

Cotswolds LEADER Programme

Executive Group Member

Key responsibilities:

- A member of the Executive Group, which meets approximately 9 times a year.
- Help to develop and promote the programme, working closely with Executive Group colleagues, the Programme Manager and Conservation Board as the programme's Accountable Body.
- Ensure that the programme is seen to be highly successful and to have achieved its targets.
- Help to scope and secure any successor programme of funding to follow on from current LEADER initiative.

This is voluntary and unpaid position. It is envisaged that Membership of the LAG Executive Group will require 1 day a month on average, including attendance at formal meetings that are typically held every 6-8 weeks.

You will need to be able to access use of ICT facilities for general communication and urgent project based grant decision making, typically via e-mail and teleconference.

Overview

The Cotswolds LEADER programme launched in November 2015 and is due to operate through to March 2020. Cotswolds Conservation Board and its partners secured £1.998 million from the national LEADER programme managed by Defra and the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

The programme's focus is one of generating jobs and economic growth. The 6 investment themes in their relative order of priority for the Cotswolds are as follows:

- Micro-enterprises and farm diversification,
- Rural Tourism,
- Increasing Farm Productivity,
- Increasing Forestry Productivity,
- Culture and Heritage,
- Rural Services.

The Cotswolds Local Action Group (LAG) Executive considers and determines grant applications, supported by the programme team. The programme team works with applicants, guiding them through the two stage application process, starting with an Expression of Interest (EoI), followed by Full Application. EoI are assessed based on eligibility. After an application is approved by the LAG Executive, the Programme Team produces a Grant Funding Agreement and subsequently monitors the project and assesses grant claims. Grant payments are made by the RPA.

Fuller details of the programme, its Local Delivery Plan, Local Development Strategy (LDS), grant spend profile and the estimated investments, outputs and outcomes across the theme priorities are provided in the LEADER page of Cotswolds Conservation Board website; www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/leader

The Conservation Board is the Accountable Body for the programme and employs the two programme staff.

The LAG Executive Group:

- Promotes the programme,
- Approves applications,
- Provides feedback to successful and unsuccessful applicants,
- Monitors project progress against expenditure and outcomes,
- Mentors projects to ensure successful delivery.

Membership: 12 Executive Group members; 7 recruited through open competition and 5 appointed by and are also members of the Cotswolds Conservation Board, but act in this capacity as individuals.

Members represent the 6 themes of the LEADER Programme; Micro enterprise, Rural Tourism, Farm Productivity, Forestry Productivity, Culture & Heritage and Rural Services. Membership has a private sector majority in terms of backgrounds and experience.

The benefits of the LEADER approach is that local people:

- Have knowledge of the specific needs and challenges of the LEADER Area;
- Are best placed to understand the benefits and abilities of project proposals to contribute to the needs of the LEADER Area;
- Will develop a sense of ownership and commitment to the projects and local assets that are developed within the LEADER Area;
- Strengthen local relationships and develop a joint and positive working relationship to the common benefit of all of the residents of the LEADER Area.

Training:

- LAG Executive Group members primarily learn about the delivery of LEADER, their roles and responsibilities through participation and on the job training.
- LAG Executive Group members are encouraged to take part in events and promotional activity for the group.
- LAG Executive Group members with specific skills may also deliver information sessions to the LAG covering their area of knowledge.

Meetings in 2018: Meetings of the LAG Executive are currently scheduled for the afternoons of: 10th January, 14th February, 28th March, 2nd May, 13th June, 25th July, 12th September, 17th October and 28th November. Meetings are normally held at the Conservation Board's Offices in Northleach.

The programme is due to operate through to March 2020. It is envisaged that a UK or England successor programme will be developed in parallel with the Brexit negotiations, although entry to any new programme will be competitive.

Cotswolds LEADER Structure

Governance
The Accountable Body is the Cotswolds Conservation Board.
Local Action Group (LAG) Executive - 12 Executive Group members; 7 recruited through open competition and 5 appointed by and are also members of the Cotswolds Conservation Board, but act in this capacity as individuals.
Staff
1 Programme Manager (f/t) 1 Programme Assistant (p/t)
Networks
LAG Executive Accountable Body staff and Board members Advisory Network Local LEPS Local Economic Development teams from Stroud, Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils. Professional networks such as Chambers of Commerce, Accountants, Land Agents and National Farmers Union.

Operational Arrangements - Meetings:

Meetings: 9 meetings planned for 2018, with facility for urgent grant decision making via email and teleconference.

Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called at any time if the LAG Executive Group or Programme Team receives a request from partners setting out the purpose of the business to be considered at that meeting.

Quorum: At any meeting of the LAG Executive group there must be a minimum number of 5 members present. If a quorum is not present 30 minutes after the time set for the start of the meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned to another time or to another date and time at the Chair's discretion and it will be recorded that no business was considered because there was no quorum. For purposes of the quorum, participation of partners by video-conferencing links will be considered as present. The Executive is structured so that the members recruited through open competition are greater in number than those appointed via the Conservation Board. The ratio of attendance at meetings of the LAG Executive must consist of at least 51% open competition members being present, thereby the Cotswold Conservation Board has no overall control. Any voting requires the same 51:49 balance between those members voting.

Chairperson: The Chairperson, or in their absence, the Vice Chairperson shall preside over the meetings of the LAG Executive Group. If both are absent, members will choose a member to preside. In May 2017 an Independent Chairperson was recruited, to chair and guide the LAG Executive for the remainder of the current LEADER programme.

Declarations of Interest: Where an interest has been declared from a group member as the applicant, then they should withdraw from the meeting while the item is discussed. It is important to ensure that the meeting remains quorate at this point of the meeting (as cited above). For additional clarification, other private finance 'match' funders; if they are not the applicant, are eligible to participate and vote on the discussions relating to the application. Where a LAG Executive Group member's organisation shares board members, directors or other senior officials with an applicant organisation, and is aware /or is made aware of such a connection, that member should declare the connection as an interest. Where it is felt that this would not unfairly favour or prejudice the application, the remaining members present at the meeting may decide that the member declaring the interest need not abstain from the discussion of, and decision on, the relevant item. Members will also sign up to the working better together code of conduct in the LEADER National Development Framework, Annex 3. These rules will also apply to the programme team.

Order of business: The main business of meetings will be the consideration of grant applications and to consider the progress of the LEADER Programme and strategic issues. In general items of business will be considered as follows:

- Those members present and apologies
- Minutes of previous meetings will be considered as a correct record
- Matters arising
- Progress Reports
- Declarations of interest by members
- Consideration of grant applications
- Urgent business
- Any other competent business
- Date, Time and Location of next meeting

Voting: Subject to compliance with the LEADER guidelines as laid down by the European Commission, all questions coming or arising before the meeting will be decided by a majority of the members present. Views from partner organisations submitted in writing or by e-mail prior to the meeting will be accepted and included as part of the decision making process. A vote may be taken by a show of hands. The Chairperson will not normally be expected to vote, but will have a casting vote if required.

Conduct of Members: Members will be expected to fulfil the Code of Conduct in regard to the principles of public life provided at Annex 2 and Defra's behavioural code of conduct for LEADER LAGs provided at Annex 3.

In fulfilling the duties of a LAG Executive Group member people will be privy to confidential information regarding potential projects and the allocation of public funding. Members will need to treat any information gained from being a LAG representative as Confidential. It is equally important that members are adequately protected and feel able to work with confidence on the set tasks required. For these reasons members will be asked to complete a register of interest in which they must list any business or commercial interests

that they may have. It is then individual members' responsibility to ensure that this register is kept up to date.

Members must not seek to exploit a commercial benefit from any information gained through being a LAG Executive Group representative. Therefore when they receive an Agenda for a meeting the members will be responsible for ensuring that do not receive papers or take part in discussions on projects that fall within the scope of their register of interests. For example if you or any members of your family are a hotel owner you should immediately declare an interest and not either ask to see the papers or become in any discussions or decisions regarding a project that involves tourism accommodation. Members are expected to respect the equal opportunities statements which have been stated in the LDS.

Recruitment of LAG Executive members to fill vacancy:

Applicants should have an interest in local economic development within its social, cultural and environmental context and have a thorough knowledge of and passion for the Cotswolds LAG area. The LAG and associated structures operate on an open and transparent basis.

Any recruitment exercise will be managed by the Cotswolds Conservation Board, as Accountable Body. The Conservation Board will make its appointments to the Executive annually, at its AGM.

Other Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations: Further to the above operational arrangements, the LAG Executive will operate under the Constitution of the Cotswolds Conservation Board, as the Accountable Body for the LEADER programme.

Application process:

- **Deadline for applications: Noon Friday 5th January 2018 (applications: submission of CV and covering letter)**
- **Interviews: Monday 15th January 2018**

Annex 1: Map of the Cotswolds LEADER area

Annex 2: Code of Conduct

Annex 3: Defra LEADER Behavioural Code of Conduct – working well together

Annex 4: Summary of Roles & Responsibilities

Annex 5: Summary of Planned Outcomes

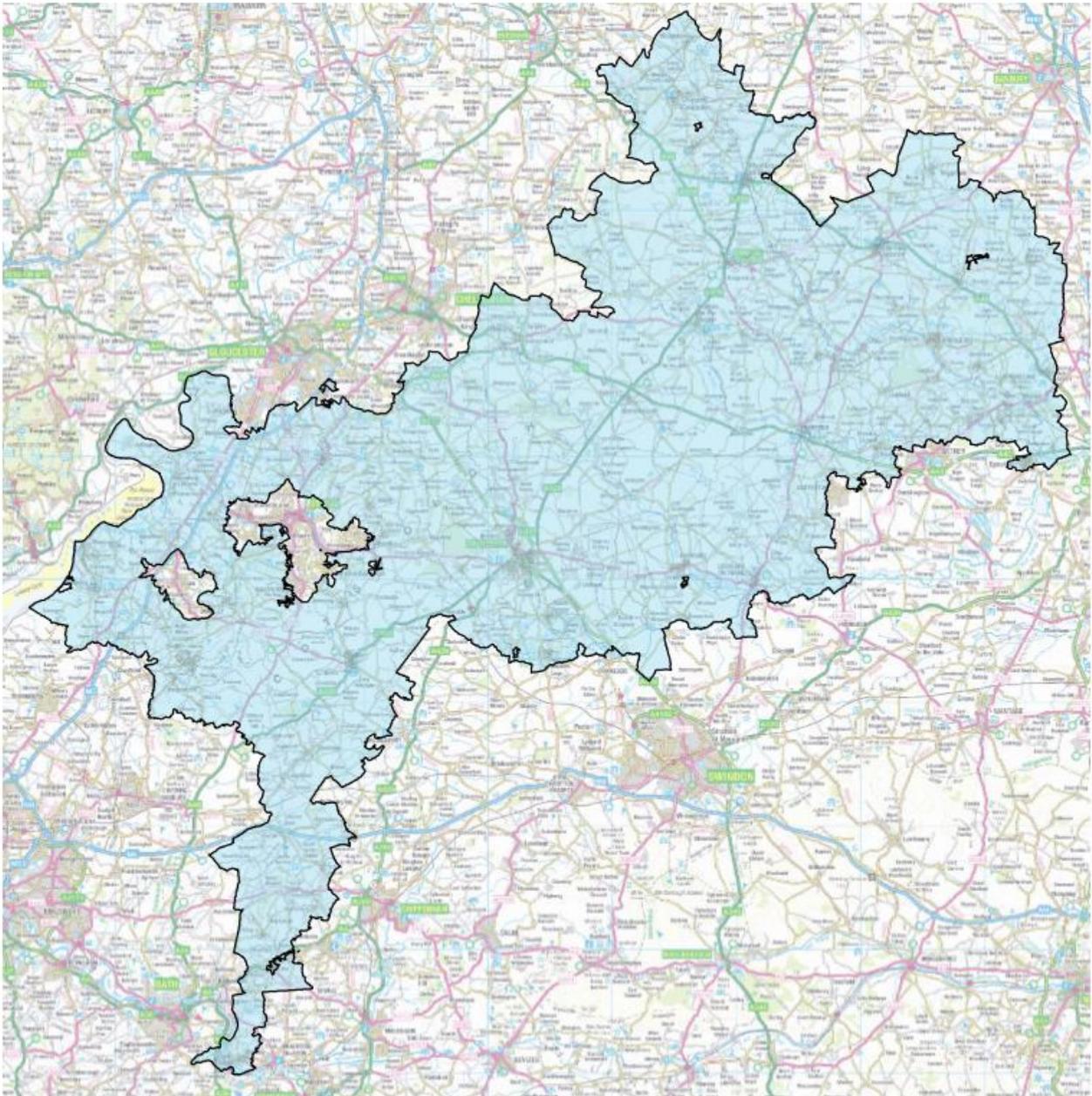
Annex 6: LAG Executive members

Annex 1: Map of the Cotswolds LEADER area



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Cotswolds LEADER-eligible area



Annex 2: Code of Conduct – principles of public life

All LAG Executive members shall observe the following general principles of public life:

Selflessness: Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty and Integrity: Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity: Members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability: Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

Openness: Members should be open as possible about their actions and those of their Board, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal Judgment: Members may take account of the views of others but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for Others: Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the LEADER Programme Team and the Conservation Board's statutory officers, and its other employees.

Duty to Uphold the Law: Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

Stewardship: Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

Leadership: Members should promote and support these principles by leadership and by example.

Annex 3: The Defra LEADER Behavioural Code of Conduct – working well together

We want to see Defra and LEADER groups working effectively together. We believe that the quality and cost effectiveness of services can be improved significantly when organisations work well together.

We expect LEADER groups to be productive in how you work with Defra. The way in which we challenge each other should be professional, respectful and avoiding grievances. Any disputes you have with Defra must be dealt with professionally and privately and must not be aired with applicants and grant recipients. You are expected to create a good impression with customers, representing the programme, Defra and the LAG Executive.

We expect you to co-operate with us and respond positively to the challenges of LEADER delivery. We have a common goal which is to use LEADER to secure benefits to your local communities. We will work with you to solve policy and operational problems around LEADER delivery.

We need to share information with each other to help improve our approach and ensure delivery of a co-ordinated and compliant programme.

We will expect you to have a flexible approach and be open to new ways of thinking, helping us find new solutions to delivery/policy and operational problems. With new policy priorities, changes to the delivery landscape and the introduction of the new CAP payments system, those that have been involved in LEADER in the past won't be able to do things as you've always done them.

Once an issue has been resolved, accepting this may mean a compromise has been made; all parties will ensure that this is explained to relevant parties in a measured and reasoned way, explaining the rationale for the collective decision that has been taken.

Annex 4: Summary of Roles & Responsibilities

Programme Team & Cotswolds Conservation Board as the Accountable Body:

- Ensure compliance with RDPE operating procedures including; selection and approval of individual projects and authorising of grant payments against approved claims.
- Maintain project records to provide an audit trail, and regularly monitor the progress of the projects.
- Evidence the decision making process.
- Employ the LEADER Programme Team.
- Procure activity or services for the LAG Executive Group.
- Bank roll the Running Costs and Animation (RCA) between submission of grant claims and payment from the Rural Payment Agency.

LAG Executive Group

Raise awareness of the programme and encourage innovative projects, and oversee:

- The strategic direction, coherence, and effectiveness of the programme,
- The delivery of activity and its relevance to the strategy's priorities and objectives,
- The development of the programme's annual Delivery Plan,
- The programme communications strategy,
- The monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

The LAG Executive has the following specific responsibilities:

- Consider applications, appraisal reports and related recommendations.
- Approve or decline applications in line with established procedures.
- Support programme delivery by offering insight and expertise within a member's own field or sector in order to develop strong applications.
- Offer technical advice or expertise at the appraisal stage of an application.
- Undertake project monitoring and inspection visits.
- Work with the Accountable Body to maintain accurate and timely financial and project management records.

Annex 5: Summary of Planned Outcomes

Summary Delivery Plan for Programme	Totals	Amount per Investment theme
Support for Increasing Farm Productivity		£299,759
<i>No. of Projects</i>	12	
<i>No. of Businesses or Holdings Benefitting</i>	12	
<i>No. of Jobs Created</i>	5	
Support for Micro SMEs and Farm Diversification		£679,456
<i>No. of Projects</i>	24	
<i>No. of Businesses or Holdings Benefitting</i>	30	
<i>No. of Jobs Created</i>	70	
Support for Rural Tourism		£399,679
<i>No. of Projects</i>	16	
<i>No. of Jobs Created</i>	16	
Provision of Rural Services		£59,954
<i>No. of Projects</i>	4	
<i>No. of Businesses Benefitting</i>	4	
<i>Jobs Created</i>	2	
Support for Cultural and Heritage Activity		£99,918
<i>No. of Projects</i>	4	
<i>No. of Businesses Benefitting</i>	4	
<i>Jobs Created</i>	3	
Support for Increasing Forestry Productivity		£99,918
<i>No. of Projects</i>	4	
<i>No. of Businesses or Holdings Benefitting</i>	4	
<i>Jobs Created</i>	2	
Total Investment		£1,638,685
Total Jobs created		98

Annex 6: LAG Executive members

Name	Organisation	Sector	LEADER priority theme covered
Jo Burgon (Independent Chairman)	Environmental NGOs, & Former Chairman Outdoor Recreation Network	Third Sector	Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Tourism, Culture and Heritage, Rural Services, & Forestry Productivity
Nigel Colston	Farmer and owner of diversified B&B and fishing lake enterprises, District Councillor, Cotswolds Conservation Board Member	Private	Farm Productivity, Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Tourism, Rural Services, & Forestry Productivity
Rebecca Charley	Farmer and countryside adviser. Chair of Ruscombe Valley Action Group and Parish Councillor - (Ruscombe), Cotswolds Conservation Board Member	Third Sector	Farm Productivity, Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Tourism, Rural Services, & Forestry Productivity
Elizabeth Hodges	Retired Food Microbiologist, Farmer/Agricultural Contractors. Town Councillor, Chipping Campden Town Council. Town Trustee Chipping Campden Town Trust, Vice Chairman Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils.	Private	Farm Productivity, Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Tourism, Culture and Heritage, & Rural Services
Peter Jones	Technology Executive, Independent Business consultant, Non-Executive Board Director, Cotswold Conservation Board member.	Private	Micro/Small Business, Enterprise, Use of technology in Rural environment.
John Matthews	Retired farmer; Estate Owner with office letting business, & former President of Wiltshire CLA, Cotswolds Conservation Board Member	Private	Farm Productivity, Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Tourism, Rural Services, & Forestry Productivity
Sam Phillips	Farmer - 1750 acre family run agricultural holding	Private	Farm Productivity, Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Tourism, Rural Services, & Forestry Productivity
Alison Robinson	Chief Executive, Gloucestershire Association of Town and Parish Council's	Third Sector	Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Culture & Heritage and Rural Services

Russell Warner	Owner of Westend Office Suites, Chair of the Federation of Small Business - Cotswolds Branch, & mentor at the Gloucestershire Growth	Private	Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Tourism, Culture and Heritage, Rural Services, & Forestry Productivity
Jeff West	Area Dean of Deddington, and Associate Priest at St Mary's Banbury, & Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries	Third Sector	Tourism, Culture & Heritage and Rural Services
Carl Woodward	Senior Manager (Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire): SME Banking Business & Agriculture at Lloyds Bank	Private	Farm Productivity, Micro/Small Business Enterprise, Tourism, Rural Services, & Forestry Productivity
Vacancy			