



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Offices, Stornoway, on Wednesday 14 June 2017 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT

Mr Donald Crichton (Chair)
Mr Norman MacDonald (Vice-Chair)
Mr Calum Macmillan
Mr Iain A MacNeil
Mr Donald Manford
Mr Roddy Mackay
Mr Uisdean Robertson
Mr Finlay Cunningham
Mr Norman A MacDonald
Mr Alasdair Macleod

Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Iain M Macaulay
Mr Neil Mackay
Mr Gordon Murray
Mr Roddie Mackay
Mr John A Maciver
Mr John Mackay

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Paul Steele
Mr Iain M Macleod
Mr Paul Finnegan
Mr Ranald Fraser
Mr Angus Morrison

Mr Finlay Stewart
Mr Rae Mackenzie
Mr Charlie Nicolson
Mr Calum Maclean
Mr Kenny John Macleod

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Calum Iain Maciver
Mr John Cunningham
Mr Joe Macphee
Mrs Anne Macdonald
Mr Peter Middleton
Ms Alison MacCorquodale
Mr Robert Emmott
Ms Lesley McDonald
Mrs Dolina Macleod

Mrs Mairi Maciver
Mrs Isla Macarthur
Mr David Macleay
Mrs Kathlene Morrison
Mr Murdo Mackay
Mr Nigel Scott
Mr Domhnall Macdonald
Mrs Yvonne Maciver
Mr Colin George Morrison

Prayer

The Meeting was preceded by prayer, led by Mr Gordon Murray.

TRIBUTES

On behalf of the Committee the Chairman extended sincere condolences to Mr Donald Manford and his family on the recent tragic loss of his great-niece Eilidh Macleod and conveyed his best wishes to Laura Macintyre and her family for her continued recovery.

The Chairman paid tribute to Keith Bray, Head of Development, who would be leaving the Comhairle in July 2017 after nearly 22 years' service. The Chairman thanked Keith Bray for his service over the years and wished him well in his new position of Reporter for the Scottish Government.

MINUTES

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| Minute of Meeting of 1 March 2017 | 1 | The Minute of Meeting of 1 March 2017 was approved . |
| Minute of Meeting of 16 May 2017 | 2 | The Minute of Meeting of 16 May 2017 was approved . |
| Declaration of Interest | 3 | Mr Norman A. MacDonald declared an interest as a member of his family was employed by Community Energy Scotland and left the meeting during consideration of item 17.

Mr Donald Crichton and Mr Calum Maclean declared an interest as Members of Stornoway Trust and left the meeting during consideration of item 19. |

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance Management (Development) 2016/17: Quarter 4 Year End

- 4 With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 1 March 2017, the Director of Development submitted a Report providing an overview of the Business Plan and related performance issues for Quarter 4 Year End. The Report stated that the Development Department Plan covered the following service areas with relevance to the Committee: Cultural and Information services (Heritage); Development Services (elements related to Strategic Planning; Economic Development and the Energy Unit. The progress against individual actions and key performance indicators for 2016/17 were summarised in the Presentation as follows:

Cultural and Information Services: Libraries and Heritage

All Business Plan actions and KPIs were on target for Quarter 4. It was highlighted that there had been 3,870 visitors to both Museum nan Eilean sites during the quarter and that it was anticipated to exceed high-end targets for the first year. It was noted that the Harris Tweed Project Archivist had commenced in post and that significant loans with national museums had been agreed.

Development Services

All Business Plan Actions and KPIs had been achieved with the exception of the preparation of a Regional Marine Plan. It was highlighted that the Department had received the Scottish Government Building Standards Division Award for National Building Standards Performance Excellence.

Economic Development

All Business Plan actions and KPI's were on target and an overview was provided of the various projects and stages under the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, details of the Community Capital Grants programme, updates on LEADER and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and Business Gateway.

Energy Unit

All Business Plan actions and KPI's were on target. The presentation provided details on the Energy Supply Company, European Energy Projects and Oil and Gas Decommissioning.

The presentation concluded with the year-end performance and financial outcome and the priorities for the next quarter for Development Services were listed at the end of the Presentation.

On conclusion of the presentation Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle continue to scrutinise Business Plan performance through Interplan and through engagement with the Quarter 4 (Year End) Performance Monitoring Presentation.

CONSTITUTION

Strategic Member Officer Working Groups – Appointment of Members 5

- 5 The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking the Comhairle's approval for the establishment of Member/Officer Working Groups and the Committee was invited to make recommendations in relation to the appointment of Members to these Working Groups, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned. The Report stated that the Strategic Member Officer Working Groups would have the advantage of facilitating officer and partner/agency representation to ensure that all relevant points of view were captured prior to the Comhairle being asked to make strategic or policy decisions. The Report stated that the Chief Executive would appoint officers to Member Officer Working Groups.

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

- (1) establish a Sustainable Development Strategic Member Officer Working Group, on the basis that the Chair and Vice Chair and five Members be appointed as follows:

Mr Donald Crichton
Mr Kenneth John Macleod
Mr Norman Macdonald
Mr Roddy Mackay
Mr Finlay Cunningham
Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Alasdair Macleod; and

- (2) note that the Chief Executive would appoint officers to the Member Officer Working Group.

Fisheries Joint Consultative Committees – Appointment of Members

- 6 The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking the appointment of Comhairle representatives to the Fisheries Joint Consultative Committee. The remit of the Committee was to advise the Comhairle on matters pertaining to the conservation and development of the fishing industry. The Report stated that in terms of the Scheme of Administration, the Chairman of the Sustainable Development Committee would be an ex-officio Member of the Joint Consultative Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle appoint nine Members to the Fisheries Joint Consultative Committee comprising eight Elected Members of the Comhairle, in addition to the Chair of Sustainable Development Committee, securing, where practicable, geographical representation as follows:-

Mr Donald Crichton
Mr Donald Manford
Mr Calum Macmillan
Mr Finlay Cunningham
Mr Paul Finnegan
Mr Ranald Fraser
Mr Alasdair Macleod
Mr John A Maciver
Mr John N Macleod

Crofting Joint Consultative Committees – Appointment of Members

- 7 The Chief Executive submitted a Report seeking the appointment of Comhairle representatives to the Crofting Joint Consultative Committee. The remit of the Committee was to advise the Comhairle on matters pertaining to the conservation and development of the crofting industry. The Report stated that in terms of the Scheme of Administration, the Chairman of the Sustainable Development Committee would be an ex-officio member of the Joint Consultative Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle appoint nine Members to the Crofting Joint Consultative Committee comprising eight Elected Members of the Comhairle, in addition to the Chair of Sustainable Development Committee, securing, where practicable, geographical representation as follows:-

Mr Donald Crichton
Mr Calum Macmillan
Mr Uisdean Robertson
Mr Paul Finnegan
Mr Neil Mackay
Mr Gordon Murray
Mr John A Maciver
Mr Calum Maclean
Mr John N Macleod

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Outer Hebrides Leader and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020 Programmes 8 With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 10 February 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report providing an update on the delivery of the Outer Hebrides LEADER and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Programmes 2014-2020. The Report stated that LEADER was a European Union funded Community Development Programme focussed on delivering a bottom-up method for supporting rural development primarily aimed at small-scale, community driven projects. The Report highlighted that LEADER had been delivered in the Outer Hebrides since 1991 and £7.56m of grant funding had been awarded to over 700 community projects by the end of the previous programme in 2013. The cumulative value to the Outer Hebrides economy of all LEADER Programmes between 1991 and 2013, including funding from all external sources, was estimated to have been in excess of £25m.

The Report stated that the Outer Hebrides LEADER and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Local Development Strategy 2014-2020 had been approved by the Scottish Government in 2015 following a series of community and stakeholder consultations across the Outer Hebrides. The key agreed objectives within the strategy were detailed in the Report and included the promotion of renewable energy; support to community fisheries and marine initiatives, crofting; the development of tourism initiatives and to network with Local Action Groups in Scotland, the UK and across Europe.

As outlined in the Report, both the LEADER and EMFF Programmes had been managed by Local Action Groups (LAGs). The LEADER LAG and a Fisheries FLAG were each made up of public, private and voluntary representatives drawn from a range of different sectors across the Outer Hebrides and responsible for the delivery, management and strategic direction of the Local Development Strategy. The Chairman of Sustainable Development Committee represented the Comhairle on both the LAG and FLAG. The Comhairle was the 'Accountable Body' for the Outer Hebrides LEADER Programme 2014-2020 and responsible for administering LEADER finances under the terms of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Scottish Government, on behalf of the LAG.

The Report stated that the future was unclear for both these programmes post-Brexit. Currently both funds would continue to be available until 2019 or until funds were fully committed and the Comhairle would be updated as to further developments as and when these arose, including implications for the LEADER and EMFF Programmes when announced.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the progress made in delivering the Outer Hebrides LEADER and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020 Programmes.

Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund: Projects Progress 9 With reference to item 15 of the Minute of Meeting of 24 September 2014, the Director of Development submitted a Report providing an update on the progress with the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) projects across the Outer Hebrides. The Report stated that RCGF supported locally-developed community regeneration projects that helped to build sustainable communities by encouraging transformational change through local economic development and employment creation. A total of £25m per annum is available through this fund delivered in partnership with COSLA and Scotland's Local Authorities.

The Report further stated that 'calls' for applications from Local Authorities were made annually by Scottish Government and the Comhairle had been fortunate to have made successful applications to each of the four funding Rounds and grants totalling £3.5m had been awarded to the Comhairle to-date securing a combined project cost of over £11m. These RCGF interventions have been crucial in delivering significant levels of community economic development over the past four years in creating jobs and leveraging in additional funding and investment.

A 'call' for new projects under Round 5 (Stage 1) had been announced on 23 May 2017 for submission by 18 August 2017 and work was currently underway with stakeholders, community groups and HIE in regard to suitable applications. Successful Stage 1 applications would be notified in October 2017 and, subsequent to the submission of Stage 2 applications, notification of successful projects would be circulated in February 2018.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree that the Director of Development liaise with stakeholders and submit a bid for funding to a fifth round of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

Community
Capital Grant
Fund: Projects
Progress and
Additional
Funding Requests

10

With reference to item 22 of the Minute of Meeting of 8 June 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report seeking approval of Community Capital Grant Funding. The Report stated that the Community Capital Grant Fund (CCGF) had been created in June 2013 and allocated £1.8m from the current Capital Programme 2014-18 with the specific aim to assist community organisations to deliver projects that contributed to supporting the Comhairle's strategic priorities. To-date 24 community projects had been awarded grants, 10 of which had been completed. It was estimated that 47.5 FTE jobs would be created/safeguarded and further details of these projects were outlined in the Appendix to the Report. In June 2016 the Comhairle agreed to close-off the CCGF and allocate the remaining funding to support the delivery of a range of strategic community development projects and for match-funding for a fourth round of the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) as outlined in the previous item on the Agenda.

The Report highlighted that the Comhairle successfully secured total funding of £1.17m from RCGF (Round 4) in March 2017 towards the Castlebay Harbour Initiative and an Isle of Lewis Heritage Programme (IoLHP) and Officers were currently developing funding packages with these respective community organisations to support the delivery of these projects. The Report dealt with specific funding requests from Coimhearsnachd Bharraidh agus Bhatarsaidh Ltd. to support the Castlebay Harbour Initiative and a suite of projects under the IoLHP.

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

- (1) note the success of the two bids to the fourth round of the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund; and**
- (2) approve £61,950 to the Castlebay Harbour Initiative and £300,000 the Isle of Lewis Heritage Programme from the Community Capital Grant Fund.**

PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS

Outer Hebrides
Local
Development
Plan:
Examination of
Proposed Plan

11

With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 7 December 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report detailing the outcome of a second consultation in January 2017 on the Outer Hebrides proposed Local Development Plan and sought approval to submit the Plan to Scottish Ministers requesting examination of the unresolved issues. The Report stated that the provision of a Local Development Plan was a requirement for each Planning Authority under the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and formed the Comhairle's view in terms of how land should be developed over the next five to ten years.

The Report stated that the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (OHLDP) Main Issues Report (MIR) had been published in December 2015 and set out the significant new issues that had arisen since the production of the existing Development Plan and had identified proposed sites for such uses as housing and business. The purpose of the MIR was to stimulate discussion and encourage engagement in the Plan process from an early stage in line with recent planning regulations. A Report to the Committee in December 2016 detailed the engagement that took place prior to publication of the proposed Plan in January 2017 and the subsequent consultation process which ran until March 2017. The Report stated that 42 individuals, agencies and companies had made comments and raised a wide range of issues and these were detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report. The Report confirmed that responses to the submissions had been prepared in regard to minor or 'non-notifiable' modifications and these had generally been accepted as outlined in Appendix 2 to the Report. The representations that required more substantive modifications had been grouped and addressed under topic headings and these were set out in Appendix 3 to the Report.

The Report confirmed that the proposed Plan would be submitted to Scottish Ministers who would appoint a Reporter to carry out an Examination of the unresolved matters and make recommendations as to any modifications deemed necessary.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) agree the responses to the comments received during consultation, detailed in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 to the Report; and**
- (2) authorise the Director of Development to submit the Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers seeking Examination of the unresolved issues.**

MARINE PLANNING

Marine Planning Update 12

With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 November 2015, the Director of Development submitted a Report detailing outstanding actions for Marine Planning and making recommendations for a long term strategic approach. The Report stated that a statutory requirement of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 was that Ministers must prepare a National Marine Plan (NMP) and had the option to prepare Regional Marine Plans (RMPs) for Scotland marine regions (out to 12 nautical miles). The Report stated that Marine Plans do not replace or remove existing regulatory regimes or legislative requirements but provided direction to a range of marine decisions and consents.

The Report stated that the Comhairle agreed at the November 2015 Series of Meetings to progress the establishment of a Marine Planning Partnership. However, that had proved challenging, largely due to governance complexities, funding, deficiencies and a lack of appetite in the current financial climate. The Report indicated that while local management of marine resources had been a key objective of the Comhairle, a cautious approach had been required to ensure the objectives were clear, the risks were properly managed, and any delegated obligations were deliverable. The Report presented a long term strategic approach for consideration, taking account of:

- financial and service sustainability
- governance
- legislation and policy content
- development pressure; and
- experience from elsewhere

The Report highlighted that local involvement in the sustainable and efficient use of marine resources had been a key aspiration of the Comhairle and if developed properly; regional marine planning could have significant economic, social, and environmental benefits and represented an opportunity to ensure future pressures were addressed in a sustainable and co-ordinated manner with the involvement of the local community. The Report proposed that the development of a streamlined Regional Marine Plan focused on key local issues should remain a medium-long term goal of the Comhairle through the 'Our Islands Our Future' agenda and to continue to monitor the political and legislative context while engaging with relevant stakeholders to identify a sustainable funding model and progress opportunities for preparatory work which would support the delivery of a Regional Marine Plan in the future.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the strategic approach for progressing Marine Planning detailed at Section 26.1 to the Report.

Scottish Government Consultation Amendments to Permitted Development Rights for Scottish Finfish and Shellfish Developments 13

The Director of Development submitted a Report seeking delegation to submit a Comhairle response to a Scottish Government Consultation on proposed changes to Permitted Development (PD) rights for Scottish Finfish and Shellfish Developments. The Report stated that the proposed changes had been the result of a review of current PD rights, with input from the Ministerial Group for Sustainable Aquaculture Capacity Working Group which had been established to effect improvements to the planning and consenting process. The consultation sought comments on whether to relax the requirement for prior notification under existing PD rights and to consult on improvements to PD rights relevant to shellfish farmers.

A copy of the consultation questionnaire was attached in the Appendix to the Report which opened on 5 May 2017 and would close on Friday 28 July 2017. As the timing was outwith the Committee cycle, delegation was sought for the Director of Development to submit a Comhairle response. Following analysis, the results of the consultation would be used to finalise amendments to the Order.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle authorise the Director of Development to prepare and submit a Comhairle response to the Scottish Government Consultation: Amendments to Permitted Development Rights for Scottish Finfish and Shellfish Developments.

HERITAGE

Heritage and Archaeology Strategy 14

With reference to item 16 of the Minute of Meeting of 1 March 2017, the Director of Development submitted a Report providing an update on the activities of the Comhairle's Heritage Service including strategies for Heritage and Archaeology, the Udal Project, and the Year of History Heritage and Archaeology. The Report stated that the Heritage Service encompassed Tasglann nan Eilean Siar (archives), two Museum nan Eilean sites at Lews Castle and Lionacleit, archaeology services and Hebridean Connections. The main focus of the service for the last year had been to ensure the successful opening and operation of the new Museum at Lews Castle.

The Report detailed proposals for a Heritage Strategy currently being developed through consultation with a variety of organisations and which followed on from the Activity Plan delivered as part of the Lews Castle Project. The purpose of the strategy consultation was to identify the key challenges and opportunities facing the sector in the short and medium term and a draft analysis document on potential aims and objectives, of which there were four key areas, was detailed in the Appendix to the Report:

The Report stated that the economic impact of archaeology had been assessed in a Report commissioned by the Comhairle from EKOS consultants. A number of workshops had taken place in Uist and a workshop would be held in Stornoway on 21 June 2017 with a view to reporting the outcomes to the September Meeting of the Committee. The Report confirmed that the Heritage Service continued to work with Lews Castle College UHI to source funding for the development of an academic research agenda for archaeology.

Section 7 to the Report highlighted the progress with the Udal project which formally came to an end on 31 March 2017. The manuscript of the forthcoming publication on the research conducted on the assemblage had been completed and submitted in draft form to Historic Environment Scotland by the author, Beverley Ballin Smith, and it was anticipated that copies of the monograph would be available as part of a launch event to be held as part of the Islands Book Trust conference Uist – Island Archaeology in Focus on 3-5 August 2017. Section 8 to the Report detailed several key activities supported by the Heritage Service under the banner of the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology and further plans for the remainder of 2017.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) agree that the Director of Development submit a progress update Report to the September/October 2017 Series of Meetings.**

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Renewable Energy Position Paper	15	<p>With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 7 December 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report detailing the current position of Renewable Energy issues and Comhairle engagement. The Report highlighted the significant renewable energy resource around the islands and identified renewable energy as a key economic driver with the potential to revitalise the island economy through supply chain and community benefit opportunities. The Report provided information in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Grid Arrangements; • Government Support for “Remote Island Wind”; • High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Radial Connector; • Community Generation; • ‘Hebrides Energy’ (community owned Energy Supply Company); and • Marine Energy <p>The Report confirmed that the Comhairle had been involved in the promotion of Renewable Energy activity since the 1990’s. However, the scope for developing a Renewable Energy industry of scale in the Western Isles was currently constrained by poor Grid connectivity and in order to export these volumes of renewable energy generation to Grid, a new 600MW HVDC Radial Connector was required. The Report highlighted the requirement of a government subsidy to support transmission costs and detailed confirmation of the Conservative Party manifesto on 18 May which pledged to support the development of wind projects in the remote islands of Scotland subsequent to a visit by Secretary of State, Greg Clarke MP, to the Outer Hebrides in April to co-chair a meeting of the Scottish Islands Delivery Forum.</p> <p>The Report further highlighted the vibrant community energy sector within the Western Isles and the challenges going forward and that the Comhairle’s ultimate vision was for a local energy economy to generate and supply island consumers within a closed island network from renewable energy.</p> <p>The Director of Development confirmed that, as agreed during the last term of the Comhairle, planning was currently underway to hold an Energy Conference in September 2017.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle continue to engage with Government, Regulators, Transmission Owners and developers to achieve the best outcome for the existing Renewable Energy opportunity.</p>
Scottish Government Consultation Scottish Energy Strategy – The Future of Energy in Scotland	16	<p>The Director of Development submitted a Report providing a Comhairle response to the Scottish Government’s consultation ‘Scottish Energy Strategy – The Future of Energy in Scotland’. The Report stated that a response had been submitted to the Scottish Government by the deadline of 31 May 2017 and there was an opportunity to submit further comments following the Committee’s consideration. The consultation outlined the Government’s vision for the future of energy in Scotland which was based around a stable, managed transition from the current energy landscape to a 2050 scenario where carbon emissions would be reduced by 80% over existing levels.</p> <p>The Report stated that there was much to be commended in the Draft Scottish Energy Strategy and there were key areas, such as ‘Remote Island Wind’, SMART metering and the Local Energy Economy where the Strategy could support the Comhairle’s work and provide useful third party validation. There were other areas where the Comhairle sought further detail in order to avoid duplication of local effort or the undermining of local initiatives, in particular the Strategy’s proposal for a Government owned Energy Supply Company. In general terms, however, the Strategy was welcomed and provided some much needed focus for the future of energy in Scotland.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle homologate the draft Comhairle response to the Scottish Government’s ‘Scottish Energy Strategy’ consultation detailed in the Appendix to the Report.</p>

Mr Norman A MacDonald declared an interest as a member of his family was employed by Community Energy Scotland and left the meeting during consideration the following item.

Community
Energy Scotland

17

With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 7 December 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report detailing Comhairle support to the community renewable energy sector through funding to the Outer Hebrides Community Energy Support Service (OHCESS). The Report stated that funding Community Energy Scotland (CES) to deliver OHCESS provided a route for the Comhairle to support the community energy sector in the Outer Hebrides through a recognised and well respected delivery agency. The Report further stated that supporting community energy was in line with a range of Comhairle strategic objectives and targets, including in the Outer Hebrides Economic Regeneration Strategy.

The Report stated that historically the Comhairle had supported the sector through the capital programme providing funding of £1.5m to 44 projects over recent years with a total project spend of £5.2m and also assisted the larger community generators through the provision of pre-implementation loans. Since 2014, Comhairle support had moved towards direct support for the community renewables umbrella agency, CES. The Report outlined the support being provided to aspiring community generators as a result of these respective activities, and how some of the issues faced by those groups were being dealt with.

The Appendix to the Report detailed the service CES would provide to the Comhairle as a result of its funding towards OHCESS during 2017/18.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle support the approach to the Community Renewables sector through the Outer Hebrides Community Energy Support Scheme (OHCESS).

BIODIVERSITY AND COUNTRYSIDE

It was agreed under the terms of Section 50A (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, 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 would be disclosed.

Uist and Barra
Abattoirs

18 *

With reference to item 15 of the Minute of Meeting of 8 June 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report seeking agreement of funding support for the provision of abattoir services in Uist and Barra during 2017/18. The Report stated that the Comhairle had entered into a short-term lease arrangement with the Lochmaddy and Garradhmor abattoirs in previous years. The Report indicated that discussions had been held with both operators in order to confirm whether they would be willing to enter into a lease agreement for 2017/18, subject to approval by the Comhairle. It was noted that formal acceptance of the leasing agreement had been received from both operators and that once throughput figures for 2016 had been submitted these would be circulated to Members for information.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the lease for Gearradhmor and Lochmaddy Abattoirs for a 22-week period during 2017/18 on such terms and conditions as the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Development, should determine.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr Donald Crichton and Mr Calum Maclean declared an interest as members of Stornoway Trust and left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

Castle Grounds Regeneration Project Update 19 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 March 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report providing an update on the delivery phase of the Castle Grounds Regeneration Project. The aim of the project was to restore and improve the Lews Castle Grounds and transform the management and maintenance of the park to enhance its enjoyment by local residents and visitors to Stornoway. The project would complement the Lews Castle Museum and Archive project.

The Report stated that following the successful award of Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) through 'Parks for People' funding of over £3.9m in June 2015, Stornoway Trust and the Comhairle had been working closely together to move forward to proceed to detail design and tender stage. This would provide cost certainty for the capital elements of the project and allow partners to further consider funding and delivery options. It was anticipated that the procurement and tender process would be completed in Autumn 2017 with a view to report back to the September/October Series of Meetings.

The Report further stated that a Castle Grounds Regeneration Project Board had been established to be the strategic decision making group and was chaired by Stornoway Trust. The Project Board's remit had been approved by the Comhairle at its last meeting and was appended to the Report for information. In reference to the membership of the Project Board, the Director of Development stated that Stornoway Trust had moved to appoint five members to the Board and in order that there was equal numbers representing both Stornoway Trust and the Comhairle it was proposed to nominate an additional Comhairle Member to the Board.

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

- (1) note the progress with the Castle Grounds Regeneration Project;**
- (2) agree that a further Report be provided to the September/October 2017 Series of Meetings on the outcome of the tender process; and**
- (3) appoint Mr Norman Macdonald to the Project Board.**

Hebridean Way – One of Scotland's Greatest Trails 20 With reference to item 21 of the Minute of Meeting of 7 December 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report providing an update on the Hebridean Way project. The Report stated that subsequent to notification of an unsuccessful Stage 2 bid to the Coastal Communities Fund in March this year due to oversubscription, the Report sought approval of £25k from the Industrial Promotion Budget and £50k from Revenue Match funding to support the establishment of an Outer Hebrides Countryside Trust (OHCT). The Report stated that to enable the Hebridean Way project to progress, the set-up of an OHCT represented the best opportunity to attract other external funding. It was proposed to establish a Countryside Trust and to agree a revised funding package of £240k as outlined in Section 6 to the Report, subject to confirmation of partner match funding contributions. Section 5 to the Report highlighted the various activities that have taken place in relation to the Hebridean Way this year.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree to support the establishment of the Outer Hebrides Countryside Trust subject to a complete funding package being in place, at an estimated cost of £240k, and that the Comhairle's contribution be funded from:

- (1) £50k from the Revenue Match Fund previously agreed to support the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) bid;**
- (2) £25k from the Industrial Promotion budget in 2017/18; and**
- (3) approval in principle of £25k from the Industrial Promotion budget in 2018/19, subject to availability of resources and approval of the Comhairle's 2018/19 budget.**

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| Business Gateway: Annual Performance Update | 21 | <p>With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 8 June 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report providing an annual update on Business Gateway performance in 2016/17, details of the new business funding streams and proposals for the delivery of enterprise support for young people. The Report stated that the Outer Hebrides Business Gateway (OHBG) service commenced in April 2009 following a review of the Enterprise Network in 2007. Business Gateway's core mission was to contribute to the delivery of Scotland's Economic Strategy and to provide support services to small businesses across Scotland, regardless of location. Its goal was to increase the number and quality of new-start businesses in Scotland and to support existing businesses with growth potential.</p> <p>The Report provided a detailed overview of Business Gateway's high level performance and results during 2016/17 and highlighted two new Business Gateway initiatives: Grants For Growth (GfG); and Outer Hebrides Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (OHYES). Both these schemes would support existing local business to grow and enable young entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. The Report further stated that in 2016 the Comhairle took the initiative to develop an enhanced programme of support for young entrepreneurs to work alongside The Prince's Trust namely the 'Outer Hebrides Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme' (OHYES). The new two-year programme would offer grants of up to £3,000 and aimed to support any young entrepreneurs aged up to 40 to start their own business.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree to approve proposals to enhance support for youth entrepreneurship across the Outer Hebrides over the coming two years.</p> |
| UK Industrial Strategy | 22 | <p>The Director of Development submitted a Report seek homologation of a Comhairle response to the UK Government's consultation on its emerging Industrial Strategy submitted by the closing date of 17 April 2017. The Report stated that the UK Government published a Green Paper in January 2017, 'Building our Industrial Strategy', and invited comments on its contents. The Report further stated that the Industrial Strategy Green Paper identified ten 'pillars' which would drive forward the UK economy: science; research and innovation; skills; infrastructure; business growth and investment; procurement; affordable energy; sectoral policies; driving growth across the whole country; and, creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places. The Report stated that the Comhairle response to the Green Paper detailed in the Appendix to the Report sought to address each of the ten pillars from an island perspective.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle homologate the response to the UK Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper detailed in the Appendix to the Report.</p> |
| Outer Hebrides Skills Investment Plan | 23 | <p>The Director of Development submitted a Report providing details of the Outer Hebrides Skills Investment Plan (OHSIP). The Report stated that the OHSIP had been agreed by a range of partners in the Outer Hebrides (including the Comhairle, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Jobcentre Plus, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Lews Castle College UHI, Outer Hebrides Tourism, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Third Sector Hebrides). The aim of the OHSIP was to develop a set of actions that would address potential threats and capitalise on opportunities that would enable the islands to realise sustained economic growth, while ensuring that young people had a range of opportunities that encouraged them to live, learn and work in the islands. The purpose of the OHSIP was to change the way skills provision was planned, designed, commissioned and delivered in the Outer Hebrides and five key action areas had been identified as projects which had the capacity to make a significant impact on the demand and supply of skills in the Outer Hebrides.</p> <p>The Report stated that the plan was ambitious and would require significant resources to deliver the vision, strategic outcome and actions recommended. In the first instance it was proposed that the Programme Board established by the Chief Executive consider the governance arrangements and liaise with key partners. A further Report on delivery arrangements and allocation of resources would be presented for consideration to the September/October 2017 Series of Meetings. The skills planning model and an overview of the OHSP were detailed in the Appendices to the Report.</p> |

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

- (1) for the Comhairle's interests, the vision, strategic outcomes and actions arising from the Outer Hebrides Skills Investment Plan as detailed at Appendix 2 to the Report; and**
- (2) that a further Report on governance arrangements be presented to the September/October 2017 Series of Meetings following initial consideration by the Programme Board.**

It was agreed under the terms of Section 50A (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, 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 would be disclosed.

Hebrides
Spaceport Update

24 * With reference to item 20 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 September 2016, the Director of Development submitted a Report providing an update on the submission of a funding bid to the UK Space Agency (UKSA) to establish a UK Spaceport in North Uist. The Report stated that the Comhairle had been developing the concept of a Hebrides Spaceport in North Uist which would provide vertical satellite launch facilities for the growing space sector.

The Report stated that following the UK Space Agency (UKSA) announcement in February 2017 inviting bids from enterprises capable of starting sustainable small-satellite launch or sub-orbital spaceflight operations from a UK spaceport from 2020, the Comhairle had established the Spaceport 1 consortium in order to respond to the opportunity and submit a bid to the UKSA on 28 April 2017. It was indicated in the Report that the outcome of the bid submission and consideration of future activities would be presented to the September/October 2017 Series of Meetings.

Details of the Economic Impact Assessment had been provided for the benefit of new Members. The project could potentially be one of the most significant economic projects in the islands in recent years and had the capacity to create in the region of 200 jobs, bring in significant investment from consortium partners and to develop areas of West Camp in discussion with the MOD.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the current situation;**
- (2) agree to undertake the next steps in refining the Spaceport 1 bid and preparing for the independent evaluation process; and**
- (3) approve an allocation of up to £70,000 from the Revenue Match Fund on the basis detailed in Paragraph 6.3 to the Report.**

Outer Hebrides
Oil and Gas De-
Commissioning
Strategy 2017

25 With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 November 2015, the Director of Development submitted a Report seeking approval of a refreshed version of the Comhairle's Oil and Gas Decommissioning Strategy previously agreed in June 2015. The Report stated that the original Strategy had been developed by the Comhairle in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Stornoway Port Authority. Arising from that Strategy, a Market Analysis report had been commissioned by Tulloch Energy and a key recommendation of the report was to establish an industry led Outer Hebrides Energy Group. The Group was now in place and driving the decommissioning agenda, supported by the Comhairle and its partners. The Report further stated that the recommendations of the Tulloch Energy Report and input from the Outer Hebrides Energy Group and general market intelligence had informed the 2017 refresh of the original Strategy and new areas of focus included synergies with Stornoway Port Authority's plans for a new Deep Water Port at Arnish and the emergence of a niche activity for the Outer Hebrides in terms of Recycling, storage of Recyclables for resale and local reuse of Recyclables. A copy of the 2017 Strategy was appended to the Report and an Action Plan for 2017-2020 was outlined in Section 3 to the Report.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the refreshed Outer Hebrides Decommissioning Strategy 2017 appended to the Report.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Reports Outstanding 26 The Chief Executive submitted a Report detailing those Reports outstanding arising from decisions of the Committee.

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

URGENT ITEM

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

Consultation on Crofting Commission Policy Plan 2017 27 With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 September 2017, the Director of Development submitted a Report informing Members of a consultation on the Crofting Commission Policy Plan and seeking delegation to submit a Comhairle response. The Report stated that Comhairle officers had received notification of the consultation on 2 June 2017 and as the deadline for submission was 21 July 2017 which was outwith the Committee cycle, delegation was sought to submit a Comhairle response.

The Report stated that following the Crofting Commission elections on 17 March 2017, the Commission had been required by statute to submit a plan to Scottish Ministers by 17 September 2017 setting out its policy on how it proposed to exercise its functions. The consultation document was appended to the Report and the Committee's view was that the consultation provided a good opportunity to give a strong response to the new Commission and that the Director would endeavor to reflect the Comhairle's views in the proposed response.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle authorise the Director of Development, in consultation with the Chair of Sustainable Development Committee to submit a Comhairle response to the consultation.

