be running a shorter programme due to Brexit.
- 7. Project Enquiries:** SD distributed an updated report dated 25th January 2017 (Appendix D). She confirmed that the LAG Executive could be looking at a number of projects at the March meeting. SD stated that enquiries were now moving swiftly and the pipeline changing daily. LR questioned whether the LAG needed to focus on local priorities to which SD confirmed the RPA had said to focus on investing in projects but to monitor spending and flag up any overspend on individual priorities.
- 8. Items requested by members:** None
- 9. Any Other Business:** MM informed everyone that the funeral of the late John Holman would be taking place on Wednesday 1st February at Salisbury Crematorium. MM stated that John had been

a tremendous support to the LAG and would be sorely missed and that he felt it apt that the HoW new office was previously his.

10. Date of the next meeting: Was confirmed as Wednesday 23rd March 2017. The meeting closed at 7.20pm. MM thanked LR for chairing the meeting. LR thanked SSDC for the use of the meeting room. MM thanked SD and EC for their continued hard work.

Approved as a correct record:

Signed:

Date:

LAG Executive Chairman



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