



# Kelvin Valley & Falkirk LEADER Business Plan

June 2019

Name of Group	Kelvin Valley and Falkirk (KVF) LEADER LAG
Accountable Body	Falkirk Council
Contact	Pete Reid
Address	Suite 2B Falkirk Stadium 4 Stadium Way Falkirk FK2 9EE
Telephone Contact	01324 590971
E-mail Address	Pete.Reid@falkirk.gov.uk

Date	31/05/2019
Author	Tom Rutherford
Version	3.3

## **CONTENTS**

<b>1. FORWARD .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.....	3
<b>2. GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 OVERVIEW .....	4
2.2 GOVERNANCE AND OPERATING STRUCTURES.....	4
2.3 OVERVIEW OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	6
2.4 LAG DECISION MAKING.....	7
2.5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	8
<b>3. LAG MEMBERSHIP.....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	11
3.2 ACCOUNTABLE BODY .....	11
3.3 LAG BOARD .....	11
3.4 LAG CHAIR .....	14
3.5 OPERATIONAL TEAM.....	15
<b>4. LAG PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	17
4.2 OVERALL APPROACH.....	17
4.3 LAG OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES .....	18
4.4 APPLICATION PROCESS .....	19
4.5 LAG SPONSORED/COMMISSIONED PROJECTS .....	19
<b>5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN.....</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	21
5.2 OVERALL APPROACH.....	21
5.3 MONITORING FRAMEWORK.....	23
5.4 EVALUATION PLAN .....	25
<b>6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION .....</b>	<b>27</b>

6.1	INTRODUCTION .....	27
6.2	FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS .....	27
6.3	ADMINISTRATION.....	28
6.4	PROGRAMME BUDGET.....	28
<b>7.</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.....</b>	<b>30</b>
7.1	INTRODUCTION .....	30
7.2	COMMUNICATION PLAN .....	30
7.3	KEY TARGET GROUPS .....	33
<b>8.</b>	<b>EQUALITY STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>35</b>
8.1	INTRODUCTION .....	35
8.2	LAG APPROACH .....	35

**Appendix 1 Constitution**

**Appendix 2 map of LAG area**

**Appendix 3 Application Process**

**Appendix 4 Outline Job descriptions**

# 1. Forward

## 1.1 Introduction

This Business Plan has been prepared as a key document which provides the operational framework for the implementation and delivery of the Kelvin Valley and Falkirk (KVF) LEADER Local Development Strategy (LDS).

It can be read both as a stand-alone document and as a complementary one to the LDS.

The Business Plan has been influenced and developed based on:

- guidance provided by Scottish Government;
- guidance provided in the Common Provisions Regulations;
- discussions within the KVF LAG;
- learning from the previous business planning process; and
- the outputs from the stakeholder consultations undertaken as part of the LDS development process.

As such, the plan commands the support of local community organisations, local development agencies and national agencies delivering services in the Kelvin Valley and Falkirk area, illustrating their commitment to the principles that lie behind the LEADER Programme.

The Business Plan sets out a broad framework for the implementation of the LDS through addressing the following themes:

- Governance and management
  - this section describes the proposed governance and operating structures, LAG membership and the decision making processes to be adopted.

- Delivery and project appraisal
  - this section describes the staff resources required to deliver the LDS, their roles and responsibilities and the procedures for project development and selection. It also highlights how the LAG will integrate with local and regional structures.
- Financial Plan
  - this section sets out an initial budget spend by key theme and intervention rate. It also provides details of likely sources of co-financing.
- Business Plan Activities
  - this section reviews each thematic priority by highlighting the scope of the measure, type of activities, performance measures and resource allocation.
- Communication Plan
  - this section outlines the communications and publicity strategy and provides an indicative programme of events and activities.
- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
  - this section describes how the LEADER Programme and associated projects will be monitored and assessed for effectiveness.

## 1.2 Strategic Framework

The Business Plan has been developed as the implementation framework for the LDS and to deliver against the following.

### *LDS Strategic Framework*

---

#### **Vision**

- 'to create a more vibrant and sustainable local economy by supporting services and facilities, developing the business base and employment capacities, and sensitively exploiting our cultural and natural assets'.

---

#### **Strategic objectives**

- increase the economic output from the hospitality, tourism and cultural sectors in terms of employment, number of businesses and GVA;
- increase the viability and sustainability of communities through increased use of local business and services and though minimising economic leakage;
- attract new investment in physical and built assets; and
- ensure that local people have suitable access to appropriate training and skills support that will allow them to access or progress in employment.

<b>Theme 1: Heritage, Tourism and Leisure</b>	<b>Theme 2: Community Services and Facilities</b>	<b>Theme 3: Local Business and Employment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical infrastructure development</li> <li>• Support further development of key assets</li> <li>• Development of pathways, cycleways and connections between assets</li> <li>• Cultural and sporting events;</li> <li>• Signage, interpretation and marketing of assets</li> <li>• Marketing and promotion</li> <li>• Bespoke business support</li> <li>• Collaborations between tourism/sporting/food &amp; drink SMEs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of derelict sites and empty units</li> <li>• Innovative community transport solutions</li> <li>• Improved access between communities and heritage and employment locations</li> <li>• Town and village centre services</li> <li>• Support for social enterprise</li> <li>• Community ownership of services and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment-related training and employment scheme linked to canals/rivers, cultural heritage, woodlands</li> <li>• Social enterprise programme</li> <li>• Placement and mentoring schemes for young people</li> <li>• Developing business networks</li> <li>• Employability programme targeting young people and long term unemployed</li> <li>• Tourism related business development</li> </ul>

The three strategic themes are closely interconnected representing an integrated and sustainable development approach for the LEADER area.

## 2. Governance

### 2.1 Overview

This Chapter describes the proposed governance and operating structures, LAG membership and the decision making processes to be adopted.

Governance will be based on the following high level approach:

- a (to be agreed) Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Managing Authority (Scottish Government) and Accountable Body (Falkirk Council – subject to committee approval) which will set out their operational duties and responsibilities;
- a constitution (see Appendix 1) which has been developed on a bespoke basis and been influenced by existing constitutions from other LAG Areas. The constitution is flexible and can be adapted to meet programme needs, any advice/requirements of Scottish Govt as Managing Authority or changes considered and agreed by the LAG board;
- the relationship between Accountable Body and LAG will be managed through the constitution and principles outlined in Business Plan.
- engaging with the LEADER Strategic Board (attended by LAG Chairs) and the LAG Managers Network (attended by LAG co-ordinators).

### 2.2 Governance and Operating Structures

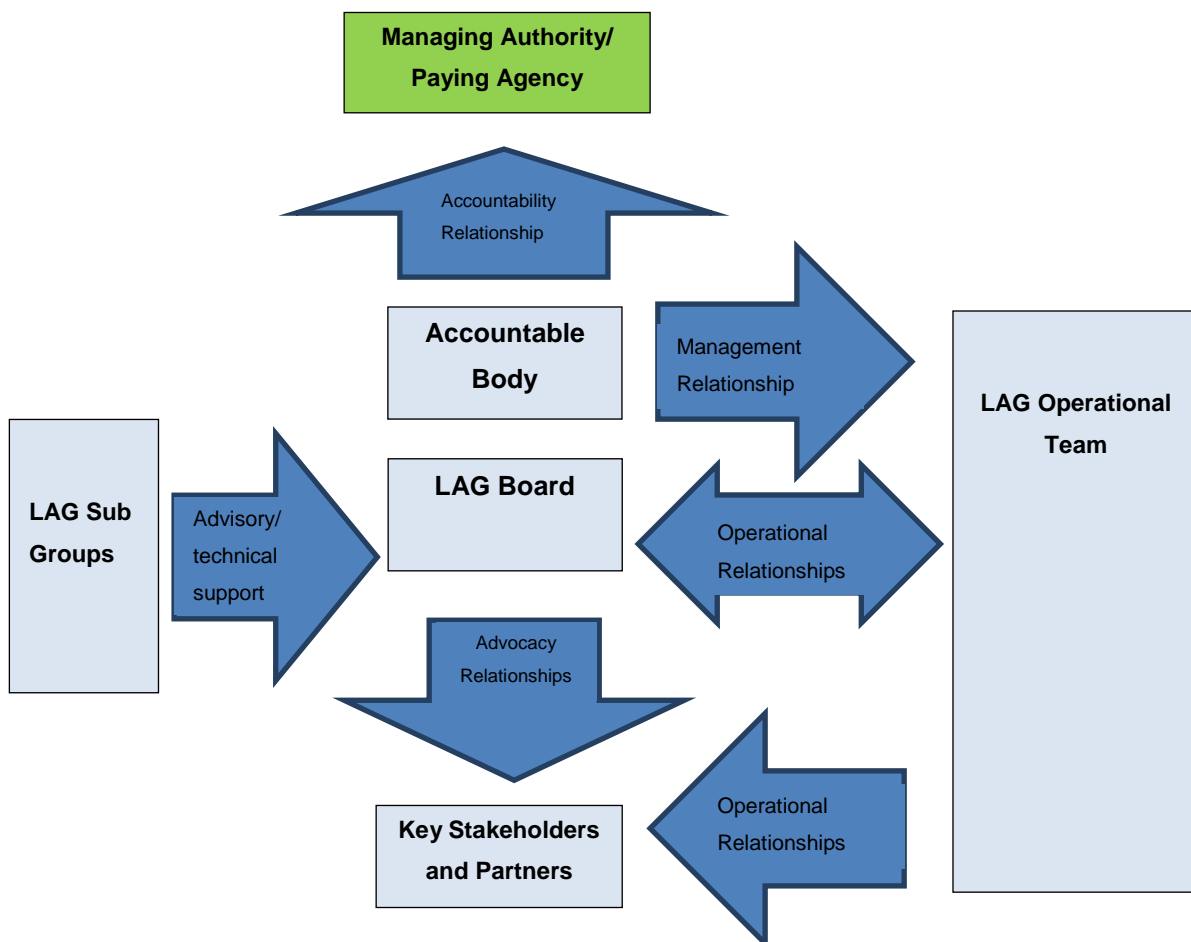
An overview of the governance structures is highlighted below. There are three key components to the structures.

- Managing Authority (MA)
  - Scottish Government
- LAG Structures
  - LAG Board; LAG Sub Groups; and Operations Team



- Stakeholders and Partners
  - Community Planning Partnerships, LAG Member Organisations, Service Providers, Communities/Community Groups and Businesses within the LEADER Area.

### Kelvin Valley and Falkirk Governance Structures



The structure is based around a transparent structure that offers clear accountability and decision making and is fully engaged with the wider local community through LAG member representation.

## 2.3 Overview of Roles and Responsibilities

An overview of the roles and responsibilities for the key LAG elements of the governance structures is detailed below.

- **Accountable Body**
  - fund management; processing claims and payments; technical assistance to support project monitoring and claims processes; managing the operational team; monitoring and reporting progress to the MA
- **LAG Board**
  - strategic management and reviewing progress; project appraisal, scoring and decision making; managing and directing the implementation of the Local Development Strategy
  - the LAG Board will have a role in agreeing and supporting the operational staff workplans and, along with LAG Sub-Groups, to promote the Programme across the LEADER Area and partner organisations
- **LAG Sub-Groups**
  - technical support/advisory roles; liaison with key stakeholders; thematic project support; advising the LAG Board; project development; supporting applicants
- **Operational Team**
  - promoting project applications; supporting applicants (signposting, technical advice, feedback etc); engaging with applicants; networking with other LAGs; exploring options for trans-regional/national projects; initial due diligence check of project applications; providing hands on support to project implementation; marketing and communication; collecting monitoring data

## 2.4 LAG Decision Making

The LAG Board will be required to make a range of specific decisions to allow the delivery of the LDS and these will be based on the following approach making use of:

- LAG Board;
  - all decision making powers as per the constitution including scoring of projects and decision making on all projects regardless of value
- LAG Sub Groups
  - Sub-Groups of at least three LAG members will be established with nomination to be based on an analysis using the skills' matrix approach to ensure they have appropriate skills.
- Programme Co-ordinator.
  - provision of recommendations/advice to Board to assist decision making
- Sub-Groups will be used to help fast track small scale applications under themes so that LAG members do not have to score every application with an electronic system put in place for the LAG Board to consider each Sub-Group recommendation.

The LAG had hoped to make wider use of sub-groups for each theme *to help fast track small scale applications so that LAG members do not have to score every application with an electronic system put in place for the LAG Board to consider each Sub-Group recommendation*, thereby:

- minimising the total time commitment of individual members to ensure regular participation;
- making the most of the specific skills and experience of individual members;
- making the use of delegation as a means of improving decision making and response times; and
- ensuring that the workload for individual LAG members is manageable.

However the procedural requirements mean that electronic voting and therefore the fast tracking of projects is not practical.

## 2.5 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of each of the LAG structures against each of the activity areas is detailed below. It should be noted that not all parts of the structure have a role or responsibility in each activity area.

### HR/Staffing

- Accountable Body: Responsible for recruitment and appointment of Operational Team Staff (in line with HR Policy and model JDs), ongoing management and training.
- LAG Board: Responsible for the following:
  - Contribute to the selection and recruitment of Operational Staff
  - Support the recruitment of LAG members through an 'open call' used to target identified 'skills' gaps'
  - Support ongoing development of work programmes of Operational Staff
- Programme Co-ordinator: Responsible for the daily management of operational team staff including annual performance review and personal development.

### Finance

- Accountable Body: Financial responsibility for the overall programme, remuneration of Operational Team Staff, claims submission and payment and management of any loan funding<sup>\*1</sup> to support project cashflow.
- LAG Board: Approval of the annual operational budget, grant award profile and any operational expenditure above £5,000.
- Operational Team: Responsible for managing and monitoring financial claims process on behalf of the Accountable Body, developing and implementing a costed operational programme on an annual basis in line with LDS requirements and ensuring all procurement is undertaken in accordance with the financial procedures and contract standing orders of the Accountable Body.

\*<sup>1</sup> Subject to formal approval, the three Local Authority members of the KVF LAG will seek to establish an interest free, repayable loan fund which will support small community groups/projects in terms of short term project cash flow.

This will be outwith the formal LEADER Programme but will seek to support and complement its activities.

### Projects and Applications

- LAG Board: Promotion of programme across LEADER area, stakeholders and partners, assessing, scoring and making decisions on funding for projects and approving use of loan funding, where required, to support project cashflow.
- Operational Team: Responsible for promotion of programme, responding to project enquiries, issuing application packs, advisory support to applicant projects, technical appraisal, preparation and distribution of scoring packs to LAG/Sub-Groups' members, compiling and maintaining application information and monitoring and reviewing submissions to help guide and steer the ongoing development of the LEADER Programme.

### Monitoring and Reporting

- Accountable Body: Overall responsibility for submission of all performance reports and liaison with the Managing Authority as necessary.
- LAG Board: Reviewing and approving performance reports for submission to the Managing Authority, reviewing and approving audit and compliance reports and developing/agreeing performance improvement action as necessary.
- Operational Team: Monitoring project implementation and operational budget spend, collating performance and financial information for claims submissions and returns, preparing quarterly performance reports for LAG approval and supporting all audit, compliance and verification checks.

## Co-operation

- LAG Board: Promotion of co-operation opportunities with other LAG areas and partner organisations and consideration/approval of co-operation applications using the same procedures as for all other applications.
- Operational Team: Scoping and development of national and transnational co-operation opportunities with other LAG Areas and potential partner applicants. Working with other programmes and funders to deliver added value and complementarity.

## Investment

- LAG Board: Identification of opportunities for member organisation to provide/support investment in the development and implementation of LEADER projects.
- Operational Team: Work with other funders and investors to identify/help secure funding for the development and implementation of LEADER projects, raise the profile of the KVF LEADER Programme with funders and identify funding opportunities to which project applicants can be 'signposted'.

## Communications

- LAG Board: Monitor the implementation of the KVF LEADER Communications Plan and support the promotion and marketing of this programme across the LEADER Area and partner organisations.
- Operational Team; The preparation and implementation of a detailed communications plan for the KVF LEADER Programme including an annual review of this plan to identify and target promotional and marketing activity as required.

## 3. LAG Membership

### 3.1 Introduction

The Governance structure was set out in Chapter 2 and this provides more detail on the specific membership elements and the individual roles and responsibilities.

### 3.2 Accountable Body

Falkirk Council will act as the Accountable Body for the KVF LEADER Programme and assume responsibility for the LEADER funding.

This will involve acting as the employer for all Operational Team Staff, providing line-management support and exercising financial control.

Falkirk Council has the necessary systems in place and considerable experience of the requirements of European funding through previous and current ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes as well as LEADER under the Scottish Rural Development Programme.

Falkirk Council will ensure that adequate controls are in place and that the process is effectively managed to meet Scottish Government and EU audit requirements. They will be responsible for reporting directly to the Scottish Government as required under the LEADER Programme.

### 3.3 LAG Board

The LAG Board has responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the KVF LEADER Programme; implementing, delivering and reviewing the Programme, devising appropriate appraisal and monitoring systems for projects and selecting which projects will be supported.

It will be a strong autonomous partnership responsible for making its own decisions.

The process of establishing the KVF LAG Board has commenced and a Board is in place. It is intended to enhance the Board through a recruitment process with the non-public sector members in the majority position. A LAG recruitment sub group has been established and the first stage in the recruitment process, a skills' audit, has been completed with current LAG members using a skills' matrix. This will be used to identify skills' gaps amongst current LAG members. The sub group will initiate a recruitment call which will involve nominations from stakeholder organisations alongside an open recruitment process advertised locally across the area including the local press. The aim will be to recruit more non-public sector Board members in addition to taking account of spatial representation, seeking where possible to achieve an even spread across the three local authority areas.

The sub-group (which does not include a representative of the Accountable Body) will consider applications and make recommendations to the LAG Board. New LAG members will then be recruited. A policy for recruiting LAG members has been developed by the sub group and will be formalised through this process. It will then apply for the remainder of the programme. This will be used in the event that additional LAG members are sought at any point in future.

It is planned that the full LAG Board will meet at a minimum every quarter. The current LAG Board has a range and mix of skills based on representation from:

- three Local Authorities;
- Central Scotland Green Network Trust;
- SNH;
- New College Lanarkshire;
- Scottish Waterways Trust;
- Falkirk CVS;
- VisitScotland;
- Scottish Enterprise; and
- Falkirk, East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire community representatives; and

Additional members will be sought who can add to the skills/experience already available in the LAG, articulate the needs of the different communities across the programme area and who can demonstrate experience in one or more of the following areas where there is an identified 'skills' gap'.



## Key Skills and Experience Requirements

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Development</b></li> <li>• <b>Enterprise</b></li> <li>• <b>Environmental Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Environmental Action</b></li> <li>• <b>Tourism Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Community Group</b></li> <li>• <b>Social Enterprise</b></li> <li>• <b>LEADER Projects</b></li> <li>• <b>Tourism Business</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Other Business</b></li> <li>• <b>Financial Management</b></li> <li>• <b>Youth Issues</b></li> <li>• <b>Gender Issues</b></li> <li>• <b>Management Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Management Practice</b></li> <li>• <b>European Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Green agenda</b></li> <li>• <b>Farm diversification</b></li> </ul> |
|---|---|

Particular importance will be given to those with specific experience relevant to the key strategic themes within the LDS with a focus on those with business or enterprise skills and experience.

We will also avoid duplication of organisational representation where there are individual organisations (such as Business Gateway) in all three Local Authority areas.

The LAG will act as a strategic board for the programme. In governance terms they will be responsible for strategic decisions, and will set the framework for operational activities. The LAG members will also set the strategic direction for the operational activities of the operational staff.

Building upon partners' experience of previous Programmes, it was considered appropriate that the proposed membership and membership interests and experiences needed to take cognisance of a range of factors.

- The need to adopt an inclusive approach;
- The need to ensure an appropriate and equal balance between social and economic partners;
- The need to ensure target groups are represented;
- The need to ensure the LAG reflects the key themes/focus of the LDS;
- The need to ensure that the LAG is independent and autonomous;
- The need to ensure that the LAG will be able to function effectively and efficiently on a practical level;

- LAG members are unpaid but payment of appropriate and reasonable costs of their participation (such as travel, subsistence and childcare) will be considered by the LAG Board.

The LAG Board will take responsibility to ensure that the above factors will be adhered to.

### Public Sector Membership

Public sector members will be drawn from the following:

- Local authorities and community planning partnerships in the three Local Authority areas covered by the Programme;
- The regional economic development structures of national agencies such as: Scottish Enterprise; Skills Development Scotland; VisitScotland;
- The rural affairs and environment agencies such as: Scottish Natural Heritage, and Forestry Commission Scotland

### Community and Business Membership

The majority (51%) of members of the LAG will not be from the public sector, but will represent the programme area's local businesses, communities and third sector organisations.

## 3.4 LAG Chair

Scottish Government guidance is that the Chairperson may not be a representative (officer or office holder) from the Lead Partner/Accountable Body. The LAG chair has a vital role to play in ensuring that the organisation is truly independent and operates effectively. The LAG has therefore agreed to have a non-public sector chairperson.

### 3.5 Operational Team

In order to deliver the ambitious LDS it will be a fundamental requirement to recruit a small team of three (FTE) staff who will provide day to day operational and delivery support.

This will include:

- Programme Co-ordinator;
- Development Officer/ Animator; and
- Finance Officer/ Admin support.

In taking this forward, we will aim to employ staff on a flexible basis, positively promoting the use of part time/job sharing opportunities and reflecting the need to vary specific staff input required over the lifetime of this programme.

The Operational Team will be responsible for a range of tasks to include:

- Marketing and promotion of the Programme and publicising it in the locality among a wide range of stakeholders;
- Developing and maintaining the website;
- Engaging with potential project applications to provide guidance and advice;
- Pro-actively promoting the Programme and generating new projects/ideas;
- Working with stakeholder/ partners on co-production of new projects;
- Receiving applications and ensuring that they are complete and technically eligible;
- Engaging with other LAGs in joint projects/ co-production;
- Providing technical advice to the LAG members;
- Providing logistical support to LAG members when undertaking LEADER activity;
- Drafting and issuing grant offer letters to approved projects under the LEADER Programme;
- Receiving, checking and co-ordinating the processing of grant claims from successful project applicants;

- Maintaining and updating spreadsheets and databases relating to the progress of the LEADER Programme and presenting such information to the LAG and any other relevant bodies;
- Submitting regular claims and progress reports to the Managing Authority and undertaking financial control and monitoring of budgets;
- Circulating LAG papers and taking minutes at LAG meetings.

The job descriptions for these posts will be based on Scottish Government Business Planning Guidance provided as outlined in Appendix 5.

The Operational Team will have their own internal structures with the Programme Co-ordinator responsible to the Accountable Body nominee as their individual line manager for all staff related performance issues. The Operational Team will be based within the Accountable Body but will have nominated locations in other areas where they will be based part time/ as required to support operations.

## 4. LAG Procedures

### 4.1 Introduction

The LAG will adopt the Scottish Government application process and its associated forms. The LAG will develop its own procedures for how this is processed to minimise delay in application and decision making.

While ensuring all aspects of eligibility are complied with, the LAG aims to notify applicants of the final LAG decision within a maximum of two weeks of it being considered at a LAG board (or within four weeks of submission for 'fast-tracked' projects)

### 4.2 Overall Approach

The overall approach to seeking applications will be based on the following approach:

- Stage 1: Over the first two years of the Programme applications will be sought using Project Calls to cover all thematic areas. It is intended that there will be four calls per annum (8 over two years);
- Stage 2: Over years 3-4 Programme applications will be sought using restricted calls based on the performance over the first two years. This will reflect progress against themes and targets and seek to ensure that the Programme meets its overall performance targets;
- Stage 3: Over the remaining Programme timeframe applications will revert to an open call, partly as a sweep up and partly to ensure that all funding is fully invested.

While the above sets out a proposed approach at this point in time it is recognised that we will continually monitor performance and may seek to review this at a later stage.

## 4.3 LAG Operational Procedures

In addition to the above structures, there are a number of other key aspects to the longer term development of our approach:

- training and development
  - induction training for all LAG members
  - development of a buddy system for new members
  - project appraisal training for all LAG members
  - operational staff to have individual training plans
- use of on-line process
  - dedicated web site for KVF LEADER Programme
  - board papers to be available electronically
  - all LAG papers, reports, minutes to be available on the LAG website
  - (under development) Scottish Government finance and monitoring system
- relationship management
  - Programme Co-ordinator to establish relationships with key stakeholder/partners
  - initial formal meetings with all stakeholders/ partners to share ideas/opportunities
  - regular update meetings
- use of Sub-Groups
  - although only partially implemented to date, the LAG wishes to consider the use of Sub-Groups in relation to the thematic areas
- co-funding opportunities
  - it is recognised that a key challenge will be to attract other funds to support the LDS priorities
  - this would be managed through operational team and their work would not just involve 'attracting other funding' for projects delivered through this LEADER programme but also about raising its profile with other funders so that projects may be more successful in securing funding.
- financial loan funding support

- it is intention for the Local Authorities to establish a repayable, interest free loan fund which can be used to cash flow projects delivered within local communities where applicants don't have financial capacity to cash flow these themselves.

## 4.4 Application Process

Applications will be sought from businesses, community groups, organisations and individuals where sponsored by a public body or agencies.

The key aspects in the application process will include:

- point of first contact – applicants can make general enquiries and initial discussions with the Operations Team;
- submission of an initial “project enquiry form” at any time in the to notify the Operations Team of potential interest in LEADER funding support;
- the Operations Team will ensure access and awareness of the relevant guidance and applications materials held on Scottish Government web site; and
- initial application appraisal and clarification with applicant(s) where necessary by the Operations Team to ensure compliance with technical eligibility;

The key aspects of each stage are outlined in Appendix 3.

## 4.5 LAG Sponsored/Commissioned Projects

The LAG will also seek to make best use of its powers and ability to fund projects developed either directly or indirectly. In particular, it is believed there will be two key areas:

- projects developed within the LEADER Programme area in partnership with local stakeholders;
- projects identified by the LAG as requiring investment and commissioned directly by the LAG; and
- projects developed in partnership with other LAGs (co-operation).

Our approach will be based on identifying opportunities through:

- an annual strategic review session by the LAG. This will seek to identify specific/strategic projects which will help deliver and enhance the delivery of the KVF LEADER Programme/LDS and which would be sponsored/procured through the LAG (although at this stage of business planning process, no set allocation has been put against these types of projects);
- establishing regular contact with the neighbouring LAGs through the Programme Co-ordinator (every quarter) to review potential for collaborative bids;
- proposals from LAG members; and
- proposals from the Programme Co-ordinator.

In terms of activity commissioned directly by the LAG, key themes and ideas are still being developed. Commissioning could include enterprise (business support), employability and community action planning/capacity building in line with our spatial targeting proposals. Detailed proposals will be agreed in collaboration with stakeholder organisations in order to ensure that LEADER commissioned activity would be additional, add value and not replace existing activity.

Research undertaken to map existing provision through stakeholder services involved meeting with the three Business Gateway providers to establish any gaps that currently exist in terms of enterprise support in the rural area. This was supplemented by information from the Third Sector Interfaces. As a result, a stakeholder event has been organised which will bring together Business Gateway providers, Scottish Enterprise, Third Sector Interfaces, Visit Scotland, Forestry Commission, farming representatives and other stakeholders to discuss rural enterprise and farm diversification and to consider how these budgets within the LEADER programme could be allocated to achieve maximum benefit in the urban fringe and rural areas whilst avoiding duplication of existing support.



## 5. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

### 5.1 Introduction

This Chapter outlines the proposed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan that establishes how the LAG will meet the requirements set out in the guidance note. It is noted that Scottish Government is providing specific guidance on the M&E requirements and will also provide access to an IT system for LEADER.

The LAG will seek to monitor its own activities; those of the projects it funds; and also providing input to the Scot Governments M&E plan for the national RDP programme. The M&E plan for the KVF LAG will take a phased approach, front-loading with M&E of its LDS while subsequently responding to future guidance on national M&E of the RDP currently under development by the Scottish Government.

It is highlighted that application and claims forms will be designed to capture the majority of information required to populate the core indicators. Crucially, the IT system will also allow additional information specific to LAGs to be captured to support their particular M&E framework.

### 5.2 Overall Approach

The overarching M&E objectives will be to:

- evaluate local programme delivery against the objectives of the LDS;
- advise the further refinement and improvement of the LDS, its delivery and the funded projects;
- ensure programme compliance with the regulations; and
- provide accountability to local and national stakeholders

The key elements of the monitoring and evaluation framework include:

- responding to requests for additional information from the Scottish Government and complying with monitoring requirements in a prompt manner;

- the production of brief quarterly financial progress reports that illustrate details of project approvals, fit with strategic and Business Plan objectives, eligible expenditure, total expenditure and leverage ratios to date;
- detailed annual reports that will provide an account of the projects supported, the activities and performance against performance indicators, progress in supporting target groups, level of funds committed and claimed by measure and clearly identifying the remaining funds;
- the LAG will input to the SG requirements for national implementation reports for 2017 and 2019;
- learning from M&E activities will be disseminated to target audiences as soon as practicable (see proposed legacy event);
- the Programme Co-ordinator will prepare an evaluation schedule for the LAG Board by mid-2015, highlighting when decisions are required, and recommending necessary preparatory and follow-up work;
- the Board will commit adequate resources to support the M&E work of the programme staff including, where appropriate, their personal learning and development and
- where appropriate, the Board will contract specialist M&E activities as self-sponsored projects.

In addition to the components outlined, a mid-term and ex-post evaluation will be carried out after the financial completion of the Programme. This evaluation will adopt a systematic approach to evaluating the impact of the LEADER Programme that establishes a logical connection between the Programme inputs and changes that the Programme is designed to achieve.

We recognise the benefits if all LAGs adopt a similar approach to evaluation in order that there is an ability to compare and contrast across LAGs as well as gross up to a programme level. We will therefore seek to work with other LAGs and Scottish Government on this aspect of the M&E plan.

The overall responsibility for setting up and implementing the M&E Framework will rest with the Programme Co-ordinator and support resources will be provided within the overall management budget.

All monitoring reports will be made available for download on the LAG web-site.

## 5.3 Monitoring Framework

In terms of monitoring, it is proposed to adopt an approach that includes the following elements:

- monitoring of socio-economic baseline based around the indicators provided in the LDS
  - the LAG will provide short annual updates to the socio economic baseline to identify broad macro trends in the Programme area;
- monitoring of EC indicators as per MA requirements
  - to include both output and result indicators
- monitoring of LAG specific indicators which are specific to the LDS
  - these will be bespoke based on strategic themes

The proposed monitoring framework is detailed below in Table 5.1.

This also provides details of sources of data, responsibility for collecting data and reporting requirements.

We note that the Scottish Government are providing additional guidance on monitoring community capacity with this indicator carried forward from the previous LEADER programme. We will include this in our detailed framework as developed.

**Table 5.1: LDS Monitoring Framework Indicators**

Theme	Sub Field	Indicators			Source/ Reporting	
Socio-economic	Population	Numbers			Published annual Gov statistics	
		Gender/age				
	Employment	Numbers			Annual updates to be prepared by Programme Co-ordinator for submission to LAG	
		Gender/age				
	Business	Number				
		Sector				
Unemployment	Number/%					
	Age/ gender/ duration					
EC Indicators	Output	Projects supported	Number		LAG records	
		Type of project promoter	NGO			
			LAG			
			Public body			
			SME			
			Other			
		Cooperation projects	Inter-territorial			
			Transnational			
		Expenditure	Preparatory support	Support for prep of LDS		Reports to be compiled by Programme Co-ordinator on an as required basis to meet reporting requirements.  Input to annual report
				LEADER start-up		
	Support for implementation LDS					
	Prep and implementation of co-op activities		Technical Support			
			Support for ITC projects			
			Support for TC projects			
Support for running costs/ animation	Support for running costs					
	Support for animation					
Results	P6A Facilitating diversification, creation of new small enterprises and job creation	Jobs created in support projects		LAG records. Project Application Monitoring visits/ Quarterly reports from applicant To be undertaken by Programme Co-ordinator		
		% of rural population covered by LDS				
	P6B Fostering local development in rural areas	Rural population benefiting from improved services/ infrastructure				
LDS Indicators	Theme 1	Visitor/ tourism facilities	No developed/ upgraded	Type	Detailed guidance to be developed as early project.  Data will be fed into IT system as developed.	
		Visitor/ tourism events	No supported	Type		
		Business/enterprise diversification support	No supported	Type		
		Infrastructure projects	No supported	Type		
		Leverage	Other public	Private sector		
	Theme 2	Community services	Number	Type	Data will be included in annual reports.  Key role for Programme Co-ordinator.	
		Village enhancements	Number	Value		
		Access projects	Number	Type		
		Community projects	Number	Value		
		Leverage	Other public	Private sector		
	Theme 3	Employment support	Number supported	Support provided		
		Training	Number supported	Type		
		Social enterprise supported	Number	Value		
Low carbon projects		Number supported	Value			
Leverage		Other public	Private sector			
Impacts	The detailed requirements have still to be agreed and will be included within the formal evaluation plan					

## 5.4 Evaluation Plan

The final evaluation plan will build on the issued guidance - *LEADER Evaluation: Practical Lessons for LAGs, Managing Authorities and Evaluators*.

The monitoring framework will focus on gathering both quantitative and qualitative information from the projects in order to facilitate effective evaluation.

Information that will be recorded by the Programme Operations Team on behalf of the LAG will include:

- successful project applicants, as a condition of grant award, will be required to complete quarterly feedback questionnaires outlining activities and progress along with outputs and impacts;
- information on media coverage of funded project; and
- the Programme Operations Team will arrange monitoring visits with a focus on projects of scale to reflect the financial risk on larger projects.

Qualitative information, specifically focussing on the impact of the programme on target groups, will be gathered from discussions of the perceptions of the impact of the Programme with project applicants and beneficiaries. This will be carried out on an ongoing basis and as part of the ex-post evaluation. This will be achieved through focus groups and participatory workshops that seek to establish beneficiary perceptions of:

- the Programme's aims and objectives;
- the impact of the project on their lives; and
- measures to improve accessibility of project and Programme activities.

The approach is therefore designed to:

- identify what has worked well and not so well about the programme and projects, both in terms of what was done (outputs), how it was done (delivery processes) and what it has achieved (impacts);
- assist the LAG to develop or modify objectives, delivery structure, and funding arrangements throughout the Programme period; and
- effectively record the achievements and lessons learned.

Following this logical approach, the ex post evaluation of the Programme will focus on the following three broad elements:

- Context – developing an understanding of the influences on the Programme, its fit with the wider operating environment and the resources invested in it in terms of time, expertise and financial resources;
- Implementation – developing an understanding of the way in which the KVF Programme is delivered, the strengths and weaknesses of delivery and the extent to which activities were implemented as expected; and
- Benefits – developing an understanding of the extent to which progress is being made towards any desired changes and the extent to which wider or unanticipated consequences have arisen.

The above of course will be refined to reflect guidance issued by the Managing Authority, particularly to ensure a coherent approach across all LAGs.

## 6. Financial Administration

### 6.1 Introduction

This Chapter sets out the proposed financial arrangements for the Programme.

We believe that LEADER and any further investment it will help generate will fill a crucially important gap in the development needs of our rural communities and will introduce a new and vital approach towards the joined-up, collaborative and innovative development of the Kelvin Valley and Falkirk area.

Estimates of the costs of managing the Programme and delivering the strategy have been based on the range of projects identified during the Strategy and Business Plan consultation stage and take into account the guidelines for allocation of resources. Our assumptions are set out below.

### 6.2 Financial Assumptions

These are based at this stage on the approved award of £2,824,399.

- the Scottish Government Guidance requires to make provision for the following:
  - Co-operation - min 5%
  - Animation and running costs – max 25%
  - Enterprise and Farm diversification – min 20%
- additional guidance on spend profile has been provided and reflected in financial tables;
- intervention rate varying to reflect demonstrable need from applicants and value for money for the LAG.
  - this will be obtained through project investment from public sector partners; other partners; community groups; third sector organisations and the private sector

- staffing and administration costs will be claimed in full as allowed for in the Programme Guidance (although, subject to approval, accommodation costs will be provided by member organisations);
- the LEADER funds will be invested across the three thematic priorities to reflect the likely higher costs for physical projects as follows:
  - [Theme 1] 32%; [Theme 2]: 18%; and [Theme 3]: 25%; and Administration 25%;
  - this allows for the minimum of 20% to be dedicated to enterprise/diversification activities and the 5% allocated to co-operation all of which will be spread across the individual themes.

## 6.3 Administration

These are estimated to be around £700,000 over the six year life of the Programme.

A detailed financial plan has been developed by the Programme Manager (with LAG approval).

## 6.4 Programme Budget

These are the initial assessment of financial projections based on high level assumptions.

**Table 6.1: Draft Financial Table**

		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Admin	LEADER	90,000	100,000	100,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	500,000
	<b>Annual</b>	90,000	100,000	100,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	500,000
Theme 1	LEADER	76,800	83,200	121,600	134,400	134,400	89,600	640,000
	Public	96,000	104,000	152,000	168,000	168,000	112,000	800,000
	Private	19,200	20,800	30,400	33,600	33,600	22,400	160,000
	<b>Annual</b>	192,000	208,000	304,000	336,000	336,000	224,000	1,600,000
Theme 2	LEADER	43,200	46,800	68,400	75,600	75,600	50,400	360,000
	Public	54,000	58,500	85,500	94,500	94,500	63,000	450,000
	Private	10,800	11,700	17,100	18,900	18,900	12,600	90,000
	<b>Annual</b>	108,000	117,000	171,000	189,000	189,000	126,000	900,000
e 3	LEADER	60,000	65,000	95,000	105,000	105,000	70,000	500,000



	Public	48,000	52,000	76,000	84,000	84,000	56,000	400,000
	Private	12,000	13,000	19,000	21,000	21,000	14,000	100,000
	<b>Annual</b>	120,000	130,000	190,000	210,000	210,000	140,000	1,000,000
<b>Total</b>		510000	550000	765000	805000	805000	560000	4,000,000

As highlighted above, it is anticipated that all match funding for this programme will be secured through project investment made from public sector partners; other partners; community groups; third sector organisations and the private sector and will be confirmed on a project by project basis.

## 7. Communications Plan

### 7.1 Introduction

This Chapter sets out our high level communication plan. It recognises that communicating and publicising the LAG and the LDS aims and achievements effectively can contribute very positively to the successful achievement of the objectives.

The approach to be adopted will ensure that the LAG and its staff will work with other organisations and initiatives in the area to ensure that effective complementarity is achieved in practice with a range of wider stakeholder organisations.

It also recognises that the Communications Plan must fit with the timetable for the LDS and further guidance will be issued which will be incorporated into our overall approach.

### 7.2 Communication Plan

The objectives of this communications plan are to address the following:

- To promote the work of the KVF LAG and the objectives of the LDS within the local community, across Scotland and transnationally;
- To encourage beneficiaries from the local rural community and businesses to further engage in rural community development;
- Overall, to heighten the profile of the Kelvin Valley and Falkirk area, adding value to past, current and future activities and supporting the sustainable development of regeneration of the region; and
- To increase the level of understanding and awareness within the local community of the role which the EC plays in rural economic development.

The Programme will be promoted in a way that is easily identified by the local community.

For this purpose we have specified a number of key overriding principles for all LEADER communications and publicity:

- use of plain English
  - to be easily adopted by the local community, all LEADER communications and publicity will be written in plain English, avoiding unnecessary jargon or technical terms;
- identification of a clear referral process
  - clear identification of a “next point of contact” or further information within all communications and publicity material to help raise local community awareness and support community development; and
- monitoring of communication and publicity effectiveness
  - as part of the annual LEADER business plan review, a commitment to examine all communication and publicity activity with a view to its effectiveness in engaging with the local community.

The Programme Co-ordinator will have lead responsibility for ensuring the implementation of communications and publicity strategy and will have specific responsibility for stakeholder management, ensuring effective co-ordinated publicity across public sector partners and in communicating with external stakeholders.

LAG members will also be encouraged to take responsibility for promoting the work of the programme, participating in events and identifying potential promotional opportunities

Lastly, Commission Regulations on publicity guidelines (including correct use of logos etc.) will be adhered to within all media releases and project documentation issued as well as incorporated as an obligation within grant offer letters which applicants will require to sign and return.

### Key Components of Communications Plan

The communications plan will contain the following key components based around:

- Dedicated KVF LEADER web site:
  - a dedicated website for the programme will be developed and we will ensure reciprocal links on partners’ websites as appropriate
  - all publicity materials, information, application and support documents will be available on the web site

- information on calls for applications and reminders of deadlines
  - applicants will be able to lodge applications on-line on Scottish Government web site with access to this promoted on the KVF LEADER web site
  - listing of projects supported to facilitate exchange of best practice
- Events and roadshows
  - launch event
  - programme of information raising workshops by Programme Co-ordinator across the LEADER Programme area
  - LEADER legacy event at end of Programme
- Reports and research
  - publication of annual reports
  - publication of approved projects
  - publication of any bespoke research
- External communications
  - the Programme will seek where possible to engage with a host of local, regional, national and transnational partners. This will help to ensure that the LDS is promoted and more importantly linked with the existing strategic policy framework.
- Radio and press coverage
  - pro-active engagement with local press and radio to raise the profile of the LDS and successful activities in the longer-term.
  - The KVF LAG will also use this media to publicise calls for applications
- LAG Programme branding
  - the LAG will utilise the current LEADER branding
- Key client management
  - all LAG members will be allocated a key stakeholder which will include key local businesses to act as main contact and to seek to develop relationships and joint activity.

- This approach will be developed further once the LAG is fully established

The relative success of the various media used will be monitored by the Operational Team to ensure effectiveness and value for money. Success would generally be linked to the number of enquires and/or applications generated and the overall levels of positive coverage.

A key early action will be to develop a calendar of planned activities with key milestones in relation to the communications and publicity strategy over the first two years.

### 7.3 Key Target Groups

There are a number of key internal and external audiences with whom the LAG would wish to communicate.

An analysis of these is provided at Table 7.1, over.

**Table 7.1: Key Communication Audiences**

<b>Key Target Group</b>	<b>Sub Groups</b>	<b>Communication</b>
Local Community	Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general awareness</li> </ul>
	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunities for support</li> </ul>
	Education sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sources of applications</li> </ul>
	Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information on success</li> </ul>
	Voluntary sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• input into strategy development</li> </ul>
Business Community	Local employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general awareness</li> </ul>
	Social Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunities for support</li> </ul>
	Local investors/ developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sources of applications</li> </ul>
	Property owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• source of matched funding</li> </ul>
	Farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information on success</li> </ul>
	Tourist/ visitor organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• input into strategy</li> </ul>
Public Agencies	LAG Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• source of joint projects</li> </ul>
	Other local and national Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• source of funding</li> </ul>
	LA operating departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategic support</li> </ul>
	Local Politicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information and good practice</li> <li>• joined up services/ delivery</li> </ul>
Media	Local press	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general awareness</li> </ul>
	Regional/National press	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• publicise success</li> </ul>
	Other media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• source of applications</li> <li>• publicise events</li> </ul>
External organisations	Other LAGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• co-operation projects</li> </ul>
	Transnational organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• external funding</li> <li>• sharing best practice</li> <li>• shared evaluation approach</li> </ul>
Managing Authority	Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formal reporting</li> </ul>
	SRDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting success</li> <li>• sharing good practice</li> <li>• joint approaches across LAGs</li> </ul>

## 8. Equality Statement

### 8.1 Introduction

This Chapter explains our approach to equalities which is set out in Falkirk Council's [Equality Mainstreaming Report](#). As the Accountable Body, Falkirk Council is committed to '*alleviating the causes and effects of poverty and addressing inequalities*'. Within this context we will work to make sure that we achieve the requirements of the public sector equality duty which is to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity and;
- Foster good relations

### 8.2 LAG Approach

The KVF LAG is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality of opportunity. We will provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination where it impacts on people with any of the protected characteristics below:

- Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Gender identity, Race & Religion; Sexual Orientation and Transgender status.

We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- Ensuring that equality of opportunity and diversity is evident within our operating and decision making processes;
- Aiming to build a partnership which reflects the diverse communities in which we work,
- Encouraging participation from groups currently under represented;
- Treating our applicants, colleagues and partners fairly and with respect;
- Promoting an environment where people, projects and the aims of the LEADER programme encourage the achievement of their full potential;

- Recognising and valuing the differences and individual contribution that people make;
- Utilising the policy, practice and processes of the Accountable Body to ensure legislative compliance and best practice delivery of the aims and objectives of the LEADER programme.

Every member of the KVF LAG has a personal responsibility for implementing and promoting these principles in their day-to-day dealings with applicants, with each other and with partners.

We will measure and report on the effectiveness of our policies and processes in relation to these principles, by building performance monitoring and management information requirements into policy and product development.

This information will be used to inform future policy and to enhance our business processes.



## Appendix 1: LAG Constitution

### Kelvin Valley and Falkirk LEADER LAG (Local Action Group)

#### Constitution

##### **1. Title**

The group shall be titled “Kelvin Valley and Falkirk LEADER LAG” for the areas of Falkirk, East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire shown on the map of eligible area, at Appendix 2, or the most recent amended version of this map as approved by the Scottish Government.

##### **1. Objectives**

To design, implement, monitor and evaluate the Kelvin Valley and Falkirk LEADER LAG local rural development strategy, in accordance with the business plan most recently approved by the Scottish Government, for the LEADER programme period 2014-2020.

##### **2. Powers**

- 2.1 The LAG is responsible for designing, implementing and monitoring the local development strategy.
- 2.2 The tasks of local action groups shall include the following:
  - 2.2.1. building the capacity of local actors to develop and implement operations;
  - 2.2.2. drawing up a selection procedure and criteria for the selection of operations;
  - 2.2.3. prioritise operations according to their contribution to meeting the local development strategy’s objectives and targets;
  - 2.2.4. publishing calls for proposals or an ongoing project submission procedure, including definition of selection criteria;
  - 2.2.5. receiving applications for support and assessing them;
  - 2.2.6. selecting operations and fixing the amount of support and, where relevant, presenting the proposals to the Managing Authority for final verification of eligibility before approval;
  - 2.2.7. monitoring the implementation of the local development strategy and the operations supported; and
  - 2.2.8. carrying out evaluation activities linked to the local development strategy.

### **3. Membership**

- 3.1 The general structure of the LAG shall consist of the members of the LAG, who will have the right to attend the meetings of the LAG and take decisions, including in relation to changes to the constitution.
- 3.2 Membership of the LAG is open to the local authorities of Falkirk, East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire, and other public agencies, business groups, constituted voluntary action groups and constituted community groups operating within the eligible area (Appendix 2).
- 3.3 The LAG, from its foundation, will be comprised of at least 51% non-public sector members, in accordance with SG guidance and EU Regulations.
- 3.4 The founding members are those who have declared and or signed their adoption of this Constitution at the inaugural meeting called by North Lanarkshire Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014.
- 3.5 The LAG Board will have a minimum of 12 members.
- 3.6 After foundation, an organisation wishing to become a member must apply in writing to the Programme Co-ordinator. The LAG shall consider each application for membership at the first meeting which is held after receipt of the application; the LAG shall, within a reasonable time after the meeting, notify the applicant of its decision on the application.
- 3.7 The LAG may, at its discretion, refuse to admit any organisation to membership.
- 3.8 Organisations which are members of the LAG shall be required to take a full and active part in the activities of the LAG which includes nominating a representative to attend meetings of the LAG and ensure its nominated representative attends meetings on a regular basis and takes a full and active part in proceedings.
- 3.9 Any organisation which wishes to withdraw from membership shall sign, and lodge with the LAG, written notice to that effect. The organisation shall cease to be a member on receipt of the notice by the LAG.

### **4. Meetings**

- 4.1 The LAG will meet for the first time on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and an AGM will take place not more than 15 months from this date.
- 4.2 The LAG will meet at least four times per year and more frequently if required to do so due to high volumes of funding applications or other business.
- 4.3 Meeting dates will be advertised on the KVF LAG website.

- 4.4 LAG decisions can be quorate through written procedures – i.e. decisions can be mandated by email
- 4.5 In exceptional circumstances, the LAG Chair may call an Emergency Board providing members with at least 5 days' notice of the meeting;
- 4.6 No business shall be dealt with at any meeting unless a quorum is present. The quorum shall be half of the number of member organisations, present in person. In the event that the number of member organisations is uneven, the figure should be rounded down.
- 4.7 If the Chairperson is not present within 15 minutes after the time at which the meeting was due to commence, the members of the LAG present at the meeting shall elect, from among themselves, the person who will act as chairperson of that meeting.
- 4.8 The chairperson of a meeting may, with the consent of the meeting, adjourn the meeting to such time and place as the chairperson may determine.
- 4.9 Each member organisation may be represented at a meeting by up to two of their members. Notwithstanding this, each member organisation shall have one vote, which must be given personally, on any motions, amendments or proposals.
- 4.10 Each member will be allowed to have a single named substitute nominated on their behalf if they are unable to attend and Board meeting. If the LAG Member is an agency representative, then the agency is deemed to be the LAG member and provided the individual representatives have undergone induction training, they will have full LAG member voting rights. This also applies to agency members where the LAG member duties are shared between different members of staff. This does not apply to community representatives who have LAG membership as individuals. Where a substitute LAG member is attending who has not received induction training, they will only be permitted to vote via instructions from the LAG member which must be conveyed.
- 4.11 A register of attendance will be kept on all members who will be expected to have a minimum attendance level of 75% at full LAG Board meetings. If they are unable to maintain this they will be asked to nominate a substitute or, failing that, their membership will cease.

### **Voting**

- 4.12 The LAG will also hold a Register of Interest for each member which will be updated on an annual basis.
- 4.13 At the start of all meetings the Chair will ask if any member has a potential conflict of interest to declare in relation to any agenda item. Where there is a conflict of interest, the member will be required to leave when that specific project/issue is being discussed. A member of the LAG shall not vote at a

meeting of the LAG on any resolution concerning a matter in which he/ she or the organisation that he /she represents has an interest, which conflicts (or may conflict) with the interests of the LAG; the member must withdraw from the meeting, while the matter is being discussed and determined.

- 4.14 At least 50% of the votes in decisions must be from the non-public sector members. As such, the votes of individual LAG members will be recorded.
- 4.15 In the event of there being more than 50% of LAG members in attendance at a meeting who represent the public sector but the meeting is quorate, public sector members will be asked to volunteer to abstain from voting to allow LAG business to be conducted. This may include representatives from the local authority areas having a combined vote.
- 4.16 Any motion, amendment or proposal shall be deemed to be carried by simple majority of those member organisations voting.
- 4.17 The Chairperson has a normal vote.
- 4.18 The LAG may, at its discretion, allow any person, whom they consider appropriate, to attend and speak at any meeting of the LAG; any such person invited to attend a LAG shall not be entitled to vote.
- 4.19 Where a project is seen as strategic/significant or novel, the Board may offer an opportunity for the applicant to present the project to the Board including allowing for questions and answers.

#### 4.20 **Sub-groups**

The LAG may choose to set up sub-groups of its members. Members of Sub-Groups will be selected based on their chosen area of expertise. The LAG will approve the appointment of members to the sub-groups. Sub-groups are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the LAG. Sub-groups will make recommendations to the LAG.

### 5. **Special (General) Meeting**

- 5.1 Outwith the normal timetable for LAG meetings, a Special General Meeting shall be convened following the receipt by the LAG of a request for such a meeting signed by representatives of a majority of the number of member organisations. Such a request shall indicate the reason for the request for a Special General Meeting.
- 5.2 Upon receipt of such a request, the LAG shall convene a meeting, to which all member organisations shall be invited. Such a meeting shall take place within 28 days of receipt of request, and member organisations shall receive at least 21 days' notice of the meeting. Notice of the meeting shall include a copy of the agenda for the meeting, which shall clearly indicate the reason for the meeting.

## **6. Alterations to the Constitution**

Any proposal to alter this Constitution must be delivered by letter to the LAG/Programme Coordinator not less than 28 days prior to the date of the meeting at which it is first to be considered. The terms of the proposed resolution to alter the Constitution shall be stated on the notice calling the meeting which shall be issued not less than 21 days prior to the meeting. In addition to the voting arrangements above, the alteration shall only be deemed to have been duly authorised if the resolution is supported by a two-thirds majority of the member organisations who attend and vote at the meeting.

## **7. Dissolution**

7.1 If the LAG decides at any time that, on the grounds of expense or otherwise, it is necessary or advisable to dissolve, it shall agree a date for a meeting of member organisations to be held to discuss the proposed resolution to dissolve. Not less than 21 days prior to the date of such meeting member organisations shall receive information indicating the terms of the proposed resolution to dissolve the organisation. If the resolution is supported by a simple majority of the member organisations who attend and vote at such a meeting, the alteration shall be deemed to have been duly authorised. Any meeting shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the LAG or, in her/his absence, another nominated member of the LAG. In the event of any tied vote, the Chairperson of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

7.2 All grant funding remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts or liabilities, shall transfer to the Scottish Government.

8. Minutes will be taken of all LAG meetings and these will be posted on the LAG web-site. A summary of recommendations made by Sub-Groups will also be presented in an on-line format.

### **Office bearers**

Office bearers will normally be elected at an Annual General Meeting unless

- it is a new office or
- the office holder ceases to hold office more than two months before the AGM.

They will be elected for a period of 3 years.

At foundation the only office was the Chairperson.

## **9. The Chairperson and Vice Chair**

10. The Chairperson may not be a representative from the Accountable Body or the public sector, or officer or office holder. A post description is included in

Appendix 5. The Vice Chair may not be a representative from the Accountable Body.

- 10.1 The current Chair of the Strategic Board will hold the position of Chair for the first three year period.
- 11.** the Chair and Vice Chair will be required to demonstrate:
  - 11.1.1. an understanding of rural economic development
  - 11.1.2. experience in corporate governance
  - 11.1.3. good standing and reputation with the rural community
- 11.2 The Chairperson and Vice Chair of the LAG will hold office for three years and will then be required to stand down.
- 11.3 In anticipation of this, the LAG Board will ask for applications from among members to be considered for the position of Chair and/or Vice Chair. The applicants will submit a short written statement setting out their rationale and skills and experience to hold the position. These will be considered by the rest of the LAG and, following discussion, a new Chairperson and/or Vice Chair will be elected.
- 11.4 The retiring Chairperson and/or Vice Chair standing down may immediately stand again for re-election as Chairperson.

## **12. Accountable Body - Management and Control of Finance**

- 12.1 At foundation the Accountable Body will be North Lanarkshire Council, continuing the role from the Kelvin Valley LAG. Following on from this, the LAG Accountable Body will be one of the local authorities of Falkirk, East Dunbartonshire or North Lanarkshire. Any change of Accountable Body must be agreed by the LAG with all three local authorities.
- 12.2 The Accountable Body will act as the Administrative Lead and Accountable Body as defined in the Local Action Group Local Development Strategy and Business Plan and, as part of this role, will be the fund- holder for the LAG. The Accountable Body will use its financial systems to receive funds from the Scottish Government, and any match funding from individual partners for the administration of the project, and then pay out grants and management costs as agreed by the LAG.
- 12.3 The Accountable Body will employ LEADER- funded staff on behalf of the LAG and all reasonable costs for such employment will be reimbursed to the Accountable Body by the LAG.
- 12.4 Accountable Body will remain a member of the LAG at all times.

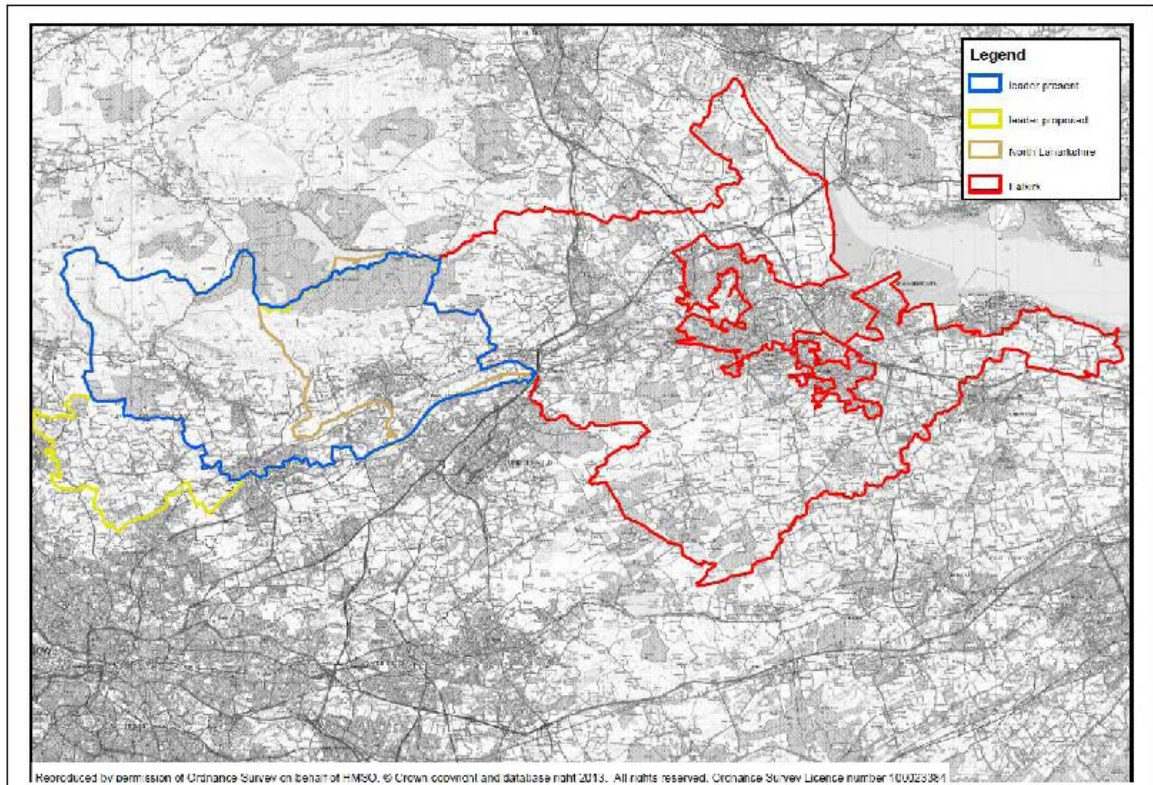
12.5 The financial year of the LAG shall be from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31 December. An audited statement of the fund for the financial year shall be submitted to the LAG by the Accountable Body. The Accountable Body has responsibility for preparation, compliance and the submission of claims to the Scottish Government as described in the Service Level Agreement between the Scottish Government and the Accountable Body.

### **13. Programme Co-ordinator**

The Programme Co-ordinator shall act as Secretary to the LAG and will be responsible for the technical appraisal of projects prior to assessment by members. The Programme Co-ordinator will manage any other LEADER-funded staff.

In the event that the LAG does not employ a Programme Co-ordinator, the Accountable Body will be obliged to fulfil this role.

Appendix 2 – Map of Kelvin Valley and Falkirk LEADER eligible area





## Appendix 3: Application Process

This sets out additional details on the proposed application process.

Applications may be brought forward/submitted by LAG member organisations and these will be dealt with in the same way depending on the value of the project but with the individual LAG member being excluded from appraisal/decision making.

### Point of First Contact

In addition to activity associated with the Communications Plan, the Programme Operations Team will advise potential applicants on the development of ideas, eligibility criteria for LEADER support etc..

Applicants will then be encouraged to submit an initial project enquiry form which can be further reviewed by the Team.

### Application Submission

Following on from initial discussions and submission of the project enquiry form, the Programme Operations Team will ensure access and awareness of the application process including application form and guidance notes. Applicants will be made aware of local submission deadlines as part of the KVF Programme.

Application form/guidance etc. is to be held online by the Scottish Government and it is proposed that supporting information for KVF LEADER is held on a bespoke KVF LEADER website (and provided in hard copy if required).

### Initial Technical Appraisal

Project applications will be initially appraised by the Programme Operations Team to ensure all aspects of technical eligibility are met. Should there be a need for further clarification on any aspect of the application, the appropriate contact within the co-ordination team will contact applicants directly.

The Operational Team will make a technical assessment on eligibility prior to submission of the application to the LAG members and will ensure that only technically eligible projects are forwarded to the LAG for consideration.

## LAG Appraisal/Sub-Group Appraisal

The Programme Operations Team will compile a case list of all eligible applications that, along with all appropriate information will be forwarded to LAG members for scoring.

### **For applications requesting LEADER support**

Any application requesting above £5,000 LEADER will be scored by LAG members with scores collated by Operational Team and then considered at quarterly board meetings.

The Operational Team will forwarding of completed applications to LAG members at least two weeks before LAG Board meetings for scoring and collate the individual and average scores for each project. An overview case list produced in preparation for the LAG meeting.

- decision regarding application made by the LAG; and
- notification of decision and letter of grant award where appropriate.

### **For farm diversification or rural enterprise applications requesting between £5,000 and £100,000 LEADER support**

A thematic Sub-Group has been set up to score these applications. However, there will be key differences:

- more support provided for applicants from the operations team to complete;
- anticipate less text detail required as part of scoring process.

The Operational Team will forward completed applications to relevant Sub-Group at least one week before collective appraisal by Sub-Group. The Operational Team will send scores and recommendations from the group to the LAG for decision.

## Selection Criteria

Based on lessons learned from previous programmes, the Operational Team will establish a formal scoring system for projects for LAG approval. A scoring template will be developed based on formal criteria and guidance to ensure consistency.

The LAG will make an overview assessment of the project against the following strategic criteria:

- the project will contribute to the outcomes of the KVF LEADER Development Strategy, and
- the organisation has current capacity and is best placed to carry out the planned activities.

All projects will be required to meet the strategic criteria in order to be taken forward for full scoring.

Project scoring will be based on an approach using a range of criteria as follows:

- strategic integration - direct links to local, national and European priorities;
- complementarity with the Local Development Strategy;
- evidence of need;
- evidence of demand;
- additionality - extent to which project would proceed without LEADER support;
- leverage - amount of match funding from other sources;
- value for money - measure of efficient use of resources;
- project management - assessment of ability to deliver project based on ability to deliver outcomes;
- innovation - assessment of how the process circumvents barriers to development;
- equal opportunities - full equal participation of individuals and social groups by means of relevant policies;
- community involvement - degree of participation, involvement and support and extent to which project will benefit rural community evidence will be required to substantiate;
- sustainability - evidence of continuing benefit;
- environmental impact - extent to which the project enhances or protects the environment; and

- transferability - ease of transferring ideas and lessons learnt to other rural projects or programmes.

The project scoring and approval will be based on a minimum threshold score set by the LAG for approval and reviewed to reflect spend trends.

### LAG Decision

When the LAG has arrived at its decision, it will be the responsibility of the LEADER Operations Team to inform the applicant of that decision. Where the applicant has been unsuccessful, contact will be made directly to provide an opportunity for feedback and a formal letter notifying the unsuccessful application issued.

### Grant Award

Where the applicant has been successful, Falkirk Council as Accountable Body will issue a formal Grant Offer Letter to the successful applicant on behalf of the Kelvin Valley and Falkirk LEADER LAG. The grant offer letter will be signed by the appropriate delegated authority at the Accountable Body. The grant offer will include all relevant conditions and will further stipulate:

- the name and address of the applicant;
- the level of grant offered;
- a list of eligible items of expenditure; and
- terms and mechanisms for repayment.

### Appeals Process

Appeals will only be considered where an application has been rejected on the basis of not following procedures rather than the formal decision process. Where warranted, applicants will be given advice/opportunity to resubmit following changes but with no automatic consideration at next LAG meeting unless there was a technical issue with their first application.

It should be noted that any appeal must be based on the confirmation letter and the explanation of the reasons for the decision. Following receipt of the formal confirmation of an unsuccessful application, the applicant will have a right of appeal based on the following approach.

- request a telephone call with the Programme Co-ordinator to discuss the decision and obtain additional information to aid understanding;
- consider the merits in representing the application by addressing any of the expressed concerns;
- agreeing timings for any subsequent application.

If at this stage the applicant will have the right to re-submit their project for consideration but only on the basis of significant changes.

## Appendix 4: Chair and Vice Chair

### **The Role and Responsibilities of the LAG Chair**

The LAG Chair has an important and pivotal role in the delivery and implementation of the LEADER Programme. A successful and effective LAG Chair is involved in far more than just chairing the LAG meeting and is responsible for all matters related to the effective operation of the LAG and staff.

Specific responsibilities of the LAG Chair include:

- managing and controlling LAG meetings
- liaising with the LEADER Coordinator on the minutes, business/order of business of LAG meetings and the ordering of applications for consideration
- ensuring that those with an interest in individual applications are not present during the decision making process for those applications
- ensuring that meetings reach a clear decision and that this is recorded
- ensuring excellent familiarity with all relevant LEADER documents and procedures, locally and nationally, and being a source of expertise for other LAG members
- taking part in the induction of new LAG members and supporting/mentoring existing LAG members as appropriate
- being the main point of contact with the Accountable Body, including in relation to LEADER staffing
- directing staff in relation to the strategic direction and implementation of the LEADER Programme locally
- representing the LAG on the Chair's Strategic Group
- attending networking meetings of Scottish and UK LEADER and encouraging requisite numbers of LAG members to attend
- representing the LAG at other meetings as may be required and appropriate

- liaising with LAG partners as/when appropriate
- dealing with any concerns raised by LAG members in an appropriate way
- dealing with concerns raised by applicants if these cannot be dealt with by the LEADER staff
- dealing with any concerns from staff promptly and appropriately
- dealing with any concerns related to staff promptly and appropriately
- ensuring that relations with other Scottish LAGs are maintained and encouraged
- encouraging the development of trans-regional and trans-national joint projects.

## Vice Chair

To assist the Chair in the execution of the above roles as required.

To serve as Chair in their absence and where the Chair has a conflict of interests.

## Appendix 5: Outline Job Descriptions

The finalised job descriptions for the posts to be incorporated within the KVF LEADER Operations Team will be subject to approval and grading by Falkirk Council (as their employer). However, these job descriptions will be based upon the anticipated roles and responsibilities as outlined below:

### **Programme Co-ordinator**

Overall responsibility for

- financial and compliance management of the KVF LEADER Programme;
- developing and strengthening relationships with the Managing Authority, European Commission and other national bodies;
- creating a strong partnership of private, public and voluntary sector partners;
- establishing an effective Communications Plan for the KVF LEADER Programme;
- devising, implementing and overseeing an effective, inclusive and transparent programme responsive to the needs of the KVF LEADER area and meeting the LDS aims and objectives;
- devising, implementing and overseeing a robust plan for monitoring and evaluation that meets Scottish Government and EU Audit requirement;
- influencing local rural development through policy meetings, conferences, workshops, and links with wider programmes and funds;
- managing the LEADER Operational Team by prioritising workloads, providing support and managing team performance in delivery with agreed team objectives; and
- supporting the LAG to co-ordinate and manage the successful implementation and on-going delivery of the LDS.

### **Development Officer/Animator**

Responsible for:

- facilitation and animation of the KVF LEADER Programme;
- supporting the preparation and control of LEADER budgets;
- identifying additional funding sources/partners;
- developing, monitoring, and supporting the implementation and evaluation of the LDS;
- liaising and communicating with strategic partners;
- monitoring physical and financial performance and reporting to the LAG, Accountable Body and Managing Authority as required;
- technical appraisal of projects and ensuring fit with LDS;
- measuring results and reviewing LEADER processes;
- taking part in local and national co-operation and networking activity;
- implementing an efficient framework of procedures for the application, evaluation and monitoring of projects benefiting from LEADER funding;
- ensuring that the LEADER Programme is properly publicised and promoted and that the Communications Strategy is implemented effectively;
- overseeing KVF LEADER financial returns and monitoring data; and
- supporting/managing small business support locally.



### **Finance Officer/Admin Support**

Responsible for:

- providing support to programme beneficiaries, assisting in the development and maintenance of key information and quality systems;
- providing technical advice for projects and project applicants;
- administering project claims and monitoring physical and financial records/files;
- collating statistical information;
- supporting audit requirements to ensure that claims are fully eligible and compliant,
- processing all financial information as required;
- collating information for board meetings and presentations;
- ensuring claims and reports to the Managing Authority are completed within required timescales;
- supporting the implementation of monitoring and evaluation activity;
- engaging with applicants to process claims and ensure effective collation of financial evidence and records;
- design and support training locally around project and financial issues and EU monitoring requirements for all applicants as required; and
- providing office administration relating to the KVF LEADER Programme