

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014 - 2020

Measure 19 – LEADER

Scheme Objectives;

- *To use the LEADER approach to encourage people to become involved in improving and developing their rural communities*
- *To generate innovative ways of strengthening the capability of and confidence in rural areas to help sustain long-term development in Wales*
- *To promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas*

STATEMENT OF CONTROL REQUIREMENTS;

This document and associated evidence is a requirement of the **Local Development Strategy** approval.

Evidence to be provided on the controls in place to manage and monitor the Local Action Group delivery activity, including;

- Terms of Reference
- Detail of control processes i.e. systems and management of segregation of duties
- Project Submission & Selection Criteria (process for project selection and criteria, and on-going project submissions)
- Organisation Chart (Running Cost & Animation staff structure only)
- Co-operation activity

	<p>CONTROL DESCRIPTION</p> <p><i>** Clearly describe the processes in place to ensure this control requirement is met. For example; the Terms of Reference sets out x controls and will be monitored by x and y.</i></p>	<p>KEY DOCUMENT / DATABASES/TOOLS</p> <p><i>** list the documents and or finance systems or databases to be used to manage and monitor the programme</i></p>
<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE</p>		
<p>The Terms of Reference will set out how the LAG’s corporate governance arrangements will be put in place and managed and how the administrative functions will be undertaken.</p> <p>These will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Led Local Development shall be “led by local action groups composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, in which, at the decision-making level neither public authorities, as defined in accordance with national rules, nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the voting rights (Section 1) • Key Issues must be addressed (as listed in LEADER Guidance Notes page 26): 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As the LAG is inclusive it needs to evolve to meet the changing needs of the area and priorities of the strategy. The LAG is therefore made up of a group of natural persons who represent businesses, local organisations, public authorities and other representation of local civic society to include a representative from the Administrative Body. The LAG seeks to be gender balanced and have a fair representation of specific target groups addressed by the LDS e.g. young people, disadvantaged groups, vulnerable groups, etc. To avoid conflicts of interest neither the public authorities nor any single interest group will have more than 49% of the voting rights at the decision-making level of the LAG; The LAG will ensure that at least 51% of votes in selection decisions are cast by members that are NOT public authorities and allow selection by written procedure. This is to ensure an inclusive and transparent process, diversity in the strategy and a reasonable spread of the projects across a range of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Development Strategy • Internal finance spreadsheets mirroring the WEFO PPIMS Gateway • Web site for presenting:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full explanation of the LEADER programme in the LAG area; ○ Project calls; ○ Draft Application, Checklist and Financial Delivery Profile; ○ Application template; ○ Funding awards granted; ○ Funding awards declined; and ○ Funding awards under consideration. • Database for the control, contact and recording of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interest groups; ○ Welsh LAG contacts;

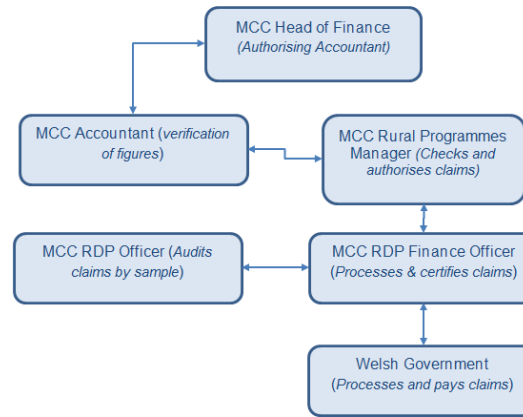
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How LAG membership is to be agreed (Section 2) • How sectoral representation is to be managed (Section 3) • How wider stakeholders and interested parties are to be kept informed (Section 4) • How meetings are to be conducted and recorded. (Section 5) • How a quorum is to be determined (Section 6) • How conflicts of interest are to be recorded and managed. (Section 7) • How project selection criteria are to be determined (Section 4) • How appeals are to be managed (Section 4) • LAG constitution must represent three sectors; Public, Private and Third and it is recommended that 	<p>different sectors;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The LAG is composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, in which, at the decision-making level neither public authorities nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the quorum as stated in Commission Regulation 1303/2013 Article 32.2(b). 3. Changes to the membership will not be permitted if they result in the 49/51% balance being unachievable. Any new membership applications will be considered by the LAG at the next available meeting or through written procedures. Successful applicants will be invited to attend the next available meeting/ event. Unsuccessful applicants will be written to by the Chair, outlining the reasons why their application was rejected. 4. To raise awareness of the programme the LAG will prepare, select and approve projects on a rolling basis. In preparing for the receipt of proposals the LAG will define the selection criteria. The LAG will then receive and assess applications for support; Select projects and activities, fix the amount of support and, where relevant, present the proposals to the Administrative Body for final verification of eligibility before approval. The LAG will also ensure that written working procedures, rules and structures for decision-making are in place to guarantee the selection of projects is consistent with the objectives of the LDS whilst indicating how this will operate in an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WG /WEFO contacts; ○ Funding requests; ○ Funding awards; ○ PI records; ○ Thematic balancing; and ○ Date and time record of contact details.
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<p>the LAG should be not less than 18 members. (Section 8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual members should represent only one organisation for the purposes of LAG constitution (Section 8) • Detail the management of Single Interest Groups. (Section 9) 	<p>instance of any conflict of interest. If a project is rejected, a full explanation will be recorded on how the decision was reached. A mechanism is in place to allow the project to be resubmitted provided defined caveats are met; and ensure that appeals made against a project decision are dealt with in a fair and open manner and that any opportunity for resubmission are considered.</p> <p>In addition the LAG will hold a launch event and will undertake regular awareness raising activities such as themed events, the issuing of press releases, the launch of the website, social media activities, etc. A database of stakeholders is also being developed to enable direct mail opportunities.</p> <p>5. The LAG will meet at least four times a year with the Chair given discretion to call additional meetings as and when necessary. The Administrative Body will provide secretariat support to the LAG and its members. LAG meetings will be held at a venue within the programme area whenever possible, but may be located elsewhere to ensure full participation of members at all times if required. The Chair (in conjunction with the groups Secretariat) will have the right to invite representatives of other bodies to the Local Action Group to discuss particular issues where necessary. A LAG meeting will be postponed, but continued with no voting decisions being made if less than 51% of non-public sector LAG members are present. An</p>	
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	<p>agenda will be circulated at least one week before each meeting. Members with significant items for discussion must notify the Programme Team of these two weeks prior to the meeting to ensure they are included on the agenda. Minutes will be kept to record all decisions made by the LAG and to minimise the risk of any conflict of interest issues. Where a conflict of interest arises a note will be made in the minutes. The LAG may establish Task and Finish working groups to undertake specific areas of work on its behalf, as and when required. Working Group members may include both LAG members and others co-opted for their specific skills.</p> <p>6. The quorum for a LAG meeting will be 8 members of which 51% will be non-public sector LAG members.</p> <p>7. Declaration of Interests at meetings: - LAG members will be required to declare any interests in relation to programme issues and projects put before the LAG for discussion at the start of the meeting or raise them as they arise on the agenda. Early advice is therefore encouraged so that the RDP Programme Team can advise accordingly.</p> <p>When declaring an interest, the LAG member must specify the nature of the interest, and whether it is personal or prejudicial. The minutes of the meeting must record the fact that a declaration has been made and by whom.</p> <p>If a LAG member declares a prejudicial</p>	
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	<p>interest, they must remain silent during the meeting while the matter concerned is under discussion.</p> <p>LAG members will not be able to vote on an issue if they have declared a prejudicial interest;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. The minimum number of members on the LAG at any time will be 18 who represent the public, private and third sectors. There will be no more than one third plus one individual members from each sector and each LAG member must represent only one sector. 9. Only individuals from within the LAG area or with a sectoral interest in the delivery of the programme will be eligible to apply for membership. 10. There will be 2 Vice-Chairs 	
<p>DETAILS OF CONTROL PROCESSES</p>		

- Ensure no official performs one of those tasks without his work coming under the supervision of a second official by:
- That Staff training is appropriate at all levels of operation, and there is a policy for rotating staff in sensitive positions, or alternatively for increased supervision by:



The figure above details the organisational structure indicating the division of duties with regard to the LAG claim procedures. As the diagram indicates there is no individual with responsibility for more than one of the tasks of authorising, paying, or accounting for the funding. No officer within the Administrative Body will perform one of the tasks without their work being under the supervision of a second officer. Since the initial Local Development Strategy was submitted to Welsh Government, payments are now processed through the Rural Payments Wales (RPW) division of Welsh Government via an on-line claims submission portal. RPW themselves audit the claims and record any errors for the Rural Finance Officer to correct or explain their rationale.

- Training needs analysis will be undertaken to identify the skills gaps or training needs in the team and prioritise them;

Officer training requirement and completed record.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once identified the next step is to ask the team members what relevant skills they want to improve through training; • Any training needed will need to be relevant and focused and guided by SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-limited) objectives; • Learning preferences will also be taken into account as it is likely that each team member will prefer to learn differently. Different training options will be considered and training preferences acknowledged; • A personal development plan will be formulated for each team member. This will help prioritise training needs to identify the best way to address them; • Various options are likely to be considered e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ‘Off the shelf’ training for generic skills requirements e.g. marketing, capacity building, etc. ○ ‘In house training’ or ‘on the job’ training to enable team members to learn at pace and to apply new knowledge immediately. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'Job Shadowing' to enable new employees to cover a lot of ground in a short space of time. ○ Mentoring to encourage team members to engage with others outside the team or MCC and consider different opportunities and solutions to problems. ○ Conferences, seminars, workshops and course so the RDP team members can engage with employees from other areas and benefit from cross border learning to discover how other RDP programmes are operating; ○ Online courses to enable team members to progress at their own pace and complete the course at work or home; ● A budget has been set aside within the running and animation costs to cover any external training required; and ● RDP team members will be asked to review their training experiences to ascertain if their training is relevant and appropriate and to discuss how their new skills can be 	
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	<p>implemented. This will be ascertained via regular one to ones or using MCC's 'Check in Check Out' appraisal process</p> <p>The Administrative Body will implement business continuity arrangements as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff involved with the Running Costs Programme will be aware of all officer's roles and responsibilities. The Rural Programmes Officer will be aware and receive training in the finance functions and the management functions. The Rural Programmes Finance Officer will assume the LAG secretariat function should it be required. • All staff employed within the Animation Programme will be involved in each other's projects ensuring an appreciation of the programme development as a whole. 	
<p>PROJECT SUBMISSION & SELECTION CRITERIA</p>		
<p>The tasks of a LEADER LAG are set out in Article 34 of Commission regulations 1303 - 2013 (the Common Provisions Regulation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drawing up a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations, which avoid conflicts of interest, ensure that at least 50 % of the votes in selection decisions are cast by partners which are not public 	<p>The LAG has designed a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of projects and activities which will be delivered using RDP funding; The LAG will ensure that projects and activities demonstrate coherence with the LDS and are prioritised according to the weighting given to the theme and their subsequent contribution to meeting the objectives and targets of the strategy;</p> <p>The LAG will:</p>	<p>Register to record the full details of all projects that have submitted a Draft Application, or a full application for funding and the outcome arrived at. This document will be in addition to the minutes recorded at a LAG meeting where proposals for funding are being considered.</p>

<p>authorities, and allow selection by written procedure;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring coherence with the community-led local development strategy when selecting operations, by prioritising those operations according to their contribution to meeting that strategy's objectives and targets; • preparing and publishing calls for proposals or an ongoing project submission procedure, including defining selection criteria; • receiving and assessing applications for support; • selecting operations and fixing the amount of support and, where relevant, presenting the proposals to the body responsible for final verification of eligibility before approval; • monitoring the implementation of the community-led local development strategy and the operations supported and carrying out specific evaluation activities linked to that strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Receive proposals for projects and activities including defining selection criteria. Templates will be provided for the initial Draft Application which will take into account the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How the proposal meets the objectives of one or more the supported themes; ▪ How the objectives of the cross-cutting themes are satisfied; ▪ The sustainability of the project as a mainstream opportunity; ▪ Extent to which the Draft Application responds to identified need and is supported by evidence of prospective demand; ▪ The extent of the rural communities being supported; and ▪ That the level of financial support is proportionate to the return on investment and targets associated with the Performance Indicators. <p>The Draft Applications will be refined between the Animation Programme Coordinator and the applicant. It may be necessary to employ the services of a specialist in the area of the proposal. Providing the Draft Applications meet the objectives of</p>	
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	<p>the Strategy and are eligible, a completed application will be submitted by the beneficiary for funding to support the proposal; The LAG itself may wish to support projects that come directly from its membership. These projects may not be community led but be high level in nature such as raising awareness of the themes. For example showing what renewable energy means and its associated technologies. A direct application for funding would be prepared by a Rural Programmes Coordinator on behalf of a particular LAG thematic group for presentation to a LAG meeting for its consideration;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Receipt and assessment of applications for support will be assessed initially through the Animation Programme by the Rural Programmes Coordinator responsible for this proposal and the LAG members(s) with an interest in the achievements that the proposal would address; ○ Selection of projects and activities, agreement of the amount of support and, where relevant, presentation of the proposals to the Administrative Body for final verification of eligibility before approval; 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The LAG interest group will vote on whether an application is fit for submission to the full LAG for approval. At least 50% score against a scoring template must be achieved to allow the application to proceed. ○ The Animation team will ensure that written working procedures, rules and structures for decision-making are in place to guarantee the selection of projects is consistent with the objectives of the LDS whilst indicating how this will operate in an instance of any conflict of interest; ○ The LAG Chair will ensure that at least 51% of votes in selection decisions are cast by members that are NOT public authorities and allow selection by written procedure; ○ Voting on projects by written procedure will be permitted in cases where opportunities for project support may be missed. The written procedure ensures that the following controls are recorded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Papers are circulated by the secretariat to the LAG members; ▪ Members have a 21 working day opportunity to vote on an application which may be for example electronically; ▪ Any NO votes by members may have comments 	
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	<p>recorded that recommend the resubmission of an application;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That at least 50% of the LAG vote; ▪ That at least 51% of the votes are in agreement with the proposal; ▪ That there are at least 51% of non-public sector LAG members in agreement with the proposal; ▪ That any single interest group will not have more than 49% of the voting rights at the decision-making level of the LAG; ▪ That members with a declared conflict of interest will not vote; and ▪ The LAG secretariat will ensure that all the above conditions are met, and the results circulated to the LAG membership within one week of the end of the vote. The result will be recorded as a minute at the next full LAG meeting. <p>○ Where a project is rejected, the appointed Animation team officer will ensure a full explanation is recorded on how the decision was</p>	
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	<p>reached to ensure a mechanism is in place to allow the project to be resubmitted providing defined caveats are met; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Rural Programmes Manager will ensure that any appeals made against a project decision dealt with in a fair and open manner and that any opportunity for resubmission are considered. <p>The LAG will monitor the implementation of the LDS and the projects that are supported and carry out specific evaluation activities linked to the LDS.</p>	
<p>The Local Development Strategy (LDS) will be reviewed annually throughout the RDP Programme</p>	<p>Statement taken from the Local Development Strategy: Ensure that financial and monitoring targets for the LDS are set and met and reviewed regularly to include an annual re-assessment by Welsh Government;</p>	
<p>ORGANISATION STRUCTURES</p>		
<p>Organisational structures must ensure the correct separation of duties between officials.</p> <p><i>** only supply staff structures for Running Cost & Animation functions</i></p>	<p>Rural Programmes Manager is responsible for the management of the team. The Rural Programmes Finance Officer is responsible for the finances of the Running, Animation costs and Implementation costs and the Rural Programmes Officer for the secretariat of the LAG.</p> <p>Rural Programme Manager is also responsible for the Rural Programme Coordinators and delivery of the Animation Programme.</p>	

	<p>The section above “DETAIL OF CONTROL PROCESSES” describes the correct segregation of duties between officials.</p>	
<p>COOPERATION</p>		
<p>Co-operation element of LEADER;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a mandatory element of the LEADER measure – there is a requirement that each LAG must undertake at least one co-operation project or activity during the Programme. Eligibility and selection criteria should follow the same approach used for projects implemented under the LDS 	<p>Statement taken from the Local Development Strategy: ‘Ensure that as a mandatory requirement a minimum of one cooperation project is supported which may be inter-regional or transnational in nature’;</p> <p>Examples of cooperation activity have been included in the LDS.</p> <p>Assessment of Co-operation projects will follow the same steps and criteria as detailed in Project Submission and Selection Criteria section above.</p>	

LOCAL ACTION GROUP REPRESENTATIVE	
Signed:	
Name:	Pamela Mason
Chair / Vice-Chair LAG:	Chair
Date:	22nd April 2021

ADMINISTRATIVE BODY REPRESENTATIVE	
Signed:	
Name:	Michael Powell
Position in Administrative Body:	Rural Programmes Manager
Date:	22nd April 2021