



MG ALBA – LÈIRSINN STRATEGY UPDATE

Report by Chief Officer, Economic & Community Regeneration

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to consider a presentation from MG ALBA on the implementation of its 'Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media' plan, and to consider proposals to agree a strategy for the Stornoway 'Media Village'.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 In 2022, MG ALBA published 'Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media', which outlines a future where Gaelic media is at the heart of Gaelic communities. Lèirsinn sets out how Gaelic media can connect with all audience segments and be a catalyst for growth in language, communities and economies.
- 2.2 The Sustainable Development Committee received a presentation on the Lèirsinn vision from MG ALBA at its February 2022 meeting, at which point it was agreed that a shared co-operation agreement with the Comhairle be submitted for consideration in due course. As a result of personnel changes, this work has not formally progressed, but the Comhairle has continued to work with MG Alba across a range of fronts, including skills and training, and through ongoing operation of the 'Stornoway Media Village'.
- 2.3 Donald Campbell, Chief Executive of MG ALBA and Lorna Macaulay, Director of Development and Partnerships, will deliver a presentation on the implementation of Lèirsinn, and outline opportunities for future partnership working between MG ALBA and the Comhairle.
- 2.4 Stornoway's 'Media Village' comprises a range of properties owned and leased by the Comhairle at Seaforth Road, Stornoway. The activity and tenants on site make a significant cultural and economic contribution to the Outer Hebrides. There is evidence of under-utilisation of the space across the Media Village, and it is proposed that the Comhairle liaise with MG ALBA, Stòrlann and other tenants to agree a future strategy that ensures the facilities are optimised and positioned to meet growth opportunities and aspirations for the Gaelic language and creative industries sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle notes the presentation from MG Alba on the implementation of its Lèirsinn strategy, and notes proposals to develop a strategy for Stornoway's 'Media Village'.**

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Background Papers: Report to Sustainable Development Committee, February 2022

IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	54a Seaforth Road and 54-56 Seaforth Road are owned by the Comhairle.
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	Supports the Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 ambition to strengthen the local economy.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Sustainable Development Committee received a presentation on MG ALBA's 'Leirsinn' vision at the February 2022 committee series, at which point it was agreed that a shared co-operation agreement with the Comhairle be submitted for consideration in due course. As a result of personnel changes, this work has not formally progressed, but the Comhairle has continued to work with MG Alba across a range of fronts, including skills and training, and through the ongoing operation of the facilities at the Stornoway 'Media Village'.

DETAIL

- 6.1 In 2022, MG ALBA published 'Lèirsinn: A Route Map for Gaelic Media', which outlines a future where Gaelic media is at the heart of Gaelic communities; generating growth in language capability; acting as a key economic driver; and ensuring young people have a digital domain which will be crucial to ensure the future of the language. Lèirsinn sets out how Gaelic media can connect with all audience segments and be a catalyst for growth in language, communities and economies.
- 6.2 Given the shared linguistic and economic priorities of both the Comhairle and MG ALBA, there are opportunities for continued partnership working to deliver against this strategic vision. Donald Campbell, Chief Executive of MG Alba and Lorna Macaulay, Director of Development and Partnerships, will deliver a presentation on the implementation of Lèirsinn and outline ongoing and future opportunities for joint working with the Comhairle.
- 6.3 MG ALBA are critical to the operation of Stornoway's 'Media Village', acting as lead tenant for the Comhairle owned properties at 54-56 Seaforth Road, which provide office, studio and post-production facilities, and from which BBC Radio nan Gaidheal broadcasts in Stornoway. The ERDF-funded expansion to 56 Seaforth Road, completed in 2011, provided additional space and facilities for MG ALBA on the ground floor, and small offices and workspaces for individuals and companies in the creative industries sector on the first floor.
- 6.4 The Comhairle further leases 'An Tosgan' (54a Seaforth Road) to Stòrlann, who act as lead tenant in relation to office and storage space for a range of Gaelic organisations including Stòrlann itself, Comunn na Gaidhlig and Acair. The Comhairle has continued to provide ad hoc access and short-term leases for the large Studio Alba space on the ground floor of 54a Seaforth Road. The Comhairle's

ongoing commitment to operating the facility and significant investment in recent years has enabled space to support productions such as Katie Morag, An Clo Mor, and An t-Eilean.

- 6.5 There is evidence of under-utilisation of the space across the Media Village, and it is proposed that the Comhairle liaise with MG ALBA, Stòrlann and other tenants to agree a future strategy that ensures the facilities are optimised and positioned to meet growth opportunities and aspirations for the Gaelic language and creative industries sector. It is proposed that a short piece of work be commissioned to allow an independent examination of this, in consultation with relevant stakeholders. This will seek to guide future investment in, and utilisation of, the facilities by the private and public sector.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Comhairle works with MG Alba across a range of fronts, including skills and training, and through ongoing operation of the Stornoway 'Media Village'. Partnership working to meet the strategic priorities of both organisations, and for the benefit of the Gaelic language, economy and communities of the Outer Hebrides, will continue to be progressed.