

**MINUTES of MEETING of the EXECUTIVE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY,
LOCHGILPHEAD
on THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2009**

Present: Councillor Dick Walsh (Chair)

Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor James Robb
Councillor Vivien Dance	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor George Freeman	Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Alison Hay	Councillor Isobel Strong
Councillor Donald Macdonald	Maureen Arthur
Councillor Duncan MacIntyre	Fiona Fisher
Councillor Robert Macintyre	David McEwan
Councillor Ellen Morton	Alison Palmer
Councillor Douglas Philand	

Also Present:

Councillor Anne Horn	Councillor Andrew Nisbet
Councillor Alister MacAlister	Councillor Al Reay
Councillor John McAlpine	Councillor John Semple
Councillor Donald MacMillan	Councillor Ron Simon
Councillor Alex McNaughton	Provost William Petrie
Councillor Bruce Marshall	

Attending:

Nigel Stewart, Director of Corporate Services
Andrew Law, Director of Operational Services
Bruce West, Head of Strategic Finance
Angus Gilmour, Head of Planning
Robert Pollock, Head of Development and Strategic Transportation
Malcolm MacFadyen, Head of Community Regeneration
Jane Fowler, European Manager
Brian Barker, Policy and Strategy Manager
Fergus Murray, Development Services
Mark Lodge, Development Services

Apologies: Councillor Donald McIntosh Jane Brown

The Chair ruled, and the Executive agreed, to consider as a matter of urgency a report regarding Dunoon Hostel by reason of the need to allow works to proceed. This report is dealt with at item 18 of this Minute.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

2. MINUTES

(a) EMPLOYEE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 5 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Minutes of the Employee Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 5 September 2008 were noted.

(b) EXECUTIVE 22 JANUARY 2009

The Minutes of the Executive of 22 January 2009 were approved as a correct record.

3. LEADER'S REPORT

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

His presentation to the "Aspiring to be a Head of Service" seminar on 13 January 2009; his attendance at the Community Planning Management Committee on 21 January 2009; his attendance at the COSLA Leaders meeting on 30 January 2009; and he reported on Council Tax collections and collections of Non-Domestic Rates to the end of January 2009.

Decision

To note the contents of the report for the period 24 December 2008 – 30 January 2009.

(Reference: Report by Leader of the Council for period 24 December 2008 to 30 January 2009, submitted).

4. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON AREA CAPACITY EVALUATIONS

Following recommendations by the Reporter, which were accepted by the Council, a report detailing Supplementary Planning Guidance developed to provide guidance on the circumstances when an Area Capacity Evaluation (ACE) should be carried out, who should do it, what it should contain and how it should be used to inform the development management decision making process was considered.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and endorse the Supplementary Planning Guidance on the use of Area Capacity Evaluations in the Development Management process as detailed at Appendix A of the report; and
2. To establish a protocol for dealing with applications which require Area Capacity Assessments and the ACE which accompanies them as detailed at paragraph 2.2 of the report.

(Reference: Report by Director of Development Services, submitted)

5. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2008

A report summarising the Revenue Budget position of the Council as at 31 December 2008 was considered.

Decision

To note the Revenue Budget position of the Council as at 31 December 2008.

(Reference: Report by Head of Strategic Finance, Joint Report by Chief Executive and Head of Strategic Finance, Joint Report by Director of Community Services and Head of Strategic Finance, Joint Report by Director of Corporate Services and Head of Strategic Finance, Joint Report by Director of Development Services and Head of Strategic Finance and Joint Report by Director of Operational Services and Head of Strategic Finance, tabled)

6. CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2008

A report summarising the position for all Services on the Capital Plan as at 31 December 2008 was considered. The report compared expenditure levels and project performance in terms of costs, timescale, benefits and risks. Where Services had projects classified as red then a separate report from the relevant Head of Service was also considered.

Decision

To note the Capital Plan position of the Council as at 31 December 2008.

(Reference: Report by Head of Strategic Finance dated 22 January 2009, Report by Head of Democratic Services and Governance dated 26 January 2009, Report by Head of ICT and Financial Services dated 16 January 2009, Report by Head of Community Regeneration dated 27 January 2009, Report by Head of Roads and Amenity Services dated 26 January 2009 and Report by Head of Facility Services dated 20 January 2009, tabled)

7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2008

A report summarising the monitoring as at 31 December 2008 of the Council's Overall Borrowing Position, Borrowing Requirement for the Year, Treasury Management Activity, and Prudential Indicators was considered.

Decision

To note the Treasury Management monitoring report as at 31 December 2008.

(Reference: Report by Head of Strategic Finance dated 30 January 2009, submitted)

8. FAIRER ARGYLL AND BUTE (FAB) PLAN

The Executive on 18 December 2008 received a report about the Fairer Argyll and Bute (FAB) Plan and the process for allocating the Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF). The FAB Partnership met for the first time on 19 December 2008 and considered the draft Plan and funding allocations within the Plan. The recommended Plan, which will form part of the 2009 Single Outcome Agreement, and FSF allocations were before the Executive for consideration.

Decision

1. To agree the scope for the Fairer Argyll and Bute Plan;

2. To approve the recommendations for the allocation of the Fairer Scotland Fund made by the FAB Partnership;
3. To note the criteria used to assess proposals;
4. To note that the recommended allocation to the third sector will be made pending agreement of detailed implementation plans with the Third Sector Steering Group;
5. To agree that work should begin now to look at the implications of historic and prospective funding circumstances; and
6. To agree that a seminar on this should be arranged for Members in the Autumn of 2009.

(Report by Chief Executive, submitted)

Provost William Petrie left the meeting during discussion of the foregoing item.

Maureen Arthur and Alison Palmer left the meeting.

9. ARTS, CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT

The Depute Spokesperson for Arts, Culture, Leisure and Sport submitted a report which detailed various meetings he had attended between 2 September and 15 December 2008.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To agree that the Social Affairs Policy and Performance Group should look at presenting a case for the use of sports facilities within Argyll and Bute at the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

(Reference: Report by Depute Spokesperson for Arts, Culture, Leisure and Sport dated 8 January 2009, submitted)

10. STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS REVIEW UPDATE

A report advising the Executive of the impact that the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) may have on the road and rail infrastructure within the Argyll and Bute Council area was considered.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To delegate to the Director of Development Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to draw up a list of schemes and to press to the Scottish Government, MPs and MSPs to recognise the importance of these schemes; and

3. To request that appropriate Member and Officer intervention is made to ensure that the proposals within the Argyll and Bute Council area are realised.

(Reference: Report by Director of Operational Services dated 28 January 2009, submitted)

Councillor Donald MacMillan left the meeting.

11. DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SCOTTISH TRUNK ROAD NETWORK

Transport Scotland had issued consultation documents in December 2008 seeking views of key stakeholders on the shape of the 4th Generation Term Contracts for the Management and Maintenance of the Scottish Trunk Road Network. A proposed response to this consultation was before the Executive for consideration.

Decision

To agree the response as detailed at Appendix A of the report subject to the following amendments and to instruct the Head of Roads and Amenity Services to submit this as Argyll and Bute Council's formal response to the consultation to Transport Scotland by 23 February 2009:-

1. Additional sentence to be added to the response to question 6 to read "The Council would welcome discussion on partnership arrangements that would lead to a greater collaborative framework with local authorities"; and
2. Additional sentence to be added to the response to question 11 to read "The Council believes there is a need to improve communication between Scotland Transerv and Transport Scotland with the public, communities and road users.

(Reference: Report by Director of Operational Services dated 27 January 2009, submitted)

12. ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND PERFORMANCE GROUP WORK PROGRAMME

A report summarising the key activity areas and current work programme of the Environment Policy and Performance Group was considered.

Decision

To note the forward work programme of the Environment Policy and Performance Group and that a future report on progress will be brought to the Executive in August 2009.

(Reference: Report by Chair of Environment Policy and Performance Group dated 5 February 2009, submitted)

13. ISLE OF TIREE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN GUIDANCE

Argyll and Bute Council had approved the new Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Guidance at the Strategic Policy Committee on 21 September 2006. The most challenging component of the new guidance had been to embrace the varying and distinctive landscapes and settlements within Argyll and Bute and provide appropriate design guidance for these. In recognition of this and given the unique and distinctive landscape and built form on the island of Tiree it was determined that area specific guidance should be developed for the island which would supplement the more general Argyll and Bute guidance.

The Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee, on 4 February 2009, had approved the Isle of Tiree's Sustainable Design Guidance as supplementary planning guidance and this was now before the Executive for ratification.

Decision

To endorse the decision of the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Committee to approve the new Isle of Tiree Sustainable Design Guidance as supplementary planning guidance.

(Reference: Report by Director of Development Services, submitted)

The Chair ruled, and the Executive agreed, to adjourn the meeting for lunch at 12.50 pm and reconvene at 1.20 pm.

David McEwan, Fiona Fisher and Councillors Anne Horn, John McAlpine, Alex McNaughton, Bruce Marshall and Ron Simon did not return to the meeting.

14. CONSULTATION ON FORESTRY PROVISIONS IN THE SCOTTISH CLIMATE CHANGE BILL

The Executive, at its meeting on 22 January 2009, had considered a proposed response to the consultation on the Forestry Provisions in the Scottish Climate Change Bill. A further report proposing the way forward on the consultation was before the Executive for consideration.

Decision

1. To note that the meeting with the Minister had been rescheduled; and
2. In light of the extended deadline, afforded to the Council, for submissions being today, to endorse the discussion paper, as adjusted and appended to this Minute, as the Council's response to the consultation and to request the Leader in addition to develop these points further at the meeting with the Minister.

(Reference: Report by Leader of the Council and Extract from Minutes of Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Committee of 4 February 2009, submitted)

Councillor John Semple left during discussion of the foregoing item.

15. NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2 - GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION ISSUES

The Scottish Government had issued a consultation on the National Planning Framework for Scotland 2 (NPF2) Discussion Draft in early 2008 which set out a spatial strategy for Scotland's development to 2030, providing a national strategic context for development plans and planning decisions and helping to inform the wider programmes of government, public agencies and local authorities in Scotland. The Council had made representation to the Scottish Government on a number of issues which it felt had not been fully addressed including the lack of any mention of the proposal to develop the Hunterston to Carradale sub-sea cable link, which it was felt should be included as part of the transmission system reinforcements.

A report updating Members as to the current position with regard to the NPF2 and advising Members that, given the tight parliamentary timeframe, representation had now been made to the Scottish Parliament on the specific issue of electricity grid reinforcements as contained in the NPF2, as they related to Argyll and Bute. This matter was initially raised following a debate at the Economy Policy and Performance Group on 28 January 2009.

Decision

To note that the Council has now written to the Clerk to the Local Government and Communities Committee at the Scottish Parliament and all Argyll and Bute Members of Parliament seeking the inclusion of a new sub-sea cable link from Hunterston to Carradale in the future electricity grid reinforcements identified within the National Planning Framework for Scotland 2.

(Reference: Report by Director of Development Services, submitted)

Councillor Robin Currie left during discussion of the forgoing item.

16. LOCH LOMOND AND THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK CONSULTATIVE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

A report summarising the main issues contained within the Local Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Consultative Draft Local Plan November 2008 and recommendations from the Helensburgh and Lomond and Bute and Cowal Area Committees were considered.

Decision

To agree the following recommendations and include these as the Council's formal response to the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority consultation on the proposed Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Local Plan which ends on 28 February 2009:-

1. That Argyll and Bute Council is broadly supportive of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs first local plan and in particular welcomes the proposed policies which accord with the aims and objectives of the Argyll and Bute Structure and Local Plans, in particular, Policies TRAN 1 and TRAN 3;

2. That the Council strongly objects to COM 2 where it seeks to prevent change of use of Libraries and Schools unless they have been marketed for such uses for 12 months, because these services are predominantly provided by local authorities within the areas which they are responsible for, as such no alternative market exists for these uses where a local authority declares them surplus to requirements due to closure or replacement;
3. That the Council object to RET1 in relation to retail development, because the lack of reference to sequential approach and definition of small scale retail development is not consistent with the approach advocated by SPP8 or the Argyll and Bute Structure Plan as it applies to the Argyll and Bute sector of the National Park;
4. To insert the word 'adverse' at paragraph 3.7 of the report, 4th sentence, so that it reads "This policy could therefore have adverse implications for services provided by Argyll and Bute Council, such as schools and libraries"; and
5. That the Council recommend that minor amendments be made to the policies on drainage and flooding in order to take cognisance of the Council's role as flooding authority as follows: ENV 12 delete last sentence and replace with "Consideration should also be given to the impact of discharging surface water from developments to any watercourse by undertaking a Drainage Impact Assessment in consultation with the flooding authority". ENV 16 – add to the end of 2nd sentence "for approval by the flooding authority" and to part b) add "(vi) Cognisance has been taken of the Association of British Insurers template of flood events for particular development risks". Reason – in order to highlight residential occupancy risks greater than normal and subsequently require more onerous storm return periods to be designed for.

(Reference: Report by Director of Development Services, Extract from Minutes of Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee of 3 February 2009 and Extract from Minutes of Bute and Cowal Area Committee of 3 February 2009, submitted)

Councillors Alister MacAlister, Duncan MacIntyre and Al Reay left during discussion of the foregoing item.

Councillor Robert Macintyre left the meeting.

17. EUROPEAN COMMISSION CONSULTATION ON TERRITORIAL COHESION

In October 2008 the European Commission launched its Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion for consultation amongst EU member states. A draft response to this consultation along with a recommendation from the Economy Policy and Performance Group was considered.

Decision

To approve the draft response subject to the following amendments:-

1. Reference should be made within the response to the Council's preference for co-terminosity; and

2. In light of the stance taken by the CPMR, to add a paragraph referring to the Council's desire to see improved grid connections and pricing structure.

(Reference: Report by European Manager and Extract from Minutes of Economy Policy and Performance Group of 28 January 2009, submitted)

18. DUNOON HOSTEL - UPDATE ON INCREASED COSTS OF FIRE SAFETY UPGRADING WORKS

A report seeking funding to cover the cost of additional works identified following an inspection by the Care Commission on 16 January 2009 was considered.

Decision

To approve the additional £135,000 required to complete this project to the appropriate standards to be vired from elsewhere within the Community Services Block Allocation for 2009/2010.

(Reference: Joint Report by Director of Community Services and Director of Operational Services dated 19 February 2009, tabled)

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public for the following 4 items of business on the grounds that they were likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1; 1; 8 and 9; and 6 and 9 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

19. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UNIT: FUTURE STAFFING FOCUS

A report inviting the Executive to endorse a significant development of direction in the delivery of the Chief Executive's function to secure and lead improvement in light of the Council's approval of the Improvement Plan on 22 January 2009 was considered.

Decision

1. To endorse
 - a) The arrangements as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
 - b) A reconfigured post of Head of Improvement and HR; and
2. To appoint a Recruitment Panel comprising the Leader, the Depute Leader, Councillor Ellen Morton, Councillor Alison Hay and 3 other Councillors, to be notified to the Director of Corporate Services by the Leader, to short list, interview the short listed candidates and make an appointment to the reconfigured post of Head of Improvement and HR.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive dated 10 February 2009, submitted)

20. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING FUNCTIONS

A report on the outcome of the Best Value Review of Protective Services, Licensing and support services function in Legal and Protective Services was considered.

Decision

1. To approve the report and action plan arising from the Best Value Review; and
2. To approve the approach to implementing the action plan outlined in paragraphs 3.5 – 3.8 and appendix 1 of the report and the arrangements set out therein.

(Reference: Report by Director of Corporate Services dated 9 February 2009, submitted)

21. FLEXIBLE NEW DEAL

Delivery of the Government's service to the unemployed is undergoing significant change. This service is currently delivered via a series of tendered contracts which include New Deal. As part of a streamlining and simplification exercise, the Department of Work and Pensions is introducing a new approach to delivery called Flexible New Deal. This will consolidate a large number of existing individual contracts for different types of support thus reducing the number of contractors who deliver this service. The Council's Employability Service is one of 15 Prime contractors in Scotland and delivers services to the unemployed in Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire. The Employability Service approach to delivering support to clients is recognised across Scotland as best practice. A series of papers have been considered by the Economy Policy and Performance Group giving a range of options for the Council's approach to New Deal changes. The PPG is recommending to the Executive that the first stage in a tendering process be approved by the completion of a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) which must be submitted by March 2009.

Decision

1. To approve the submission of a PQQ as the first non-binding stage of a tendering process; and
2. To agree to consider a further series of papers on Flexible New Deal detailing the resources required and risk associated with the tendering process and subsequent service delivery if successful.

(Reference: Report by European Officer and Extract from Minutes of Economy Policy and Performance Group of 28 January 2009, submitted)

22. LEASE OF SITE AT DUNOON STADIUM

A report advising the Executive of a request for lease of a site at Dunoon Stadium was considered.

Decision

To agree the recommendation as detailed in the report dated 10 February 2009.

(Reference: Reports by Director of Corporate Services dated 26 January, 3 February and 10 February 2009 and Extract from Minutes of Bute and Cowal Area Committee of 3 February 2009, submitted)

Appendix

VIEWS OF ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT ON THE CONSULTATION PROPOSALS ON FORESTRY PROVISIONS IN THE SCOTTISH CLIMATE CHANGE BILL.

1. We appreciate this opportunity to have a discussion with the Minister on the consultation on forestry provisions in the Scottish Climate Change Bill.
2. Our request for this meeting follows our not being formally consulted, as part of the process and our need to secure further detail. We fully recognise that a number of principles require to be established to take forward the proposals but understand that many of the respondents to the consultation have expressed concerns on the lack of detail.
3. As a Council we are aware that there exists significant opposition and objection to the principle of the proposal from Forestry Trade Unions and from communities as well as community council representatives
4. Our Council recognises that the purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the use of a proposed measure in the Scottish Climate Change Bill that would give Scottish Ministers powers, through secondary legislation, to modify the functions of the Forestry Commission in Scotland where necessary or expedient, to address climate change and to provide greater flexibility in maximising the potential of the National Forest Estate to help combat climate change. However, the ability of the proposals to deliver the desired outcomes is uncertain given the lack of detail. In addition consideration of other solutions does not appear to have taken place.
5. Our Council further recognises that the Scottish Government places a high priority on the efficient management of its capital assets and that the National Forest Estate is the single largest public land resource held by Scottish government. It has a capital value estimated to be around £850 million and delivers a wide range of benefits, including the production of timber for Scotland's wood processing industries, opportunities for education, recreation, wildlife conservation, community engagement and partnership working.
6. Argyll and Bute Council noted the following in respect of forest expansion in its response to the consultation on the SFS in 2006 – *“The Draft Scottish Forestry Strategy has set a target of 25% of woodland cover by 2050 from the current level of 17½%. Currently the Argyll area has approximately 30% of its area covered by forestry, exceeding the Scotland wide target and contains over 20% of Scotland's broad leaved woodland. Any proposed increases in forestry in the Argyll and Bute area need to take the existing high levels of forestry into account. It is proposed that the detailed delivery of this Scottish Forestry Strategy target should be dealt with through the Regional Forestry Forums and Indicative Forestry Strategies (IFS), in order that appropriate account can be taken of local circumstances. The element of local accountability which IFS provide has been noted as valuable by the*

Scottish Ministers and should be recognised in the Scottish Forestry Strategy. An IFS is an important reference source across a range of forestry decisions including targeting.

7. *Another target is a sustained level of production by 2025. It should be noted that timber production is set to double in the next decade in Argyll. Consideration requires to be given to the infrastructure issues which are particularly acute in Argyll. Currently, assistance is primarily targeted to Trunk roads whereas it is the fragile rural roads which are liable to bear the brunt of sustaining this increased level of production. Pressure on the more fragile rural areas could conflict with the Scottish Executive policies in terms of the environment and tourism.”* Given the above the significance of this issue to the people/communities of Argyll and Bute can be appreciated; especially when considering that 25% of this will be the subject of this consultation.
- 8 Increased forest traffic impacts on and increases deterioration of our fragile rural roads which will require increased Government support to sustain that local road network.
8. At this point in time in view of the lack of detailed information we are aware that there is much public concern regarding the potential economic, social and environmental impact of what is proposed here, with many public meetings taking place across Argyll and Bute. There is therefore an urgent need for further and informed comment.
9. We are aware of the views being expressed on the consultation, especially the plausible submission from the Forestry Commission Trade Unions and those from the forest industry operating in the Argyll and Bute area. We hope that all will be very carefully considered, with information, conditions and assurances provided that recognise all the important points being made.
10. A number of issues raised within the consultation are worthy of discussion here today :-

Joint venture

12. The issue of joint venture, which we generally support with the proviso that all relevant European, national and local policies are addressed. Further, that consideration being given to National Forest Estate (NFE) continuing to play a leading role in delivering on climate change, as well as recognition of the many joint venture arrangements currently in place, and promoted by Forestry Commission Scotland.

Leasing of land

13. The issue giving cause for real concern and opposition by many, is the proposal to pre-selling of the Forestry Commission timber reserves through a land- lease proposal. Part of this concern relates to the possible loss of a long term income stream that the Forestry Commission relies on to deliver much of its conservation, education and recreation programmes. There are questions around the lack of evidence to support the value of leasing or cutting rights on large areas of FCS land. We understand that the removal of

100,000ha of the most commercial areas from FCS management (approx 25% of the NFE woodland cover) is equivalent to removing nearly 35% of the income from FCS. If correct then careful consideration will require to be given on the impacts of this.

14. Further careful consideration needs to be given to the various points raised by the Forestry Commission Trade Unions in their submission at section 9, relating to the potential disadvantages to Scottish Government and the Forestry Commission. They illustrate previous bad experiences by other governments with; leasing, the change in emphasis in forest policy over recent years, the value of any leasing and its relationship to capital values, rotation lengths and improved carbon sequestration, the issues around impacts on staff, future employment and its sustainability, the lack of flexibility to redeploy staff, maintaining the commitment to no compulsory redundancies, and as a result provide safeguards/resources to FCS on the likely future cost implications of all of this.
15. The Council shares the concern regarding future employment in Argyll and Bute in the forestry sector which employs a significant number of people; in particular the remoter, rural and island areas. The Council expects that should future leasing arrangements go ahead they will not compromise the ability of the FC to continue to run the Modern Apprenticeship Schemes. It is unclear how this would be achieved with the significant reduction in income.
16. Further detail needs to be provided regarding the benefits and any disbenefits of a leasing arrangement in a transparent way through ongoing dialogue with all interested stakeholders. There will need to be clearer demonstration of contractual conditions that safeguard the public and their concerns.
17. Argyll and Bute Council will require further detail with cast iron guarantees, through contractual conditions, that in the event of a leasing arrangement and the generation of £200m, that a significant proportion of this will be spent in Argyll and Bute to deliver the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement..
18. Consideration being given to the provisions for land management, infrastructure deterioration and flooding issues, as a consequence of leasing, must ensure no detriment from the proposals impacting on communities and individuals. It is unclear what consideration was given to other methods of achieving the desired outcomes.

Trusts

19. There are questions around the need to form Trusts to hold funds.
20. It has been suggested that Scottish Government could give Forest Enterprise "trading status" and allow it to hold over such funds for the purpose of climate change. This may provide for greater flexibility.

General re questions 4, 5, and 6.

21. Argyll and Bute Council, in partnership with the Forestry Commission and Scottish Enterprise Forest Industries Cluster, are currently commissioning a new Indicative Forest Strategy (IFS) for Argyll and Bute, excluding the loch

Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

22. This strategy is looking at all aspects of the future of forestry (private and public), as it affects our area, including for example; identifying new afforestation opportunities, the incorporation of renewable energy (biomass), tackling timber transport issues and the development of forest crofts. This will accord with Circular 9/1999 (currently being revised by the Scottish Government) and the Scottish Forestry Strategy aims. Given the lack of detail it is unclear if the ability to deliver the outcomes identified in the locally developed IFS will be compromised.
23. A major concern already identified is the fact that over 90% of the existing forest product is exported from our area, normally by road, with no added value being applied. If this situation is allowed to continue then the expansion of forestry will simply add to the emissions generated by this transportation method and will significantly impact on climate change. This reinforces the point that although there are costs to Argyll and Bute there is a need for added value to be invested in the communities of Argyll and Bute.
24. It is our belief that the future forest management policy should be integrated with the broader land management pattern and spatial planning objectives. The importance of climate change must be assessed in context with other objectives such as the need for reducing transport and producing food locally. The IFS is one way of achieving this.
25. The Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) was recently agreed with the European Union but the level of support, particularly relating to forestry and agriculture, was limited. A report of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Independent Inquiry into the future of Scotland's hills and islands sets out very clearly the issues preventing the achievement of Scottish government targets for woodland expansion. The IFS is one vehicle for improving take up of SRDP related to increasing /enhancing forestry and woodlands.
26. There is an urgent need to ensure the sustainability of population and employment in rural areas. The allocation of additional resources to those which are currently approved to help achieve woodland expansion and targets, as well as to sustain agricultural activity in all our remote, rural areas of Scotland requires endorsement by the EU.