

**MACC BASE COUNCIL SUPPORT**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report outlines the council's current work with the Machrihanish Airbase Community Company (MACC). The report then outlines our continued support for MACC as we seek to optimise economic development on the base including asking the area committee to recommend to the council to send a letter of support regarding a relaxation of the overage agreement from the MoD.
- 1.2 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and recommend to Council that a letter be written to the MOD supporting MACC's request to make change to the Overage Agreement to help facilitate further economic growth at the base.

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### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Representatives of Argyll and Bute Council have been working closely with Machrihanish Airbase Community Company (MACC) for a number of years to help the base reach its optimum economic potential to benefit the people of Kintyre and beyond. This report outlines some of the work that has been done and is ongoing and makes a recommendation to Council to write to the MOD indicating the Council's support for MACC's request to make changes to the Overage Agreement
- 2.2 Raise profile of MACC in a national context to be the platform for future inward investment in Argyll and Scotland.  
Secure the Current Interest of 3 companies within the Aquaculture Industry on site with Planning and Development support for the projects  
The SSE Electricity Distribution upgrade in and out of Kintyre is critical for renewable energy projects.  
The existing short term overage agreement – support to have MOD withdraw Overage agreement clause

### **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 that Members note the contents of the report and recommend to Council that a letter be written to the MOD supporting MACC's request to make change to the Overage Agreement to help facilitate further economic growth at the base.

### **4.0 DETAIL**

#### **4.1 Background**

- 4.1.1 The Council has been working with MACC on a number of initiatives over recent months in an effort to realise economic opportunities on the former MOD base now in community ownership. The area of the base has been included within the current Argyll and Bute Development Plan as an Area for Action and is proposed to be included in the emerging Local Development Plan as a strategic business allocation with a focus on green energy generation and creation of additional employment opportunities. This designation has triggered the preparation of a masterplan to cover the whole base to enable new development to take place in appropriate locations. The

masterplan is currently being considered by Officers of the council and will be used to facilitate further detailed planning consents including new sites for aquaculture investment.

- 4.1.2 Officers of the Council continue to help facilitate events at the base, such as tarmac rallies that have been held there, and are working with representatives of MACC to bring forward renewable energy projects involving solar panels.
- 4.1.3 A significant development with huge potential for both the base and indeed wider Argyll and Bute is the location of the UK Spaceport at the base taking advantage of the 3,000 feet plus of main runway and key position on the west coast of Scotland in a remote location adjacent to the sea. Machrihanish has been shortlisted to one of eight sites six in Scotland, one in England and one in Wales. A joint bid was launched which encompassed a partnership approach with the Council and HIE as the economic arm of the Community Planning Partnership together with MACC representing the base as landlord and community partner. This partnership bid was signed by the Council's Chief Executive and submitted as an expression of interest in September to the UK Government and it is hoped to get initial feedback in January of next year on the requirements of further submissions.
- 4.1.4 It is considered that by submitting the bid for a UK spaceport this will considerably help raise the profile of Kintyre as a place to do business in given the wide range of potential economic assets there are in close proximity together with the high quality of life the area can offer as rural community.
- 4.1.5 Council Officers remain willing to continue to work with representatives of MACC to continue to raise the profile of the address any barriers to growth on the site. This includes working to secure the investment of the aquaculture industry on the base and lending support to have the MOD to withdraw the overage agreement to better facilitate future investment in the base. The Council also continues to support the activities of SSE in improving the electricity grid from and to Kintyre via the Carradale to Hunterson sub-sea cable and proposed enhancement of overland pylons and wires to Inveraray and beyond over the next decade.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Council Officers working with our Community Planning Partners such as HIE will continue to work with representatives of MACC to optimise the economic growth of the base for the benefit of wider Kintyre and indeed Argyll and Bute. Key aspects of this include working in

partnership to submit further bids for the Machrihanish base to be identified as a UK spaceport and writing to the MOD and Secretary of State for Scotland asking them to meet with MACC in an effort to withdraw the overage agreement clause to help facilitate further economic growth on the base and create new employment opportunities.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy – MACC base is identified as a strategic business site in the emerging Local Development Plan
- 5.2 Financial – None directly arising from this report
- 5.3 Legal – None
- 5.4 HR – None
- 5.5 Equalities – None
- 5.6 Risk – None
- 5.7 Customer Service - None

For further information please contact Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transportation Tel: 01546 604293

Policy Lead Ellen Morton (Acting Lead) Economic Development