

Arran Economic Group

Minutes of Meeting

Held on Thursday 8th March 2018 at 1100 hrs in the Glen Cloy Suite, Auchrannie Resort, Brodick, Isle of Arran.

In Attendance:

Tom Tracey (Chairman)
Sheena Borthwick-Toomey (Development Director)
Alasdair Laurenson (NAC)
Alastair Dobson (Taste of Arran)
Bill Calderwood (Arran Community Council)
Vicki Yuill (Arran CVS)
Barry Smith (Arran High School)
Councillor Ellen McMaster
Ruth Betley (North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership)

Apologies:

Councillor Timothy Billings
Kenneth Bone (VisitArran)
Lorna Spencer (CMAL Assets)
Stephen Gallagher (Scottish Government)
Steven Cullum (Scottish Government)
Jennifer Nicoll (HIE)
Lucinda Gray (HIE)
Linda Johnston (Auchrannie Resort)

1. Introduction, Minutes & Welcome

TT opened the meeting and introduced the Annual Report top line results confirming the infrastructure projects were nearly complete and posing the question for future work; How do we use these to promote the island? BC adopted the Minutes and AD seconded.

2. Housing

SB gave the group an update on the current situation: An original meeting was postponed due to bad weather and will now take place with Irvine HA re the 21 units [REDACTED] within the next 3 weeks. Work is progressing with the legal department within NAC regarding the [REDACTED] Rent to Buy Units planned [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in association with SFT. Meeting planned for end March with Forestry

Commission & HIE regarding the community asset transfer of [REDACTED] for possible [REDACTED] self-build plots. This should coincide with the launch of the Scottish Government Self-Build Loan Fund. Two further “self-build” plots have been purchased by young workers on the island and in the process of submitting planning applications. AD asked what the timescales were. **SB intimated towards the year end but would check and report back.** AL confirmed meetings had taken place with LDP Team and a policy statement was likely to be inserted into the plan concerning the housing crisis on Arran. The exact wording of the statement is still to be received. AD further asked about the Allocations Policy for Social Housing Stock. SB confirmed this was a current and fluid situation with many statutory obligations for HA’s & local authority’s taking precedence over “workers” allocation. However, TT, BC and SB were meeting within the next week to consider the priorities and design a Local Lettings Policy specifically for the island, North Ayrshire Council and HA’s to consider for implementation.

Also, working in partnership with NAC & HA’s regarding consideration being given to ways of incentivising the reintroduction of empty houses and raise revenue to fund solutions to the housing crisis. Once the information is collated, **SB will report back to AEG to present findings.**

The direction of travel in solving the housing crisis on Arran is positive.

3. Connectivity

BC confirmed the latest update from HIE stated the last two cabinets for Kildonan and Whiting Bay are built and will be installed following final testing. This will provide a total of 23 cabinets on Arran covering Blackwaterfoot, Brodick, Corrie, Kilmory, Lamdash, Lochranza, Pirnmill, Shiskine, Sliderry and Whiting Bay. BC further confirmed a solution was still required for residents connected directly to Exchanges. The roll-out of the white-space technology continues apace and no problems reported from users. Mobile coverage is also extending (albeit slowly) with new 4G signals now being received in Lamdash for EE customers. Upgrades to the emergency services network is progressing well with a further two masts now built at Dyemill and Glen Rosa. A planning application is being considered for a further mast at the end of the Ross Road at Glenree. The community mast at Kilmory awaits capacity being allocated as will the new masts. Initial concerns that the emergency services network capacity may be limited or restricted are being followed up with assistance from Patricia Gibson MP. There is a continued issue with backhaul being limited and this is currently being followed up. In recognition that connectivity represents a fantastic opportunity to position Arran as a modern, connected business and lifestyle destination a “Arran Digital” meeting has been organised for next week bringing together the main service providers, technology developers, government and key users (health, social care, education, business and community) to investigate areas of possible collaborative working. This meeting is supported and sponsored by NAC Business Growth Team.

Ruth Betley of North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership gave the group an

overview of a recent Connectivity “TEC” grant application which was designed to provide an innovative connectivity solution enabling delivery of health and social care directly to patients within their home environment as follows: -

“The aims are to maintain more of our citizens at home, or a homely setting and to reduce the pressure on higher end care options by providing alternative person-centred care in the community. To date there has been significant interest by Arran in further exploring TEC. There is a real opportunity to provide an exemplar approach to Digital Health and Care by combining the redesign of day to day service delivery with TEC, ICT and E-Health intervention on this island. While the aims are around patient outcomes it is hoped to be able to use this test of change which provides a practical step by step approach on digital health and care in practice. This approach will be a replicable model for large scale digital transformation across other localities and partnerships in NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

The team will assist with developing health and well-being plans with individuals which focus on prevention and self-management. They will focus upon the implementation of three e-health interventions: home and mobile health monitoring; video enabled services and digital apps. These will be embedded within local pathways of care. In addition, an aim to reduce time taken up by care home visits by 2 -hours per week with the complex cases which will be receiving care from the health and care support worker team instead of traditional CAH staff, community nurses and social services staff.”

Barry Smith of Arran High School gave the AEG an update on the connectivity opportunities and challenges faced within the areas of education and skills: -

Current Connectivity Across Schools

- NACED WIFI only authorised NAC education devices. Argyll College is on a separate network.
- WIFI network rollout almost complete throughout primary schools and high school.
- Connectivity can still be “patchy” at times but has improved considerably over the past year.
- The physical proximity to Argyll College means that young people already have very good access to College facilities.
- Slow connections across AHS and primary. Hardware or Bandwidth?
- Large number of “static” PCs; greater flexibility would be beneficial – laptops/mobile devices can go anywhere.
- Technical support can be slow (visiting technicians to primary schools). The High School has had no technician support for over a year.

The Challenges

- Digital hardware profile across all schools. Pupils identify this as an issue.
- Digital skills of staff – currently variable – with more reliable infrastructure comes greater opportunity (and expectation) for staff to be engaged in delivering inspiring digital learning.

Opportunities with finding Solutions to Challenges

- Providing 21st century education experiences with which all young people can engage.
- Supporting staff in developing the confidence that they can plan digital aspects of learning in the knowledge that hardware and connectivity are reliable.
- Digital skills development of all staff, students, parents and community.
- Links to other kinds of learning i.e. what opportunities exist for college to diversify their offer in Arran High School through digital learning (beyond the traditional model) ?
- Global dimension – skills for learning, life and work. ENACTUS/European Youth Forum – AHS is the first school to be accepted.

Future Education Connectivity Plans/Aspirations

- Digital Literacy – fundamental skill for every child, as important as learning to write.
- Digital learning needs to be central to all youngsters' lives, equity of opportunity for youngsters – Arran, North Ayrshire, Scotland, Globally.
- BYOD – challenges and opportunities in equal measure ?
- Further online learning opportunities – MOOCs/Future Learn.
- Additional learning pathways for young people.
- Arran High School cluster as a centre of excellence in Digital Learning – using remote rural location as a lever and advantage in the development of sector leading approaches to digital learning.

4. Arran Gateway Project

AL informed the group £100k in grant funding had been received from the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund towards the refurbishment of the ex-ferry terminal building. Although very welcome, further funding was still required. Lucinda Gray of HIE (not in attendance at the meeting) provided a written update as follows “HIE is currently considering a request from NAC to provide match funding and pointed to a potential other source of funding from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. This will be open to applications from local authorities in April 2018. The aims of the fund are highly relevant – support with infrastructure requirements to ensure that the services and facilities visitors need are provided for. It will be launched in April and administered by VisitScotland. The details can be found on the Scottish Government website.” AL & SB also mentioned a meeting with The Robertson Group had taken place where the AGP was discussed in depth with a view to attracting inward private investment for the three phases of the project. Currently The Robertson Group are assessing the Masterplan Study and The Housing Study and due to report back within a few weeks.

5. Ardrossan Task Force/Harbour Update

BC provided the group with the following update – Work continues to confirm the optimum arrangements to provide the most resilient service for the long-term

connection to Arran. The option prepared last year is still on the table but there are a couple of other possibilities which are being evaluated. Work continues this week with the nautical experts to prepare an options paper which will enable the task force to present proposals to the Minister prior to the Easter recess for his review. This work will also look at the options for the build of both land and marine work to allow pre-work to be initiated as soon as practical. A project management team will be appointed to take the programme forward on conclusion of the review. Other related updates include the Glen Sannox build continues with vessel anticipated to come into service in the Summer of 2019. Brodick – work continues to complete certification of the PAS. CalMac staff are working in the new terminal building to set up services (IT etc). Area of parking places in front of the new building has been opened up and folks are asked to “Observe the Signs”.

6. Communications

SB informed the group contact had been made with NAC & HIE regarding a “change of message” from the AEG – to a Place to Live and Work. This message change signifies the major steps taken over the last two years to improve Arran’s connectivity and infrastructure. Meetings with communications teams will be scheduled over the next month. Grant funding had been received from NAC and The Business Gateway to design an Arran Development Trust website to showcase Arran in this light. All pertinent reports and news relating to living and working on Arran will be in the one place. A link will be set up with the VisitArran website to share and drive traffic to the new site.

The findings of the AEG Annual Report will be featured in The Banner newspaper within the next two weeks.

A public meeting will be scheduled over the next two months featuring [REDACTED] Housing. The community will be asked for their views and feedback.

7. Any Other Business

Lucinda Gray of HIE provided the group with further updates: -

There have been some staff changes in the Argyll Area Team. David Smart left HIE in February and she will resume her role as key contact for the AEG and will identify other team members to work on specific projects as appropriate.

HIE is keen to collaborate on the Clyde Islands Initiative. This was within David Smart’s portfolio and will transfer to another member of the Argyll Area Team.

Tourism Action Group – following an earlier meeting with VisitArran, HIE, NAC and VisitScotland, a tourism action group meeting is proposed for April/May (date to be confirmed) which HIE will attend.

Digital Arran – Peter Guthrie, HIE’s Head of Digital Communities will be the key contact for

this project. He has discussed the project with John McGuire at NAC. Unfortunately, HIE is unable to attend the meeting on 12 March, but Peter will catch up with John following the initial meeting on 12 March re any specific actions.

Actions

Timescale of house building - SB intimated towards the year end but would check and report back.

Allocations Policy, Empty Homes and Incentives - SB will report back to AEG and present findings.