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MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on TUESDAY, 28 AUGUST 2018

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Jean Moffat	Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Aileen Morton	Councillor Jim Lynch

Attending: Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager
Cleland Sneddon, Chief Executive
Pippa Milne, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services
Stuart Green, Corporate Support Manager
Peter Leckie, Project Manager
Danni Onn, Island Liaison Partner, Scottish Government
Iain McAllister, Island Liaison Partner, Scottish Government

The Chair ruled and the group agreed, that business dealt with at item 10 of this Minute be dealt with as a matter of urgency due to the timescales involved in responding to the Rural, Economy and Connectivity Call for Views on the level of investment by the Scottish Government in the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services, and the impact this has on the wider rural economy in areas served by these services to the Ferry Stakeholder Group Membership.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and general introductions were made.

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ARGYLL AND THE ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP HELD ON 29 MAY 2018

The Minute of the previous meeting of the Argyll Islands Strategic Group held on 29 May 2018, was approved as a true record.

4. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT - DRAFT DESCRIPTION OF ISLAND LIAISONS PARTNERS

The Chief Executive introduced Danni Onn and Iain McAllister as two of the five newly appointed Island Liaison partners to the group and spoke to the terms of the report, which outlined the draft description and objective of the pilot scheme.

Discussion was had in relation to the need for the liaison directors to establish knowledge, understanding and relationships with communities and local partners on the islands in order to improve the engagement between island communities and the Scottish Government and to achieving the objectives of the scheme and whether the outline timescale of 18 months would have an adverse effect on these. Further discussion took place in respect of the use of social media as a method of communicating with the wider island communities. The Area Governance Manager agreed to provide information on the pilot and the island liaison partners to the newly constituted Community Council's as part of discussions on engaging with community planning.

Decision

The group agreed to note the draft description and objectives of the Island Liaison Partners.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive, dated 28 August 2018, submitted)

5. NATIONAL ISLANDS GROUP MEETING

The Chief Executive advised that the next planned meeting of the National Islands Group was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 4 October 2018. Councillor Morton advised that discussions were ongoing around the possibility of Argyll and Bute hosting a future meeting of this group.

Decision

The group agreed to note the information provided.

6. ISLANDS TRANSPORT GROUP

The Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services advised that the next meeting of the Islands Transport Group was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 23rd October 2018. Mrs Milne further advised that discussions were ongoing about the focus of a future agenda of the group being on Argyll and Bute related issues.

Decision

The group agreed to note the information provided.

7. UPDATE ON ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) ACT

The group gave consideration to a verbal update from the Chief Executive, who advised that the Islands (Scotland) Bill had received Royal Assent on 6 July 2018 becoming the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. Mr Sneddon further advised that it will take some time for the breadth of the Act to become clear and that the Government plan should identify whether there would be any financial implications or additional funding available towards the island proofing process, which was well underway in Argyll and Bute.

Decision

The group agreed to note the information provided.

8. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND'S VESSEL REPLACEMENT AND DEPLOYMENT PLAN - ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The group, having noted that Transport Scotland were in the process of producing the Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan Annual Report 2017, agreed to defer discussion on this item until their next meeting on 30 November 2018, at which time the representative for Transport Scotland, Richard Hadfield would be in attendance to provide an update on the findings, ahead of the publication of the 2017 report.

9. OUR ISLAND WASTE

The group gave consideration to a report highlighting the legal obligations placed on the Council to collect householders waste, and in particular the forthcoming ban on Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) going to landfill across Scotland from 2021. The report provided detail on the likely impacts of the BMW ban on our Island waste disposal operations and the technical options being considered together with their likely impacts.

Discussion took place in respect of current processes on the islands including the PPP contract which currently covers the Isle of Bute; the shortfall in capacity for treatment of up to 1 million tonnes of waste identified by the Scottish Government; the possibility of seeking to continue derogation and additional support to support compliance with the regulations and the continued engagement with the Scottish Government and SEPA, who are the enforcement wing of the project, with members noting that the Western Isles were also engaging in a similar process. Further discussion took place in respect of the possibility of additional funding through the newly established Islands (Scotland) Act 2018; the need to provide further education to the public on what makes up our waste and the implications that the regulations would have on the transporting of waste from our islands to the mainland. The Project Manager advised that other schemes such as community composting and smaller scale arrangements were also being considered. Mr Leckie provided information on the implementation and policing requirements of the deposit return scheme, with the group noting that specific development sessions were being run for members prior to the EDI Committee meeting in September 2018 with continuing sessions being offered until the implementation of the scheme.

Decision

The group:

1. agreed to note the impact of the BMW ban on the disposal of Waste from island sites in particular the increase in costs both financial and environmental that will have to be borne as a result of converting the disposal operations from Landfill to Transfer Stations;
2. endorsed the approach taken through the Waste Strategy review to identify and cost potential solutions; with a report being prepared for the Environmental, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 7 September 2018;
3. agreed to support the preparation of a request to the Scottish Minister under the terms of the Islands Act 2018 for an Island Impact assessment focusing on the impact of the 2020 BMW ban, and noted that the impact assessment in conjunction with the options appraisal document will enable Scottish Ministers and SEPA to formally consider an Island Derogation or the provision of additional financial support to help meet the terms of the ban; and

4. endorsed the continued engagement with stakeholders such as Calmac, CMAL and the Scottish Government on the impact of additional haulage requirements as a result of the BMW ban.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 August 2018, submitted)

10. RURAL, ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE - DRAFT BUDGET 2019-20 - CLYDE AND HEBRIDES FERRY SERVICES - CALL FOR VIEWS

The group gave consideration to a report providing detail of the survey, which has been commissioned by the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee to gather the views of individuals and organisations on Scottish Government funding for Clyde and Hebrides ferry services, and the importance of ferry services within Argyll and Bute.

The Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services encouraged everyone to complete the survey, which could be found at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/FerriesBudget/> before the closing date of Friday, 7 September 2018.

Decision:

The group agreed to feedback additional comments to the survey, contained within Appendix 1 of the report, to the Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation and the Strategic Transformation and Infrastructure Manager by email, no later than Monday, 3 September 2018.

11. FUEL POVERTY (TARGET, DEFINITION AND STRATEGY) (SCOTLAND) BILL

The group gave consideration to a report highlighting the initial progress with the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill which is currently in the first stage of the parliamentary process. The report outlined the key changes to the definition and the target/strategy, which will have considerable challenges for Argyll and Bute as a whole, as well as the additional challenges faced with the proposals identified in the Energy Efficient Scotland consultation.

Decision

The group noted the response to the consultation submitted by officers.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 August 2018, submitted).