

## **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

### **1. Programme Timing**

- All projects must be contracted by 27 September 2019
- James & Lioba's (full time) contracts end on 31 March 2020
- All grant payments must have been made by 31 December 2020
- Mandy's (1 day a week) contract ends 31 March 2021

### **2. LAG Meetings**

There are no further scheduled LAG meetings. The last of the remaining applications are being considered out of committee by email. The LAG will meet in the autumn, date tbc, to discuss monitoring and evaluation.

### **3. Programme performance**

The programme has supported 56 projects (closed & contracted) with a total value of £1,711,029, which represents 97.55% of the allocation. Collectively this investment has created 80 new jobs.

In terms of spend, 36 out of our 46 projects have successfully completed their project and claimed their grant. This equates to £1,036,799.

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

The Programme is on course to spend the full allocation. There is £43,031 left to allocate and we are currently progressing seven applications to ensure the Programme is 100% allocated. The grant request figure from the remaining applications is considerably more than remaining resource so not all applications will be successful. However, we will continue to progress as many applications as possible by the end of September and have them 'approved subject to funding' so they are 'ready packaged' for the following two scenarios:

- We experience an unexpected withdraw from a contracted project and need to fill the gap.
- We receive additional funds from an RPA reallocation (applications need to be appraised and QC'd before we can put ourselves forward for this).

The remaining applicants have been made aware of the Programme constraints in terms of timing and resource and know there is no guarantee of funding.

Our target was to create 93 jobs. The programme is currently forecast to create 85 jobs – close to target. Moreover, the jobs total is likely to rise as most applicants were conservative in their forecast.

A wide range of jobs have been created at all skill levels. One of our early projects, Westend Office Suites, has created a number of office/ retail units on a small business park. One of the businesses using this new space translates academic research papers and the staff are all educated to PhD level. Another beneficiary, Ocean Ecology, has created two positions for laboratory technicians. See below for some of the jobs created by the Programme:

*Account Manager. Retail Assistant. Chef. Waiter. Business Director. Distiller. Driver. Gardener. Forester. Site Manager. Yard Operative. Machine Operator. Administrator. Laboratory Technician. Designer. Education Centre Manager. Communications Officer. Herdsman. Activity Trainer. Print Manager. Cleaner. Shop & Café Manager. Agricultural Worker. Sales Assistant. Marketing Manager.*

Our projects have created jobs for a broad cross-section of workers, including hard to reach groups such as people leaving the armed services, people recently made redundant and newly qualified apprentices.

In addition to direct job creation, our projects have created indirect jobs, safeguarded existing jobs, facilitated promotions and new training opportunities.

#### **5. Programme overheads: RCA (Running Costs Animation)**

At the outset of the Programme, overheads were based on 18% of the total allocation. In August 2018, Accountable Bodies were given the option to increase RCA to 22%. We will deliver the Programme using a little under 20% RCA with the 2% difference being spent on projects.

The Board claims back Programme expenditure, such as staff costs, on a quarterly basis. The claims include a contribution towards the Boards overheads calculated at 15% of salary costs. Our claim for Apr-Jun 2019 is currently being processed by RPA i.e. we are up to date.

#### **6. Capturing the legacy of LEADER for the Board**

A comprehensive end of programme report will be produced by the end of 2019. There will also be a number of events, the first of which is on 12<sup>th</sup> September when we will be visited by a senior policy team from Defra's Rural Development Programme England Team. The aim of the day is for the group to visit a number of LEADER projects, meet with the grant recipients and get a better understanding of the effectiveness of the funding and the impact on the businesses. The second event will celebrate and share the successes of LEADER in the Cotswolds with key stakeholders. Both events will offer opportunities for the Board to make the case for continued support for rural businesses in the Cotswolds.

**Supporting Paper(s):  
None.**