

ISLANDS GROWTH DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held through
Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 8 August
2024 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT Mr Paul Steele, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Chair)
Mr Dennis Leask, Shetland Islands Council
Ms Emma Macdonald, Shetland Islands Council
Ms Heather Woodbridge, Orkney Islands Council
Mr Kristopher Leask, Orkney Islands Council

APOLOGIES Mr Donald Crichton, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE Ms Anne Murray, Programme Director
Ms Charlene Macmillan, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Hazel Tait, Shetland Islands Council
Mr Jan Riise, Shetland Islands Council
Ms Kirsty Laing, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 12 July 2024 1 The Minute of the Meeting of 12 July 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 items 3, 4, 5 and 6 on the grounds of the amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the partners under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services.

Creative Islands Wellbeing 3* Mr Neil Grant, Director for Development, Shetland Islands Council, Mr Gareth Waterson, Director of Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, Orkney Islands Council and Ms Anne Murray, Islands Growth Deal Programme Director submitted a Report which sought approval of the Full Business Case (FBC) for the Creative Islands Wellbeing Programme and collaborative workstreams. The Report noted that Creative Islands Wellbeing is a cross-island programme within the Islands Growth Deal, and that approval was sought for the overall Programme FBC, and the three collaborative Work Packages - approval for capital creative hub projects in Orkney and the Outer Hebrides will be sought through supplementary annexes to the Programme FBC at an appropriate stage of project readiness.

It was noted that there are no significant changes to the proposals for the three collaborative workstreams to what was presented and approved at OBC but during the FBC approval process a change request was made, and approved, regarding leadership of the Centre for Creative Ageing. This moved from NHS Western Isles to An Lanntair – NHS Western Isles (in liaison with NHS Orkney and NHS Shetland) remain a key partner.

It was agreed to:

- (1) approve the Creative Islands Wellbeing Programme Full Business Case at Appendix 1, subject to its approval by Scottish Government and UK Government – the Programme Director would provide an update on approval status at the next meeting of the Joint Committee;**

- (2) **note that at this point approval is sought in relation to £1m of the £5.6m funding for Creative Islands Wellbeing and that this relates to funding required to progress what are termed the three collaborative workstreams within the Full Business Case; and**
- (3) **note that future approval will be sought in relation to the capital funding for creative hubs in Orkney and the Outer Hebrides once the business cases for these have been developed.**

Shell-volution

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Ms Anne Murray, Islands Growth Deal Programme Director and Mr Neil Grant, Director for Development, Shetland Islands Council submitted a Report which sought approval of the Full Business Case (FBC) for the Shell-volution Project. The Shell-volution project has been designed to enable expansion in the low carbon and sustainable mussel farming sector in Shetland, and more widely in Scotland. The Report noted that the project is led by the University of the Highlands and Islands. Consultation and engagement with a range of stakeholders has ensured alignment and industry-led prioritisation and this is reflected in the governance proposals for the project which will include the Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group, Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers, and Seafood Shetland. HIE are also a key partner.

It was noted that a full assessment against the subsidy control principles was carried out, and that the recommendation, approved by the Chief Executive, was to award the subsidy. This will necessitate publication of the decision to award this funding on the UK Government Transparency database.

It was agreed to:

- (1) **approve the Shell-volution Full Business Case at Appendix 1, subject to its approval by Scottish Government and UK Government - the Programme Director would provide an update on approval status at the next meeting of the Joint Committee; and**
- (2) **allocate £4,400,000 of Islands Growth Deal funding to the Shell-Volution Project.**

TalEntEd Islands

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Ms Anne Murray, Islands Growth Deal Programme Director, Mr Gareth Waterson, Director of Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, Orkney Islands Council and Mr Neil Grant, Director for Development, Shetland Islands Council submitted a Report which sought approval of the Full Business Case (FBC) for the TalEntEd Islands Programme. TalEntEd Islands is a university-led programme that will deliver activity across Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides, creating attractive opportunities for people to remain in the islands through study and work; and attracting new people to the islands. TalEntEd will create opportunities for education, skills development and training opportunities, entrepreneurship and workplace innovation.

The Report noted that the scope of the project had not changed since the Outline Business Case, but there had been a reduction in activities in Work Plan 2 in response to inflation. Costs have also impacted on the number of 'Develop' grants it would be possible for the lead partner to provide in Work Package 3.

It was noted that the Programme Management Office, and the Programme Board will maintain strong engagement and oversight of the project. A representative from each Council will sit on the TalEntEd Partnership Board and will ensure linkages between each Council and the implementation of the programme.

It was agreed:

- (1) approve the TalEntEd Islands Programme Full Business Case at Appendix 1, subject to its approval by Scottish Government and UK Government - the Programme Director would provide an update on approval status at the next meeting of the Joint Committee;
- (2) note that approval is sought in relation to £4.5m of the £5.9m funding for TalEntEd Islands Programme, relating to Work Packages 1-3; and
- (3) note that future approval will be sought in relation to release of funding towards Work Package 4.

Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre 6*

Ms Anne Murray, Islands Growth Deal Programme Director and Mr Neil Grant, Director for Development, Shetland Islands Council submitted a Report which sought approval of the Full Business Case (FBC) annexe for the Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre (CHSIC), part of the Islands Centre for Net Zero (ICNZ). The Islands Centre for Net Zero (ICNZ) is a cross-island programme within the Islands Growth Deal.

The Report noted that the Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre project will expand green-hydrogen production on the Outer Hebrides and create a new hands-on hydrogen technology training and next generation electrolyser research and field-testing facility. The project builds on the existing expertise and assets of the three project partners (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, UHI North, West and Hebrides and a private partner) who are recognised hydrogen technology pioneers and possess the vision, knowledge and skills necessary to successfully deliver the project.

It was agreed to approve the Business Case Annexe for the Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre at Appendix 1, subject to its approval by Scottish Government and UK Government - the Programme Director would provide an update on approval status at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Chair, on behalf of the Islands Growth Deal Joint Committee welcomed the progress made in relation to the projects discussed and commended the work of officers in reaching this stage.

It was noted that the Islands Growth Deal Joint Committee would next meet on Wednesday, 28 August 2024 at 4.00pm. The Meeting would be held through Microsoft Teams.