

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 30 AUGUST 2022

RURAL COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING 2022/23

JOINT REPORT BY

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ABSTRACT

This report asks members to note a successful bid to the Scottish Government Rural Communities Test of Change Fund by Angus Council on behalf of an Interim Rural Steering Group (Report Ref: 267/21) which is currently in the process of applying to Office of the Scottish Charity Register (OSCR) to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

Scottish Government have allocated funding to all eligible rural areas. Angus (known as the Angus Local Action Group area) has been allocated an indicative programme budget of £288,469 from the Scottish Government Rural Community Led Local Development Funding Programme 2022/23. A new group, currently called the Interim Rural Steering Group, is currently being formally established to administer the funds in Angus and run the Programme. This role is known as the Accountable Body. Until the new organisation is granted charitable status, it is not a legal entity and as such, not able to act as the Accountable Body.

The Interim Rural Steering Group has requested that Angus Council act as Accountable Body for the period of the fund to 31 March 2023 or until they are granted charitable status, whichever is sooner. Members are asked to approve Angus Council taking on this role on a temporary basis and delegate authority to Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform to accept the grant offer.

The structure of the new Angus Rural Partnership Board will allow for one permanent Angus Council representative and members are asked to agree that the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth represents Angus Council.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) note a successful bid to the Scottish Government Rural Communities Test of Change Fund by Angus Council on behalf of an Interim Rural Steering Group (Report Ref: 267/21)
- (ii) approves Angus Council acting as Accountable Body for the period of the fund until 31 March 2023 or until the Interim Rural Steering Group is formally established, whichever is sooner
- (iii) delegates authority to the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform to accept the grant offer.
- (iv) Approves the appointment of the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth to the Board of the Angus Rural Partnership

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COUNCIL AND ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan 2017-2030

- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit:
- Our communities are safe, secure, and vibrant:
- Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services.

And to the Angus Council Plan 2021-2024 priorities of

- Angus to be a go-to place for business
- To maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities
- Our communities to be strong, resilient, and led by citizens

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Angus Council has acted as Accountable Body for many European Funding Programmes over the years including Fisheries and LEADER Programmes. For each programme Angus Council has employed staff who oversaw the project development, finance, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes as well as audit compliance. Staff costs were met from an administration budget available as part of the programme fund allocation. In addition, input was provided in-kind from council services including finance, legal and democratic and internal audit. Funding decisions on projects were made by a cross sector partnership of private, public and third sector representatives known as the Local Action Group (LAG).
- 3.2 Angus Council acted as Accountable Body for the Angus LEADER Programme from 2014 until the Programme closed on 31 March 2021. Angus Council continues to undertake the Accountable Body duties overseeing final audit responsibilities.
- 3.3 During 2021/22 the Scottish Government confirmed £3m funding to support and deliver on Community Led Local Development (CLLD) in Scotland – Rural Communities Test of Change Fund. The funding was used to pilot new approaches to CLLD and to inform future funding.
- 3.4 The funding was delivered in two tranches. The first tranche of funding was made available to Local Action Groups (LAGs). This was to allow LAGs to build on the positive legacy of LEADER while using their experience to innovate and test change.
- 3.5 The Angus LEADER Programme had however closed as its allocation of funding had been spent. The LEADER staff were no longer in post and the Local Action Group had been disbanded.
- 3.6 Scottish Government were keen to ensure that Angus was not penalised for its success and were open to development of a new Interim Rural Steering Group. This is much like a Local Action Group in LEADER terms, a group of individuals from public, private and community organisations that operates on a local level to support a “bottom up” approach to local rural development. The Interim Rural Steering Group consists of former Angus Local Action Group members as well as new members who are working towards becoming a SCIO to support local rural development through project development and to complement other place-based approaches taking place throughout Angus.
- 3.7 As the Interim Rural Steering Group were not formally established bids for Tranche 1 (Stream 1 and 2) funding were submitted by Angus Council on behalf of them (Report 267/21 refers). The Rural Communities Test of Change Fund - Tranche 1 (Stream 1) bid was successful, and £35,000 awarded. Angus Council accepted the award on behalf of the Interim Rural Steering Group. The funding was used to provide the Interim Rural Steering Group with suitable resource to develop and deliver CLLD projects that would test change, inform future CLLD policy and potential schemes.
- 3.8 The Rural Communities Test of Change Fund – Tranche 1 (Stream 2) bid was also successful, and a further £50,000 was awarded. This funding is being used to explore new and innovative governance arrangements and for identification of local test of change projects.
- 3.10 Following a Public Scotland Quick Quote Process Five Glens Consultancy was appointed by Angus Council using the available funding to manage the development of the Interim Rural Steering Group and has to date:
- Explored the development of CLLD delivery models in Angus post LEADER funding, mainly identifying new and innovative governance arrangements, partnerships, and collaborative opportunities.

- Set up a working and steering group to recommend and agree delivery and governance proposals.
- With external legal advice fully explored the preferred legal structures for future CLLD delivery with the recommendation to the Interim Rural Steering Group to form a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)
- Investigated test of change projects to reshape the way Angus rural communities engage to become involved in service and project delivery.
- Considered and agreed to develop five Angus Local Community Action Plans that will identify community needs and aspirations of villages and rural settlements.

3.11 Angus Council have to date supported this work with officer time and input and as Accountable Body for the funding been responsible for the submission of claims and monitoring reports to Scottish Government.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 In April 2022, Scottish Government announced they were putting in place a new £116 million Rural Community Led Local Development fund for the financial year 22/23 through a refreshed network of Local Action Groups that will ensure that public, private and third sector organisations, including communities are able to work collectively in the development and implementation of local priorities, with a clear link to national outcomes. This is based on a robust evaluation process capturing learning from testing new approaches and the LEADER legacy.

4.2 The Rural Community Led Local Development Fund will be delivered in two tranches during 2022/23. Tranche 1 (£7.6 million) will be allocated to Local Action Groups (LAGs) based on the socio-economic profile of each area alongside population and size. The approach is like the methodology adopted for the 2014-20 LEADER Programme using the most up to date data, and LAGs will be responsible for project funding decisions.

4.3 A decision on Tranche 2 delivery mechanism is unknown at the time of this report.

4.4 As with previous LEADER programmes, this CLLD approach will make provision for a percentage allocation of Tranche 1 to be used for administration and animation (the promotion and development of projects).

4.5 The LAG in Angus is the Angus Interim Rural Steering Group who have fully explored its preferred legal status and a new organisation under the name of Angus Rural Partnership is currently being formed. A submission to OSCR for charitable status for the new organisation has been submitted. The Interim Rural Steering Group see themselves as an organisation at the forefront of Community Led Local Development in rural Angus and has indicated a willingness to be involved in the delivery of the Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23.

4.6 The Interim Rural Steering Group have prepared a Community Led Vision – a light touch document stating their wider ambitions, building on the evaluation of previous local development strategies and place plans which has been provisionally approved by Scottish Government.

4.7 The indicative Angus Rural Community Led Local Development funding allocation is £288,469.00 with an allocation of £57,142.86 for project development, promotion, and administration. The administration budget will be used to allow Five Glens Consultancy to continue to work on behalf of the Interim Rural Steering Group, including developing potential projects. Administration funding will also be used to cover the cost of Angus Council staff time to the project albeit this is not expected to be a significant cost. Any projects funded must contribute positively to local people and priorities and must demonstrate inclusion, equality, and diversity. Five Glens Consultancy and the Interim Rural Steering Group will be encouraged to work closely with Angus Council to ensure that any project development work complements other place-based approaches in Angus and to avoid duplication.

The Vibrant Communities Team will provide community development support and ensure alignment of the group's work and plans with wider place-based work.

- 4.8 As they are not yet formally established however they have asked Angus Council to continue as Accountable Body, accept the grant offer on their behalf and hold the funds until no later than 31 March 2023 or until they are formally established, whichever is sooner.

Angus Council's role should members agree that we continue as Accountable Body on an interim basis will be to process and pay monthly invoices from Five Glens Consultancy for delivery of the work, process any claims from projects should any be approved and submit financial claims and monitoring returns to Scottish Government; and sign the grant offer.

- 4.9 Given the previous experience of Angus Council as Accountable Body and understanding of the financial and monitoring requirements, the Scottish Government and the Interim Rural Steering Group are keen that Angus Council continues to act as Accountable Body for the Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 22/23 allocation while the group's charity status is confirmed by OSCR, and appropriate governance and structure are developed. A Memorandum of Agreement will be developed between both parties.
- 4.10 Once the new organisation (Angus Rural Partnership) becomes a legal entity, Angus Council will begin transferring activities associated with Accountable Body status to Angus Rural Partnership. It is expected that by no later than the end of the Programme (31 March 2023) Angus Rural Partnership will be able to be the Accountable Body organisation.
- 4.11 Should there be an ask of Angus Council to continue as Accountable Body beyond 31 March 2023 this will be the subject of a further committee report.
- 4.12 The structure of the Angus Rural Partnership Board will allow for one permanent Angus Council representative and members are asked to agree that the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth joins the Board representing Angus Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The anticipated grant to be received and administered is £288,469.00. Part of this funding will be used to cover the cost of Angus Council staff time to fulfil the Accountable Body role. This is not expected to be a significant cost but, in any event, will be met in full from the funding being provided by the Scottish Government.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached.

7. CONSULTATION

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Finance and Director of Sustainable Growth and Vibrant Communities have been consulted in the preparation of the report.

NOTE: No 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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Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

(To be completed with reference to Guidance Notes)

Step 1

Name of Proposal Rural Community Led Local Development

Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment No

(A) If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

(i) It does not impact on people No

(ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics
No

(iii) It is for information only No

(iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year No

(v) It is technical No

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

(B) If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following:

Is this a full Equality Impact Assessment Yes

Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment No

If you have answered Yes to either or both of the above, continue with Step 3.

If your proposal is a **strategy** please ensure you complete Step 13 which is the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

Step 3

(i) Lead Directorate/Service: Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Service Reform

(ii) Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? If so, please describe.

No, the proposal is to request that Angus Council continue to act as Approved Body on behalf of the Interim Rural Steering Group, while the organisation's Office of Scottish Charity Register (OSCR) application is approved, and all governance is in place.

(iii) What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

Following the closure of the 2014-2020 LEADER programme, £3.5m funding was confirmed in the Scottish Budget 2021 to test new ways to support and deliver on future community-led local

development (CLLD) in Scotland. When announced, the Angus LEADER Local Action Group had disbanded, and Scottish Government did not want any former Local Action area to miss out on test of change funding.

An Interim Rural Steering Group was formed, and Angus Council successfully applied for Test of Change funding on their behalf, this included acting as accountable body, procurement of a contractor to support the group explore new ways of working and form a new organisation to deliver future CLLD activities in rural Angus. The Interim Rural Steering Group, to be known as “Angus Rural Partnership” are currently in the process of obtaining OSCR charity status and becoming a legal entity.

A further £11.6m has been confirmed to support CLLD in 2022/23, monies will be distributed to the former Local Action areas throughout Scotland to a new network of Local Action Groups. The Angus allocation amounts to £288,469.00 and the Interim Rural Steering Group, have submitted a business plan to Scottish Government for approval, once approved a letter of offer will be issued. The Interim Rural Steering Group are not able to accept the award at present as their governance structure is still being set up and therefore requests that Angus Council continues to act as Accountable body for the duration of the Community Led Local Development Programme, up to March 2023.

(iv) Is it a new proposal? Yes

OR

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? No

Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees	Yes
Job Applicants	No
Service users	No
Members of the public	Yes

Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

Internal data (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

Angus Council has acted as Accountable Body for many European and Scottish Government funding programmes and understands the financial and monitoring requirements. The Interim Rural Steering Group and Scottish Government Rural Communities Team are keen that Angus Council continues as Accountable Body until the Interim Rural Steering Group's charity status is confirmed and appropriate governance and structures in place. This will be no longer than March 2023.

Internal consultation (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

Angus Council staff have consulted with the Interim Rural Steering Group and Rural Communities Test of Change Team at Scottish Government

External data (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

Rural Communities Test of Change – monitoring and evaluation data from October 2021-March 2022 provides information on the Interim Rural Steering Group progress i.e., exploration of governance structures and new ways of developing Community Led Local Development in rural areas.

External consultation (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils).

The second stream of the Rural Communities Test of Change Funding (£50K) allocated to the Interim Rural Steering Group is being used for project development. Consultation has taken place with Angus Council Communities Teams and in rural communities to develop 5 Local Community Action Plans. These plans and consultation will help identify projects for this next tranche of funding.

Other (general information as appropriate).

Step 6: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? No

If yes, please state what they are, and what measures you will take to obtain the evidence you need.

Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups? Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.

Impact on all protected characteristics are unknown as yet, as projects have still to be identified, however, Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23 projects must demonstrate that they advance inclusion, equality and diversity, and support at least one of the Scottish Government's priorities which are:

- Rural Poverty – especially child and fuel poverty
- Young Person's Guarantee, Green Skills and Fair Work
- [Rural Movement](#) and Scottish Rural Parliament outcomes
- Covid recovery
- [Community wealth building](#)
- Local democracy and governance, community empowerment
- Wellbeing Economy
- Inclusive growth (includes Community-Led Tourism)
- Net Zero and Climate Emergency
- The [National Islands Plan](#)
- Rural Entrepreneurial activity
- Test how we use the reach of the LAG network to advance the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and Regional Land Use Partnership

All projects will be assessed, and recommendations made in line with these priorities for the benefit of all groups.

Age -Impact-Positive

Disability-Impact -Positive

Gender reassignment-Impact – unknown

Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23 projects must demonstrate that they advance inclusion, equality and diversity.

Marriage and Civil Partnership- Impact – unknown

Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23 projects must demonstrate that they advance inclusion, equality and diversity.

Pregnancy/Maternity- Impact – unknown

Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23 projects must demonstrate that they advance inclusion, equality and diversity.

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers) - Impact – unknown

Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23 projects must demonstrate that they advance inclusion, equality and diversity.

Religion or Belief - Impact – unknown

Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23 projects must demonstrate that they advance inclusion, equality and diversity.

Sex- Impact - unknown

Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23 projects must demonstrate that they advance inclusion, equality and diversity.

Sexual orientation – Impact -unknown

Rural Community Led Local Development Funding 2022/23 projects must demonstrate that they advance inclusion, equality and diversity.

Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?

Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.

Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics and advances equal opportunities.

Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?

Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

This step is only applicable to **strategies** which are key, high level decisions. If your proposal is **not** a strategy, please leave this Step blank, and go to Step 14.

Links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance.

Step 13(A) What evidence do you have about any socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome in relation to this strategic issue?

Step 13(B) Please state if there are any gaps in socio-economic evidence for this strategy and how you will take measures to gather the evidence you need.

Step 13(C) Are there any potential impacts this strategy may have specifically on the undernoted groupings? Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from Covid-19.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each grouping.

Low and/or No Wealth (e.g. those with enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future).

Impact

Material Deprivation (i.e. those unable to access basic goods and services e.g. repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies).

Impact

Area Deprivation (i.e. where people live (e.g. rural areas), or where they work (e.g. accessibility of transport)).

Impact

Socio-economic Background i.e. social class including parents' education, people's employment and income.

Impact

Other – please indicate

Step 13(D) Please state below if there are measures which could be taken to reduce socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome.

Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?

As projects develop the EIA will be reviewed to identify impacts.

Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?

The EIA will be published along with the Rural Community Led Local Development Committee report.

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Rhonda McFarlane

Reviewed by: Doreen Phillips

Approved by:

NB. There are several worked examples of separate EIA and FSD Assessments in the Guidance which may be of use to you.