

## **COTSWOLDS LEADER PROGRAMME UPDATE**

**Summary:** To present an update on the progress of the LEADER Programme

**Recommendation:** That the update report be noted.

**Officer Ref:** James Webb, LEADER Programme Manager (01451) 862033

### **General Items**

**1. Exchange Rate gains**

All LEADER Programmes have benefited from additional resource as a result of an exchange rate change from €1euro = £0.80 to €1euro = £0.88. This change was applied to the uncommitted and committed and unspent portion of the allocation up to 31/07/2018.

**2. 22% Running Costs Animation (RCA)**

RPA has approved RCA spend of 22% for Cotswolds. For the Cotswolds to fully utilise this extra resource, the most important thing is to contract as many quality projects as possible in the time we have left. This will ensure the Programme has sufficient resource post March 2019 for programme management and monitoring & evaluation.

**3. Full Application Training session: 22/08/2018**

This was the second training session run this year. It was attended by 10 applicants/ agents from the final tranche of full applications.

**4. Programme Timing**

- The cut-off date for Expressions of Interest was Friday 31 August 2018.
- The cut-off date for receipt of Full Applications is Wednesday 31 October 2018
- All projects must be approved and contracted by Friday 29 March 2019\*
- All grant payments must have been made by 31 December 2020

\*We have requested a 4 month extension to this date to 30/07/2019, which is currently being considered by the RPA.

**5. Remaining LAG Meetings**

There are seven remaining LAG Meetings:

- Wed 12th September 2018
- Wed 17th October 2018
- Wed 28th November 2018
- Wed 12th December 2018
- Wed 30th January 2019
- Wed 27th February 2019
- Wed 13th March 2019

## 6. **Programme performance**

The programme has supported 29 projects (closed & contracted) with a total value of £893,455. Rural Payments Agency (RPA) statistics were distributed on 03/09/2018, summarised below:

### Expressions of Interest (EOI) on desk

- The deadline for receiving EOI was Friday 31 August
- Lots of interest end of August
- 15 EOI with a collective value of about £455K

### Total Contracted

- Cotswolds is ranked 48 out of 79 (1 being the best/ 79 worst)
- The total project allocation figure has increased from £1,638,688 to £1,799,361, an increase of £160,672, which is attributable to the exchange rate gain.
- Consequently, the Cotswolds contracted figure has reduced from 56% in late July to 49.65% now. This is largely because of the exchange rate gain and also because of two recent withdraws of contracted projects.

### Total Spend

- Project spend is currently £414K.
- Spend has slowed down over the summer as it is reliant on projects completing and submitting their claims so is reactive.
- There are a number of large spend projects due to complete this autumn, which will boost this figure.

## 7. **Are we on track, are we going to deliver, will we over achieve or under supply?**

We currently have 3 full applications in appraisal, 3 full applications on desk and a further 16 full applications in development and due for submission by 31/10/2018. The 16 full applications in development account for the £720,988 in the Targets vs Actuals appendix. We have up to 15 EOIs that could also be invited to full application, which would help mitigate for withdraws. This is important because the withdraw rate has been quite high – 8 since the end of July, including 2 contracted projects.

Whilst we have enough applications to reach the Cotswolds spend and jobs targets, there is insufficient resource to process them in the remaining time. As predicted at the start of the summer, the large number of full applications submitted at the end of October will create a bottleneck in our processing ability. The Board should be prepared for a degree of underspend.

## 8. **Voluntary surrender of funds**

RPA has advised that should a LEADER group think it is unlikely to utilise its full allocation, it could surrender project funds for reallocation nationally. LEADER groups surrendering funds need to complete a Variation Request by 19/09/2018. A week earlier on 12/09/2018, RPA is conducting an exercise on DORA to identify

LAGs that require extra project funding. The Cotswolds LAG will review the likelihood of spending the full allocation and the potential for voluntary surrender of funds at their meeting on 12 September.

Closed Projects (Claimed in full)

	<b>Priority 1 – Support to increase farm productivity</b>
	£10,059 towards a Cluster Flush system for a dairy farm in Gloucestershire.
	£5,206 towards a Mobile Sheep Handling system for a sheep farm in Worcestershire.
	£49,958 grant towards a Robotic Milking system for a dairy farm in Wiltshire.
	£20,430 towards a Cluster Flush and EID Ruminant Collars for a dairy farm in Gloucestershire.
	£26,061 towards a Trailing Shoe Slurry System for a dairy farm in Gloucestershire.
	£17,434.80 towards a Trailing Shoe and Ruminant collars for a dairy farm in Wiltshire.
	£20,048 towards a Cluster Flush system and Cow Mattresses for a dairy farm in Wiltshire.
	£6,247 towards a Fertiliser Spreader with GPS for a farm in Gloucestershire.
	£9,798 towards a Cluster Flush for a dairy farm in Gloucestershire.
	<b>Priority 2 – Support for micro and small businesses and farm diversification</b>
	£40,000 towards the construction of 10 new high quality office units: Westend Office Suites.
	£13,011 towards the fit out of a business unit and associated equipment: Saltpig.
	£48,849 towards the construction of a new farm shop and café: Vegetable Matters.
	£47,973 towards building work to double the retail space at Wotton Farm Shop.
	£10,463 towards new equipment and electric supply: Capreolus Distillery.
	<b>Priority 3 – Support for rural tourism</b>
	£29,292 towards improved access and two wooden holiday homes: Longhills Farm Kennels.
	<b>Priority 6 – Support for increasing forestry productivity</b>
	£10,000 towards a firewood processor and Log Deck: Little Owl Logs
	£49,981 towards a large firewood processor for a business in Gloucestershire.

Contracted Projects (Not yet claimed)

	<b>Priority 1 – Support to increase farm productivity</b>
	£6,991 towards a fixed Cattle Handling System for a farm in Gloucestershire.
	£42,810 towards a System Cameleon Drill for an organic arable farm in Gloucestershire.
	* £23,372 towards an ice-cream and butter production facility on a dairy farm in Gloucestershire.
	£29,757 towards a Direct Drill for an arable farm in Oxfordshire.
	£5,098 towards a Mobile Sheep Handling system for a sheep farm in Gloucestershire.
	<b>Priority 2 – Support for micro and small businesses and farm diversification</b>
	£17,891.38 towards specialist particle analysing equipment for a business in Gloucestershire
	£99,982 towards a Food & Farming Education Centre in Oxfordshire: Cotswold Seeds.
	£99,995 towards converting an old building to create new offices for a business in Wiltshire.
	<b>Priority 3 – Support for rural tourism</b>
	£49,993 towards the construction of 5 residential holiday units in Gloucestershire.
	£16,075 towards a Roundhouse and associated facilities for a tourism provider in Wiltshire.
	<b>Priority 6 – Support for increasing forestry productivity</b>
	£38,112 towards Forestry equipment and a Firewood processor for an Estate in Gloucestershire.
	£48,642 towards storage for woodchip and a Firewood processor for a business in Oxfordshire.

\* Claim has been received and is being processed.

Supporting Paper(s):

- **Appendix. 'A' - Targets vs Actuals**

**James Webb, Cotswolds LEADER Programme Manager**