

Devon LAGs Meeting – Notes from 4th August 2009

1. Updates from each LAG

Making it Local (Blackdowns and East Devon)

- First project approved
- 2 development workers in post
- Developing a strategy paper on market towns

South Devon LAG

- 6 projects approved
- 3 Small grant schemes being established (Community Facilities, Enablement Fund and Business Development)
- Claims – very time consuming and repetitive, need 100% evidence
- Developing baselines

Greater Dartmoor LEAF

- 12 projects approved
- Anticipated underspend this year
- Lack of interest in some parts of the programme – addressing this
- Facing an Appeal against rejection of a project
- Pressure of paperwork on LAG Members – losing private sector members

Leader 4 LAG

- First project approved
- Staff in post
- LAG being cautious in considering applications, prioritising innovation and environmental criteria of the programme
- Business Growth Small grant scheme awaiting final LAG approval
- Anticipated underspend this year

2. Update on Main RDPE grants – Sarah Woollacott

- 41 applications submitted so far across the South West
- 12 approved, 7 rejected and 22 being appraised.
- A range of commissioned programmes have started – eg SW Healthy Livestock Initiative, Vocational Training, SW Agricultural Resource Management – offering a range of information, training and grants.
- 200 project proposal forms have been submitted to the Rural Enterprise Gateway
- Need to establish a referral process from REG to the LAGs for those projects which may support Lag objectives
- Roadshows about the RDPE planned for October – in each area.

3. Meeting Theme – Community Buildings

Presentations by David Kinross of Community Council of Devon / Devon Association of Community Buildings

- 530 buildings in Devon (400 parishes) worth circa £160m
- Research conducted in 2007/8 on community buildings – 300 responses and 30 case studies – providing detailed information

- Research covered economic impact and environmental potential
- Issues: rural services and amenities disappearing – therefore community buildings more important; increasing legislation; harder to recruit volunteers; decreasing capital funding; pressures on maintenance and new activities; new public demanding different activities/uses; helping to deliver localism agenda.
- CCD manages grants of £200,000/year and provides small loans
- Issues – scout huts and church buildings ineligible for these grants and support.

Presentation by Paul Sander-Jackson from Wessex Reinvestment Trust.

- Information about the Trust on www.wessexrt.co.uk
- Community Share Issues - Piloting a tool for local investment into community buildings
- Self help approach for Industrial and Provident Societies – low cost approach to raise share capital
- Piloted by Ecos building project in Langport, Somerset – raised £650,000 to build eco homes - £150,000 raised from local community
- Established the procedures and process to achieve a community share issue – only suitable for projects providing both a financial and social/environmental return on the investment
- Working with 4 pioneer communities, will establish a learning network through an online forum and regular meetings

Workshop with CCD

- Discussion of how to prioritise funding to community buildings - high demand.
- Need for baseline data – requests for information on who had grants in last 5 years from CCD, Devon Renaissance Community Boost fund and local Sustainable Development Funds.
- Interest in incentivising communities to address environmental and economic sustainability issues. Perhaps a two stage process – initial grant for environmental audit/income generation research, then access to grant to implement recommendations

4. RDPE Community and Social Enterprise Funds (Bruce Douglas)

SWRDA has allocated £7.5m to provide support to the sector to make it more self sustaining and address social inclusion issues. There will be 3 elements:-

- a) Project Funding Pot (NB public match funding is not eligible)
- b) Business Support for community and social enterprises linked to vouchers for specialist advice
- c) Facilitation service to access this programme – going out to tender for regional or sub regional support

Project enquiries should be addressed to Bruce Douglas.

5. Date of Next Meeting – February 2010 – to be confirmed