**RURAL ECONOMY WORKING GROUP**

**(WORKING GROUP TO SELEP)**

**Terms of Reference**

**October 2020**

**Aims and Objectives:**

* Bring together all parties involved in the rural economy and tourism sector (including rural businesses, farmers and landowners, environmental and community organisations, tourism and heritage groups, local authorities and government agencies) to drive economic development in the Rural Economy. Work collaboratively to promote rural growth priorities.
* Support Rural Growth ambitions – providing support and advocacy for rural regeneration; helping to link rural areas to the wider regional economy to support work to help improve the economic health and the sustainable growth of rural areas.
* Work with partners to identify and action rural priorities – the SELEP Rural Strategy providing the framework for focussing on agreed priorities.
* Review funding and bidding opportunities.
* Seek out and promote opportunities to apply for funding – including the Sector Support Fund.
* Input into SELEP strategies and provide feedback.
* Promote best practice – sharing information to improve rural propositions.
* Look across LEP boundaries – including the plans and proposals of neighbouring LEPs and their impact in preparing for growth in their rural economy.

**Operation:**

Members of the group will:

* Attend each meeting, or if unable to attend, endeavour to send a representative.
* Inform the organisation they represent of progress made by the Working Group and consult them on key issues and recommendations.
* The group will meet bi-monthly (subject to change as deemed necessary). Meetings will be held in a central location or via video conferencing.
* Tasks from each meeting will be agreed by the Working Group and reviewed at each meeting.
* The group will act in accordance with the business practices of SELEP in aiming to be light touch and agile in its operation.
* Members agreeing to undertake tasks will liaise with the group where necessary and provide feedback on progress.

**Membership:**

* Membership will be drawn from representative organisations in the SELEP area.
* The Chair commits to a term of two years.
* The agenda will be circulated in advance of each meeting to ensure appropriate representation; this will aim to be a minimum of 5 working days prior.

**Decision Making:**

* The group operates as an advisory and influencing panel and does not hold any formal mandate in decision making.
* Agreed recommendations will be managed in accordance to SELEP Governance procedures.
* Where decisions are within delegated thresholds they will be taken locally (by contracting authorities) or centrally (by the SELEP Secretariat).

**Support**

* SELEP will offer support in terms of administrative duties, advice or endorsement of projects undertaken by the Working Group.

**Chair:** Graham Peters

**Secretariat:** Alex Riley, SELEP

 Stuart Gibbons, SELEP Rural Consultant

**Transparency:**

* In accordance to SELEP Governance, notes of the meeting will be published on the SELEP website.

**These terms of reference to be approved October 2020 and will be reviewed October 2021**