

Quarterly Report

April – June 2019

Arran Economic Group

Chairman's Summary of AEG April - June 2019 Quarterly

The latest tourist information reports show us with continued growth of 5% in revenue year on year. Our Quality of life survey shows that Arran remains in the top 10% in Scotland.

Whether this can be sustained in the medium to long term depends on how quickly we can resolve our most pressing crisis. The lack of affordable housing on Arran; with rents in excess of 40% mainland rates and household incomes among the lowest in North Ayrshire, the only question is why our labour shortages in every sector of our economy are not higher. NAC 34 houses in Brathwic Terrace will start to solve the problem. The Arran Development Trust has now placed detailed plans and grant applications with the Scottish Government for 43 affordable homes and 14 self-build plots. Meetings have been held with Ministers for Housing, Islands and Rural Economies to explain the problem and outline the solution. All are sympathetic. We will know over the next three months if this sympathy translates to funding. Meetings have also been held with the CEO of North Ayrshire Council and we are working closely with them. The ball is firmly in the Governments court and our MSP is working for a positive outcome.

The Ferry Committee's continuous drive to establish a problem solving and customer service ethos with CalMac. This paid dividends over Easter with an additional capacity for 11,800 passengers, 3,200 cars and 700 meters of freight. However, the underlying problems remain. CMAL/CalMac infrastructure; (Boats/Harbours/Information Systems) need urgent and significant Capital Investment which seem to be on the horizon but never quite manage to get here. The Ferry Committee continue to press for this solution and in the meantime mitigate the infrastructure inadequacies where possible. On a more positive note several new initiatives are being developed by Eco Savvy, ACVS and Health and Social Care Partnership to encourage environmentally friendly transport and reduce social isolation caused by a lack of transport.

Work continues to develop and implement the Skills Plan across the four key sectors; Construction, Health and Social Care, Visitor Economy and Shared Provision. Each group has identified priorities, actions, partners, barriers to success and potential solutions.

Progress also in communication with eight events held over the period and the completion of the Discover Arran website and Social Media platforms.

In conclusion, the top line performance figures are encouraging but the underlying divergence in the availability and cost of social housing with the mainland exacerbates labour shortages in all sectors. Some of these, as we saw in a recent Banner headline, are critical and threaten our long-term sustainability. There are grant funds available and a detailed proposal to access them is with the Government. We will keep you updated on progress but would also encourage you to get involved directly.

Tom Tracey
Chairman: Arran Economic Group

Housing Delivery: Arran Development Trust: (ADT) Barry Mochan/Sheena Borthwick-Toomey

During the quarter April – June 2019, work has continued at a good pace and the Arran Development Trust has been accepted by the Scottish Government and designated as a Rural Housing Body. This means the Trust can apply Rural Housing Burdens on title deeds of properties/land it owns and operate a Right of Pre-Emption to ensure a buy-back if required to ensure these properties/land remain affordable in perpetuity. It also allows the Trust to apply for Housing Association funding in the future.

The Arran Development Trust has completed and lodged 2 applications with the Scottish Land Fund to Value and further purchase two of the sites (Rowarden and Benlister/St Molios) with a decision due on the 19th of June. The Trust has also completed all the feasibility work as secured with Rural & Islands Housing Feasibility Fund and shared the results with all stakeholders. The ADT has also now lodged all three RIHF Main Fund applications for development funding. In the case of the Dyemill application, the RIHF has agreed to consider both the purchase and installation of the services on site, allowing the plots to be serviced and sold at an affordable level and none retained by the Trust as this would defeat the purpose of the project. The Forestry Commission who own the site has agreed, the sale is much simpler than before as the ADT is now a Rural Housing Body, able to give all the comfort necessary for the transfer/sale. The valuation of the site will be part funded by the FC and details are currently being finalised.

Liaison with NAC Housing Department in relation to all 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. From discussions with NAC Housing, NAC are very supportive of the ADT work and have offered to operate the ADT Board Strategy and Local Lettings Policy in the short to medium term allowing the ADT to concentrate on the build out of all three sites. In the case of Dyemill, due to its location and out with the LDP, NAC senior officers have offered to aid the ADT through the planning process where possible.

NAC Housing Department are currently finalising the work for the 34 (up from 26/31 in the LDP) homes at Brathwic Terrace, Brodick and have recently held several community drop-in sessions to consult on the plans directly. The homes will consist of 17 General Housing, 3 x General, 4 x General, 8 x Amenity Houses and 2 x Wheelchair Accessible. The exact breakdown of General Housing will be a mix of mainly 2 and 3 Bedrooms with additional 4/5 Bedroom types. There will be no 1 bed units as these are not cost effective to construct. Work is scheduled to commence in the Autumn of 2019 after encountering many delays re suppliers/contractors. During a recent meeting with NAC Housing, it was recognised that housing for workers must be a priority but as a local authority it was a statutory obligation to provide for as many identified groups as possible. NAC Housing confirmed their lettings policy was now under review and would liaise with the ADT.

Working with the local High School, education professionals and head of the construction section of Skills Development Scotland, the ADT are scoping out the possibility of providing alternative routes for school leavers for vocational training and employment on the island delivered through the ADT Rural Housing Training Academy. Covering all aspects of construction, project management, administration and maintenance.

The ADT has also met with the owners of the Dougary Estate regarding Empty Properties and land which may be suitable for affordable homes on this side of the island. Also, some potential developments in the Shiskine area. This will be followed up over the next couple of months. The ADT membership is now around 400 members.

Health & Social Care: Ruth Betley

The Complex Care pilot was completed at the end of April and the first draft of the evaluation report is to be presented to the Health and Social Care Senior Partnership management team on 4th July. The hope is that this new way of working will be rolled out across Arran, including a multi-disciplinary team approach and a new health and care support worker. There have been many positives from the pilot.

The plans for the unscheduled care service continue to develop with the new Ambulance Transfer service up and running and the upgraded expanded A+E department completed. Work will begin on upgrading the old A+E to accommodate the new X-ray machine on 15th July. There will be an official opening later in the year and AEG members will be invited along.

In addition, plans for the Integrated Hub on Arran continue with the Initial Agreement. This document will be presented to the Integrated Joint Board on 20th June and then the Infrastructure Partnership Board on 8th July. It is anticipated that the document will then be submitted to Scottish Government in September 2019. This includes a preferred way forward for re-provision of the hospital, Lamlash and Brodick Health Centres. The next stage, once the Initial Agreement has been approved by Scottish government is the Outline Business Case which will incorporate the 4 options detailed in the Initial Agreement. This Outline Business Case stage will include the formal public consultation exercise. This will take approximately 9-10 months to complete.

The lack of affordable homes on Arran continue to be a primary reason for staff shortages which in turn can impact service delivery. This situation needs to be resolved as a matter of urgency.

The Arran Gateway Project/Community Hub: Sheena Borthwick-Toomey

As previously reported, our bid to lease the ex-ferry terminal building from CMAL Assets was unsuccessful. We are in a follow up process with Kevin Hobbs, the CEO of CMAL Assets over the next few months to better understand their prioritisation process. The plan had been approved by three Government agencies (NAC/HIE/RCGF) offering £200,000 for redevelopment of the facility which would have opened in April 2019. In addition, The Gateway project was part of a Master Plan for the area to which CMAL contributed. However, despite all of the above CMAL's process prioritised a Cinema complex, which may or may not be available to the community in 2019.

Obviously, we and CMAL need to learn from this process and see what we could do differently for future projects. We will advise of learnings as we receive them.

Digital Applications to match Infrastructure

Andrew Stirling of Larkhall Consulting has provided information regarding an event designed for Rural Connected Communities – It relates to a DCMS programme to support the introduction of 5G technology in rural areas. [Orkney's already benefited greatly](#) – with applications in farming and fish farming.

Discussions continue with the High School to ascertain whether they can host the Digital Blacksmith/Arran Digital Skills Hub – the High School has, in turn, reached out to North Ayrshire Council for approval. More should be known on this shortly.

On Tuesday 17th September, from 7pm, there will be a Digital Blacksmith event in Brodick Hall, exploring how skills and connectivity can create options for community innovation. The event will be organised jointly with [Callum Nash](#), the award-winning University of Northumbria researcher

whose Participatory Research programme this will form part.

Transport Infrastructure & Service (Physical Connectivity) Jude King/Bill Calderwood.

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. Eco Savvy has confirmed they have been awarded funding to pilot an electric bike scheme.

Eco Savvy now have two part-time Sustainable Travel & Transport Coordinators in post: Emma Tracey and Andrew Binnie. Both are experienced, qualified and competent people to take on these focused roles and have the full project team in place. Andrew and Emma both attended an induction day at the new office space at Home Farm; Andrew will be working this week with Emma officially starting next week. They will be co-ordinating assigned aspects of the following activities and deliverables:

- Island wide eBike Scheme
- Arrans First Green Travel & Transport Map
- Bike Maintenance Tool Library
- Travel and Maintenance Workshops and Events
- Fuel Efficient Drivers Training
- Lift Car Share Scheme
- Increased Collaboration with local organisations

There is inevitability that aspects such as the Green Travel & Transport map will take on the improvement of signage as well as support on the development and implementation of new routes to promote uptake of active travel (i.e. Brodick-Lamlash cycle route). Activities will take on anything that minimises high carbon travel and endorses lower carbon & zero carbon alternatives. This includes tackling the bike on bus issue. There is lots to achieve but it is felt the right people are in post to make it happen!

Once Andrew and Emma have settled into their roles, more focus will be placed on the voluntary steering group to discuss how to achieve some of the shared priorities and aims.

Ferry Resilience / Development:

Arran Economic group supports the Arran Ferry Committee work to improve the service reliability / Resilience and attended a meeting arranged with the Minister responsible in early April. We presented information highlighting the impact the increasing interruptions were having on the "quality of life" for residents and economic impact to the island economy. Minister acknowledged the situation and confirmed that the delays to the new vessels under construction were a major disappointment.

Our discussion also highlighted the restricted capacity this year over the Easter period and supported our request for additional sailings which collectively delivered capacity which carried 11800 passengers 3200 cars and released 700 metres of HGV traffic which may otherwise have

taken space on the Caledonian Isles. This had a positive impact to resident's short-term travel needs and also contributed to the island economy.

We continue to support the Ferry Committees ongoing work to develop both the Brodick and Lochranza services all year round and their other actions to improve the services required for all sections of the community.

Arran Skills & Development: Alastair Dobson/John McGuire

The meeting in May was the first feedback meeting of the group since the facilitated meeting in December 2018 with Alan McGregor, where collectively it was agreed to focus on 4 key skills areas that were critical to the economic and social development of Arran.

1. Construction
2. Health and Social Care
3. Visitor Economy
4. Shared Provision

All four groups have taken a task and finish approach, are populated by 3-4 key individuals, and each have identified key priorities, actions, partners, barriers to success and potential solutions. Excellent progress has been made to date with great evidence of partnership working, based on a drive to produce workable local solutions using frameworks and budgets already in place. There has also been feedback and solutions suggested where gaps have been identified. Work plans are now in place for each key area and the groups have agreed to lead the activity and report back on a 6-monthly basis.

All groups are committed to keep challenging delivery and developing solutions and keeping focus and pace. Updates are available.

Cross Cutting Themes and Opportunities

- a. There are current critical vacancies and the groups are looking at short term solutions as they work through medium- and longer-term opportunities.
- b. There is a need to look at skills development at all levels, not just young people, but areas such as workforce development, under employment, skills sharing and reskilling.
- c. As many of the sectors have already done a workforce development plan, have also fed into the Arran Development Trust housing needs analysis, is there a simple and quick way to build on this information to develop a future skills map for Arran (help required but we believe there could be a fast and focussed way to complete this. Suggestions gratefully received)
- d. Each sector alludes to the fact that the Arran Skills Group was essential to their future planning.
- e. The collective and accepted challenge is to look for innovative solutions using existing tools and frameworks. Where there are gaps, offer suggestions or revisions.
- f. All organisations are learning quickly of the roles, responsibilities, operations and resources of the others and are finding great value in this.
- g. Developing excellent leadership skills with principles and owners of Arran businesses and organisations on Arran will be a key driver for success at all levels.
- h. Digital needs to be integrated across all themes and there will be further meetings with businesses, schools, colleges and council departments.

Communications

The Discover Arran website is now complete and is 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 is the inter-action through a contact page. The ADT has a strong social media presence to complement the main website. Contact from interested individuals is regular and very positive, lots of questions and emails of support.

The results of the Quality of Life Survey are now complete and will be in the public domain within the next few weeks. Interesting results were recorded regarding the additional questions around affordable housing which is very informative and helpful.

Eight community engagement events have now been held to provide an overview of the work on housing and these will continue as the projects progress. There are in excess of 30 people who have registered an interest in self-build. The Highland Small Communities Housing Trust and Buildstore have agreed to visit Arran and present “financial” solutions to the community around self-build and this event will be organised once we have clarity regarding the availability of plots and grant funding.

Over 300 people are now members of the Arran Development Trust. At current growth rates there will be 400 members by the end of the month.

Presented by Sheena Borthwick-Toomey
Development Director
Arran Economic Group
July 2019

Appendices:

Transport Infrastructure and Service Strategy.

Output of review to develop Arran Transport Strategy

Owner: **Ferry Committee (wet side), NAC (dry side), SPT (straddles both) LPP leads on “Community” Transport & Eco Savvy on “Green” Transport.**

Current State: Arran has a several major defects in transport infrastructure and service provision. These range from insufficient seasonal capacity on Ferry and Bus services, through poor quality roads to a lack of provision for active travel and transport services that prevent social isolation.

Future State: Arran has transport infrastructure and service which balances demand with supply from the local community, business and visitors, by sea and on land, which are fit for purpose and supported by an information system that provides transparent access to what is available.

Operating Principles: (Guidance on what we are trying to achieve.)

- 1) Priorities for Lifeline Service: Medical Emergency, Lifeline supplies, people, freight, private transport.
- 2) All transport services connect.
- 3) All transport Services support active travel.
- 4) Community transport solutions provided in and by the community.
- 5) Move towards electric or hybrid public and private transport.
- 6) Encourage active transport.
- 7) Discourage freight from roads and boats when economic and environmental alternatives are available.
- 8) Encourage safe active travel routes between villages
- 9) Transport and path network which recognises 100 times more visitors than residents by providing signage, speed limits and guidance on road and path usage.

How do we move from Current State to Future State?

- 1) Complete the Brodick Harbour Implementation without disruption to the timetable and with minimum inconvenience to passengers. **Complete.**

- 2) Continue to improve Brodick Harbour facilities and services. ([Ferry Committee](#))
- 3) Deliver a two-ferry, year-round service to Arran from Ardrossan and a winter service from Lochranza to Clonaig ([Ferry Committee](#))
- 4) Complete the Ardrossan Harbour Redevelopment without disruption to the timetable with minimum inconvenience to passengers. ([Ardrossan Task Force/Ferry Committee](#))
- 5) Improve the data base that forecasts: ([AEG/Ferry Committee](#))
 - a) 5-year demand for passengers and freight.
 - b) Monetarises the effect of demand/supply imbalances on the Island economy and CalMac revenue.
 - c) Use this data to maintain and improve service or consider other options.
 - d) RET impact (roads, infrastructure etc).
- 6) Works with CalMac, Transport Scotland and the SG to review CalMac performance to their contract and drive improvements were necessary. ([Ferry Committee](#)).
- 7) Work with NAC transport department to understand and communicate how they plan to upgrade and maintain our roads to a state which is fit for purpose. ([NAC/E McM](#))
- 8) Work with our Bus service provider to deliver a service which matches demand with supply and supports active transport. ([Eco Savvy](#))
- 9) Define and implement a local transport strategy which will support social inclusion and prevent social isolation locally. ([NAC/Health & Social Care Ptn/ACVS/: Lead LPP](#))
- 10) Develop and promote Green Travel and Active Travel: ([Eco Savvy](#))

When: Item 1 is complete. Items 2 through 10 are ongoing at various levels.

Metrics: Transport demand and supply are in balance to and from the Island and on the Island. Measurable increase in Green and Active Transport and a measurable reduction in transport induced social isolation.