

Consultation

The Orkney Islands Council (OIC) engaged consultants in January 2014 to assist with the preparation of a LDS and Business Plan to be used to bid for funding for the next LEADER 2014 – 2020 Programme.

An initial meeting was held with Alister Brown, LEADER Co-ordinator and Phyllis Harvey, Local Action Group (LAG) Chair to discuss the consultation process.

It was agreed the main elements of the consultation process would include;

- A workshop with the current LAG
- A community consultation to be undertaken by sending out questionnaires to community groups and businesses. Public workshops would also be held
- A stakeholder consultation of relevant organisations by undertaking face to face interviews as well as circulating a questionnaire

ABA attended a scheduled LAG meeting at the Pickaquoy Centre on Tuesday 28th January 2014. A presentation was given outlining the background to the LDS, proposed methods for community consultation and stakeholder engagement as well as the timescales for submission and decision making by the Scottish Government. Feedback was sought from LAG members following the presentation. During this meeting a draft questionnaire was presented and updated. The format and location for workshops was also discussed.

Community Consultation

Following on from the LAG meeting several lists of consultees were drawn up based on several categories including;

- Previous LEADER successful applicants
- Previous LEADER unsuccessful applicants
- Previous engagement with LEADER Co-ordinator not leading to application
- Orkney Communities Directory – community group contacts with current email address

These lists were discussed, refined and agreed upon. The final questionnaire was then emailed on Monday 17th February 2014 to the following:

- 112 LEADER contacts (successful, unsuccessful and previous engagement)
- 156 Orkney Communities Directory contacts
- Kirkwall Business Improvement District (BID) for circulation to members
- OREF for circulation to members
- 18 Orkney Food and Drink and Crafts members
- 3 members of the Orkney Food and Craft, Craft Sub-Committee for circulation to members

- The Strategy Manager of Corporate Services (Orkney Island's Council (OIC)) for circulation to Community Planning Partnership members
- The identified Orkney Fisheries contact for circulation to Orkney Fishermen's Society and Stromness Community Business Forum
- The Democratic Services Manager (OIC) for circulation to Orkney Community Councils and OIC Councillors

Additionally, 10 paper copies of the questionnaire were also sent to some Community Associations who had no registered email address. A follow-up reminder email was sent on Wednesday 26th February to those who had not yet returned the questionnaire to extend the deadline for returns to Monday 3rd March.

At the end of the consultation period 22 questionnaires had been returned via email and post.

Three public workshops were held in the evening in late February and held in Stromness, Kirkwall and St Margaret's Hope. The events were well publicised. Publicity of the questionnaire and public events took a number of formats. Press releases were issued and posted on OIC website and Orkney LEADER webpage. The LEADER Co-ordinator was interviewed by Radio Orkney. Workshops were also advertised in the local newspaper The Orcadian and on Radio Orkney as well as locally on noticeboards in the area.

The format for each workshop was similar. The consultants gave an introduction to the need for an LDS and the process of developing one, the LEADER Co-ordinator presented highlights of the Orkney LEADER 2007 – 2013 Programme. A previous applicant was invited to give a brief presentation on the LEADER Programme. After the presentations attendees were invited to participate and provide information on the following;

- A current SWOT analysis for Orkney as a whole
- Issues currently facing groups
- Priorities for the new Orkney LEADER 2014 – 2020 Programme
- Potential projects for the new Orkney LEADER 2014 – 2020 Programme

A copy of the workshop presentation is included in the Consultation Report in Appendix 2.

Although the workshops were well publicised numbers attending were quite low. However, those that did attend engaged fully and provided a lot of information on current issues and potential projects.

Stakeholder Consultation

During the consultation process a number of stakeholders were identified. Face to face meetings were arranged with as many of these as possible. It was also agreed to use wider groups and forums to circulate the questionnaire, to ensure that as many individuals, groups, businesses and organisations as possible were able to participate. A small number of interviews took place during the last week in January,

the remainder were undertaken at the end of February. Most of the interviews were undertaken face to face however two were undertaken via telephone conferencing. A total of 39 stakeholders from different organisations were consulted. For a full list of those consulted please see the consultation report contained in Appendix 2.

Consultation Outcomes, Issues and Priorities

A detailed SWOT analysis is contained in Section 3. It details the main responses from all those consulted and groups items into three categories; social, economic and environmental.

Issues

Respondents were asked to state the main current issues they were facing. The aim of this question was to ascertain the needs of the local area. The main issues currently facing respondents include;

Economic

- Long term funding and sustainability of organisations and groups
- Timescales whilst juggling different funders
- Securing match funding
- How to develop more renewables projects
- The need to consider community benefit as well as ensuring businesses remain viable
- Underemployment
- Availability of labour
- Access to finance and cashflow
- Succession planning
- Not enough support for training
- Funding for coordination and promotion of activities
- Need to maximise digital opportunities

Social

- Lack of young people engaged in community development
- Legislation for community groups
- Groups increasingly need more skills and capacity to run projects e.g. legal, finance
- Transport for community groups
- Lack of suitable or reliable communication links
- How to make best use of funding streams
- The same faces appear at every committee and few young people are engaged
- Not enough support for training
- Funding applications very onerous paperwork especially for volunteers

- The responses given highlight that a number of different sectors and groups are facing similar issues. Funding is a major issue for community groups. How to apply for, secure match funding and manage projects are all common issues. Lack of resources is also a common problem for groups. Although Orkney has a very active base of community and voluntary groups, the demands being placed on them is increasing.

Priorities

Respondents were asked which sectors were currently of most importance and should be given a higher priority in the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Programme. The majority of respondents were keen for the Programme to cover as many groups and sectors within Orkney as possible, however, they were aware that with budget limitations LEADER would only play a part in contributing to community economic development within Orkney. Due to the small population bases within the islands and some parishes, inter-generational projects were also highlighted as being an area the new Programme should include. There was no desire from respondents to prioritise or target particular geographic areas within Orkney, although it is acknowledged that some communities may be more fragile where population is falling and there are fewer young people.

The LAG has further commented that it wishes the strategy to be inclusive and cover a range of rural development and fisheries activities. This is because in a small island community of just over 20,000 people, everyone must work together within the limited range of sectors available.

It is clear from the consultation report that Orkney has a number of groups representing a wide range of community and business interests dispersed throughout Orkney. Many of these groups have been operating for a number of years and have achieved significant results. A particular strength is the ability of several groups and sectors to network and work together in partnership. One issue common to all is the lack of security of funding and match funding available to develop, implement and sustain projects. Sustainability of projects, organisations and communities is an extremely important current issue for the Orkney economy.

