

COUNCILLOR LEN SCOULLAR, DEPUTE PROVOST AND SPOKESPERSON FOR EUROPEAN ISSUES**1. INTRODUCTION**

This Spokesperson's Report provides a brief update on the following matters:

- The Final Declaration from the 39th General Assembly of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions,
- Argyll and the Islands LEADER Programme 2007 – 2013,
- Argyll & Bute and South Ayrshire Fisheries Local Action Group, and;
- The EU Offshore Wind and Marine Energy Seminar.

A brief update on these matters will be provided in turn.

2. THE FINAL DECLARATION FROM THE 39TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS

Following the previous feedback on the 39th General Assembly of the CPMR in Aarhus on 29-30 September 2011, the Minute and the Final Declaration of the meeting have been published. Key points of interest from the final declaration include:

- The CPMR's broad support and overall satisfaction at the proposals for the EU Budget which it believes are consistent with the aims of the overarching Europe 2020 Strategy.
- That the CPMR acknowledges the moderate but real reduction in the two biggest EU budget policies, namely Cohesion Policy (Regional Policy) and the Common Agricultural Policy and the CPMR will endeavour to ensure these budgets are safeguarded in the context of the future negotiations.
- Regarding accessibility, the CPMR regrets that neither the White Paper on the future of Transport, nor the outlines of the review on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) pays any actual attention to the principles of territorial cohesion and improving accessibility. It therefore hopes that these principles will be fully integrated into the Commission's forthcoming proposals.
- The Conference is concerned about the EU Budget proposals with regard to accessibility in peripheral areas, since they plan to concentrate the new "Connecting Europe Facility" on a series of nodes and corridors that leave out the peripheries. On the basis of the two policy positions adopted by the General Assembly, entitled "TEN-T Review: Priorities for the CPMR" and "The European Transport Policy White Paper: Some Observations and Potential Areas of Work for CPMR", it will be actively lobbying, notably with the European Parliament, to make sure that the forthcoming legislative proposals take into account the specific characteristics, in terms of intra regional transport, access to markets and to core transport networks, of the peripheral Regions and islands.

The CPMR continues to be one of the Council's key European networks and I am happy to share the Final Declaration and the Minute of the meeting with Members.

3. ARGYLL AND THE ISLANDS LEADER PROGRAMME 2007 – 2013

Since it began allocating funding in May 2008 the Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) has awarded over £7 million of grant funding to 216 projects, with total project costs of over £17m, thus providing a substantial cash injection for communities

across Argyll and the Islands (Argyll & Bute and Arran & the Cumbraes).

During the third quarter of 2011/12 at the December LEADER LAG (sixteenth round) a total of 16 projects were awarded funding totalling £586,696. A few examples to highlight are as follows:

- Appin Community Trust: Appin Car Park and Cycle Track Access with Biodiverse Regeneration – £50,180. This project will create a new, eco-friendly car park for the village of Appin which will benefit local people as well as visitors to the area.
- Argyll College UHI: Development of Engineering Training Facility at Lochgilphead - £104,370. This aim of this project is to provide a brand new, purpose built engineering facility adjacent to the current Construction Skills Training Centre in Lochgilphead.
- Luss and Arden Community Development Trust: Luss Play Park Renovation - £10,952. The project will assist in purchasing another two pieces of play equipment suitable for older children. The play park is an important facility, in both social and economic terms, that allows safe play for children in a village which has over 750,000 visitors per annum.

4. ARGYLL & BUTE AND SOUTH AYRSHIRE FISHERIES LOCAL ACTION GROUP

Argyll and Bute Council has secured £256,416 of funds from the European Fisheries 'Axis 4' Fund and welcomes the opportunities this will bring for the local area. The money will be used to support regeneration activity in existing and former fishing communities and funds will be disbursed through a Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG).

Argyll and Bute Council made the bid in collaboration with colleagues from South Ayrshire Council and we will now work to form a joint FLAG.

It is a condition of the offer that Axis 4 funds must be matched 100% with other public funds, which may in turn, be further matched by funds from project applicants. Working in partnership with colleagues from South Ayrshire Council we will be exploring ways to generate match funding.

5. THE EU OFFSHORE WIND AND MARINE ENERGY SEMINAR

The Economic Development Service is organising an EU Offshore Wind and Marine Energy Seminar which will take place on Friday, 2 March at the Scottish Marine Institute, Dunstaffnage, by Oban. Fergus Ewing, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism and Jean-Didier Hache, Executive Secretary of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions will open the Seminar and there will be presentations and contributions from national and European policy experts and the renewables industry. Key points for discussion at the Seminar include:

- Offshore wind and marine energy opportunities in the West Coast Highlands and Islands of Scotland for sustainable economic growth,
- Infrastructure and skills requirements and opportunities to support offshore and marine renewables, and;
- Role of European Policy and Funding in unlocking the renewables potential in the West Coast Highlands and Islands in line with the targets and priorities of EU 2020.

Following the Seminar a summary report will be produced and circulated to participants and circulated appropriately within the Council.

For further information contact: Councillor Len Scoullar Depute Provost and Spokesperson for European Issues.