



**Heart of Wessex Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday 25th May 2016**

Minutes

SSDC Offices, Churchfields, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 9AG

Present: Michael Mounde (MM) (Chairman), Simon Cullum (SC), Jeremy Gaunt.(JG), Naomi Kimber (NK), Sue Place (SP), Lizzy Ralph (LR), Helen Rutter (HR) (Advisor), Peter Wheelhouse (PW) (Advisor)

In attendance: Clare Langdon (CL) and Ali Morgan (AM) – Wiltshire Council, Emma Curtis (EC) – Programme Officer

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** MM welcomed everyone to the meeting, including for the first time Clare Langdon (CL) from Wiltshire Council. She noted that she is AM's colleague in the Economic Development Team. All introduced themselves.

1a. Apologies: Sarah Dyke-Bracher (SDB), Jenny Pitcher (JP), Dan Templar (DT), Bridget Wayman (BW), Susan Jonas (SJ)

1b. Declarations of Interest: None received.

1c. Minutes of 23rd March 2016 Executive Committee meeting:

MM noted that draft minutes needed to be circulated much earlier than has been the practise over recent years. It was agreed that the aim should be, under normal circumstances, to have the draft out for comment with 10 working days of the meeting.

All members were able to agree the minutes other than AM who did not have to hand the amendments she wished to be made. MM requested that amendments were raised within 48 hours after which out-of-committee clearance would be sought.

Jeremy Gaunt joined the meeting at this point.

1d. Matters Arising: Covered by and reported under agenda items concerned.

2. **Project Applications**

- 2a. Project. Little Jack Horners: We built this village on sausage rolls (Project ref: 10402)**

Introduction. MM commented that this was a reasonably straightforward first application. The Quality Check (QC) on the Appraisal had been completed and passed. He was sure that all had read the Full Application and its spreadsheets, and the Appraisal. The judgement was now that of the voting members of the Committee.

Discussion. The following points were made during discussion:

- **SC.** The business had been extremely patient with the process.
- **JG.** He knew the product and the applicant and didn't understand why the bank manager approached was not interested in helping the business despite proven demand from Waitrose.
- **MM.** It was probable that the business had spoken to more than one bank. Note that LEADER was a grant giver, not a last resort grant funder.
- **LR.** She had questioned the scale of the business at the LAG Forum. Although the business had generated much interest, it was not interested in becoming much larger. This may account for the bank manager's lack of interest. The applicant was first and foremost a baker and, with the level of funding requested and people involved, it was still valuable funding and essentially free money.
- **AM.** Noted that comments had been sent to SDB regarding eligibility concerns.
- **PW.** He felt the project scored well against the criteria.
- **HR.** She agreed PW's comment and thought that this was a good route for the business to stay in control while scaling up.

Decision. Voting members voted five in favour and one against the grant application, with the two standard conditions. MM signed the LEADER FA Appraisal Form 009 to confirm approval on behalf of the LAG.

At this point concern was raised about issuing contracts within purdah constraints and timescales. AM and SL stated that they could issue the contracts the following day (26th May) provided all information was passed to them that morning. This offer was much appreciated. [Afternote: this was achieved and contracts were issued on 26th May.]

2b. Project. East Knoyle Community Shop: Wren's Shop 10th Anniversary Refit (Project Ref: 102337)

Introduction. MM confirmed that this project had also passed the appraisal Quality Check and noted that the QC appraiser had worked hard to get the appraisal completed in time for this meeting.

Discussion. The following points were made during discussion:

- **SC.** He felt that the application and its figures were incredibly vague. He agreed with the appraiser that there were problems with it. He had not seen the accounts or profit margins. *[For future reference, this type of information is normally available to members through the Programme Manager.]* Towards the end of the discussion he noted that he had been swayed by everyone's positive comments and that he now felt he could support the application.
- **MM.** Those concerns might well have arisen because the appraiser and quality checker would not have seen the draft HoW LEADER Delivery Plan 2016/17 para 2.3 **Delivering the LDS**, where the RPA template makes clear "*that at least 70% of all projects must deliver direct economic growth, and the remaining 30% make a contribution to the rural economy*" which is where this application lay. Although the project would not contribute directly to a paid job it would help

enable local economic growth. He noted that the Programme Manager was required to visit the project during the programme period to ensure that it was being carried forward correctly.

- **NK.** She questioned the radius of the local economy affected. MM mentioned that local suppliers would have been looked at and the project clearly fits strategic objectives.
- **SP.** She felt the project provided good indirect benefits to local suppliers and the economy. The shop had a good track record of success and could become more successful. It was run as a charity by volunteers and volunteer's act as a catalyst for helping people get into paid work and were very valuable. Re a later discussion around conditions, she commented that the application showed a lot of knowledge and skills were available but the group must use them.
- **LR.** She commented that the application form shows that they are profitable.
- **NK** commented that although the project would be providing a tangible asset there was no direct job creation but felt there were wider community benefits which would be traceable.
- **LR** echoed SP's comments on the positivity and benefit of volunteer workers. Meeting the applicants at the LAG Forum, she felt they were a competent group.
- **JG** agreed with SC and his comments. But he would support the project as it would be good for the community and would have beneficial ripple effects.
- **AM** commented that no direct jobs would be created but more volunteers would be required and it would benefit the wider community. AM felt that the appraiser should have asked for further evidence. EC noted that the appraiser had asked for further evidence from the applicant, and that the appraisal had passed the QC. AM also felt that there was not much evidence regarding the match funding and asked whether the appraiser had asked for this information. EC produced the letter from the project file confirming the match funding. Later, AM mentioned that support and advice could be given on marketing and projections via the Growth Hub or Inspire mentoring
- **PW and HR** suggested that a condition could be made asking for evidence on growth impact and for an ongoing assessment of customers' origins and needs with a view to a wider market. **LR** felt that the applicant had a lack of marketing expertise and that this was because it was run by volunteers trying to make a positive impact on the local community. She agreed that marketing and customer assessments could be a condition. **PW** questioned if the private investor (who had offered match funding if required) would work alongside the applicant and offer expertise. Perhaps a condition could be that the applicant receives guidance on marketing on the basis that they carry out market research.

Decision. Voting members voted six in favour of the grant application; there were no abstentions or refusals. MM signed the LEADER FA Appraisal Form 009 to confirm approval on behalf of the LAG, with the two standard conditions. A further condition relating to full planning permission and tree protection plan was added.

3. **Update from RPA/DEFRA:** MM noted that no report had been received. SDB and he had attended a meeting in Okehampton with LAG Chairmen and Programme Managers

from Cornwall, Devon and Somerset to discuss the difficult running of the programme. A letter was being prepared to be sent to DEFRA on behalf of all LAGs present at the meeting to be signed by all the Chairmen of all LAGs attending detailing the difficulties and frustrations being felt. MM confirmed he would share the letter once it had been finalised.

4. **Update from the Accountable Body:** AM reported that she had completed the review of LAG Delivery Plans and had submitted the Attestation Report on 29th April 2016 to DEFRA. There was concern about the HoW Delivery Plan. AM noted that a meeting had taken place on 18 May with the LAG [MM] and Managing Agent [SP] to raise those concerns; a list of 'actions required' would be sent to SP.
5. **Report on meeting of 18th May 2016 between LAG, Wincanton Community Venture and Wiltshire Council:** MM drew attention to the report for this item circulated on 20th May 2016. It is the aide memoire MM prepared for the meeting, with the Accountable Body's concerns given in its agenda set against the LAG's responses to them. AM commented that she was not aware of the report. After some discussion MM commented that his memory of the meeting differed markedly to AM's. He reiterated his request, strongly and repeatedly expressed at the 18 May meeting, that Wiltshire Council needed set out how they intend to achieve their responsibility "for delivering the programme on behalf of the LAG" to help avoid the many confusions all too evident at the moment. CL confirmed that a list of actions would be prepared and discussed in detail. MM requested that the report be noted, which it was.
6. **Programme Update:** In SDB's absence EC distributed her report - at Annex A. MM asked that members note particularly the section on Volunteer Appraisers. AM asked that the Purdah section be amended as shown as WC would try and get the contracts out prior to the deadline of 27th May 2016. CL requested a copy of the report be emailed over to her.
7. **Programme Running Cost & Animation (RCA):** The 3rd RCA claim for January to March 2016 had been submitted and receipt confirmed on 13 May. It also included the staff costs incurred by WCV (management, finance, HR) for the whole of 2015. AM confirmed that the first two claims have been paid and that the system appeared to be working well with only a slight discrepancy from all 4 LAGS.
8. **Project Enquiries:** No report received.
9. **Items requested by members:** None requested.
10. **Any Other Business:** None
11. **Date of the next meeting:** Tuesday 26th July 2016 at 6.30pm, Churchfields, Wincanton, BA9 9AG

The Chairman thanked all for attending and SSDC for the continued use of the meeting room and the excellent coffee. He closed the meeting at 19:50.

Approved as a correct record:

Signed:

Date:

LAG Executive Chairman



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