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MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on FRIDAY, 18 AUGUST 2017

Present:

Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Mary-Jean Devon (by Lync)
Councillor Anne Horn
Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor

Councillor Aileen Morton (by Lync)
Councillor Elaine Robertson

Attending:

Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager
Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation
Antonia Baird, Community Development Officer
Ian Turner, Islands Bill Team, The Scottish Government

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Julie McKenzie, Yvonne McNeilly and Len Scoullar, and on behalf of Pippa Milne, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP

The group gave consideration to a report outlining the Terms of Reference for the work of the group as detailed in the agreement made by Council on 29 June 2017.

Decision:

The group:-

1. agreed the Terms of Reference detailed in the report subject to the inclusion of the words "uninhabited islands" at 4.1 and 4.2(1) and 4.2(2) of the report, and the removal of the word "communities" at paragraph 4.2(2) of the report;
2. requested that the Area Governance Manager liaise with the group to identify a suitable date in the week commencing Monday 11 September to host the next meeting of the group; and
3. agreed that future meetings of the group would take place on Tuesday 31 October 2017; Tuesday 9 January 2018 and Tuesday 27 March 2017, enabling reporting to the Policy and Resources Committee.

(Ref; Report by Executive Director of Customer Services, dated 18 August 2017, submitted.)

Councillor Aileen Morton joined the meeting by lync at 11.02am.

4. ISLANDS BILL

The group gave consideration to a presentation from the Community Empowerment Division of the Scottish Government, outlining the basis and timescales of the Islands Bill, which aims to achieve a sustained focus across Government and the wider public sector on improving outcomes for island communities. Discussion took place in respect of the National Islands Plan; the duties in relation to island communities; the representation of island communities; greater flexibility in electoral ward design for islands; the development in the Scottish Island Marine Development area and the parliamentary timetable and process.

Decision:

The group agreed to note the contents of the presentation.

The Chair thanked Mr Turner for the information provided.

(Ref: Presentation by the Islands Bill Team, The Scottish Government, dated 18 August 2017, submitted.)

Councillor Morton left the meeting at 11.50am due to technical difficulties.

Councillor Devon left the meeting at 12.05pm.

5. UPDATE FROM THE STRATEGIC ISLANDS GROUP MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2017 IN STORNOWAY

The group gave consideration to a report which provided an update from the meeting of the National Islands Strategic Group held in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis on 11 July 2017.

Decision:

The group agreed to note the contents of the update from the meeting of the National Strategic Group held in Stornoway on 11 July 2017.

(Ref: Report by Chief Executive, dated 18 August 2017, submitted.)

6. WORK STRANDS / RESPONSE TO ISLANDS BILL CONSULTATION AND ATTENDANCE AT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Discussion was led by the Chair, Councillor Currie who encouraged everyone to respond to the online questionnaire at

www.parliament.scot/newsandmediacentre/105516.aspx.

Members noted that discussions were being facilitated with the island communities in a bid to gather their views on the Islands Bill on 22 August 2017. Members also noted that a further meeting of the group would take place before attendance at the Parliamentary Committee on 20 September 2017 to update in relation to the discussions and to finalise the draft response to the Islands Bill consultation.

The Chair outlined the proposed work strands of the group going forward:-

- Energy – Renewables/Fuel Poverty/De-carbonisation
- Crown Estate
- Environment (Waste; Designations; Crofting; Agriculture & Fisheries)
- Tourism (including Culture)
- Regional Skills (Construction)/FE & HE Provision/Apprenticeships
- Depopulation/Migration
- Education/Health
- Education/Health (Recruitment)
- EU/BREXIT
- Digital (Mobile/Broadband)
- Housing/Empty Homes Initiatives
- Economy
- Planning
- Transport
- Social Security Reforms

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