

**MINUTES of MEETING of ECONOMY THEMATIC CPP GROUP held in the COUNCIL
CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on WEDNESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2011**

Present: Councillor Ron Simon (Chair)

Councillor Alister MacAlister, Argyll and Bute Council
Councillor Donald MacMillan, Argyll and Bute Council
Councillor Elaine Robertson, Argyll and Bute Council
Robert Pollock, Argyll and Bute Council
Sue Gledhill, HIE
Anthony Standing, Skills Development Scotland
Frances Webster, Skills Development Scotland
Jane MacLeod, Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce

Attending: Shirley MacLeod, Argyll and Bute Council
Jane Fowler, Argyll and Bute Council
Ishabel Bremner, Argyll and Bute Council
David Clements, Argyll and Bute Council
Lisa Bond, Argyll and Bute Council
Eileen Wilson, Community Planning Manager
Ian Davison Porter, Business Improvement Districts Scotland

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillor Alex McNaughton, David Cannon, Caledonian MacBrayne and Douglas Cowan, HIE.

Shirley MacLeod advised that Bill Dundas from the Scottish Government was unable to attend the meeting today to give his presentation on the Agriculture Industry in Argyll and Bute and it was agreed to invite him to give this presentation to the Group at the next meeting in May 2011.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Economy Thematic CPP Group meeting held on 23 November 2010 were approved as a correct record.

4. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Ian Davison Porter, Director of Business Improvement Districts Scotland gave a very informative presentation on this initiative which was established in 2009 to support and encourage the development and operation of Business Improvement Districts across Scotland. BIDS leads the Scottish Government's BID programme and is the national organisation for BIDS in Scotland. Ian explained the process and basic principles of developing a BID and referred to a number of established BIDS across Scotland and developing BIDS including Oban - tourism

town centre; Dunoon town centre/peninsula; and Mull – food producers.

Ian also responded to a number of questions in response to his presentation.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the presentation and thanked Ian for his contribution to the meeting; and
2. Agreed that there was a need for the Council to develop a strategy for dealing with BIDS in the Argyll and Bute area.

5. ECONOMY THEMATIC CPP GROUP SCORECARD

A report summarising the recommendations of the working group set up to look at the current Economy Thematic CPP Group Scorecard was considered.

Decision

1. Agreed that the current Scorecard be amended to include the new measures set out in report at paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 ;
2. Noted that Ishabel Bremner would liaise with Partners in respect of further appropriate measures being included in the Scorecard to reflect the economic health of the area; and
3. Noted that the revised Scorecard would be brought to the next meeting in May 2011.

(Reference: Report by Thematic Lead, submitted)

6. PARTNER UPDATES ON CPP PLAN

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

Skills Development Scotland

School Leaver Destination Report

Anthony Standing referred to the contents of this report which was based on pupils who left school in December 2009 and August 2010. He advised that a follow up survey was currently being compiled and that a copy of the report was available to view on the SDS website.

PACE - the Scottish Government's national strategic partnership framework for responding to redundancy situations. Skills Development Scotland leads PACE at a national level, facilitating local response teams to provide tailored help and support for individuals at risk of, or experiencing, redundancy.

Frances Webster advised that SDS were currently working very closely with Argyll and Bute Council to support people whose lives will change as a result of cuts to the Council's budget and referred to workshops which will be delivered to staff facing redundancy. Frances also advised that they were working with staff of Machrie Hotel on Islay and they were working closely with Job Centre Plus to map where small business are and that a PACE report was being worked on which will show which sectors are most affected by the current economic climate. It was noted that they were also working with Skycon to pull together a workforce profile to see what the workforce had to offer in terms of skills.

Scottish Tourism Week

Anthony advised that SDS, Job Centre Plus and Springboard were working together for Scottish Tourism Week and were hosting an event in the Soroba House Hotel, Oban on 1 March 2011.

LANTRA

Anthony referred to LANTRA which was hosting events for organisations on how land based centres work.

Service Delivery Agreement

Anthony advised that he was working with Ishabel Bremner on this and that a workshop was being held in March 2011.

Argyll and Bute Council

Business Gateway

Ishabel reported that ongoing year to date (YTD) delivery with regard to start-up and existing businesses supported was as follows:

- start-up businesses supported – actual of 134 YTD against an annual target of 150:

with 60 starts supported YTD in Helensburgh and Lomond the annual target of 56 has already been exceeded;

for the remaining areas within Argyll and Bute, 74 starts have been supported YTD against an annual target of 94; and

- existing businesses supported - actual of 269 YTD against an annual target of 225. A significant increase was seen in November and December 2010, due primarily to existing businesses attending the popular e-commerce and website building workshops held in Inveraray, Dunoon and Oban.

Business Gateway workshop delivery during the third quarter of 2010/11 was as follows:

- one Awareness Raising Seminar in Oban;
- 10 Business Start-up modules in Oban, Dunoon and Campbeltown;
- four Practical Book-keeping workshops in Dunoon, Oban, Campbeltown and Inveraray;
- four HMRC Reduce Your Tax Bill workshops in Dunoon, Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown;
- three HMRC Self Assessment workshops in Campbeltown, Oban and Inveraray;
- three Making the Most of Online Trading workshops in Oban, Dunoon and Inveraray;
- four Build Your Own Business Website workshops in Inveraray, Dunoon and Oban and;
- lastly an Advanced Web Building workshop was in held in Inveraray for those attendees who attended the Build Your Own Business Website workshop that had gone on to develop their site and needed further guidance.

Ishabel advised that overall customer satisfaction is very high. Analysed feedback to November 2010, recorded that 81% of workshop attendees thought the workshops delivered were “excellent” and 18% rated the workshops as “good”.

The pilot Competitive Business Growth Programme (CBGP) was soft launched in August and promoted via series of roadshows in September and advertising in December 2010. As a new scheme, it has taken time for awareness to grow. In December 2010 the LEADER Local Action Group approved the request for the pilot’s application deadline to be extended until 30 September 2011, giving more time to promote the pilot and achieve its projected outcomes and evidence based learning. (Fit for Growth is the comparable programme delivered in the Helensburgh and Lomond area).

The CBGP Business Networking event took place in Oban on the 2nd February 2011 (postponed on 8th December 2010 due to the bad weather) with guest speaker, Fraser Doherty, Superjam. Business Gateway received some very positive feedback from businesses that attended the event such as “I thought the networking event was both informative and inspirational and it was a great opportunity to talk to business people from many different sectors - all of whom share a common goal - to be successful and prosperous in Argyll and contribute to the local economy.” Linda Battison, Oban & Lorn Tourism Association.

Business Gateway are also working in conjunction with the Council’s Procurement Team to hold supplier development events across the Council area during May 2011. These events will follow on from supplier workshops being held in March 2011 by the Procurement Team involving small groups of suppliers and contractors who are experienced in bidding for work and are able to work with the Procurement Team to identify barriers that exist within the procurement process for local companies.

Renewables

Ishabel advised that the Renewable Energy Action Plan Executive Summary had been produced and disseminated and had been well received. She also advised that the first meeting of the Argyll and Bute Renewables Alliance (ABRA) would be held in March 2011.

Access Road and Housing at Dunbeg

Ishabel advised on progress with this.

HIE

Skycon

Sue Gledhill reported that production continued in order to fulfil current contracts.

Argyll Marine Science Park

Sue advised that the procurement process was underway to appoint new contractors and it was expected that contractors would be on site in late summer 2011.

Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce

Heart of Tourism Alliance

Jane MacLeod advised that Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce were working with the newly formed Heart of Tourism Alliance, a tourism marketing group which was set up from spare cash from the Dalriada Project and that a promotional event would take place on 11 March 2011 hosted by the Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce.

Business Breakfasts

Jane also referred to successful business breakfasts they had hosted including one with Mike Russell, MSP and another with Alan Reid, MP, Michael Moore MP and Councillor Alison Hay in which a number of topics were discussed including: burden of employment legislation; increased VAT rate, pensions, renewables, state of the roads and the banking sector.

Decision

1. Noted the updates provided by Partners; and
2. Agreed that Skills Development Scotland would give a presentation to the Group in May 2011 covering youth destinations including physical destinations and modern apprenticeships.

7. HIGHLIGHT AND EXCEPTION REPORTS

(a) STRATEGIC HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES FORUM

Consideration was given to a Highlight and Exception report prepared by the Strategic Housing and Communities Forum.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Strategic Housing and Communities Forum dated 10 January 2011, submitted)

(b) ARGYLL AND ISLES LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP

Consideration was given to a Highlight and Exception report prepared by the Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Noted that the number of projects the Argyll and the Islands LEADER Programme has funded is 157 and not 162 as detailed in the report.

(Reference: Report by Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group dated 12 January 2011, submitted)

(c) STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP LIST FOR HIGHLIGHT AND EXCEPTION REPORTING

Consideration was given to the revised Strategic Partnership List for Highlight and Exception Reporting submitted by Eileen Wilson, Community Planning Manager. The Group were asked to suggest any areas in which the list could be rationalised.

Decision

Noted the contents of the list and that this will be updated following recommendations made at the other Thematic CPP Groups.

(Reference: Strategic Partnership List for Highlight and Exception Reporting updated February 2011, submitted)

8. LOCAL EMPLOYABILITY PARTNERSHIP GROUP

Consideration was given to a request from the Local Employability Partnership Group to nominate a representative from the Community Planning Partnership to work with Skills Development Scotland on the procurement and contracting process for Get Ready to Work and Training for Work in Argyll and Bute.

Decision

Noted that due to the short timescale involved Eileen Wilson had represented the Community Planning Partnership at a meeting to take this tendering process forward and that the outcome of this would be reported to the Group at the next meeting in May 2011.

(Reference: Email dated 24 January 2011 from George Maxwell, SDS, submitted)

9. COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP AUDIT 2011

Consideration was given to a report advising that Audit Scotland has announced that there will be an audit of the Community Planning Partnership and that it will focus on the role of the Partnership in supporting sustainable economic growth.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report and noted that the Council will coordinate the response to Audit Scotland in consultation with Partners.

(Reference: Report by Community Planning Manager, submitted)

Councillor Donald MacMillan left the meeting.

10. UPDATE ON COUNCIL REDUNDANCIES

Jane Fowler advised that of 474 posts identified to be cut as part of the Council's Service Review and budget fewer than 20 of those posts would see staff at risk from compulsory redundancy and that those staff affected would not leave the Council until at least June and that it was hoped that before then there would be the potential for those staff to be redeployed elsewhere.

Jane advised that in respect of the other posts identified to be cut staff in those posts had either gone through a process of redeployment, applied for voluntary redundancy, or had variations made to their contract.

Jane advised that a separate consultation on the Education Non Estate Review was still ongoing which would affect classroom assistants, music tutors and non teaching employees.

Decision

Noted the update provided.

Anthony Standing left the meeting.

11. SUPPORT FOR REDUNDANT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

A report informing the Group of the arrangements the Council is making to support employees whose employment may be terminated as a result of redundancy on a compulsory, or voluntary, basis was considered.

Decision

Noted the arrangements the Council is making to provide information and advice to employees whose employment may be terminated as a result of redundancy.

(Reference: Report by Head of Improvement and Strategic HR, submitted)

12. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

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

Decision

Agreed the current work programme and that the following items would be placed on the agenda of the next meeting scheduled to take place on Wednesday 25 May 2011 –

Theme – Youth Employment

Report on outcome of evaluation of RET (if available)

Partner Updates

New Economy Thematic CPP Group Scorecard

Presentation by SDS on Youth Destinations/Modern Apprenticeships

Progress report on SDS Get Ready for Work and Training for work contract

SDS Progress Report

Presentation by Bill Dundas on Agriculture Industry in Argyll and Bute
Strategic Timber Transport Funding