

**MINUTES of MEETING of ECONOMY THEMATIC CPP GROUP held in the COUNCIL
CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on WEDNESDAY, 31 AUGUST 2011**

Present: Councillor Ron Simon (Chair)
Councillor Alister MacAlister
Councillor Donald MacMillan
Councillor Alex McNaughton
Douglas Cowan, Highland and Islands Enterprise (Thematic Lead)
Robert Pollock, Argyll and Bute Council
David Cannon, Calendonian MacBrayne
Jane MacLeod, Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce
Bill Stewart, Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network

Attending: Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager
Ishabel Bremner, Economic Development Manager
Eileen Wilson, Community Planning Manager
Jonathan Welch, Transport Planner
Mike Johnston, Best Value Officer
Bill Dundas, SG Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated from Councillor Elaine Robertson, Frances Webster, Skills Development Scotland, Anthony Standing, Skills Development Scotland and David McGilp, Visit Scotland.

Having noted the apologies of both Frances Webster and Anthony Standing, it was agreed to continue consideration of the reports regarding Completion and Drop Out Rates of Apprenticeships and Contracting for Get Ready for Work to the next meeting of the Group scheduled to take place on 29 November 2011.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Economy Thematic CPP Group meeting held on 25 May 2011 were approved as a correct record.

4. PRESENTATION ON THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY/SRDP GRANT SCHEME

The Group welcomed Bill Dundas to the meeting and heard a very informative presentation from him on Agriculture in Argyll and Bute. He presented some statistical information in respect of Agriculture in Argyll and Bute ranging from the numbers and different types of farming/crofts across the area as well as employment figures. He also advised on the challenges faced by the industry as well as the opportunities in the current

economic climate. Bill also provided information on the SRDP Grant Scheme, a programme for delivering public support to land managers and communities of rural Scotland from 2007 – 2013.

Bill also responded to a number of questions arising from his presentation.

Decision

Noted the contents of the presentation.

5. ECONOMY THEMATIC CPP GROUP SCORECARD

Consideration was given to the new layout and content of the Economy Thematic CPP Group Scorecard on Pyramid which provided links to the EDAP 2011 and included a number of Economic Indicators.

Decision

Noted the contents and agreed that a hard copy of current information would be circulated to the Group in advance of the next meeting.

6. PARTNER UPDATES ON CPP PLAN

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

Argyll and Bute Council

CHORD Programme

Robert Pollock advised on progress with each of the following projects:-

Rothesay - he advised that good progress was being made with the Rothesay Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and that £2.6m had been secured for the regeneration of Rothesay. He also advised that the FBC for the redevelopment and refurbishment of Rothesay Pavilion was now complete.

Helensburgh - the Council planned to invest £6.5m in Helensburgh for environmental, streetscape and waterfront improvements and that the FBC was going before the Council's Executive in September 2011 for approval.

Campbeltown – he advised that work had begun on the Old Schoolhouse in Campbeltown with funding from Campbeltown THI and ERDF and he also referred to the reconfiguration of the Kinloch Road and confirmed that the land transfer agreement had been concluded with ACHA allowing the Campbeltown Infrastructure improvements for road and harbour facilities to move forward.

Dunoon – Robert referred to a successful workshop which had been held in Dunoon on 30 August 2011 to look at developing the FBC for Dunoon and advised that approximately £9m of investment was planned to

refurbish the Queens Hall and landscaping around this, road realignment and that harbour facilities including the old Dunoon Pier would also be looked at.

The Lorn Arc Project

Robert advised the Group of a Scottish Government and Scottish Futures Trust initiative to deliver economic growth by enabling Local Authorities to fund public infrastructure to encourage regeneration and growth. The approach is known as Tax Incremental Finance and Robert advised of the Council's bid for TIF Funding which relates to infrastructure investment that will stimulate the economic development within Oban (the extension of Oban's North pier and the road infrastructure) which was submitted on 19 August 2011 following approval by the Executive on 11 August 2011. He advised that this package of infrastructure has been named the Lorn Arc and will aim to stimulate economic development in the Oban, Dunstaffnage, Dunbeg, North Connel and Barcaldine area. He concluded that confirmation on whether or not the Council's bid would be successful to enable to progress to the development of a business case for the project would be known towards the end of September 2011.

Renewables

Robert advised that the second meeting of the Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance (ABRA) had taken place on 22 June 2011 and that this meeting had focussed on issues relating to transmission (capacity and charging), the work undertaken by the HIE Renewables team and port and infrastructure requirements relating to the off-shore wind sector.

Business Gateway

Ishabel Bremner advised that for the first quarter of 2011/12, business start ups supported was 33 against a target of 35 and that they were broken down as follows:

- 6 MAKI versus a target of 7; compared with 4 last year
- 3 OLI versus a target of 7; compared with 11 last year
- 3 B & C versus a target of 7; compared with 15 last year
- 17 H & L versus a target of 14; compared with 19 last year

She also advised that the number of existing businesses supported with advice or workshops was 115 (excluding H & L) in the first quarter of 2011/12 and that they were broken down as follows:

- 58 MAKI versus an annual target of 84
- 46 OLI versus an annual target of 83
- 11 B&C versus an annual target of 83

Ishabel also advised that this quarter saw the launch of pilot Procurement workshops in Oban, Dunoon, Inveraray and Islay. These were co-ordinated by Business Gateway but delivered by the Council's Procurement Team. In total, 36 people attended and feedback was

excellent with over 92% of the feedback sheets completed rating the event as good or excellent.

Cal Mac

David Cannon advised that Cal Mac had been won the Public Transport Operator of the Year Award for the second year running. He also advised of the new ship which had been delivered to Islay. He confirmed that CMAL were progressing with works at Kennacraig, Port Ellen and Port Askaig. In respect of the Dunoon – Gourock passenger ferry, he confirmed that David MacBrayne Subsidiaries had won the contract and that they were faced with running a passenger only service from vehicular services and thanked Argyll and Bute Council for their support with this. He referred to the positive meeting held on 23 August 2011 with Argyll and Bute Council, Inverclyde Council and other interested parties regarding the ferry service and advised of a steering group that had been set up to look at infrastructure requirements. He reported that they had successfully transported 7,000 passengers to the Cowal Games on 27 August 2011. David also confirmed that a letter of support for the Council's bid for TIF funding was being sent from Cal Mac to the Scottish Minister.

Argyll and Bute Scottish Enterprise Network (ABSEN)

Bill Stewart advised that he was currently involved with arrangements for the ABSEN AGM and Conference being held in Rothesay on 5, 6 and 7 October 2011. He referred to workshops that ABSEN had run for Children and Families and Recycling Groups. He advised that ABSEN continued to support new, existing and potential Social Enterprises and that 7 new Members had joined in the last 3 months which exceeded targets.

Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce

Jane MacLeod confirmed that they were also in the process of writing a letter supporting the Council's bid for TIF funding and that this would be forwarded to the Scottish Minister in the next few days. She advised that it was too early to report figures from Members and that more information would be available at the next meeting. Jane also referred to the Housing summit held in Inveraray on 26 August 2011 which looked at housing and construction problems across Argyll and Bute. She advised on a number of issues that had been raised including Procurement and the issue of community benefit clauses. She confirmed that a list of the issues raised would be drawn up and forwarded to the Scottish Government.

HIE

Douglas Cowan confirmed that Wind Towers Ltd were now up and running at the wind turbine tower manufacturing and assembly plant in Machrihanish. He advised that HIE were currently working with the community on the disposal of the base at Machrihanish and he also referred to the European Marine Science Park. Douglas also advised that he expected the new Scottish Government Economic Strategy in a

couple of weeks. In respect of customer facing tourism businesses reports on visitor numbers were mixed. He advised that margins were getting tighter and profitability was down a bit. He reported that engineering, energy and business services were doing well across HIE and that businesses involved in exporting have seen particularly high growth.

Decision

Noted Partner updates.

(Reference: Highlight and Exception report by Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network dated 18 August 2011, submitted)

7. HIGHLIGHT AND EXCEPTION REPORTS

(a) ARGYLL AND BUTE STRATEGIC HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES FORUM

Consideration was given to a highlight and exception report provided by the Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing and Communities Forum.

Decision

Noted the activity that was undertaken by the Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing and Communities Forum during the period April – July 2011 and the key challenges and actions to be addressed in the future.

(Reference: Report by Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing and Communities Forum dated 28 July 2011, submitted)

(b) ARGYLL AND THE ISLANDS LEADER LOCAL ACTION GROUP

Consideration was given to a highlight and exception report provided by the Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group.

Decision

Noted the activity that was undertaken by the Argyll and the Islands Local Action Group during the period 1 May – 31 July 2011 and the key challenges and actions to be addressed in the future.

(Reference: Report by Argyll and the Islands LEADER Local Action Group dated 22 August 2011, submitted)

Bill Dundas and Jane MacLeod left the meeting.

8. INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED ON CPP WEB PAGES

Eileen Wilson confirmed that the Thematic pages were now on the Council website and that more information on the activities being looked at by the Thematic Groups needed to be included and that it would be

useful to look at the best way of populating the Thematic pages with this information.

Decision

Agreed that at the end of each future meeting of the Group a decision would be taken on whether or not any items discussed at the meeting should be included on the Thematic pages of the Council website and that information on these items would be forwarded to the Web team for inclusion on the web page.

9. ARGYLL TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP AND STRATEGIC TIMBER TRANSPORT FUNDING

Jonathan Welch spoke to the terms of his report which provided information on the Argyll Timber Transport Group, Agreed Routes Map and Pre Conditions, Strategic Timber Transport Funding and the role of the Argyll Timber Transport Group Project Officer.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Transport Planner, Argyll and Bute Council, submitted)

10. UPDATING OF SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

Eileen Wilson confirmed that Officers were currently looking at combining the CPP and SOA for 2012/13 which would be more outcome driven. She explained that the plan was for this to be a one year document and that it would be ready to implement by April 2012. She confirmed that once the new Council was in place following the May 2012 elections the combined Plan would be revisited.

Decision

Noted the update and that a further report would be brought on progress with this to the next meeting.

11. ROAD EQUIVALENT TARIFF (RET) BRIEFING NOTE

Consideration was given to a report advising of the background to the Scottish Government's RET pilot, the impact to date on those communities involved and the costs of extending the pilot in the future.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Strategic Transport Manager, Argyll and Bute Council, submitted)

12. THE ARGYLL AND BUTE RENEWABLE ALLIANCE - PROGRESS REPORT

Consideration was given to a progress report on the Argyll and Bute Renewable Alliance which had previously been before the CPP Management Committee.

Decision

Noted the contents to the report.

(Reference: Report by Development Projects and Renewables Manager, Argyll and Bute Council, submitted)

13. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

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

Decision

Agreed that the following items would be included on the agenda for the next meeting on 29 November 2011:-

Partner Updates
Performance Management – Scorecard
Future Work Programme
Highlight and Exception Reports
Completion and Drop Out Rates of Apprenticeships
Contracting for Get Ready for Work
Info to be included on Thematic web page
SOA/ CPP
Rural Broadband

The Chair advised that consideration would be given to moving the Theme of Housing and Planning to the February 2012 meeting.