

---

**THE ARGYLL AND BUTE RENEWABLE ALLIANCE (ABRA) – Progress Report**

---

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1** ABRA brings together key partners from within the public and private sector, under the auspices of Community Planning, to assist with the implementation of the Argyll and Bute Renewable Energy Action Plan.

Partners include Argyll and Bute Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Government, Marine Scotland, Scottish Power Renewables, Scottish and Southern Energy, The Crown Estate Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage and Skills Development Scotland.

- 1.2** ABRA held its first meeting for 2012, 2 March 2012, at the Scottish Marine Institute, Dunstaffnage. This meeting marked the first anniversary of the formation of the alliance.
- 1.3** The alliance reviewed areas of work progressed by partners and actions agreed at the meeting 28 October 2011. These will continue to address outcomes of the REAP, and included: a review of the REAP, Skills Development, Community Policy, Encouraging Business Growth Opportunities and the Tiree Onshore Scenario Mapping study.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1** The Management Committee note the progress and areas of work being progressed by ABRA.

**3. DETAIL**

**3.1 Review of the Argyll and Bute Renewable Energy Action Plan 2010-2013**

- 3.11** An update of the REAP action plan has been undertaken by lead partners Argyll and Bute Council (ABC) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), in advance of a full review of the plan 2013.

Partners recognised achievements from the delivery of the REAP to date, including:

- ABRA established – key workstreams being progressed in partnership to assist with implementation of the REAP.
- Campbeltown / Machrihanish N-RIP site; Wind Towers Ltd – infrastructure investments
- Successful TIF bid for the ‘Lorn Arc’ Project – support for the bid

demonstrated by ABRA members.

- Ports and Harbour Position Paper – developed through engagement with, and endorsed by, ABRA.
- Argyll College Engineering Facility – funding secured.
- ‘Tiree Onshore Scenario Mapping’ – draft report open to consultation.
- GIS Mapping – Argyll and Bute Council, Renewables Interactive Map developed.
- Formation of ABRA skills sub-group – priorities agreed and ‘Skills Demand Mapping’ exercise initiated.
- Community Policy review.
- EU Offshore Wind and Marine Energy Seminar - 2 March 2012.
- Representation at promotional events, and promotional material developed – including, ALL Energy 2011, Offshore Wind Conference Aberdeen 2012.

3.12 Through the review, key areas of focus to be progressed, identified with partners, to ensure successful delivery of the plan, include the following:

- Progress Skills Agenda – identify opportunities, gaps and focus.
- Business development - e.g. supply chain opportunities.
- N-RIP 3 – marine (wave & tidal)
- TIF ‘Lorn Arc’ – progress to business case development.
- N-RIP Campbeltown/Machrihanish site – ongoing development.
- ‘Tiree Onshore Scenario Mapping’ study – next steps
- Community Renewable Opportunity Plan (CROP)
- Increased profile
- Onshore and offshore community policy
- EU policy and funding

3.13 ABRA members considered the full suite of actions in the draft plan. ABC and HIE will now review the draft plan following discussions at this meeting, before it is finalised.

## **3.2 Skills Development**

3.21 The alliance agreed 28 October 2011 to establish a skills sub-group, and five key priorities for skills development, which represent opportunities for Argyll and Bute to build on:

1. Determine the future skills demand
2. Sector awareness and career promotion
3. Increase capability for apprentices
4. Transition training funds to support new recruits, upskilling etc.
5. Build on the College Energy Skills Partnership

3.22 Skills Development Scotland (SDS) provided partners with an update on skills development work progressed since 28 October 2011, and key actions to agree moving forward. Key developments to note, included:

- The subsequent formation of the skills sub-group as agreed – this includes core representation from ABC, HIE and SDS. The group are now working

to progress actions to address the priorities identified. The first of which, a 'Skills Demand Mapping' exercise, in close liaison with the industry, to obtain the necessary baseline data in order to determine future skills demand.

- Successful funding secured for the Argyll College Engineering Training Facility, at Lochgilphead. This will provide both general engineering and specific renewables training across Argyll and Bute, and is expected to open later in 2012.

### **3.3 Community Policy**

- 3.31 As agreed 28 October 2011, ABC undertook a review of the existing 'Argyll and Bute Council Policy on Community Benefit from Onshore Windfarms (2005)' – progressed with input from ABRA members.
- 3.32 The recommendations made aim to develop a framework which facilitates a flexible approach, taking account of individual community and stakeholder needs. Above all, contributing to sustainable economic development for communities and Argyll and Bute, whilst taking into consideration the national direction of onshore windfarm community benefit policy.
- 3.33 Partners agreed with the recommendations outlined and for ABC to progress additional necessary work required to finalise a proposed updated 'Argyll and Bute Council Policy on Community Benefit from Onshore Wind.'
- 3.34 ABRA agreed principles for the development of an offshore windfarm community policy 28 October 2011. This included consideration of the variables shaping community policy (e.g. differing community priorities and varying absorption capacities) and the challenges to the deployment of the offshore industry.
- 3.35 Since recognising these principles partners considered 2 March 2012 the discussions and key areas of work which have been progressed – such as the 'Tiree Onshore Scenario Mapping' study – and will assist in furthering understanding of the potential requirements and implications of the offshore wind industry. These will in turn shape and inform the nature and suitability of application, of any future offshore windfarm community policy.
- 3.36 Partners agreed to ensure alignment of ongoing discussions and work relative to offshore wind. Engagement will continue with ABRA members, and progress with proposals will be reported for review at forthcoming ABRA meetings.

### **3.4 Encouraging Business Growth Opportunities**

- 3.41 Following discussions at the meeting 28 October and questions raised by partners relative to business development approaches ongoing within Argyll and Bute, ABRA members noted an overview of this work provided by HIE.
- 3.42 This presented business growth opportunities within the renewable energy sector in Argyll and Bute, and identified opportunities for future development, whilst highlighting some of the key challenges to overcome in order to maximise

local business development.

- 3.43 Further business development work will be targeted as a key area of focused within the reviewed REAP.

### **3.5 Tiree Onshore Scenario Mapping**

- 3.51 Julian Farrar (Director, Ironside Farrar – Environmental Consultants commissioned to undertake the study) presented to partners the work undertaken for the ‘Tiree Onshore Scenario Mapping’ study. This has considered an early assessment of operations and maintenance activity associated with the proposed Argyll Array offshore windfarm, and the potential onshore implications of these assessments for the community of Tiree.
- 3.52 The study has been funded by ABC, HIE, Marine Scotland and The Crown Estate, who together with Tiree Community Development Trust, Scottish Government, Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd, Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Power Renewables, have formed the steering group to oversee the study process.
- 3.53 Community and stakeholder consultation has been central to the process. Ironside Farrar has held three consultation events on Tiree since August 2011. Engagement has included a range of local community members, business and stakeholders together with elected representatives and wider groups such as the Tiree Association.
- 3.54 The draft report is open to consultation until Friday 27 April 2012, and can be accessed from the Argyll and Bute Council website at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/tireeconsultation](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/tireeconsultation).
- 3.55 Partners noted, and agreed the recommendation for some form of continued engagement activity to follow from the conclusion of this particular study. The steering group will now consider what and who is appropriate to form future engagement. ABRA will be updated on progress with this as appropriate.

### **4.0 EU Offshore Wind and Marine Energy Seminar – 2 March 2012**

- 4.1 Following the meeting of ABRA, the Council hosted an ‘EU Offshore Wind and Marine Energy Seminar’, again within the Scottish Marine Institute. It was recognised this was a timely event, as the proposed EU budget has identified energy and the shift towards a low carbon economy as a key priority across all funding strands, and given the challenging renewable energy targets set by the Scottish Government towards 2020 – some of which are currently the most ambitious in Europe.
- 4.2 The event was opened by Cllr Walsh, alongside Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, and brought together influential national and European policy experts, from across the European and Renewables agendas.
- 4.3 A series of presentations considered the vision towards EU 2020, the

opportunities and challenges presented by the offshore wind and marine resource potential off the west coast Highlands and Islands, and the delivery and priorities for European policy and funding in this regard.

- 4.4 Subsequent workshop sessions considered in greater detail, the 'Physical and Development Infrastructure' and 'Business and Skills' requirements, necessary to unlock and capture the opportunities presented by this resource, and the ways in which European policy and funding can support this, in order to maximise economic development opportunities on the west coast.
- 4.5 The presentations and outputs from the seminar workshops can be accessed from the council website at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/eu-offshore-wind-and-marine-energy-seminar](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/eu-offshore-wind-and-marine-energy-seminar).

## **5.0 Scoping – Community Renewables Opportunities Plan (CROP)**

Scoping exercise currently underway with regard to the development of a community renewables opportunity plan - 6 week consultation period ending 4 May 2012. This is being progressed through the 'Third Sector and Communities' CPP Group.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The ABRA will continue to be pivotal in realising successful delivery of the Argyll and Bute REAP.

As such, the areas of work outlined above and actions agreed 2 March 2012, will continue to be progressed in partnership by the alliance, and reviewed at the forthcoming meeting, to be held summer 2012.

For further information contact: Audrey Martin  
Development Projects and Renewables Manager  
Telephone: 01546 604180