



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Offices, Stornoway, on Wednesday 25 September 2019 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT	Mr Donald F. Crichton (Chair) Mr Norman MacDonald (Vice-Chair) Mr Calum Macmillan Mr Iain A MacNeil Mr Donald Manford Mr Roddy Mackay Mr Uisdean Robertson Mr Norman A. MacDonald	Mr Alasdair Macleod Mr Angus McCormack Mr Iain M Macaulay Mr Gordon Murray Mr Roddie Mackay Mr John A Maciver
APOLOGIES	Mr Finlay Cunningham	
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE	Mr Paul F. Steele Mr Iain M. Macleod Mr Angus Morrison	Mr Finlay Stewart Mr Kenny John Macleod
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE	Mr Malcolm Burr Mr Calum Iain Maciver Mr Joe Macphee Mrs Anne Murray Mr Domhnall MacDonald Mr Pete Middleton Mr Murdo Mackay	Mrs Mairi Maciver Mrs Anne Macdonald Mr Nigel Scott Mr Colin G. Morrison Miss Mairi Sine Macdonald Mrs Fiona Maciver

Prayer The Meeting was preceded by prayer, led by Mr John A. Maciver.

Condolences The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee extended condolences to Mr Angus McCormack on the recent passing of his wife Mary.

MINUTES

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| Minute of Meeting of 19 June 2019 | 1 | The Minute of Meeting of 19 June 2019 was approved . |
| Minute of Meeting of Crofting Joint Consultative Committee 26 August 2019 | 2 | The Minute of Meeting of Crofting Joint Consultative Committee 26 August 2019 was noted . |
| Declaration of Interest | of 3 | Mr Donald Crichton declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Stornoway Trust and remained in the Meeting during consideration of item 10.

Mr Norman Macdonald declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Castle Grounds Regeneration Project Board and remained in the meeting during consideration of item 10. |

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance Management 2019/20 Quarter 1 Economic Development and Planning

- 4 With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 19 June 2019 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an overview of the Economic Development and Planning Business Plan progress and related performance for Quarter 1 2019/20. The Report stated that the Communities Department Business Plan had 16 Actions and 18 Key Performance Indicators of relevance to the Committee in respect of Building Standards, Business and Regeneration Support, Sectoral and Project Support, Heritage Services and Planning Services. The Report indicated that all Business Plan Actions and KPIs relevant to the Services were on target and one complaint had been received in the quarter which had been successfully resolved at Stage 1.

The Report provided an overview of business performance, risk management, financial performance and stated that the main focus over the past period had been a staff consultation on Service Redesign and identifying savings options to meet the £306k savings target for 2020/21.

The Report highlighted the following key points:

- A new 3-year business skills workshop contract had been awarded in April and the new workshop programme had started in May;
- External funding had been sourced and approval given for a new grant scheme aimed at young entrepreneurs;
- Good progress had been made on the Castle Grounds Regeneration Project;
- 8 Stage 1 bids had been submitted to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF); and
- In regard to Planning Services, there had been an increased volume of planning applications in the period along with a number of significant Environmental Impact Assessment cases. Recruitment of staff and allocation of resources remained a concern.

In respect of renewables and the Contracts for Difference (CfD) allocation Round 3 announcement on Friday 20 September 2019 and that Stornoway Wind Farm had not achieved a CfD. Following the Renewable Energy Briefing for Members on 24 September 2019 it was anticipated that a report on renewable energy would be submitted to the December series. In the interim period the Director for Communities would keep Members apprised of any developments.

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

PLANNING

Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

- 5 The Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an update on the recently enacted Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and the likely implications for the Comhairle. The Report stated that the Planning Bill had been published in December 2017 and following a turbulent eighteen months of discussion and debate, the resulting Act had received Royal assent on 25 July 2019. The Report summarised the high level changes to the overall framework under which planning operated and stated that there would be significant financial and resource implications for the Comhairle.

The Report further stated that the detail of how the new provisions would work in practice would be contained within subsequent secondary legislation and guidance which could take up to two years for some aspects of the Act to come into force. Officers would continue to engage on all aspects of the implementation of the Act including secondary legislation and processes and further Reports would be provided to the Comhairle as necessary.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the enacted Planning (Scotland) Act 2019; and**
- (2) agree that the Head of Economic Development and Planning provide further Reports on subsequent secondary legislation and processes as necessary.**

FISHERIES

Marine Scotland Consultation Proposals to Designate Four New Protected Areas in Scottish Waters

6 The Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking homologation of a Comhairle response to the Marine Scotland Consultation "Proposals to Designate Four New Marine Protected Areas in Scottish Waters" as the consultation deadline fell out with the formal committee period. The Report stated that the Scottish Government had opened a consultation process on 7 June to 30 August 2019 on proposals to designate four new Marine Protected Areas (pMPAs) in Scottish waters, three of which were relevant to the Outer Hebrides:

- Shiant East Bank (conservation features of circalittoral sands and mixed sediment communities, northern sea fan and sponge communities, shelf banks and mounds)
- North East Lewis (conservation features of Risso's dolphin and sandeels)
- Sea of the Hebrides (conservation features Basking shark, minke whale, fronts)

The Report highlighted concerns in respect of the Marine Scotland statement that the process for carrying out Island Communities Impact Assessments (ICIA) was not wholly developed at this early stage and that following the recent passing of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and that the draft screening under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 found that no ICIA assessment was required. The Comhairle strongly opposed the designation of the Marine Protected Areas – North East Lewis, Sea of the Hebrides and Shiant East Bank as part of the consultation response and had requested that a copy of the draft screening be made available for review as soon as possible.

The Comhairle response to the consultation was appended to the Report which had been circulated to the Fisheries Joint Consultative Committee prior to submission. It was noted that there was an opportunity to add to the response and it was agreed to include reference to revisiting previously designated areas subsequent to the introduction of new technology.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle homologate the response to the Marine Scotland Consultation on Proposals to Designate Four New Marine Protected Areas in Scottish Waters, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

HERITAGE SERVICES

Museum and Archive Storage Update

7 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 museum and archive storage position, collection issues and likely future requirements. The Report stated that museum collections had been stored in a succession of unsuitable and poorly-equipped premises and that the current storage situation placed museum collections and staff at risk; these issues had been highlighted as an action from the Internal Audit of the Archaeology Service in 2017.

The Report stated that The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) had announced the Heritage Horizons Fund which sought to prioritise 'Landscapes' and 'Heritage at Risk'. Following discussion with NLHF with regard to the Great Place Project, there was an opportunity to develop a proposal for submission in 2020 and if successful funding would be available in 2021. The Report proposed engagement with key internal and external heritage partners to develop proposals for innovative storage and conservation facilities across the islands.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle authorise the Head of Economic Development and Planning to develop a Heritage Horizons Fund proposal for submission in 2020.

Lews Castle Museum and Archive Project

8 This item was withdrawn.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It was agreed that the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely: information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the Comhairle).

Old Co-op Building,
Castlebay, Isle of
Barra

- 9 With reference to item 15 of the Minute of Meeting of 24 September 2014 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report, in response to a request under Standing Order 35 from Cllr Callum Macmillan and Cllr. Donald Manford, providing an update on the current situation with the former Co-op store in Castlebay, Isle of Barra. The Report stated that a proposal to demolish the property as part of the South Uist and Barra Regeneration Programme had been agreed with the Scottish Government, the Comhairle and Castlebay Community Council. The Report further stated that a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) request received in August 2019 in respect of the property was under consideration and would require formal appraisal in due course as per the process set out for dealing with such requests

The Report provided options for Members to consider detailing the benefits and dis-benefits and stated that there were significant financial and other risks to the Comhairle in considering any other option other than adhering to the contractual agreement with Scottish Government RCGF grant and the extant Comhairle decision. The Report recommended that the Comhairle:

- (1) adhere to the grant conditions for the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund , including demolition of the former Co-op Store, Castlebay, Isle of Barra; and
- (2) agree to authorise the Director for Communities to take the necessary action to implement the Comhairle's decision.

The Chairman stated that this had been a long standing, intractable issue and in view that it was a small business based in Castlebay, Barra that employed local people and the recommendations had risks associated with it as outlined in the Report, he invited local Members to speak to the Report and for the Committee to have further discussion on the matter.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) defer any action with regard to the future of the former Co-op store in Castlebay;**
- (2) that the Director for Communities undertake further discussions with the Scottish Government with regard to the grant obligations in light of the Community Asset Transfer Request;**
- (3) that the Director for Assets, Finance and Resources undertake an evaluation of the road safety issues associated with the site of the former Co-op store building; and**
- (4) that the Director for Communities submit a Report to the December 2019 Committee series on these matters for further consideration.**

Mr Donald Crichton declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Stornoway Trust and remained in the Meeting during consideration of item 10.

Mr Norman Macdonald declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Castle Grounds Regeneration Project Board and remained in the meeting during consideration of item 10.

Castle Grounds Regeneration Project 10 With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 September 2018 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an update on progress of the Castle Grounds Regeneration Project. The Report stated that a £4,725,200 funding package had been secured by partners to deliver the Castle Ground Regeneration Project and the Comhairle, in partnership with the Stornoway Trust, were working to implement the project. The Comhairle, as grantee, had awarded the contracts for the capital works, delivered through three separate contract packages, and work had commenced on all three packages in early March 2019. The Report stated that Civil works including drainage, new paths and landscaping were well advanced and works on the Buildings and Structures were also progressing well. Progress photographs were provided in the Appendix to the Report.

The Report further stated that following completion of the capital works, horticultural work including historic planting restoration would be undertaken by the Stornoway Trust under the guidance of the Head Gardener and Assistant, two recently established posts funded by the Lottery project.

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

Stornoway Business Improvement District (BID) - Operating Agreement 11 With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 June 2018 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking approval to enter into discussions on an Operating Agreement with the Stornoway Business Improvement District (BID). The Report stated that a Stornoway BID Steering Group had been established following discussions emerging from the Strategic Stornoway Vision Group and had attracted funding from the Scottish Government and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to promote and progress the development of a Stornoway BID. A part-time Project Manager had been recruited in May 2019 for a fixed term period of 14 months with the aim of securing BID status for the town.

The Report provided an overview of activity to date, a timeline for the coming months and outlined the requirement for the Comhairle to enter into discussions on an Operating Agreement with the Stornoway BID, in parallel with beginning to consider the potential BID levy implications for the Comhairle. BIDS were a well-established model for business involvement in Town Centre regeneration and proposals for a Stornoway BID had received positive feedback from businesses and other stakeholders. It was clear from the legislation and best practice from other areas that formal support from the local authority in respect of a BID was critical to the success of the model.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle authorise the Director for Communities, in consultation with the Director for Assets, Finance and Resources, to engage in discussions on an Operating Agreement with the Stornoway BID.

Faroe Islands Visit (21-23 May 2019) - Update 12 With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 June 2018 the Director for Communities submitted a Report providing an update on a recent visit by a delegation to the Faroe Islands and to bring forward a set of recommendations. The Report stated that a small delegation from the Outer Hebrides had visited the Faroe Islands in May 2019 to gain insight into how the Faroese stemmed de-population, increased population and retained young people. The trip also gained insight into the political structures, regulatory approaches, economic development goals and infrastructure development, including innovative approaches to funding that infrastructure. A copy of the trip itinerary was attached in Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Report highlighted that Norconsult, Norway's largest multi-disciplinary engineering and design consultancy had been in discussions with Mr Angus MacNeil MP. The company had provided economic and technical input to Norwegian and Faroese tunnels including the Eysturoy Tunnel in the Faroe Islands. Norconsult had undertaken a high-level study which had included an economic overview of fixed links compared to ferries to and within the Outer Hebrides which demonstrated that fixed links were an economically efficient investment. The Report stated that further detailed work would be required but the contact with Norconsult offered a way forward to explore tunnel concepts in the Outer Hebrides.

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

- (1) to formally write to the Faroese Government seeking follow-up engagement, in Uist, to progress issues and formalise ties between the Outer Hebrides and the Faroe Islands;**
- (2) to explore, in the context of the Comhairle's submissions to the Review of Local Governance, the potential for enhanced community empowerment through an area or municipality form of governance in the Outer Hebrides and to request that the Chief Executive submit a report on the means of delivery of such models in the Outer Hebrides;**
- (3) begin an engagement with communities across the Outer Hebrides to establish views on tunnels as a means of transportation both within the Outer Hebrides and between the Outer Hebrides and the Scottish mainland;**
- (4) that the Transport and Infrastructure Member Officer Working Group explore the potential governance, financial and partnership arrangements that could be utilised in relation to the establishment of a Hebridean tunnel company based on the Faroese model;**
- (5) engage with Føroya Tele (Faroese Telecom) to explore opportunities for introducing new digital services to the Outer Hebrides;**
- (6) engage with Smyril Line, the Faroese ferry company, to identify opportunities for the Outer Hebrides if a Faroe Islands to Scotland ferry service is established; and**
- (7) engage with academic stakeholders in the Faroe Islands to understand and learn from their approach to population retention and growth, gender equality and participation in democratic and related processes.**

Rural Tourism
Infrastructure Fund

13 With reference to item 20 of the Minute of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of 20 June 2018 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an update on the Capital Match Fund allocated to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) and seeking delegation to approve the utilisation of the balance of RTIF of £67,819. The Report stated that in 2018 the Scottish Government had announced the creation of the RTIF administered by to support the delivery of projects to improve the visitor experience and relieve pressure on the resident communities of popular areas.

The Report stated that the Comhairle had successfully secured funding of £230,000 from the first round of RTIF for projects, with a total value of £511,181 and stated that the Comhairle match fund requirement was £232,181, leaving a balance of £67,819. A further bid to the second round of RTIF had been unsuccessful.

The Report provided details of the projects to date and in view that these had been largely based in Lewis and Harris, it was proposed to prioritise projects in Uist and Barra that met the RTIF criteria such as public toilet provision, better road and path access to tourism assets, car-parking and camping/motorhome provision. It was further proposed that the approval of project applications be delegated to the Director for Communities and the Director for Assets, Finance and Resources.

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

- (1) agrees to utilise the balance of £67,819 approved for the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) to support delivery of a range of tourism infrastructure improvement projects, with priority given to projects in Uist and Barra, subject to each project leveraging in match funding equal, at least, to the Comhairle's contribution and demonstrating the ability to deliver best value outputs for the tourism sector; and**
- (2) delegates authority to the Director for Communities in consultation with the Director for Assets, Finance and Corporate Resources to consider and approve funding applications.**

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Reports
Outstanding

- 14 The Chief Executive submitted a Report detailing the reports outstanding arising from the decisions of the Committee.

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