

Causeway Coast & Glens Shadow Council

To: Organisational Development Committee

Rural Development Programme (2014 – 2020)

22nd January 2015

5.0 Report to Committee

Linkage to Interim Corporate Plan	
Strategic Themes	Prosperity. Cohesive Community. Sustainable Environment. Health and Wellbeing.
Lead Officer	Richard Baker Transitional Management Team - Leisure and Development Group Lead. Corporate Director - Coleraine Borough Council
Cost: (If applicable)	

5.1 Background

As per the report to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 4th December 2014, animation for establishment of the new Rural Development Local Action Groups (LAGs) commenced in October 2014. The Rural Development Council (RDC) have been contracted by the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to facilitate the election of social partners onto the LAG Board. RDC have been contracted to complete this process by the end of January 2015. At a LAG formation meeting held in Garvagh on 15th January 2015, the LAG grouping agreed that the overall size of the LAG Board would be 18 members.

With an overall membership of 18, the number of elected members will be a maximum of 8. (Elected members will make up 49% of the LAG Board - in line with EU regulation on public sector voting on LAGs). Council is now required to elect 8 members onto the LAG for delivery of the new Rural Development Programme for the period 2014-2020. Council have the option of appointing elected interim representatives until April 2015, wherein the full LAG will be required to be fully formed. Council can nominate members as it deems appropriate but DARD have stated that consideration needs to be given to balance and representation and be reflective of the last election. When considering a geographical spread Council need also to consider the rural nature of the programme. The process for appointing Councillors to the Board could follow the agreed process for appointing Councillors to partnerships, boards and other bodies as defined by DOE.

5.2 Governance

The operation of the LAGs is set out in the EU Common Provisions Regulation. This stipulates among other things that 'no one single interest group shall represent more than 49% of the voting rights'. This means public sector representatives (considered as a single group) must not exceed 49% of the makeup of the LAG Board".

5.3 Budget

The overall allocation to the Causeway Coast & Glens Council area is £9.6million, 22% of which can be used for administration. This means there is a programme budget of £7.78m and a technical assistance budget of £1.73m available for up to a six year period.

5.4 Resourcing the LAG

DARD have indicated that they will make animation funds of circa £25k available to the Causeway Coast & Glens Council for the period February until September 2015 to allow Council to facilitate the LAG and the development of an Interim Strategy. This arrangement will allow Council more time to consider the staffing requirements whilst at the same time ensuring that the LAG is resourced and the Interim Strategy is developed within the given timeframe.

5.5 Project Plan

Deadline	Task
27.02.15	Identify councillors to take places on the 'Interim LAG'- (No more than 49% of total LAG membership)
27.02.15	Identify council resource to help the LAG develop its Interim Local Development Strategy (Animation Phase)
27.02.15	Submit bid to DARD for Animation costs from 1/3/15 – 30/9/15 (Staff, Accommodation, Utilities etc)
30.03.15	Enter into Animation contract with DARD
30.04.15	Submit agreed Strategy to DARD
30.04.15	Identify councillors to take places on "FINAL" LAG
30.04.15	Comply with requests for LAG members to attend training
30.06.15	Assist the LAG to animate the Strategy and make preparations for first call for applications
30.06.15	Have sufficient resource in place to Administer the Programme for the LAG
31.08.15	Be ready for 1 st call for applications on 1 st September 2015

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that Council nominate 8 members onto the LAG Board ensuring that the selection is representative of geography, community and gender.
2. Council enter into a contract with DARD for animation funds to resource the LAG Board and develop the interim strategy.