
The Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance – Progress Report

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** The Renewable Energy sector has the potential to fundamentally and positively transform the economy and communities of Argyll and Bute. In order to achieve this outcome the Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP), approved by the CPP 16th June 2010, was developed from a key action in the Argyll and Bute Community Plan 2009-2013, to facilitate a co-ordinated partnership approach to renewable development in Argyll and Bute. One of the key actions identified within the REAP to facilitate this co-ordinated approach, was the establishment of the Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance (ABRA).
- 1.2** The ABRA terms of reference, drawn up in consultation with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, were presented to the CPP Management Committee 15th December 2010 for endorsement.
- 1.3** Following this, formal invitations were distributed to all proposed members, as stated in the terms of reference. A positive response was received from all partners, and subsequently the inaugural meeting was progressed 18th March 2011, at which it was agreed to hold three meetings per annum. The second meeting was recently held 22nd June, and the final in 2011 is scheduled for 28th October. Progress reports shall be submitted following agreement of the action points from each meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** The Management Committee note the progress of ABRA to date, including the key topics and issues identified for discussion and the action points arising from these.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1** ABRA brings together key partners including Argyll and Bute Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Government, Marine Scotland, Scottish Power Renewables, Scottish and Southern Energy, Crown Estate Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage and Skills Development Scotland. The alliance will ensure a strategic overview of renewable development and a greater awareness of all the issues relating to this development, across Argyll and Bute, and Scotland, as well as assist with

implementation of the REAP.

- 3.2** A positive response was expressed by all partners from the inaugural meeting, who strongly supported the terms of reference of the alliance, and agreed that Argyll and Bute had put its 'best foot forward' in this approach.
- 3.3** The inaugural meeting provided partners with an opportunity to highlight their own organisations activities and priorities in respect of renewable development, and the implications of these, as well as view some of the work ongoing, within Argyll and Bute. It also focused discussions on ways in which to maximise the opportunities for everyone involved, not least the communities within Argyll and Bute, and Scotland.
- 3.4** From these initial discussions partners identified a number key themes and cross-cutting issues, which will inform future priorities of the alliance.
- 3.5** The second meeting of the alliance built upon the key themes and issues identified from the inaugural meeting. The key agenda items were transmission, the work of HIE, and port and harbour infrastructure requirements – considering the future needs of the industry to support and develop offshore wind and marine renewable energy projects.
- 3.6** There was active engagement in the discussions that followed, with all partners highlighting potential barriers to the development of this sector, and ways of working more closely together to progress the actions required to address these issues.
- 3.7** Partners concluded there that is a need for more coordinated and joined up discussions, between public and private sectors, in order to; recognise collective requirements and allow alignment of investment plans, create a common understanding of needs and challenges, as well as ensuring decisions are connected at a local and national level, supporting future proofing of respective investment plans, securing synergy and VFM.
- 3.8** A number of positive actions were agreed to assist in achieving this. Partners will now consider the role of ABRA in developing a common position towards key renewable developments and issues, such as transmission and distribution, and port and harbour infrastructure requirements, outlining how ABRA intends to assist coordination of partner planning and investment. Partners will also work together to identify key priorities, which will inform the forthcoming review of the REAP, in order to produce a plan which is focused and based on collective outcomes.
- 3.9** Progress with these actions will be reviewed at the next meeting of the alliance, 28th October 2011, where the topics for discussion will be communications, socio-economic benefit, skills and coordinating

decisions for future port and harbour infrastructure requirements.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1** A positive response has been received by all partners from the meetings of ABRA to date. Partners have agreed that there is a need to ensure the alliance is outcome driven.
- 4.2** The actions arising will see partners work more closely to secure alignment of partner plans, objectives and future investment, in order to develop a clear understanding not only of the barriers to the delivery of our vision as outlined in the REAP, but also the best options for working in partnership to overcome these barriers at a strategic level.
- 4.3** The next ABRA progress report will be submitted to the CPP Management Committee 14th December 2011, following agreement of the action points arising from the meeting of the alliance 28th October 2011.

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