

Scottish Government Islands Liaison Team Update

At the last Argyll Islands Strategic Group meeting, the Islands Liaison team was asked to make links between Argyll and Bute Council and appropriate Scottish Government policy teams on 2 issues. The following short update summarises progress.

1) Scope for discussions about including athletes from Argyll and Bute island communities in the Scottish national scheme for providing financial assistance to athletes based in the islands to attend mainland events, a.k.a. the Islands Travel Award Scheme pilot.

The scheme is managed by **sportscotland**, who provided the following information and indicated that they were happy to discuss Argyll and Bute's inclusion. This information and contact details were passed to the Group on 26 June.

- The Island Athlete Travel Award Scheme is a £45,000 programme to support talented athletes from Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles with the additional costs of travel for island-based athletes.
- Up to eight athletes from each local authority (24 overall) will benefit from the additional support, with up to £1,500 available per athlete each year over the three years of the pilot programme.
- The investment has been made available by the Scottish Government through **sportscotland**, the national agency for sport, with additional contributions from each local authority.
- Since June 2015, **sportscotland**'s discussions with COSLA and the Island authorities have focused on support for Island-based performance athletes. These discussions have progressed well and resulted in agreement at the Highlands & Islands Regional Sporting Partnership meeting in August 2016 of an outline programme which builds on **sportscotland**'s current provision to the Islands through its local performance development programme and the **sportscotland** Institute of Sport network.
- The application process will be managed by each local partner, with awards made to the first athletes in early 2018. The total number of athletes benefitting will depend on the number of high quality applications received and the size of awards made (all awards will be up to £1,500). We expect to make awards to up to 24 athletes. **sportscotland** will resource £10,000 per local authority with the local authority contributing a minimum of £2,000 cash (to complete £12,000 award fund).

2) The way in which fuel poverty targets are set for island areas, in particular around equity of outcomes for residents of island communities.

The initial contact made by the Liaison team with the SG Fuel Poverty team has been superseded by the Fuel Poverty team's establishing direct engagement through Scotland's first Island Communities Impact Assessment, in support of the national Fuel Poverty Strategy process. Engagement has been carried out with all local authority areas with island communities, including Argyll and Bute. Targets will include national, and local authority level measures. Difficulties with transport meant that the Fuel Poverty team was not able to physically visit Argyll and Bute, however

the team are grateful to Argyll and Bute Council for holding a meeting with stakeholders and feeding their views into the process.