

**MINUTES of MEETING of ECONOMY THEMATIC CPP GROUP held in the MEMBERS ROOM,
KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on WEDNESDAY, 25 MAY 2011**

Present: Councillor Ron Simon (Chair)

Councillor Alister MacAlister
Councillor Alex McNaughton
Douglas Cowan, HIE (Thematic Lead)
Anthony Standing, Skills Development Scotland
Frances Webster, Skills Development Scotland
Bill Stewart, ABSEN

Attending: Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Ishabel Bremner, Economic Development Manager
Audrey Martin, Senior Planning/Development Officer
Mike Johnston, Best Value Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillor Donald MacMillan, Councillor Elaine Robertson, David Cannon, Caledonian MacBrayne and Jane MacLeod, Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Economy Thematic CPP Group meeting held on 23 February 2011 were approved as a correct record.

4. ECONOMY THEMATIC CPP GROUP SCORECARD

Consideration was given to the proposed revised contents and layout of the Economy Thematic CPP Group Scorecard.

Decision

1. Noted that apart from HIE no feedback from Partners had been received on measures they would like included on the Scorecard; and
2. Agreed the new layout and that a further request should be made to Partners to also include some key indicators and that the contents of the Scorecard will be finalised and signed off at the next meeting in August 2011.

5. AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY IN ARGYLL AND BUTE/SRDP

As Bill Dundas from the Scottish Government had not arrived to give his presentation it was agreed to invite him to attend the next meeting in August 2011.

6. YOUTH DESTINATIONS/MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS AND GET READY FOR WORK AND TRAINING FOR WORK EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMMES

Anthony Standing of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) gave a very informative presentation on the results of the survey carried out in October 2010 on School Leaver Destinations for Argyll and Bute based on 2009/10 leavers and also information on the different types of Modern Apprenticeships available across Argyll and Bute and the take up of these by 16 – 19 year olds and the 20+ age group.

Anthony also provided an update on the contracts for the Get Ready for Work employability programme for 16 – 19 year olds and Training for Work employability programme for unemployed adults or those under threat of redundancy and confirmed that Argyll Training had been awarded both these contracts.

He also responded to a number of questions arising from his presentation and referred to a piece of work Skills Development Scotland were currently undertaking on Bute in which they were gathering information on why unemployment figures were rising on the island even though HIE had heard from employers that they were having a difficulty in employing and retaining staff at appropriate levels.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the presentation and that a copy of the full survey report on School Leaver Destinations would be circulated to the Group by SDS along with a copy of the results of the follow up survey currently being undertaken and due for publication in June 2011;
2. Noted the contents of the SDS Service Level Agreement with Argyll and Bute Council and Work Plan for 2011/12;
3. Noted that SDS would provide for the next meeting a report on completion rates and drop out rates in respect of Apprenticeships; and
4. Agreed that it would be useful to track on a monthly basis the take up of Modern Apprenticeships on the Economy Thematic CPP Scorecard and that other measures in respect of School Leaver Destinations could be tracked on an annual basis.

7. PARTNER UPDATES ON CPP PLAN

Partners provided information on work currently being undertaken in respect of the Economy Community Plan Actions.

Argyll and Bute Council

Business Gateway

Ishabel Bremner reported that for the last financial year 2010/11, business start ups supported was 159 exceeding the target of 135 by 18%. This is an increase of 19% points on last year's (2009/10) figure of 133 business start ups supported. The start ups supported by area are broken down as follows:

- 27 MAKI versus a target of 27; compared with 33 last year
- 26 OLI versus a target of 26; compared with 15 last year
- 35 B&C versus a target of 26; compared with 24 last year
- 71 H&L versus a target of 56; compared with 61 last year

She also advised that 91 workshops and 87 Meet the Adviser events were delivered across the area during 2010/11.

She confirmed that the Competitive Business Growth Programme pilot was gaining momentum and that she would report further on this at the end of the pilot in September.

Renewables

In terms of renewables Audrey Martin gave an update on the following:-

Renewable Energy Action Plan – looking at key actions and seeking to delivery these in partnership with HIE and the industry.

CPP Offshore Wind Renewables Event which was well attended.

Development of a renewables interactive map available on Argyll and Bute Council's website.

Working with An Suidhe to facilitate the process of delivering of a range of community benefits in association with their operating wind farms.

Energy Event in Aberdeen – international event with over 500 exhibits including a joint stand by the Council and HIE.

Tiree Master Planning Project – working in partnership with Marine Scotland, the Crown Estate, HIE and developers to map processes in consultation with the local community over the next 6 months .

Working in partnership with HIE on a National Renewables Infrastructure Plan.

Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance – the formation of which was a key action outlined within the CPP Renewable Energy Action Plan. Its inaugural meeting was held in March 2011 and brought together key partners including Argyll and Bute Council, the Scottish Government, Marine Scotland, HIE, Scottish Power Renewables, Scottish and Southern Energy, Crown Estate Commission and Skills Development Scotland and where there was a good level of engagement and buy in to the process.

HIE

Machrihanish

Douglas confirmed that a new joint venture company (Scottish and Southern Energy and Marsh Wind Technology Ltd) has completed the purchase of the Skykon wind turbine tower manufacturing and assembly plant at Machrihanish, Campbeltown from its Administrators bringing real international players physically into Argyll and Bute.

Targets

Douglas confirmed that HIE met the majority of their targets last year and that this year their targets will be on impact type measurements and that he will arrange for these to be made available on Pyramid.

Dunstaffnage

Douglas advised that there had been little tangible progress since the last meeting and that they hoped to have a contractor in place by late August 2011.

SDS

See item 6 of this Minute.

Argyll and Bute Scottish Enterprise Network (ABSEN)

Bill Stewart advised that as this was his first meeting he would be able to provide a more comprehensive report to the next meeting. He referred to the work carried out by ABSEN including providing information and training; improving procurement practices in the public sector; and strengthening links with national agencies. He advised that they were in the process of carrying out an Evaluation Survey which had last been undertaken in 2009. He confirmed that membership had increased over the last year and advised that two Regional meetings had been held this year and that the plan was to hold four meetings per year. He also advised that ABSEN's annual conference would be held in October.

Bill confirmed that he would liaise with Ishabel on identifying some meaningful measures to be included on the Economy Thematic CPP Scorecard.

Decision

Noted the updates provided by Partners.

8. HIGHLIGHT AND EXCEPTION REPORTS

(a) ARGYLL AND BUTE STRATEGIC HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES FORUM

Consideration was given to a highlight and exception report provided by the Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing and Communities Forum.

Decision

1. Noted the activity that was undertaken by the Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing and Communities Forum during the period November 2010 to April 2011 and the key challenges and actions to be addressed in the future; and
2. As Housing had a significant impact on the economy and the construction industry agreed that the theme for the November meeting should be Housing and Planning.

(Reference: Report by Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing and Communities Forum dated 17 May 2011, submitted)

(b) ARGYLL AND THE ISLANDS LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP

Consideration was given to a highlight and exception report provided by the Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group.

Decision

Noted the activity that was undertaken by the Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group during the period December 2010 to April 2011 and the key challenges and actions to be addressed in the future

(Reference: Report by Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group dated 17 May 2011, submitted)

(c) ARGYLL AND BUTE RENEWABLE ALLIANCE

See item 7 – Partner Updates on CPP Plan.

9. INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED ON CPP WEB PAGES

In the absence of Eileen Wilson, Community Planning Manager it was agreed to continue consideration of this item to the next meeting.

10. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the future work programme of the Economy Thematic CPP Group.

Decision

1. Agreed that the following items would be included on the agenda of the next meeting on 31 August 2011:-

Report on Outcome of evaluation of RET

Partner Updates

Economy Thematic CPP Group Scorecard

Presentation by Bill Dundas on Agriculture Industry in Argyll and Bute

Strategic Timber Transport Funding

Highlight and Exception Reports

Information to be included on CPP Web Pages

Presentation by HITRANS (provisional)

2. Agreed that the theme for the November meeting would be Housing and Planning.