

## **Economy Thematic CPP Group - Development of Community Plan**

### **1. Summary**

This paper sets out for consideration potential narrative for the Economy section of the Community Plan 2009-13 and in doing so highlights three areas of focus for the Economy Thematic Group.

### **2. Recommendation**

That the Economy Thematic Group considers the attached draft proposed narrative for the Community Plan 2009-13.

### **3. Detail**

It has been agreed to proceed with a Community Planning structure on the basis of 3 thematic groups – covering (1) Social Affairs (2) Environment and (3) Economy. There is the potential for overlap between the three groups and also for potential overlap with the Area groups. As matters progress, it may be necessary to identify areas of overlap/common interest, and agree a lead group for each such area. In general, however, matters are not yet at this stage.

Both the CPP thematic groups and the mirror Council Policy and Performance Groups (PPG's) should, focus on the same basic areas of activity, and be interested in the same general outcomes. There will, of course, be differences – given that the CPP thematic groups will be looking at wider issues/outcomes, across the whole partnership, while the PPGs will focus more on issues contained in the Council's corporate plan.

If the basic premise of securing a common approach in terms of identifying major issues is accepted, then it is possible to identify specific areas of focus and subsequently, measures which can be used to assess progress against these. In terms of the economy, preliminary discussions have led to three areas being identified:

- Sectors with growth opportunities – our sustainable economic assets – focus on renewables plus tourism, food and drink and marine science;
- Town centres – working towards our towns being vibrant centres of economic activity and the quality of our built environment complementing our outstanding natural environment;
- Supporting business growth;

Suggested narrative, based on the three themes is attached at appendix 1.

Views on the suitability of these topics/issues and on the measures which may be identified as providing outcome indicators in terms of performance are invited.

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Highlands & Islands Enterprise  
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## Potential Narrative for Economy Chapter of Community Plan

### Ambition

Creating employment and prosperity by developing:

- our sustainable economic assets
- vibrant towns that are centres of economic activity
- competitive and successful businesses

We shall create jobs and wealth across all of Argyll and Bute by realising the potential of our sustainable economic assets. The greatest opportunities are currently in **Renewable Energy** and we shall develop the **Renewable Energy** Industry in order that our area is at the forefront of renewables manufacturing and development. We shall also assist the development of other sustainable economic assets that are linked with our outstanding local environment, primarily: **Tourism**; **Food and Drink**; and **Marine Science**.

We will strive to make our towns places of economic vibrancy that create employment and prosperity for their residents and those living in their rural surroundings. Our towns are endowed with beautiful locations, fine heritage, strong communities and many ambitious businesses. The significant potential of our **towns as vibrant centres of economic activity** that contribute to the wider wellbeing of Argyll and Bute and Scotland needs to be unlocked.

We will **assist businesses** in Argyll and Bute to develop and grow in order to create wealth and employment in our communities. We will provide business advice and support to people who aspire to start their own business and to existing enterprises. We will provide additional support to those businesses that have the greatest potential for creating jobs and wealth at a national and international level and can contribute to the **business competitiveness and success** of Argyll and Bute and Scotland.

### Examples of Delivering Ambition

**Welcon Towers** – Following the announced closure of the Vestas plant at Machrihanish in August 2008, key partners including HIE, Argyll & Bute Council and Scottish Development International (SDI) mobilised to identify options to secure the jobs at stake. A potential purchaser of the facility was identified and Welcon Towers Ltd took over the former Vestas wind tower manufacturing factory at Machrihanish in March 2009. We shall continue to work with Welcon to support the expansion of the facility, increasing direct employment opportunities and maximising prospects for related activity. Our aim is to position Argyll at the forefront of renewables manufacturing and development.

**CHORD** – Argyll and Bute Council has agreed an ambitious regeneration programme in five of its waterfront towns - Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon. The Council has agreed to allocate more than £30 million to the programme, since named 'CHORD'. The initiative will see major improvements to the town centres and waterfronts of all five towns

**Business Gateway** - This new service has been established to assist residents of Argyll and Bute convert their ambitions of starting a business into a reality and also provide support and advice to existing local businesses. This support is delivered via an experienced team of local business advisors, tailored courses, a state of the art website and access to a national business information service.

**Another example – Marine Science Dunstaffnage** – A priority for HIE is to build upon the international reputation and expertise of the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) and successful emerging businesses located at Dunstaffnage to create an economic driver for Argyll & Bute. Marine Science has been recognised as a sector with significant growth potential in global terms. By supporting the expansion of commercial activities through the creation of a new Science Park, expanding the education and research base, we will create an international centre of excellence for marine science delivering high value employment opportunities able to retain and attract highly skilled young people in the area.

**Opportunities and Challenges** – Argyll & Bute is not immune from the current economic circumstances. In challenging economic times it is more important than ever that the limited public funds are used to maximum effect. In particular we must balance support that sustains local activity with the need to focus on the key sectors and businesses that can create long term sustainable economic growth that will increase prosperity and opportunities across Argyll & Bute.

**Working in Partnership to Deliver for Argyll and Bute** – Effective partnership working requires focus on common objectives. The Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement provide a framework for working together effectively. This does not mean that all partners need to be involved in everything; but it does require greater co-operation amongst partners and communities, better alignment of priorities and clearer communication mechanisms that the new community Planning Structure provides.