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MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on TUESDAY, 29 MAY 2018

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Anne Horn
Councillor Aileen Morton
Councillor Elaine Robertson

Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Jim Lynch

Attending: Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager
Pippa Milne, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation
Stuart Green, Corporate Support Manager

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Sir Jamie McGrigor, Yvonne McNeilly and Jean Moffat.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2018

The Minute of the meeting of the Argyll Islands Strategic Group held on 27 March 2018, was approved as a true record.

4. INTRODUCTION OF/UPDATE ON SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ISLAND LIAISON DIRECTORS

The Corporate Support Manager provided information in relation to the appointment of the 5 Scottish Government Island Liaison Directors for the Argyll and Bute area. He advised that each had a personal link to the islands in some way and were directly responsible to the senior Civil Servant Donna Bell, whom they would report to on a quarterly basis. Mr Green advised that although discussions were ongoing to establish the exact nature of their roles, the expectation was that they would link directly with the Chief Executive, the Argyll Island Strategic Group and the Community Planning Groups, however there would be a need to manage expectations to ensure that they are not drawn into issues at a local level. Discussion took place in respect of the geography that each would cover, with Mr Green advising that one would be responsible for the island of Bute with two of the others taking responsibility for each of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles and the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands areas respectively. Mr Green advised that it was expected that they would be introduced at the next meeting of the group, where they would outline their roles and responsibilities.

Decision:

The group agreed to note the information provided.

5. UPDATE ON NATIONAL ISLANDS GROUP MEETING

The Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services advised that there had been no meeting of the National Islands Group since July 2017, and that there had been no indication of a future meeting date at this time.

Decision:

Having noted their disappointment at the lack of progress, the group requested that the Area Governance Manager write to the Chair of the National Islands Group enquiring as to when the next meeting is expected to take place.

6. UPDATE ON ISLANDS TRANSPORT GROUP

The Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services advised that there had been no formal meeting of the Islands Transport Group since July 2017. She advised that the meeting which had been scheduled to take place in December 2017 had been postponed due to severe weather and had yet to be rearranged. The group noted that meetings of the Islands Transport Group usually coincided with meetings of the National Islands Group due to the similar nature of the membership.

Decision:

The group agreed to note the information provided.

7. ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) BILL UPDATE

The group gave consideration to a report providing an update in regard to the progress of the Islands (Scotland) Bill. The Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation advised that following completion of Stage 2 of the Bill a number of amendments had been made. He advised that one of the main amendments was the inclusion of the six local authorities with island interests as statutory consultees to the National Islands Plan, and advised that all amendments could be viewed at <https://bb.parliament.scot/Legislation>. Discussion took place in respect of the expected timescales for the consideration of stage 3 of the Islands Bill and the possible resource implications as a result of the new legislation.

Decision:

The group agreed that a progress report be brought to the next meeting of the group.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 29 May 2018, submitted.)

Councillor Morton joined the meeting at 2.25pm.

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8. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND'S VESSEL REPLACEMENT AND DEPLOYMENT PLAN

The group gave consideration to a report outlining the progress regarding the Council's marine infrastructure including the ports and/or routes at Port Askaig, Islay; Craignure, Mull; Lismore; Fionnphort to Iona and Tayinloan to Gigha. The Head of Economic

Development and Strategic Transformation agreed to feedback comments in relation to the proposed works at Rothesay to the Council's Marine Operations Manager and provide an update to the group. Discussion took place in respect of the expansion of port facilities and the deployment of the two new vessels, with the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure outlining the need for a business case to establish whether it is financially sensible to take on a project of this nature if there will be no larger vessels to use it.

Decision:

The group:

1. agreed to note the contents of the report; and
2. requested that the Area Governance Manager extend an invitation to Transport Scotland to attend the next meeting of the group to discuss the plan from their point of view.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 29 May 2018, submitted.)

9. ISLAY AND JURA SUMMIT UPDATE

The group gave consideration to a report providing an update on the main findings of the Islay and Jura Summit that was held on the 4th of April 2018. Members noted that the main action from the Summit related to the potential for establishing an Economic Forum for the Islands to include the Council, HIE, Industry and Community Council reps and that an initial meeting to progress this had taken place in Lochgilphead.

Decision:

The group agreed to note the contents of the report.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure dated 29 May 2018, submitted.)

10. NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The group gave consideration to a report looking at the current work plan of the committee, in light of the progress of the Islands Bill and discussed the need to focus on key strategic priorities to better ensure the deliverability of positive outcomes for island communities. Discussion took place in respect of possible work strands going forward, which included waste, housing, social security reform and digital connectivity in relation to education and health. Further discussion was had in relation to the frequency of the meetings and the arrangements for the visit from the Minister for Islands and Transport.

Decision:

The group agreed:-

1. to note the contents of the report;
2. that meetings take place quarterly with the next meeting being Tuesday, 28 August 2018, and that this meeting take place within the Council Chambers, Kilmory,

Lochgilphead to allow for easier participation for the Scottish Minister for the Islands and Transport, Humza Yusaf, MSP. Members further agreed that if the Minister was unable to attend on this date, that the meeting be rescheduled to a more convenient date;

3. that the Area Governance Manager revisit the meeting dates already set and circulate dates during the months of November 2018 and February 2019 with the meetings scheduled to take place on islands being rescheduled for 2019; and
4. that the work strands for focus at the next meeting of the group be waste and housing.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 29 May 2018, submitted.)