

## Renewable Energy Action Plan

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The energy industry in Argyll is based on the use of renewable sources of power including hydro, onshore wind and solar installations as well as biomass heat or combined heat and power boilers. Future opportunities for tidal and wave power are also available.
- 1.2 Both the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Economic Development Action Plan identify the positive contribution that renewables can make to the Argyll economy and seek to support the development of the sector.
- 1.3 Despite uncertainty surrounding subsidies for renewables, as reported to Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in January 2016, it is still desirable, where projects remain feasible, to ensure that the maximum local economic benefit associated with the renewables sector is secured. With this in mind, the Argyll and Bute Renewable Energy Plan (REAP) has been updated. The focus has been a light touch, strategic plan focused on strategic actions which can be supported and progressed by the members of the Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance (ABRA). The new Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP) has been discussed with ABRA members and they have endorsed the action plan contained within it.
- 1.4 With a focus on making the document accessible and in a format that is easy to update, the action plan has been produced in an A4 leaflet style document. In addition, a story map, which has the benefit of being able to incorporate the action plan as well as interactive mapping already available on the Council's website, has been prepared and can be accessed via the following link <http://arcg.is/2cbzD6l> This will allow the REAP to be available in an online and offline document format accessible to all. A demonstration of the story map app will be provided to the Committee.

### RECOMMENDATION:

The committee approve the Renewable Energy Action Plan contained at Appendix 1 and as demonstrated through the Story Map.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The energy industry in Argyll is based on the use of renewable sources of power with hydro and onshore wind particularly widely deployed at scales ranging from small scale to commercial developments. Smaller scale solar installations as well as biomass heat or combined heat and power boilers are also a feature. Over the longer term there are future opportunities for tidal and wave power, with the Sound of Islay project being the most advanced at the moment. There is currently more than 1GW of renewable power generation operational or consented within Argyll, including more than 1MW of Council owned renewables.
- 2.2 Both the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Economic Development Action Plan identify the positive contribution that renewables can make to the Argyll and Bute economy and seek to support development of the sector. In order to maximise the opportunities associated with the renewables industry there needs to be appropriate infrastructure in place and the supply chain, including appropriately skilled staff, need to be available locally.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members:-
- Approve the Renewable Energy Action Plan contained at Appendix 1 and as demonstrated through the Story Map.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 In addition to the renewable generation sites themselves, there are also a number of businesses who operate in the manufacturing, operations and maintenance supply chain for the renewables industry. The most notable is the CS Wind factory at Machrihanish although other businesses operate in both the onshore and offshore sectors and also within the UK and internationally. There are also opportunities for businesses that are not solely part of the renewables supply chain, for example civils contractors and accommodation providers, to benefit from the renewables industry particularly during the construction phase.
- 4.2 Members will however recall that they received an update in January 2016 which detailed how activities and policies created at a Scotland and UK level

could affect the local renewables industry. Uncertainty remains a feature of the renewables industry and, whilst many developers are still progressing proposals, supportive policy and funding regimes will need to be in place if new renewables technologies and associated developments within Argyll and Bute are to be achieved.

- 4.3 Within this context it is still desirable, where projects remain feasible, to ensure that the maximum local economic benefit associated with the renewables sector, and particularly developments within Argyll and Bute, are achieved. With this in mind, the Argyll and Bute Renewable Energy Plan (REAP) has been updated but due to the uncertainty surrounding subsidies etc., the focus has been a light touch, strategic plan focused on strategic actions which can be supported and progressed by the members of the Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance (ABRA).
- 4.4 The Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance is a public-private sector partnership which includes organisations such as Argyll and Bute Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, SSE Networks, The Crown Estate Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Local Energy Scotland and some of the main developers of renewables within Argyll and Bute. The draft Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP) has been discussed with ABRA members and they have endorsed the action plan.
- 4.5 The REAP is focusing on the main local issues which can impact on renewables development:
- Transport and connectivity – important to enable goods and services to be brought into and exported from the area. The port at Campbeltown is a key asset since Campbeltown is identified within the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan as a renewables hub with a focus on manufacturing, operations and maintenance;
  - Supply chain – local businesses which support the renewables industry both in Argyll and internationally;
  - Business land– hubs for organisations operating within the renewables supply chain; and
  - Skills and recruitment – to ensure that local people can access job opportunities.
- 4.6 With a view to making the document accessible, the action plan document is in an A4 leaflet style which complements the existing ABRA leaflets which promote Argyll and Bute. In addition, a story map, which has the benefit of being able to incorporate not only the action plan but other interactive mapping already available on the Council's website, has been prepared. This means that the REAP is now available as an online and offline document accessible to all. These formats also ensure that the REAP can be easily and quickly updated to reflect the continual changes that are facing the sector. It will also allow the REAP to be updated to reflect the Scottish Government new Energy Strategy, the draft of which is due to be published in the New Year. It would be proposed that the REAP be updated annually through consultation with ABRA members. A demonstration of the story map will be provided to the Committee.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The REAP has been updated to provide an action plan which has been endorsed by ABRA members and represents appropriate activities to ensure that the local economic benefits associated with the renewables industry within Argyll and Bute are realised.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy The Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Economic Development Action Plan recognise the importance of the renewables industry and the new REAP will replace the existing Renewable Energy Action Plan.
- 6.2 Financial There is no direct financial implication however it is hoped that the REAP will maximise the local economic benefits associated with renewable energy within Argyll and Bute which in turn could result in some additional income for the Council e.g. business rates etc.
- 6.3 Legal None
- 6.4 HR None
- 6.5 Equalities None
- 6.6 Risk There is a risk that if not updated economic benefits associated with renewables might not be achieved or maximised.
- 6.7 Customer Service None

**Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, Pippa Milne**

**Policy Lead – Councillor A Morton**

23 November 2016

**For further information contact:** Audrey Martin, Transformation Projects and Regeneration Manager, [Audrey.Martin@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Audrey.Martin@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Renewable Energy Action Plan Leaflet