

PILOT SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP

1. SUMMARY

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) with University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Policy Web organised a seminar series with a range of senior speakers who presented their thoughts and visions on the sustainable development challenges for the Highlands and Islands, as a UK peripheral and rural region, in the first two decades of the 21st century.

The seminar series ran from September 2006 until June 2007 and there is now a proposal to develop this further with a pilot sustainability workshop in Argyll and Bute.

This paper provides detail and invites CPP partners to discuss the proposal.

2. BACKGROUND

Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves achieving a balance within economic, social and environmental agendas. Focusing too much on one of these agendas potentially undermines the others.

Sustainable development therefore involves joining up activity, thinking more about the consequences of our choices and gradually changing our domestic and business behaviours. This in turn will create opportunities for new ways of linking business, local communities and the environment, new learning and skills and identifying new business opportunities. By identifying what these changes will mean for the future, the foundations can be built to let us realise these opportunities.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) with University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) organised a seminar series between September 2006 and June 2007 with the following three main objectives:

- To raise awareness of main sustainable development issues for the Highlands and Islands and how stakeholders propose to respond to challenges and opportunities;
- To allow stakeholders to think more strategically about the implications of sustainable development for their own organisations, and to 'join up' their own thinking with others;

- To assist in the development of UHI by providing a series of events, and potential output, to bind those UHI partners involved in a sustainable development research assessment exercise submission in 2007-8.

The seminar series included lectures from Chief Executives, Chairs and Heads of Service from the Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Highland Council, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Communities Scotland, Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Shell Exploration and Production, and the Centre for Rural Health.

3. DETAIL: PROPOSED SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP

Aim To raise awareness and delivery of practical sustainable development solutions in Argyll and Bute

Strategy Hold a pilot project workshop where key individuals will be invited to discuss sustainable development challenges and opportunities for Argyll and Bute. Anticipated outcomes for the event include:

- Identification of Research and Development/ training/ education opportunities
- Improving the joining up of economic, social and environmental agendas
- Identifying new business opportunities.

Facilitator: Sarah Parkin, Forum for the Future

Speakers: could include a representative from each of the following
Sustainable Development Commission Scotland (SDC-Scotland)
Carnegie UK Trust
CADISPA (Conservation & Development in Sparsely Populated Areas)

Case study: Atlantis Leisure in Oban, Gigha Heritage Trust

If successful, this pilot workshop for Argyll and Bute could be repeated throughout the Highlands and Islands to help find practical and pragmatic sustainable development solutions for communities. The aim is that this would ultimately lead to more sustainable communities.

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