

Minutes of the seventh Local Economic Forum meeting held on Tuesday 16th April 2002 at the Town Hall, Hillhead, Lerwick, Shetland.

Members Present:

David Finch (Shetland Enterprise)
Jim Smith (Federation of Small Businesses)
David Sandison, (Shetland Salmon Farmers' Association)
Hazel Sutherland, (SIC Chief Executive's Office)
Gussie Angus (Shetland Islands Council)
Gordon Johnson (North Atlantic Fisheries College)
Alec Miller (Shetland Islands Partnership)
Brian Isbister (Shetland Fish Producers Organisation)

By Invitation:

Alvin Bashforth (SIC Development Department)
Douglas Irvine (SIC Development Department)
Kay Smith (SIC Training Section)
Hubert Hunter (Employment Services)
Andy Carter (Careers Scotland)

Ann Black, Shetland Enterprise (Secretary)

1. INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair, David Finch welcomed all present. Apologies were received from Brian Anderson, (Shetland Enterprise), Robert Smith, (Shetland Islands Tourism Board), Jacqui Watt, (SIC Community Services Department), Rob Anderson (Shetland Islands Council), Sandy Cluness, (Shetland Islands Council), Ruth Henderson (Shetland Fish Processors' Association), and Gordon Dargie (Shetland College).

2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 18TH JANUARY 2002

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2002 were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Communications

Some members had completed the recent survey issued by Scottish Executive. But, it was noted that there had been some technical problems in accessing and completing the form on-line.

(ii) Skills to Industry Programme

Douglas Irvine reported that funding had been secured for the "New Ventures Innovation Scheme", and action would be taken shortly to attract suitable candidates for the scheme.

(iii) Shetland Portal and Fibre Optic Cable

Douglas Irvine explained that the Shetland portal project aimed to provide an address, which would guide users to websites where Shetland products and services could be accessed on-line. Shaw Marketing is currently working on a design proposal for the portal.

Scottish and Southern Energy are due to make a decision this week on whether they intend to proceed with the fibre optic cable this financial year.

(iv) Childcare

The forum was informed that an independent report had been written on The Viability and Sustainability of out of School Clubs in Shetland. The report highlighted some serious issues around sustainability of provision, and it was decided to refer the report to the Community Planning Board for discussion.

4. YEAR ONE ACTION PLAN: REPORT TO SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE (SLEF/24)

(i) Joint Meeting between LEF and SIC's Development Forum

A paper had been tabled at today's meeting of SIC's Economic Development Forum. (Report No: DV) 44-D1 Relationship of the Economic Development Forum to the Local Economic Forum). The paper recommended that, in order to remove confusion and duplication with the LEF, members consider suspending the meetings of the Economic Development Forum for one year, with the Local Economic Forum being asked to consider any relevant business.

However, members of the Economic Development Forum had rejected the proposal, maintaining that the LEF, as presently constituted, was insufficiently representative. It was agreed to continue to hold the two forum meetings on the same day, back to back.

(ii) Area Economic Strategy

Progress discussed in item 6 of the agenda.

(iii) Joint Presentation to FSB.

As a follow-up to the joint presentation made at FSB annual general meeting, Shetland Enterprise and Development Department staff have offered their services at other FSB meetings, where appropriate.

(iv) Business and Community Services Guide

All members have received a hard copy of the guide, with additional copies available from Shetland Enterprise. The guide is also available on the Shetland Enterprise website. Arrangements have been made with A.B. Associates to amend guide quarterly, and forum members are encouraged to direct any changes through Ann Black at Shetland Enterprise.

(v) Financial and Resource Allocation to Economic Development

this will be completed by 15 May, 2002.

(vi) Business Intermediaries

Arrangements for the follow-up training session / workshop have still has to be made.

(vii) Single Business Gateway

Work is on going between Shetland Enterprise and SIC's Development Department. Ideally a customer / client will access the services they require, regardless of the initial point of entry, through effective sign posting by agencies. Progress will be recorded through customer/client satisfaction.

5. YEAR TWO THEME(S): RESPONSE BY SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE (SLEF/25)

Year 2 Task: Members agreed that, in addition to implementing the current Action Plan, skills development was the most issue that needed to be addressed in Shetland. The current review of the colleges and their alignment with economic development was seen as important to this

process. It was agreed that the overall skill's infrastructure should take into account the college review and provide suggestions on where resources should be devoted.

It was noted that the North Atlantic College had already undertaken detailed skills survey work, which reviewed the needs of industry. From this, they have produced a 3-year strategy document with a skills-to-industry match.

Furthermore, there was a recognised need for generic skills such as management, IT and financial control.

It was agreed in order to start the process, to invite Tavish Scott, MSP who is a member of the ELL Committee to make a presentation to the forum on the lifelong learning agenda, and related issues, following which a detailed action plan would be prepared for consideration at the next meeting. (Note: the provisional date for this event is: 2nd May between 3-6 p.m., in the Bressay Room of the Lerwick Hotel)

The forum were informed that the Shetland Islands Council were organising a consultation day on the review of the colleges on the 9th May. All members of the SLEF were welcome to attend, and relevant points from the meeting of the 2nd of May would be fed into this event. This event will concentrate on the training infrastructure.

6. DRAFT 10-YEAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (SLEF/26)

Douglas Irvine introduced the preliminary report, "10 Year Economic Strategy". The purpose of the report is to introduce the idea of a Shetland economic development strategy that will be shared by all the participants in the Local Economic Forum and all those bodies involved in the development of Shetland economy. This would then form the economic strategy input required by the Community Planning Board.

Members of the forum broadly accepted the proposals of the report and the process of wider consultation will now start.

7. VISIT BY ELL COMMITTEE - 17th AND 18th JUNE, 2002

Detailed arrangements, as they affect the LEF, will be issued closer to the event.

8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING

Provisional dates for next meetings are the 23rd May and the 13th June.

9. AOB

Hubert Hunter, Employment Services, reported that unemployment now stood at 1.5 %, with March figures due to be published tomorrow. He predicted an increase in the numbers unemployed, as certain fish sector employment had finished for the season.

Andy Carter, Careers Scotland, reported that they had just over 20 young people on their register, which was higher than usual. It is estimated that 300 school leavers will be moving out of the school system over the next few months. It was anticipated that approximately one-third will leave Shetland to participate in higher education, with the remainder joining the local labour market, or undertaking courses at the local colleges.