

FORTH VALLEY AND LOMOND LEADER

DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

2015-2021

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Submitted by the Subgroup of the FVL Rural Stakeholder Group

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1. Governance

1.1 Introduction

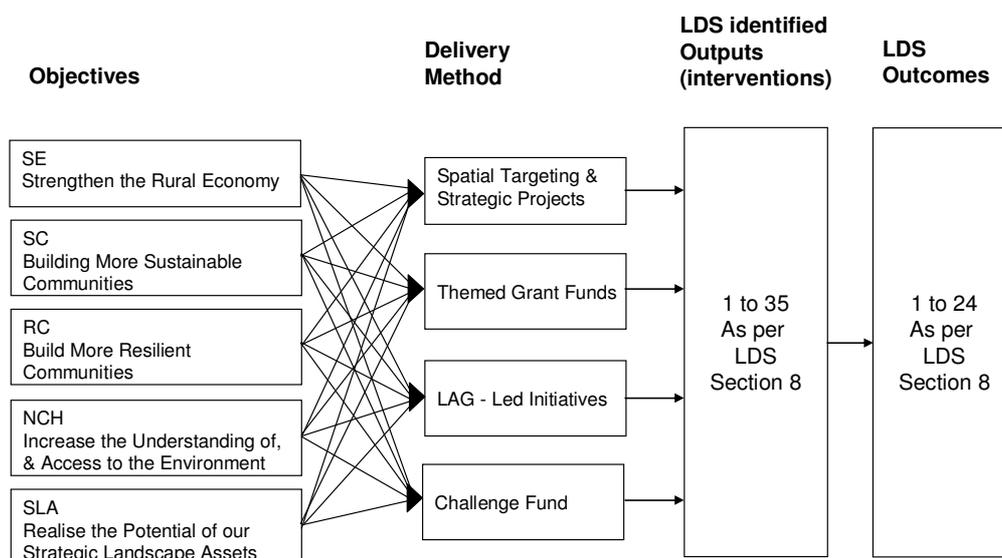
The Forth Valley and Lomond (FVL) Local Development Strategy (LDS) has been proposed by a newly formed FVL Rural Stakeholder Group and details the five strategic objectives which have been identified as priorities for the Forth Valley and Lomond area. These are:

- Strengthening the rural economy of the FVL area
- Supporting the communities of the FVL area to become more sustainable
- Supporting the communities of the FVL area to become more resilient
- Increasing the understanding of, and access to, the natural and cultural heritage environment in the FVL area
- Realising the economic and community potential of the strategic landscape assets in the FVL area

The Local Development Strategy details the rationale upon which these objectives have been based - socio-economic need, strategic context, local and national priorities, previous LEADER experience, consultations with community groups and consultations with other rural stakeholders.

The purpose of the business plan is to detail how the LDS objectives will be delivered. A summary of the process is included below.

Figure 1: Implementation of FVL LDS Process



The FVL Rural Stakeholder Group¹ overseeing the preparation and development of the LDS is wider than the previous FVL Local Action Group (LAG). The Stakeholder Group has met multiple times since August 2013, and its membership has grown as new interests have become relevant to the discussions, and the potential for LEADER has become more widely recognised. Together with the Community Stakeholder Group which sense-checked the development of the LDS, and the extensive community consultations that have taken place across the area, this makes the LDS and Business Plan grounded in the local area and responsive to locally identified need and aspirations.

With experience of running two very successful LEADER programmes in the past (2002-2006 and 2007-2013), FVL is keen to build on this governance and operational experience, whilst also embracing some new ways of working, to reflect changes in our geographic coverage, but also to learn from different practices from elsewhere in Scotland and Europe.

1.2 Partnership Structure

The Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Programme will be governed by a Local Action Group, with an independent Chair and Vice Chair, and supported by Stirling Council as Lead Partner and Accountable Body.

It is proposed that our partnership structure will remain as an independent Unincorporated Association with a Constitution, supported by an Accountable Body. This relationship has worked very well for both previous LEADER LAGs in terms of having effective procedures and a supportive relationship, but also in terms of enabling the LAG to have strong links with other departments and services of the Accountable Body (a Local Authority). A copy of our draft constitution is attached in Annex C. This will need to be finalised once the new LAG has been appointed and met for the first time. A Service Level Agreement will be in place between the Managing Authority (Scottish Government) and the Accountable Body (Stirling Council). A Memorandum of Understanding will also be in place between the LAG and the Accountable Body.

A LAG members' handbook and Code of Conduct is in the process of being produced which reflects the new structures and procedures.

1.3 Decision-making Procedures

FVL will to adopt an inclusive approach to decision-making with all decisions being taken by the whole Local Action Group (with decisions taken on a majority basis). The independent Chair will chair the discussions at meetings and will ensure that the LAG operates according to its own agreed procedure. In the event of a split decision on any topic discussed, the Chair will have the casting vote.

Wider community input to decision-making will be sought through letters of support for applications, and a list of forthcoming applications for assessment will be posted on the FVL website to allow any wider community concerns to be conveyed to the Programme Manager prior to LAG meetings.

¹ List of member organisations can be found in Annex A

1.4 Use of Subgroups

FVL proposes to make use of short-life subgroups to address topics or decisions that would benefit from greater scrutiny or discussion. We will ensure that there will always be community representation on these subgroups. The subgroups will then make recommendations to the wider LAG for approval. These subgroups may relate to particular project proposals, or issues relating to the operation of the Programme. In the past we have used subgroups for a variety of purposes – eg seeking volunteers to either assess (more) complex projects, guide the development of new initiatives, or oversee the development of the LAG’s website.

We have found the use of short-life subgroups particularly effective for our circumstances, as it means it “spreads the load” of responsibility and commitment over all our LAG members, which is particularly important when so many participate as unpaid volunteers. It also means we can draw on specialist skills, knowledge and interest according to particular need, which go beyond an assessment of projects function. In each case the subgroup makes a recommendation for the decision to the wider LAG for approval or not.

1.5 National Park Joint Sub LAG

One of the subgroups already agreed is a National Park subgroup, which will run for the life of the Programme and appraise National Park wide projects and strategic National Park projects. The details on the operation of this group have been finalised in conjunction with Argyll and the Isles LAG and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority. This arrangement is outlined in more detail in Annex D.

1.6 Project Assessment Process²

Projects will be technically assessed by LEADER staff, calling on further technical or professional expertise if needed, or use of subgroups as appropriate, prior to projects being sent out for scoring to LAG members. An on-line scoring system will be used (using the new LARC system when in place). All members will be asked to score the projects, with the exception of any member who may have a conflict of interest (financial or personal) in the project under discussion.

1.7 Conflicts of Interest

We will adopt Scottish Government guidance on dealing with conflicts of interest. Anyone with a conflict of interest in a project or decision being taken would not be able to score that particular project or participate in the assessment discussion. Conflicts of Interest include members who represent bodies who are leading on project applications, have a financial interest, or are involved in a project in some other way which may mean they are not able to objectively assess a project (in the latter scenario, LAG members will be encouraged to discuss any possible conflicts of interest with the Programme Manager prior to projects being sent out for scoring). A register of ‘interests’ will be kept in the LEADER office, although it will be incumbent on members to discuss possible conflicts of interest with the Programme Manager as soon

² See flowchart of Assessment Process in Annex B

as the possibility of a conflict of interest arises. LAG meetings will note any conflicts of interest at the start of the meeting and this will be minuted.

1.8 Project Scoring

It is understood that standardised scoring sheets will be set up on the LARC system, with all projects scored against the same criteria. Project scores and comments will be received automatically by the LEADER Secretariat prior to the LAG meeting. These scores and comments will inform the discussion at the subsequent LAG meeting, along with recommendations from the LEADER Development Officer and the technical assessor. The definitive project decision will be taken at the meeting, on a majority voting basis.

1.9 Appeals

Detail on how an appeals process will work is to be provided by Scottish Government and we will adopt this process. Decisions of the LAG will be final and there will be no right to appeal the outcome of a LAG decision, unless the LAG's own procedures have not been followed, then applicants would have the right to have their project re-considered by the LAG. Any project which is unsuccessful in its application will be given detailed feedback, and where appropriate encouraged to re-apply once the feedback is addressed. However, in all cases, if new information is provided after the LAG has given its decision which changes the project substantively, then a new application can be made.

1.10 Quorum

Quorum on all decisions will follow the EU requirement of at least 51% of LAG members party to the decision being non-agency members. The draft constitution also states that seven members of the LAG are required for meetings or decisions to be quorate, of which at least two must be agency members and at least two must be non-agency members. This is to ensure a broad perspective is brought to all decision-making.

1.11 Making the Right Choices – Projects

To deliver the objectives and priorities of the LDS, the partnership which makes up the LAG will ensure that all funding allocated will be used as effectively and efficiently as possible, maximising value for money, innovation and the additionality requirements of LEADER funding. To achieve this FVL recognises the need for alignment with the strategic and operational priorities of rural development partners and the funding opportunities from other sources.

In the course of our discussions on how best to ensure our more limited funds would enable the implementation of our LDS objectives and priorities, it was discussed and agreed that in some cases a more strategic approach would be adopted cases where the LAG would be able to see a measurable difference that the LEADER funds could make, or where 'the sum of the total was greater than the sum of the individual parts'. At the same time there was concern that we might 'lose' some of the more grassroots activity that FVL LEADER has supported so comprehensively in the past and has been so important in building capacity in the area and would continue to be needed in the future (see the previous Programme evaluation recommendations in

section 5 of the LDS). As a result we are proposing four different approaches to allocating LEADER funds in this area:

- 1. Spatial targeting and prioritising strategic projects**
- 2. Themed mini-grant schemes aligned with our LDS growth opportunities**
- 3. LAG-led projects and initiatives**
- 4. Challenge funding open to all projects meeting the LDS objectives**

All projects will be assessed on their contribution to the LDS, taking into consideration the following factors:

1. Economic impact, job creation, quality of jobs created, projected income and turnover, use of local resources, multiplier effects, strategic nature of project, etc.
2. Dead weight, additionality and displacement
3. Alignment with LDS priorities re target areas /groups
4. Consistency with other strategies;
5. Viability and sustainability of the project (markets, technology, operational and financial viability);
6. Capacity of project promoters to carry out the project

1.12 Small Business and Farm Diversification Support

Support to small business and farm business diversification is a new activity to be supported by LEADER funding as previously these actions were supported through other parts of the Scottish Rural Development Programme in the past (under the now-defunct RPACs). In the 2014-2020 programme, responsibility for managing these funds transferred to LEADER, and the funds associated with these activities are significantly less than they have been in the past. This means there is likely to be much greater demand for funds than there will be funds available. For this reason FVL has decided that this activity will be overseen by an Enterprise & Farm Diversification subgroup of the LAG and Stakeholder Group and there will be a greater emphasis on initiatives that will create jobs and economic growth.

Membership of this group may change over time, but in the first instance will be made up of the Business Gateway/Enterprise Trust members of our Stakeholder Group and Economic Development representatives of our three Community Planning Partnerships. We would also expect our business representatives on the LAG to also join the subgroup.

Whilst the small business support from the LAG will follow the objectives of the LDS, focussing on the priority business sectors, and working in partnership with our Business Gateway colleagues in all three local authority areas, the Enterprise & Farm Diversification (EFD) Subgroup will ensure that the enterprise support mapping work already undertaken is kept up to date and comprehensive, and will also keep the LAG abreast of emerging small business issues in the FVL area. The EFD subgroup may also instigate EFD proposals for the wider LAG to consider supporting.

Following our recent local discussions on the dispersal of funds for EFD purposes, a local business grant and loan mapping exercise was carried out

which highlighted that there were gaps in grants being available to rural businesses and farm diversification businesses at the £10k level, and also at the £50k to £100k level. However, given the small sums of funding expected to be available for business support and farm diversification, and an analysis of scale of return on investment, it has been agreed that a small business grant scheme, capped at £10k per grant, will be set up to support new and additional business activity that directly meet the objectives of the FVL Local Development Strategy. There will also be a greater emphasis on job creation and growth for all applications receiving support. As these funds would be awarded from our 10% of budget allocation for business support and 10% for farm diversification, the total budget will be capped according to the final allocation to the FVL area. This will not preclude other business related applications being considered (for more than £10k) from the main LEADER fund, should the community/economic/environmental benefit be strong, or if a more strategic application is submitted which benefits multiple businesses. The LAG will also have discretion to consider a higher grant award in exceptional circumstances.

This scheme will be monitored and subject to ongoing review, particularly in relation to volume of demand and extent to which interventions supported through this scheme do deliver the LDS objectives in a cost effective way. The scheme will be branded and marketed separately to the remaining LEADER funds to make it easier for our partners to promote the scheme on our behalf, but also in recognition that the support needs of businesses in applying for funds are different to those of community groups. In this way we will ensure close working with our Third Sector and Business Gateway partners (complementing, rather than duplicating, existing support provided by either partner).

From our previous experience of running a business targeted grant scheme, we also recognise that dedicated development support will need to be provided to the businesses and farms coming forward to help refine their proposals coming forward for funding to better fit with the objectives of the LDS, but also to assist with the preparation for conforming with the rules which govern the LEADER funds (this was one of our key lessons learnt from running our Sustainable Tourism Business Grant Scheme).

The FVL staff team is currently located in the same offices as the Stirling Business Gateway³ delivery team, so we propose to continue these strong links, which would involve signposting all business applicants to Business Gateway to receive business planning support⁴ prior to submitting their proposals to LEADER, as well as receiving referrals from Business Gateway colleagues from across the FVL area. Having worked with business

³ Business Gateway in the Forth Valley is delivered on a consortium basis between Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils, where Falkirk Council manages the contract on behalf of all three councils. The contract has been awarded to a consortium of Stirling Enterprise Park, CETERIS and Falkirk Council's Economic Development Team. In West Dunbartonshire the Business Gateway contract has been awarded to Business Development Advisors Ltd.

⁴ The size and growth potential of businesses currently determines the level and type of business support available from Business Gateway, with the vast majority of businesses in our LEADER area falling into the category of limited one-to-many support available - another reason for proposing dedicated support with the E&FD grant scheme.

applicants in the previous programme, we know that this link with Business Gateway is crucial for ensuring that business proposals are robust and fundable by the LAG. We also recognise that it is important to support businesses in helping ensure that business applicants meet the LEADER audit requirements, whilst also guiding the businesses seeking funding to meet the strategic objectives of the LDS.

1.13 Staffing and Organisation Structure

An organisation and staffing structure map is included overleaf. Depending on funds available, we propose to employ an experienced and qualified team comprising a Programme Manager, two part-time Development (animation) Officers, a Claims Officer, a part-time Administration Officer, a part-time Communications and Events Officer (4 days a month) and a part-time Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (6 days a month) as core administration and animation support to the LEADER programme⁵. As most of these posts have been identified as part-time, there may be scope for some of these posts to be merged into full time roles, depending on the skill-set of the candidates coming forward. However, we recognise that in rural areas, part-time employment opportunities can attract a wider range of candidates.

1.14 Staffing Roles and Responsibilities

The Programme Manager will report to the LAG (via the Chair) and will have management responsibility for the LEADER team. The Programme Manager will also report to the Accountable Body in a line management capacity. The role of the Programme Manager will be to have overall responsibility for the financial and operational delivery of the programme and the staff team, liaise with Scottish Government, the Accountable Body and LEADER stakeholders, lead on financial and legal issues related to the LAG and advise the LAG on all matters relating to LEADER.

The Development Officers' roles will be to animate the territory, support applicants with the development of their proposals, liaise with other LEADER areas, and lead on the implementation of the Local Development Strategy. The Development Officers will have a key role in building capacity within communities⁶ which have less experience of project development and applying for funds. The Claims Officer will support applicants with the drawing down of funds once the projects are under way. Support to applicants regarding claiming will include a training session (one to many) immediately after the LEADER award is made, and will be mandatory, as well as (limited) one to one support to projects once they are ready to start claiming. The Administration Officer will provide administration support to deliver the programme and also support to applicants in relation to their documentation requirements. The Communication and Events Officer will organise and implement communication and event related activity, whilst the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will support the Monitoring and Evaluation subgroup and co-ordinate the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

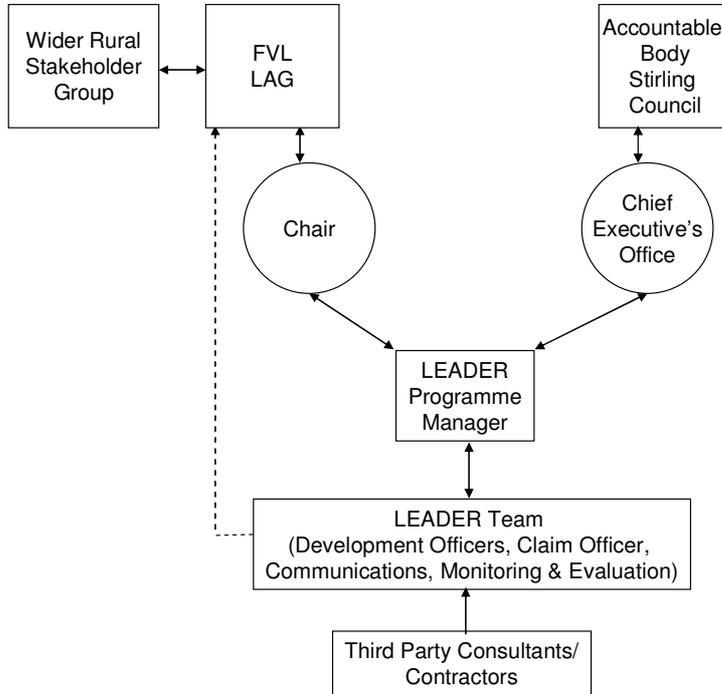
⁵ Job descriptions can be found in Annex E - TBC

⁶ These may be geographic communities in their entirety which have not successfully accessed LEADER funds previously or groups within communities who are new to LEADER, but have been identified as important to the delivery of the LDS.

We also propose to employ (or contract) specialist development staff to provide specialist support or lead on project specific areas for fixed term periods to deliver specific elements of the LDS, such as the Enterprise & Farm Diversification Business Grant Fund. Depending on the nature of these and the time periods required, the budget for this will be used to either employ fixed term staff or consultancy support. In addition, we are in discussion with Argyll and the Islands LEADER and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority regarding a National Park Projects Officer who will work exclusively on National Park wide projects and strategic National Park projects. This role is likely to be funded as part of a project rather than part of the operational structure.

The Accountable Body will have line management and employment responsibility for the LEADER team, with the Senior Manager for Economic Development based in the Chief Executive's Office at Stirling Council taking responsibility for this. Any decisions which impact on the delivery of the LEADER programme will be discussed with the Programme Manager, LAG Chair and Vice Chair prior to being agreed.

**Figure 2: Organisation and Reporting Structure
FVL LEADER**



2. LAG Membership

2.1 LAG Skills

The new Local Action Group will be recruited openly and transparently based on a Skills Matrix designed to reflect the geographic area we cover, and the skills needed to discuss and develop the range of projects expected to be supported in the implementation of our LDS. The identified skills are based on our experience of running LEADER programmes in the past, and on the 5 strategic objectives outlined in the LDS. A list of the “essential” and “desirable” LAG member skills is included in Annex F.

2.2 LAG Timescale and Composition

The recruitment of the new LAG is currently underway (February 2015) so that it will be in place for the opening of the Programme, anticipated for April 2015 (subject to confirmation from Scottish Government). For practical reasons, we propose to recruit a LAG of no more than 21 in number, of which at least 51% will be community, business or land manager members and will be widely promoted. The LAG selection process will be based on the skills each nomination or application would bring to the group.

2.3 LAG Membership

Our LAG area will cover three Local Authority areas, three Community Planning Partnerships and (part of) a National Park. With the maximum number of ‘Agency’ LAG members fixed at 10, we will be seeking to recruit members who are able to represent more than one organisation, or more than one sector. Having discussed this with our stakeholders, we have agreed that our Local Authority members will share a seat with our Community Planning members who cover the same geographical area, and who already work closely together. We will have one guaranteed place and this will be for our Lead Partner (Accountable Body) which is Stirling Council.

Our agency members will therefore include:

- Stirling Council/Stirling CPP
- Clackmannanshire Council/Clackmannanshire CPP
- West Dunbartonshire Council/West Dunbartonshire CPP
- Scottish Enterprise
- VisitScotland
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
- Scottish Natural Heritage

Other organisations who have expressed interest in joining the LAG include the Third Sector Interfaces (we have three), the Enterprise Trusts who deliver the Business Gateway contract in our area (we have three), Forestry Commission Scotland, Central Scotland Green Network Trust, Rural Stirling Housing Association, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Community Partnership and previous LEADER applicants (some national, some local). Our community, business and land management members will be individuals recruited from across the area.

As we propose to recruit a new LAG to reflect our new LEADER Programme, with membership reflecting the priorities within the LDS, we will recruit at least

3 members who have no previous experience of being a LAG member. These could be either agency or community⁷ members. However, to ensure we build on the knowledge and experience of the LEADER approach which we have built up over the years, we will ensure that at least 3 of the new LAG will have previous experience of being a LAG member. LAG appointments will be for three years to ensure wider community involvement in decision-making processes.

2.4 LAG Member Recruitment Process

An application form process has been utilised to ensure that the skills we need are recruited from the outset, as well as ensuring a fair and transparent system is utilised. This includes a briefing document or “job description” on what is involved in being a LAG member⁸.

The recruitment of LAG members has been publicised through our partner organisations and local community contacts, with whom we have built close working arrangements over the two previous LEADER programmes. This includes use of Third Sector and Community e-bulletins, membership organisations’ networks in all areas to be covered by our LDS, Council e-bulletins and social media channels, as well as through our own LEADER contact list (of everyone who has ever made an enquiry or application to LEADER in the past), the FVL LEADER website, Facebook page and the Scottish Rural Network. This is in addition to the local Community Planning Fora that exist in our area who have offered to encourage people to apply. We will also target efforts to recruit from sectors that are key to the delivery of our LDS but are maybe not so familiar with LEADER, such as the land management sector where we are working with Scottish Land and Estates and NFUS to promote awareness of LEADER. We are guided by our partners in this respect.

With the exception of the Accountable Body, LAG members will be appointed for a period of 3 years to allow for sufficient learning and understanding of the LEADER approach, as well as to ensure that the LAG builds a strong rapport and sense of unity. After 3 years members will be able to step down or reapply. This allows the LAG to be refreshed with new perspectives, as well as giving others within our communities the opportunity to be on the LAG.

The Stakeholder Sub-group has been given the remit by the wider Stakeholder group to assess the applications which come forward, using the Skills Matrix to ensure as wide a range of relevant skills as possible is represented on the LAG. Any skill or sectoral gaps will then be proactively targeted with the assistance of our partners. The ensuing proposed list of LAG members will be presented to Stakeholder Group for endorsement. This will then ensure there is no dominance of any one organisation in the selection process.

2.5 LAG Training

⁷ For the purposes of simplicity, when we refer to community LAG members, we are referring to our non-statutory agency members, so includes our business members, land managers, members who represent non-statutory organisations and individual community members

⁸ See Appendix F for copies of the application form and explanation of LAG member role.

All LAG members will receive training in the new processes and the LDS priorities, as well as the new on-line system being created by the Scottish Government. Training in project appraisal will also be provided. Given the requirement for all documents to be circulated and scored on-line through the new Scottish Government LARC system, all LAG members will be required to have access to the internet and be reasonably IT literate. Any training required in this respect will also be made available.

3. LAG Procedures

3.1 Accountable Body

The FVL Stakeholder Group has agreed that Stirling Council is the most appropriate organisation to undertake the role of Accountable Body. As Lead Partner on the two previous LEADER programmes, Stirling Council has developed a proven track record in meeting the audit and financial management requirements of LEADER. Stirling Council has the required systems in place, and crucially the LEADER team has learnt to use these systems to maximise effectiveness in the delivery of the LEADER programme. Being hosted within a Local Authority, if the LEADER team need to pull in particular expertise or skills, they are able to bring in the advice of a very wide network of helpful and knowledgeable colleagues to assist at short notice and at no additional cost to the Programme.

The Stakeholder Group has invited Stirling Council to continue in the role of Accountable Body and the Council has agreed.

3.2 Role of Accountable Body

Stirling Council will employ staff and provide line management, payroll and other employment services to the LEADER team. The Council's team of qualified auditors will undertake an annual audit of the Programme at no additional cost to LEADER, which allows the Council to meet its Service Level Agreement requirements with the Scottish Government, and also to ensure that the LEADER team continue to follow agreed processes and procedures.

From Stirling Council's perspective, their agreement to lead on the partnership will benefit their rural communities, who would not be able to benefit from LEADER if the Council did not step forward. LEADER has become a very visible EU fund in the Stirling area and is one of the ways the Council supports the economic development of rural Stirling, whilst recognising the strategic benefits of assisting Clackmannanshire, West Dunbartonshire and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs communities also.

As Accountable Body, Stirling Council will be required to sign a Service Level Agreement with the Scottish Government, and also to complete a Memorandum of Understanding with the LAG to set out the relationship between the LAG and the Council.

As stated previously, any decisions taken by Stirling Council which impact on the delivery of the LEADER programme will be discussed with the Programme Manager, LAG Chair and Vice Chair prior to being agreed.

3.3 Role of Other Partners

All our partners have offered to support the delivery of LAG activities in any way they can. However, this is within a context of widespread public sector cuts that are affecting all our partner organisations, which means financial contributions to LAG overheads are unlikely. However, access to meeting rooms and support from staff within those organisations are some examples of how the LAG will benefit from those organisations.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

4.1 Introduction

FVL LEADER recognises the value and importance of effective, and comprehensive, monitoring and evaluation in order to measure the impact of its activities but also to improve the systems and approaches to the benefit of the wider rural area. FVL also understands that monitoring and evaluation is now an obligatory task under the Common Provisions Regulation 1303/2013. Crucially, being able to evidence the difference our LDS will make will strengthen the credibility of the LAG and understanding of the LEADER approach in our area.

4.2 Objectives of the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

1. To assess the impact of FVL LEADER's interventions at a project level and at an LDS level
2. To monitor progress of projects in order to report back to Scottish Government
3. To monitor the effectiveness of the LEADER processes in achieving the outcomes of the LDS
4. To assess the effectiveness of the different funding approaches outlined in the LDS in achieving the outcomes of the LDS
5. To demonstrate the added value of LEADER approach in the FVL area
6. To enable the LAG to learn from experience and build on that experience to the benefit of the FVL area

4.3 Governance and Co-ordination Arrangements

FVL views the new requirements as an opportunity to make monitoring and evaluation a core activity for the LAG and the LAG staff (subject to sufficient funding being secured to do so). Other than commissioning a strategic review of the previous LEADER programme, which included an evaluation of the impact of previous support to projects, FVL has had limited evaluation experience previously. This evaluation expertise was also bought in through consultancy support for a short period of time, rather than being embedded in the day to day operation of the Programme.

A subgroup of the LAG will be set up to oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the LDS. This may also include members from the wider FVL Stakeholder Group. This group will report to the LAG and the Stakeholder Group on an annual basis. Staff resource will also be provided to work with this group and implement the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. An annual meeting with the Stakeholder Group is proposed to review delivery against the LDS and make any necessary adjustments to the programme in light of successes and challenges. Involving, and informing, the stakeholders of progress in this way will allow them to better understand/report to others how LEADER is meeting their own organisation's strategies referred to in section 4 of the LDS.

The M&E subgroup will map out the process, timelines, structures and identify all those who need to be involved in designing a monitoring and evaluation system for the FVL LDS. The subgroup will also ensure that the LDS aims are effectively captured in the monitoring and evaluation work.

FVL will also participate in any national LEADER evaluation working groups.

4.4 Evaluation Topics

Embedding monitoring and evaluation as a core activity of the LAG will give the LAG the opportunity to explore some key topics, or questions, relating to the implementation of the LDS. Some of these topics will relate to the specificities of the FVL LDS, its objectives and outcomes, and others to the wider aspects of the LEADER approach.

Initial topics will include the impact of our LEADER funding on the FVL area, but will also explore the effectiveness of the different funding approaches proposed in the FVL LDS, exploring the positive outcomes of each, but also the negatives – who benefits – who doesn't – how resource intensive are each of the approaches, for example. The overall impact on each of our growth areas will also be one of the initial topics for evaluation, as will be the empowering nature of the LAG, and the extent to which having a LAG empowers our communities or not.

4.5 Data and Information

In the course of preparing the Local Development Strategy, the Stakeholder Group gathered a wide range of data to map the current socio-economic profile of the FVL area. Most of this data was collected at a datazone level, and has been compiled in a format that can be easily updated and monitored over the course of the 2014-2020 programme, and reported back to the LAG and Stakeholder Group on an annual basis. The LEADER team pulling this information together also undertook some thematic mapping which was specific to the FVL area and the LDS (such as number of community owned assets in the area, number of community managed assets in the area, number of business closures etc). As this is not information that is captured elsewhere, this will also be monitored over the course of the programme.

In addition a new IT system for LEADER (LARC) has been created centrally by Scottish Government. This will enable easy reporting and analysis of data captured from project application forms and claim forms as projects progress.

The key here will be to ensure that the data we request in the application forms and claims forms is tailored to the specifics of our LDS. This will be in addition to the core data required by Scottish Government (still to be advised) and DG Agri (number of LAGs, population covered by the LAG, number of LAGs multi funds, number of projects, type of project promoter, number of co-operation projects, number of LAGs involved in co-operation projects, and total public expenditure).

The application forms and claim forms are still to be drafted (by the Managing Authority) but we propose to draft our LDS specific measures as one of the first tasks of the new LAG, led by the Monitoring & Evaluation Officer once in post.

4.6 Tools and Methods

A wide range of tools and methods are available for monitoring and evaluation, many of which are listed on the European Network for Rural Development's Monitoring and Evaluation toolkit. The toolkit makes an important distinction between self-evaluation (ie the LAG undertaking this themselves) or external evaluations (ie consultants are employed), and between quantitative analysis (things you can easily measure) and qualitative (things that are more subject to judgement). There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods, as indeed there are with the two different types of data being measured.

In the Forth Valley and Lomond we have committed to investing resource in employing in-house expertise as part of the core operational team (subject to us securing sufficient funds to do this). This will be to embed a participative approach in the way we undertake our activities, and to involve the LAG in all stages (supported by a M&E subgroup). However, this will not be to the exclusion of external evaluation methods as we do recognise that there are some aspects of evaluation that are more effectively carried out by third parties – and sometimes a combination of both in-house and external (eg case studies and focus groups).

The existing LEADER support team already has some in-house knowledge and qualifications in research methods (the current Programme Manager has a diploma in Research Methods for Social Scientists at postgraduate level) although it is fair to say that this experience has only been used in a contract management capacity in the past. This gives the FVL team a good platform upon which to base future monitoring and evaluation activities, and in particular to select the appropriate tools and methods at the different stages of the LEADER programme, and at the different stages of the LAG's development. The detail of which methods and tools be used and when will form part of the Monitoring & Evaluation Action Plan which will be produced by the M&E subgroup and M&E Officer.

4.7 LAG Evaluation Timelines

As outlined in the Monitoring & Evaluation toolkit, there will be a need to retro-plan the timescales for the various evaluation activities according to the evaluation milestones set by the Managing Authority, the main ones being the Annual Implementation Reports, and the two enhanced Annual Implementation Reports in 2017 and 2019. There will also be a post programme evaluation following closure of the programme, although it is noted that the indicative date for this is 2024 which is outwith the staffed period of the 2014-2020 programme, so may require staffing input from the 2021-2027 programme.

Planning for the data specification and the designing of data capture tools such as the application and claims will be done in liaison with our Managing Authority (and much of this will be incorporated into the new LEADER IT system). However the timeline of what is done and when will be a key part of the Monitoring & Evaluation Action Plan (in the form of a timeline diagram), which will be compiled by the M&E subgroup and the M&E officer.

As the FVL LAG will be feeding back on progress to the Rural Stakeholder Group on an annual basis, and also will be organising an annual community event (see section on Communications), these will become key evaluation milestones for the programme.

4.8 Communicating our Monitoring & Evaluation

As referred to above, the monitoring and evaluation timelines are closely linked to our communications activities and LAG events, as communication with our many LEADER partners and stakeholders (and applicants) is important at all stages of the monitoring and evaluation work. The communications aspect of this work is referred to in more detail in section 6 of this plan on Communications.

The involvement of our applicants in our monitoring and evaluation activities will be fundamental if we are to produce any meaningful data which in turn will impact on analysis and interpretation of that data. This will require clear and concise communication with project applicants all the way through the application and project delivery process, and ensuring we develop (and maintain) a good relationship with our applicants throughout, ensuring that the message we are communicating is well understood, and at the right time. In practice, we are well aware that to convey a key message most effectively, we need to repeat the message on multiple occasions and to more than one person involved in a project.

The other key aspect of communicating our monitoring and evaluation is communicating the findings. In this we have performed poorly in the past as this part of the process can be time consuming and resource intensive (in terms of staffing and funding of materials and publications) and when in the midst of running a LEADER programme can seem less of a priority when the core operation of the programme and audit requirements become a greater priority. It is important that we communicate the learning from our Programme to the wider community, our stakeholders, our LAG members, future applicants, current applicants, our Accountable Body (Stirling Council) the Managing Authority (Scottish Government), policy makers in our area and also at national and international level.

For this reason, we are proposing to employ an officer with a specific remit for monitoring and evaluation, and another with a specific remit for communications, both of whom will work closely together in planning for and communicating the results of our evaluation activity.

4.9 Evaluation Resources

As our evaluation activities will be much greater than in previous programmes, we anticipate additional staffing resource will be required and so have budgeted accordingly (6 days a month). In addition there will be costs associated with carrying out evaluation activities – particularly the end of programme evaluation which would need to be carried out externally. However, we recognise that most of the monitoring activity (as opposed to evaluation) will be encapsulated by the new LARC LEADER Portal.

We also understand that over the course of the Programme, the Managing Authority will be organising training and capacity building to support the LAGs with our evaluation activities to ensure consistency, quality and robustness, and we will fully participate in these centrally co-ordinated activities.

5. Financial Arrangements

(i) Administration (ii) Programme Budget

A detailed budget is enclosed in Annex G which details a realistic programme budget and administration/animation costs to run a programme as outlined in this Business Plan.

5.(i) Administration Budget

Our administration and animation budget⁹ draws heavily on our experience of running LEADER previously, and in particular fills in the gaps where our previous administration and animation has been incomplete. Of significant difference to our previous programmes is the greater emphasis on Communications (with applicant, LAG members, stakeholders and wider public), Monitoring & Evaluation, and provision of specialist support or LAG-led initiatives.

Another difference with the new Programme relates to the accommodation arrangement for the LEADER team, whereby the consolidation and sale of the former Council buildings has meant the LEADER team will now lease its own accommodation directly from Stirling Enterprise Park. The new accommodation is located within the same offices as the Council's former Economic Development team which has been transferred to an arms length company (STEP) as part of wider Council re-organisation and consolidation of business support services. The new premises is more accessible and larger than previously available, and importantly, it is also able to accommodate the LEADER files and documentation within the office. The premises is also proving to be more popular with LEADER applicants. The cost of the move, and the not insignificant cost of connecting the new premises electronically (fibre optic) to the main Council server has been borne by Stirling Council.

More detail on the relationship between the LAG and the Accountable Body is detailed in the constitution, which will be signed by all parties.

A summary of the expected administration and animation budget can be found in table 1 – but of course will be influenced by the size of the programme to be managed¹⁰. A £2million scheme will require less staffing resource than an £8million scheme, and staffing is the most significant administration cost to the programme.

Table 1: Administration and Animation Costs – FVL LEADER

Admin & Animation Costs	Budget
Salary Costs, incl NI + pension for 7 years (number of years to be confirmed)	£1,003,885
Consultancy or Salary (TBC) – Specialist (incl Co-operation) over 6 years	£92,488
Staff Travel over 7 years	£8,400

⁹ See Annex G

¹⁰ This is still unknown at the time of writing, in February 2015

Insurance	£2,682
Office Costs over 7 years	£50,873
Applicant Costs	£4,964
Stationery	£2,299
Telephone Costs	£7,203
Learning & Networking Costs	£18,914
Communications	£32,384
LAG Meeting Costs	£5,410
LAG Member Costs	£17,672
ICT Costs	£4,450
TOTALS	£1,251,624

5. (ii) Programme Budget

Our expected project expenditure can be found in Table 2 overleaf and is based on the identified priorities and detail of the Local Development Strategy, with close reference to our community consultation activity. The LDS includes the strategic priorities within the Programme area which the FVL LEADER LAG will take a pro active role in making them happen. These include the delivery of National Park community priorities, the development of the Ochil and Kilpatrick Hills and surrounding communities, initiatives in the Breadalbane area and support for key growth business and social enterprise sectors.

A key marker of our future activity is our previous programme activity where the LAG supported £2.98 million worth of project activity over the 6 years. In true LEADER way of working, in terms of capacity-building, networking and inspiring, much of this activity will lead to new and further activity which will contribute to the implementation of the new Local Development Strategy. This includes:

1. Projects which have resulted in increased visitor numbers/greater usage of facilities, which has triggered further project activity to develop or accommodate this
2. Projects which have built capacity and enthusiasm, inspiring communities and groups to undertake other developments which we expect to come forward as LEADER applications
3. Projects which involved feasibility studies, development strategies or business plans which the LAG now want to see being implemented, although it is recognised that some may be more appropriately funded by other funders to do this.

In addition, we are already aware of a number of new early stage proposals and proposals from ‘new to LEADER’ applicants. The principle of LAG-led initiatives and targeted grant schemes has also been well received and encouraged in our consultation discussions, and has led to a number of ideas and discussions (LAG-led initiatives would be strategic projects or areas of activity where no single community or organisation would be in a position to take the projects forward themselves) – not all of these ideas will be able to be taken forward. However, it does give a flavour of the scale of expected LEADER activity in the Forth Valley and Lomond area which is reflected in proposed expenditure figures below.

Table 2 Project Expenditure – FVL LEADER

Project Allocations over 5 years

Main Fund (Spatial Targeting, Themed Grant Funds, LAG-Led Initiatives, Challenge Fund)	£3,450,000
Co-operation Development	£50,000
Co-operation	£500,000
Farm Diversification	£500,000
Enterprise Support	£500,000
	£3,608,000

6. Communications Plan

Please set out below the proposed arrangements for communications

6.1 Principles & Objectives:

Effective communication about the LAG and LDS aims and objectives , about achievements of the Programme and the difference it has made, and about LEADER process requirements are key to a successful programme of investment.

Key principles are:

6.1.1 communication is 2-way: telling (in various ways) and listening

6.1.2 aims of communication activities (the message) will change over the life-time of the Programme:-

- I developing & preparing the LDS
 - aim is to consult involve and raise awareness
- II launching the LDS and LAG
 - to raise awareness and improve understanding of LDS and grant funding
 - to encourage co-operation
- III implementing the LDS
 - to raise awareness and improve understanding
 - to stimulate interest in a higher number of investments which bring added value
 - to encourage involvement in strategic project development
 - to share knowledge
 - to encourage co-operation
- IV celebrating achievements
 - sharing good practice and lessons learned
 - validating the partners' commitment to the Programme
 - ensuring that EU intervention is acknowledged and publicised
 - sharing FVL LEADER's contributions to national LEADER Programme and to SRDP.
- V monitoring & evaluating the Programme
 - (see separate section on Monitoring & Evaluation re impact of interventions, ie project performance against project targets and LDS objectives.)
 - to ensure that LDS activities complement other initiatives and do not duplicate SRDP or EU funded activities
 - to inform LAG in process on ongoing review of LDS and strategic allocation of LEADER funds
 - to ensure that SLA terms with SG are met

6.1.3 both internal communications and external communications are key to success

6.2 Target audiences and communication approach:

Bearing in mind that the aim of communications and the message will change over the lifetime of the LDS, a range of approaches will be used at different times to communicate different messages to target

audiences. An outline is given in the table below. Whilst we maintain a strong commitment to community and business engagement, lessons learned from the previous programme have also informed our approach. In particular, the interactive nature of our website for LAG members and the Handy Hints document for applicants are to be continued. New developments will include holding a specific training event for projects after approval in order to underline scheme requirements; explain any specific grant conditions; and reinforce claiming, procurement and publicity requirements.

	TARGET AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH	OUTCOME
	Internal audience		
2.1	LAG members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - input to LDS development via Stakeholder Group - use of interactive Knowledge Hub on FVL website for accessing Forum discussion, and documents - use of LARC for accessing applicant information and for scoring - attendance at conferences and workshops - visits to projects and other LAGs - quarterly LAG meetings (opportunity as a wider rural development forum as well as LDS implementation) - involvement on subgroups between LAG meetings - annual report, AGM, monitoring & evaluation - satisfaction survey at mid term evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involved partners who help with ongoing consultation and awareness raising of LDS aims and achievements - strategic investment of LEADER funds in keeping with LDS
2.2	Stirling Council as Lead Partner and Accountable Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensured representation on LAG - attendance at relevant Council committee meetings and submission of Council reports. - Monitoring of Staff performance & development via PRD and 1-2-1s. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLA terms with SG are met
2.3	Scottish Government – Management Authority (RCT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly Reports - reporting as required, including ‘Enhanced Annual Reporting’ and ‘Enhanced Programme Evaluation’ (2017 Process; 2019 results) for SRDP as a whole - attendance at Co-ordinators’ Meetings - attendance at Strategic Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compliance with regulations - achievements shared - investments monitored and evaluated
2.4	Scottish Government – Paying Agency (RPID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Report - Annual Audit Report - Paying Agency annual inspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compliance with regulations
	External audience		

2.5	Stakeholders in rural development (e.g. general public, organisations, community groups, small businesses, Rural Parliament) – outwith FVL area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - press releases from Staff Team on investment - press release and opening events organised by successful projects - Staff Team ‘piggyback’ on events already taking place (eg annual funding fair) - Staff Team organise events (incl Annual Stakeholders Meeting/Workshop) - Annual Celebration Event - use of website, Facebook, SNRN - e newsletters, annual reports & research (to keep ‘Strategic Context’ up to date and relevant) - face to face meetings - via LAG members - attendance at events, conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more engagement with LEADER - better understanding of LEADER - more co-operation - assistance with promoting LEADER - better projects which fit with LDS and add value
2.6	Stakeholders in rural development within FVL area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above. - website notification of projects coming up for appraisal at next LAG meeting - community comments ‘postbox’ - use of wider Stakeholder Group which has been instrumental in developing LDS and an annual workshop on progress and achievements will be organised to coincide with the LAG’s AGM. - annual community event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more local community engagement with the LEADER process - better understanding of LEADER - better LDS refresh throughout programme which is informed by partner experience
2.7	CPPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LAG membership via Council representation - Annual meeting between co-ordinator and CPP Manager (Clacks); Strategic Leads/Programme Managers (Stirling); DIG 1 (Dunbartonshire) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strategic collaboration - LEADER investment achieves more
2.8	Other funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - e newsletters; SNRN website; CTSi newsletters; Council Funding Officers; surveys; promotional materials - Face- to face meetings - annual meeting with those delivering Strategic Funds locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better coherence with other programmes - less duplication
2.9	Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as 2.5 above, and - face-to-face visits by Development Officers - use of ‘Handy Hints’ document to underline Scheme requirements - attendance at Post Approval Training event - use of EU, SG and LEADER logos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - informed and enabled applicants - high quality applications received

		Successful applicants put signature to a specific Publicity Guidelines document as part of the Acceptance of Offer - involvement and networking via annual celebration event - satisfaction survey at mid term evaluation	- more co-operation and networking - knowledge shared
2.10	Small Businesses	- ongoing working relationship with Enterprise Trusts who deliver Business Gateway - (more detail to follow after Sept workshop)	- informed and enabled small business and farm diversification applicants
2.11	Other LAGs	- attendance at neighbouring LAG meetings - subgroups for co-operation projects - attendance at Strategic Board; Co-ordinators' Meeting; - Local Gov Knowledge Hub - email communication	- knowledge share - more co-operation
2.12	SNRN & ENRD	- share successes and co-operation activity - attend and host events	- knowledge shared - success celebrated

6.3 Financial Plan

The financial implications our Communication Plan have been incorporated into the Programme Budget Projections as follows:

6.3.1 Staffing (see Job Descriptions):

The Programme Manager will have lead responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Communication Strategy and we propose to employ a communications and events officer to implement our Communications Plan (1 day a week) – subject to sufficient funds being in place.

6.3.2 Applicant costs:

Room hire + catering+ stationery will be required for Post Approval Training event

6.3.3 Communication materials and activities:

Website design, build and maintenance; promotional material and annual community event

6.4 Timeframe:

Stage I: Developing & Preparing the LDS (2014)

A comprehensive table of Community and Stakeholder Engagement for activities undertaken in Stage I is to be found in Section 10 of the LDS.

Stages II – V: Key milestones for the Communication Plan for the first **two years** are as follows:

<u>Stage of</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
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Programme			
Stage II: Launch of LDS and LAG	i) appoint LAG after advertising opportunity, and appointing according to skills matrix ii) refresh LAG as required by LDS evaluation iii) Develop publicity materials, website, update Handy Hints, Publicity Guidelines, Offer documentation iv) Launch event	by January ongoing by March by March	 ongoing
Stage III: Implementing LDS	i) LAG training to induct members-approve Constitution, Handbook, Code of Conduct incl Conflicts of Interest; vote in Chair; plan launch and publicity. LARC training. ii) Closing date for applications iii) LAG meeting for considering applications iv) Post approval training event v)AGM, incl Monitoring & Evaluation, and Communication Plan reporting vii) consideration of mini grant schemes or special targeting	January March, May, Aug, Nov. April, June, Sept, Dec. April, July, October, - ongoing	Feb, May, Aug, Nov March, June, Sept, Dec Jan, April, July, Oct. March ongoing, and specifically at AGM in March
Stage IV: Celebrating Achievements	i) press release; website, SNRN publicity of approved projects ii) attendance at project opening events iii) Annual Community Event iv) Facebook updates	April, July, Oct ongoing - ongoing	Jan, Apr, July, Oct ongoing February ongoing
Stage V: Monitoring & Evaluation	i) see separate M & E strategy ii) Present Monitoring Report on Sustainable Tourism Business Grant Scheme (2013-2015) to LAG iii) reflect on, and adjust Communication Plan at AGM iv) Set Communication Plan Milestones for 2016 and 2017; to include mid-term evaluation by third party.	December December -	December - March

6.5 How will we know that our Communication Plan has been effective?

This will be an agenda item at our annual Stakeholder event, and will also be reviewed at our annual community event. Information will be collected on an ongoing basis, and will include:

6.5.1 Direct measurables:

- * attendance of LAG members at LAG meetings, subgroup meetings, Strategic Board, project events and rural development events/workshops
- * no. of Press Releases circulated and used
- * Website monitoring (Google analytics)
- * Facebook monitoring
- * Events organised (attendance)
- * Events attended and by whom
- * no of times FVL LEADER submit articles to SNRN website
- * attendance of staff at training and conference events
- * applicant attendance at Post Approval Training events
- * Feedback survey – after annual celebration event, and Post Approval Training
- * amount of funds allocated (in general; broken down spatially, to co-operation activities and to any specific 'calls')

6.5.2 Indirect indicators:

- * percentage of allocated funds drawdown by applicant
- * value LAG members rate LAG membership, and how it translates to daily work.
- * audit outcomes
- * staff retention
- * Monitoring & Evaluation of project investments against LDS (see Monitoring & Evaluation Plan above) - spread across strategic partners, objectives and geography; gaps in strategic partners, objectives and geography.

7. Equality Statement

7.1 Introduction

The Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER 2015-2020 Local Development Strategy and Business Plan represents the practical framework for the disbursement of LEADER funds over the geographic area of rural Clackmannanshire, Stirling and West Dunbartonshire.

LEADER funds are sourced from the Scottish Government and the European Community and are to be used for the purposes of meeting the objectives as set out in the Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy.

The LDS and Business Plan has been developed in consultation with local community groups, businesses and agencies and has been overseen by a stakeholder group comprising the previous Local Action Group and representatives from organisations with an interest in the development of rural Stirling, Clackmannanshire and West Dunbartonshire.

The purpose of this Equality Statement is to improve the work of Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER by promoting actions to reduce inequalities, to avoid discrimination and to take action to improve equality and enhance human rights.

7.2 Commitment

The Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER LAG will uphold and promote human rights in everything it does. We recognise our responsibility to adhere to anti-discrimination legislation including the Equality Act 2010, which currently includes gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, trade union activity and religion and belief and will continue to incorporate other discrimination legislation into its policies and practices as and when they become law.

The FVL LAG also recognises that there are other reasons, not directly covered by anti-discrimination legislation, which may lead to individuals being unfairly treated including, domestic circumstances, cultural belief, employment status, or because they have AIDS or are HIV positive. In terms of applying for grant funding, there may be other barriers preventing groups coming forward for funding, such as lack of experience in filling out forms or understanding the terminology employed by LEADER. Development Officers will be employed as part of the FVL administration team whose remit will include working with applicants to develop quality applications and therefore address these potential barriers.

7.3 Policy Statement

The Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER LAG is committed to embracing diversity, eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.

The Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER LAG will support equality of opportunity and will work to reduce discrimination on the grounds of:

- Gender (including people undergoing gender reassignment);
- Marital or civil partnership status;
- Sexual orientation;
- Race (including ethnicity or nationality);
- Colour;
- Religion or beliefs or none (atheists);
- Age;
- Disability (whether registered or not);
- HIV positivity;
- Political beliefs.

We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- Promoting equality of opportunity and diversity within the communities in which we work and with all our partners and workforce;
- Recruiting a Local Action Group which reflects the diverse elements of LEADER funding and the diverse communities in which we work;
- Encouraging participation from groups currently under-represented;
- Treating our applicants, colleagues and partners fairly and with respect;
- Promoting an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment and tackling behaviour that breaches this;
- Recognising and valuing the differences and individual contributions that people make;
- Providing support and encouragement to LAG members and staff to develop their skills and abilities in implementing the Local Development Strategy;
- Producing a Code of Conduct for LAG members and staff.

FVL funds will be used to address specific needs identified in the LDS. FVL recognises that groups protected by law are not necessarily disadvantaged. Therefore, applicants targeting a specific group will have to evidence that the group is disadvantaged and that addressing that disadvantage will help to meet the objectives in our LDS.

7.4 Mainstreaming

The FVL LAG will seek to ensure that, from its outset, LAG composition reflects the diverse nature of the LDS and the communities it serves. Membership will be based on possession of the skills and experience needed to competently oversee the delivery of the LDS. A skills matrix has been created to show the skills needed on the LAG.

The FVL administration team will ensure the commitment to equality is embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our applicants, colleagues and partners.

The FVL administration team expect all groups receiving funding from us to share our commitment to equality and applicant's policies are analysed as part of the assessment process.

The FVL administration team will also assess the proposed beneficiaries of each project as set out by the applicant in their application for funding.

Annex A
Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER - Stakeholders

FVL LEADER Stakeholders

Remit: To oversee the development of the new LEADER Local Development Strategy and Business Plan and give a strategic steer

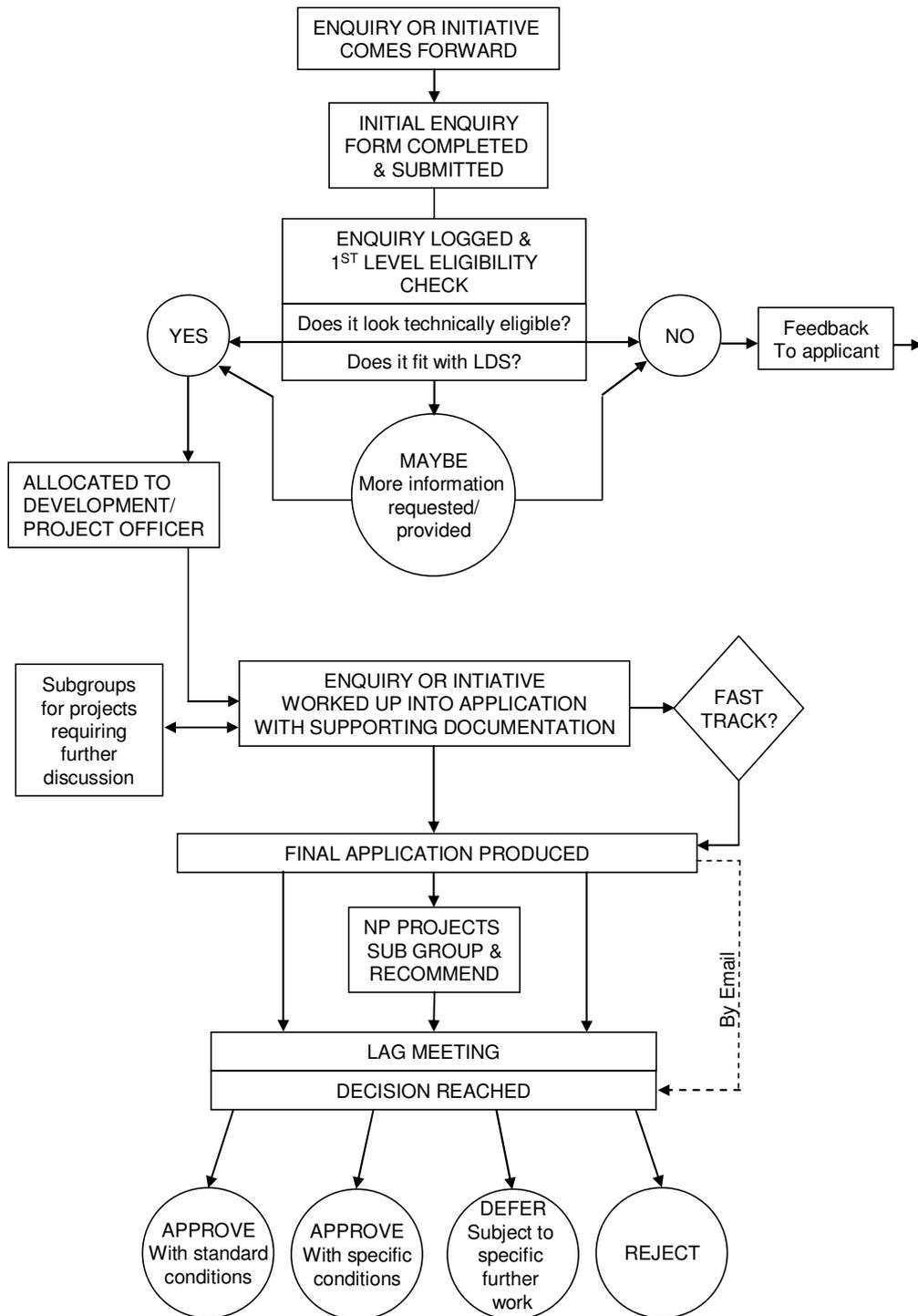
Stirling Council	Scottish Land and Estates
Clackmannanshire Council	LANTRA
West Dunbartonshire Council	National Farmers Union for Scotland
Stirling CPP	(previous) Forth Valley and Lomond
Clacks CPP	Local Action Group
West Dunbartonshire CPP	Ceteris
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	STEP
National Park Authority	Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	Clackmannanshire Third Sector
National Park Community Partnership	Interface
Scottish Natural Heritage	West Dunbartonshire CVS
Forestry Commission Scotland	Rural Stirling Housing Association
Scottish Enterprise	Forth Environment Link
VisitScotland	Central Scotland Forest Trust
Ochils Landscape Partnership	

FVL LEADER Stakeholder Subgroup members

Remit: Set up by wider Stakeholder Group to work with the LEADER team on pulling together of the Development Strategy and Business Plan

Stirling Community Planning Partnership/Council
Visit Scotland
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
Clackmannanshire Council
Scottish Enterprise
SNH
LEADER Programme Manager
LEADER Development Officer

Annex B FVL LEADER ASSESSMENT PROCESS



Annex C Draft Constitution

- 1 **NAME:**
The Association shall be known as The Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Local Action Group, (the “LAG”).

- 2 **GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE**
The Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER LAG will cover all of Stirling, with the exception of Stirling City (but including Bannockburn and Cambusbarron), all of Clackmannanshire with the exception of Alloa (but including Sauchie), and rural West Dunbartonshire.

- 3 **AIMS and OBJECTS:**
To oversee and be responsible for the implementation of the LEADER Programme in the Forth Valley and Lomond Area, according to the Business Plan approved by the Scottish Government in November 2014 and such variations to the Business Plan as may from time to time be agreed.

- 4 **POWERS:**
To further the above objects the LAG may:-
 - 3.1 Engage and pay fees to professionals and technical advisors/consultants to assist in the work of the LAG;
 - 3.2 Establish special or standing committees, sub-committees or sub groups when and where considered necessary with such powers as the LAG may consider appropriate;
 - 3.3 Make regulations establishing the criteria upon which offers of grant award are to be determined;
 - 3.4 Determine applications for grant assistance and offer awards of up to a maximum of seventy percent (70%) of the Eligible Project Costs, as this is defined in the notes to the Grant Application Form;
 - 3.5 Authorise the Programme Manager to complete and issue offers of grant award on the instructions of and on behalf of the LAG;
 - 3.6 Draft and adopt standing orders for the LAG and its committees and sub-committees and policy directions in relation to the content of the standing orders;
 - 3.7 Take such actions as are necessary to monitor the performance and financial management of Projects in receipt of grant assistance;
 - 3.8 Establish an intranet and/or internet presence to promote the aim and objects of the LAG;
 - 3.9 Bring together in conference and work in liaison with representatives of community, voluntary and business organisations, government departments, local and other statutory authorities and individuals;
 - 3.10 Arrange, provide for and attend or join in arranging and providing for the holding of conferences, workshops, exhibitions, seminars, lectures, meetings, and training courses to promote or attain the objects of the LAG;

- 3.11 Collect and disseminate information on all matters affecting the objects and exchange such information with other bodies having similar objects whether in this country or not;
- 3.12 Raise money for the objects and accept gifts and receive contributions on such terms as shall be deemed to be appropriate;
- 3.13 To enter into any arrangement for co-operation or mutual assistance with any charitable body, whether incorporated or not;
- 3.14 Invest the funds of the LAG not immediately required for the objects in such manner as the LAG may consider appropriate but only on the advice of the LAG's financial advisors;
- 3.15 To effect insurance of any kind;
- 3.16 Do all such other lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects.
- 3.17 Authorise the lead partner to demand repayment of grant from applicants deemed by the managing authority to have defrayed grant finding on ineligible activities, ineligible items of expenditure, or are judged by the LAG to have defaulted on their terms and conditions of grant.

5 MEMBERSHIP:

- 5.1 Membership shall be open to the following categories :-
 - 5.1.1 Stirling Council ("SC"); Clackmannanshire Council ("CC"); West Dunbartonshire Council ("WDC");
 - 5.1.2 Scottish Enterprise ("SE") and successor;
 - 5.1.3 The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority ("LLTTNPA");
 - 5.1.4 Visit Scotland ("VS")
 - 5.1.5 Scottish Natural Heritage ("SNH");
 - 5.1.6 Community Planning Partnerships ("CPP");
 - 5.1.7 Forestry Commission Scotland ("FCS");
 - 5.1.8 Business Gateway ("BG") and successor;
 - 5.1.9 An individual from local business ("Business");
 - 5.1.10 An individual from the community ("the Community");
 - 5.1.11 An individual representing the voluntary community ("the Voluntary"); and
 - 5.1.12 An individual from the land management sector of the community ("Land Manager");
- 5.2 For the purposes of this clause:-
 - 5.2.2 "Public Sector Member" means each of SC, CC, FC, WDC, LLTTNPA, VS, SNH, FCS and SE;
 - 5.2.3 "Business Sector Member" means the Business member;
 - 5.2.4 "Community Sector Member" means the Community member; and
 - 5.2.5 "Voluntary Sector Member" means the Voluntary member; and
 - 5.2.6 "Land Manager Member" means the Land Manager member.
- 5.3 The LAG shall consist of at least twenty members of whom less than half can be Public Sector Members. The remaining members must be a combination of Business Sector Members, Community Sector Members, Voluntary Sector Members and Land Management Members.

- 5.4 Where a member is an incorporated body it shall be represented by an authorised officer of that body and the name of that officer shall be intimated to the Secretariat in writing;
 - 5.5 Where a member is an unincorporated body it shall be represented by such individual as may be nominated from time to time by that unincorporated body and the nomination of that individual shall be intimated to the Secretariat in writing;
 - 5.6 Membership of the LAG shall cease in the case of death, or in the case of an incorporated body, on the dissolution, winding up, striking off or receivership of the body which constituted the member.
 - 5.7 A member may not transfer its membership to any other individual or body.
 - 5.8 A member may retire from membership of the LAG by intimating to the Secretariat in writing notice of retiral which (in the case of an incorporated body) shall be signed by an authorised officer or a director as appropriate.
 - 5.9 A member who is an unincorporated body may retire from membership of the LAG by withdrawing its nomination for membership by intimating to the Secretariat in writing a notice to that effect
- 6 HONORARY OFFICERS:
- 6.1 At the annual general meeting the LAG shall elect a Chair and a Vice Chair and such other honorary officers as the LAG shall from time to time decide.
 - 6.2 The Chair and the Vice Chair and any other honorary officer shall hold office until the conclusion of the next annual general meeting of the LAG and shall be eligible for re-election on a three year basis
 - 6.3 Nominations must be made in writing and must be delivered into the hands of the Secretariat at least fourteen clear days before the annual general meeting
 - 6.4 A member may not nominate themselves
 - 6.5 Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be held by ballot

7 GENERAL MEETINGS:

7.1 Annual General Meetings

7.1.1 The first annual meeting of the LAG shall be held no later than 31st August 2015, and once in each year thereafter an annual general meeting of the LAG shall be held at such time (being not more than 15 months after the date of the preceding annual general meeting) and at such place as the LAG shall decide.

7.1.2 At least 21 clear days notice of the meeting shall be given in writing by the Secretariat to each member.

7.1.3 At each annual general meeting the business shall include the consideration of inter alia:-

7.1.3.1 An annual report on the work of the LAG;

7.1.3.2 The election of honorary members;

7.1.3.3 Motions submitted; and

7.1.3.4 Such other transactions and/or matters as may from time to time be appropriate.

7.2 Special General Meeting

7.2.1 The Chair of the LAG may at any time call a special general meeting of the LAG

7.2.2 The Secretariat shall call a special general meeting within 28 days of receiving a written request to do so, which request must be signed by not less than two thirds of the members of the LAG and provide reasons.

7.2.3 At least 21 clear days notice of a special general meeting shall be given in writing by the Secretariat to each member.

8 RULES OF PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS:

8.1 Quorum

8.1.1 The quorum at a meeting of the LAG shall be 7 members who must be able to vote on any given issue of which at least 2 must be Community Members and 2 Public Sector members.

8.2 Voting

8.2.1 Unless otherwise provided for in this Constitution, all questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast.

8.2.2 Arrangements for proxy voting may from time to time be made provided that no such arrangements shall be made in respect of the matters described in clauses 9 and 10.

8.2.3 In the case of an equality of votes the chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

8.3 Minutes

7.3.1 The LAG shall keep minutes of all general meetings and meetings of all committees and sub-committees which shall contain in each and every case a note of members present, those attending, the

Chair and a full record of all proceedings, resolutions and decisions.

9 SERVICES:

9.1 Secretariat

9.1.1 The LAG shall nominate a member to act as lead partner and to provide secretariat services to the LAG which shall include, inter alia:-

9.1.1.2 Calling general meetings and all associated administrative duties;

9.1.1.3 Taking and producing Minutes of all meetings of the LAG;

9.1.1.4 Employing staff and line managing staff on behalf of the LAG;

9.1.1.5 Such other services as the LAG and the member shall agree.

9.2 Finance

9.2.1 The LAG shall nominate a member to provide financial services to the LAG which shall include, inter alia:-

9.2.1.1 Setting up a specific cost centre within its own Bank Account through which income received on behalf of the LAG may be credited and payments made on behalf of the LAG may be debited;

9.2.1.2 Accumulate interest on the funds held in the cost centre on a monthly basis and pay over the accumulated interest yearly at the members financial year end, such interest to be a proportionate part of the interest paid to the member from its Banker having regard to the percentage which the funds held in the cost centre bears in relation to the remainder of the funds held in the member's Bank Account;

9.2.1.3 To provide upon request, but no more frequently than on a quarterly basis, a Statement of Financial Activities in relation to the LAG cost centre; and

9.2.1.4 Such other services as the LAG and the member shall agree.

10 ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION:

10.1 A resolution to alter this Constitution shall not be valid unless:-

10.1.1 Two thirds of the votes cast in relation to the resolution at a general meeting of the LAG (whether annual or special) are in favour; and

10.1.2 Notice (setting out the terms of the proposed alterations) shall have been given to the members not less than 21 clear days before the meeting at which the alteration was proposed.

11 DISSOLUTION:

- LAG.
- 11.1 The LAG may determine that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the
 - 11.2 After doing so it shall call a special general meeting and if such a decision is supported by a majority of two thirds of the votes cast the LAG shall:-
 - 11.2.1 Settle the debts and liabilities of the LAG forthwith, and
 - 11.2.2 Return to the original individual contributors the remaining assets of the LAG in such proportions as the original individual contributions bear to the total original contribution.

Annex D National Park Sub LAG

Remit of the National Park Joint sub-LAG

The Joint sub-LAG will oversee an initial assessment process that will assess projects for delivery against the A&I LDS, the FVL LDS and NP area priorities. It will also ensure that the potential clarifications or information requirements of both LAGs are co-ordinated and addressed upfront, thereby minimising complexities for the applicant and reducing the risk of conflicting decisions being reached once referred to both LAGs for final decision. The Joint sub-LAG will be:

- Concerned with cooperation projects within the National Park Area
- Empowered by the A&I and FVL LAGs to consider, discuss and make recommendations on National Park projects
- Supported by joint-work of the A&I and FVL Development Officers
- Employed on a case-by-case basis and as prompted by the receipt of an Initial Enquiry to either LEADER programme

Composition of the National Park Joint sub-LAG

The Joint sub-LAG will have a standing membership comprised of representatives from the A&I and FVL LAGs. Should a member be unable to participate an alternate will be provided. Individuals will be appointed at the commencement of the new LEADER programme and will comprise the following:

- Chair – Alternate between an A&I or FVL representative from the community sector
- 1 A&I representative from the public sector
- 1 A&I representative from the community sector
- 1 FVL representative from the public sector
- 1 FVL representative from the community sector
- 2 optional representatives – up to 1 additional volunteer from each LAG

As the group will have an assessment role, conflicts of interest will need to be avoided, and where possible will be anticipated in advance. It is worth noting that the National Park Authority is likely to have an interest in most of the projects coming forward as either a project lead, a project facilitator or as a match funder.

Process for National Park Cooperation Projects – Pre Award: Application and Decision

1. Initial Enquiry

The Development Officer will contact their counterpart(s) upon receipt of a relevant Enquiry. Based on technical guidance and fit with the LDS, the Development Officers will check if the project should proceed as a LEADER project. If so, the Development Officers will follow up with any additional information that they would expect the NP Joint sub-LAG to require (e.g. business plans or background reports). The Development Officer(s) will convene a meeting of the NP Joint sub-LAG and will circulate all available information. Members of the respective LAGs will also be contacted with a view to any additional expertise being added to the NP Joint sub-LAG. The NP Joint sub-LAG will discuss the initial information and either proceed with particular points for development or decline the project. The outcome of this discussion will be noted by the Development Officer(s).

2. Development

The Development Officer(s) will work with the applicant to complete a single application, including all necessary associated paperwork and technical compliance.

3. Recommendation by NP Joint sub-LAG

Once the application is ready the Development Officer(s) will re-convene the NP Joint sub-LAG to consider the full application and agree a recommendation for consideration by both LAGs. This will include a common set of requirements for the applicant should the project be successful. The outcome of this discussion will be noted by the Development Officer(s).

4. LAG Decision

Either by email or at the respective next LAG meetings (determined by the size or complexity of the project) the Development Officer(s) will present the project and the recommendation to both LAGs. Members of the LAG will be asked to accept the recommendation of the NP Joint sub-LAG, or reject it. If rejected, a good reason will need to be given. As with all LAG decisions, a vote will be taken should a consensus not be reached. The decision will be minuted.

Conflict of Interest

These arrangements must comply with the governance requirements of the LEADER 2014-20 programme. It is recognised that potential conflicts will need to be carefully monitored and managed. For example, should a standing member of the Joint sub-LAG submit an initial enquiry for a cooperation project they would step down from the Joint sub-LAG and an appropriate alternate would be appointed

Process for National Park Cooperation Projects – Post Award: Administration and Claiming

The process for processing Cooperation Project claims is being developed at a National Level, with an aim to simplify multi-LEADER programme claiming and administration. We expect these new processes to be in place for the start of the 2014-20 programme. Should there be a delay in implementation a 'Lead LAG' will be agreed as the main point of contact for the applicant and the following process will be used in the interim.

1. Paperwork

- a. Programme staff of the Lead LAG to stamp and copy paperwork, pass to programme staff of partner LAG
- b. Partner LAG programme staff to stamp and copy paperwork, return originals to applicant.

2. Questions

- a. Lead LAG programme staff compile a list of questions and send to applicant to respond to, cc Partner LAG programme staff
- b. Partner LAG programme staff add to the list of questions, and send back to Lead LAG programme staff
- c. Lead LAG programme staff forward second list of questions to applicant and follows up responses/any additional paperwork received from applicant

3. Main Contact

- a. Lead LAG programme staff become main point of contact for discussion of any claiming issues, but cc Partner LAG programme staff in emails

4. Payment

- a. Lead LAG programme staff pay their proportion of claim, and recommend to Partner LAG programme staff likewise
- b. Partner LAG programme staff review paperwork is still to their satisfaction and make payment.

Annex E Draft Job Descriptions

LEADER Programme Manager

Section A

Post Title: Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Programme Manager

Location: STEP, Stirling

Reports to post (Title): Chair and Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Local Action Group

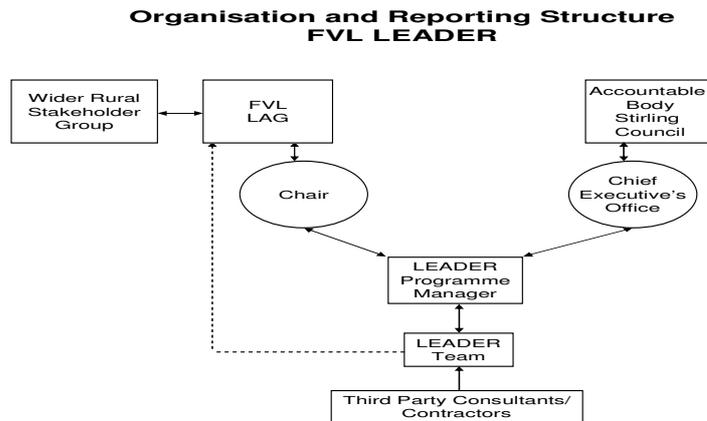
Post Number:

Service: Chief Executive's Office

Section B

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

Line managed by the Chief Executive Office at Stirling Council



Section C

OTHER RESOURCES)

Support Unit budget of £xxx pa and programme budget of £xxxxpa

Section D

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

To ensure the LEADER programme runs efficiently and effectively to stimulate rural economic development and ensuring that full use is made of the LEADER programme by businesses and communities in the Forth Valley and Lomond area.

Section E

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To manage and co-ordinate the implementation and delivery of the Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Local Development Strategy and Business Plan
2. To take overall responsibility for financial and compliance management to ensure robust delivery
3. To liaise with the LEADER Managing Authority, Paying Agency and other national bodies with a rural remit, including the Scottish National Rural Network
4. To ensure the developmental support and advice to potential LEADER applicants within the Programme area is to the highest standard
5. To liaise closely with the Chair and Vice Chair of the LAG in the delivery of the Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Programme
6. To liaise closely with colleagues in Stirling Council to ensure Accountable Body responsibilities are met and prepare reports on progress for the relevant Council Committees
7. To ensure awareness and promotion of LEADER within the Forth Valley and Lomond area is to a high standard, and that the Programme is monitored and evaluated in line with LEADER regulations
8. To ensure that LEADER is responsive to the local situation by liaising with partner organisations to monitor policy and economic developments and to inform partners about projects which may be of interest to them
9. To take lead responsibility for financial control and monitoring of budgets.
10. To take lead responsibility for supporting the LAG in the appraisal of applications presented for funding under LEADER.
11. Line management of the LEADER staff team.
12. Any other duties as may be considered appropriate for this post by the Local Action Group.

Section F

COMMUNICATIONS

Internal: written and oral with the Local Action Group and the Chief Executive Office, economic development, finance, internal audit and other services in Stirling Council

External: written and oral with communities, rural businesses and partner organisations, including other local authorities, Scottish Enterprise,

Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority, FCS, SNH, VisitScotland and others.

Section G

DEMANDS

Excellent communication (oral and written) and influencing skills

Ability to co-ordinate and organise effectively

Project management skills

Negotiating skills

Presentation skills

Financial management skills

Section H

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Some out of hours working will be required to deal with the work patterns of community and voluntary groups. There will also be a requirement to travel throughout the Forth Valley and Lomond area. It is likely that there will occasionally be tight deadlines and a need to work under pressure.

Section I

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Essential Criteria: Educated to a degree level in a relevant discipline or able to demonstrate relevant knowledge and experience
Excellent communication, presentation and interpersonal skills
Organisational abilities
Project management and financial management skills
Experience and knowledge of EU grant schemes
Full UK driving licence required

Desired Criteria: Knowledge and experience of rural development issues
Experience of working within partnership organisations
Some knowledge of marketing and PR

Stirling Council

Job Description

This job description may be amended from time to time dependent on job requirements and Service provision.

Section A

Grading Section

Post Title:

Forth Valley & Lomond
LEADER Development
Officer

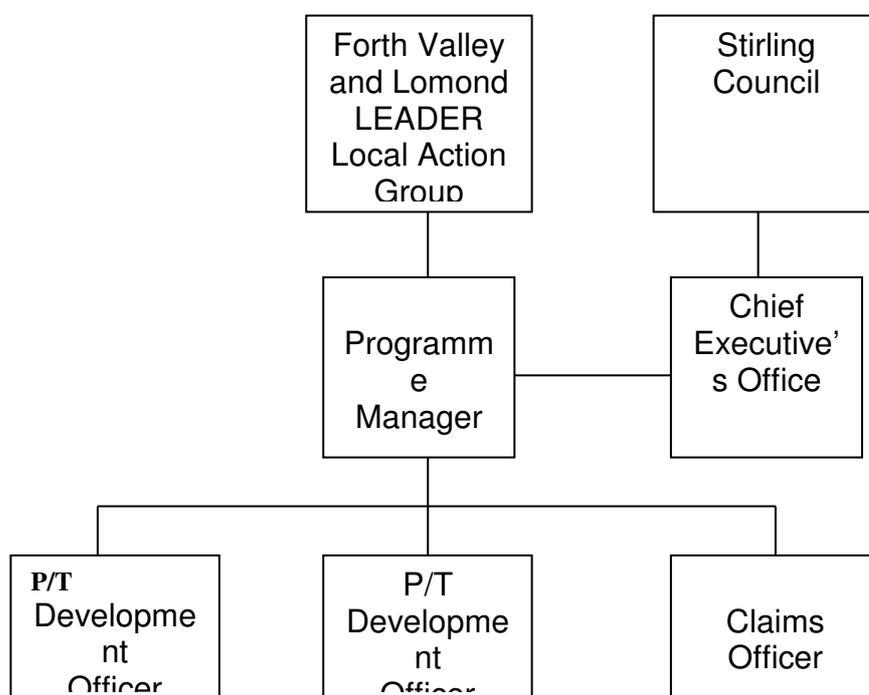
Eval Ref.

Location:		Grade.
Reports to post (Title):	Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER Programme Manager	Date.
Position Number:		
Service:	Chief Executive's Office	
Date:		

Section B

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIP and EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

This section describes the reporting relationships of the job within the immediate organisation and if appropriate has detail of the organisation a tier above and below the job. Also described is responsibility for employees, (if any).



Section C

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE and OBJECTIVES

This section lists the main (headline) responsibilities / accountabilities of the job.

To support the submission of robust and eligible applications to the Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER Programme through the provision of development support to potential and actual applicants, to the benefit of the wider rural economy, businesses and communities in the Forth Valley & Lomond area.

Section D

MAIN DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES

This section provides detail of the main responsibilities / accountabilities. Individual tasks may be included. Note, these are illustrative only and are not exhaustive.

1. To raise awareness of and actively promote the uptake of LEADER by community and business groups within the Forth Valley and Lomond area

2. To provide developmental support and advice to potential LEADER applicants within the Programme area, particularly in areas where LEADER has had less take-up than others
3. To technically assess projects and ensure strategic fit with the Local Development Strategy and the LEADER regulations
4. To work under the direction of the Programme Manager to provide support services to the Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Local Action Group (LAG)
5. To assist the LAG in their appraisal of applications presented for funding under LEADER
6. To respond to LEADER project development requests from the Local Action Group
7. To manage any third party contract management arrangements should the need arise
8. To develop links with rural small businesses and liaise with local small business support partners
9. To learn from and develop rural development networking opportunities
10. To research and support the development of projects which partner with other LEADER partnerships in Scotland, elsewhere in the UK and across Europe
11. To assist project applicants in the development and maintenance of key information and undertake monitoring and evaluation of projects in line with LEADER regulations
12. Ensure that the LEADER Programme is properly publicised and promoted, and that the Communications and Strategy is implemented
13. To take lead responsibility for the management of the website contract and social media to ensure that most effective use is made of the Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER website and social media channels
14. Any other duties as may be considered appropriate for this post by the Local Action Group or Programme Manager.

Section E

RESPONSIBILITY for PHYSICAL ASSETS, DATA and FINANCE

This section details responsibility for **physical assets**, eg. vehicles, buildings, stock control / procurement, **data**, eg computers, record keeping, **finance** eg. budget holding / monitoring / cash handling.

Responsible for keeping the LEADER project files up to date and in order, ensuring a complete audit trail is in place.

Section F

COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

This section notes examples of the individuals or organisations with whom the post holder will come into regular contact, and explains the nature of the communication and level of skill required by the postholder.

Internal: written and oral with LEADER Support Team, the Local Action Group and services in Stirling Council

External: written and oral with community groups, rural businesses and partner organisations, including other local authorities, Scottish Enterprise, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, SNH, VisitScotland.

Section G

MENTAL SKILLS

This section details the level of problem solving, analysis, creativity, forward planning/scheduling required.

Excellent communication (oral and written) and influencing skills

Ability to co-ordinate and organise effectively

Project development/management skills

Presentation skills

Section H

WORKING ENVIRONMENT and PHYSICAL EFFORT

This section details the predominant physical environment of the job e.g. Indoor/outdoor working, hazardous conditions, plus any specific physical effort. Any need for out of hours working will be noted.

Some out of hours working will be required to deal with the work patterns of community and voluntary groups. There will also be a requirement to travel throughout the Forth Valley and Lomond area. It is likely that there will occasionally be tight deadlines and a need to work under pressure within a close-knit team.

Section I

KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS

This section details the knowledge and skills including any qualifications, specific training or experience required.

Essential Criteria: Educated to a degree level in a relevant discipline or able to demonstrate relevant knowledge and experience

Good communication, presentation and interpersonal skills

Organisational abilities

Experience of providing development support to community organisations

Good IT skills

Full UK driving licence required

Desired Criteria: Knowledge and experience of rural development issues

Experience of working within partnership organisations

Knowledge and experience of EU funding rules

LEADER Claims Officer

Job Description

This job description may be amended from time to time dependent on job requirements and Service provision.

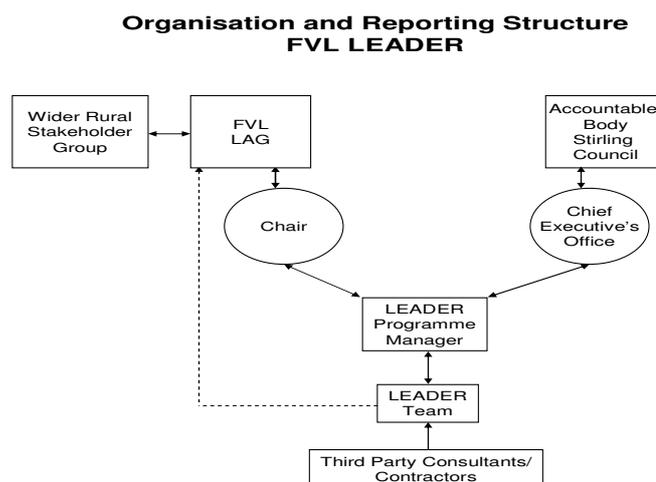
Section A

Post Title: Claims Officer
Location: Viewforth, Stirling
Suitable for job share
Reports to post (Title): LEADER Programme Manager
Post Number:
Service: Chief Executive's Office

Section B

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

Line managed by the LEADER Programme Manager



Section C

OTHER RESOURCES

N/a

Section D

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

To contribute fully to the delivery and development of an effective claims and support service, within the Forth Valley and Lothian LEADER programme.

Section E

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Receiving, checking and co-ordinating the processing of grant claim forms from approved applicants
- Monitoring timeous submission of project claims, resolving any administrative difficulties and alerting the Programme Manager to any claiming problems
- Liaise with Internal Audit as part of role to ensure that projects are fully eligible and compliant
- Development, maintenance and update of in-house spreadsheets, databases and manual programme records
- Ensuring the LARC LEADER database is up to date and accurate
- Design and deliver training on project claiming and other EU monitoring requirements for applicants
- Servicing Local Action Group (LAG) meetings – co-ordination of dates and times, venue arrangements, circulation of papers, minute taking
- Drafting grant offer letters to approved applicants
- Assisting in the monitoring of individual LEADER projects
- Supporting the initial enquiry/application process
- Processing and maintaining records of LEADER expenditure
- Point of contact in absence of manager and team
- Answering queries/providing information
- Any other duties as may be considered appropriate to the post by the Programme Manager

Section F

COMMUNICATIONS

Internal: Written and oral with LEADER staff team, LEADER Local Action Group, economic development, internal audit and other Council services

External: Agencies, the general public, and project applicants, either in person, by e-mail or by telephone.

Section G

DEMANDS

Demonstrate a flexible approach towards performing allocated duties

Ability to work on own initiative

Section H

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Ability to work under pressure individually and as part of a team to meet tight deadlines. Some meetings may be held away from the office and some out of hours working may be required.

Section I

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Essential: At least 2 years relevant experience.
Excellent organisational skills
Experience of operating financial systems
Experience of working with invoices
Good knowledge and experience of Microsoft Office, including Word and Excel.
Experience of minuting meetings

Desirable: HNC or equivalent in Business Administration or other financial qualification
Experience of processing European funding
An understanding of how community organisations work

Annex F LAG Member Application Form and Description **Being a Forth Valley & Lomond(FVL) LEADER**

Local Action Group (LAG) Member

Background:

1. There will be at most 21 LAG members, with at least 51% being ‘community/business’ members (eg from a geographic community, community of interest, community organisation, business person, land manager, farmer etc) and no more than 49% from the public sector / agencies (eg Local Authorities, Community Planning Partnerships, Scottish Enterprise, Visit Scotland, National Park Authority, SNH, Forestry Commission Scotland, Business Gateway etc).
2. The LAG will be chaired by an ‘independent’ member (ie not Local Authority).
3. The LAG, through the Chair, is supported by a team of paid staff who are employed by Stirling Council and based at the STEP John Player Building in Stirling (see Business Plan for the FVL LEADER 2014-2020 Programme).
4. The FVL LAG is intended to be a strong autonomous partnership, responsible for making its own decisions and overseeing the implementation of the FVL Local Development Strategy. It will be responsible for reporting on achievements to the wider community and to the EU (via the Scottish Government, who are the “managing authority” for LEADER).
5. The Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER Programme area is geographically large, covering the rural areas of Clackmannanshire, Stirling and West Dunbartonshire. LAG members will come from across the eligible area, and LAG meetings will take place in different locations across the area.
6. The role of a LAG member is both rewarding and demanding. It offers the privilege of influencing rural development in the FVL LEADER area. There are LAG meetings at least every three months, and sometimes additional short-life ‘sub LAG’ meetings that require LAG volunteers. A LAG meeting will usually last two hours, and will take up more of your time once you factor in travel and preparation. Preparatory reading requires internet access, and will take anything from an evening to a day to consider properly (depending on the number of projects there are for consideration).
7. The Forth Valley and Lomond ‘Local Development Strategy’ for the 2014-2020 FVL LEADER Programme has been approved by the Scottish Government. It was developed over a twelve month period with wide community and agency input. It sets the strategic direction, and will be reviewed and developed by the LAG over the lifetime of the Programme.
8. The LAG will consider project grant applications at LAG meetings, and sometimes by email between meetings. The LAG can also develop and commission projects itself.
9. There will be training available on being a LAG member; on the use of the Scotland-wide LEADER on-line ‘LARC’ system; on the LEADER Programme 2014-2020, as well as the opportunity to attend workshops, conferences and project celebrations. LAG members will be able to refer to the LAG Member Handbook, and Code of Conduct
10. There is a stated aim of recruiting a LAG in which there is an appropriate balance of age, gender and geographical spread; as well as the spread of desirable skills/knowledge. The equalities, skills and geographic balance will be reviewed annually.
11. Attendance at LAG meetings is voluntary and unpaid. Expenses will be reimbursed.

The main Responsibilities of a LAG member are to:

12. Be responsible for the delivery and implementation of the LEADER Programme in the Forth Valley and Lomond area.

13. Act as an ambassador for FVL LEADER, promoting it's opportunities, encouraging applications, developing LAG led projects and sharing it's achievements
14. Follow the LAG member Code of Conduct which includes declaring any interest in and absenting oneself from project discussions in which you have an interest, and respecting LAG, project and business confidentiality.

The main Tasks of a LAG member are to:

15. Monitor the implementation of the Programme as a whole
16. Ensure that a fair and transparent appraisal system is followed for applications for LEADER project funding
17. Read project applications and supporting documentation prior to a LAG meeting.
18. Submit a 'score' for each application (against set criteria) via website, prior to the LAG meeting
19. Attend the LAG meeting, take part in project application discussions, vote on whether they should be approved for LEADER funding, and if there are to be specific conditions, develop what these conditions might be.
20. Ensure that project monitoring is undertaken, which at times may mean volunteering to attend LEADER project events and opening celebrations

Knowledge, Skills and Experience required are to:

21. Approach the role in a fashion that uses your skills as someone who
 - can approach discussion and decisions from a LAG-wide perspective
 - uses their experience of economic/community development; of the Strategic Themes, and of the rural FVL area (see Essential Skills in attached Skills Checklist)
22. Bring your knowledge and experience of living and/or working in the FVL LEADER area to the role (see Desirable Skills in attached Skills Checklist). Selection of who becomes a LAG member will be based on the Skills Matrix to ensure that as a group, the LAG brings the required range of skills to the table.
23. Listen to other people's points of view, and reach a consensus decision.

Next Steps:

24. Please complete the attached Application Form, and the Skills Checklist, and return them by **XXXX** to:-

xxxxx

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. We can also put you in contact with previous LAG members if you wish to ask them about the role.

25. The 'FVL LEADER 2014-2020 Stakeholder Group' has a subgroup which, together with the Programme Manager, will cross-check all applications against essential skills, desirable skills, required community/agency ratio and age/gender/geography balance. We hope to let you hear the outcome of your application by the end of March.

FVL LAG MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

1. Contact Details

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

(the best number to reach you on)

Email:

2. Are you applying as an employee of a public sector / agency organisation?

If Yes, please state which.....

Please provide Job Title

3. Are you applying as a community / business member?

If Yes, please state whether employed / self-employed / retired / unemployed / student

As applicable, please state the name of your employer / nature of your business / previous employment / course studying

4. Are you a volunteer with a community organisation?

If Yes, please state which

5. Interest in LEADER and the 'partnership' way of working

(Please tell us about any involvement that you have had with LEADER and/or in other partnership initiatives)

--

6. Please tell us about any previous involvement with European Funding, Community Development or Economic Development which may be of relevance

7. Skills and knowledge you would bring to the LAG

*(Please complete the attached **Skills Checklist**, and expand on any of the skills you have marked, as well as other knowledge and experience you would bring to the LAG)*

Essential Skills:-

Desirable Skills:-

8. Availability to attend meetings

(Please tell us about any time limitations you may have in relation to attending regular meetings either in the daytime or evenings)

Do you have any questions you would like to ask about LEADER or the LAG?

Signed

Date

REMEMBER TO COMPLETE AND RETURN THE **SKILLS CHECKLIST** TOO.

Annex G Proposed LAG Skills & Skills Matrix

Selection of LAG members will be based on skills brought to the table and geography (ie West Dunbartonshire, Stirling, Clackmannanshire and within/outwith National Park area). These skills will be shared by all LAG members (be they community or agency members).

Skills have been split into ‘essential’ and ‘desirable’ whereby all LAG members will require to have all the essential skills and one or more of the desirable skills.

Essential Skills:

- 1. Able to think on a LAG area wide basis**
- 2. Have experience of economic or community development**
- 3. Experience of one (or more) of the five strategic areas**
- 4. Experience and knowledge of the area**

Desirable Skills:

Strengthening the Rural Economy

1. Knowledge/Experience of “Strategic” Economic and Tourism Development (knowledgeable of wider economic factors)
2. Experience of Running a Business or Supporting Business
3. Experience of Practical Marketing
4. Experience of Reading and Assessing Business Plans and Accounts
5. Knowledge of Broadband Infrastructure Options or ICT Take-Up by Communities and Businesses
6. Knowledge/Experience of the Skills Sector in a Rural Context
7. Able to Provide a Link with Other EU Funding Available

Sustainable Communities

8. Experience of Working with Young People and/or with Different Age Groups
9. Knowledge of Business Opportunities in FVL Area
10. Awareness of Equality Issues & Barriers
11. Experience of Managing a Construction Project
12. Experience of Managing a Community Asset (regardless of ownership)
13. Experience of Taking a Community Asset into Community Ownership
14. Experience of Co-operative Community Working

15. Other Community Experience

Resilient Communities

16. Experience/Knowledge of local Economic Development
 17. Experience of Businesses and Communities Working Together
 18. Knowledge/Experience of Low Carbon Technologies and Activities
 19. Experience of Development Cycling Infrastructure Projects
 20. Experience of Practical Solutions to Community Problems
 21. Experience of Social Enterprise
- #### Access to/Understanding of Natural and Cultural Environment
22. Knowledge of Access Legislation or Experience of Finding Solutions to Access Issues
 23. Experience of Working with Land Owners/Managers
 24. Experience of Running Environmental Projects
 25. Experience/Knowledge of the Cultural Heritage Sector

Strategic Landscape Assets

26. Awareness/Understanding of the Challenges of Multiple Land Owners & Interests
27. Familiarity with the Landscape Scale Plans and Strategies which Cover the FVL Area
28. Experience of Delivering Landscape Scale Projects

Annex H Programme Budget

See attached Excel spreadsheet