



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Offices, Stornoway, on Wednesday 1 May 2019 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT	Mr Donald F. Crichton (Chair) Mr Norman MacDonald (Vice-Chair) Mr Iain A MacNeil Mr Roddy Mackay Mr Uisdean Robertson Mr Finlay Cunningham Mr Norman A. Macdonald	Mr Alasdair Macleod Mr Iain M Macaulay Mr Gordon Murray Mr Roddie Mackay Mr John A Maciver Mr John Mackay
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE	Mr Rae Mackenzie Mr Charlie Nicolson	Mr Kenny John Macleod
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE	Mr Malcolm Burr Mr Robert Emmott Mr Joe Macphee Mr John Cunningham Mr Domhnall MacDonald Mr Pete Middleton Mrs Kathlene Morrison Mrs Mairi Maciver	Mrs Anne Macdonald Ms Catherine Maclean Ms Charlene Macmillan Mrs Dolina Macleod Mr Colin G. Morrison Mrs Fiona Maciver Miss Mairi Sine Macdonald Mr David L Chisholm

Welcome The Chairman welcomed Colin Gilmour, Chair of Outer Hebrides LEADER and Local Action Group to the Meeting.

Prayer The Meeting was preceded by prayer, led by Mr Charlie Nicolson.

MINUTES

- Minute of Meeting of 27 February 2019 1 The Minute of Meeting of 27 February 2019 was **approved**.
- Declaration of Interest 2 Mr Donald F Crichton declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 3 as a member of the Leader Local Action Group (LAG) and remained in the meeting during consideration of the item 3.

PRESENTATION

- Outer Hebrides LEADER and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Programme 2016-2020 3 With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 February 2019 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an overview and impact of the LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement Économique Rurale or Links between Activities Developing Rural Communities) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Programmes in the Outer Hebrides. The Report stated that to date LEADER had supported over 730 projects, allocated a total of £11.63m LEADER funding, attracted over £22m of additional match funding currently worth over £34.3m to the Outer Hebrides economy. The Report further stated that in the 2014-2020 programming period the Outer Hebrides had been awarded £528k for the sustainable development of fisheries areas supporting eight projects to date and allocating £244k funding for projects worth £1.2m to the area with pipeline projects expected to fully commit the fund.

The Report highlighted a requirement for the Outer Hebrides to identify and establish

alternative methods of support to alleviate the loss of the receipt of European funding in the UK to assist in sustaining the development of the local economy and its proactive rural communities.

Colin Gilmour, Chair of Outer Hebrides LEADER Local Action Group gave a Presentation to the Committee which provided an overview of the LEADER and EMFF 2014-20 Programmes following which Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions.

The Presentation provided background on LEADER and its objectives which had been in existence through five programmes since 1991 and details of the number of projects and funding over the years. It highlighted that the Outer Hebrides current Programme 2014-2020 attracted the most public and private match funding in comparison to the other 21 Scottish LAGs and over the years had levered in at least £34.36m to the islands economy.

In regard to post 2020/Brexit the Presentation indicated that there was currently no information on any post 2020 UK Government plans for Community-led Local Development (CLLD) and whether a LEADER-type programme would be included in the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund. CLLD had been a key component in developing and sustaining rural communities and that support and engagement locally and nationally would be required to assist the Outer Hebrides LAG to develop a strategy for the future development of CLLD in the Outer Hebrides. Mr Gilmour paid tribute to the experienced and knowledgeable Comhairle staff involved in Leader and EMFF and to the Comhairle's support over the years which had attributed to the success of the OH LAG.

The Leader addressed the Committee and stated that future funding had been discussed at meetings of the Highlands and Islands Leaders Group and the Convention of the Highlands and Islands and there had been several meetings with Lord Ian Duncan. The Leader gave assurances that work was being progressed in respect of making a case to the Shared Prosperity Fund, set-up to reduce inequalities between communities. All Highlands and Islands Councils were involved and the Convention was putting together a paper co-ordinated by Deputy First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney to present to Ministers.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Colin Gilmour for the presentation and paid tribute to him and all the Comhairle staff involved in Leader and EMFF since its inception and acknowledged the positive economic impact across the islands since 1991.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance Management (Communities) 2018/19: Quarter 4

- 4 With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 February 2019 the Director for Communities and the Head of Economic Development submitted a Joint Report providing an overview of the Business Plan and related performance issues to mid-March 2019. The Report stated that as the present reporting period fell out-with the normal quarterly period, quarter 4 and the year-end financial position would be provided in the Performance Report to the June Committee. It was anticipated that all Business Units would out-turn to, or ahead of budget.

The Report stated that the Communities Department Plan covered six services areas of relevance to the Committee: Building Standards, Planning, Heritage, Sectoral and Project Support, Business and Regeneration Support, and Strategy and Energy Unit. The Report indicated that all Business Plan actions and KPIs relevant to the Committee were to target with the exception of two under Heritage and three in relation to Library Services. Only two complaints had been received during the last quarter, one of which had been resolved and the other was ongoing.

The Report highlighted the following areas:

- The Strategy and Energy Unit key activity would revolve around the OFGEM consultation on the Western Isles transmission links Needs Case (concurrent Report at item 14).
- Ongoing priorities for Economic Development and Planning included a successful Archaeology Symposium held in Uist; all Business Gateway KPI targets being exceeded and a successful outcome for RCGF Round 6 projects being announced (concurrent Report at item 9).

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle note the Report.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Outer Hebrides
Local Development
Plan: Development
Plan Scheme 2019

- 5 With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 April 2018 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking approval of the annual review of the Development Plan Scheme (DPS) which was a statutory requirement under the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. The DPS 2019 was detailed in the Appendix to the Report and set out the Comhairle's proposed programme and processes for preparing and reviewing its Development including the LDP and other associated and supporting documents.

The Report stated that the DPS would direct the work programme for the Development Plan team and, in line with Regulations, would be published and made available online and at the various deposit locations and copies sent to the Scottish Ministers. Further updates would be reported back to the Committee as the various pieces of work set out in the DPS progressed. It was noted that a Planning Seminar for Members had been scheduled for Tuesday 7 May 2019.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) approve the Outer Hebrides Development Plan Scheme 2019 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report; and**
- (2) authorise the Director for Communities to publish the Development Plan Scheme 2019.**

Planning Service
(Development
Management)

- 6 The Director for Communities submitted a Report seeking approval of funding for the delivery of the Planning Service due to increased demands arising from renewables related activity. The Report stated that the Service was experiencing an unprecedented workload associated with large scale renewables with no capacity within the existing team to deal with the volume or complexity of the work. A list of the renewables related casework expected in the coming year was detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

The Report provided information on the Planning Service and the impact on current resources to deliver renewables related work in addition to the regular work and detailed a proposal to recruit a permanent post of Planning Officer. The proposal had been agreed in accordance with the Establishment of Post Procedure and was the subject of a concurrent Report to Human Resources Committee on 2 May 2019.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree:

- (1) the utilisation of planning fee income to fund the post of Planning Officer (Grade I) for two years; and**
- (2) that future funding of the post be met from core budgets pending a full review of the Planning Service.**

FISHERIES

Scottish
Government
Consultation
Future of Fisheries
Management in
Scotland: National
Discussion Paper

- 7 The Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking approval of a Comhairle response to the Scottish Government consultation on Future of Fisheries Management in Scotland: National Discussion Paper. The Report stated that the National Discussion Paper was a comprehensive first stage of a longer process of discussion and collaboration to develop Scotland's Future Fisheries Management Strategy and provided a good opportunity to review fishing opportunities and ensure that Scottish fishing communities could access local fish stocks and derive maximum benefit from UK quotas.

The Report highlighted the key themes arising from the Marine Scotland Stakeholder meetings in 2017 in Section 6 to the Report. The Report further stated that the fish in Scottish seas were perceived as a public resource, with the rights to catch them regarded as a public asset, therefore it was recommended that assessment should be made of alternative quota allocation such as zonal attachment but also taking into account transparent economic and social criteria. It was further highlighted that the Comhairle had successfully operated a Community Quota Scheme for a number of years with nephrop quota held for the long term benefit of fishers wishing to access the sector on a lease basis annually.

The National Discussion Paper had been discussed by the Fisheries Joint Consultative

Committee (FJCC) on 12 April 2019 and subsequent to these discussions an initial draft response had been produced as detailed in the Appendix to the Report. Responses to the Discussion Paper would help shape the development of the Future Fisheries Management Strategy and Marine Scotland aimed to publish a formal consultation document in 2019 setting out an agreed shared vision with a set of concrete proposals and high level priorities to help guide fisheries management decisions over the coming years.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) agree the draft response to the Scottish Government Consultation on Future of Fisheries Management in Scotland: National Discussion Paper as detailed in the Appendix to the Report; and**
- (2) authorise the Head of Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with Fisheries stakeholders, to finalise the response for submission by 7 June 2019.**

HERITAGE SERVICES

Dualchas Airson
Daoine - Great
Place Project
Update

- 8 With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 September 2017 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an update on the progress of the Great Places Project. The Report stated that the Comhairle had secured grant investment of £156,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund Great Place Scheme in 2018 to develop a heritage and cultural asset strategy for the Outer Hebrides; and to identify strategic approaches to support and deliver appropriate heritage-led economic development, identifying infrastructure requirements and priorities. The Report further stated that a Project Manager had been appointed in November 2018; a project partnership steering group had been established to manage the delivery process, with a membership composed of heritage, arts and tourism organisations from across the Outer Hebrides and; The Lottery Heritage Fund (LHF) had appointed an external mentor to review and support the project.

The Report highlighted Pròiseact An Fhìor-àite Co-chomhairle (Great Place Project Symposium) due to be held in An Lanntair on 14 May 2019 and that community consultation exercises would be held over the next period throughout the Islands consisting of pop up workshops and activates to gain community input to ensure the project would deliver on its approved purposes. Assurances were given by the Head of Economic Development and Planning that a further symposium would be held in Uist and there was a commitment to engage with all partners, including Comann Eachdraidh.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Scottish
Government
Regeneration
Capital Grant Fund:
Comhairle Match
Funding Request

- 9 With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 December 2018, the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking approval of match-funding for projects which had been successful at Round-6 of the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF). The Report stated that the Comhairle had made successful applications to each of the six funding Rounds to-date, securing grants totalling £8m, with total project costs of over £27m.

The Report stated that successful Round 6 (Stage 2) applications had been announced in March 2019, securing £2.17m of RCGF funding for the 'Cnoc Soilleir' project in South Uist and the Bragar Old School Redevelopment 'Grinneabhat' project with a total value of £6.8m. The 'Great Bernera Marina Hub' project had been placed on a reserve-list with the stipulation that a bid could be made to start the project this year, should the project meet certain timescales. The Report further stated that Cnoc Soilleir required Comhairle match-funding of £200k, Great Bernera Marina Hub required £61,640. Match funding was not required for the Grinneabhat project. Approval of the Comhairle contribution would leave a balance of £117,360 in the Capital Match Fund.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle:

- (1) approve funding of £200,000 to the Cnoc Soilleir project from the Capital Match Fund; and**
- (2) approve £61,640 to Bernera Marina Hub project from the Capital Match Fund subject to formal approval of the project by the Scottish Government.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Scottish
Government
Economy Enterprise
and Fair Work
Committee: Inquiry
into Local Business
Support

- 10 The Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an update on the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee inquiry on business support and the potential for improved inter-agency collaboration across the Outer Hebrides. The Report stated that the Committee had explored the effectiveness and efficiency of Scotland's business support provision and had published a final Report on 20 February 2019. The inquiry had found that Business Gateway had evolved organically and did not perform the function that was initially intended and there was concern regarding the lack of transparency, accountability and alignment in relation to Business Gateway services. The Report recommended a number of ways in which this could be addressed (Section 7 to the Report), including publication of budget and performance information at local authority level. The Report further stated that some of the findings were at odds with the Comhairle's experience of how the Outer Hebrides Business Gateway had operated locally over the past decade. The Committee had asked the Scottish Government to review and consider whether the 'Irish model', or aspects of it, were applicable in the Scottish context to overcome current accountability and alignment challenges and the conclusions of that review would be available in due course and reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Report highlighted that the Comhairle was currently promoting deeper cross-agency working and discussions between the Comhairle and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) were ongoing with a view to closer collaborative working as part of the Economic Development and Planning service redesign proposals.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree:

- (1) to note the publication of the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee Report on its Inquiry into Business Support; and**
- (2) continue developing proposals for closer collaborative working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other agencies across the Outer Hebrides, as appropriate.**

Town Centre Fund

- 11 With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 September 2018 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an update on the Town Centre Fund Award and detailing proposals for prioritisation. The Report stated that the purpose of the Town Centre Fund Capital Grant was to enable local authorities to stimulate and support place based economic investments which encouraged town centres to diversify and flourish, creating footfall through local improvements and partnerships and would contribute to transformative investments which drove local economic activities and re-purpose town centres to become more diverse, successful and sustainable.

The Report further stated that in light of recent investments in Stornoway, Tarbert and Castlebay, it was proposed to prioritise funding to support and accelerate the delivery of the Balivanich Regeneration Strategy which had been endorsed by the Comhairle in September 2018. The proposal for a more flexible approach to consider areas other than Stornoway had been discussed with the Scottish Government and prioritising Balivanich met the conditions of grant as in relation to taking a 'town centre' approach to regeneration and to the Place Principle. The allocation of funds would be considered at future Meetings of the Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree to prioritise the Balivanich Regeneration Strategy for funding under the Town Centre Fund.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- Reports Outstanding 12 The Chief Executive submitted a Report detailing the Report outstanding arising from the decisions of the Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman ruled that in accordance with the provisions of Section 50 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the following two items be considered as a matter of urgency in order to allow the Comhairle to take a view on the matter prior to the next Series of Meetings.

- Minute of Meeting of Fisheries Joint Consultative Committee of 12 April 2019 13 The Minute of Meeting of Fisheries Joint Consultative Committee of 12 April 2019 was **noted**.

- Western Isles Transmission Link: Needs Case Consultation 14 The Director for Communities submitted a Report to seeking approval of a draft Comhairle response to OFGEM's 'minded to' view on Scottish Hydro Electric – Transmission's Final Needs Case for the Western Isles Transmission Link. The Report stated that in August 2018, on the strength of 418MW of renewable generation being already contracted to Grid in the Western Isles, Scottish Hydro Electric–Transmission (SHE-T) submitted a Final Needs Case to regulator, OFGEM, for authorisation to build a 600MW Radial Connector (Transmission Link) between National Grid at Beaulay and the island network at Arnish. Although a smaller, 450MW, cable module was available, SHE-T had requested OFGEM authorisation for some 'anticipatory investment' to 600MW to accommodate future Onshore Wind generation by the community and pre-commercial Marine Energy connections. The Report further stated that the economics of the 'anchor' projects at Stornoway, Eishken and Tolsta had been built around a cable capacity of 600MW and these schemes may only be viable if the generator paid a smaller share of cost recovery on a larger (600MW) cable rather than a larger share of cost recovery on a smaller (450MW) cable.

The Report indicated that OFGEM's decision was to reject a 600MW solution and approved a 450MW solution although OFGEM remained open to a 600MW solution if there was sufficiently strong evidence of future generation or if a third party bore the additional cost of a 600MW cable over a 450MW cable (estimated at between £27m and £45m or between 4.5% and 7.5% of contract cost).

The Comhairle's response was appended to the Report and strongly disagreed with OFGEM's decision to reject the case for a 600MW link and sought to lay out the case for additional generation over and above the 418MW already contracted to Grid. This included 88MW of community owned Onshore Wind and Pumped Storage currently in the Planning system to be connected to the grid from August 2019 and 34.3MW of existing Distribution connected generation being displaced to the new HVDC Radial Connector and 64MW of community generation in scoping. In conclusion, an OFGEM decision for 450MW would wipe out the Western Isles Transmission Link project.

Mr John Cunningham addressed the Committee stating that OFGEM's concern was to safeguard the consumer but was open to an arrangement for the costs to be covered to 600MW. SHET had unspent allocations in the North of Scotland transmission area which could be repurposed toward the Western Isles link subject to various constraints and, as OFGEM had extended the deadline for response to 31 May 2019 this would afford an opportunity to include further information on SHET's proposals to the Comhairle submission.

The Committee commended the work of Mr Cunningham and the Director for Communities in making the case to OFGEM officials on their visit to the island on 11 April and for the robust response appended to the Report.

Subsequent to agreement by OFGEM to extend the deadline for responses to 31 May 2019, it was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) authorise the Director for Communities in consultation with the Leader and the Chair of Sustainable Development Committee to finalise the Comhairle response to OFGEM's consultation on the Final Needs Case for the Western Isles Transmission Link; and
- (2) that the Director for Communities circulate a copy of the finalised response to all Members of the Comhairle.