

North Skye Broadband Steering Group Meeting No. 16

7th July - SLCVO 18:00

Minutes

Attendees:

Roy Bennett (Chair) (RB), Geoff Semler (GMS), Elgar Finlay (EF), Niall Till (NT), Moira Scobie (MS), Charles McCrimmon in attendance, and via Skype Nigel Redfern, Robin Crorie.

Apologies: Hugh Ross, Nick Duffill.

Previous Minutes from 12.05.16 were accepted and approved (RB), seconded (GMS) without amendment.

Matters Arising:-

Plan for research visits is in progress – to be reviewed.

F.O.I. Request – Has been re-written and re-submitted.

State of Play:-

GMS reported that the Public Consultation document has been published and the consultation period is due to close shortly, after which we can submit the ESPD, (a proforma for which has been received from CBS). This was discussed in the project group last week, and it was decided to make it as easy as possible for bidders to bid. The ESPD requires approval from BDUK prior to publication so the whole process is going to be very slow.

With regard to the ComBenSoc, documents just require a few minor amendments before they are ready to be submitted. GMS will progress this when the company address is finalised.

We have joined INCA (Independent Networks Co-operative Association) which is a group of independent network providers, including people like B4RN.

The date slippages, due to delays from CBS, etc., have been notified to HIE, and they have acknowledged this and that there is likely to be an overspend as a result of the delays.

ACTION: GMS+RC to review spending forecasts to estimate when current funding will run out.

RC has been looking into possibly working with the Phone Co-op. A Non-Disclosure Agreement is now needed to progress this further. Copy of NDA awaited.

ACTION: RC + EF to progress.

EF reported that the Community Engagement programme was continuing. Has attended the Half Marathon and Struan Gala, 3 more events are planned.

SAPC – All references to NSB were removed from the final version of the document, but CBS still managed to issue the wrong one, and we had to request it be changed. ESPD was due out 4/7, but will now be the following week at earliest.

Knowledge transfer – paper issued about potential visits.

EF has and will continue to liaise with other groups. A draft document was sent to us for comment by SRA Working Group of the Scottish Rural Parliament. Our response was that the document needed substantial changes before it could be submitted with our blessing, as it dwelled on the “low Mbps” type scenarios rather than addressing the real future needs of Rural Businesses and Communities. As far as we know it has not been submitted.

EF has started to warm up potential suppliers ahead of the ESPD being published to ensure we get a reasonable number of interests registered.

Has also started to look at other funding. Loans do not look promising but equity may be a route.

Has also had a request from MSP Rhoda Grant for a meeting – now agreed for 11.08.16, GMS to attend as well if possible. Also invited to Rural Connectivity Meeting in October, which he would like to attend. **ACTION: RC to try and ascertain objectives of this meeting.**

The “Focus” paper was discussed and the proposals and conclusions in the paper were agreed.

Date of Next Meeting:

Next meeting to be held at SLCVO (TBC) on Thursday 4th August.