

BNED LEADER Update

Bolsover North East Derbyshire (BNED) LEADER is a European Funded Programme which aims to develop a vibrant, dynamic and diverse rural economy and increase economic productivity and growth. The current Programme commenced in 2015, the original deadline for approving and contracting projects being March 2019 has now had a 2nd, and final extension to Sept 2019 (for approving and contracting projects) to give as much time as possible to spend the last of our total allocation.

The primary objectives of the Programme are job creation and economic growth within the rural economy, with projects meeting one of the six priorities:

- Support for increased farming productivity
- Support for micro/small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support for tourism activities
- Provision of rural services
- Support for culture and heritage activities
- Support for increased forestry productivity

Applications Received

Council area	Total Queries	EOI Endorsed	Awaiting FA	In Appraisal	Approved
Total	282	95	2	4	31
Bolsover DC	73	25	0	1	11
NEDDC	167	70	2	3	20
Out of BNED Area Queries	42	-	-	-	-
Grant Involved	-	-	£20,280.00	£76,090	£1,150,883.80

To date, 98 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) have been received 95 of which have been invited to Full Application. Currently 31 of these applications have been contracted, 8 have been rejected at either the ECR stage or LAG approval meetings, 3 are in the process of completing Full Applications and 3 are in Appraisal. 48 have withdrawn from the process blaming problems with match-funding, arranging quotes and programme complexity and 2 contracted projects have had their grant funding agreements withdrawn due to non compliance of LEADER processes.

The EOI window remained open due to a project which would have seen our allocation spent being rejected by the LAG approval panel meeting in March 2019 resulting in an approximate £95,653.90 of funding becoming available to allocate. A further extension has been granted to have contracted all projects by 30th September 2019, therefore this 3 month period has focused on getting applications through which would be able to adapt to very tight turnaround timescales in terms of building a Full Application, obtaining quotes, not needing planning permissions (or have them in process already) etc in order to spend our remaining allocation.

9 claims totalling £167,889.89 have been processed and paid to beneficiaries in this period.

The LEADER Team remains in regular contact with the few applicants left building their Full Applications to offer support and guidance, offered as face to face in meetings as well as checking draft applications. The working relationship developed with applicants means that estimated spend profiles can be based upon the quality of applications and enthusiasm of the applicant, therefore showing a more accurate picture of likely approvals. Applicants are currently taking advantage of the available 121 guidance and have commented on how much this has helped them, particularly as timescales in preparing a Full Application are now much shorter due to RPA guidance being 'fluid' regarding final deadlines.

The Economic Development Units and Partnerships Teams of BDC and NEDDC still continue to play a key role in promoting the scheme, supporting applicants and undertaking project appraisals.

Promotion

Promotion will shift to case studies of completed projects in the near future. Closed project details are now starting to be added to the website (www.bned-leader.co.uk/index.php/projects-2014-2020) and more will be completed after the busy application processing period. Tours of completed projects will also be organised for BNED Local Action Group members and key partners up to the end of the Programme.

BNED LEADER Staffing

Jo White and Paige Kelly have been instrumental in keeping the team afloat over the past few months helping with quote and claims checks and ensuring that legal Grant Funding Agreements are quality checked before being issued.

I am pleased to announce that Nicola Parsons will be re-joining the team after being successful in her interview for the new Monitoring and Support Officer and will be part of the team until Mar 2021.

Sharon Stevenson, BNED LEADER

11th July 2019