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A Message from the New Chair of SLAED

Further to the SLAED AGM on 9th November 2020, I was honoured to accept the position as the new chair.

Over the last few weeks there have been a number of changes to the chairs and vice chairs across SLAED's strategic and thematic subgroups. I would like to thank all the officers who have taken up the mantle and those who have shown great commitment in guiding these groups over the years; I'm sure many will maintain an active interest in discussions (I certainly will on the rural agenda). In particular, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Pamela Smith, who I succeed as chair. Pamela brought excellent leadership skills and professionalism to the role (a hard act to follow!) Pamela continues to chair the People/Employability Group through a very important period for the employability agenda.

As we approach the end of this unprecedented year, economic development staff (which includes Business Gateway) across local authorities continue to respond to the global COVID-19 pandemic through the dissemination and delivery of support to businesses and to vulnerable residents throughout our communities. In such uncertain times, including the imminent UK exit from the EU, we need to ensure the voice of local government economic development officers, through an inclusive place-based person/community-centred approach, is captured to influence and inform economic and social recovery going forward.

Therefore, during the last quarter of 2020/21, the SLAED Executive intends to scope out how we respond to the external environment through a refresh of the Strategic Plan, a review of the current SLAED structure and appropriate SLAED representation on key regional and national

In the meantime, I would like to wish all SLAED members a happy festive season and a New Year where it is hoped we will all return to a safe new norm.

Ishabel Bremner



Update from the SLAED AGM

At the SLAED AGM the following nominations to the SLAED Executive group were confirmed by members.

Chairperson– Ishabel Bremner, Argyll & Bute

Deputy Chairperson– Pamela Stevenson, Fife

Deputy Chairperson– Rory Young, Dundee City

People Group Chair– Pamela Smith, Falkirk (seconded to IS)

Tourism Group Chair–Tracey Martin, Falkirk

EU Funding Group Chair– Malcolm Leitch, Glasgow City

Rural Group Chair– Juliette Cooke, Dumfries & Galloway

Performance Group Chair–Gary Hughes, Aberdeenshire

Business Group – Co Chair Approach

Allan Conry, North Lanarkshire

Graham Smith, Glasgow City

David Gardiner, Dumfries & Galloway

Member without Portfolio– Sharon Thomson, Glasgow City

SLAED People Group Update



Local Government and Scottish Government have been working in partnership to help those already disadvantaged and economically excluded to progress towards, enter and sustain Fair Work.

Recognising that employability support will be more important than ever, as we shape our collective economic and wellbeing response to the current public health crisis the publication of the [No One Left Behind Delivery Plan](#) on 24th November reinforced the commitment to ensuring no one is left behind in Scotland's labour market.

This Delivery Plan developed in partnership sets out a collective approach to continuing progress and reflects our shared commitment to work collaboratively with the third sector and other partners to deliver a Scottish approach to employability that focuses on the needs of the individual first and foremost, tackles inequalities and grows Scotland's economy.

It also outlines our collective ambition for more effective and

enabling them to progress towards or enter employment.

In addition Local Government has been responding to the [Young Person's Guarantee Report](#) to ensure that every young person aged between 16 and 24 will be guaranteed either the opportunity to study at university or college, take part in an apprenticeship programme, take up a job or work experience, or participate in a formal volunteering or training programme according to their own personal circumstances.

We are working to strengthen local partnerships to continue to work constructively and collaboratively to ensure that all those who could benefit from personalised, tailored and responsive employment support have the opportunity to do so.

Changes in the labour market brought about by the COVID-19 are having the greatest impact on those on the lowest incomes and in the most precarious, least secure jobs. Emerging evidence highlights the disproportionate impacts and as a result social and economic inequalities amongst groups and communities will increase, in response Scottish and Local government have committed to an inclusion first approach to prevent a further widening of the inequality gap.

I have witnessed at first hand the incredible effort that has gone in to design and develop at speed programmes of support often working to very challenging deadlines and within difficult circumstances. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to SLAED Employability leads for their incredible individual and collective effort.

As we will continue to respond and take forward our economic recovery plans we will continue to strive for the best outcomes for our local communities in the weeks and months ahead to ensure we remain focused on an inclusive well-being economy with Fair Work for all.

SLAED Business Group Update

The SLAED Business Group has been continuing to collectively support economic recovery in terms of providing a forum for local authorities to share expertise and good practice, as well as addressing common challenges. A key focus has been on working alongside Scottish Government to develop and administer further rounds of Covid-19 Hospitality Closure and Restriction Grants. SLAED is keen to support the Scottish Government in delivery of



communications to achieve a pan-Scotland local authority delivery vehicle – representatives from Scottish Government, SLAED, COSLA and Local Authority Directors of Finance have worked collectively to support the wider network.

The Business Group has also been engaging with partners, including SDI around the GlobalScot programme to support export strategies, as well as exploring key strengths around inward investment across Scotland. It has also been working with SE, HIE, SDI, SDS and SOSE as part of a Brexit Resilience Group which seeks to develop core messages for businesses to assist them to take relevant action before the end of the UK/EU transition period.

Importantly, as part of SLAED Economic Recovery Plans over the next 12–18 months, the Business Group working alongside the Executive intend to scope out how we respond to the external economic landscape and our wider business support services including Business Gateway. To learn from our experiences over the last 8 months, the challenges facing businesses, their needs and to ensure we provide a fit for purpose economic development service for the future.



SLAED Performance Group Update

The SLAED Indicators Framework for 2019/20 was signed off by the Performance Group at the start of the year, and the Annual Report is due to be published this month. However, councils have experienced significant challenges in collating the data due to staff being redeployed to respond to the Covid-19 crisis. In many councils this redeployment of staff is ongoing, particularly with new rounds of business support funding which need to be administered. In addition, data for some of the indicators taken from publicly available sources is also delayed for similar reasons. As a result, the timescales for the publication of the report are likely to be pushed back to January 2021.

As the 2019/20 SLAED Indicators Report presents data from that financial year, the unique economic circumstances faced in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis will not be reflected. The Improvement Service, with input from the SLAED Performance Group, therefore published a Covid-19 Supplement Report in October to acknowledge the significant impact the crisis has had on local areas, as well as the critical role that local authority economic development services have played, both in terms of the initial crisis response and ongoing support for

2020, as well as initial context to the 2020/21 report which will be published next year. The Supplement may be updated in 2021 as the economic situation continues to evolve.

The [Covid-19 Supplement Report](#) can be downloaded from the SLAED website.

SLAED Tourism Group Update

THE SLAED Tourism Sub-group is a proactive group Of Economic Development Officers with a remit for Tourism which continues to meet on a regular basis engaging with key agencies such as Visit Scotland, Scottish Government, Scottish Tourism Alliance, Scottish Enterprise, Business Gateway and many more.

The postholders have now changed and Suzanne Cumiskey from Perth and Kinross Council who had acted as Chair for several years has stepped down and the group would like to thank Suzanne for her significant contribution and hard work to the development of this group. The new Chairperson is Tracey Martin from Falkirk Council assisted by two Vice Chairs Elaine Carmichael from East Lothian Council and Craig Wilson from Argyll & Bute Council ensuring the group continues to have a mix of urban & rural representatives as the leadership group.

We would also like to congratulate Gaynor Sullivan from Dundee City Council, an active member on our group, who was recently included Scotland's Top 100 Women in Tourism in Scotland. Gaynor has been instrumental in marketing the development of Dundee waterfront, working to raise the profile of V&A Dundee and subsequently developing Dundee as a short break destination

The group have continued to work collectively throughout the pandemic to share knowledge, encourage best practice and feed in at national level to discussions on rebuilding Scotland's tourism industry this includes:

- Representation on [STERG](#) (a sub group of the Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group) which includes contributing to the [STERG National Action Plan](#).and inputting into Scenario Planning currently being worked on.



created to drive forward the recovery of Scotland's vital tourism sector and who have now published their [recommendations for recovery](#).

- Representation on the STA Destination Forum

Freeports Consultation

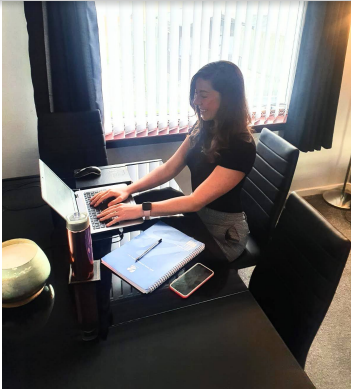
The Freeports consultation was published in February 2020 and set out the UK Government's vision to establish up to 10 Freeports across the UK. It was due to close in April but, as a result of disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was extended to 13th July 2020. Overall, the government received 364 responses. SLAED has been actively engaged in the consultation along with the Scottish Government and those local authorities in Scotland that intend to bid for Freeport status. Scotland's engagement in the process is led by Ivan McKee MSP, and there is currently consideration for one or two freeports in Scotland. It will be important to be cautious of displacement through this process and ensure that the broader footprint of the Freeport(s) benefit Scotland as a whole, and not just the region it is located within.



Freeports are designed to be innovative hubs that boost the economy by helping businesses to invest in their machinery, infrastructure and staff. They will help to create jobs and attract investment to some of the most deprived communities around the UK. The Freeports consultation proposes a brand-new, bespoke model, with a comprehensive package of measures designed to boost trade, employment and innovation. Overall, respondents welcomed the ambition of the proposals, the emphasis on local economic geography and regeneration, the flexibility of the customs model, and the focus on innovation. Further details will be shared via the SLAED Business Group as this progresses.

European Social Fund in the Times of Covid-19

All ESF operations in Stirling are being delivered remotely, and both ESF staff and participants have had to overcome different barriers to enable and ensure a smooth continuation of support. Most participants suffer from health issues and have limited access to the internet, as well as limited IT experience, making it really hard to



This was the case for a Stirling Council tenant who contacted an ESF funded operation – Stirling Enhanced Advice Services – as she was reaching pension age and wanted to know the impact this would have on her benefits. She was very stressed about this as she suffered from mobility issues and her partner also had previously suffered from throat cancer; therefore they were nervous about any change and the impact of the stress on their health. Their personal circumstances meant that their entitlement to housing benefit would end soon and they would need to make a new claim for Universal Credit.

It was extremely difficult to coach the clients through the UC claim via telephone due to their lack of IT literacy. Fortunately, their younger daughter was able to assist and follow the case workers instructions on how to make the benefit claim online.

Further information can be found [here](#).

Referrals to the Advice Stirling service can be made by emailing moneyadvice@stirling.gov.uk or by calling 01786233528

Tackling Irresponsible Camping in Perth & Kinross

The Coronavirus pandemic led to a significant increase in visitors to Perth and Kinross over the summer months. These included day-trippers, motorhome drivers and wild campers who all, understandably, wanted to escape lockdown into some of Scotland's most beautiful scenery.

While visitors are always welcome in Perth and Kinross and most were aware of their responsibilities, a small number of “dirty campers” left behind debris, including human waste, after camping near beauty spots such as Loch Clunie and Loch Tummel. Others even abandoned tents or chopped down trees for firewood. Additionally, the high number of cars parking on some narrow rural roads caused obstructions for other road users, including farm traffic and emergency vehicles. Working with partner agencies including Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue, Perth & Kinross Council, adopted a range of measures to reduce anti-social behaviour and dangerous parking.

Countryside Rangers, and representatives of Police Scotland and the SFRS, carried out patrols of busy areas reminding campers of



that prohibited parking.

Although most campers responded positively to visits from officers, where necessary enforcement action, such as issuing parking tickets, was used. Police also charged a small number of campers for vandalism-related offences while a new FAQs on the do's and don't of camping was added to the Council's website. The Council is also preparing a campaign to remind visitors to treat Perth and Kinross with respect.



Business Services United in Fife

Fife Council has refreshed and launched InvestFife, a single entity for business support services. It will unite the various elements of Fife Council Economic Development's Business Enterprise, Land and Property services under a single banner, whilst working in partnership with Business Gateway Fife, making its offering more accessible to new and existing businesses.

InvestFife will provide a clear access point for local business of all sizes to seek the support, guidance and funding they need to meet the significant challenges in the current environment. InvestFife will also showcase the offer Fife has to external investors and provide the guidance and support they need to establish in Fife.

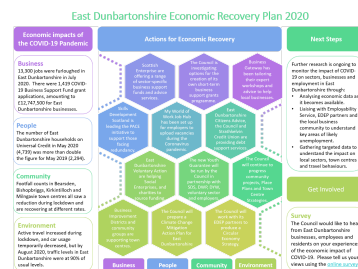
A new look website has been launched for [InvestFife](https://www.investfife.gov.uk)

To contact InvestFife, email: fifemeansbusiness@fife.gov.uk

Covid-19 Economic Impact Survey – East Dunbartonshire

East Dunbartonshire Council are conducting a survey to find out about the experiences of businesses, employees and residents with regards to the economic impacts of COVID-19. The survey also asks for feedback on the Economic Recovery Plan for East Dunbartonshire, which was produced by the Council and its Community Planning Partners to identify the key impacts of COVID-19 on the local economy and set out the actions being delivered in response. Any responses to the survey will be considered in updating the Plan in the coming months.

The Economic Recovery Plan aims to support businesses and residents. It sits within the context set out by the



emerging data on the economic impact of COVID-19. It also forms part of the Community Planning Partnership's delivery of Local Outcome 1 of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The Plan updates the 2017 Economic Development Strategy action plan, reflecting the severity of this crisis and the need to target resources.

The actions in the Economic Recovery Plan are presented under the following four priority areas:

1. Business
2. People
3. Community
4. Environment

The survey will be live from 2nd – 30th November and can be accessed [here](#).

INVEST
in Renfrewshire



Mind and Money Matters

Invest in Renfrewshire delivers a holistic range of interventions to support individuals to secure a positive and sustained destination. It develops core and vocational skills as well as removing barriers to employment. Cally Moore is the Health and Wellbeing Adviser who supports participants that identify their mental health as a barrier to employment. Tricia O'Connor is the Income Adviser and provides participants with support in relation to their finances, including welfare benefits, debt, budgeting and better off in work calculations.

Cally and Tricia have joined forces to deliver Mind and Money Matters, exploring the connection between financial and emotional wellbeing. The reaction has been highly positive and clients have provided such feedback as:

“it helped me a lot to understand money more and how to manage it. It was great and I was anxious but you guys helped me stay calm and I felt welcome...”

“It was good to get tips and hear others chat about challenges and experiences as sometimes not working/earning can sometimes make you feel not so great.”

These sessions are offered to all clients in the early stages of engagement with Invest in Renfrewshire, which recognises the importance of addressing both mind and

and participants can access this session as well as a range of other barrier removal and vocational online delivery.

Further information can be found [here](#).



Anchor Charter

Community Wealth Building...uses the economic levers available to Anchor Institutions to develop resilient, inclusive local economies with more local spend and fair employment, as well as a larger and more diverse business base, ensuring that wealth is more locally owned and benefits local people.

Anchor Institutions...are organisations which are rooted in particular places by their mission, histories, physically fixed land and assets, and established local relationships.

Anchor Charter Mission Statement

To commit to long-term collaboration between Ayrshire Anchor Institutions, supporting shared Community Wealth Building goals to improve collective wellbeing and create a strong, resilient and inclusive local and regional economy. This includes a commitment to the embedding of Community Wealth Building principles and reporting on progress to the CWB Commission.

We commit to this Anchor Charter to deliver Community Wealth Building in Ayrshire



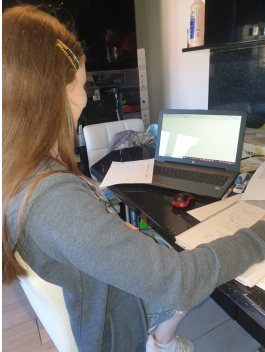
Anchor Charter for Ayrshire Anchor Institutions: Major Step Forward in Community Wealth Building Journey

North Ayrshire Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy was launched in May 2020 and outlined a bold new economic model with a focus on wellbeing and inclusion to reduce poverty and inequality in the region. Central to the new way of thinking was the support of other major Ayrshire Anchor organisations who, like North Ayrshire Council, will use their local spending power to generate wealth in the area.

On 5th October, North Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire College and Scottish Enterprise signed Scotland's first Community Wealth Building Charter.

By signing the Charter, the organisations are pledging to do all they can to support the principles of the Community Wealth Building approach. These include supporting more local business to bid for public sector contracts with each agreeing to increase their spend locally where possible. There will also be a review of all land and property to see how it can be used more efficiently to support communities and enterprises to help them grow. Those signing the Charter have also pledged to prioritise fair employment and environmental sustainability.

Councillor Joe Cullinane, Leader of North Ayrshire Council, said: "Community Wealth Building is about working in partnership with communities and businesses to build a strong local economy which supports fair work, encourages local spend and uses the land and property we own for the common good so that wealth stays local. The commitment of East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire College, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Scottish Enterprise, alongside North Ayrshire Council, to deliver the Community Wealth Building approach is a landmark moment in our Community Wealth Building journey. We hope that in coming months more of the region's major Anchor Institutions will commit to the Charter and together we can build back better, fairer and greener."



Fife Council Assessment Centre Virtual Success

Since the lockdown in March many businesses have looked for smarter and better ways to deliver their services. The lockdown and subsequent restrictions have meant a complete revamp of the way we all do things. Fife Council's assessment centre has implemented new methods of delivery to ensure that pupils undertaking a foundation apprenticeship have been able to continue with their qualification and gain relevant experience and skills.

Due to COVID-19 the assessment centre had to be innovative and creative with delivery, including changing from face to face classroom learning to online delivery using Microsoft Teams. Online placements have been established to give students the best exposure to the world of work whilst ensuring their safety and not being in the physical workplace. The assessment centre has developed incredible virtual work placement opportunities which will be at the centre of the learning. The learners will learn about the sector by undertaking national progression units' assessments which will test their understanding and require them to research and apply analytical skills. The work-based challenge unit will culminate in the learners harvesting all the learning to test their meta skills and to cement their understanding. This good practice was welcomed at a national level and has been shared with other providers with an interest in this approach.

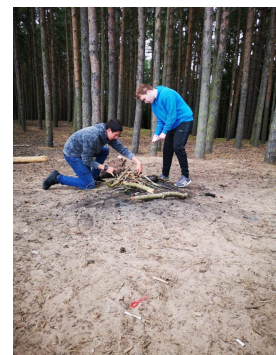
Further information can be found [here](#).

Contact: [Stewart Lyons](#), Employability Officer, Fife Council, Business and Employability.

Fife Pupils Set to Step into the Footsteps of Kings as a New Project Begins with Royal Links

Fife Council's Economic Development Team and Employability Team have partnered to create a fantastic work-based project opportunity for over 25 secondary school pupils studying an FA in Business Skills.

Pupils will be working to create new merchandise to promote the popular free app 'In the Footsteps of Kings' alongside a cohort of pupils who will be designing a brand-new augmented reality game



skills as they work to a deadline to develop exciting new products to advertise the app. Pupils will go head to head in groups as they showcase their business acumen and team working skills in Fife's version of The Apprentice.

In the Footsteps of Kings was developed by Fife Council's Tourism team with app developer Mardles and has seen a surge in downloads as families explore their local areas together and learn about the fascinating Royal connections that exist in Fife.

Not only will young people gain valuable experience in participating but will also be part of the expansion of this popular app which will be enjoyed by many more families for years to come.

Further information can be found [here](#).



New Businesses Thriving in Midlothian

Each month Locate in Midlothian is showcasing the fantastic new companies who have set up locally, bringing new ideas and services to the Midlothian community and beyond.

During October, Local Restrictions were a real challenge for businesses but, with support from Business Gateway Midlothian's dedicated advisers new and diverse businesses are starting up and thriving during challenging times.

From employee ownership stories to delicious treats delivered direct to customers doors, have a look at the exciting businesses who have been setting up in Midlothian over the last month.

Further information can be found [here](#).

Scotland Loves Local - Aberdeenshire

The Scotland Loves Local campaign is a national initiative designed to encourage all those who live in Scotland to think local first and support their high streets safely and in line with public health guidelines. Following attendance at a Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP) webinar on the Scotland Loves Local national campaign, an idea was hatched and permission sought from STP to incorporate the text 'Aberdeenshire' into the design.



Aberdeenshire businesses will be encouraged to download the local logo, which is available in various formats. They can then use it in any way they deem suitable to promote their business, remind and actively inspire people to shop local in Aberdeenshire.

It is aimed that through the lead work of Economic Development, with support from Corporate Communications and all within Aberdeenshire Council, that business owners will welcome and utilise the free initiative to encourage footfall and increase local spend in the economy.

Click [here](#) to read more about the local campaign.

Click [here](#) to read more about the national campaign.

Lanarkshire Women in Business Pilot Success



The decision to run a Lanarkshire Women In Business pilot was prompted, not out of nicety, but out of necessity. Figures published by the Office for National Statistics in 2018 indicated that 25% of Lanarkshire businesses were female led, against a national average of 34%. Additionally, only 4.5% of the female working age population (16–64) in Lanarkshire were self-employed.

The purpose of the pilot was to explore the barriers and challenges that women face in starting and growing businesses in Lanarkshire. Also to test the appetite for a longer-term support initiative. The events led programme ran from Sept 2019 to Sept 2020 and saw 547 women register. Events included a Launch (Bothwell), Closing the Female Funding Gap (Coatbridge), A Mind for Business (East Kilbride) and GO Digital (webinar). Feedback has been encouraging:

"I attended the 1st event in Bothwell and the last event today. Both were excellent in regards to knowledge, support and more important, giving me confidence. We have lots of women like me who would benefit from these events monthly. I don't believe my company would even have started if not for that day in Bothwell".

LWIB is a collaborative effort involving North and South Lanarkshire Councils, Business Gateway Lanarkshire, New

business support initiative are being progressed.

Perth & Kinross Council's Covid-19 Business Communication Strategy

A swift response from Perth & Kinross Council's Economic Development team to ensure businesses in the area received clear, relevant and regular communications during the Covid-19 Lockdown period and beyond, paid dividends as they planned their recovery strategy.

Their Covid-19 e-bulletin was launched on March 18th and continued on a daily basis until mid-April when it shifted to three times weekly. The comms focused on disseminating the most important information for businesses, providing clear links to crucial funding applications and signposting businesses to webinars and training updates from local partners.

Interaction was significant, with regular open rates of over 70% in the first 3 months and with over 1200 signed up. This allowed the team to speak directly to an already engaged business community when they circulated their first Business Barometer in May 2020; an impressive 1500 responses were received, offering valuable insights as the Covid-19 Business Support Task Force began to prepare their recovery strategy.

The focus of the Bulletin changed in July 2020 to 'Recovery', offering guidance and support as businesses eased out of lockdown. This continues to bring all relevant updates around Covid-19 restrictions, funding and opportunities, and has recently expanded to include important Brexit information.



Support For Those Affected By Redundancy

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) is the Scottish Government's initiative dedicated to responding to redundancy situations.

affected by redundancy are out of work.

PACE brings together 24 organisations, including SLAED, together with the Scottish Government to provide free and impartial advice, guidance and support for individuals affected by redundancy.

PACE can help businesses by supporting their employees through the redundancy process. PACE is available to all individuals affected by redundancy, no matter the size of the business.

PACE Advisers have extensive experience of dealing with redundancy situations and can:

- Help with CV, job search, applications and interviews
- Advise on benefits staff may be entitled to
- Provide information on learning and training opportunities.

Despite restrictions on face to face contact as a result of COVID-19, PACE support continues to be delivered through the PACE Helpline, by video calling, through webinars and through enhanced online resources.

Visit www.redundancyscotland.co.uk for more information or call 0800 917 8000 to speak to an adviser.

A number of video case studies can be found [here](#)

