

ANGUS COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2015

ANGUS LEADER PROGRAMME – UPDATE AND SLA 2014-2020

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This report updates the Committee on the process for bidding for European LEADER Funds and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) funding to support rural development activities and fishing communities in decline in the period to 2014 - 2020. The Committee is asked to note the approval in principle of the Angus Local Development Strategy and Business Plan. The Report also seeks approval for the Council as Lead Partner on behalf of partners (the Local Action Group and Fisheries Local Action Group) to sign the Scottish Government Service Level Agreement to deliver the Programme and accept the associated risks.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) notes the approval in principle of the Angus Local Development Strategy and Business Plan submitted in February 2015 and attached as **APPENDIX 1 and 2**.
- ii) agree that Angus Council signs the Scottish Government Service Level Agreement and accepts the risk involved in its role as Lead Partner for the Programme on behalf of partners (the Local Action Group and Fisheries Local Action Group) as outlined in the LDS and Business Plan.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- We have a sustainable economy with good employment opportunities: LEADER and Fisheries projects enable employment opportunities and support new development projects.
- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit: Through LEADER there have been regeneration projects and those supporting tourism.
- Our communities are safe, secure and vibrant: LEADER Programme is shaped by the community and is designed to empower local development.
- Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services: additional services have been provided within rural communities through LEADER funding.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The LEADER rural development programme will operate on a 7 year cycle covering 2014 - 2020.

3.2 Angus Council will be the Lead Partner for the Angus LEADER and EMFF Programmes on behalf of partners and LEADER funding will be delivered through a Local Action Group (LAG) and EMFF funding through a Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG).

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Scottish Programmes have been developed within the European framework of regulations on the Structural Funds, namely the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).
- 4.2 Angus Local Development Strategy and Business Plan
The Local Development Strategy (LDS) and Business Plan were submitted to Scottish Government in September 2014. This was approved in December 2014 subject to final amendments and allocation of budget.
- 4.3 The timescale for starting the Programme is March/April 2015 given that staff will have to be recruited and discussions are still taking place based on the draft Service Level Agreement with Scottish Government.
- 4.4. As in the previous Rural Tayside LEADER and Angus EFF Axis 4 Programmes, a Lead Partner is required who can assume legal and financial responsibility for the delivery of the Programmes and employ staff. Angus Council will continue in this role as before given their ability and experience A Service Level Agreement with Scottish Government is currently under discussion but responsibilities are expected to include:-
- Financial responsibility for payment of project claims
 - Responsibility of ensuring eligible projects are funded
 - Monitoring and managing the programme budget
 - Reporting as required to Scottish Government
 - Annual accreditation checks, SLA audit and internal audit reporting
- 4.5 Subject to agreement with Scottish Government it is proposed that Angus Council sign the SLA and assume the responsibility and associated risks for delivering the Programme

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The allocations of LEADER and EMFF funding is scheduled to be announced early 2015.
- 5.2 At this stage, the financial implications for Angus Council to support administration of the LAG are unknown but the full costs of administration are met from the LEADER and EMFF budgets. There are significant financial responsibilities included within the SLA which will be reported in April 2015.

**RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

NOTE: The following background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 Leader Local Development Strategy
Appendix 2 Leader Development Strategy Business Plan