

**MINUTES of MEETING of ECONOMY THEMATIC CPP GROUP held in the COUNCIL
CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2010**

Present: Councillor Ron Simon, Argyll and Bute Council (Chair)

Douglas Cowan, CPP Thematic Lead, HIE
Councillor Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council
Councillor Alister MacAlister, Argyll and Bute Council
Councillor Donald MacMillan, Argyll and Bute Council
Councillor Andrew Nisbet, Argyll and Bute Council
Councillor Elaine Robertson, Argyll and Bute Council
Robert Pollock, Head of Economic Development and Strategic
Transportation, Argyll and Bute Council
Mike Geraghty, Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network
Jane MacLeod, Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce
Frances Webster, Skills Development Scotland
David Cannon, Cal Mac
Margaret McSparran, HIE

Attending: Shirley MacLeod, Area Corporate Services Manager, Argyll and
Bute Council
Ishabel Bremner, Economic Development Manager, Argyll and
Bute Council
David Clements, Performance Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Audrey Martin, Senior Planning/Development Officer, Argyll and
Bute Council
Jonathon Welch, Transport Planner

The Chair ruled, and the Group agreed, to vary the order of business.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillors Alex McNaughton and Ellen Morton and from representatives from SPT.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Economy Thematic CPP Group held on 25 November 2009 were approved as a correct record.

4. RENEWABLE ENERGY ACTION PLAN (REAP)

Following approval of the Community Planning Partnership Plan there was an action agreed to develop a Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP) for Argyll and Bute. Argyll and Bute Council and Highland and Islands Enterprise are the lead Partners taking this forward to the initial draft stage and this initial draft has been circulated to consultees with

comments requested back by Friday 26 February 2010. It is proposed that once comments have been received these will be incorporated into the Draft Plan and that a joint meeting be arranged of the Economy and Environment Thematic CPP Groups to give a presentation on the Draft Plan and enable Partners to consider the best way in which to maximise the opportunities for economic benefit from renewables and at the same time safeguard the environment, one of the area's key assets.

Decision

Agreed to recommend to the Environment Thematic CPP Group that a joint meeting of the Economy and Environment Thematic CPP Groups take place on Monday 29 March 2010 at 1.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

5. TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

(a) STRATEGIC UPDATE ON LOCAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

The current Local Transport Strategy for Argyll and Bute was endorsed by both the Council and the Community Planning Partnership in the spring of 2007 following extensive community consultation. The Strategy sets out plans and policies for transport in Argyll and Bute for the period 2007 – 2010 and also includes future transport aspirations in the area.

The Local Transport Strategy is scheduled to be revised in 2010 and a report and presentation advising on progress with this was considered.

A discussion also took place on the Scottish Ferries Review and David Cannon from Cal Mac responded to a number of questions.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report and presentation (a copy of which is attached to this Minute);
2. Agreed that the revised Strategy would need to take account of budgets set at a national and local level;
3. Acknowledged that the revised Strategy would have to make clear that different policies may apply to different areas of Argyll and Bute eg, ferries and buses will be more important to island and rural communities and train services will be more important to urban areas such as Helenburgh;
4. Agreed that it was important to develop the Passenger Transport Network with all Partners;
5. Noted that SPT were planning a major campaign regarding surcharges on concessionary ferry fares effective from April 2010;

6. Noted that David Cannon would arrange to provide information to the Group on Cal Mac's ticketing arrangements;
7. Acknowledged the good work Cal Mac have undertaken in respect of Tourism;
8. Noted that CMAL have confirmed that the new Islay ferry will only be able to serve Islay at Port Askaig and that funding of £3.5m for Port Ellen and £1.5m for Kennacraig has been identified to upgrade the piers to accommodate the new ferry; and
9. Noted that SPT had been unable to attend the meeting today due to the weather and agreed to continue to invite SPT to future meetings of the Group.

(Reference: Report by Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transportation, submitted)

(b) UPDATE ON ROAD EQUIVALENT TARIFF

Margaret McSparran from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) provided the Group with a very informative presentation on the work and activities HIE have undertaken in support of the RET Pilot which commenced in August 2008 and will run until the spring of 2011.

Thereafter Margaret responded to a number of questions arising from her presentation.

Decision

Noted the contents of the presentation (copy of which is attached to this Minute) and looked forward to further updates once the evaluation process was complete.

6. REVIEW OF ECONOMY COMMUNITY PLAN ACTIONS/PARTNER UPDATES

Partners provided information on work currently being undertaken in respect of the Economy Community Plan Actions.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Successful Businesses – Douglas Cowan advised that HIE were currently engaged with around 70 businesses in the Argyll and Isles area. They were noticing that the effects of the current difficult economic climate were not consistent across the various sectors of the community but were nevertheless challenging. He advised that unemployment was continuing to rise across the whole area particularly in Rothesay and Dunoon (2nd) and Campbeltown (4th).

Sustainable Economic Assets – Douglas referred to renewables and

advised that HIE were continuing to work with WELCON Towers at Machrihanish to support their expansion. Employment at the factory was increasing and HIE were working with the company to support recruitment and training.

Marine Science – Douglas advised that the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) at Dunstaffnage have been awarded a contract to extend their research and education facility and that HIE were taking the lead in the science park.

Douglas confirmed that the major priority for HIE was economic growth.

Argyll and Bute Council

Economic Development Action Plan – Robert referred to the Draft Plan which had received very positive feedback from Partners.

CHORD Projects – Robert provided an update on progress to date with each of CHORD Projects which were about the regeneration and economic development of 5 towns across Argyll and Bute.

Campbeltown (Townscape Heritage Initiative) – Council working with Historic Scotland to identify a number of key buildings in Campbeltown to bring them into use again.

Campbeltown (Development of Marina) – looking to expand marina to a transit marina, Robert confirmed that a grant of £500,000 had been secured to undertake a feasibility study.

Campbeltown (Realignment and Development of Kinloch Road) – Robert advised that design works for road were now complete and that Council were entering discussions with Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) re housing for this area.

Helensburgh (Redevelopment of Esplanade and Streetscape and Traffic Management for Town Centre) – Robert confirmed that the Design Teams for each of these projects were now in place.

Oban (Potential for Transit Marina) – Robert confirmed that a full business case had been undertaken which identified significant challenges and uncertainties. The Council were currently working with Oban Bay Marine to revise their plans for a Marina.

Oban (Development Road) – this was looking at the potential for a £15m road to open up significant parts east of Oban for development. Robert confirmed that successful meetings with Transport Scotland had taken place in December and February.

Rothesay (Town Heritage Initiative) – Council were currently looking to identify buildings for this funding.

Rothesay (Regeneration of Rothesay Pavilion) – this project will result in the full upgrading and refurbishment of Rothesay Pavilion, an iconic

Category A listed building in the Council's ownership, and will provide a high class tourism, arts and leisure facility for the Island of Bute and the wider Argyll and Bute and Scottish community.

Dunoon – currently looking at regeneration of waterfront. Assessing project in its entirety in order establish correct phasing.

Robert advised that the Council were continuing to try to lever in more European money and private sector investment for each of these Projects.

Business Gateway – Ishabel Bremner confirmed that the Council had agreed at its budget to provide Business Gateway with funding totalling £60,000 so that business start up grants could be offered to new, small businesses (£35,000 will be used to fund start up grants which will be £500 each and the rest will be used to assist with business growth for existing businesses). Ishabel also advised that an application seeking £40,000 from the European Regional Development Fund had been submitted.

Decision

1. Noted the updates provided by Partners;
2. Noted that Ishabel would investigate the possibility of Business Gateway being able to offer start up grants to young people on islands up to the age of 29 as was the case with PSYBT Awards;
3. Noted that Robert would confirm to Jane MacLeod, Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce, the weighting being applied to local businesses seeking contracts through the CHORD projects.
4. Noted Jane's concern that the weighting being applied was too low and noted that the Council had to comply with strict EU laws on procurement;
5. Agreed that a progress report should be brought back to the next meeting on Business Gateway;
6. Endorsed the Chair's comment that the totality of public sector funding should be looked at; and
7. Noted that Business Gateway and Skills Development Scotland were currently working together in schools to raise awareness amongst young people on the idea of returning to the area after studies and setting up businesses.

Councillor Donald MacMillan left the meeting.

7. ECONOMY THEMATIC CPP SCORECARD

Consideration was given to development of the Economy Thematic CPP Group Performance Management Scorecard.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the Scorecard for the Economy Thematic CPP Group;
2. Agreed that until Partners have access to the Council's Performance Management System, Pyramid, the information on the Scorecard will not be helpful to the Group; and
3. Noted that work was being undertaken to enable Partners to have access to Pyramid and agreed to request the Head of ICT and Financial Services to bring a report to the next meeting of the Group on how this work was progressing.

(Reference: Report by Performance Manager, submitted)

Mike Geraghty left the meeting.

8. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the development of a work programme for the Group for 2010.

Decision

1. Agreed that the following items would be standing agenda items for the Group -

Performance Management
Partner Updates on Economy Actions within Community Plan
2. Agreed that Tourism would be the theme for the next meeting in May 2010 and that Construction/Housing Industry would be the theme for the meeting held in August 2010;
3. Agreed that an invitation should be extended to the Housing Associations to attend the meeting in August 2010; and
4. Agreed that Renewables should be discussed at joint meetings with the Environment Thematic CPP Group.

(Reference: Report by Area Corporate Services Manager, submitted)

9. INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Consideration was given to the process for assessing whether or not existing Strategic Partnerships linked into the priorities of the Economy Thematic CPP Group.

Decision

Agreed that Shirley MacLeod, Isabel Bremner and Eileen Wilson should

meet to discuss this further and bring a report back to the next meeting of the Group in May 2010.

(Reference: Report by Community Planning Manager, submitted)