

VALE OF GLAMORGAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting held on 24th February, 2016.

Present: Councillor E. Williams (Chairman); Mr. R. Traherne (Vice-Chairman); Mr. F. Coleman, Ms. A. Haden, Mr. J.J. Herbert, Ms. C. Lucas, Mr. S. McMillan, Ms. E. Nash, Mr. R. Pittard and Mr. R. Simpson.

Mr. J. Wyatt, Ms. H. Blackmore, Mrs. L. Mills, Mr. S. Pickering, Mr. G. Teague, Mrs. S. Thomas (Vale of Glamorgan Council) and Ms. M. Miyata-Lee (Natural Resources Wales).

1. Apology for Absence –

This was received from Mr. G. Thomas.

2. Welcome –

The Chairman introduced the new representative from Natural Resources Wales, Ms. M. Miyata –Lee, and all present provided introductions.

3. Minutes –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 25th November, 2015 be approved as a correct record.

4. Presentation re Rural Community Development Fund by Helen Blackmore, Senior Rural Regeneration Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council –

Helen Blackmore, Senior Rural Regeneration Officer, provided the Forum with a presentation on the Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF). The RCDF was a Welsh Government grant scheme open primarily to community groups. The indicative total grant fund available was £69m for 2015 - 2019. There would be an open call for funding requests every quarter, the first open call for funding was currently open and closed on 23rd May 2016. The indicative allocation for this period was £4m and the decision date for these expressions of interest was 15th August 2016. The intervention rate was 80% grant funded and 20% match funded. The maximum project value was £160,000, with a maximum grant of £128,000 from the RCDF. The grant was for capital only, however there was scope to include some revenue costs toward a capital build such as feasibility, planning fees etc. The funding was only open to rural wards in the Vale of Glamorgan as it was part of the Rural Development programme; therefore it was not available in Barry, Penarth or Llandough.

The three objectives of the RCDF were:

- To promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

- To help with those most deprived in rural Wales and those with limited scope to change their circumstances
- To develop the resilience and capability of rural communities so they are better able to cope with and adapt to change.

There was a fairly strict criteria for the award of the funding; the proposals would be scored according to how well they would achieve the selection criteria.

The selection criteria were:

- To achieve effective community engagement during the development of the proposal
- To contribute to the aims and objectives of the RCDF, the Local Development Strategy and other Welsh Government strategies
- Improve access to services
- Address fuel poverty and 'in work' poverty
- Address digital exclusion.

To date, 15 applications had been received in the first round ranging from smaller to large scale projects. Welsh Government would not consider projects in excess of £160,000, unless it could be demonstrated that smaller elements of a project could be delivered in isolation. The grant application must be made directly from the community group to Welsh Government and be completed online. The Creative Rural Communities team could provide organisations with suggestions to help improve their submissions. The first round of submissions had recently been returned to the Local Action Group which would advise how the projects fitted in with the Local Action Strategy. The submissions would then be sent back to Welsh Government.

Mr. Traherne asked whether groups in the Vale of Glamorgan would be competing with those across Wales and was informed that they would be, however, they would be as eligible as other areas as long as they could demonstrate their eligibility against the criteria.

Ms. Haden asked where the 20% match funding would come from and who would carry out the work generated by a bid if the Forum were to put forward an expression of interest. In response, Mr. Teague advised that if the Forum could identify projects for user groups which may be interested in formulating a funding bid, the Vale Council would be interested in speaking with them. The Council had access to other grant funding for projects which had clear community public interest, for example, the Coastal Access Improvement Plan. Ms. Haden expressed concern in terms of timescales for the submission of bids as community consultation could take some time. In response Ms. Blackmore advised that although the first open call period closed on 23rd May it would be opened on a quarterly basis going forward.

Mr. Pittard asked whether submissions could be done through Community Councils and was informed that they could and it was confirmed that Valeways would be able to complete a bid with Ms. Blackmore advising that the fundings would only be for capital.

Ms. Nash queried whether the bridleways along the A48 would be eligible for a grant

and was advised that any bid would need to meet the requisite criteria such as improving social poverty and the Public Rights of Way Team would be keen to look into an advanced bridleways projects.

Mr. Coleman queried the position in relation to support facilities for bridleways such as car parks. Mr. Teague advised that they would not be eligible for funding via the Public Rights of Way team, however, it might make a good project for the RCDF funding. It was also confirmed that the St. Athan Community Library Group had approached the Creative Rural Communities in relation to this funding. Welsh Government had ensured that the bids met with the Local Development Strategy objectives. Following a request from a Forum member, it was confirmed that a link to the Rural Community Development Fund information would be provided within the minutes, as below:

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/rural-community-development-fund/?lang=en>

It was further confirmed that the Forum would be informed of community groups that expressed an interest in this grant funding

The Chairman thanked Ms. Blackmore for attending the Forum and for her informative presentation on the Rural Community Development Fund.

5. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Funding Programme –

Mr. Teague provided the Forum with an update on the ROWIP Funding Programme and the projects that had been completed throughout the year, as follows:

Code	Location	Details	Update
VG1	Entire Network	Preparation of new Definitive Map, analysis and reporting of CAMS data	CAMS reporting, maintenance and analysis of data continuing. Definitive Map expected to be republished with relevant date of 15 th March
VG2	Summerhouse Point	Dedication of rights at Summerhouse	Delays to legal order – funding of project reallocated
VG3	Countywide/millennium heritage trail	Waymarking	Additional stock waymarks received. Millennium Heritage Trail waymarks to be installed via Valeways also received. Design work undertaken on waymarking for Valeways routes

VG4	Cowbridge	Dedication of legal rights for Penllyn Bridleways	Dedication and waymaking of scheme as required by legal agreement condition complete.
VG5	Peterston Super Ely	Drainage scheme at Peterston-Super-Ely	Scheme complete
VG6	Countywide	Review and support of annual clearance arrangements	Annual clearance complete
VG7	Cowbridge	Drainage scheme at Millfield Drive, Cowbridge	Complete
VG8	Countywide	General practice officer training	Complete
VG9	Llancarfan	Improve access to SSSI woodland - Llancarfan	Stock received – installation of gates
VG10	Tredodridge	Improve accessible route - Tredodridge	Stock received – installation of gates

It was anticipated that the ROWIP funding would be made available during 2016/17 at the same level as the current year and the ROWIP funding programme was provided in order to implement the aims and objectives contained within an Authority's ROWIP. Projects that may be tied to a ROWIP aim were eligible for funding and broad scope therefore existed for funding projects. A total award of £31,136 had been granted for the current financial year.

Mr. Traherne asked how much had been spent on training and whether it should have been funded from an internal budget instead. It was confirmed that there had been some staff changes within the team and the new staff required training which had cost £595.

Mr. McMillan asked what would happen if the ROWIP funding ceased. Mr. Teague advised that ROWIP grant funding levels provided an additional amount equal to approximately three quarters of the current maintenance budgets and it would not be available unless replaced by another scheme. Regardless of the funding issue, the Authority would still be required to implement a ROWIP and the work would come from fixed expenses if not provided from the ROWIP funding programme.

Mr. Traherne asked whether, in future, figures could be provided for the ROWIP funded projects. Mr. Teague confirmed that this could be done at year close though would not be provided whilst projects remained to be commissioned.

Mr. Coleman expressed concern that some of the waymarking was not well looked after, and suggested carrying out two surveys per year, one for the easy to use paths and the other to look at the principal paths. In response, Mr. Teague advised that this was already done, the promoted paths were assessed by volunteers twice yearly and they also carried out clearance work on the paths. Most paths were already well surveyed and the team would be looking to address the bigger issues next year. Furthermore, he confirmed that the team would be looking to put resources into maintenance of paths next year and the Valeways waymarking would see some

refreshment.

Mr. McMillan asked what impact the recent wet weather had had on the paths and maintenance budget. Mr. Teague advised that the last two winters had been very bad, especially in coastal areas, and Natural Resources Wales had made additional funding available to deal with issues created by the bad weather. Some areas could not be accessed as they were too wet and he expressed the view that in the longer term, if the bad weather continued, it would place a burden on the paths and more surfacing would be required.

Mr. Teague advised that he was happy to take suggestions for maintenance projects. Currently there was a bid for Summerhouse Point and a list had been made of any serious anomalies in terms of the new definitive map which would be addressed and the team would continue to develop the adopt a path scheme.

6. Re-Publication of the Definitive Map -

Mr. Teague provided the Forum with an update on the re-publication of the Definitive Map.

Mr. Teague circulated preview copies of the Definitive Map together with an index. He advised that copies would also be provided to all Town and Community Councils in the Vale of Glamorgan.

After a lengthy quality assurance exercise the authority was ready to prepare a new consolidated map and this was due to be published with a relevant date of 15th March, 2016.

Mr. Pittard asked how the Map lined up with those of adjoining local authorities. Mr. Teague advised that there had been a quality assurance exercise during which they had checked data from other authorities and checked where paths crossed the authority boundaries. The quality assurance was done on a scale of 1 : 5000 and additional layers would be updated on a web-mapping system.

Mr. McMillan offered his congratulations to the Public Rights of Way Team for the work they had carried out in delivering the Definitive Map.

7. Coastal Access Improvement Programme Background and Update -

Mr. Teague provided the Forum with an update on the Coastal Access Improvement Programme which was being funded by the Welsh Government via Natural Resources Wales and delivered through Local Authorities.

Since the Wales Coast Path officially opened on 5th May, 2012 the scheme, which initially ran from 2007-2013 had continued to fund the development and improvement of the route. Following completion of the initial project, further funding was made available which ran from 2013-2015.

The current programme was initiated by a Ministerial announcement that committed £900,000 of funding per annum for the next five years to the path. The current

scheme differed from previous in so much as funding was divided between improvements and maintenance to reflect the maturing nature of the Coast Path.

The Forum was informed in relation to the improvement projects for the coast path which were 100% grant funded. The number of projects approved was reduced in the new tranche of the programme and additional funding had been made available for project VG117 (creation of Ultitrek path at Sully Playing Fields following the initial offer. Those receiving funding are shown below:

Code	Description	Details	Update
VG101	Ogmore Down -Creation Agreement	Conclude outstanding creation agreement on path, formalising new alignment that avoids needs for road walking	Creation to be drafted on basis of previous agreement. To be progressed by creation order, ongoing into 2016/17
VG104	Monknash - Creation Order	Missing link currently available on permissive basis only. To be progressed by Creation Order, anticipated landowner objection	Landowner has agreed to proceed by creation agreement – ongoing and to be progressed further in 2016/17
VG107	Tresillian Rollbacks	Formalisation of rollback following coastal erosion during 14-15	Initial case meeting completed Regional officer not appointed by NRW – less staff capacity than was anticipated
VG109	Cwm Colhuw (west) - Surface Improvements	Improve surface by addition of loose stone (type 1).	Works ready to commence though access to site unavailable due to wet conditions. May slip implementation of works into 2016-17 if conditions do not improve during March.

VG111	Summerhouse rollbacks	legal orders to formalise cliff-top rollback	Initial case meeting completed. Regional officer not appointed by NRW – less staff capacity than was anticipated
VG112	Gileston - Creation Order	Creation order to fill in missing section of coast path on improved alignment.	Landowner has agreed to proceed by creation agreement – ongoing and to be progressed further in 2016/17
VG117	Sully	Creation of Ultitrek path at Sully Playing Fields	Scheme designed and contractor appointed. Delays in commencement occurring due to boundary dispute.

In addition and allocation for coast path maintenance via grant and at 75% grant rate had been advised. In the Vale of Glamorgan for 2105-16 this amounted to £19,230 of grant to be matched by £6,410 and it was anticipated that this would be issued each year over the life of the programme for the maintenance work as follows:

Code	Description	Details	Update
<i>Maint</i>	Maintenance Projects on VoG WCP	Vegetation cut back, maintenance of furniture and surfaces	Vegetation cut backs completed. Repairs to stone wall at Atlantic Collage commissioned Repairs to path between Lavernock and Penarth to be implemented.

Projects for 2016-17 had been identified to Natural Resources Wales. It was provisionally advised that five projects would be funded as follows:

Code	Description	Details
VG101	Ogmore Down - Creation Agreement	Conclude outstanding creation agreement on path, formalising new alignment that avoids needs for road walking
VG104	Monknash - Creation Order	Missing link currently available on permissive basis only. To be progressed by Creation Order, anticipated landowner objection
VG109	Cwm Colhuw (west) - Surface Improvements	Improve surface by addition of loose stone (type 1).
VG112	Gileston - Creation Order	Creation order to fill in missing section of coast path on improved alignment.
VG108	Dimhole - Cut into cliff and improve surface	Path close to edge requires cutting back into cliff and provision of level surface as it ascends from cwm.

In addition, enquires had also been made as to additional funding to remedy the recent storm damage at Monknash that had destroyed the surface of the path. Coast Path staff were not recruited during 2015/16 and discussions in attempting to agree a way forward would take place during 2016/17.

Mr. Traherne asked how much of the £900,000 the Vale would receive and was informed that it would be approximately £50,000 - £60,000. He also confirmed that figures for each project could be included in future reports to the Forum where possible so not to prejudice competitive tendering.

Mr. Pittard advised that maps were published in Cardiff Bay which listed tourist points however the Coast Path was not listed on this map. Mr. Teague confirmed that he would notify Cardiff Bay in relation to this.

Mr. Pickering informed the Forum that there were no issues regarding the roll back projects and the PROW team had good working relationships with landowners, furthermore the new structure in the Countryside Services was working well and providing more flexible working arrangements.

8. Maintenance Reports -

The Forum was provided with an update in relation to maintenance work carried out across the Vale of Glamorgan from March 2011 to February 2016. The report also detailed the maintenance issues that had been logged and received from October 2015 to February 2016. Mr. Teague informed the Forum that due to the bad weather, some maintenance issues could not be addressed. There had been staffing issues within the Team; however they were now producing work programmes and working much more closely with the Heritage Coast and Country Parks Teams. The first review of work programmes would be in April 2016.

9. Legal Orders and Evidential Modification Orders Updates -

The Forum was presented with an update on the Legal Orders and Evidential Modification Orders across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Mr. Teague advised that there had been a decision by the Planning Inspectorate in relation to Trem Echni. This decision had been confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate and a notice of the confirmation had been advertised on 11th February, 2016. In addition, the Planning Inspectorate would be visiting White Farm and he would be in a position to report back to the Forum in the next few months. He further advised that they had received an objection to the White Farm Order which had been received after the Pre-Order consultation had commenced.

Mr. Coleman asked whether the Evidential Modification Orders were in the new Definitive Map and it was confirmed that they would currently need to be read alongside the Definitive Map as they were yet to be confirmed. Furthermore, all newly confirmed bridleways had been listed on the Definitive Map.

Mr. Pittard raised a query in relation to the maps produced by Natural Resources Wales, in that the Countryside Council for Wales maps which showed footpaths in Wales were no longer on their website. He was of the view that they should be reinstated until an adequate replacement had been found. In response, Ms. Miyata-Lee advised that she would look into this issue and feed back at the next Forum meeting.

Mr. Teague agreed to bring a copy of the Definitive Map to future Forum meetings. The next meeting of the Forum would be held on 25th May, 2016 and the date for the July meeting was confirmed as 27th July, 2016.