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MINUTES of MEETING of ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on TUESDAY, 28 MAY 2019

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

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

Attending: Pippa Milne, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transformation
Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager
Stuart Green, Corporate Support Manager
Iain MacAllister, Island Liaison Partner, Scottish Government
Jon Rathjen, Island Liaison Partner, Scottish Government
Ralph Throp, Island Liaison Partner, Scottish Government
Don Morrison, Islands Team, Scottish Government

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

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

There were no apologies for absence intimated.

The Area Committee Manager advised that Councillor Horn had been delayed and would join the meeting in due course.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ARGYLL ISLANDS STRATEGIC GROUP HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2019

The Minute of the previous meeting of the Argyll Islands Strategic Group held on Wednesday, 27 February 2019, was approved as a true record.

4. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ISLAND LIAISON DIRECTORS UPDATE

The group gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the progress made by the Scottish Government Island Liaison Directors since their introduction to the Council and their work with island communities across Argyll and Bute. Mr Throp outlined the expectations of the role which encompassed both strategic and local levels and the key learning and ongoing challenges together with the priorities for the next quarter. Discussion took place in respect of a pilot scheme run by the Scottish Government in assisting with payments for young people who reside on the islands to attend sporting events on the mainland. The Chair advised that despite having being included in the initial discussions through COSLA, it would appear that Argyll and Bute have been excluded from the pilot. Mr Throp agreed to feedback the comments to the appropriate Policy team within the Scottish Government.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the information provided.

(Ref: Report by Scottish Government Liaison Directors, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

5. ISLANDS (SCOTLAND) ACT

The group gave consideration to a verbal update from Don Morrison of the Scottish Government's Islands Team. Mr Morrison provided information on the configuration of the team and outlined the basics of the Islands (Scotland) Act, which came into force in October 2018.

Mr Morrison outlined the engagement strategy of the team and the consultation process which was launched by the Scottish Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands on 6 April 2019. He advised of the emerging themes of the consultations which have already taken place which included poor connectivity; lack of affordable and sustainable housing; population decline; poor transport links; community empowerment and fuel poverty. Mr Morrison provided information on the development and timescales involved in publishing the National Islands Plan and the ongoing work involved in producing guidance and templates for Islands Communities Impact Assessments.

Discussion took place in respect of the promotion of the online consultation process through social media; the requirement of Ministers to consult with island authorities and those who represent island communities; the links between the Democracy Bill and the Islands Plan particularly in relation to Parliamentary timescales; ferry issues and the forthcoming Biodegradable Municipal Waste Ban.

Mr Morrison agreed to feedback the comments of the group in relation to the consultation of local authorities and provide clarification as to whether Island Communities Impact Assessments could be applied retrospectively by Local Authorities or if this would only apply to the Scottish Government. Mr Morrison also agreed to circulate the full consultation schedule to the group by email.

The Chair thanked Mr Morrison for the information provided.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the information provided.

Councillor Anne Horn joined the meeting at 11.10am during discussion of Agenda item 5.

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6. UPDATE ON ISLANDS TRANSPORT FORUM

The group gave consideration to a report outlining updates on the National Transport Strategy and Strategic Transportation Projects Review 2; the Islands Scotland Act 2018; Ferries and the HIAL Strategy together with the points raised at the Islands Transport Forum at their meeting on 9 May 2019 with the Minister of Energy, Connectivity and the Islands. Discussion took place in respect of the ports and ferry infrastructure and the possible implications of the biodegradable municipal waste landfill ban on the ferry service.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the updates provided at the Islands Transport Forum and the points raised.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

7. NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The group gave consideration to a report outlining the process and progress of the National Transport Strategy and associated Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) together with the top transport priorities for Argyll and Bute to support economic growth and social inclusion.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed:-

1. to note Appendix 1 as top transport priorities for Argyll and Bute to support economic growth and social inclusion; and
2. that Appendix 1 is to be used and referred to in pursuing support from the Minister of Transport and will feed into the response to consultation on NTS2/STPR.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

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

The group gave consideration to a report highlighting the response to the Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) for the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill which indicates the additional uplift and concerns over the revised fuel poverty definition. Discussion took place in respect of the possibility that the Island Communities Impact Assessment for the Fuel Poverty Bill be used as a template for the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and the possibility that the target of no more than 5% fuel poor households in Scotland by 2040 be broken down to reflect the statistics on the islands. The Scottish Government Island Liaison Directors agreed to feed back the comments of the group to their Fuel Poverty Policy colleagues.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the contents of the report.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

9. UPDATE ON ARGYLL AIR SERVICES

The group gave consideration to a report outlining the interim contract details for the provision of Air Services between Oban and the Islands of Coll, Colonsay and Tiree which

is operated by Hebridean Air Services Ltd (HASL) for the period 16 May 2019 until 15 September 2019.

Decision:

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group agreed to note the details of this paper and the award of an interim contract to Hebridean Air Services Ltd covering the period 16 May 2019 until 15 September 2019.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services, dated 28 May 2019, submitted.)

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Argyll Islands Strategic Group noted that the date of the next meeting will be confirmed in due course following confirmation of a date which allows the Scottish Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands to be in attendance.