

## Quarterly Report

April – June 2018

### Arran Economic Group

#### Housing Delivery

During the quarter April to June 2018, major steps forward have been taken in the delivery of affordable housing for rent or market. The new draft LDP for North Ayrshire is currently under consultation and does contain flexibility for additional homes adjacent to settlement boundaries. It is also recognised within the plan, Arran has additional challenges and within the planning parameters there is a willingness to enable development. Discussions are ongoing, and the relationship is good. Further work in this area is required and a meeting to discuss a further potential alteration to new build on the island will take place shortly.

The Arran Development Trust has completed and agreed their Housing Statement, Local Lettings Policy and Points Allocation System in advance of the Arran Housing Association being set-up. Liaison with NAC Housing Department in relation to this work is regular and necessary for compliance in the future, as all social housing providers will be working from the Common Housing Register for tenants. The ADT has also been awarded OSCR registration with legal work nearing completion around the Articles of Association changes required for public funding if required in the future. Meetings have also taken place with the Scottish Land Fund and the Rural Housing Fund for land purchase and development respectively. Productive meetings with the Forestry Commission, Arran Estates and several local land owners willing to offer land to the ADT for affordable homes have taken place. The ADT now has a Land Register allowing for over 400 units. Most of the sites are within the local plan and several are “shovel ready”.

The ADT is currently working on the business plan and associated documents for the Arran Housing Association and it is intended to lodge this application with the Housing Regulator at the beginning of Autumn. Five and thirty-year financial plans also need to be completed and the ADT is working closely with the Housing Regulator to ensure compliance. If, everything goes to schedule, the newly formed Arran Housing Association will commence work in March 2020.

NAC Housing Department are currently procuring for the 31 (up from 26 in the LDP) homes at Brathwic Terrace, Brodick. Work scheduled to commence in the Spring of 2019. Unfortunately, the 6 units planned for Auchrannie Road, Brodick with Scottish Futures Trust (Rent to Buy Scheme) has been dropped from the schedule as additional water pipe work made the site untenable under their proposed scheme. The site owner has now agreed to reduce the sale price taking this work into account. The ADT will discuss the potential of this

site at their next meeting.

Two Community Engagement Drop-In Sessions have been held to showcase the available land sites, housing feasibility work and proposed affordable house designs. Marketing of these events was carried out via Stakeholder social media networks and The Banner Newspaper. Of the people attending, positive comments were received, and no negativity voiced on either occasion.

There are 59 Empty Homes registered on Arran and work continues to bring these properties back into habitable affordable use. Shelter published their Annual Report on Empty Homes recently, showing over 37,000 EHs in Scotland. Only 700 have been brought back into use in the last year and 3,500 since 2010. On checking at local authority level, NAC has brought back into use a total of 47 in the North Ayrshire region, 4 of which are on Arran (Kilmory, Lamlash & Whiting Bay). More focussed work is required on Arran as these properties could provide very welcome affordable accommodation for those most in need and alleviate immediate recruitment challenges. Discussions continue with NAC Housing and the dedicated Empty Homes Officer with a view to introducing a pilot scheme on Arran. This work stream will form part of the discussion at Ministerial level to ensure its prominence and importance.

Working with the local High School, education professionals, health care professionals and local businesses informal research is currently being compiled to inform the future of Arran Skills & Training requirements for the future, specifically in the areas of construction and related trades/skills requirements. Working towards the provision of and alternative routes for school leavers for vocational training and employment on the island delivered through the Arran Housing Association.

### **The Arran Gateway Project/Community Hub**

CMAL Assets has put the ex-ferry terminal building on the market for general lease. The estate agents have been in contact and the AEG/ADT have viewed the property along with architects and project managers with a view to work required based on the original Masterplan Study. Quotations have now been received and if the ADT is successful in its bid, work will be procured through the local authority process. £100k funding from the RCGF has been awarded and a second £100k application to the Participatory Budgeting – Community Choices Fund has been applied for with a decision due mid-August. Additional funding from HIE & NAC will still be required if the building is to be developed appropriately. However, since there has been a delay in the marketing of the ex-ferry terminal building, the ADT is now under real pressure to reach an agreement with the owner and commence re-furbishment work before the start of the new financial year (April 2019) or else the £100k funding grant from RCGF will be lost.

In order to develop the building to realise the full potential for economic growth and further development of the island, a Community Share Offer Document is currently under design

and discussion with Community Shares Scotland. The community share offer will be designed to raise funds enabling the Step-Ashore/Transit Marina part of the building to be developed along side the necessary harbour works. Importantly, it will also allow the Arran's community and beyond to have a say/play an active role and pertinent link to the facility.

### **Clyde Islands Initiative**

The meetings are quarterly and work towards common goals including physical connectivity, digital connectivity, tourism, economic growth and development of the Clyde Islands. Each of the three islands are at different stages of development in the various areas and are sharing methods of best practice. It is important for Arran to enable the work required and as mentioned above with Step Ashore/Transit Marina within the Arran Gateway Project to offer similar facilities as available elsewhere in the Scottish islands. Arran is sharing best practice in the areas of digital connectivity, economic growth and development. Councillor Alex Gallagher of North Ayrshire Council has been appointed as cabinet member for the Islands. This is a positive move and ensures focus on the islands of Arran and Cumbrae are represented appropriately at cabinet level within the local authority.

### **Digital Applications to match Infrastructure**

The first meeting to discuss using the now widely available digital connectivity has been held with NHS, Scottish Government and North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership to deliver and improve appropriate health care across Arran. The Telehealth & Telecare project is necessary as an interim solution to the problems encountered with recruitment of health and care professions, due to the lack of affordable homes. This project requires a good and sustainable level of funding until the housing problem has been addressed. Various grant funds are now being considered. A second meeting of the group to discuss the delivery side of the project will take place in September. A presentation on the future delivery of this project will be given to the full AEG at their meeting in September.

### **Transport Infrastructure & Service (Physical Connectivity)**

As part of The Arran Gateway Project/Community Hub, active travel/carbon neutral transport/electric cars & bikes are now under discussion as a potential additional source of hire income for the community, encouraging a healthier lifestyle for both residents and visitors to the island. Discussions are underway around social isolation and engagement with hard to reach groups very much at the forefront. A working group with ACVS, AEG, ADT and NAC are considering funding routes and best practice to be deployed to enable this part of the project to succeed.

## **Arran – A Sustainable Island**

Working with Eco Savvy and Zero Waste Scotland in the areas of best practice around active travel and carbon neutral transport together with energy solutions to be incorporated into all new affordable homes is proving beneficial and will become apparent as the individual projects progress through delivery.

### **Communications & Promotion**

The ADT website is nearing completion and will be the main content provider for all the work currently being undertaken, giving opportunities for interested individuals/groups to view documentation/plans/proposals etc. An important part of this facility will be inter-action through a contact page.

It is also important to continue to utilise the many Stakeholder social networks along with heritage and traditional media including The Banner Newspaper. It must be remembered that the population on Arran is older and as such they tend to lean towards a local newspaper rather than digital technology and must be catered for in the round.

Regular community engagement events will be organised as the main projects mentioned above reach the delivery stage to inform both residents and visitors. Each project will require a slightly different treatment, and this will be identified as they progress.

Regarding the awareness required for the Community Share document, this will differ markedly from the other projects in that local, national and global media must be engaged to ensure the level of revenue is to be realised through effective campaigning. It is anticipated, a marketing budget will be required for this work.

The second Quality of Life Survey is about to be delivered to residents with the questionnaire currently being finalised. There is still time to add in a few more questions.

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