

**MINUTE OF MEETING OF  
RURAL ABERDEENSHIRE LEADER  
LOCAL ACTION GROUP  
RURAL ABERDEENSHIRE BROADBAND INITIATIVE**

**THURSDAY, 20 JANUARY 2011 AT 1.30 PM  
COMMITTEE ROOM 4, WOODHILL HOUSE**

**Present**

Shona Anderson	Visit Scotland
Jamie Bell	Scottish Enterprise
Moir Gordon	SWRI
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council – Community Economic Development
Jennifer Kinnaird	Scottish Government Rural Payments Inspection Directorate
James Knowles	LAG Chair
Bob Leonard	Aberdeenshire Council – Community Learning & Development
John Lewis	Aberdeenshire Rural Partnership Federation
Alexander Macleod	Aberdeenshire Council – Community Planning
Keith Newton	Aberdeenshire Council – Community Planning
Matt Young	Forestry Commission Scotland

**Officers in Attendance**

Vicky Thomson	Aberdeenshire Council
Anne MacLennan	Aberdeenshire Council

**Apologies**

Moir Beverley	Aberdeenshire Council - Finance
Caroline Clark	NHS
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers' Union Scotland
Scott Petrie	Scottish Rural Property and Business Association
Maureen Stephen	Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Services
Paul Timms	Scottish Natural Heritage
Andy Willox	Federation of Small Businesses

**1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Chairman welcomed Jim McCurrach, ICT Consultant, to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

**2. DRAFT LAG MINUTE OF TUESDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2010**

- 2.1 Approved as an accurate record. There were no matters arising. Minutes will be uploaded on the LEADER website.
- 2.2 Two errors were identified in the Broadband Minute of 19 October 2010. These will be corrected on the LEADER website.

In section 5.2 it states that planning permission will be required for a transmission mast to be erected at Kinmuck. This is not the case as no mast is required.

It also states that the service may be adversely affected by heavy rain,

snow or fog. This is not the case.

### **3. COMMUNICATION**

- 3.1 Following the Audit Scotland inspection of two project files no issues were identified. Audit Scotland will submit a report on overall LEADER audit to Scottish Government.
- 3.2 Vicky attended a meeting of funders for the Enchanted Castle event which was unavoidably cancelled in December 2010 due to adverse winter weather.

The applicant intends to bring the event forward to November/December 2011. Marketing of the event was productive with 100% ticket sales achieved. The breakdown of the distribution of tickets was 48% from Aberdeen City, 40% from Aberdeenshire and 12% from outwith the area.

A significant amount of expenditure has been incurred by the applicant and a meeting with the insurers will be held in the near future.

The project has up to 2 years to claim their grant and the LAG agreed to continue the project approval. The project will require a project amendment for approval to extend completion date.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest for this Round of applications.

### **5. PROJECTS 106 TO 109**

- 5.1 Aberdeenshire's Rural Broadband Challenge Fund (RBCF) Bid to Scottish Government which totalled £241,406 was unsuccessful. Limited feedback was received.

There was a significant level of interest across Scotland and, as anticipated, the £800,000 Fund was heavily oversubscribed. Bids to RBCF totalled approximately £4-5 million.

The five LAGs who received funding were Orkney, Western Isles, Forth Valley, Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire.

LAG had previously agreed at the Broadband Challenge meeting on 19 October 2010 that if Rural Aberdeenshire's RBCF application was unsuccessful, the projects could be re-routed back through the LEADER application process.

RBCF was a one-off additional sum of money coming to LEADER and it is not anticipated that Scottish Government will allocate any further specific broadband funding. LAG would like this to be raised at the next LEADER Strategic Board meeting.

5.2 For the benefit of LAG members who were unable to attend the Broadband Meeting on 19 October 2010 Jim McCurrach of JM ICT repeated his informative presentation on the BET Solution chosen by Boyndie, Ballogie and Arbuthnott and the Wireless Solution chosen by Kinmuck.

5.3 **Wireless Solution**  
**106 – Broadband – Kinmuck Area Broadband Project**

Kinmuck opted for the wireless option as the BET solution was unsuitable. Kinmuck will receive a microwave service from a mast in Northfield, Aberdeen. This innovative service offers a high bandwidth capacity which will cope with growth.

The applicant has plans to expand the service to other areas in the future. The cost of upgrading the kit has been built into the Kinmuck plan.

Three surveys have already been carried out at the applicant's expense. It is the applicant's intention to go out to tender again.

5.4 **BET Solution**  
**107 – Boyndie Broadband Service**  
**108 – Broadband – Ballogie Community**  
**109 – Arbuthnott Community Broadband Challenge**

Scotnet has already carried out a survey for the above 3 projects and all are suitable for the BET solution.

The BET solution is a proven technology which has been trialled for a year across the UK. Scotnet is the only Scottish BET Solution internet provider. BT Openreach will look after BET in the long term.

5.5 Lengthy discussion took place regarding the level of funding requested and the possibility of applicants making a greater contribution to costs.

LAG considered all four projects to be valid and appreciated the amount work involved for applicants in making application for broadband funding. The Scottish Government RBCF was to disburse funds at 100%. The projects being considered by the LAG will make a 10% contribution.

Kinmuck is an exemplar project which will be transferrable to other areas with 'line of site'. The net revenue from this project will be transferred to a trust and will be used by Calecom to help benefit other areas facing the same broadband issues as the Kinmuck community. If successful there are plans for the wireless solution to be rolled out to Fintray and Hatton of Fintray.

Costs for all four proposals are based on the number of households keen to take up the offer following community consultation. If a reduced number of households decide to take up the scheme, then the amount of LEADER grant disbursed will be reduced proportionally.

LAG considered it important to highlight that the broadband initiative will be

of benefit to rural Aberdeenshire businesses as well as individual households.

The Rural Aberdeenshire Broadband Initiative will be a one-off pilot. LAG considered this pilot aligns with LEADER theme for a Progressive Rural Economy.

Following a vote, resulting in nine in favour, one against and one abstention, the four projects were approved.

Chairman thanked LAG for continued support considering the importance of Broadband provision for households and businesses in rural Aberdeenshire.

**6. AOCB**

There was no other business.

**7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

PAC meeting – Tuesday, 1 March 2011, Conference Room D, Woodhill House at 10.00 am.

LAG meeting – Monday, 14 March 2011, Committee Room 4, Woodhill House at 10.00 am.