

# ISLANDS GROWTH DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held through  
Microsoft Teams on Friday, 31 May  
2024 at 3.00pm.

PRESENT	Mr Paul Steele, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Chair) Ms Heather Woodbridge, Orkney Islands Council Mr Dennis Leask, Shetland Islands Council
APOLOGIES	Mr Donald Crichton, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Ms Emma Macdonald, Shetland Islands Council Mr Kristopher Leask, Orkney Islands Council
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE	Ms Anne Murray, Programme Director Ms Hazel Tait, Shetland Islands Council Ms Inga Burton, Orkney Islands Council Ms Kirsty Laing, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Ms Louise Shearer, Shetland Islands Council Ms Shona Clyne, University of the Highlands and Islands Mr Tim Langley, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Welcome and Introductions	The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, and on behalf of the Committee noted his appreciation of the valuable contribution made by Mr David Dawson, Orkney Islands Council who had stepped down as a member of the Joint Committee. It was noted that Mr Kristopher Leask would be one of Orkney's representatives on the Joint Committee
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## MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 12 April 2024	1	The Minute of the Meeting of 12 April 2024 was approved.
Declaration of Interest	2	There were no declarations of interest.

It was agreed that the public, including the press, be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of item 3 and 4 on grounds of Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the Joint Committee).

Full Business Case Approval – Calanais Visitor Centre Redevelopment	3	Ms Anne Murray, Islands Growth Deal Programme Director and Mr Calum Iain MacIver, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar submitted a Report which sought approval of the Full Business Case (FBC) for the Calanais Visitor Centre Redevelopment. The Report noted that the Calanais Visitor Centre redevelopment is one of five core projects proposed as part of the Destination Development Programme – a targeted intervention to develop a suite of projects that will build on different strengths of the Outer Hebrides' rich environment and cultural heritage – and that standalone Full Business Cases will be submitted for each capital investment within the Programme.
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The Report further noted that Calanais Standing Stones are one of Scotland's iconic visitor destinations. They are the most visited attraction in the Outer Hebrides with around 157,000 visitors annually. The Calanais Visitor Centre is adjacent to the Standing Stones and was established in 1995 as a community enterprise to provide visitors to the Stones with facilities including interpretation, café, and retail area to generate employment and economic benefit for the west coast of Lewis. The Calanais Visitor Centre redevelopment will enhance the offering for visitors at the Centre and the stone, to create a visitor attraction that is fit for purpose given the anticipated rise in visitor numbers.

**It was agreed:**

- (1) to approve the Calanais Visitor Centre Redevelopment Full Business Case at Appendix 1, subject to its approval by Scottish Government and UK Government; and**
- (2) to allocate £4,110,180 of Islands Growth Deal funding from the Outer Hebrides Destination Development Programme to the Calanais Visitor Centre Redevelopment.**

Shell-Volution

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Ms Shona Clyne, University of the Highlands and Islands delivered a presentation in relation to Shell-Volution – a new and innovative technical programme enabling future growth in the low-carbon and sustainable mussel farming sector in Shetland, and more widely in Scotland.

The presentation noted that Shell-Volution will be delivered on a collaborative basis with businesses, industry, academia and the public sector, and seeks to support growth and future industries. The programme included a robust Research and Development programme which will be delivered over a nine-year period in addition to improved productivity, efficiency and resilience the output is anticipated to meet customer capacity needs and will create greater food security in the islands and across Scotland.

It is anticipated that Shell-Volution will require £4.4m in Islands Growth Deal funding, with scope to lever an additional £2.2m in additional funding over the project's lifespan. Key outcomes for the programme include: an estimated growth in output of 10,000 tonnes in mussels per annum up to 2038-39; protection and increasing sustainable employment in rural areas – estimated direct mussel farm employment in Scotland to grow by c55 full time equivalent posts; ecological benefits, including providing customers with an increased supply of healthy seafood products; and the development of new knowledge, processes and innovations.

Ms Clyne noted that the first iteration of the Full Business Case had been submitted for review and feedback in May 2024. Further iterations will be submitted over Summer 2024 following feedback, with a view the project commencing, subject to approval, in Autumn 2024.

The Chair, on behalf of the Joint Committee thanked Ms Clyne for the informative presentation on Shell-Volution.

Date of Next Meeting

The Islands Growth Deal Joint Committee will next meet on Friday, 12 July 2024 at 9.00am. The Meeting will be held through Microsoft Teams.