

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghaidheal agus Bhoid

Customer Services
Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT
Tel: 01546 602127 Fax: 01546 604435
DX 599700 LOCHGILPHEAD
e.mail –douglas.hendry@argyll-bute.gov.uk

26 January 2012

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD** on **THURSDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2012** at **10:00 AM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director - Customer Services

BUSINESS

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)**
3. **MINUTES**
 - (a) Executive - 15 December 2011 (Pages 1 - 12)
 - (b) Special Committee for Older People Services - 7 December 2011 (Pages 13 - 14)
4. **LEADER'S REPORT**
Report by Leader of the Council (Pages 15 - 22)
5. **EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING**
Report by Spokesperson (Pages 23 - 24)
6. **TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
Report by Spokesperson (Pages 25 - 34)
- * # 7. **BUDGETING AND PLANNING 2012/13 AND 2014/15**
Budget Pack issued separately to Members on 26 January 2012
- # 8. **SCHOOL HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS: 2013/14 AND 2014/15**
Report by Executive Director – Community Services (Pages 35 - 38)

9. STRATEGIC EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Report by Executive Director – Community Services (Pages 39 - 40)

10. HELENSBURGH PIER MASTERPLAN

Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services (to follow)

E1 11. HELENSBURGH PIER HEAD

Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services (to follow)

E2 12. FORMER LOCHGILPHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report by Executive Director – Customer Services, extract from Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee held on 7 December 2011 and report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services (Pages 41 - 52)

E3 13. OBAN CHORD - OBAN BAY/HARBOUR INTERIM BUSINESS CASE

Extract from CHORD Programme Management Board held on 13 January 2012 and report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services (Pages 53 - 60)

The Committee will be asked to pass a resolution in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public for items of business with an “E” on the grounds that it is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part I of Schedule 7a to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The appropriate paragraphs are:-

E1 Paragraph 9 Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

E2 Paragraph 8 The amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services.

Paragraph 9 Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

Paragraph 13 Information which, if disclosed to the public, would reveal that the authority proposes-

- (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
- (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.

E3 Paragraph 8 The amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services.

Paragraph 9 Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

Items marked with # denote matters to be considered as part of the Council's function as Education Authority.

Items marked with an "asterisk" are items, on the basis of information available at the time this Agenda is published, on which the Committee may not have delegated powers to act, and which may therefore require to be referred to the Council or another Committee, and that referral may depend on the decision reached at the meeting.

EXECUTIVE

Maureen Arthur	Councillor Rory Colville
Councillor Robin Currie	William Dalby
Councillor Vivien Dance	Councillor Alison Hay
Councillor Duncan MacIntyre	Councillor Robert Macintyre
Councillor Neil Mackay	Councillor Donald MacMillan
Councillor Bruce Marshall	William Marshall
David McEwan	Councillor Ellen Morton
Councillor Gary Mulvaney	Councillor Andrew Nisbet
Alison Palmer	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Len Scoullar	Councillor Dick Walsh

Contact: Hazel MacInnes Tel: 01546 604269

This page is intentionally left blank

**MINUTES of MEETING of EXECUTIVE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY,
LOCHGILPHEAD
on THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillor Dick Walsh (Chair)

Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor Donald MacMillan
Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Bruce Marshall
Councillor Vivien Dance	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Alison Hay	Councillor Andrew Nisbet
Councillor Duncan MacIntyre	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Robert Macintyre	Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Neil Mackay	William Marshall

Also Present: Councillor George Freeman Councillor Alex McNaughton
Councillor Daniel Kelly Councillor Isobel Strong
Councillor Donald Kelly Councillor James Robb

Attending: Sally Loudon, Chief Executive
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director – Customer Services
Sandy MacTaggart, Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services
Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director – Community Services
Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and Strategic HR
Bruce West, Head of Strategic Finance
Kirsty Flanagan, Finance Manager
David Logan, QIO - Special Projects
Chris Dalgarno-Platt, Finance Manager – Special Projects
David Clements, Performance Manager
Fergus Murray, Development Policy Manager
Mark Steward, Marine and Coastal Development Manager

The Chair welcomed Mr William Marshall, the new teacher representative, to the Executive.

The Chair advised that the following Notice of Motion under Standing Order 14 had been received for consideration as a matter of urgency at this meeting -

“This Committee requests that the Leader of the Council seeks a meeting with the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Infrastructure to discuss the persistent closures over the last 3 years of the A83.

The road is the main access into Argyll for the people of Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands and therefore is vital to the people and businesses who use this route.”

Moved by Councillor Alison Hay, seconded by Councillor Duncan MacIntyre.

The Chair ruled and the Committee agreed that the above Motion along with the business dealt with at item 15 of this minute be taken as a matter of urgency by reason of the need for better and more integrated strategic transportation infrastructure

planning due to problems that had arisen from the recent landslip on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful and associated road closure; and the ongoing operational issues with the new Dunoon-Gourock passenger ferry service.

The Chair ruled and the Executive agreed that the business dealt with at item 16 of this minute be taken as a matter of urgency by reason of the need to make a response to the consultation on the future of the Crown Estate.

The Chair advised that a supplementary paper would be tabled in respect of the Revenue Budget Update dealt with at item 18 of this minute.

The Chair ruled and the Executive agreed to adjourn the meeting for 10 minutes to allow Members the opportunity to read the papers that had been tabled.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ellen Morton, Maureen Arthur, David McEwan and Alison Palmer.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

(a) EXECUTIVE - 3 NOVEMBER 2011

The Minutes of the Executive of 3 November 2011 were approved as a correct record.

(b) SPECIAL EXECUTIVE - 24 NOVEMBER 2011

The Minutes of the Executive of 24 November 2011 were approved as a correct record.

(c) EMPLOYEE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - 9 FEBRUARY 2011

The Minutes of the Employee Joint Consultative Committee of 9 February 2011 were noted.

4. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader of the Council submitted a report which highlighted issues he had recently been involved with including:-

His attendance at the Highlands and Islands Conveners Group and Highlands and Islands Convention on 23 October 2011; his meeting with Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Enterprise, Economy and Tourism on 24 October 2011; his attendance at a meeting of the Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance on 28 October 2011; his attendance at the Association of Community Councils on 29 October 2011; his attendance at the Scottish Affairs Committee Inquiry into the Crown Estate in Scotland on 31 October 2011; his attendance at the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership on 2 November 2011; his attendance at

the COSLA Leadership Board on 4 November 2011; his meeting with Brian Keating from URTV on 9 November 2011; his attendance at a COSLA Ministerial meeting re the housing budget and the Transfer of Management Development Fund on 9 November 2011; his attendance at the Highlands and Islands Conveners meeting on 17 November 2011; and his attendance at the COSLA Leaders meeting on 18 November 2011.

The Leader also provided updates on the following:-

Local Tax Collection; Benefits; Procurement and Commissioning; Customer Services; and IT.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report for the period 21 October to 25 November 2011.

(Reference: Report by Leader of the Council 21 October – 25 November 2011, submitted)

5. THIRD SECTOR AND COMMUNITIES

The Spokesperson for Third Sector and Communities submitted a report advising on work currently being undertaken in respect of the following:-

Active Schools – Sports Leadership; Library Services – Involvement in Future of Libraries Project; Adult Learning; Youth Forum – Youthbank; Supporting Youth Work; Leisure Services; Trading Standards – Citizens Panel Survey; Trading Standards – Cigarette Sales; Argyll and Bute Local Services Initiative; and the Argyll and Bute Third Sector Partnerships.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Spokesperson for Third Sector and Communities dated December 2011, submitted)

6. ENVIRONMENT

The Spokesperson for Environment submitted a report updating Members on the following matters –

The Marine Protected Area Workshop; Development of the Argyll and Bute Coast Countryside Trust; Local Development Plan; Argyll and Bute Design Competition; Landscape Capacity Study; Craignish Community Plan; Biodiversity; Recycle Scotland; the Shanks PPP Contract; and the Carbon Management Programme.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Spokesperson for Environment dated December 2011,

submitted)

7. EUROPEAN ISSUES

The Spokesperson for European Issues submitted a report giving a brief update on the following matters –

Highlands and Islands European Partnership Scottish Parliament Evening Reception; Meeting of the West of Scotland European Forum; Argyll and the Islands LEADER Programme 2007 – 2013; and Local Authority International Environmental Organisation (KIMO).

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report.
2. Instructed the Executive Director – Customer Services to invite Kat Feldinger from the Scottish Government's Structural Funds Division to address the Committee on the European Structural Fund Programmes for the 2014-20 programming period.

(Reference: Report by Spokesperson for European Issues dated December 2011, submitted)

8. SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Spokesperson for Social Affairs submitted a report providing information on the following matters –

Winter Arrangements for Social Care Services; Appointment of New head of Children and Families; Older People's Services Review; Learning Disability Services Review; Meetings he had attended; Southern Cross and Argus Care Group; and the Response to the Child Protection Inspection Report.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Spokesperson for Social Affairs dated 6 December 2011, submitted)

9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTING FQ2 2011/12

The Chief Executive and Executive Directors presented the Council Scorecard and Departmental Scorecards to the Executive using the Council's performance management system, Pyramid. The presentation focused on performance during the period July to September 2011, including a review of successes, key challenges and an outline of improvement actions for the coming period.

Decision

Noted the performance management report for financial quarter 2 2011/12.

(Reference: Presentation by Chief Executive and Executive Directors on Council and Departmental Scorecards for FQ2 2011/12)

10. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Annual Performance Reviews provide a mechanism for Heads of Service to review their previous year's key successes and key challenges and to identify key improvements for the coming year. A report inviting the Executive to challenge the content of the Annual Performance Reviews was considered.

Decision

Noted the content of the Annual Performance Reviews.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated December 2011, submitted)

11. ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report, which is a key requirement of the Council's Public Performance Reporting Framework and which set out high level performance information, was considered by the Executive.

Decision

Noted the publication of the Annual Report for 2010/11 and that it would be available via the Council website and in limited hard copy format in main Council public buildings.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 22 November 2011 and Annual Report 2010/11, submitted)

12. QUEEN'S JUBILEE BANK HOLIDAY

A report was considered which related to plans to create a four day weekend in June 2012 to allow employees to participate in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Decision

1. Agreed to award employees in non-teaching establishments a one-off additional days paid leave to be taken on 5 June 2012 following the UK and Scottish Governments' decision to declare that date a bank holiday, as per the Royal Wedding 2011 arrangements.
2. Agreed that any employees who are required to work on that day would be able to take the time off in lieu at a later date.
3. Agreed that Chief Officials and LGE employees will be required to take one of their floating public holidays on Monday 4 June to allow council buildings to close, where possible.

4. Agreed that staff engaged in services that require to operate would attend work as normal and not surrender a floating days leave.
5. Noted that schools will be closed to pupils on 4 June 2012 which is currently scheduled as an in-service day and that LGE staff employed in teaching establishments will not be required to take their floating public holiday on that day.
6. Noted that the relevant Minister has already given his consent for schools in Argyll and Bute to close on 5 June 2012 as part of the normal annual leave arrangements.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated December 2011, submitted)

13. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

A report presenting progress being made by partners on the delivery of a Single Outcome Agreement and developments being made in partnership working to facilitate a more partner based approach to service delivery was considered.

Decision

Approved the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement Annual Report 2010/11 for final submission to the Scottish Government.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated December 2011 and Single Outcome Agreement Annual Report 2010-2011, submitted)

14. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT COMMUNITY PLAN

A report updating the Executive on progress with the combined Single Outcome Agreement/Community Plan, which is due to be launched in April 2012, was considered.

Decision

Noted the progress on the Single Outcome Agreement/Community Plan.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 23 November 2011 and Draft Argyll and Bute Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2012/13, submitted)

15. STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

In terms of Standing Order 14 the following Notice of Motion had been received for consideration by the Executive –

“This Committee requests that the Leader of the Council seeks a meeting with the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Infrastructure to discuss the persistent closures over the last 3 years of the A83.

The road is the main access into Argyll for the people of Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands and therefore is vital to the people and businesses who use this route.”

Moved by Councillor Alison Hay, seconded by Councillor Duncan MacIntyre.

The Notice of Motion was withdrawn by the mover and seconder, given the submission of a report that had been prepared by the Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services that addressed a number of issues including those raised within the Motion.

A report advising the Executive on the Council’s actions with regard to addressing the requirement for better and more integrated strategic transportation infrastructure planning across government bodies and local authority agencies that have a responsibility for roads and ferries in Argyll and Bute was considered. This was due to the recent landslip event on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful and the associated road closure, and the ongoing issues associated with the new Dunoon-Gourock passenger ferry service.

Decision

1. Noted the content of the report.
2. Agreed the actions summarised within the report.
3. Delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Spokesperson for Transportation and Infrastructure, to determine the remit and composition of a Roads and Transportation Working Group as detailed at paragraph 4.3 of the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Transportation and Infrastructure dated 15 December 2011, tabled)

16. FUTURE OF THE CROWN ESTATE

A report advising the Executive of action taken in regard to agreeing a joint response, on behalf of all local authorities within the Highlands and Islands area, to a consultation on the future of the Crown Estate, which finished on 14 December 2011.

Decision

1. Noted the action that had been taken.
2. Delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, any further actions that require to be taken in the event of changes in the position of any other Council(s) within the Highlands and Islands Area.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 15 December 2011, tabled)

The Committee adjourned for lunch at 1.05pm and reconvened at 1.40pm.

Councillor Robert Macintyre and Councillor Donald MacMillan left the meeting.

17. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

A report summarising the revenue budget position of the Council as at 30 September 2011 was considered.

Decision

Noted the revenue budget position of the Council as at 30 September 2011.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated December 2011, submitted)

18. REVENUE BUDGET UPDATE

A report outlining arrangements for advising the Executive of the outcome of the local government finance settlement and its impact on the Councils budgetary position was considered. A supplementary paper was tabled at the meeting advising Members on the outcome of the local government finance settlement and updated budget forecast.

Decision

1. Noted the outcome of the local government finance settlement and updated budget forecast.
2. Agreed, in principle, to accept the local government finance settlement as detailed within the supplementary report.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 7 December 2011, submitted and supplementary report by Chief Executive dated 15 December 2011, tabled)

19. CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

A report summarising the position for all departments on the capital plan as at 30 September 2011. The report compared actual and budget expenditure for the period 1 April to 30 September 2011, forecast and budget expenditure for the whole of 2011-12 and total project forecast and budget expenditure.

Decision

Noted the position for all departments on the capital plan as at 30 September 2011.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 12 October 2011, submitted)

20. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

A report summarising the monitoring as at 30 September 2011 of the Council's overall borrowing position, borrowing activity, investment activity, economic forecast and prudential indicators was considered.

Decision

1. Noted the treasury management report.
2. Agreed to permit the Head of Strategic Finance to retain a maximum deposit of £5M with the Clydesdale Bank.
3. Recommended to the Council that the Investment Strategy be amended to allow up to £5M to be held in the Instant Access Account with the Clydesdale Bank.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 7 December 2011, submitted)

21. SERVICE REVIEW PROGRAMME: SUPPORT SERVICES REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

The executive summaries for each of the workstreams and the cross section workstream for the Support Services Review were presented to the Executive for consideration.

Decision

The Executive -

- 1 Noted the savings identified in the Executive Summaries for each of the 11 workstreams contained within the scope of the Support Services Review.
- 2 Noted that the target of 20% savings had been achieved for the Support Services Review.
- 3 Recognised that many of the savings are dependent on restructuring and the implementation of ICT changes to primary systems which will require careful implementation planning with adherence to both timescales and dependencies.
- 4 Noted that Trade Union consultations are required before changes to pay frequencies are implemented and subject to the progress of these consultations this initiative may be implemented on 1st April 2012 or April 2013 with consequential delays in the achievement of savings.
- 5 Noted that for such critical systems, great care will be needed with the fullest discussions and consultations, good communications and project management to ensure that the systems and administrative changes can be implemented accurately and to timetable.
- 6 Noted that the preferred options are management and operational matters and will be implemented by the relevant officers subject to the conclusion of the HR consultation.
- 7 Noted that the outcomes of the Support Services Review were presented to elected members at the Members Seminar on 5 December 2011.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated December 2011, submitted)

22. MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND

A consultation Paper had been issued by the Scottish Government giving an indication of the priority given to mental health issues in Scotland with a view to providing the basis of a national strategy and setting out a programme of work for the following 4 years. Responses are invited by 31 January 2012 and the Executive considered a draft response to the consultation.

Decision

Approved the response to the consultation as detailed in appendix 1 to the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 7 November 2011, submitted)

23. COMMISSION ON RURAL EDUCATION CALL FOR EVIDENCE

A report providing a draft response to the call for evidence from the Commission on Rural Education was considered.

Decision

Agreed that the draft response to the call for evidence by the Commission on Rural Education as detailed in the report be submitted on behalf of the Council.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 6 December 2011, submitted)

24. COUNCIL TAX ON LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES AND HOUSING SUPPORT GRANT - CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATION

A report detailing a response to the Scottish Government Consultation on Council Tax on Long-Term Empty Properties was considered. Responses were invited by 10 January 2012.

Decision

Agreed the draft response to the Consultation as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 25 November 2011, submitted)

25. PROTECTION OF SHELLFISH GROWING WATERS

A report providing a brief background to the Scottish Government Consultation 'An Integrated Approach to the Protection of Shellfish Growing Waters' was considered.

Decision

1. Noted the report.

2. Agreed that the report form the basis of the Councils formal response to the Consultation.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated December 2011, submitted)

26. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Executive considered a report providing an update on the progress with the Local Development Plan process and seeking approval to amend the timetable associated with the Local Development Plan in order to better engage with the plans wide range of stakeholders and take full account of a range of ongoing planning considerations and some which had emerged in recent weeks.

Decision

1. Noted the content of the report.
2. Approved the re-scheduling of the publication of the Local Development Plan in line with the amended timetable as detailed at Appendix A to the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated December 2011, submitted)

27. HELENSBURGH PIER MASTERPLAN

A report containing draft masterplans for the former Hermitage Academy and Pierhead Sites was considered. The Executive, at their meeting on 3 November 2011 had authorised the Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure to instruct consultants to prepare a revised master plan in an effort to procure a proposed new leisure facility and further the development and marketing of both sites. The report sought approval for these masterplans to go out to consultation for a period of time commencing 16 December 2011.

Decision

Approved the draft Masterplans containing different development options for both the former Hermitage and Pierhead sites, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, for a period of consultation commencing 16 December 2011 and ending 18 January 2012.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated 2 December 2011 and draft masterplans, submitted)

The Chair intimated that Councillor James Robb, who was not a member of the Executive, had notified him that he wished, in terms of Standing Order 22.1, to speak and vote on item 27 of this Minute. The Chair ruled that he would exercise his discretion to allow him to speak on the following item of business but not to vote.

Councillor James Robb left the meeting.

Councillor Robin Currie left the meeting.

The Committee noted that in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the report submitted contained information that would have made it possible to exclude the public for this item of business on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Notwithstanding this, Members agreed to discuss the item, other than the elements thereof specifically covered by the 1973 Act in public session.

28. HELENSBURGH PIER HEAD AND HERMITAGE ACADEMY BRIEFS

A report advising Members of the progress with regard to the development of the options for the future development at the Helensburgh Pierhead in conjunction with the potential for development of the former Hermitage Academy site was considered.

The Committee adjourned midway through discussion of this item; at which point the Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public for the discussion of the remaining business on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Decision

Agreed the recommendations as contained within the report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated 15 December 2011, submitted)

**MINUTES of MEETING of SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES held in
the MEMBERS ROOM, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on WEDNESDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillor Dick Walsh (Chair)

Councillor Robin Currie
Councillor Andrew Nisbet
Councillor Elaine Robertson

Attending: Sally Loudon, Chief Executive
Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director – Community Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rory Colville, Ellen Morton and Len Scoullar.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Special Committee for Older Peoples Services held on 8 September 2011 were approved as a correct record.

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

4. LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES - SUMMARY UPDATE

The Committee considered a report giving an update on the tender exercise for Learning Disability Services and also recommendations that had been put forward by the Learning Disability Project Board.

Decision

Agreed the recommendations put forward by the Learning Disability Project Board.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated November 2011, submitted)

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed at a later date.

This page is intentionally left blank

LEADER'S REPORT: 28th November 2011 to 20th January 2012

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE MEETING: 2nd February 2012**1.0 Programme Monitoring Committee, 7th December**

I attended the above meeting by Video Conference. The agenda items were as follow:-

- N+2
- Strategic Overview
- Advisory Group Convener's Report
- Strategic Delivery Bodies: Annual Update (including; UHI Millennium Institute and Highlands and Islands Enterprise)
- Broadband
- Community Planning Partnership Plans (Up-date)

Further detail from this meeting is available in the Leaders Report Pack

2.0 9th December 2011. Meeting re Gourock – Dunoon Ferry with Michael Russell and with Partners.

I met with Michael Russell MSP and a range of partners to discuss the current, unsatisfactory situation with the Gourock-Dunoon Ferry. The meeting seemed to strike a positive note; with our MSP agreeing to take a series of proposals back to his colleague, Alex Neil, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment. Most significant was the proposal to consider the reinstatement of a combined vehicular and passenger service for the medium to longer term. I felt that this alone was a good step forward.

The three point plan proposal put in front of Mr Neil covers; short, medium and long term actions:-

In the short to medium term, a process would examine options for improving the current service provided by the Argyll Flyer and Alicat vessels, the potential utilisation of the Coruisk ferry on the Dunoon-Gourock route, improvements in embarkation / disembarkation arrangements which will include the provision of berthing pontoons and shore side passenger accommodation infrastructure, and any other potential short to medium term proposals which parties consider appropriate for consideration. This process would require options to be developed and examined in terms of technical and operational feasibility, deliverability and cost. The target timescale for this would be April 2012, but would be dependent upon the Project and Resource Plan developed by the

Scottish Government's Ferries Division.

In the medium to longer term, a confidential options appraisal process would look at options for the provision of a vehicular ferry service operating between Dunoon and Gourock. This process would look at all potential options which would include the existing service model, the provision of new vessels designed specifically for the Dunoon-Gourock route by the Scottish Government and the scope to develop an operating model which could allow a private sector operator to provide a vehicular ferry service on this route. The timescale and resources required to undertake this options appraisal would be identified by the Scottish Government's Ferries Division, with a target date to develop a Project Inception Document by February 2012.

I was delighted by what we agreed, and I am sure the communities of Cowal and Inverclyde will be equally pleased. I am not alone in feeling that this route requires a combined passenger and vehicle service it is what we pressed for before and during the tripartite arrangement; however there was always a feeling that we were not being listened to. I am grateful to Michael Russell MSP for recognising the gravity of the situation and agreeing to raise these very pressing matters with the Transport Secretary.

I very much look forward to hearing in the near future how the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment plans to take this issue forward."

3.0 **COSLA Convention, Friday 16th December**

Chief Executive, Sally Loudon and I attended the COSLA Convention in Edinburgh on the 16th December 2011. The agenda Items were as follow:-

Items taken in Private Session

1. Health and Social Care Integration – Address by Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Deputy First Minister
2. Cities Strategy
3. Care Home Fees
4. Community Care Charging for Non-residential Care
5. Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Bill
6. National Contract for Foster Care
7. Protocol on use of Police and Fire Reserves
8. COSLA EU Priorities 2012
9. Consumer Protection Landscape
10. Resilience Data Collection

Items taken in Public Session

11. Regeneration Strategy / Enterprise Areas
12. Consumer Protection and Transport Task Groups

- 13. Teacher Census Numbers
- 14. Re-procurement of myjobscotland.gov.uk

Minutes

- 15. Convention 21st October 2011

Items 11 to 14 were taken in public session and I have summarised these below:-

3.1 Regeneration Strategy / Enterprise Areas

The purpose of this paper was to provide the Convention with a summary of the ongoing lobbying work of COSLA regarding the Scottish Government's Regeneration Strategy, Urban Regeneration Company (URC) funding and Enterprise Areas.

Outcome

The two recommendations from the paper were accepted. The Convention:-

- i. noted the continuing work of COSLA regarding the Regeneration Strategy, URC Funding and Enterprise Areas; and
- ii. noted the conclusion of discussions on URC funding for 2012/13 and 2013/14 and the proposal for further discussions on the use of local government monies post 2013/14 with Scottish Government.

3.2 Consumer Protection and Transport Task Groups

The purpose of this report was to consider the suggestion from the relevant COSLA Executive Groups to establish a Consumer Protection Task Group and Transport Task Group respectively and to agree the overarching role and remits of each group.

Outcome

The two recommendations from the paper were accepted. The Convention:-

- i. noted the suggestion from the Community Well-Being & Safety and Regeneration & Sustainable Development Executive Groups for the establishment of Task Groups covering the remits of Consumer Protection and Transport; and
- ii. endorsed the establishment of these Task Groups and that Group Leaders will be approached for nominations.

3.3 Teacher Census Numbers

The purpose of this report was to advise the Convention that local authorities had collectively delivered their commitment to protect teacher numbers, and

have therefore completed a critical element of the teachers' agreement struck through the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) in May 2011.

Outcome

The Convention agreed to the recommendation of the paper, as follows:-

The Convention noted that the Scottish Government published the results of the September census on 7 December 2011 and that the target figure of 51,131 was exceeded, thereby going beyond local government's commitment to the teacher's agreement struck by the parties to the SNCT in May 2011.

3.4 Re-procurement of myjobscotland.gov.uk

The purpose of this report was to invite the Convention to agree, in principal, future funding of the "myjobscotland" recruitment portal, which is presently the subject of a re-procurement exercise. Once completed, and precise operational costs are known, a further report will be submitted to a future Leaders meeting setting out the funding commitment required of individual councils.

Outcome

The two recommendations made in the paper, were agreed, as follow:-

- i) The Convention noted that a re-procurement exercise for the myjobscotland recruitment portal is currently underway with the results to be known early in January 2012, and
- ii) The Convention agreed in principle, future funding of the portal, subject to a further report to a future Leader's meeting setting out the precise contribution required from individual councils.

4. Updates

4.1 Local Tax collection

Collections of Council Tax to 31 December 2011 are 85.54%, down by 0.07% on last year's at this time. This is better than the position reported at end of November which was down by 0.12%. The decrease is due in mostly to poorer collections via Sheriff Officer (0.07%) as they are finding it much tougher this year to make collections compared to last year, although December Sheriff Officer collections were slightly improved. Collections of Council Tax for 2010/11 year are 96.87% which is down by 0.02% on the previous year's at this time; similar to the position at end of November.

British Gas has advised that they will no longer operate the Council Tax Energy Efficiency Rebate Scheme for us. Members will be aware that we had

considerable difficulties in securing adequate service from British Gas, particularly in the islands. Officers will now see if we can make a more formal arrangement through the Energy Savings Trust.

Collections of Non-Domestic Rates to 31 December 2011 are 86.33%; up 0.10% on last year. This is an improvement on the position at the end of November, where I reported that we were up 0.73%. Collections for 2010/11 are 98.62%, down 0.23% on the previous year's; similar to the position at end of November. This reflects considerable difficulties in collecting the remaining debt with our Sheriff Officers; there are very few current arrangements in place.

4.2 **Benefits Update**

Officers attended a workshop on the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) in early January and already it is clear that Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are realising the disadvantages of their preferred option (of leaving local authority fraud staff employed with local authorities but working to SFIS policies and procedures and managed through SFIS for a temporary period). DWP staff were unable to comment on whether Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) will be applied, which is a continuing concern. We are pleased that there are now signs that they are starting to design what the future service will look like, but this is still at a very early stage.

The DWP's launch of their phase 2 Automated Transfers to Local Authority Systems (ATLAS) service, designed to update changes in benefit claimants details directly to local authority systems, has been delayed till 23 January, due to a number of issues being experienced in the pilot sites.

The new "under 35 rules" will start to apply from this month and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) transitional protection rules will start to end shortly. With the proposed freeze on LHA rates starting this April and unemployment expected to continue to rise, a great deal of time will be used to explain to customers, landlords and stakeholders what to do.

Ahead of the introduction of Universal Credit the Communities and Local Government Select Committee has published its report into Localisation issues in Welfare Reform. This covered localisation of the Social Fund, and localisation of the support for Council Tax, as well as Housing Benefit changes. This highlights a number of concerns which we all share:

- We have seen little evidence to support the hope that new and better-paying jobs for individuals, to off-set the 10 per cent reduction in the benefit budget, will inevitably follow from these incentives; (Paragraph 44)
- We are concerned about the financial risk to local authorities from assuming responsibility, within a fixed budget, for a means-tested

benefit, for which demand could increase as well as decrease. Furthermore, a fixed grant will disincentivise efforts by local authorities to improve take-up among those groups who at present under-claim Council Tax Benefit. (Paragraph 48)

- We recommend that the Government delay the introduction of the new Council Tax support system by a year or more. (Paragraph 57)
- We understand and are sympathetic to the policy intention behind the Universal Credit, but believe that in the case of support for housing costs, councils should retain administrative responsibility. It is incongruous for a Government committed to decentralisation to plan to remove from local authorities a function which they administer well, in which they have irreplaceable expertise, and which greatly affects other areas of local policy-making and service delivery such as housing strategy and homelessness. Furthermore, while Universal Credit aims to make the system simpler, in splitting responsibility for Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit it may introduce unnecessary complexity for customers. (Paragraph 68)
- We are concerned about the potential negative impact of direct payment arrangements for the Universal Credit on social landlords. (Paragraph 72)

The Department for Communities and Local Government has published its response to this report, and, whilst acknowledging these concerns, does not appear to be planning any significant changes to its proposals.

However, a small number of local authorities and housing associations have been named as demonstration projects to run from June 2012 till June 2013 to test the direct payments of housing benefit to local authority and RSL tenants ahead of the introduction of Universal Credit from October 2013. This is to test concerns around whether claimants will manage to keep their rents up to date. None are in Scotland.

4.3 **Procurement and Commissioning update**

I previously reported that the Roads Capital Works contract won the Scottish Government Opportunities Award for the “Best Customer Engagement Initiative of the Year”. This project has also made the short list for the COSLA Excellence awards in the category of Achieving Better Outcomes.

The Tarbert and Oban Shred Pathways Projects contracts and the Housing Support contracts have now been awarded.

Officers have been trained on the Scottish Government’s new Bravo solution system which will allow for more control over evaluation and award of tenders. It will tie in seamlessly with the publiccontractsscotland website.

Meetings have been held with the administrators and the new operators for the two residential homes in our area which were part of the Argus Group.

4.4 **Customer Services**

Just under 88% of enquiries were dealt with at first point of contact through the Customer Service Centre (CSC) in November; a significant increase from the level in November (80%). This is mainly due to the improvement in the percentage for social work which is now 76.4%. The percentage of abandoned calls was 10.7%, which is down on the November figures reported of 8.6%. This was affected by staff using up their remaining annual leave in December. The Macfarlane server, which handles the telephony for the CSC, failed and had to be replaced. This took longer than expected, due to delays in deliveries due to Christmas business volumes. However calls were re-routed via Lync and this should not have been obvious to customers phoning in. Lync has added greatly to our resilience.

The new national Blue Badge Improvement Service went live on 4 January 2012 with very few issues so far.

Planning Enquiries are scheduled start being channelled through the CSC from 24 January.

Testing is under way on voice automation for taking payments which would allow this service to be available by phone 24/7.

The CSC was kept open till 10 p.m. on 5 January to assist members of the public who were continuing without electricity due to the stormy weather. On 6th January the CSC assisted with an outbound campaign to contact all households which were still without power to see if they needed further assistance.

4.5 **IT**

I reported previously on a concern over the funding of our network from 2014. A funding bid was submitted to the Scottish Government in relation to this funding gap in August and a full options appraisal and business case was presented to the Director Digital on 17 January for initial comment before going to the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment. This takes into account the McClelland Review of Public Sector ICT Infrastructure and the developing strategy for the Scottish Public Sector Network (SPSN). The

continued investment and support from the Scottish Government has enabled a very effective network which enables strong public sector service delivery and supports connections from 145 schools, offices and other sites across Argyll and Bute. The current annual cost of this service is just under £1.5m but we only contribute £367,000 towards this because of funding from the Scottish Government. At present the availability of future funding is unknown. The Pathfinder North Options Appraisal and outline Business Case will be crucial in allowing the Scottish Government to make a decision on the future availability of funding. Officials within the Scottish Government have indicated that they will have developed a roll-out plan for SPSN with funding proposals by the end of March 2012, and that a decision on Pathfinder North will have been made within this context by then. The rationale applied by Scottish Government to support Pathfinder North 1 remains extant. Market failure remains in this most rural of areas resulting in disparity in telecoms pricing, compared to urban areas. The importance of a robust and reliable communications infrastructure cannot be over emphasised as it provides the bedrock to sustainable rural communities.

A new 3 year contract for telephone line rental and call charges has been awarded to Azzurri Communications which is expected to save c £54,000 on current costs of £340,000 p.a. The contract will commence at the start of February 2012.

The Oracle "Purchase to Pay" project has commenced. As a first step the Oracle Financials suite was upgraded to a later version of software in early December.

4.6 **Service review**

Revenues and Benefits, Procurement and Commissioning and ICT are all workstreams within the Support Services review. The Executive Summaries were presented to Members at the Executive on 15 December. All new and changed jobs have now been evaluated under the Gauge Job Evaluation System. The formal consultation with the trades unions began on 9 December and the trades unions have now confirmed that they are satisfied with the consultation that has taken place.

Education Spokesperson's Report February 2012

Congratulations

I am sure all Members will join with me in congratulating the Head of Service in Education, the new Mrs Carol Evans,(Carol Walker) on her recent marriage and in wishing her and her husband every good fortune in the future.

Property Damage

The resourcefulness and resilience of school staff at Ashfield and Sandbank primary schools were tested recently when both schools were affected by property damage. Ashfield had a small electrical fire which meant pupils being relocated to the nearby village hall for a few days whilst repairs were made. The games hall at Sandbank lost part of its roof in the recent storm weather but the School managed to continue to operate. A permanent repair to the roof of Sandbank was undertaken in January with support from the Council's Facility Services.

I am delighted to be able to commend the very prompt response during a holiday period by council staff, both in Education and in Facility Services, to the storm damage, a response which minimised any disruption to the pupils' education. There are so many individual examples of staff going the extra yard that I feel it might be unfair to single out any one individual.

New Appointments

I have been heavily involved in the appointment of permanent head teachers recently, a process which is still ongoing.

As Spokesperson for Education and Lifelong Learning I would wish to extend my congratulations and best wishes to:

Mrs Gwen Gilmour, Parklands School

Mr Stephen Glen-Lee, Joint Headship, Easdale and Luing Primary Schools

Mrs Kathleen Johnston, Joint Headship, Keills and Small Isles Primary School

Mrs Maureen MacDonald, Port Ellen Primary School

Mrs Ruth Reid, Rhunahaorine Primary School

Miss Judith Frost, Port Charlotte Primary School (commencing in April)

Mrs Pauline Inglis, Lochdonhead Primary School

Ms Louise Paterson, Achahoish Primary School

A number of other appointments are being progressed at the time of writing the report with still more to do.

Interviews are in place for:

Sandbank – 31 January

St Andrew's and Tighnabruaich – 20 February

Education Strategy

The Education Service is currently working on updating a range of key education strategies to present to Council an overarching vision for the future of education in Argyll and Bute. This integrated package of strategies will integrate fully and present a coherent approach for the service to take forward. They will respond to the further implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence; to the provision of Additional Support Needs for pupils following the conclusion of the current service review; to the further development of new partnerships around the senior phase in our secondary schools; to the Council's approach to validated Self Evaluation (VSE) in conjunction with Education Scotland and to the Council's approach to early intervention and preventative work which will involve staff from Education Services, Children and Family Services and partners in the 3rd sector. It is expected that this work will be presented to Council in the summer of 2012 and will help the Education Services brief elected members on the challenges faced by the service and how these are being met

Performance Reporting Pilot

Education Scotland has asked Argyll and Bute to take part in a project to develop examples of how authorities could fulfil their statutory responsibilities as regards reporting on the performance of children and young people given the development of *Curriculum for Excellence*. There are twelve authorities taking part in this project and one of our Quality Improvement Officers is taking the lead on this work which should be completed later in the year.

Mary's Meals

After the presentation on Mary's Meals to Members I asked Education officers how Argyll & Bute schools could be involved with this locally based charity which places great emphasis on the importance of education. As a result of this, the week commencing Monday, 26th March (the last week of term) has been chosen as "Mary's Meals' Week" when a contribution will be made to Mary's Meals from every school meal served that week.

To increase the uptake of school meals that week we will need to market it well and plans are currently being worked on for this. The Mary's Meal representative will deliver a short presentation to all primary Head Teachers on Wednesday February 2nd and deliver the same to secondary Head Teachers at a date yet to be arranged.

**TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SPOKESPERSONS REPORT****JANUARY 2012****Oban Airport**

On 25 November the CAA concluded its Licensing and Safety Audit. No Category 1 or 2 non compliance issues were found for Oban, Coll or Colonsay aerodromes. A number of Category 3 items (lowest scale) were identified which have the potential to affect safety and should be considered for remedial action.

Overall the DAA Audit Team commented that their audit had found that there had been no reduction in the Council's commitment to air safety over the last 12 months and that they would be recommending to the CAA that Argyll Air Services be now removed from the "Special Attention" designation and this has now taken place.

The next programmed CAA audit is scheduled to take place during February 2013.

Category 1 Projects SPT 2012/13

The projects below have been identified within SPT 3year capital programme for potential capital funding 2012/13. The below is subject to SPT approval and is subject to capital finances available to SPT which for 2012/13 has been reduced.

Improving Helensburgh Town Centre Transport Infrastructure £175k. This is currently in as priority for 12/13. This is to complement the CHORD work that will be undertaken within Helensburgh by the Council during 12/13. SPT may allocate £350k match funding to undertake the following complimentary work to the CHORD project

- Signalised pedestrian crossing West king St (vicinity of existing old folks home)
- Improvements to bus stops
- Increase number of disabled bays
- Improvements to junctions/DDA compliance (better pedestrian crossing points)
- Traffic calming (utilising different materials i.e. not raised tables or speed humps)
- Improvements to signage/security
- Revised speed limits from 30mph to 20mph

Bus Stop Infrastructure £70k To undertake further enhancements to bus stop infrastructure in Helensburgh and Lomond area.

SCOTTISH FERRY SERVICES**Draft Plan for Consultation**

The Council in formulating its response to the Draft Ferries Plan will consider and reflect the views of its island and peninsular communities that rely so heavily on ferry services.

The Council welcomes many of the proposals put forward in the consultation document and is particularly encouraged by the clear recognition of the need to improve services to the smaller islands communities currently served by CalMac, and those to Bute and Mull.

We recognise that not all the proposals in the plan can be implemented immediately and would be happy to work with the Scottish Government in establishing priorities and related implementation programmes within the funding available. In this regard we are encouraged that Government recognises that ferry services are the only effective means of access for many communities and their economic lifeline and while efficiencies should be promoted, these shouldn't be achieved by reductions in necessary levels of service.

The Council currently runs 4 ferry services and recognise that there could be merit in these being subsumed into the ferry network provided directly by Scottish Government through Transport Scotland.

Regarding our piers and harbours these currently run on the basis that they are financially self-sustaining taking into account the costs of maintenance, income from dues, and Government support funding. The Council own a large number of facilities many of which are no longer used for transportation, require continuing maintenance, and cannot be transferred to other parties. While we could be willing to consider Scottish Government taking responsibility for this estate, this would only be acceptable if all the estate were taken, and no cherry picking of income generating facilities were proposed leaving the Council with an unsustainable and unproductive residual estate.

2ND RAIL FRANCHISE CONSULTATION

The issues raised by the Scottish Government's 2014 Rail Franchise Consultation are wider than initially anticipated. To provide the most informed and helpful response to the Consultation in the best interests of our communities we consider that some additional research and technical advice be obtained with the assistance of HITRANS and SPT.

FERRY CONTRACT 1923GI – GOUROCK TO KILCREGGAN FERRY SERVICE

The core users of this service are workers from the Faslane and Coulport naval bases, who travel between Gourock and Kilcreggan, mainly Monday to Friday and SPT confirmed this through on-board survey. The surveys highlighted low patronage generally on Sundays and on Helensburgh sailings.

Tenders were invited for a contract with a timetable based around the requirements of the core users, operating between Gourock and Kilcreggan on Monday to Saturday, and operators were invited to consider an innovative approach to the tender by identifying any opportunities for additional revenue – such as serving Blairmore – in an effort to reduce the overall contract cost.

Whilst the tender price submitted was lower than that of the current contract, it was felt that, given the removal of the Sunday sailings and the link to Helensburgh – both of which have proved to be extremely lightly used – it did not sufficiently reflect this and a decision was therefore taken to further test the market by re-advertising the contract.

Tenders were invited for the same timetable as before and operators were again encouraged to include options for additional days and destinations, but with the seating capacity of the vessel now reduced from 90 to 60, in light of the further survey data, which had demonstrated a maximum of 48 passengers at one time. On this occasion, the lowest tender price received was from Clydelink Ltd. The price includes provision of a new build 60 seat vessel operating from Gourock to Kilcreggan throughout the day Monday to Saturday.

“However the SPT Operations committee after lengthy debate decided to accept the tender from Clydelink with an addendum to continue but monitor the summer Gourock – Kilcreggan Sunday sailings for the coming year and open dialogue with Argyll and Bute Council and others with regard to any possible future Helensburgh alternatives”

PUBLIC TRANSPORT TENDERS – HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND AREA

BUS

CONTRACT 8812d: Helensburgh – Garelochhead – Coulport (service 316)

Tenders were invited for the replacement of the current contract for service 316 which provides two early morning and two late evening journeys on a Monday to Saturday, and a 2 hourly Sunday service between Helensburgh, Garelochhead and Coulport. Minor changes were made to the departure times of the Monday to Saturday journeys to improve intermediate connections.

Only Garelochhead Coaches submitted a tender price.

CONTRACT LSO22C: Helensburgh/Vale of Leven – Royal Alexandra Hospital (service 340)

Tenders were invited for a direct replacement of the current contract for service 340, which provides a Monday to Friday, two hourly daytime service and also two return journeys on a Saturday and Sunday between Helensburgh Station/Vale of Leven Hospital and Royal Alexandra Hospital.

The lowest compliant tender price was submitted by Wilsons of Rhu.

CONTRACT W012: Alexandria – Luss, Alexandria – Helensburgh, Old Bonhill/Alexandria – Balmaha (services 305, 306, 309)

Tenders were invited for contract W012, which provides service 305 between Alexandria and Luss, service 306 between Alexandria and Helensburgh, and service 309 between Old Bonhill and Balmaha, all of which operate on a daily basis. Contract W012 consolidates previous contracts LS021B and LS020D. The contract period 15 July 2012 until 26 March 2016 had been identified to coincide with the expiry of subsidised services supplied by Stirling council, which operate within West Dunbartonshire and neighbouring local authorities.

The lowest tender price was submitted by Loch Lomond Bus Services.

HIGH SPEED RAIL

The object of this report is to advise of the publication of the Fast Track Scotland report promoting the inclusion of Scotland in the plans for the UK High Speed Rail (HSR) network. On 10th January 2012 the UK Government's Transport Secretary Justine Greening formally announced its intention to support the HS2 proposals to construct a high speed rail link between London and Birmingham by 2026. The Government also confirmed its support for HS2 to extend to Manchester and Leeds by 2033. The UK Government's proposals are set out in "High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future – Decisions and Next Steps". In the document, the UK Government has indicated that onward connections to Glasgow and Edinburgh would initially utilise existing "classic" lines. Journey times between London and Glasgow and Edinburgh would be cut to three and a half hours. The UK Government has restated that its vision is for a truly national high speed rail network serving all of the major cities of Britain. It acknowledges the benefits of future extension of direct lines to Scotland and "expects to work with" the Scottish Government on the latter's ambitions for high speed rail connections.

Outline of Proposals

The Fast Track Scotland report lays out the updated business case for the inclusion of Scotland in the wider UK HSR network and the UK wide benefits this will bring.

The key points of the report are:

- Inclusion of Scotland in the HSR network strengthens the business case and BCR (Benefit Cost Ratio) of the project, and increases the economic and environmental benefits of the HSR network
- Significant additional capacity is required to alleviate the large forecast demand growth on long distance rail services
- The new HSR network will free capacity on existing routes for freight and regional rail services
- Inclusion in the HSR network would allow Scotland greater economic equity with other areas of the UK
- Inclusion of Scotland in the HSR network will support economic growth through agglomeration and wider regeneration in Scotland and Northern England
- To gain the full benefits any new HSR route requires to offer a faster journey time than aviation between the central belt of Scotland and London therefore requiring a new full HSR route to Glasgow and Edinburgh; and
- The remit of the UK government company tasked with developing the HSR network in England (HS2) should be expanded to include HSR links with Scotland.

The Fast Track Scotland report highlights the significant advantages to the rest of the UK of inclusion of Scotland in the UK HSR network and the benefits for all areas of Scotland including the central belt and the West of Scotland in particular.

The UK Government has approved HS2 to Birmingham by 2026, with onward connection to Manchester and Leeds by 2033. Under these proposals, connections to Glasgow and Edinburgh and currently planned to be by "classic" rail. The UK Government expects to discuss with the Scottish Government the latter's ambitions for High Speed Rail to Scotland.

Conclusions

HSR is a key project for both the UK and Scottish Governments. For Scotland there are broad positive impacts in terms of modal shift, regeneration and wider economic development to be gained from inclusion in the UK HSR network.

SPT TRAVEL CARD UNIT

There are approximately 520,000 National Entitlement Cards (NEC), providing access to the National Concessionary Travel (NCT) Scheme and the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme (SCTS), held by residents of the 12 Local Authorities comprising the Scheme area. SPT manages the card application (for the disability related cards), card renewal and card replacement processes for this group of NEC holders. In addition, SPT provides the call centre service for all NEC holders, less Young Persons, within the SPT area.

YOUNG PERSONS CONCESSION SCHEME (SCTS – JOINT COMMITTEE)

The Young Persons Concession Scheme is administered and funded by Transport Scotland. This scheme is targeted at the 16-18 age group, and allows a reduction of 1/3 off bus fares, up to 50% off rail fares and 2 free journeys if you are a resident of an island.

There is a proposal to amend the ferry element of the young persons scheme – the proposal is that in lieu of the 2 free ferry journeys, it is proposed that the concession should be 1/3 off the cost of the adult fare, thus making the concession consistent with that available to young people on the mainland.

As stated above this scheme is administered by Transport Scotland and the Joint Committee has no direct involvement. The Joint Committee previously welcomed the introduction of the scheme recognising it had a valuable contribution to make in promoting public transport use among young people as well as supporting the aim of ensuring access to education and employment.

Should the Joint Committee support the proposed amendment it is proposed that the Chair of the Joint Committee writes directly to Transport Scotland highlighting the support and requesting that consideration to the proposal is given.

R.E.T

Object of report

To inform the Committee of the Scottish Government's recently announced proposal to extend the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) Scheme, and how this will now include additional ferry routes that operate within the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme ('the Scheme'). This report is also intended to inform of any potential impact on the Scheme.

Background

RET is a theoretical means of setting ferry fares based on the cost of travelling an equivalent distance by road. The concept has been applied in reducing vehicle and passenger fares. The intention behind RET is that it reduces the economic disadvantage suffered by remote island communities, and that it will enable island communities to make a bigger contribution to the economy of Scotland. The current pricing mechanism by which RET is calculated is shown below.

RET pricing mechanism:

	Passengers	Cars	VCs/Buses
Core fare per route	£2.00	£5.00	£20.00
RET fare per route	£0.10	£0.60	£0.18 per metre (based on length of vehicle)

On 28 November 2011 the Scottish Government announced its intention to roll out the existing pilot RET scheme across a wider range of islands than currently under the RET scheme which was initiated in 2008. This roll out will include additional ferry routes that operate within the Scheme area. Under the original RET pilot, the Scheme has already benefited from lower car and passenger fares for Coll and Tiree although at the time of writing the proposed future pricing mechanism are unknown. Appendix A shows current fares and route miles for ferry routes operating within the Scheme area.

Outline of Proposals

From spring 2012, the Scottish Government is proposing to make permanent the existing RET pilot on services to the Western Isles (outwith the Scheme). A new RET pilot scheme will start in October 2012 for services to / from Colonsay, Islay, Jura, and Gigha all of which operate within the Scheme area (map attached at Appendix B). This is likely to result in lower car and standard passenger fares and potentially additional demand for ferry services included in the Scheme.

In October 2014 a further RET pilot scheme will be introduced for Arran Services, and within the lifetime of the Parliament, the RET pilot scheme will be extended to cover Cumbrae and Bute on the Clyde as well as Iona, Lismore, and Mull which also operate within the Scheme area. Thereafter the Scottish Government has undertaken to consider the roll out of RET to local authority, commercial and mainland to mainland routes following the outcome of the Ferries Review.

Conclusions

Overall the current RET pilot has been deemed a success in terms of economic activity on the islands included. The cost of ferry travel for residents, visitors and businesses has been significantly reduced and with reduced costs there has been an upturn in local economies which could stabilise populations, especially the working age population.

It should be noted, however, that the nature of the Clyde islands is different in terms of adjacent populations than the more remote Western Isles islands. The opportunity for spontaneous weather-dependant trips to be made is far greater on the Clyde routes than on the existing pilot RET routes. As such any monitoring of the impacts of the scheme will need to take this and a number of other factors into account, including :

- Vessel capacity;
- Island infrastructure, including roads and accommodation;
- Capacity of supported bus services;
- The impact on the island environment; and
- The impact on island economy / businesses.

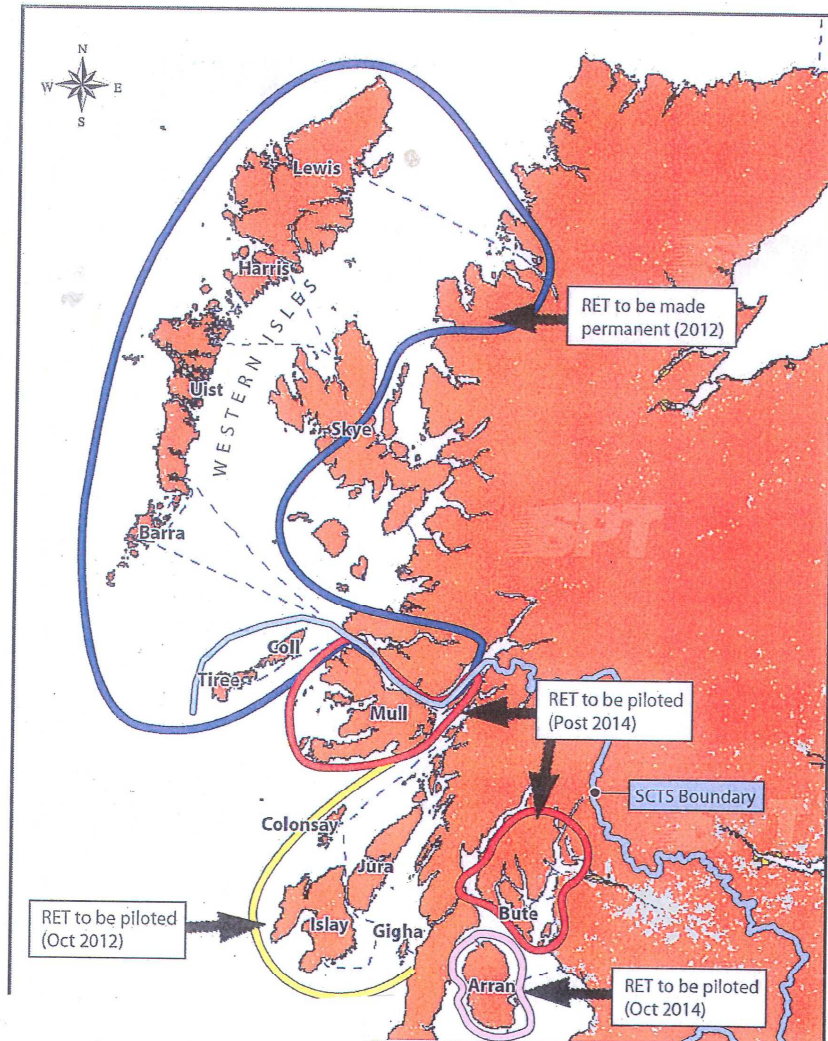
There could also be additional costs for the ferry operator as regards the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme. As stated above any reduction in ferry fare costs is reflected in lower re-imburement from SPT to the operator, the short-fall would have to be met by RET scheme compensation and funded by Scottish Government.

Given the potential for a significant variation in passenger numbers making use of the Ferry service when the (RET) pilot is introduced, and the unique interdependencies of the ferry to the bus service on the islands this announcement will also now need to form part of the review.

Appendix A

Operator	Route	Mileage (Approx)	Passenger (Single)	Passenger (Return)	Car (Single)	Car (Return)
ClydeLink	Yoker-Renfrew Ferry	0.10	£1.70	NA	NA	NA
Argyll & Bute Council	Easdale-Ellenabeich	0.20	NA	£1.70	NA	NA
Argyll & Bute Council	Jura (Feolin)-Port Askaig	0.60	£1.35	NA	£7.60	NA
CalMac	Colintraive-Rhubodach (Bute)	0.62	£1.25	£2.15	£6.75	£11.40
Argyll & Bute Council	Oban-Kerreira	0.80	NA	£5.00	NA	NA
Argyll & Bute Council	Lismore-Port Appin	1.00	£1.50	NA	NA	NA
CalMac	Iona-Fionnphort	1.00	NA	£3.20	NA	NA
CalMac	Largs-Cumbræe	1.18	NA	£3.40	NA	£17.95
SPT	Kilcreggan-Gourock	2.00	£2.35	NA	NA	NA
CalMac	Fishnish (Mull)-Lochaline (Mainland)	2.20	£2.90	£5.00	£12.80	£21.75
CalMac	Gigha-Tavinloan	2.49	£2.95	NA	£10.25	NA
Western Ferries	McInroy's Point - Hunter's Quay	2.80	£4.00	£7.50	£10.90	£20.70
CalMac	Tarbert-Portavadie	3.30	£3.75	£6.35	£16.85	£29.00
CalMac	Tobermory (Mull)-Kilchoan (Mainland)	3.73	£4.65	£7.75	£23.80	£40.50
Argyll Ferries Ltd	Gourock-Dunoon (CalMac)	4.29	£3.40	£5.75	NA	NA
SPT	Kilcreggan-Helensburgh	4.60	£2.35	NA	NA	NA
CalMac	Lochranza (Arran)-Claonaig	4.97	£4.50	£7.65	£22.75	£39.00
CalMac	Wemyss Bay-Rothesay	6.77	£3.50	£6.35	£14.05	£24.15
CalMac	Oban-Lismore	7.52	£2.45	£4.80	£25.50	£43.50
CalMac	Oban-Craignure (Mull)	9.32	£3.95	£6.90	£29.00	£49.50
CalMac	Lochranza (Arran)-Tarbert	11.50	£4.50	£7.65	£22.75	£39.00
CalMac	Brodick (Arran)-Ardrossan	11.81	£4.65	£8.40	£29.50	£51.00
CalMac	Port Ellen (Islay)-Kennacraig	30.30	£7.65	£13.45	£43.50	£75.00
CalMac	Port Askaig (Islay)-Kennacraig	32.31	£7.65	£13.45	£43.50	£75.00
CalMac	Oban-Colonsay	36.60	£11.15	£18.90	£58.00	£98.00
CalMac	Oban-Coll/Tiree	59.71	£8.65	£17.30	£44.50	£89.00

Appendix B



Councillor Duncan MacIntyre
25 January 2012

This page is intentionally left blank

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES : EDUCATION**

**EXECUTIVE
2 FEBRUARY 2012**

SCHOOL HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS:

2013/2014 and 2014/2015

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The major school holiday arrangements for Argyll and Bute for session 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 require to be set by the Executive.
- 1.2 Members are asked to agree a framework for the main school holiday periods in Argyll and Bute into which other related dates – in-service days and local holidays will be incorporated.
- 1.3 Proposals for the main school holiday periods in Argyll and Bute is attached as Appendices 1 and 2. They take appropriate account of the arrangements outlined by other authorities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to agree that:

- (a) the proposals for school holiday arrangements in session 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 be accepted
- (b) the incorporation of in-service and additional holidays agreed by the Executive Director be intimated to Area Committees
- (c) the final patterns of school holidays and in-service days be circulated widely thereafter to all interested parties.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 Following a cross authority meeting to discuss school holiday arrangements it was agreed that all authorities represented at the meeting would try to follow the same core holiday pattern.
- 3.2 Copies of the school holiday proposals have been circulated to the relevant unions and teachers' professional associations for consultation and comment. The proposals have their support.
- 3.3 Once the proposals for school holidays in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 have been agreed, they will be circulated to all head teachers to have the dates of the remaining in-service days and the dates of the five local holidays agreed in consultation with Parent Councils and incorporated.

3.4 The completed school holiday arrangements will then be intimated to all members and thereafter to all relevant parties.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The wider discussion amongst local authorities has resulted in a proposed school holiday pattern which minimises variation between neighbouring councils yet broadly takes account of historical school holiday arrangements in Argyll and Bute.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The recommendations in this report are in keeping with the council's commitment to open communication.

Financial: None

Personnel: None

**Equal
Opportunity:** None

Legal: None

**Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services
November 2011**

For further information contact: Carol A Walker, Head of Education, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8AJ. 01369 70 8525.

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services : Education
School Holiday Arrangements
2013/2014**

TERM	BREAK	DATES OF ATTENDANCE		HOLIDAY TOTAL	WORKING DAYS TEACHERS
First		Closed	12 August 2013	1	
		Closed	13 August 2013 Teachers' In-service day		
		Open	14 August 2013 Pupils Return		
	October	Close	11 October 2013	5 (6)	44
		Open	21 October 2013		
	Christmas	Close	20 December 2013	10 (16)	45 (89)
Second		Open	6 January 2014		
		Close	13 February 2014	2 (18)	29 (118)
		Open	18 February 2014		
	Spring	Close	4 April 2014	11 (29)	34 (152)
		Open	22 April 2014		
		Close	02 May 2014	1 (30)	9 (161)
Third		Open	06 May 2014		
		Close	27 June 2014		39 (200)
			Minus 5 local holidays		-5
					195

**Argyll and Bute Council
Community Services : Education
School Holiday Arrangements
2014/2015**

TERM	BREAK	DATES OF ATTENDANCE		HOLIDAY TOTAL	WORKING DAYS TEACHERS
First		Closed	11 August 2014	1	
		Closed	12 August 2014 Teachers' In-service day		
		Open	13 August 2014 Pupils Return		
	October	Close	10 October 2014	5 (6)	44
		Open	20 October 2014		
	Christmas	Close	19 December 2014	10 (16)	45 (89)
Second		Open	5 January 2015		
		Close	12 February 2015	2 (18)	29 (118)
		Open	17 February 2015		
	Spring	Close	2 April 2015	11 (29)	33 (151)
		Open	20 April 2015		
		Close	01 May 2015	1 (30)	10 (161)
Third		Open	05 May 2015		
		Close	26 June 2015		39 (200)
			Minus 5 local holidays		-5
					195

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

COMMUNITY SERVICES

2nd February 2012

STRATEGIC EVENTS & FESTIVALS

1. SUMMARY

1.1 At the September 2011 Executive members agreed the 3 year funding for a list of strategic events and festivals across Argyll & Bute. The only event identified for support within the Helensburgh and Lomond area was a new event which was to be locally determined and following detailed discussions with local stakeholders a new winter festival will be introduced. An annual sum of £16k has been agreed to support the event. A contingency sum was also agreed within the events budget and an appropriate use for this money has now been put forward.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members are asked to approve the allocation of the £20k contingency sum within the Strategic Events budget for the promotion and development of the new Helensburgh Winter Festival.

3. DETAIL

3.1 At the 29th September 2011 Executive meeting members approved the introduction of a Strategic Events & Festivals budget to provide 3 year financial support to a range of major events in Argyll & Bute. The key reason for supporting the major events was to maximise economic benefit to the area through increased cultural tourism.

3.2 The issue of legacy was identified as an important factor in achieving longer term economic impact from an event. Bringing back repeat visitors to the area provides a continuing to stimulus to the local economy. While one-off events can be very successful in their own right, they tend to have limited long term economic impact. A truly successful event not only delivers an immediate impact but also leaves a footprint for years to come.

3.3 Funding was agreed for a new event in the Helensburgh and Lomond area that could meet this longer term objective. A decision has now been reached amongst the key local stakeholders/organisers to move forward and create a winter festival in late November/early December. This should provide a welcome boost to the local economy in the early winter with the aim of establishing Helensburgh as a significant short stay visitor attraction at that time of year.

3.4 Given this is the only new festival that funding was agreed for, it will be vitally important that it is effectively marketed and promoted in the early years and there will also be additional set up costs involved which do not apply to all the other ongoing events which the Council is funding. The loss of the Scottish Open Golf Championship to the Helensburgh & Lomond area in 2011 has created a significant gap in visitor income to the area and through the Chamber of Commerce local businesses are very keen to support a new public/private sector funded festival which will bring in visitors to help address part of the lost income to the area.

3.5 In addition to the specific grant support agreed by the Executive, a contingency sum of £20k was established with the primary goal of financing the promotion of a new event. The Helensburgh Winter Festival organising group have made a request for this one-off fund to be granted to them to help build up the festival into a well known and established event across the west of Scotland and much further afield. No other major new events are being developed in the area and this would be an appropriate use of the contingency fund to ensure the winter festival is successfully launched and given a sound early platform on which to base and grow its future success.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 As evidenced by the success and major economic benefit generated to this area by the Cowal Highland Gathering and Royal National Mod, the scale of the event and the degree of media coverage and marketing are critical success factors. Providing additional resources to assist with launch of the Helensburgh Winter Festival will maximise the likelihood of its success and provide the greatest opportunity to create a longstanding legacy for the area.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy: This proposal fits with the Council's Culture & Economic Development strategies.

5.2 Financial: The £20k funding has been set aside within the Strategic Events & Festivals budget.

5.3 Legal: None

5.4 Equal opportunities: None

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director - Community Services
25th January 2012

For further information contact: Donald MacVicar, Head of Community & Culture tel 01546 604364

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank