



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Stornoway on Wednesday 2
February 2022 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT

Mr Donald Crichton (Chair)	Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Norman MacDonald (Vice-Chair)	Mr Iain M Macaulay
Mr Calum Macmillan	Mr Neil Mackay
Mr Iain A MacNeil	Mr Gordon Murray
Mr Roddy Mackay	Mr Roddie Mackay
Mr Uisdean Robertson	Mr John A Maciver
Mr Grant Fulton	Mr John Mackay
Mr Norman A MacDonald	
Mr Alasdair Macleod	

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Paul Steele	Mr Angus Morrison
Mr Iain M Macleod	Mr Calum Maclean
Mr John G Mitchell	Mr Kenny John Macleod

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Malcolm Burr	Miss Mairi Sine MacDonald
Mr Calum Iain Maciver	Mrs Fiona Maciver
Mr Norman MacDonald	Ms Susan Rabe
Mr Joe Macphee	Mr Nigel Scott
Mr Murdo Mackay	Mr Tim Langley
Mrs Anne Macdonald	Mr Murdo Morrison
Mrs Mairi Maciver	Mrs Sarah Maclean

Prayer

The Meeting was preceded in prayer by Mr Donald Crichton.

MINUTES

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| Minute of Meeting of 1 December 2021 | 1 | The Minute of Meeting of 1 December 2021 was approved . |
| Declaration of Interest | 2 | Mr Roddy Mackay declared an interest as the Development Manager of Eilean Dorcha Festival and left the meeting during consideration of item 9. |

PRESENTATION

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| MG Alba - Leirsinn Strategy | 3 | The Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report concerning the new 'Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media' Strategy. The Report stated that MG Alba had recently published the Lèirsinn Strategy which outlined a future where Gaelic media was at the heart of Gaelic communities; generating growth in language capability; a key economic driver; and ensuring young people had a digital domain which would be crucial to ensure the future of the language. |
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The Report further stated that Lèirsinn was an investment proposition that set out how Gaelic media can connect with all audience segments and be a catalyst for growth in language, in our communities and in our economies. With the required investment

Lèirsinn would deliver on reaching and engaging younger users of Gaelic, driving an increase in usage and learning of Gaelic, creating jobs in communities, inspiring creativity and talent, and fostering media entrepreneurship through the language.

Mrs Ealasaid MacDonald, MG Alba's Director of Strategy and External Affairs provided a short presentation to the Committee following which Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions. The presentation provided further detail on:

- the economic impact of Gaelic media (currently and potentially)
- a statement of intent
- the potential of Gaelic in the digital era and young people
- Gaelic for everyone through consumption, creation and participation
- achieving the Lèirsinn through content for digital and young audiences, media innovation and growth and building scale

In order for Lèirsinn to succeed the following would be required:

- Statutory provision for Gaelic public service media
- A new investment accord for Gaelic media
- A new agreement between the BBC and MG ALBA
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Communities

Further to the above Members were informed that statutory underpinning was crucial as the legislative framework was dated and inadequate and needed to be fully reviewed. To that end MG Alba were lobbying hard and there was an opportunity for a white paper for a new Media Bill at Westminster which would provide certainty and stability. MG Alba were engaged with the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and lobbying hard for additional funding mechanisms and would welcome support from the Comhairle through a formalised agreement.

In conclusion Lèirsinn was underpinned by young people, and the objective was, through support mechanisms, to move outwith the hub of Stornoway by removing the location barrier to encourage wider socio economic benefit.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Ealasaid MacDonald for the presentation and commended the proposals to formalise an agreement with MG Alba and to support the work on lobbying UK Government. The Comhairle looked forward to the opportunity to work in a more collaborative manner with MG Alba to realise the forecasted economic impacts for the Outer Hebrides as well as at a regional and national level.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the discussions on a shared Co-operation Agreement with MG Alba and that a formal proposal will be submitted to the Committee for consideration in due course.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance Management
2021/22 Quarter 3
Economic Development and Planning

4

With reference to item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 1 December 2021 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing an overview of the Communities Department Business Plan progress and related performance as at Quarter 3. The Report stated that the Communities Department Business plan had 22 Actions and 22 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 stated that the financial performance of Economic Development and Planning would be prepared and submitted as part of the Budget Setting process at the end of February 2022. Indications were that Planning Services and Building Control were forecasting a surplus, while Heritage Service was expected to out-turn to budget. There was an estimated overspend of £200k associated with the costs of the Spaceport 1 project.

Section 6 of the Report provided an overview of business performance under each service area and the local government benchmarking framework priorities. Only one complaint had been received in Quarter 3.

One of the key areas of concern related to a significant increase in planning applications which had put pressure on staff. Recruitment to Planning posts was being addressed at a national level and the Comhairle were engaging with other local authorities through a North of Scotland Partnership Group on this. Priorities related to the continued operation of services and maintaining progress on key projects and ensuring continued support to the business and wider community through service teams. Services continued to comply with all Covid-19 guidance and remote working remained a critical feature of day-to-day activities.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Leader Rural Communities Testing Change (RCTC) Fund and £5k available for each ward. Members were encouraged to make submissions as draw down on funding was required by the end of March 2022. Officers would issue a reminder to all Members.

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

Performance Management
2021/22 Quarter 3
Consumer and Environmental
Services
Housing Services
Municipal Services
Energy

5

With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 1 December 2021 the Director for Communities submitted Report providing an overview of the Communities Directorate Business Plan progress and related performance for Quarter 3 of 2021/22 and indicating that significant progress had been made across a range of service areas in Quarter 3 with good progress across business Plan targets. The Report further provided an overview of business performance, local government benchmarking framework priorities, risk management and a summary of the broad financial performance position of service areas. A complete overview of financial performance figures would be prepared and submitted as part of the Budget Setting process at the end of February 2022. There were no service complaints in the quarter.

The service area relevant to this Committee was Energy as outlined in paragraph 6.20 to 6.24 of the Report. Updates were provided on Lewis Wind Power's Contract for Difference Allocation Round 4 bid in early 2022 with outcomes anticipated in April 2022, which was very important to Lewis Windpower achieving their contract which would trigger OFGEM approval of the Needs Case for the proposed 600MW Transmission Link. Updates were also provided on the ScotWind Leasing Round, Crown Estate Scotland Local Asset Management Pilot and the Outer Hebrides Net Zero Hub.

Since the Report had been written there had been public announcements on the Crown Estate ScotWind Leasing Round and the Director for Communities highlighted that the three leases on the Westside of Lewis had been among 17 granted by ScotWind on behalf of CES. He indicated that the successful developers would further explore their options and take forward EIA, planning and marine licencing activities etc. It was anticipated that there would be further officer engagement with the developers over the coming weeks and possibilities for the local community to maximise business opportunities through supply chain and buyer events.

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

PLANNING

Planning Performance
Framework 2020-
21

6

With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 January 2021 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report providing Scottish Government feedback on the annual Planning Performance Framework Report for 2021-22. The feedback detailed in the Appendix to the Report highlighted that ten Red/Amber/Green (RAG) ratings had been awarded green, two were not applicable and three amber ratings related to decision-making timescales for local applications; continuous improvement,

specifically service improvement commitments that remained ongoing rather than complete; and three legacy cases that were live at the end of the reporting year

The Report stated that the Markers had indicate that overall, the service had continued to achieve reasonable outcomes with targets met and delivered in the context of pressured budgeting; recruitment challenges; diminished staff resources; and the impacts of Covid restrictions.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Scottish Government feedback on the 2020-2021 Planning Performance Framework Report as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Biennial Review of
Planning
Enforcement
Charter 7

With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 February 2020 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking approval of the biennial review of the Comhairle Planning Enforcement Charter as required by Section 158A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Report stated that the Act required an Enforcement Charter to set out:

- a statement of the Authority's policies as regards their taking enforcement action;
- an account of how members of the public can bring any ostensible breach of planning control to the attention of the Authority;
- how any complaint about how the Authority takes enforcement action can be made; and
- the Authority's procedures for dealing with any such complaint.

The Report further stated that the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 enacted in July 2019 had introduced additional requirements and that the Comhairle's Charter update in 2020 had reflected these matters. The Charter was provided in the Appendix to the Report and presented to the Committee for consideration and approval for re-publication. There were no substantive revisions to the 2020 version.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve for re-publication the Planning Enforcement Charter, as set out in the Appendix to the Report; and adopt the Charter as its current statement of Planning Enforcement Policy.

Local Development
Plan Action
Programme Review
2021/22 8

With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 February 20219 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking approval of the first review of the 2018 Local Development Plan Action Programme for publication. The Report stated that it was a legislative requirement to prepare and publish an Action Programme for the Local Development Plan (LDP) every two years setting out how the Authority proposed to implement the Plan, a list of actions required to deliver each of the Plan's policies and proposals and identifying the lead agent(s) who were to carry out the actions, and the timescale for doing so.

The Appendix to the Report detailed the first review of the Action Programme providing updated commentary and recommendations on proposed amendments to better reflect the likely delivery and implementation of the Plan's Policies and Proposals. It was noted that when preparing the Action Programme the Authority must consult with Key Agencies; Scottish Ministers and those specified in the Action Programme. The review of the Action Programme and broader ongoing Plan monitoring continued to assess the application of the Plan's Policies and Proposals and would in due course inform a new Local Development Plan.

Under consideration of this item reference was made to national and international designations in the Outer Hebrides and the impact of these on potential development. This Report dealt with the Action Programme aligned with the LDP as a toolkit for monitoring and review. The current LDP had been approved in 2018 and published in 2019 and would be subject to future review under the new Planning Regulations. The Comhairle over previous years had made many representations on proposed

designations in and around the islands and the Chair agreed to engage further with Scottish Government on the population and socio-economic argument for the removal of designations before the end of this Comhairle term.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve this first review of the Local Development Plan Action Programme for publication.

Under consideration of this item it was further agreed that the Chair of Sustainable Development, in consultation with the Director for Communities, make further representations to the Scottish Government on national and international designations in the Outer Hebrides.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr Roddy Mackay declared an interest as the Development Manager of Eilean Dorcha Festival and left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

Creative Industries 9
Revenue Funding
2022-2023

With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 February 2021 the Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking approval of funding agreements with key creative industries organisations in 2022/23. The Report stated that An Lanntair, Taigh Chearsabhagh, the Hebridean Celtic Festival (HebCelt), Ceòlas, the Eilean Dorcha Festival and the seven Western Isles Fèisean were essential parts of the islands' cultural heritage infrastructure and had successfully delivered activities in terms of their 2021/22 Funding Agreements despite the continued restrictions due to COVID-19. The organisations deliver significant social and economic impacts in terms of jobs supported, monies recycled through the local economy, and through the leveraging-in of additional new resources.

The Report further stated that approval of the recommendations would enable each organisation to plan their 2022/23 programmes and support the delivery of a wide ranging and vibrant programme of cultural and creative activity and would strengthen their funding applications and enable leverage of revenue support from external funding partners.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle, subject to Budget setting for 2022/23 and the satisfactory conclusion of one-year Funding Agreements for 2022/23, approve:

- (1) £47,579 to An Lanntair Ltd. from the Economic Development Budget which includes the repayment of the sum (£3,415) due under Prudential Borrowing Arrangements;**
- (2) £13,998 to the Taigh Chearsabhagh Trust from the Economic Development Budget;**
- (3) £7,200 in total to the Eilean Dorcha Festival from the Economic Development Budget;**
- (4) £18,703 to the Hebridean Celtic Festival Trust (£14,428 from the Economic Development Budget and £4,275 from the Sgioba na Gàidhlig Budget);**
- (5) £7,558 to Ceòlas Uibhist Ltd. (£3,046 from the Economic Development Budget and £4,512 from the Sgioba na Gàidhlig Budget); and**
- (6) £10,720 in total to be distributed directly to seven Western Isles Fèisean (£4,320 from the Economic Development Funds budget and £6,400 from the Sgioba na Gàidhlig Budget).**

Studio Alba - New Gaelic Television Drama and Training Programme 10 With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of 8 December 2021, which agreed a Covid Recovery Funds investment opportunity of £230k to support the “An Clò Mòr” Gaelic Drama, utilising locations in Lewis and Harris and basing on-set filming at Studio Alba. This included establishing Studio Alba as a media/production skills hub.

The Head of Economic Development and Planning submitted a Report seeking approval to agree terms with Solus Productions Ltd. with a view to their leasing of Studio Alba and to inform of proposals for an associated broadcast training programme. The Report provided background information on Studio Alba and stated that in July 2021 Economic Development learned that MG ALBA and Screen Scotland were working with independent producer Solus Productions Ltd. to invest in and develop a new continuing Gaelic language drama, An Clò Mòr, inspired by the Harris Tweed industry. This was recognised as a significant opportunity to vitalise the local media sector and a Comhairle-led multi-partnership approach had been taken to attract the new drama to film in its entirety in the islands, utilising authentic locations and Studio Alba.

The Report further stated that the regeneration of Studio Alba was seen by Screen Scotland as an exciting proposition which addressed issues of crew and studio shortages across the country and that they were supportive of an ambitious Training Programme, associated to and extending beyond the Solus Productions drama. The Programme would develop new talent and grow the depth and expertise of talent working in the film and TV industry across the Outer Hebrides and Scotland, with a particular focus on training Gaelic speakers.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee welcomed this good news and the opportunities to utilise an underused building to the benefit of the Comhairle and the community and to regenerate Gaelic. He further paid tribute to Sarah Maclean, Economic Development Officer for her work on this project and also to congratulate Sarah on her appointment to the post of Chief Executive, Outer Hebrides Tourism. Sarah had been in post with the Comhairle since 2009 and the Committee wished her all the best for the future.

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

- (1) agree to support the An Clò Mòr project and the design and delivery of a Studio Alba based broadcast skills programme, in partnership with Screen Scotland; and**
- (2) authorise the Director for Sustainable Development to prepare a Licence to Occupy for Studio Alba, 54a Seaforth Road, Stornoway HS1 2SD by Solus Productions Ltd. on such terms and conditions to be determined by the Chief Executive and the Head of Accountancy and Exchequer Services.**

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Reports Outstanding 11 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.