

A meeting of the LEADER Policy Group was held on 28th of August 2018, and the following are recommendations to Longford LCDC (LAG) for its meeting to be held on 4th September 2018.

1. Draft LEADER Procedures Manual & Appendices

The LEADER Policy Group recommends that the LAG approve the LEADER Procedures Manual and related appendices as circulated. In relation to amendments, it is recommended that any changes to the main body of the Manual (due to Circulars/amendments to operating rules National or EU legislation) can be brought to the LAG for approval as an insertion/amendment without having to bring the full manual for re-approval each time. The Procedures Manual will be subject to an Annual Review. In relation to changes to any Appendices, it is recommended that changes to these are made as required on an operational basis. These can be brought to the LAG periodically to note, however the Implementing Partner and the Financial Partner staff should keep each other informed of any changes as they occur. The Appendices will be included in the Annual Review of the Procedures Manual

The only exception to this is in relation to the Contract between the LAG and Promoter- any change to this document must be brought to the LAG for approval as required.

2. Removal of requirement to include certain indemnities in insurance policies for promoters

Section 14.1 of the Operating Rules states: “The applicant shall fully indemnify the Minister or any official of the Department in relation to any such damage, loss or injury howsoever occurring during the development works or other activities” a recent query to the Department by another LAG/IP confirms that Appendix 5 of the Standard Application Form and the promoter’s contract with the LAG covers indemnification of the Minister. There is no requirement to add this indemnification to their insurance policy.

As such, it is recommended that this clause be removed from the current contract issued by Longford LCDC, effective immediately. If approved the revised contract will come the LAG at its next meeting for noting, in line with the agreed arrangement for amending the LEADER Procures Manual/Appendices.

3. Evaluation Committee

It is recommended that the LAG agree that the LEADER Evaluation Committee meet on a bi-monthly basis going forward, as outlined in the original Terms of Reference for the Evaluation Committee. To date the Committee has been meeting as required to ensure all projects were processed as quickly as possible, however it would be beneficial for all parties if the Committee meet on a bi-monthly basis and consider a larger number of applications per sitting.

4. Confidentiality Policy

During the review of the Procedures Manual, it became apparent that the Confidentiality Policy that Evaluation Committee members sign should be extended to all LAG members as well as staff of the Financial Partner and Implementing Partner. It is recommended that the LAG request all current LAG members and staff sign the Confidentiality Policy as circulated. The Policy should be signed on appointment to the LAG/Evaluation Committee for members of those Committees and upon appointment for staff assigned to support LEADER going forward. A copy of the signed confidentiality policy for each members/staff members will be kept with their Declaration of Interest forms, held on file by the Chief Officer.

5. LEADER Monitoring/Evaluation Committee

Longford Local Development Strategy detailed the establishment of a monitoring committee whose purpose should be:

“To review annual progress in the implementation of the Longford Local Development Strategy and to make recommendations to the LCDC in relation to these reviews. These reviews will include measurement, monitoring and evaluation of the spend and impact against the LDS priorities, monitoring local trends and issues that may impact the aims and objectives of the LDS and ensure that the processes used in reviewing and monitoring the LDS are participative and inclusive of relevant stakeholders (members of the target groups of the RDP; relevant members/staff of the LAG, Implementing Partner and Financial Partner; and other agencies and organisations relevant to RDP in Co. Longford).”

It is recommended that this role is incorporated into remit of the LEADER Policy Group to reduce the number of subcommittees to be serviced. It is envisaged that work related to this will be mainly towards the end of the year- reviewing progress and preparing annual planning for next year.

6. Official Letter head paper for use in LEADER correspondence.

It is recommended that the LAG approve the draft LEADER Letterhead, as circulated, for use with ALL LEADER related correspondence going forward (From the LAG, Financial Partner and Implementing Partner) for consistency. The LAG should note that ‘Government of Ireland’ logo may also replace the Department of Agriculture & the Marine logo, as well as the Department of Rural & Community logo (query sent to DRCD- no response as yet). Should the Department advise that the ‘Government of Ireland’ logo only be used, the Dept of Agriculture and Marine logo will be removed accordingly.

7. Recommendation for Targeted Time Limited Call for Sports Organisations

In response to the number of applications received from sporting organisations to the Community Enhancement Programme 2018, it is recommended that the LAG approve a Targeted Time Limited Call for Sporting Organisations wishing to upgrade their facilities, so as to improve/increase participation number particularly from minority groups (e.g women & girls/disability). It was noted

that a number of clubs had applied for funding to improve their showers/washing/changing facilities for women.

It is not recommended that applications for such projects would be accepted on a rolling basis, or that the current policy not to fund pitches, floodlights and club houses is changed, but the LAG could consider to support innovative initiatives from sports clubs to increase participation numbers via a targeted call. This call would have to be carefully managed and the LAG would need to detail specifically ***what is eligible*** under this call so as not to raise expectations.

Full details including the maximum budget available, maximum grant per application available and timelines still need to be fully ironed out, however the LAG is being asked to approve in principle this call to run late 2018/early 2019, with the full details to come to the next LAG meeting for approval.

Michael Nevin

Chair of LEADER Policy Group

30th August 2018