



<p style="text-align: center;">Cheshire LEADER East Cheshire Local Action Group Meeting 16 November 2015 Wyvern House, Winsford</p> <p>Present Sharon Angus-Crawshaw (Cheshire East Council) Cllr. Rachel Bailey (Cheshire East Council) Sean Bell (LEADER Support Officer) Rachel Bolton (Cheshire East Council) Joanna Douglass (LEADER Programme Manager - West) Martin Varley (Cheshire Wildlife Trust) Cllr. Sam Gardner (Cheshire East Council) Mike Gorton (National Farmers Union) John Heselwood (Cheshire Community Action) Andrew Jackson (Gate Farm Enterprises) Janet Maughan (Overwater Marina) Ellie Morris (Accountable Body) Robert Parton (Aqueduct Marina) Philip Posnett (Haughton Hall) Lucy Rogers (Canal and River Trust) Rebecca Wainwright (Marketing Cheshire) Mandy Sibthorpe (LEADER Programme Manager - East) Steve Wilkinson (Farmer) Sheila Woolstencroft (Cheshire East Council) Stuart Yarwood (ChALC) Craig Bradley (RPA)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Initials</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SAC CRB SB RB JD MV SG MG JH AJ JM EM RP PP LR RW MS SW ShW SY CB</p>
<p>1. Welcome</p> <p>1.1 Apologies SB stated that apologies have been received from Brendan Flanagan, Jake Thompson and Tony Rimmer.</p> <p>1.2 Reorganisation CRB introduced new LAG members in attendance (SY, MG, SG), who will represent Cheshire East Council, NFU and ChALC on the LAG.</p> <p>1.3 LAG Membership Nomination The Cheshire LEADER team have produced a LAG Membership Nomination Form to be used in future whenever someone wishes to join the LAG.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Actions</p>
<p>2. Conflicts of interest</p> <p>2.1 Declarations of Conflict There were no conflicts of interest declared.</p>	

<p>2.2 Register of Interests CRB asked MS if any LAG members were yet to contribute to the Register of Interest; MG, SG, AJ and RW are still outstanding and will be chased.</p>	<p>SB</p>
<p>3. Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>3.1 Approval CRB mentioned that Tony Rimmer was noted as a new LAG member in the minutes, when in fact he was an existing member. No other amendments were raised.</p> <p>3.2 Matters arising None raised.</p>	
<p>4. LEADER Update</p> <p>4.1 LAG Partnership Agreement JD explained that the Agreement has had some minor amendments since the previous meeting, particularly related to quorum as CB suggested that the previous goal of 51% representation from the private sector was unrealistic.</p> <p>The Agreement will be circulated as soon as it is finalised and each LAG Member will be required to sign it in order to have decision-making powers within the LAG.</p> <p>4.2 Offer Contract MS explained that the funding agreement between the Accountable Body and RPA has now been signed and the Cheshire LEADER Programme can begin to accept Outline Applications. There are still a small number of issues to address but the Cheshire LEADER Programme will be officially open for business from Monday 23 November, and a press release has been drafted. The only outstanding issue is some of the wording in the Partnership Agreement between Cheshire West & Chester Council and Cheshire East Council, which is currently being resolved by their respective legal teams.</p> <p>4.3 Operations Manual MS stated that the Cheshire LEADER team have now received all necessary parts of the Operations Manual from the RPA; CB confirmed that all documents aside from the Funding Agreement and Running Costs & Animation (RCA) claim forms are now available, which is enough for the LEADER team to open for business.</p> <p>4.4 Applicant Handbook MS confirmed that the entire LAG received copies of the Applicant Handbook as well as the Outline Application guidance, and thanked those who made suggestions or comments.</p> <p>RP asked for confirmation that applicants need to supply three quotes for a £500 purchase. CB explained that there is some flexibility if reasons can be provided as to why the applicant cannot supply three quotes. CB stressed the importance of quotes, as they ensure good value for money and assist with preventing fraud or collusion. Furthermore, purchases of less than £500 only require 2 quotations or catalogue listings.</p>	<p>SB, MS</p>

RP queried LEADER’s inability to fund in-progress projects. CB explained that the EU stance is that if the applicant can afford to go ahead with a project before the grant has been committed, then it suggests the grant is unnecessary. As long as applicants are aware of the timescale involved then the choice to apply or not is there, and LEADER is a valuable programme despite the potential delays involved, as the LEADER Programme Managers are able to work with applicants on these matters, and such support is simply not available on national schemes.

5. Deputy Chair

CRB thanked LAG Members for their patience during the delay of the LEADER launch. It was felt that as the LAG Chair represented the public sector, it would be appropriate for the Deputy Chair to represent the private sector.

MS explained the duties of Deputy Chair; standing in for the Chair when the Chair is unavailable, ensuring meetings are run on a fair and equitable basis and that all meetings are inclusive. SAC felt that the Deputy Chair should also act as the Chair of the Executive Board.

CRB felt it would be inappropriate for the Chair to sit on the Executive Board, SAC agreed as the LAG may challenge decisions made by the Executive Board and the Chair can act as an investigator if necessary.

JM advised that she would be prepared to stand as Deputy Chair, but felt that undertaking the role of Executive Board Chair would be too time consuming.

CRB asked if all are in agreement with JM taking the role of Deputy Chair, no objections are raised. JM officially named Deputy Chair of the Cheshire East LEADER LAG.

6. Executive Board

CRB reiterated that she should not serve on the Executive Board. CRB asked LAG Members if they felt that the Executive Board should consist of all remaining LAG members, or a proportion of them.

SW suggested a smaller number, around seven members, as the LAG would oversee the Executive Board, but perhaps with named substitutes if necessary. JM agreed that a sharper focus is needed from the Executive Board, SG agreed that seven or eight members should be sufficient. CB added that the Executive Board must not have a public sector bias. AJ asked how many Executive Board meetings are likely to occur per year, MS advised three to four per year in addition to LAG meetings. EM added that MS and JD will work closely with the Executive Board.

SY asked for a clearer steer on what was expected of the Executive Board, CRB stated that she wants a cross-section of the expertise offered by the LAG. JD advised that the Executive Board cannot be public-led, and expertise across all priorities is required.

SB suggested that the LAG go through each LEADER funding priority and ask for a show of hands from LAG members who could represent that priority and would like to be part of the Executive Board; with six themes, one representative per theme should be enough.

LR and AJ both advised that they would struggle to undertake Executive Board duties due to time commitments.

SY suggested that five members should be confirmed during the current meeting with the possibility to add more later; RP suggested member expertise can be utilised depending on the applications that come forward.

The Board concurred with this and SY nominated SW for Executive Board Chair, JM seconded. It was agreed that SW would Chair the Executive Board.

The following members were then elected to the Executive Board:

- RW representing Support for Rural Tourism priority with RP as second.
- MG representing the Farming Productivity priority.
- JT (not present) representing the Forestry Productivity priority.
- JH representing Rural Services, with SG as second.
- JM representing Farming Diversification & SMEs, with PP and AJ as seconds.

PP was elected as Vice Chair of the Executive Board.

7. Alignment With Other Funding Streams

CB gave a presentation on the other RDPE funding streams available.

MS asked how many applications have been received for the Growth Programme, CB confirmed three at the time of the meeting, but added that most applications tend to come in closer to the deadline. It is also difficult to say as there is little communication from applicants prior to application, hence the need for locally-delivered programmes like LEADER.

RB added that information on funding streams is available on the Cheshire East website.

RB queried maximum grant rates from various funding streams and CB explained as a rule LEADER is governed by de minimis funding which is capped at €200,000 over a rolling three-year period.

8. Communications Update

8.1 Ploughing Match

MS gave an update on the Cheshire LEADER team's attendance at this year's Cheshire Ploughing Match; potential applicants were invited to meet with MS and JD; both were fully booked, with additional enquiries being picked up throughout the day.

CRB asked about LEADER promotion in the following year, MS explained that a LEADER Communications Plan has been produced and will be distributed among the LAG members for their comments. MS and JD have also presented at the local CLA board meeting and will look at continuing to present at similar events to key target groups. JD added that she and MS will also present at the upcoming Forestry Application Masterclass.

8.2 Fact sheet

The Cheshire LEADER team have produced a Fact Sheet containing as much information about the programme as they could fit onto a sheet of A4; this fact sheet has since been adopted by various other LAGs.



<p>8.3 Agents Forum The Cheshire LEADER team are looking to organise an Agents Forum to ensure agents and business consultants in the area are up to speed on LEADER; this will likely be held in January either at Reaseheath College or Tatton Park, and further details will be released in due course.</p>	<p>MS, JD, SB</p>
<p>9. Dates of Future Meetings MS confirmed to the LAG that all upcoming meetings will be at 2:30pm, and that the first Executive Board meeting will be held in Sandbach.</p> <p>MG asked if the times/lengths of meetings will need to be flexible due to the number of applications received. MS and CRB agreed.</p> <p>RP mentioned the gap in the Executive Board meetings from May to November, MS explained that August was missed out due to the likelihood that LAG members would be on holiday during the summer months, but she will revisit this and come up with a new Executive Board meeting schedule.</p>	<p>MS, SB</p>
<p>10. AOB No other business was raised.</p>	