

**Meeting of Cross-Party Group on Industrial Communities in the Scottish Parliament
Wednesday 7 May 2014 at 5.15pm, Committee Room TG20/21, Scottish Parliament**

Attending Councillors	Attending Officers	Attending MSPs	Others
Cllr Tom Adam Cllr Aileen Scobie Cllr Derek Rosie Cllr Bob Young Cllr Joe Wallace Cllr William Menzies	Anne Houston Ian McCrory Malcolm Leitch Pauline Douglas Dave Parry Ian Smith	Colin Beattie MSP Adam Ingram MSP	Eleanor Taylor Allan McCabe Stuart McKay

Apologies		
Cllr Marie Burns Cllr Anne Galbraith Cllr B Grant Cllr Dennis Male Cllr Irene Oldfather Cllr John Syme Cllr Heather McVey	Linda Aird	Neil Bibby MSP John Mason MSP Elaine Murray MSP John Pentland MSP

1. Attendance and Apologies

Collin Beattie MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minute of previous meeting

The minute of the previous meeting was approved.

Group members discussed the response from Margaret Burgess MSP and it was agreed to take up the offer of Sandy McFadyen from her office making a presentation on the People and Communities Fund to the next CPG on 29th October. The issue of Vacant and Derelict Land Fund was discussed and it was agreed that it would be raised at a forthcoming meeting with Nicola Sturgeon MSP.

3. Presentation on Scottish Government Energy Strategy

Stuart McKay, Senior Policy Adviser, Oil and Gas team, Energy and Climate Change division of the Scottish Government talked the meeting through the Governments thoughts on Energy policy and

paid particular attention to issues such as fracking. He re-iterated the Government's position on a preference for Renewable energy as the way forward but also recognised that oil and gas were required to build windfarms. In fact, his view was that windfarms had possibly begun to run their course. He also drew the group's attention to Scotland's reliance on gas for domestic and industrial use. In terms of fracking he indicated that the Scottish Government were still on a steep learning curve with regard to this issue and have not taken a position on fracking but are leaving the decision to local authorities at this stage. While the UK Government issues licences for fracking, it also requires planning permission from local authorities. The group then discussed issues such as the limited lifespan of coal supply. For example, it was recognised that by 2021/22 Longannet will cease to produce coal. The potential impact on gas supply by the Ukraine/Russia dispute was also acknowledged. The group expressed some concern about the divisive impact of windfarms on communities. There was also some disappointment expressed about the Government's lack of support for clean coal technology and an acknowledgment of the sensitivities around the issue of fracking.

Fergus Ewing has agreed to speak to the next meeting of the CPG on 29th October where this topic can be discussed in more detail.

4. 'Presentation - ' Supporting Economic Growth through use of RSA and Assisted Areas', Eleanor Taylor and Allan McCabe, Scottish Enterprise.

Eleanor Taylor, Director of Business Support, Scottish Enterprise explained the concept behind RSA in terms of improving job opportunities in Assisted Areas through creating and safeguarding jobs and indicated that Scotland has performed well with an annual RSA spend of around £30m. Allan McCabe then explained the selection process and how decisions were made on what were viable projects. Adam Ingram MSP questioned whether there was a 'clawback' of funds from unsuccessful projects to which Scottish Enterprise agreed. Bob Young asked what length of time companies were required to stay in an area following investment and was informed it was at least 18 months after the last job was created. Ian Smith enquired as to the level of support for SME's and was informed that 80% of offers went to SME's but that the minimum value is £20k as the admin for awards lower than that does not give value for money. East Ayrshire was discussed and Barney informed the group that the council are looking to bring in experts in terms of successfully applying for RSA and in particular ways of targetting the resources at the most deprived areas. Adam Ingram also acknowledged that you need a certain level of infrastructure to attract investors before you can begin to provide substantial assistance.

Malcolm Leitch's interest revolved around what needs to be done to get 'deal flow' going? Eleanor Taylor highlighted the approach of trying to align RSA with account managed companies and that they are also signposting towards certain areas of high unemployment. It was agreed that the key to success was getting prospective businesses to become account managed and also to support indigenous company growth.

Eleanor Taylor offered conversations with individual Local Authorities to discuss 'deal flow'.

Overall, Scottish Enterprise representatives felt that RSA was a highly effective scheme and that combined with SMART and other incentives provided a comprehensive level of support to investors.

5. Meeting with Nicola Sturgeon - 22 May 14

The agenda for the forthcoming meeting between CPG representatives and Nicola Sturgeon was discussed. The following possible topics were agreed although it was felt that care should be taken not to have to full an agenda. Ten Point Plan, VDLF, Youth Unemployment and Connectivity in Industrial Communities were all agreed as points for discussion with the DFM.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 29th October, 5.15pm in Room TG20/21 of the Scottish Parliament.