

Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Rural Policy

21st May 2014

5.45 – 7.30pm, Scottish Parliament Committee Room 5

Coastal Community Regeneration

Minutes (Approved)

Present

John Grieve	FARNET (Speaker)
Alistair Prior	Scottish Government (Speaker)
Tony Crosbie	Big Lottery Fund (Speaker)
Allison Mathews	Big Lottery Fund (Speaker)
Alan Laidlaw	The Crown Estate (Speaker)
Paul Bancks	The Crown Estate (Speaker)
Alex Fergusson	MSP (Chair and Co-convenor)
Graeme Dey	MSP (Co-convenor)
Claire Baker	MSP (Co-convenor)
Jim Hume	MPS (Co-convenor)
Bryan McGrath	Scottish Borders Council
Christina Noble	Here We Are
Corinne Baulcomb	SRUC
Dave Sherlock	South Ayrshire Council
David Gass	Upper Quartile LLP
David Green	
David Rennie	Scottish Enterprise
Deborah Mays	DCM Heritage
Douglas Scott	Scottish Borders Council
Emma Wills	Scottish Enterprise (Work placement)
Graham Blythe	European Commission Office in Scotland
Jane Atterton	SRUC
Julian Pace	Scottish Enterprise
Liz Hawkins	Scottish Government
Mike Woolvin	SRUC
Nick Coombie	Southern Uplands Partnership/Solway Firth Partnership
Nicola Hill	Dumfries and Galloway LEADER
Phyllis Harvey	Orkney Islands Council
Patrick Krause	Scottish Crofting Federation
Peter Middleton	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Peter Ross	Dumfries and Galloway LEADER
Robert Muir	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Ross Lilley	Scottish Natural Heritage
Sarah Hunter-Argyle	SRUC
Sarah Skerratt	SRUC
Siân Ringrose	SRUC
Willie Ferguson	Lantra

Apologies

Annabelle Ewing	MSP
Andrew Paddison	SRUC
Andrew Prendergast	Plunkett Scotland
Andrew Stevenson	Scottish Government
Anne-Michelle Ketteridge	Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER
Artur Steiner	SRUC
Belinda Miller	Aberdeenshire Council
Bruce Wilson	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Claire Slipper	NFU Scotland
Cliffe Hague	Built Environment Forum Scotland
David Cameron	Community Land Scotland
David Richardson	FSB
David Watts	University of Aberdeen
David Whiteford	The North Highland Initiative
Ellie Brodie	SRUC
Eric Samuel	The Big Lottery Fund
Frank Beattie	Scottish Enterprise
Gemma Thomson	NFUS
Geoff Simm	SRUC
Iain Riddell	SRUC
James Ogilvie	Forestry Commission Scotland
Jamie Dent	Dumfries and Galloway Small Communities Housing Trust
Jane Smernicki	SRUC
Jimmy Hyslop	Scottish Natural Heritage
John Farrington	University of Aberdeen
John Lord	Yellow Book Ltd
John Watt	Scottish Land Fund
Jonathan Wordsworth	Archaeology Scotland
Jose Munoz-Rojas	James Hutton Institute
Karen Dobbie	SEPA
Linda Gillespie	Development Trusts Association Scotland
Lorna Philip	University of Aberdeen
Madhu Satsangi	University of Stirling
Maggie Gordon	Dumfries and Galloway LEADER
Marion MacAllister	Cambusbarron Community Council
Mark Pollitt	Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resources Centre
Martin Price	UHI
Michael Russell	MSP
Petra Biberbach	Planning Aid Scotland
Priscilla Gordon-Duff	Chairman Moray LEADER Working Group
Richard Heggie	Urban Animation
Tom Campbell	The North Highland Initiative
Tony Fitzpatrick	Crichton Institute
Tony Huggins-Haig	
Sandra Holmes	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Simon Bonsall	Scottish Government
Stephen Graham	Highland Council
Vanessa Halhead	Scottish Rural Action
Wendy Kenyon	SPICe

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Alex Fergusson MSP (Chair and co-convenor of the Group) welcomed all participants to the meeting. All participants introduced themselves. There were no objections to the use of audio recording equipment at the meeting and all participants at the table were reminded to use their microphones when asking questions.

2. Approval of minutes from the last meeting (19th February 2014, Planning and Rural Economic Development)

The minutes of the Group's February meeting were circulated by the Secretariat on 28th February. No comments were received so the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and approved. The approved minutes will be posted on the CPG's website ([here](http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120471/group_meetings_2013-14/1337/meeting_4_coastal_community_regeneration), http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120471/group_meetings_2013-14/1337/meeting_4_coastal_community_regeneration) asap.

3. Update on the use of VC equipment for meetings

Alex Fergusson MSP reported that the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, having contacted the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, has turned down our request to use VC equipment in the Group.

Alex Fergusson requested that any Group members who wish to provide evidence in support of our use of VC for these meetings should contact the Secretariat (e.g. members who have not been able to attend meetings due to the time/cost of travel or have colleagues who this applies to). The Secretariat will compile this evidence and then consider a resubmission of our request to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

Action: Any Group members who wish to provide evidence to support our use of VC for these meetings should contact the Secretariat.

4. 10 minute presentations (followed by discussion):

Summary of key issues raised by the speakers:

- a. **John Grieve (FARNET): *Developing Coastal Communities* (see link to the video on the website for this Group meeting [here](http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120471/group_meetings_2013-14/1337/meeting_4_coastal_community_regeneration), http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120471/group_meetings_2013-14/1337/meeting_4_coastal_community_regeneration)**

- Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund is focused on the sustainable development of fisheries areas. The support is provided on the basis that the fisheries sector is the

key actor in the area, but not the sole actor and the focus is on measures fostering linkages between the fishing sector and other local development actors.

- Axis 4 funds are managed by Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) and guided by a bottom-up local development strategy based on the needs of the local area. The model is therefore similar to LEADER.
- To date, over 8100 projects have been funded through Axis 4.
- A key part of Axis 4 is balancing a territorial and sectoral approach, with FLAGs funding projects at either end of the spectrum.
- There are three main parts of the work of FLAGs – bringing communities together and strengthening their influence (e.g. working with dispersed communities, connecting communities with the national administration and with support mechanisms and improving the tools available to communities); increasing income and safeguarding jobs (e.g. improving the position of primary producers in the supply chain, boosting direct sales, connecting fisheries activities and other sectors in the local economy such as tourism); and harnessing blue growth at local level (e.g. increasing the benefits that come to the local community, supporting innovation and entrepreneurship, etc).
- Scotland has one of the lowest budgets in Europe for FLAGs but is one of the most fisheries dependent countries in Europe. There is great potential to deliver more through FLAGs.
- In the next European programme, the Commission is looking to link LEADER and FLAGs. The extent to which they currently link together is highly varied across Europe, but the aim is to secure greater local sustainable economic development through this model of bottom-up development.

b. Alistair Prior, Head of the Rural Communities Team, the Scottish Government: *Coastal Communities: A Rural Perspective* (see link to the video with information from the March 2014 Scottish National LEADER Conference [here](http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120471/group_meetings_2013-14/1337/meeting_4_coastal_community_regeneration), http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120471/group_meetings_2013-14/1337/meeting_4_coastal_community_regeneration)

- What is a coastal community? They may be very different, including urban, rural, focused on tourism, etc.
- There is particular interest going forward into the new European programme in the emerging linkages between LEADER and the European Marine Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The LEADER approach is about the proactive animation of a territory, linking actors in the rural economy, partnership, bottom up identification of local needs, engagement of local stakeholders in developing solutions to those needs, innovation, etc.
- In the 2007-2013 programming period there were 20 LAGs delivering 20 Local Development Strategies (LDSs) and 11 FLAGs with LDSs targeted specifically at fishing communities. So, a total of 31 LDSs across Scotland, 31 different groups driving rural development and sector specific fisheries communities interests. The LEADER programme started in 2008 while the fisheries specific programme started in 2011-12.

LEADER funding has also supported coastal projects, including supply chain integration, preserving traditional activities (such as boat building), tourism and heritage, etc. Overall, however, the connections between LEADER and FLAGS have not been coherent.

- The next programming period offers opportunities for 'Community Led Local Development, CLLD' which will encourage joint strategies to deliver on both EMFF and Rural Development Funds. This provides opportunities for businesses and communities to come together and drive local development including coastal and fisheries specific actions.
- LDSs are already under development in Scotland and marine and rural stakeholders (including the Scottish Government Rural Communities Team and Marine Scotland) have already been talking for approx. one year so they are on the way to developing joint strategies. Recent meetings have brought further momentum to these discussions. LDSs have to be submitted by the end of September and ready to go on 1st January 2015.
- Beyond the LDSs, there are also opportunities to align LEADER and EMFF budgets with other funding for local community development, including in coastal communities (such as the Coastal Communities Fund). So, there is an opportunity to maximise the use of European funds but also think more strategically about how to align LDSs and the aspirations of other funders.

c. Allison Mathews (Head of Funding) and Tony Crosbie (Funding Manager, Coastal Communities Fund) Big Lottery Fund: *Coastal Communities Fund in Scotland: Priorities, Projects and Progress*

- The Big Lottery Fund (the Fund) is the largest lottery distribution body in the UK; their annual grants budget in Scotland is about £60 million.
- The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) has been running since 2012. The Fund distributes the funding on behalf of the UK Government. The programme was initiated by HMT but it takes policy direction in Scotland from the Scottish Government; similarly at 'local level' in Wales and Northern Ireland. However, the CCF has a single outcome to achieve across the UK with a focus on sustainable economic growth (including sustaining existing and creating new jobs).
- In Scotland, the focus is on small and medium sized coastal communities; a working definition of small and medium settlements for inclusion in the CCF is around 60,000 maximum population so this does include small urban centres (e.g. Stranraer). 26 Local Authority areas are currently eligible (6 in the Highlands and Islands and 20 in the rest of Scotland).
- There is £59 million available in the current (and last) round, covering 3 years across the UK. The 3 year period was agreed with the UK Government to enable projects to deliver and have the money spent by March 2017. The deadline for Stage 1 applications in the final round was the end of April. Some proposals will go forward to the second stage panels this year with decisions expected by Christmas 2014.

- 39 projects have been funded to date which are forecast to create/safeguard 723 jobs. The focus for projects has been on small towns and villages, and particularly on tourism. Projects can be run by voluntary, third and private sector organisations.
- The Fund now offers additional pre-application support and this has succeeded in raising the quality of applications.
- The CCF has applied the timescales in the current CCF period to ensure that projects can be up and running and deliver their outcomes within a reasonable timescale. Additional money may be available in future, but this depends on CE reserves in 2014 and 2015. There is hope that the CCF will continue to deliver beyond the current closing date of 2016. The CCF helps to ensure that money returns to local communities and it has seen some important successes locally in terms of economic growth and job creation/maintenance.

d. Alan Laidlaw (Portfolio Manager) and Paul Bancks (Asset Manager Rural and Coastal Team), the Crown Estate: *Creating Value for Coastal Communities*

- The Crown Estate (CE) looks after a long coastline and has an extremely diverse business. It is responsible for half of the foreshore in Scotland and virtually all of the seabed up to 12 nautical miles.
- It has a duty to manage these areas with good estate management and achieve an income from them, plus to invest in and be as positively involved in them as possible. This could be by supporting marine leisure and tourism developments, aquaculture, renewable energy, etc. The CE realises the importance of being innovative. The CE is often involved at the outset of projects helping to develop them and get the necessary consents.
- There is a huge amount going on in the foreshore, including a number of activities that aren't always immediately visible, including broadband, energy and water pipelines, shipping movements and lifeline services, aquaculture, recreational moorings, harbours and marinas, offshore renewables developments, etc.
- Example projects include developing pontoons to improve the offer for locals and tourists, sand dune stabilisation projects, improving facilities for childrens' sailing and other marine activities, etc.
- The CE is keen to play an active and open role in coastal communities; staff have experience and knowledge and are in a position to help.
- There are many opportunities at present with respect to fisheries funding and LEADER, for example, relating to food and drink, aquaculture, tourism. There is a real opportunity for different organisations and funders to align themselves together and to help to create sustainable jobs in marine/fisheries related activities.

Questions and Discussion – Key Points

- Scotland receives a low allocation of Axis 4 overall. This is a result of the relatively low EFF allocation and the fact that the FLAGs receive a low allocation of Axis 4 due to the decision to cover the whole coastline in Scotland. This has meant that a relatively limited

amount of money has been spread across a large geographical area and has resulted in criticisms regarding a loss of focus and limited ability to specifically target certain issues.

- In a similar way to demonstrating the importance of LEADER in the overall context of the CAP, it is important to demonstrate the value of Axis 4 fisheries funding within the broader context of fisheries funding.
- There is a very important opportunity now to bring together European, UK, Scottish and local funding and perspectives to create a more joined up approach and to make the funding work more effectively. Several LEADER Local Action Groups are currently looking to bring together LEADER and EMFF under one LDS and they recognise that there may be other potential benefits from drawing in CCF, CE etc. expertise and funding to provide enhanced coordination at local level.
- It is important that there is coordination, as far as possible, between different funding streams, and that communities are aware of, and have full and accurate information about, all of the funding streams available. As well as the aligning the aims/outcomes of different streams, there may also be benefits in aligning the application and spending processes associated with different streams.
- Capacity-building for communities is important to ensure that they have the resources and capacity to apply for funding that is potentially available to them. The work of the Big Lottery Fund in terms of providing additional assistance shows the benefits that this can bring in terms of better quality applications and projects.
- A collaborative approach at local level is critical. The CE can help local communities to navigate what can be a complex landscape, can help with viability reports, working with consultants, getting projects off the ground – i.e. helping to give communities the tools to make the most of the opportunities available to them. While aligning different schemes is important, it is also critical that a diversity of organisations, sectors and perspectives are involved to ensure that specific interests (e.g. fisheries) are adequately represented and not overlooked. LEADER and Axis 4 can provide some direction on this as the approach is fundamentally integrative.
- Networking between groups is also important. FARNET can help to do this for fisheries communities (as well as helping to set up projects). There are also LEADER networks and there may also be benefits to be obtained from linking rural communities in a positive and effective way to significant investments in urban coastal centres (such as Dundee waterfront).
- We need to grab the opportunities now to coordinate different funding, schemes etc. and link terrestrial and coastal/marine interests through CLLD – the next 6-12 months are key in terms of strategic planning, especially considering parallel developments in relation to marine spatial planning. It is important that all stakeholders locally and nationally are engaged in these discussions, including the Scottish Government, Marine Scotland, etc. so that a real difference can be made on the ground. There may be a critical role for local authorities in facilitating links between organisations.

All speakers were thanked for their informative presentations.

Action: Alistair Prior, Alan Laidlaw and other relevant individuals to maintain contact with regard to linking LEADER and coastal schemes, interests, etc. Alan Laidlaw to update the CPG next year as to progress with these discussions.

5. AOB

No items of AOB were discussed.

6. CPG Programme for 2014-15

There will be four meetings of the Group in 2014-15. The co-convenors of the Group, in discussion with SRUC, would like to suggest four topics on which to focus the meetings:

1. Young people in rural Scotland
2. Employment, employability and skills in rural Scotland
3. Diversifying the rural economy – how has this been done to date and how could it be done better?
4. What is rural Scotland's land for? (this will include a discussion of different land uses including forestry, and will include an update on coastal/marine issues following on from today's session).

If anyone wishes to comment on these topics, or suggest speakers, projects to showcase, etc. then please contact the Group's Secretariat (jane.atterton@sruc.ac.uk).

Thanks were recorded to SRUC's Rural Policy Centre as the Group's Secretariat.