

NORTH AND WEST CUMBRIA FISHERIES LOCAL ACTION GROUP LIMITED

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WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS?

The North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group is one of six Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) set up around the coast of England. The objective of a FLAG is to develop local strategies designed to regenerate current and former fishing communities through investment in projects designed to support the fishing industry and diversify the local economy.

Whilst no confirmation has been received to date, indications are that the North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Limited will be the recipient of European Axis 4 / DEFRA funding to support projects over a three year period.

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE?
(eg Key Decision, Policy recommendation for Full Council, at request of Council, etc.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That:

- (a) the current position on the incorporation of the North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Limited and its purpose be noted; and
- (b) the Chief Executive or his nominee be appointed as a director to the board of the North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Limited to represent the local authority interest in the project such appointment being for a period of up to three years.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2010 Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners submitted an expression of interest to a European Axis 4 programme designed to set up a series of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG's). This programme is administered in the United Kingdom by the Marine Management Organisation. This initial application was approved and small project steering group was brought together to develop a full application. This group included representatives of the fishing industry, Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners and the local representative of the Marine Management Organisation. The Economic Development Manager was also a member of this group. A full application including a strategy, business plan and a delivery plan was submitted to the Marine Management Organisation at the end of May 2011.
- 1.2 The North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group covers' an area from Silloth to Ravenglass. To qualify for support, the area covered had to demonstrate a long term link to fishing.
- 1.3 The vision for the North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group is:

By 2015, we will have built upon the strengths of North and West Cumbria by empowering our fishing communities to realise the economic and social potential and create their own sustainable future.

This will be achieved by:

- Creating a sustainable and cooperative fishing industry
- Providing training and employment opportunities for all

The strategic themes are:

- Adding value to the activities of the fishing industry
- Provide opportunities for economic diversification
- Increase the sustainability of the fishing industry and communities
- Empowering fishing communities

The objectives of the North and West Cumbria FLAG are aligned to those of the Copeland Regeneration Framework and the Copeland Coastal Initiative.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 As noted in the introduction it is anticipated that the North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group will be allocated around £1 million of Axis 4 / DEFRA funding to support projects that are aligned with the strategic priorities set out in 1.3 above. The funding will be held by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) rather than the FLAG. The role of the FLAG will be to develop projects, ensure that they align to the strategy and, where they are over £100,000, submit these to the MMO for approval. The FLAG will be able to sign off projects below £100,000. Each FLAG will also be responsible for ensuring that there is match funding for projects. The FLAG can allocate up to 10% of the funding allocated to employ support staff and it will employ a part time Programme Manager, part time Development Officer and part time Administrator.
- 2.2 The North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Steering Group decided to form a Company Limited by Guarantee to deliver the programme of activity over the three year life of the project. This gives a formal structure that enables the FLAG to be independent, but able to employ the staff noted above.
- 2.3 The Memorandum of Association of the North and West Cumbria FLAG Limited allows for a board of directors to be appointed at the first Annual General Meeting made up of one nominee from Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners, one nominee from the three Local Authorities areas that the FLAG covers and six persons nominated for election from the category of support members. This latter category is to give the opportunity for representatives of, for example, the fishing industry or communities, to stand for election by individuals and groups who formally become members of the FLAG and agree to abide by its objectives.
- 2.4 Each local authority not sitting on the board will be able to send an Officer to attend board meetings in an advisor / observer capacity.
- 2.5 The current steering group will continue to operate in a semi formal capacity until the board is formed at the first Annual General Meeting which will probably be held before the end of the year. The expectation is that whilst the FLAG will employ some part time staff, the board will need to be highly pro active and board members will be expected to undertake activities between board meetings around promoting the FLAG and developing projects. Whilst not wishing to be prescriptive, the steering group has indicated that it would be advantageous to have an officer representing Local Authorities sitting on the board as a Director. At this time Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council have not indicated how they plan to respond to the invitation to join the board. It is

assumed that given this is a three year project each authority will sit on the board for a period of one year between Annual General Meetings.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 As noted above the Steering Group has indicated that officer representation on the FLAG board may be appropriate given the need to undertake extensive development activities between Board meetings. An alternative option would be to nominate an elected member to the Board.

There is an option not to engage with the North and West Cumbria FLAG board in a formal way. This is not deemed to be a sustainable position given the significance of the project to Copeland communities.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group gives the fishing industry and fishing communities in Copeland an opportunity to develop businesses and diversify the economy.
- 4.2 Given the expected time commitment on board members between Board meetings, the Executive may wish to consider nominating the Chief Executive or his nominee to sit on the North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group.

5. STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

- 5.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments are:

The Council will not act as accountable body for the FLAG nor have any other financial exposure in respect of its activities. In legal terms the local authority's involvement will be limited to the appointment of one director (out of 8 directors) and participation by officers at meetings. Liability of the appointed director will be insured either by the Council or the FLAG. This participation will ensure that the local authorities assist and are able to contribute to the project. The FLAG is not a controlled or influenced company.

- 5.2 The Section 151 Officer's comments are: The draft memorandum of association of North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Limited does contain any financial liabilities for the Council. The Council is also not the accountable body for the scheme and therefore there are

no financial liabilities to the Council relating to this proposal.

5.3 EIA Comments An EIA screening form has been prepared for this project. A full EIA is not required.

5.4 Other consultee comments, if any: None

6. HOW WILL THE PROPOSALS BE PROJECT MANAGED AND HOW ARE THE RISKS GOING TO BE MANAGED?

6.1 The project will be managed by the Economic Development Manager who has been involved in the project from the outset.

6.2 The Board will not be holding funding and liability will be limited by guarantee. Any Member or Officer nominated to sit on the board will be covered by the FLAG's or the Council's Liability insurance.

7. WHAT MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OR OUTPUTS WILL ARISE FROM THIS REPORT?

7.1 The measurable outputs arising from this report will be the number of projects supported by the North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group in line with the strategy and action plan and the value of Axis 4 / Defra and match funding levered in.

List of Background Documents:

North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Strategy
North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Business Plan
North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Delivery Plan
North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group Limited Memorandum of Association.