



Torfaen Local Action Group - CREATE

Terms of Reference

The work of the Local Action Group underpins the principles of the LEADER programme and aims to boost the local economy, improve the skills of local people and enhance life in the rural wards of Torfaen.

MISSION STATEMENT

1. To lead in the development of the Local Development Strategy (LDS), focusing on the key themes and objectives.
2. Ensure all sections of the community are involved in community regeneration activities
3. Develop innovative projects that fit with the aims and objectives of the LDS and which follow the LEADER approach.
4. Oversee the coordination, management and monitoring of the project funded and developed through the LDS.
5. Assist in building community consensus behind the LDS.
6. Promote cross-sectoral working, e.g. with other LAG`s, Regeneration Partnerships, Local Service Board, RSL`s etc.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the LAG will contribute to the overall aims of the LDS, and objectives will be to:

1. Develop the detail of the strategic objectives and pro-actively encourage the development and delivery of the projects under the LDS.
2. Engage grass-roots communities and encourage new innovative ways to sustain rural development in Torfaen.
3. Be responsible for overseeing the commissioning of new projects in line with Welsh Government requirements.
4. Develop and implement co-operation projects.

5. Promote, where possible, awareness of the opportunities available to local businesses and communities to participate in the RDP Programme.
6. Advocate the success of programme to local partners and communities.
7. Ensure that all activities delivered as part of the LDS have appropriate exit strategies in terms of maintenance, resources and end use as appropriate.
8. Monitor progress against agreed indicators in relation to expenditure, income, timescales and outputs ensuring compliance with Welsh Government requirements.
9. Assess, and as appropriate, approve grant applications received, ensuring that grant is used most effectively to achieve strategic objectives.
10. Develop communication and networking of local partners and partnerships.
11. Undertake relevant / necessary training.

In participating in the LAG, members will be expected:

12. To adopt a fair and objective approach, and declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest;
13. To treat circulated information and discussions held, in a confidential manner;
14. Not to discuss information or decisions outside of the meeting until such time as these have been made publicly available;
15. To conduct themselves in a professional manner;
16. To treat all members with respect and to ensure all members have the right and opportunity to speak during the meeting;
17. To have the right to review LAG membership with voting powers of no confidence for individual members of the LAG and to therefore vote on membership of the LAG.
18. To provide confirmation of attendance or apologies in advance of meetings, and that an alternate attends in the event that they are unable to attend.
19. To promote and publicise the benefits of the RDP and associated projects to the wider community.

MODE OF OPERATION

1. All decisions made by The LAG should be reached on a consensus basis. In the unfortunate situation where a consensus cannot be reached, members will vote with a simple majority required. In the event of a tie, the Chair will have the casting vote.

2. All decisions made by The LAG shall not be binding upon individuals, allowing organisations to retain their statutory responsibilities and independence of action.
3. Decisions to award project funding from key funds shall be taken by the LAG.
4. Selection of projects must be consistent with the objectives of the LDS, undertaken in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner avoiding conflict of interest.
5. Records of decisions and declarations of interest will be taken at every meeting in the form of minutes

MEMBERSHIP

1. LAG membership will meet the regulatory requirements through representatives of public, private and third sector local socio-economic interests, where at the decision making level neither public authorities nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the voting rights.
2. A copy of the Terms of Reference will be provided to each member of the LAG, along with a Code of Conduct form, which will need to be signed by each LAG member on an annual basis.
3. The Group will include a minimum of twelve and maximum of 18 members who are invited on the basis of their skills, experience or background. The LAG will comprise representatives from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors, with representatives from non public sector organisations making up a minimum of 51% of the LAG membership.
4. The quorum of the LAG shall be one third of the membership.
5. In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair at any meeting the members present may elect a Chairman for that meeting.
6. Attendance at meetings will be monitored and any member unable to attend three consecutive meetings should inform the group, and provide information for a decision on continuation of membership. Following review by the LAG, the member may be asked to withdraw from the group. In this instance the group will invite another representative of the same sector to take their place.

MEETINGS

1. The LAG will meet monthly or at least quarterly, in accordance with an agreed schedule.
2. The Chair will have authority to call additional meetings for urgent matters unless those items can be resolved using electronic communication.

3. LAG meetings will be organised and supported by the RDP Team, who will provide LAG members with relevant documentation at least one week before scheduled meetings.
4. Minutes and key actions/decisions will be recorded to ensure an accurate record of meetings, and approved at subsequent meetings to maintain an agreed record.
5. The LAG will receive reports to enable it to monitor the progress of expenditure, agreed indicators, timescales, risks and outputs.
6. The group will agree the membership of any task/delivery team that may be established from time to time.
7. The meetings and sub-groups will be used to co-create initiatives, exchange views and information on what has worked well in other rural areas.

MEETING PROCEDURES

1. LAG members will be required to declare any conflict of interest at the start of the meeting. This will be included as a standard agenda item.
2. The Chair and Vice Chair will be selected by nomination and vote by the group members to serve on an annual / two yearly basis.
3. Additional attendees / Technical Advisors may be invited from time to time in order to provide advice in relation to specific issues, local knowledge and expertise.
4. Welsh Government representatives will have the right to attend the meetings as observers and to receive copies of agendas, papers and minutes of the meetings.
5. A Minimum of 10 working days will be given for each meeting.

SECRETARIAT

1. Secretariat support will be provided by the Rural Development Plan Team within Torfaen County Borough Council's Strategic Services Unit, which will assist and advise the LAG in respect of all the functions and procedures set out within.
2. Agendas, minutes and reports etc will be circulated to members at least one week before the meeting.
3. All documentation will be circulated electronically unless a request is received for paper copies.

4. Approved minutes will be posted on the Torfaen RDP website (subject to any confidentiality issues).
5. Minutes of the LAG meetings along with quarterly reports will be sent to the Partnership Board and Welsh Government.
6. The RDP Programme Manager will be responsible for ensuring that all stakeholders and funders receive up to date management information that enables all appropriate communication, including financial claim documentation is submitted within the agreed time frame.
7. LAG meetings will be utilised to monitor both financial and physical targets across the project as well as identifying and addressing any issues that may prevent the LDS from fulfilling its full potential.
8. The RDP Programme Manager will facilitate RDP Team meetings to verify any documentation being provided to the LAG meetings. These meetings will also be utilised to address and implement any actions required for delivery and service improvement.

DECISION MAKING

1. The RDP Programme Manager will provide recommendations to the LAG for implementation.
2. In the event of a vote on a decision being required, all members will have a vote including the Chair. All decisions at meetings will be made by a majority, in the event of a tied vote, the Chair will have the casting vote.
3. All decisions will be open and transparent to all members and associated partners.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

1. Members are expected to declare when there could be a perceived conflict of interest regarding matters arising during discussions. Any such declaration will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Having declared their interest, members are expected to leave the meeting during discussion.
2. Members must be open regarding any factor which may, in the opinion of an independent person, influence their opinion. A register of interests will be maintained.
3. Any member who fails to declare an interest and who receives a personal or professional benefit will be removed as a member of the LAG.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. LAG members recognise that ideas and projects submitted to them are completely confidential and will not use the information gained to further their own or their organisations' interests without the prior permission of the originator.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

1. Terms of Reference will be reviewed and amended as appropriate, or at least on an annual basis.