

**Meeting of Cross-Party Group on Industrial Communities in the Scottish Parliament
Wednesday 22 January 2014 at 5.15pm, Committee Room TG20/21 (5?), Scottish Parliament**

Attending Councillors	Attending Officers	Attending MSPs	
Cllr Tom Adam Cllr Ian McCrory Cllr Ian McDougal Cllr Derek Rosie Cllr Bob Young	Pauline Douglas Steve Fothergill Anne Houston Andrew Lindsay Ian Smith	Colin Beattie MSP Adam Ingram MSP	

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

1. Attendance and Apologies

Collin Beattie MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged with the group that this was the first meeting since the sad and sudden death of Helen Eadie, former Convenor of the Cross-Party Group. Collin asked that the minute recognised the huge contribution Helen had made to the ongoing success of the Cross-Party Group over the previous three years. Anne then indicated apologies for the meeting.

2. CPG Annual Report

a) Re-election of Office Bearers

Collin Beattie MSP was proposed as Convenor of the Cross-Party Group by Councillor Bob Young, and seconded by Councillor Derek Rosie. Neil Bibby MSP was proposed as Vice Convenor by Collin Beattie MSP and seconded by Councillor Bob Young. The Secretary of the Cross-Party Group, Anne Houston, was proposed by Collin Beattie MSP and seconded by Councillor Bob Young.

b) Discussion and Agreement of Cross Party Group Annual Report

The Annual Report from the Cross-Party Group was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. The Annual Report highlighted the meetings that had taken place over the last 12 months and also highlighted membership of the group. The group agreed the Annual Report and Anne agreed to pass this to Collin for submission to the Cross-Party Group office within the

Scottish Parliament as required. There were a number of new members who had expressed interest in the Cross-Party Group who included Jayne Baxter MSP, Cameron Buchanan MSP, and Cara Hilton MSP.

3. Note of Cross Party Group Meeting, 30 October 2013

The minute of the previous meeting was approved.

Rebuilding the Economy of Scotland's Industrial Communities – Revised ICA Ten Point Plan Document

1. Cross-Party Group Priorities

Anne introduced the Ten Point Plan to the group and highlighted the background to this, before handing over to Steve Fothergill, who talked the group through the main priorities within the Plan. The Scottish version of the Ten Point Plan was adopted by the ICA Scotland Committee on 15 January 2014 and highlighted a set of aspirations for the Industrial Communities Alliance, many of which have been underway for a significant amount of time. Steve suggested that it would be useful for the Cross-Party Group to pick up on a number of the priorities within the Ten Point Plan and, indeed, felt that the Cross-Party Group priorities in the Ten Point Plan had some synergy together. *(At this point, Collin Beattie suggested that agenda items 4 and 5 be considered together, which was agreed by the group).*

The topic of **job creation** was discussed at length and it was agreed that job creation would continue to be a priority for the Cross-Party Group, and it was furthermore agreed that the Cross-Party Group should write to Angela Constance to explore the possibility of an extended job creation scheme that could be targeted at those areas with their own economic opportunities. In addition, it was suggested that this correspondence should also refer to the possibility of the extension of Community Jobs Scotland to the private and public sector.

The issue of **rural transport** was raised and, in particular, the need to offer young people the opportunity of transport in order for them to take up job opportunities, and particular reference was made to scooters being available for young people in the Coalfield Community Transport Organisation which were not being able to be used due to a lack of funding. Adam Ingram MSP agreed to follow this up. He also suggested that it might be useful to explore the People and Communities Fund with regard to how anchor organisations within communities like Coalfield Regeneration Trust are funded. It was therefore suggested that the Cross-Party Group should write to Margaret Burgess on this topic.

The topic of **employability** was also raised in the context of the Work Programme, and it was highlighted by Ian McCrory of Fife Council that a presentation was being made by Ingeus and Working Links to discuss how they could support the local community planning partnership.

The issue of **procurement** as a development tool in terms of improving the local economy was discussed. However, Adam Ingram indicated that legislation was still at an early stage and some months away from completion. One of the main priorities for the legislation would be that local authorities would now have to report on community benefits. It was agreed that this legislation should be considered later in the year in terms of the Cross-Party Group meeting.

The issue of **zero-hours contracts** was also raised and Ian McCrory highlighted the fact that this was out for consultation and that the results of the consultation might inform future discussions. He also reminded the group that there is currently a Scottish Government

consultation out on community benefits and the restoration of former coalfield areas. The issue of coalfield restoration, in addition to the range of alternative energy opportunities, led the group to consider that it would be useful to invite Fergus Ewing MSP and Minister for Energy Enterprise and Tourism to attend the next meeting. In particular, the group were interested to find out how it would be possible to link opportunities for young people in the energy industry with the increasing growth in that sector.

Agenda items 4 and 5 (continued)

The group then moved on to discuss **improving aid to businesses**. Steve Fothergill highlighted the fact that the Assisted Areas Map process is now reaching a conclusion, however, the key part of the discussion would be around how the Assisted Areas Map and also Regional Selective Assistance are being used. It was suggested by the Convenor that a letter should be sent to Scottish Enterprise inviting them to respond on how they are planning to use the Assisted Areas Map and Regional Selective Assistance to support the growth of the local economy and, in particular, the increase to the Regional Growth Fund in England compared to the decrease in Regional Selective Assistance in Scotland would be explored.

Under the topic of emerging issues, **shale-gas fracking** was discussed and it is clear that this is an issue where a range of different views prevail. It was agreed that it would be useful for the Cross-Party Group to keep an open mind and maintain an interest in this area in addition to other emerging issues like underground coal gas extraction. Councillor Adams acknowledged that the ICA papers on these issues had proven extremely useful and it was agreed that Anne would send these papers to Collin Beattie.

Finally, Ian McCrory raised the issue of the **Vacant and Derelict Land Fund**, which is currently only open to five local authorities in Scotland. A letter is going to Nicola Sturgeon from Fife Council recommending that former coal areas be included in the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund. It was suggested that the Cross-Party Group should also write to Nicola Sturgeon on this issue and that it could be raised with Nicola Sturgeon at the next meeting.

2. Report on Meeting with Nicola Sturgeon – Deputy First Minister, 11 December 2013

Collin Beattie reported on the meeting with Nicola Sturgeon which he said had been most constructive and productive, with the issues being both addressed in the meeting itself but also further addressed with Scottish Government officials following the meeting. The next meeting with Nicola Sturgeon has been set for 22 May 2014.

3. Date of 2014-15 Meetings

The dates of the next three Cross-Party Group Meetings were agreed as Wednesday 7 May 2014, Wednesday 29 October 2014 and Wednesday 28 January 2015. However, the Group also requested that these meeting dates be flexible and that, should an issue emerge unexpectedly, that the Cross-Party Group could be called in between times.