

**MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP held in the EAGLESHAM  
HOUSE, ROTHESAY  
on TUESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2017**

**Present:**

Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Anne Horn

Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor

Councillor Jean Moffat

Councillor Aileen Morton

Councillor Elaine Robertson

**Attending:**

Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager

Cleland Sneddon, Chief Executive

Pippa Milne, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services

Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation

Councillor Jim Findlay

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Devon; McKenzie; McNeilly and Scoullar.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2017**

The Minute of the meeting of the Argyll Islands Strategic Group held on 12 September 2017, was approved as a true record.

**4. PRESENTATION BY CABINET SECRETARY FOR THE ECONOMY, JOBS AND FAIR WORK**

The Area Governance Manager advised that an invitation had been extended to the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work as he had been on the island for other business. Mrs MacLeod advised that due to other commitments the Cabinet Secretary had been unable to attend and offered his apologies to the Group. Members noted their disappointment that the Cabinet Secretary had not been able to attend.

At 12.15pm, the Chair ruled, and the Committee agreed, to adjourn the meeting to await the arrival of the Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation, and other Members of the Group, who were attending a visit to Rothesay Pavilion with the Cabinet Secretary. The meeting reconvened at 12.25pm.

Councillors Jean Murray Moffat and Aileen Morton joined the meeting at 12.25pm.

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## **5. FEEDBACK FROM PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION TO THE RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

The group gave consideration to a verbal update from the Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation. Mr Murray advised that he had attended a meeting of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee on 20 September 2017 and provided evidence in relation to the first stage of the Islands Bill. Mr Murray advised that the information provided reflected the written submission from Argyll and Bute Council, and the comments of the Group in correlation with the views expressed during consultation with Community Council's and Community Trusts.

Mr Murray outlined discussions which included concerns over top down decisions; the possibility of delegated powers closer to communities; the differing needs of island and peninsula communities together with the concern of inequalities in the sense that one size fits all, doesn't always apply; the need to empower communities to give them the skills and experience to take full advantage of the Bill; the strength of support for a National Islands Strategy that comes down to Argyll and Bute, if not island level and that Island Communities want to be involved in the framing of the plan. Mr Murray advised that he also provided information in relation to key issues which would be listed in the Bill; the consultation stage of the process; island proofing; representation of island communities and the timetable for the implementation of the Bill.

Discussion took place in respect of the need to know more about the powers afforded by the Bill and the resources available to enable it, noting that these were complex issues which must be progressed in such a way that there is a positive impact on island communities. Councillor A Morton noted the need to ensure that the expectations of islands, especially the smaller ones, are carefully managed. The Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation agreed to forward the link to the submissions made to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee on 20 September 2017 to the group, including the one made by Stephen Whiston, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance NHS Highland.

### **Decision:**

The group agreed to note the contents of the update and liaise with the National Islands Group via attendance by Councillor Currie and the Chief Executive to ensure strong representation through Stage 2 of the development of the Bill.

## **6. THE RURAL DEAL**

The group gave consideration to a presentation by the Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation on the Rural Growth Deal. Mr Murray advised that work had been ongoing for a number of years on the Rural Growth Deal, which is a deal with both the Scottish and UK Government to provide funding based on a business case supported by both the public and private sector to identify critical infrastructure projects to support key economic goals for Argyll and Bute. Mr Murray outlined the Single Investment Plan; the opportunities to build upon the already committed investments by both the private and public sectors; the key economic goals and the opportunities for growth in the numerous natural economic assets from which the Argyll and Bute region already benefits. Mr Murray advised that the Rural Growth Deal is a partnership which provides high rates of return to Scottish and UK Governments and as such it was important to show how projects

align and directly support Scotland's Economic Strategy and unlock economic potential by identifying opportunities for growth in some of Scotland's fastest growing sectors such as marine, tourism, aquaculture and ambitious space industry.

Discussion took place in respect of the process for achieving Government funding; the growth within the public sector; and the projects which are under consideration. The Area Governance Manager agreed to liaise with the Strategic Transformation and Infrastructure Manager in relation to the inclusive growth model and forward information to the group by email. Mrs MacLeod also agreed to forward the draft business case which was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in 2016.

**Decision:**

The group:-

1. agreed to note the contents of the presentation; and
2. requested that a progress report be brought to a future meeting of the group.

(Ref: Presentation by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 31 October 2017, submitted.)