

## ARIA Fund LAG (A-LAG) MEETING

24<sup>th</sup> Aug 2022

9:30 – 11:30am

Virtual – MS Teams

### Attendees

#### LAG Members

Jean Brown (JB) (signal intermittent)

Sarah Baird (SB)

Eddie Bulik (EB)

Chris Campbell (CC)

Barbara Conner (BC)

Bruce Davidson (BD)

Emma McMullen (EM)

Jim Watson (JW), LAG Chair

#### LAG Advisors

Sarah Smillie (SS)

#### LAG Staff

Angela Lamont, (AL), Co-ordinator

#### Other

Mike Newall (MN), Lead Partner, South Ayrshire Council (SAC)

#### Apologies

Kevin Brown (KB)

Christine Cuthbertson (CCu)

Angela McWhinnie (AMcW)

Jamie Tait (JT)

<b>Welcome/Introductions</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>JW welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended the welcome to new LAG Members in attendance: BC, EB and EMcM. AL reported JT and AMcW had also become members but could not attend. She noted the acceptance from Volunteer Action South Ayrshire (VASA) and The Ayrshire Community Trust ( also representing Arran Council of Voluntary Service (CVS)) but said she had still to receive confirmation from Council of Voluntary Organisations (CVO) East Ayrshire.</p> <p><b>Quorum</b> The meeting had 8 LAG Members in attendance from a possible 13 so had the required 50% quorum. It however featured 50:50 non-public: public members and JB (non-public) did not participate in decisions because of an intermittent internet connection, so therefore did not meet the 51:49 non-public: public split. Items for approval were therefore taken to the full LAG for approval post-meeting by written procedure.</p> <p><b>Approval of Previous (10<sup>th</sup> Aug 22) Meeting Minutes</b> The meeting minutes were approved. The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New vs continued projects. Costs of new projects were approved at the last meeting, but AL raised again the validity of costs from continuing projects as these can be equally valuable. SB agreed, citing the gap between the Community Renewal Fund and Shared</li></ul>	<p>AL to seek written LAG approval on amending guidance to include</p>

<p>Prosperity Fund funding as an example of where there is a need, and proposed these be allowed. The LAG agreed. <b>Decision to be approved by written procedure.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First project assessment meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 22. This meeting was to be held virtually, but Chair JW raised the point that that discussion tends to be richer at in person meetings and proposed this be held as such. This was agreed, with hybrid facilities available for those who cannot attend. The mop up assessment meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct 22 would still be held virtually.</li> </ul> <p>AL ran through the actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AL/JW to raise possibility of upfront payments to LPs from 23/24 with SG later in 22/23. <b>To be completed (TBC)/continued.</b></li> <li>• AL/Project Officer to monitor projects split by area as they come in, to strive for fair split among LA areas. <b>TBC/continued.</b></li> <li>• AL to provide key information on applicant accounts pre-assessment, and short training session for LAG on this, time permitting. <b>TBC/continued.</b></li> <li>• AL to send dates to LAG Members/set up meetings. <b>Completed apart from early Oct 22 meeting.</b></li> <li>• AL to draft summary of fund for Comms Teams. <b>Completed.</b></li> <li>• AL to present priorities in meaningful form for communities. <b>Completed, in application form/guidance.</b></li> <li>• MM to forward AL Investing in Communities Fund climate change guidance. <b>Completed.</b></li> <li>• EM/FA/AL/JW to decide on best LAG Member rep for NAC. <b>Completed – EM.</b></li> <li>• MN to consult SAC Thriving Communities for most appropriate LAG Member rep. <b>Completed – JT.</b></li> <li>• AL to contact VASA, TACT, CVO EA &amp; Arran CVS for LAG Member representation. <b>Completed – BC/AMcW.</b></li> <li>• AL to pursue LAG Advisor representation for new priority themes, disability groups and groups from areas of deprivation from autumn 22. <b>TBC/continued.</b></li> <li>• LAG to contact JW/AL with ideas of LAG led projects. <b>Completed.</b></li> <li>• AL to advise on late Aug LAG meeting. <b>Completed.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Conflicts of Interest</b></p> <p>AL noted there may be a conflict of interest with BC in Updates/Project Officer Bid as TACT were submitting a bid, and with EM, SB and SS in Potential Project as the prospective North Ayrshire Council (NAC) Community Wealth Building conference was being discussed. It was agreed to discuss both at the end and all agreed to leave.</p>	<p>continuing as well as new projects.</p> <p>AL to circulate 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 22 meeting to be held in person.</p>
<p><b>Updates</b></p> <p><b>ICT</b></p> <p>AL reported South Ayrshire Council (SAC) were providing a generic email address for the fund – <a href="mailto:aria@south-ayrshire.gov.uk">aria@south-ayrshire.gov.uk</a>, and had provided a phone number which diverts through to an officer’s mobile – 01292 616 444. AL also reported online storage system Dropbox seemed to be the best solution for allowing the LAG access to application documents for assessment and would seek the most secure version. There was general, informal agreement to this.</p>	

<p><b>Internal Audit</b> AL reported Internal Audit had been helpful in the review of the application documents, and that items had been added into the application form/guidance to align. She requested assistance proof reading the applicant guidance, to which BD, MN and JW volunteered.</p> <p><b>Grant Award Letter</b> AL reported the grant award letter from SG had been received by SAC and was awaiting signature/return. MN reported he was awaiting Finance to complete the form but it would be returned on time.</p> <p><b>Map Feedback</b> AL said she would resend the link for the eligible area GIS map for the LAG to test and identify potential issues.</p>	<p>BD/MN/JW to proof read applicant guidance ahead of fund launch.</p> <p>MN to return SG grant award letter.</p> <p>AL to send link to eligible area map for LAG to test.</p>
<p><b>Application Form Approval</b> AL introduced the proposed application form for the fund, saying the intention was to make it available on Word, continuing with the format of the LEADER documents. Suggestions arose about using a. a web form, or b.a PDF fillable form. AL expressed concern at the lead in time required for a web form, and issues she had experienced with Microsoft (to one suggestion) but said she would investigate the PDF version.</p> <p>AL ran through the sections of the form gathering feedback from members. This included space for applicants to indicate how they would achieve the fund priorities, highlighting the 300 word maximum and making any reference to costs clear they relate to eligible costs. AL to make the changes and send to LAG for final approval.</p>	<p>AL to investigate fillable PDF for application form.</p> <p>AL to amend application form and send to LAG for final approval.</p>
<p><b>Logo Vote</b> AL presented the 3 versions of the logo to the LAG for an informal vote on their preference. Option 1 which depicted both land and sea was chosen, with the request that the wording be made bolder and moved up into the body of the picture. AL to action.</p>	<p>AL to revert to graphic designer for final changes to logo.</p>
<p><b>Founding Document Discussion – Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/Constitution</b> AL reported she had been in touch with Inspiring Scotland/affiliated lawyers about the ARIA fund founding documents, aware that a constituted group (as Ayrshire LAG were) is the most open, risky structure, with little to limit liability of members. She countered this could be reduced through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having an MoU in place for the partnership between SAC and LAG which clearly defined roles and responsibilities, with transactions falling to SAC.</li> <li>• Removal of clauses mentioning transactions from the constitution.</li> <li>• Liability insurance.</li> </ul> <p>The LAG showed interest in the above. MN stated the MoU would be passed by SAC’s legal team, and SB requested sight to do the same with NAC. JW stated it opened the discussion to a possible future structure of the LAG and that liability insurance, meantime, would offer double protection. CC commented that an MoU would be useful for a third party to see how the fund operates.</p>	

<p>AL ran through suggested updates to the constitution, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To continue with the Management Support Group/Thematic Action Groups or replace with an 'Executive Team'.</li> <li>• Extending it to LAG Advisors as well as Members, including the maximum number.</li> <li>• Limiting the quorum to 10 if LAG Member numbers rose to &gt;20.</li> </ul> <p>AL also ran through changes to reduce liability of members, through removing clauses on transactions and adding a liability limiting clause if combined with insurance. KB, MN and JW to take forward in a short life working group. AL suggested a deadline of mid-Sept 22 to establish the MoU/make the changes, in good time before project assessments/money allocation.</p> <p>SB raised ensuring clarity was put in place for the Lead Partner representative's non-voting role on the LAG. AL said this would be included in the constitution/MoU.</p>	<p>KB/MN/JW to establish MoU/amend constitution in short life working group with deadline of mid-Sept 22.</p> <p>Lead Partner representative's non-voting role on LAG to be made clear in constitution/MoU.</p>
<p><b>Updates (Continued) – Project Officer Bid</b> BC left the meeting for this discussion with a potential conflict of interest.</p> <p>A potential conflict had arisen with VASA and TACT being representative on the LAG board and a bid they were jointly submitting for the Project/Claims Officer tender. AL had received assurance that the Project/Claims Officer would not be either BC or AMcW who were on the LAG. AL asked the LAG if the register/conflicts of interest process would cover this and preclude BC/AMcW leaving the LAG and the response was generally yes.</p> <p>The following points were raised to give extra assurance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It be made clear to the Project/Claims Officer that they would work for the LAG under this contract as opposed to VASA/TACT.</li> <li>• Discussions with applicants/applications are confidential.</li> <li>• Time should be recorded to show work on the contract cf. mainstay VASA/TACT work.</li> <li>• BC/AMcW be asked to amend their Register of Interest (ROI) form following the prospective appointment.</li> </ul>	<p>AL to seek written LAG approval that register/conflict of interest process is sufficient to cover VASA/TACT sitting on LAG and providing Project/Claims Officer.</p> <p>AL communicate to VASA/TACT demarcation of ARIA/mainstay work, application confidentiality and to seek amended ROI form from BC/AMcW.</p>
<p><b>Potential Project</b> EM had approached AL previously about potential funding for a forthcoming Community Wealth Building (CWB) conference hosted in North Ayrshire. She gave a brief description of the project and she, SB and SS left the meeting with potential conflicts of interest. The remaining LAG Members discussed the project based on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential draw for rural/islands beneficiaries across Scotland – hybrid event. This could counter the conference not being held in the eligible area – Saltcoats Town Hall.</li> <li>• PM session with rural/islands focus delivered with Scottish Rural Network (SRN)/SG Islands team.</li> <li>• Backing from the Rural Communities Team.</li> <li>• Applicant is NAC. Previous decision at 10<sup>th</sup> Aug 22 meeting to allow applicants from Local Authorities where they are delivered by a board</li> </ul>	

<p>displaying wider community/third sector/private representation only. Question over whether this applies here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision also at 10<sup>th</sup> Aug 22 meeting to preclude statutory duties from applications as with LEADER. The wording 'core functions' was also used but there was agreement this can be ambiguous so it will be removed from the guidance. This was seen as a clarification rather than a substantive change so would not require wider LAG approval. Question as to whether CWB within NAC economic development is a statutory duty.</li> <li>• A question on additionality: would the conference go ahead anyway, without the ARIA grant, being aware of the monies made available to NAC/the Ayrshire LAs for CWB by SG.</li> </ul> <p>A decision was made for AL to revert to the applicant covering the above points, running past the full LAG prior to sending. The conclusion was an application could be made with clarification/ a case for the above points and it would be assessed as routine.</p>	<p>AL to remove 'core functions' wording associated with statutory duties from guidance.</p> <p>AL to revert to EM with advice on CWB conference application running past LAG first.</p>
<p><b>AOCB &amp; Next Meeting</b> Date of next meeting – Wed 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 22, to cover claims guidance, funding agreement and scoring, held on Teams.</p>	<p>AL to send MS Teams invite for 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 22 LAG meeting.</p>

## Actions

### Continued

- AL/JW to raise possibility of upfront payments to LPs from 23/24 with SG **later in 22/23**.
- AL/Project Officer to monitor projects split by area as they come in, to strive for fair split among LA areas.
- AL to provide key information on applicant accounts pre-assessment, and short training session for LAG on this, time permitting.
- AL to pursue LAG Advisor representation for new priority themes, disability groups and groups from areas of deprivation from **autumn 22**.

### New

- AL to seek written LAG approval on amending guidance to include continuing as well as new projects.
- AL to circulate 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 22 meeting to be held in person.
- BD/MN/JW to proof read applicant guidance ahead of fund launch.
- MN to return SG grant award letter.
- AL to send link to eligible area map for LAG to test.
- AL to investigate fillable PDF for application form.
- AL to amend application form and send to LAG for final approval.
- AL to revert to graphic designer for final changes to logo.
- KB/MN/JW to establish MoU/amend constitution in short life working group with deadline of mid-Sept 22.
- Lead Partner representative's non-voting role on LAG to be made clear in constitution/MoU.
- AL to seek written LAG approval that register/conflict of interest process is sufficient to cover VASA/TACT sitting on LAG and providing Project/Claims Officer.
- AL communicate to VASA/TACT demarcation of ARIA/mainstay work, application confidentiality and to seek amended ROI form from BC/AMcW.
- AL to remove 'core functions' wording associated with statutory duties from guidance.
- AL to revert to EM with advice on CWB conference application running past LAG first.
- AL to send MS Teams invite for 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 22 LAG meeting.

*James Watson*

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Chair