



Minutes of the Waterford LAG Meeting
Thursday 8th October 2020, teleconference Conference Room, Dungarvan at 11.00 a.m.

Present:

Non Public Sector:

Public Sector

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| 1. Gabriel Foley | PPN / Environment | 1. Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan A/Chair | Elected representative |
| 2. Richard Grant | CEO – Waterford Area Partnership | 2. Michael O'Brien | WWETB |
| 3. Jimmy Taaffe | CEO – WLP CLG | 3. Derval Howley | Head of Wellbeing HSE |
| 4. Heather Kiely | PPN/ Community & Voluntary | 4. Julie Somers | CYPSC Coordinator |
| 5. Maggie Flanagan | PPN / Community & Voluntary | 5. Richie Walsh | Head of LEO |
| 6. Breda Fell | PPN / Social Inclusion | | |
| 7. Jenny Beresford | CEO Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber | | |
| 8. Catherine Quinlan | I.C.M.S.A. | | |
| 9. Gerald Hurley | Waterford City Chamber of Commerce | | |
| Apologies: | | Apologies: | |
| 10. Senan Cooke | | 6. Michael Walsh | CE, WC&CC |
| | | 7. Cllr. D. Geoghegan Chair | Mayor /elected rep |
| | | 8. Cllr. A. Wyse | Elected rep |
| | | 9. Brendan Lawton | Regional Mgr, DSP |

Staff Present: D. Tuohy Chief Officer*, Ivan Grimes DoS, J. Codd A/S.O., E. Smyth, A.S.O.; S Whelan S.O* (* attendance in person)

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| 1.Total current Membership | 19 |
| 2.Total attendees | 14 |

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| 3. Quorum % required (50% of 1 above) | Achieved – 74% |
| 4. non-public/public ratio attendees % ratio non-public/public attendees | 9 non-public : 5 public 64% non-public: 36% public |

1. **Confirmation of Quorum:** Having reviewed the attendance record, Chief Officer D. Tuohy confirmed that a quorum was achieved. Non-public 9: Public 5; 14 members in attendance.

2. **Apologies**

As per table above, apologies were noted. In the absence of the Mayor D Geoghegan, Cllr L O’Sullivan took the chair.

3. **Introduction of Breda Fell**

PPN Social Inclusion was introduced and welcomed to the Committee.

4. **Conflict of Interest**

- (i) Chief Officer D. Tuohy outlined the provisions of Section 5.4 of the LEADER Operating Rules (v2.0) and reminded members of their obligations therein. He reminded members to consider whether a conflict of interest could arise on receipt of the notice of meeting and agenda items. He requested members to contact him in advance of the meetings following reviewing the Agenda and associated documentation should a COI arise.
- (ii) Noting of declarations of interest for current meeting
- (iii) Review of quorum: Non-public 9: Public 5

Agreed

Jimmy Taaffe CEO – WLP declared a conflict of interest regarding the approval of WLP Administration funding Oct – Dec 2020.

5. **Confirmation of Minutes of LAG Meeting held on September 10th 2020.**

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| Proposed: D. Howley | Seconded by: J. Beresford |
| Abstentions: None | |
| Quorum achieved: Yes | APPROVED |

6. **Matters arising:** No matters arising.

7. **Circulars:** None

8. **For Noting**

- i) RDP Preview of Forthcoming Projects Nov – Dec 2020. CEO of WLP Mr. J Taaffe gave a preview of potential projects to year end. Call for E.O.I.s remains open. Cllr L O’Sullivan queried the timeframe for project completion; J Taaffe advised that the usual twelve month period applies.

9. Rural Development Programme.

(a) Project Approvals Ardmore Open Farm & Glamping Pods 112556

CEO of WLP Mr. J Taaffe advised the committee that the promoters have previously received funding supports for earlier phases of this project. The enterprise is doing well and is expanding. A deadweight issue was addressed by the evaluation committee and the requested rate was reduced to 25%. D. Howley expressed agreement with the deadweight reduction.

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| Project ID | 31LDRWAT112556 |
| Project Type: | Capital |
| Project Name: | Ardmore Open Farm & Glamping Pods |
| Promoters Name: | Ardmore Open Farm Ltd |
| Address: | Ballykilmurry, Ardmore, Co. Waterford |
| Description: | The project will provide much needed additional overnight accommodation in the Ardmore area. The promoters believe that the addition of three large extra glamping pods will go some way towards satisfying this need with the potential to offer accommodation for an additional 18 persons per night. The promoters experience firsthand through dealings with the visitors to the open farm, the lack of overnight accommodation for visitors to the area, particularly in the peak summer months and that's affordable for families. |
| Theme: | LO1 Rural Tourism |
| Sub-theme: | SA1.4 RV Parks/Camping/Glamping |
| Link to LDS | Support of rural enterprise and adding value to same to enable visitors to overnight in the area |

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| Total Project Costs | €395,484.42 |
| Eligible Project Costs | €395,484.42 |
| Funding sought by promoter: | €188,122.21 |
| State one of the following: - First Review / Previously Deferred or Not Recommend | First Review |
| Funding recommended by Evaluation Committee: | A maximum of €98,871.10 or 25% of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser |
| Details of private funding: | €296,613.32 Own funds |
| Voluntary Labour: YES / NO (If yes | No |

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| provide detail) | | | |
| Synopsis of project: | Support of enhancing the existing facilities at Ardmore Open Farm to incorporate additional zoo animals and fencing to accommodate same. Upgrading and resurfacing of walkways and addition of new walkways to new enclosures. Addition of three new large pods to accommodate families on site and a large log cabin for a communal space as well as upgrading of the wastewater treatment system | | |
| Detail exactly what WLP will be funding (List items from Project Assessment Report) | Detail | Total Cost (Expenditure) | Grant Aid recommend by the Evaluation Committee @ 25% |
| | Shopfit UK | 82,451 | 20,612.75 |
| | Ecohouse Developments Ltd | 66,887 | 16,721.75 |
| | JCR Engineering Ltd | 37,300 | 9,325 |
| | Barry Hogan | 46,854.26 | 11,713.56 |
| | Caherclough Tarmacadam Ltd | 71,000 | 17,750 |
| | Mike Flynn | 3,200 | 800 |
| | B & C Services | 46,442.16 | 11,610.54 |
| | David Hennessy & John Higgins | 13,100 | 3,275 |
| | Eoghan Parker Electrical Services | 4,750 | 1,187.50 |
| | James Leahy | 23,500 | 5,875 |
| | Total Funding | €395,484.42 | €98,871.10 |
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| Was an assessment completed?: Date: <u> Yes </u> | 28 th Aug 2020 | | |
| Are detailed costings provided for the project? Were the costs for the project considered reasonable and how was this measured? | Yes. Direct tendering was used for all cost elements and a scoring matrix used to select the chosen supplier to ensure reasonable costs | | |
| Where the procurement process resulted in less than 3 quotes, the EC must show the additional steps taken to ensure the reasonableness of costs: | Not applicable. Comparison quotations for all items | | |
| Innovative Element of the project: | Investment in three family sized pods due to popular demand where visitors enjoy staying overnight surrounded by the animals. The promoters have also acquired a zoo license and are now investing in three new types of animals which meets the visitor | | |

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| | demands of more exotic, non domestic animals. |
| Consideration of Deadweight: | As deadweight was considered a factor in the support of this project, the Evaluation committee recommended a lower funding rate |
| Consideration of Displacement: | The Ardmore Open Farm offers a unique proposition of accommodation and domestic and zoo animals on site which no other open farm offers |
| Economic justification for project: | The project addresses the lack of accommodation in the coastal village of Ardmore particularly in the summer months and adds value to their existing offering particularly in bad weather and off season. |
| Average Score for Project: | 88/100 |
| % level of aid & ceiling: | A maximum of €98,871.10 or 25% of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser |
| E. C. Executive Summary/Rationale for Funding | The Evaluation Committee agreed to recommend funding this project for the following reasons:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project scored 88/100 2. The project fits the Local Development Plan (LDS) Local Objective for Rural Tourism 3. The promoters have the skills and expertise to successfully implement the project |

| Jobs Created | Jobs Sustained | Match Funding | Previous Grant Aid Received |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---|
| 3pt, 5S | 4ft, 9pt, 5S | €296,613.32 | €9,720 SEAI 2019 €143,247 LEADER Ardmore Glamping Pods 2017 €181,860.80 LEADER Ardmore Open Farm 2014 |

| Confirmation on the applicant's position re De-Minimus and double from the relevant agencies. | Date of Confirmation | Signed By |
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| Local Enterprise Office | 15 th July 2020 | Richie Walsh |
| Failte Ireland | 31 st Aug 2020 | Ivonna Carr |
| SEAI | 3 Sept 2020 | John Flemming |

The following were the main points raised in the discussion of the project: -

- Ms Claire Connors advised that the Evaluation Committee are familiar with the promoters who have successfully implemented two previous projects, the Ardmore Open Farm, and the Glamping Pods. The promoters are proposing to add 3 larger pods to accommodate bigger

families and a log cabin where all weather type activities can be held. They are now classed as a mini zoo and wish to expand and add more animals and are looking for funding for three new enclosures and groundworks.

- A revised Project Assessment report was circulated as the grant aid from SEI for the solar panels was removed.
- Ms Connors advised that she also circulated the draft 2019 accounts for the parent company FBA for review.
- The Evaluation Committee queried if some of the groundwork could be view as renewing, but Ms Connors clarified that it was upgrading to tarmacadam as the soft core used was not weather suitable.
- After reviewing the accounts, the Evaluation Committee had major concerns regarding funding the project as it appears as if the promoters have sufficient funds to fund the project themselves.
- Ms Connors advised that the Parent company of which both promoters are directors is transitioning from being a farm business advisory service to a property development company. The accounts reflect the recent sale of three properties, but they are constantly buying, renovating, and selling so the balance sheet can change quite quickly.
- A Committee Member noted that the pods are very expensive querying if that is the type of accommodation we should be encouraging as it is not very luxurious. It was noted that beyond Covid the popularity will decline as people return to holidaying abroad.
- Ms Connors pointed out that for families it is an affordable option as it can be booked for a night or two whereas other family accommodation options nearby can only be booked weekly. It is more a unique offering with a mini zoo for the children versus a luxurious option.
- A Committee Member noted that these pods had bathroom facilities versus shared facilities which is a plus.
- The majority of the Evaluation Committee felt the project was a great benefit to the area noting that it has a proven demand.
- The Evaluation Committee discussed if they should fund the project or not. Most felt that the project is a valuable infrastructure and an asset in the area noting that they would like to see it grow. Without funding the promoters have indicated that they will not proceed.
- One Member strongly felt that the promoters should not be funded due to deadweight, but the majority agreed that funding it as a lesser extent ensured the project proceeded.
- The promoters as business people will have to weigh up the options and a little funding may help encourage the continued growth and expansion of the business.
- The majority of the Evaluation Committee agreed to recommend funding at a reduced rate of 25%. They consider it an excellent project and would like to ensure it went ahead.

A maximum of **€98,871.10** or 25 % of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser.

Amount Recommended: €98,871.10

25% of Eligible Project Funding: €395,484.42

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| Proposed: D. Howley | Seconded by: G. Foley |
| Abstentions: None | |
| Quorum achieved: Yes | APPROVED |

(b) WLP Board observations available on Extranet.

The committee were advised that Board observations were available on extranet for perusal.

(c) Project Extension Request.

Mr. Jimmy Taaffe CEO – WLP advised that 6 month extensions had been requested by the promoters of:

- Rebranding WSVR 109880
- Shotblaster & Cranes, Kenneally Steel 108638

Mr. Taaffe recommended both requests but noted that Covid 19 may affect the training element of Shotblaster & Cranes, Kenneally Steel 108638.

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| Proposed: J. Beresford | Seconded by: G. Hurley |
| Abstentions: None | |
| Quorum achieved: Yes | APPROVED |

(d) Approval of RDP Advance administration funding to WLP for Oct-Dec 2020:

An invoice of €91,616.77 has been submitted for approval. J. Taaffe left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and decision. The Chief Officer confirmed that a quorum and the required public/non-public split were still in place.

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| Proposed: D. Howley | Seconded by: J. Beresford |
| Abstentions: J Taaffe | |
| Quorum achieved: Yes | APPROVED |

10. Report of the Rural Coordination sub-committee:

R. Walsh informed the committee of the negative impacts of Covid 19 and associated implications. The level of funding applications is high and matching resources to process applications is an issue.

Under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, the €5m investment in the Mount Congreve project is likely to see completion in 2022. A €1.2m development project addressing dereliction in Cappoquin is about to commence.

Ten towns will benefit from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme including four digital portal towns namely: Kilmacthomas, Tallow, Lismore & Dunmore East. €454,000.00 has been approved for Co. Waterford under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

A similar level of funding has been applied for under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme which facilitates the development of community trails. Last year €427,000.00 was approved under the scheme


Mr. J Taaffe CEO – WLP referenced the Blackwater Economic Development Zone and the four linked Leader projects approved at the previous LAG meeting. Derelict buildings will be renovated to provide modern office space in Lismore, Cappoquin, Tallow and Villierstown

11. Correspondence: None

12. A.O.B. None

13. Date and venue of next meeting: Thursday 12th November 2020 at 11.00 a.m. via Zoom.

Meeting Closed

Signed  25/11/2020
CHAIRPERSON DATE