

Quarterly Report

July – September 2018

Arran Economic Group

Housing Delivery

During the quarter July to September 2018, work has continued, albeit slower than anticipated due to the summer holiday period.

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. Expressions of Interest for funding for all five sites identified (Dyemill, Benlister, Rowarden, Glencloy & Springbank) have now been lodged with the Rural & Islands Housing Fund. The ADT should receive notification of acceptance or otherwise by the end of October. In the case of Dyemill, a community asset transfer request is being finalised and now ready for submission, this could not take place earlier until the ADT Articles of Association had been altered.

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. To ensure the housing provided by the AHA is allocated in the main to “workers”, it may be the AHA operate a separate housing allocation list. From discussions with NAC Housing, if this is the case and if acceptable to the housing regulator, NAC will be supportive. The ADT has also completed and submitted the changes required to the Articles of Association to qualify for public funding and this has now been ratified by Scottish Ministers.

Two community drop-in sessions have been held in Lamlash Fire Station and Brodick Hall to showcase the development proposals and gain feedback. Feedback was all extremely positive (evidence in completed forms by those in attendance) and a good majority of folks attending were from the younger demographic and interested in self-build. The Scottish Government have now launched their Scotland-wide Self-Build Loan Fund and a further community presentation will be organised by the ADT in November by the HSCHT who administer the fund, to present the detail on qualification and how to apply etc.

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 34 (up from 26/31 in the LDP) homes at Brathwic Terrace, Brodick and have recently held a community drop-in session 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 Spring of 2019. 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.

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 Arran Housing Association Training Academy. Covering all aspects of construction, project management, administration and maintenance.

An approach has been made to the ADT from an Empty House Owner in Corrie with a view to the ADT acquiring the property as an affordable home. This is currently being investigated.

The Church of Scotland in Lamlash are considering land in their ownership being utilised for Workers Housing and more will be known of this plan over the next month when a meeting is scheduled to take place to discuss further with the ADT.

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. This will be followed up over the next couple of months.

The Arran Gateway Project/Community Hub

CMAL Assets is now in receipt of the ADT submission to lease the ex-ferry terminal building. There have been 3 viable submissions received which the CMAL Board are now considering. The £100k funding from the RCGF which was awarded to NAC for the refurbishment of the building has now been agreed, this will transfer to the ADT and enable the ADT to take the head lease, if the submission is successful. The £100k application to the Participatory Budgeting – Community Choices Fund was unsuccessful, however additional funding from HIE & NAC has been secured and will allow the building to be refurbished and developed. 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 could be lost.

The ADT were approached by a local business to take the central ticketing hall of the building if the submission is successful. This business could provide a retail/showcase area for local produce and café/restaurant/take-away for sea-food and other Arran produce. The ADT has noted the interest

and will keep the business informed regarding progress, however it will be incumbent on the ADT, if successful in acquiring the lease, to operate within a transparent process, allowing all businesses the opportunity to apply for space within the building.

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 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. Members of the group are currently exploring the possible funding routes available to enable the purchase of a small inter-island ferry, which is surplus to requirements to a marine organisation and for sale.

Digital Applications to match Infrastructure

The AEG is currently in discussions with the lead officer regarding the Digital Project as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal. The Business Case is being compiled and will be ready for further consultation mid-October and Heads of Terms likely in December 2018. This is one of twenty-three projects included in the £350m, 20-year programme of the AGD. The Digital project totals approximately £30m and will include an independent cable (Irvine), 4G infill (not spots) with 5G capability, Agile Platforms at key sites (Hunterston, Prestwick etc). The AEG confirmed there was further work required around digital skills on Arran and all must be considered with transport and infrastructure. Transport Scotland were currently working on a Regional Appraisal for this work.

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

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. A meeting is due to take place within October to update the ADT on housing renewables available.

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. All the main sections (Education, Health, Community, Arts etc) are now being submitted to the website before final sign-off. As soon as complete, the website will be promoted locally through the Arran Banner and supported by social media networks.

The results of the Business Survey have now been ratified and it is hoped these will be in the public domain within October.

As mentioned previously, the next community engagement event will be organised with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust to showcase the Self-Build Loan Fund. This will be timed to coincide with the availability of the self-build plots at Dyemill, Lamblash and the community asset transfer of land from the Forestry Commission.

The second Quality of Life Survey is about to be delivered to residents with the questionnaire currently being finalised. The AEG/ADT have inserted several additional questions regarding second home/holiday home ownership. This was felt pertinent on the recent news of St Ives, Cornwall having a planning decision challenged resulting in a court case which was upheld. This ensured all new build homes must be principal residences and not holiday/second homes. As a reminder, St Ives has 25% second home ownership and Arran has 22%. The AEG feel it is important to gauge local opinion on this issue.

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