

**MACHRIHANISH – DEFENCE ESTATES DISPOSAL**

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**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report informs and updates members on the progress being made towards the disposal of the Macrihanish Air Base by Defence Estates.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report and agree to a bi-monthly update on progress.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee identify a £10,000 contribution to a joint proposal costing c £50,000 (£20,000 - HIE, £20,000 - Defence Estates, £10,000 - ABC) with HIE and the MOD to prepare a scoping study and Masterplan.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Defence Estates have announced that the facility at Macrihanish is surplus to requirements and will be disposed of. This announcement puts an end to uncertainty about its future and provides a positive opportunity for investment and economic development in South Kintyre.
- 3.2 A public meeting was held at Macrihanish Air Base on 27<sup>th</sup> October and was attended by Councillors Semple, Colville and Kelly.
- 3.3 Defence Estates answered a number of questions and made a commitment to ensure that the community and partners were involved in taking forward the disposal process
- 3.4 An officer working group has been established including representatives from Defence Estates, the Scottish Government, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Argyll and Bute Council to take forward the technical details of the work. J. Fowler attended the initial meeting, and this will now be taken forward by the Director of Development Services.

**3.5** The following issues were discussed:

- A disposal brief is being prepared by Drivers Jonas, funded jointly by the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Defence Estates
- The proposed timetable for disposal is very tight, with a target of March for the disposal brief to be complete and June for the planning brief/indicative masterplan/supplementary planning guidance (subject to confirmation by Planning Services)
- MOD (Alan Muir) will attend the Kintyre Working Group again on a regular basis to keep all partners informed.
- MOD will progress issues relating to individual leases on the site.
- The working group will meet again in January, but actions will be progressed between parties in the meantime.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

**4.1** The disposal of Macrihanish Air Base will bring opportunities for economic development in South Kintyre. The Council has an important role participating in the management of the process. In order to ensure that this is carried out to take maximum advantage of the planning opportunities, a masterplan must be prepared, This will require a Council contribution of £10,000 from the Area Committee budget.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** The disposal of the Air Base will enable the acceleration of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan 'Area for Action'.

**Financial:** The contribution of £10,000 to the Drivers Jonas study has been requested from the Council by HIE and MOD.

**Personnel:** There may be additional work pressure on Planning Services in preparing a masterplan for the area.

**Equal Opportunity:** None

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