

Update on the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As members will be aware The Bill for the Islands (Scotland) Act was passed by Parliament on 30 May 2018 and received Royal Assent on 6 July 2018.
- 1.2 Argyll and Bute Council is a member of the Scottish Government's Strategic Islands Group (a successor to the Island Area Ministerial Working Group) which is chaired by Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Minister for Energy. Connectivity and the Islands and as a consequence we have been able to engage directly with the Scottish Government in regard to the delivery of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.
- 1.3 It is recommended that the Argyll Island Strategic Group note the update on the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

Update on the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Bill for the Islands (Scotland) Act was passed by Parliament on 30 May 2018 and received Royal Assent on 6 July 2018. The Act makes provision for a national islands plan: to impose duties in relation to island communities on certain public authorities; to make provision about the electoral representation of island communities; and to establish a licensing scheme in respect of marine development adjacent to islands.
- 2.2 This report provides an update on the Act with specific focus on the National Islands Plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Argyll Island Strategic Group note the update on the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

4.0 DETAIL

Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 Update

- 4.1 In regard to the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, Part 2 requires Scottish Ministers to prepare a national islands plan. Part 2, Section 3 of the Act (link below) sets out some of the main areas that will be considered in the preparation of the Plan.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/12/enacted>

These relate to:

- a) Increasing population levels,
- b) Improving and promoting:-

- i) Sustainable economic development,
 - ii) Environmental wellbeing,
 - iii) Health and wellbeing, and
 - iv) Community empowerment,
- c) Improving transport services,
- d) Improving digital connectivity,
- e) Reducing fuel poverty,
- f) Ensuring effective management of the Crown Estate,
- g) Enhancing biosecurity.

4.2 In addition in the preparation and scrutiny of the plan it is stated that the Scottish Ministers must—

(a) consult—

- (i) each local authority listed in the schedule,
- (ii) such other persons as they consider represent the interests of island communities, and
- (iii) such persons (including members of island communities and other persons) as they consider likely to be affected by or have an interest in the proposals contained in the plan, and

(b) have regard to the distinctive geographical, natural heritage and cultural characteristics (including the linguistic heritage) of each of the areas inhabited by island communities.

4.3 Initial contact has been made to the council by officials within the Rural Economies and Economic Division of the Scottish Government to advise that the development of the Plan is due to be taken forward this year.

4.4 The Group may wish to consider at this stage if, in addition to those stated in 4.1 above, there are other issues that they would wish to raise that should be considered as part of the development of the Plan. These may link to the priorities of the AISG.

4.5 The Group may also wish to consider who should be consulted as part of the development of the Plan, the best way for the Scottish Government to reach communities to gather views on the national islands plan and any barriers that there may be to wider engagement.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 It is important that our island communities are fully engaged as part of the development of The National Island Plan and that their key priorities are reflected in the Plan.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – lobbying for positive policy and resource support for our islands fits with the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement, Economic Strategy and Local Development Plan which seek to deliver sustainable island communities.
- 6.2 Financial –staff resources.
- 6.3 Legal – none.
- 6.4 HR – staff resource
- 6.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty – none.
- 6.6 Risk – Important to ensure that our communities are actively engaged through the preparation of the Plan.
- 6.7 Customer Service – none.

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