

## **Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Industrial Communities – Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016**

**In attendance** – Colin Beattie MSP (Chair), Alex Rowley MSP, Richard Leonard MSP, John Mason MSP, Fulton MacGregor MSP, Cllr. William Menzies, Cllr. Bob Young, Cllr. Derek Rosie, Cllr. Tom Adams, Andrew Ralston, Ian Smith, Ian McCrory, Malcolm Leitch, Steve Fothergill, Roddy MacDonald

**Apologies** – Neil Bibby MSP, Andy Wightman MSP, Angus MacDonald MSP, Cllr. Bill Grant, Cllr. Ann Galbraith, Cllr. James Robertson, Cllr. Bobby McGill, Cllr. John Syme, Cllr. Joe Wallace

**Welcome** – Colin Beattie welcomed all to the inaugural meeting of the Cross- Party Group for this Parliamentary Session.

**Setting the Scene** – Roddy MacDonald outlined the range of issues affecting Scotland’s Industrial Communities and provided a range of recent examples where the ICA and the Cross-Party Group have made a positive difference in the past including engagement with the Big Lottery, the promotion of Regional Selective Assistance, the Mine Workers Pension Fund Surpluses, Welfare Reform and supporting communities such as Longannet.

**Brexit** – Roddy MacDonald outlined the trail of correspondence over the recent period in relation to EU Funds from the Treasury Letter of the 12<sup>th</sup> August, to the letter to the First Minister of 23<sup>rd</sup> September and her response of the 18<sup>th</sup> October. It was noted that progress has been made from the initial Treasury position and that currently the situation for Scotland is that all multi-year European Funding Streams – European Structural Funds, CAP Pillar 2 and European Maritime Fisheries Fund money – committed prior to the EU exit from the EU will be guaranteed in full.

Colin Beattie led discussion with members on the impact of the current situation on our communities and how we engage in the wider networks. Richard Leonard advised that we needed “to campaign” while Steve Fothergill provided the perspective that the deal currently being offered to Scotland and Wales was better than that being offered to the Regions of England.

**Action Arising** – the following actions were agreed. Namely, that the Chair would write to the Convener of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee seeking their support in relation to EU Funds issue and to re-engage with the First Minister by the middle of November to ascertain how the Scottish Ministers and their senior officials are progressing in their assessment of the impact of the Chancellor of Exchequer’s announcement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016.

*Please note that following the issuing of letters as agreed above a response from Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work was received on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2016 and is appended.*

Further it was agreed that Ministerial engagement – especially with Keith Brown and Derek MacKay – was of critical importance. It was agreed that Roddy MacDonald would seek input from members of the Cross-Party on what type of issues they would seek to be on an agenda with Ministers and Colin Beattie would thereafter engage with Keith Brown in relation to re-establishing the previously held 6 monthly meetings between the Minister, senior officials and representatives from the Cross-Party Group.

**Action Arising** – please refer to Way Forward below.

**Industrial Strategy** – Prof. Steve Fothergill led discussion on this issue outlining the key drivers and how we take the document forward. He advised that the Strategy is currently being disseminated on a face to face basis. He advised that from a Cross- Party perspective it would benefit from “a Scottish filter.” Following detailed discussion on how best to advance John Mason proposed that a Members debate on the booklet should take place. It was further advanced that the Industrial Strategy should be circulated to all MSPs, the Convener of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee and to Keith Brown to ascertain whether the document has the support of the Scottish Government.

**Action Arising** – the following actions were agreed. Colin Beattie and Richard Leonard would jointly draft the motion for the Members debate. Colin would ensure that a copy of the Industrial Strategy is circulated to all MSPs, the Convener of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee and to Keith Brown seeking the Scottish Government’s support for the Strategy.

*Please note that a copy of the Industrial Strategy has been sent to all MSPs. A response to the Strategy has been received from Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 and is appended.*

**Way Forward** – Colin Beattie requested that the current Members reflect on how we expand the membership of the Group. Additionally, topics for future agendas should be considered.

**Action Arising** – Roddy MacDonald will write to the MSPs on the Cross-Party Group seeking their views on how to expand the membership of the Group and on potential future topics for consideration.

**Future Dates** – it was agreed that we should seek to confirm dates for the next two years. In principle, a core of 3 meetings of the Cross- Party Group per Parliamentary Year should be the objective.

**Action Arising** – Roddy MacDonald will engage with the ICA Executive and the Cross-Party Chair to agree a set of dates for the next two Parliamentary Years.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The Chair thanked all for their attendance and commitment to the Cross-Party Group.