



Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT
Tel: 01546 602127 Fax: 01546 604435
DX 599700 LOCHGILPHEAD
14 January 2020

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD** on **TUESDAY, 21 JANUARY 2020** at **10:30 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director

BUSINESS

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP HELD ON THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2019** (Pages 3 - 10)
4. **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ISLAND LIAISON DIRECTORS UPDATE** (Pages 11 - 12)
Report by Scottish Government Island Liaison Directors
5. **NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN UPDATE** (Pages 13 - 16)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth
6. **VESSEL REPLACEMENT AND DEPLOYMENT PLAN - TO FOLLOW**
Written Update by Transport Scotland (no officer in attendance)
7. **RESPONSE FROM MINISTER TO QUERIES RAISED AT LAST MEETING - TO FOLLOW**
Correspondence by Scottish Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands
8. **UPDATE ON BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL WARDS** (Pages 17 - 20)
Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

9. FUTURE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 21 - 22)

Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

Argyll Islands Strategic Group

Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)
Councillor Anne Horn
Councillor Jean Moffat
Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Jim Lynch

Councillor Mary-Jean Devon
Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor
Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor Len Scoullar (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Alastair Redman

Shona Barton, Committee Manager

Contact: Lynsey Innis, Senior Committee Assistant; Tel: 01546 604338

MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP held in the COLUMBA CENTRE, BOWMORE, ISLE OF ISLAY on THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2019

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Mary-Jean Devon
Councillor Anne Horn
Councillor Jean Moffat

Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Alastair Redman

Attending: Fergus Murray Head of Development and Economic Growth
Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager
Stuart Green, Corporate Support Manager
Paul Wheelhouse, Scottish Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands
Don Morrison, Islands Team, Scottish Government

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to the Scottish Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, Mr Paul Wheelhouse, and his team. General introductions were made.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim Lynch, Sir Jamie McGrigor, Aileen Morton and Len Scoullar.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP HELD ON TUESDAY, 28 MAY 2019

The Minute of the previous meeting of the Argyll Islands Strategic Group held on Tuesday, 28 May 2019, was approved as a true record, subject to the following amendment:-

Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

To replace the sentence “There were no apologies for absence intimated” with “Apologies for absence were intimated by Councillor Mary Jean Devon”.

4. UPDATED KEY PRIORITIES OF ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP

The group gave consideration to a report highlighting the list of priorities which had been updated to reflect discussion and decision at their meeting on 27 February 2019. It was noted that the list of key priorities would provide the focus of the groups work plan.

Discussion took place in respect of digital connectivity and the difficulties faced by island communities due to the challenging technology and geography which in turn adversely affects the population not only on the islands but throughout Argyll and Bute. The possibility of exploring with the windfarm companies who operate throughout the area the ways in which they could work with companies such as ALI Energy to alleviate fuel poverty was also highlighted, with the Head of Development and Economic Growth suggesting

that the Argyll and Bute Renewable Energy Alliance (ABRA) may be a useful source of information and assistance. Further discussion was had in relation to community benefits from onshore wind farms and the legalities of this. Mr Wheelhouse advised that the Scottish Government did not have the necessary powers to introduce a tax or levy on renewable energy and suggested that the group have a look at the newly updated good practice principles on the practice of Community Benefit.

Lengthy discussion took place in respect of housing provision and in particular for those with essential key worker status. Members of the group highlighted that this issue impacts on the provision of other essential services on the islands. Further discussion took place in relation to second home ownership which has seen the younger demographic struggle to find affordable housing and has resulted in young families leaving islands to set up home in more urban areas. Mr Wheelhouse advised that this has been a huge theme throughout the consultation process for the Islands (Scotland) Act, and further advised that as the Islands Plan unfolds the Scottish Government would be looking at how best to take this issue forward. Mr Wheelhouse confirmed that he would raise the issues addressed by the group with his colleague, Mr Kevin Stewart, Scottish Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning.

Mr Wheelhouse advised of a Ministerial Task Group on Population which is being chaired by Fiona Hyslop, which would look at population challenges and migration issues. He advised that he was on this group by his association with the Islands and it was widely recognised that housing plays an important part in dealing with population decline. He suggested that officers of the Council may wish to start thinking on how they could liaise with this group going forward.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to approve the amended priorities (Appendix 1) as discussed and amended at their meeting on 27 February 2019.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated 29 August 2019, submitted.)

5. ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY, CONNECTIVITY AND THE ISLANDS

Mr Wheelhouse provided a brief update in relation to the findings of the recent consultation on the Islands (Scotland) Act. He advised that one of the big themes was transport infrastructure on the islands. Mr Wheelhouse advised that whilst it had been important to recognise the successful points of RET, it was equally as important to realise the additional pressure this placed on the transport infrastructure. He advised that the Government, working together with Transport Scotland and local authorities were keen to provide a coherent public transport service and advised that the Scottish Government programme was due to be released next week. He spoke of the current issues with ferry infrastructure, particularly in relation to Fergusons Ship Yard and the building of vessels 801 and 802 and advised the situation was improving.

Mr Wheelhouse also gave an update in relation to digital connectivity and advised that they were coming towards the end of the current investment programme. He spoke of the discrepancies in areas, and advised that the Government could only invest in the areas where there was no commercial investment plan in place. He provided further information

in relation to the R100 programme and the R100 follow-on programme to tackle the final 5% of predominantly rural premises to achieve near universal coverage by the end of 2021; rates relief assistance for investors of 10 years and the launch of the Scottish Government's 5G strategy.

In relation to energy, Mr Wheelhouse advised of the heavy investment planned for energy efficiency measures; the passing of the Fuel Poverty (Scotland) Bill; the work of the Scottish Marine Energy Industry Working Group; the re-carbonising of heat; the development of off shore wind plans, which may bring employment opportunities for islanders and the continued support to CS Wind UK at Machrihanish.

The Chair thanked Mr Wheelhouse for the information provided.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the information provided.

6. ISLAND (SCOTLAND) ACT

(a) National Islands Plan and Islands Impact Assessment Consultation

The group gave consideration to a report outlining the Council's response to the National Islands Plan and Islands Impact Assessment Consultation, which relates specifically to the duties detailed in Part 2 and Part 3 of the Islands (Scotland) Act.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the response, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, which was submitted to the consultation and formed the Council's formal response.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated 29 August 2019, submitted.)

(b) Update by the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands

Mr Wheelhouse provided a brief update on the extensive works undertaken by his team, together with Strathclyde University to deliver the consultation on the National Islands Plan and the Island Communities Impact Assessment. He advised that they had run 57 events over 40 islands in a bid to get parity between islands and to ensure that as many were represented as possible. Mr Morrison of the Scottish Government's Islands Team agreed to forward the link to the individual reports, which were available for each event. Mr Wheelhouse advised that the consultation exercise would inform the National Islands Plan which is to be laid before Parliament by 4 October 2019. He advised that the Islands (Scotland) Act requires that the National Islands Plan is reported on annually and reviewed after five years.

Discussion was had in relation to the retrospective nature of the Islands Communities Impact Assessment tool and to the provision contained within the Act that allowed communities to request additional powers. Mr Wheelhouse advised that the Government were in the process of developing guidance for local authorities and Ministers for responding to requests of this nature.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the information provided.

7. ISLANDS TRANSPORT FORUM

The group gave consideration to the minute of the previous meeting of the Islands Transport Forum held on 9 May 2019. The Head of Development and Economic Growth provided a brief verbal update on the subsequent meeting of the Forum which took place on 21 August 2019 and advised that he was pleased to see the recognition of the importance of ferries and port infrastructure in the National Transport Strategy. Discussion was had in relation to the new Islay vessel design, with members of the group pleased to note that, as this is a similar size to the Finlaggan, the infrastructure already in place at Kennacraig, Port Askaig and Port Ellen could accommodate it. Mr Wheelhouse confirmed that budget discussions were taking place and that he was trying to enhance the engagement with stakeholders, trade unions and communities in this regard. Further discussion took place in respect of the annual increase in capital funding, the role of the National Infrastructure Commission; the Aviation Strategy and the current arrangements with Transport Scotland in relation to the Tayvallich to Jura Passenger Ferry.

The Head of Development and Economic Growth agreed to circulate the minute of the meeting of the Forum held on 21 August 2019 once it becomes available.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the minute of the previous meeting of the Islands Transport Forum held on 9 May 2019 and the subsequent information provided.

(Reference: Minute of the previous meeting of the Islands Transport Forum, held on 9 May 2019, submitted.)

8. VESSEL REPLACEMENT AND DEPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

The group gave consideration to a report providing an update on the current position of the Vessel Replacement and Deployment Programme which is now being finalised for consideration by Ministers and it is hoped that it will be published in the Autumn. Mr Wheelhouse provided an update in relation to the new Islay ferry, which is to be built upon completion of vessels 801 and 802 and the legal action against the Government on Northern Isles Procurement, which he advised had been helpful in establishing a legislative process and clarifying state support for ferries.

Councillor Elaine Robertson advised of a recent decision of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee to write to CMAL in support of the communities wish to commission smaller vessels and the introduction of a more frequent sailings timetable to better support existing infrastructure both in Oban and Mull. She enquired as to whether it would be appropriate to copy Mr Wheelhouse into the correspondence with CMAL and he confirmed he was happy to be included.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note:-

1. the update provided; and
2. that Mr Hadfield of Transport Scotland would be in attendance at the next meeting of the group.

(Reference: Update Report by Transport Scotland, dated 29 August 2019, submitted.)

9. ARGYLL AIR SERVICES PSO TENDER

The group gave consideration to a report highlighting the successful tender process for the Argyll Air Services Public Service Obligation (PSO) contract.

Councillor Mary Jean Devon asked that the thanks be recorded of the scholars and their families on the islands of Coll and Colonsay together with her own, to the Head of Development and Economic Growth and his team, for their efforts to secure this service.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note that the new contract for Argyll Air Services will commence with the operator Hebridean Air on 16 September 2019 and will operate for a period of 4 years until 15 September 2023 for the sum of £2,048,828.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth, dated 29 August 2019, submitted.)

10. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ISLAND LIAISON DIRECTORS UPDATE

The group gave consideration to an update from the Scottish Government Islands Liaison Team on the links between Argyll and Bute Council and the appropriate Scottish Government policy teams on issues discussed at their previous meeting on 28 May 2019. These included the provision of financial assistance for athletes based in the islands to attend mainland events and the way in which fuel poverty targets are set for island areas, in particular around equity of outcomes for residents of island communities.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the information provided.

(Reference: Update by Scottish Government Island Liaison Directors, dated 29 August 2019, submitted.)

11. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY, CONNECTIVITY AND THE ISLANDS

A number of questions had been submitted and it was agreed that questions from those in attendance would be taken first. This minute reflects the order in which discussion took place.

Jenni Minto, Islay Community Council asked:-

Islay is a success story but that success is in danger of being eroded due to a lack of public investment in the island's infrastructure: from lack of affordable housing to minimal bus service to constant issues with our life line ferry service; and everything in between.

I recognise that the Scottish Government has invested in the rural and island communities across Scotland but I believe that Islay, given its massive contribution to the exchequer, is being short changed. How can you ensure that Islay will get that needed investment?

The islands bill has been introduced to ensure islands are not disadvantaged when compared to the mainland. However islands are not treated equally with each other. For example in local government if Islay was part of the Western Isles our population would equate to 3 Councillors, one for every 1000 voters. Currently we have one third of three - so one!

In a mixed Region like Argyll & Bute, how can you ensure our island voice is heard?

Mr Wheelhouse advised that the Scottish Government were taking an equity and rights based approach to the National Islands Plan, as they had a duty to deliver services that reflect the needs of islanders without discriminating against other islands. He added that it was recognised that it's not a one size fits all situation.

Addressing the question of the number of councillors in wards with inhabited islands, Mr Wheelhouse advised that this was a matter for the Local Boundary Commission, who he believed were taking a flexible approach as it was about addressing local demand. The Chair, Councillor Currie advised that the Local Boundary Commission are meeting with the Council in October. Mr Wheelhouse advised that he would provide further detail on what the regulation means in practice.

Chris Abell, Islay resident asked:-

"Transport Scotland allows CalMac to operate a scheme whereby certain commercial hauliers are able to block book space on the Islay Ferry months in advance. Islay residents are outnumbered at least 10 to 1 by visitors on the Islay ferry. CalMac claims that Transport Scotland insists that every ferry passenger must be treated alike and that they are not permitted to issue Islay residents with an Islay ferry card to give residents reasonable travel priority as a matter of Transport Scotland policy. Islay residents are outcompeted for ferry space by freight which has priority booking and by tourists by sheer weight of numbers. It will sometimes take Islay residents a week or more to reach Kennacraig 30 miles away from the time that they make a decision to travel, and even then they will not be likely to travel at the time of their choosing.

What changes to Transport Scotland policy will the Minister make to ensure that the reasonable travel needs of island residents are given appropriate priority in an oversubscribed and overcrowded "lifeline" service by the use of a resident's ferry card or similar scheme?"

Mr Wheelhouse advised that discussions with Calmac were currently ongoing in respect of the issues raised. He advised that the issue relates to a contract that is inflexible and restrictive and prohibited a distinction between locals and visitors. He further advised that Calmac are looking to expand their saved spaces policy and also offered some

information on the club car solutions running in other areas. In relation to the freight issues, Mr Wheelhouse agreed to take this forward and feedback the outcome of his discussions.

Councillor Mary-Jean Devon spoke of the freight charges which affect delivery costs to the islands. She outlined the discrepancies since RET and asked the Scottish Minister to bear this in mind during the upcoming review of RET. Mr Wheelhouse confirmed that this would be taken into consideration.

Jura Community Council submitted the following question:-

Our primary school, Small Isles Primary, has just recently lost a classroom teacher and is about to lose the joint Head Teacher also. A new Principal Teacher started in April and all of these individuals are struggling to find a house/home on the island. The Principal is currently in short-term let on Jura until April where he will then be technically homeless and have to move on - this will be an issue as there are no long-term lets available on the island. In order to accommodate a new Head Teacher and any other teacher, there needs to be housing. There are currently plans for 10 units to be built in Craighouse village, the finish date is not certain but likely to be end of 2020 at the earliest and there is no guarantee of a house being allocated for a teacher. There is a house for sale on the island, in good condition, currently on the market for O/O £180k, with a very sympathetic seller, we are planning to contact WHHA to make a request for them to purchase this house as part of the housing stock on Jura and also see if this could then be labelled as an 'education' house, this is where we require assistance. We believe that an education house will always be needed on Jura. The teaching model favours teachers to be located on the island especially when winter ferry timetables are reduced and weather can affect teachers getting onto the island, having at least one teacher, minimum, living here, reduces the risk for school operation. Connections to Islay can prove difficult and can result in teachers being stuck. We would like to request an education house and identifying the house for sale is a quick solution for either Principle or Head with the hope of one of the other units or any WHHA unit that comes up, be available for a second teacher through a lettings policy or other means of scoring.

Mr Wheelhouse advised that he would get back to Jura Community Council with his thoughts on innovations for housing once he had had an opportunity to speak with Mr Stewart.

Councillor Horn enquired about how the consultation on the Ferry Review was taking place. Mr Wheelhouse advised that he would look into the methodology of the consultation and get back to the group in due course.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed that their next meeting be held on Tuesday, 21 January 2020. Venue to be confirmed.

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Island Liaison Partners: Update Paper

Purpose

1. To provide a brief update on Island Liaison Partner activity since the previous update provided at to the Islands' Strategic Group meeting of 28 August 2019.

Backward look

2. Recent activity undertaken by ILPs has included:

- **Islands' Plan** – we provided input into the draft Islands' Plan, including drafting sections on rural healthcare. We continue to liaison with the Scottish Government's Islands' Team on ad hoc matters.
- **Community Planning** – we represented Donna Bell (Argyll and Bute Location Director) at the Community Planning Management Committee in Helensburgh in September and at the CPP meeting Arrochar in December, feeding back to Donna on relevant matters.
- **Community Food Organisations (CFOs)** – following discussion with Stuart Green we used our contacts to highlight the potential financial support available to providers of food for good causes in the smaller islands that do not have formal CFOs but can still potentially assess funding via an existing community organisation.
- **Internal Scottish Government Liaison** – we have provided advice to a number of policy teams on island impact assessments and issues relating to island communities more generally.
- **Colonsay Community Council** – a number of actions (with Argyll and Bute Council on airport staff cover and with Transport Scotland on the definition of 'lifeline services') were progressed following attendance at the community council in October.
- **EU Exit** – while a 'No Deal' exit on 31 January appears unlikely, a potential 'hard exit' at the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 remains a significant possibility. The impacts of this could be similar in some respects to a 'no deal' EU Exit. Information on Scottish Government preparation for potential 'No Deal' exit from the EU on 31 October 2019 is available at ['Overview of 'No Deal' Preparations'](#). Resilience arrangements are stood down, but remain ready to be reactivated, should that be required.

Forward look

3. We are mindful that it is almost 18 months since our role description was proposed and agreed at the Islands Strategic Group meeting at end of August 2018.

We feel there's been some value in our role, even though it has perhaps been more limited than initially envisaged due to the need to juggle competing priorities.

4. Since our roles were first agreed, the Scottish Government has established a dedicated Islands' Policy Team, now 7 strong, and mostly island based with responsibility for acting as a bridge between SG and island communities. Given this, we propose that over the next few months we liaise with Donna Bell and Argyll and Bute Council officers to consider whether the role continues and, if so, what the approach to future engagement may be.

5. In addition, the group will wish to note that Dannie Onn is due to retire from the Scottish Government in early February and will therefore be finishing in his role as liaison partner.

Island Liaison Partners
January 2020

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**ARGYLL ISLANDS
STRATEGIC GROUP****DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH****21 JANUARY 2020**

NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN UPDATE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 was granted Royal Assent on 6 July 2018 with the first set of provisions coming into force on 4 October 2018. The Act introduced a number of measures to underpin the Scottish Government's key objective of ensuring that there is a sustained focus across Government and the public sector to meet the needs of island communities now and in the future.
- 1.2 The Act itself introduced a number of duties that are placed on the Scottish Ministers and Local Authorities in order to deliver the measures and objectives. Part 2 places a duty on the Scottish Ministers to prepare a National Islands Plan as a key outcome from the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and provides a framework for action to meaningfully improve outcomes for Scotland's island communities.
- 1.3 The Act required Ministers to consult with local authorities, as well as representatives of island communities in preparation of the National Islands Plan (Part 2).
- 1.4 Members may recall that the council responded to the initial consultation on the proposed National Islands Plan in July 2019 and responded again in November 2019 to the Draft Plan during the 40 days that it was laid before Parliament for completion. Following the 40 day period and as per the requirements of the Act the Plan was published thereafter on 27 December and can be accessed via the following link.
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/>
- 1.5 The next milestone in the implementation of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 will be the development and publication of the Implementation Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that members consider the update as contained in the report.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

**ARGYLL ISLANDS
STRATEGIC GROUP**

DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

21 JANUARY 2020

NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN UPDATE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Islands (Scotland) Bill 2018 received Royal Assent on 6 July 2018. The first Commencement Regulations for the Island Act were laid on 20 September 2018 and came into force on 4 October 2018.

3.2 As per the requirements of Part 2 of the Act namely the preparation of a National Islands Plan, by Scottish Ministers, Scotland's first National Islands Plan to improve the quality of life for island communities has recently been launched.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that Members consider the update as contained in the report.

5.0 DETAIL

5.1 According to the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, the purpose of the Plan is "to set out the main objectives and strategy of the Scottish Ministers in relation to improving outcomes for island communities that result from, or are contributed to by, the carrying out of functions of a public nature. The aim of the Plan is to shape government policy to deliver the above purpose. The plan sets out 13 objectives (see para 5.4 below), and more than 100 specific measures/actions to support achieving them, to address population decline, tackle climate change and improve transport, housing, the delivery of public services and digital connectivity.

5.2 It followed an extensive consultation which included 61 events and meetings on 40 islands across Scotland, 10 of which were in Argyll and Bute, and attended by almost 1,000 people of all ages and backgrounds. The online consultation received a further 400 responses.

5.3 The Plan has a duration of five years with a requirement for annual reports from Ministers to monitor progress and to consider where outcomes may or

may not have been delivered. Ministers will review the Plan before the end of the period of 5 years beginning with the day on which the plan was last published.

- 5.4 As required by the Act, the Plan provides a number of areas for improving outcomes for island communities, including:
- increasing population levels;
 - improving and promoting sustainable economic development;
 - improving and promoting environmental wellbeing;
 - improving and promoting health and wellbeing;
 - improving and promoting community empowerment;
 - improving transport services;
 - improving digital connectivity;
 - reducing fuel poverty;
 - ensuring effective management of the Scottish Crown Estate (that is, the property, rights and interests to which section 90B(5) of the Scotland Act 1998 applies); and
 - enhancing biosecurity (including protecting islands from the impact of invasive non-native species).

Reflecting feedback from the consultation that was carried out between April and July 2019, the final Plan also includes other issues that are important to our island communities. These cover housing, climate change, energy, education and our cultural heritage. Many of those above reflect the areas identified by the council as being critical to our island communities and also reflect the agreed priorities of the Argyll Islands Strategic Group (AISG) as agreed at their meeting in February 2019.

- 5.5 The next step will be to develop an Implementation Route Map detailing these actions and it is hoped to be able to provide a verbal update on the process and timeline that will be associated with this Route Map/Strategy.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The National Islands Plan and associated key priorities provides a framework from which the council can work closely with our island communities and Scottish Government and also work closely with key stakeholders. It is unclear at the moment as to the implications of the Plan on resources, both from a staff and financial perspective. The next stage is the development of the Implementation Strategy/Route Map to secure the delivery of the Plan and this

will hopefully clarify the key areas of focus for the council and also any resulting impact.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Policy –The Plan seeks to deliver positive policy and resource support for our 23 islands all of which fits with the objectives of the Outcome Improvement Plan, Economic Strategy and Local Development Plan which seek to deliver sustainable island communities.
- 7.2 Financial –staff resources. The implementation strategy that will now be developed will determine the impact on Local Authorities in regard to any additional duties or resources required
- 7.3 Legal – none.
- 7.4 HR – None
- 7.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – The Plan seeks to comply with these duties.
- 7.6 Equalities - The Plan will comply with all Equal Opportunities policies and obligations
- 7.7 Socio Economic Duty – The Plan seeks to remove socio-economic disadvantage for residents across our islands.
- 7.7 Islands - The National Islands Plan and associated key priorities provides a framework from which the council can work closely with our island communities and Scottish Government and work closely with key stakeholders.
- 7.6 Risk –It is important that the council engaged in the consultation process relating to the Plan and that we continue to engage with SG going forward in regard to the development of the implementation strategy to ensure that the best outcome is secured for our islands and that there is clear understanding of the resource implications for the council from the Plan and emerging implementation strategy.
Plan
- 7.7 Customer Service – none.

Interim Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth – Kirsty Flanagan
Policy Lead – Councillor Aileen Morton

January 2020

For further information contact: Audrey Martin, Transformation Projects and Regeneration manager

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

ARGYLL, ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP

LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT 21 JANUARY 2020

**UPDATE ON BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ELECTORAL WARDS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides an update on the ongoing review of Local Government electoral wards currently being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland in light of the requirements of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked to consider and note the update on the review of electoral wards by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland.

3.0 DETAIL

3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland are undertaking a review of the six council areas which contain inhabited islands as soon as practicable in terms of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

3.2 The Commission commenced reviews of Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas in late 2019 with the aim that the reviews would be completed in time for the 2022 local government elections.

3.3 Officials from the Boundary Commission met with the Council Leader, Chief Executive, Executive Director – Customer Services and Head of Legal and Regulatory Support in October 2019 to have a preliminary discussion on their approach and any initial thoughts the Council may have.

3.4 Since the meeting with the Boundary Commission, the Council have provided information, as requested by them, in regard to house building and population projections, community councils and school catchment areas amongst other things.

3.5 Issues for consideration in the review include:

Councillor numbers

Use of the power to create wards of between 1 and 4 members where these contain inhabited islands

How they define islands communities

Any other ward design considerations

Electorate forecasts

Effective consultation arrangements.

3.6 The Council also suggested in terms of public awareness that the Commission could attend a Community Planning meeting and details of future meetings have been provided to them to facilitate this. There may also be an opportunity for them to attend a future Members' Seminar.

3.7 The timescales for the review are broadly as follows, although uncertainty around the progress of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill means that at the moment firm timescales cannot be set.

- November 2019 – February 2020 – preparation of Initial Proposals
- March-June 2020 – formal 2-month consultation with the Council
- August-November 2020 – 3-month public consultation

3.8 It is intended that recommendations will be submitted to Scottish Ministers no later than May 2021 so that they can come into force for the local government elections in May 2022.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is currently undertaking a review of Local Government boundaries in the six Council areas which have inhabited islands in terms of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. This report provides an update on the progress of the review in relation to Argyll and Bute.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy None at present

5.2 Financial None at present

5.3 Legal None at present

5.4 HR None at present

5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: at present

5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics None at present

5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty None at present

5.5.3 Islands:- there could be impact in relation to island communities dependent on the outcome of the review and if recommendations are accepted.

5.6. Risk None at present

5.7 Customer Service None at present

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

Policy Lead – Councillor Robin Currie

8 January 2020

For further information contact: Shona Barton, Committee Manager (01436) 657605

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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL ARGYLL, ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP
LEGAL AND REGULATORY SUPPORT 21 JANUARY 2020

FUTURE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides information on the future governance arrangements for the Argyll, Islands Strategic Group following the decision of Council in September 2019 and seeks agreement of the dates for future meetings for the Argyll, Islands Sounding Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- (1) note the decision by Council in September 2019 and the creation of the Argyll, Islands Sounding Board; and
- (2) agree the dates for meetings of the Sounding Board for 2020.

3.0 DETAIL

3.1 The Argyll Islands Strategic Group was formed in June 2017 with the remit as follows:-

- To consider strategic issues affecting the inhabited island communities of Argyll and Bute
- To link into the work of the Scottish Government's Islands Strategic Group and Islands Transport Forum, contributing to the identification and design of solutions for the unique challenges our island communities face
- Promote the optimal development of our island communities
- Make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee/Council in regard to lobbying national government on key issues which impact on our islands' sustainable economic growth and community development
- Consider strategic policy issues and challenges to ensure that proper, fit for purpose solutions are considered to stimulate greater economic growth and community development in our island communities

- Consider current and potential new powers to enable improved service delivery and outcomes
- 3.2 In September 2019, the Council agreed that following the meeting of the Argyll, Islands Strategic Group in January 2020 the group would then meet twice yearly thereafter as the Argyll, Islands Sounding Board, retaining the original remit as approved in 2017 and referring any recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.3 The Sounding Board is not a committee of the Council but is a mechanism which allows discussion around issues and referral of matters to the Policy and Resources Committee. As such meetings will not be published on the Council's website and they will not be open to the public.
- 3.4 Suggested dates for meetings of the Sounding Board for 2020 are:-
- Thursday 7th May 2020
- Thursday 5th November 2020

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Argyll, Islands Sounding Board will replace the Strategic Group following this meeting. Members are asked to note the change and agree the dates for the Sounding Board for 2020.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy None
- 5.2 Financial None
- 5.3 Legal None
- 5.4 HR None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics None
- 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty None
- 5.5.3 Islands None
- 5.6. Risk None
- 5.7 Customer Service None

Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

Policy Lead – Councillor Robin Currie

8 January 2020

For further information contact: Shona Barton, Committee Manager (01436) 657605