

**Minutes of the 13th Local Economic Forum meeting held on Monday 16th June 2003 at the Shetland Hotel, Lerwick, Shetland.**

**Members Present:**

Jimmy Smith, Federation of Small Businesses (in the chair)

Gordon Dargie (Shetland College)

David Finch (Shetland Enterprise)

Alec Miller (Shetland Community Enterprise Network)

Mike Robertson (4QL)

Councillor Cecil Eunson (SIC)

Victor Sandison (Lerwick Port Authority)

Brian Isbister (Shetland Fish Producers Organisation)

Godfrey Spalton (BP, Sullom Voe Terminal)

Maggie Gemmill (Manager, Jobcentre Plus)

**By Invitation:**

Michael McElhinney (Scottish Executive)

Douglas Irvine (SIC Development Department)

Andy Carter (Careers Scotland)

Robin Lingard (Kinnairdie Consulting)

Ann Black (Shetland Enterprise Company)

Stuart Nickerson (Shetland Enterprise Company), Secretary

**1. Introduction & Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed all present, including those attending their first meeting of the LEF: Councillor Cecil Eunson (SIC),

Victor Sandison (Lerwick Port Authority),

Godfrey Spalton (BP, substituting for Paul Dymond)

Stuart Nickerson (Shetland Enterprise Company).

The Chairman also welcomed Mike McElhinney, who was attending from the Scottish Executive.

Apologies have been received from:

Ruth Henderson (Seafood Shetland),

Drew Ratter (Councillor, SIC),

Jacqui Watt (SIC Community Services Department),

Emma Perring (SIC Chief Executive's Office),

Paul Dymond (BP),

David Sandison (Shetland Salmon Farmers Association),

Kay Smith (SIC Training Section),

Laurence Tulloch (Shetland Islands Tourism),

Jim Budge (Director, SEC),

Janet Davidge (Shetland Retailer's Association) and

Frank Miller (Shetland Knitwear Trades' Association)

## **2. Minutes of meeting of 20th January 2003**

The minutes of this meeting were approved.

### **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

3.1 MBA Students. The Shetland Development Trust is sponsoring one candidate.

3.2 Skills Survey amongst SIC employees. The Skills Survey is currently in progress and is being undertaken by Doreen Thomson.

It was agreed that all other matters arising would be covered by agenda items.

## **4. Minutes of Skills & Learning Sub-Group meeting on 18th March 2003**

This meeting had been chaired by David Finch, who reported that the main, tangible output from the group so far was the recently published 'Learning in Shetland' directory. The directory had been launched during Adult Learning Week at an event opened by Tavish Scott MSP and attended by over 400 people. The directory has now been distributed to the public locally through the library service and at other outlets. The future priority for this sub-group is the development of a long-term skills strategy for Shetland, based on the future needs of the local economy as described in 'Shetland 2012'.

## **5. LEF Membership**

Jim Smith queried how the membership of the Shetland Economic forum compared to other LEFs on the mainland, in terms of proportion of representatives from the public and private

sectors. Mike McElhinney emphasised the importance the Scottish Executive placed on keeping the private sector at the centre of the LEF process. He stated that some LEFs consisted of 60-65% private sector representation.

## **6. Review of progress on the action plan**

### ***6.1 Business Support Services in Shetland***

David Finch reported that a new edition of the 'Business and Community Services Guide' had been released.

On the Single Entry Point, it was agreed that collaboration between Shetland Enterprise and the SIC Development Department and Development Trust was vital in achieving this. David Finch and Douglas Irvine explained that good co-operation between the organisations existed at present and that cross-referral and knowledge of each other's services was already apparent. David Finch explained further that he felt that the interface between the SIC and Shetland Enterprise was correct at the strategic level and that the onus was now on staff in making sure that the delivery processes were similarly complementary. It was noted that discussions between SIC, SDT and SEC were continuing.

### ***6.2 Local Economic Strategy - 'Shetland 2012'***

Douglas Irvine reported that the main outcome since the last meeting was the conference held at the Clickimin Centre, which had been used to launch the development strategy paper 'Shetland 2012'. A good response to this document was reported in terms of level of interest shown from those present at the conference and from feedback received during the consultation phase. Jim Smith felt that the first review of the paper should come towards the end of the year, allowing enough time for a comprehensive and detailed appraisal to be undertaken.

### ***6.3 Interface with Community Planning***

It was reported that the meeting of the Community Planning Board (CPB) had been postponed until July 7th due to the changing membership of the Board following the SIC elections. Jim Smith said that he considered the number of LEF members present on the CPB to be adequate and that the CPB was working efficiently together with the LEF and other organisations. Michael McElhinney emphasised the importance that the Executive placed on the LEF's continued input into the community planning process.

### ***6.4 Forward programme of Skills and Learning Sub-Group***

Robin Lingard said that there was a need for liaising with specific sectors in regard to skills shortages and also recommended 'Future Skills Scotland' as a source of information and advice. It was already clear, however, that development areas include management training, entrepreneurship skills, e-learning and addressing in-migration and out-migration. Members agreed that the unemployment rate in Shetland was of concern, as traditionally Shetland's unemployment rate had been well below the national average, whereas the difference between the two at the moment is minimal. Maggie Gemmill noted that there were skills shortages in particular areas of industry and Robin Lingard added that while there was concern from SME's about immediate impacts of skills shortages, there was also a need for long-term skills planning. A need for general skills development was also identified, giving employees transferable skills that can be used throughout their careers. Andy Carter stated the need for focussing on re-training and re-skilling of older as well as young people, as on the whole, Shetland's population is ageing. Maggie Gemmill added to this point by stating that re-

training should be focussed on areas where there are skills shortages in Shetland and that there was a need for local training provision to address this.

Members agreed that the skills survey should avoid 'duplication' of results with other surveys being run by SIC (Employment Survey) and by the FSB. It was suggested that consideration could be given to combining these surveys to avoid duplication and maximise response rate and results.

## ***7. Presentation by Central Support Team, Scottish Executive (Michael McElhinney)***

### ***7.1 Tracking Action Plan progress***

- Completion of the agreed action plan is a priority
- Currently, action plan objectives are 60-100% complete in 17 out of 22 LEF's visited so far.
- Significant efficiency savings have been noted
- Evidence of more 'joined-up' service delivery between public sector agencies
- Forums are continuing to engage business community (high priority)

### ***7.2 Local Strategy documents***

- Strategy development document (Shetland 2012) in line with objectives put forward in 'Smart, Successful Scotland' paper
- Scottish Executive wants local development strategies to be designed and owned locally
- 21 out of 22 local strategy documents are complete and being circulated to Scottish Executive, local authorities and the private sector
- Common themes such as transport, infrastructure, skills and housing are apparent in all local strategy documents. Specific local issues are also highlighted
- 'Shetland 2012' is one of the most advanced and comprehensive of local strategy documents examined. Positive feedback included joint ownership, clear review of each sector and specific future economic threats. Targets may still need further refinement.

### ***7.3 Linkages between LEF and community planning***

- Local economic forums engage key private and public sector organisations
- Local economic forums are linking agencies across boundaries

### ***7.4 Possible future roles for local economic forums***

- Involvement in community planning agenda
- Developing action plans
- Developing single-entry points (SEP)
- Developing local strategy documents
- Encouraging participation of business community

## ***8. Date of next meeting***

To be arranged in September 2003. It was noted that the LEF's Skills Sub-Group would be meeting on 30 June 2003.

## ***9. Any other business***

Mike Robertson reported that the first prototype of the 'Shetland gateway' website project is ready to be rolled out in the next 7-10 days. Advertising locally has increased 'hits' to the website considerably in the last month. The website is to be reviewed by a sample group of users who will provide feedback on the project.

Members expressed their appreciation for David Finch's important contribution to the initial setup and progress of the Shetland Local Economic Forum and wished him well in the future.