

# **Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Industrial Communities**

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 6.45pm via Microsoft Teams

Present

MSPs

Colin Beattie MSP, John Mason MSP, Paul McLellan MSP, Richard Leonard MSP.

Invited guests

Non-MSP Group Members

Cllr. Altany Craik, Cllr. P. Henderson, Cllr. A. Steele, Cllr. Michelle Campbell, Cllr. Nairn McDonald, Laura Cunningham, Ian McCrory, Robert Young, Keith Robson, Chris Whitwood, Prof. Steve Fothergill, Roddy MacDonald.

Apologies

Alex Rowley MSP, Cllr. D. McCall, Cllr. Russell Imrie, Malcolm Leitch.

Agenda item 1

Convener Colin Beattie MSP welcomed all present to the meeting.

Agenda item 2

Privacy Notice – Colin Beattie MSP read through the Privacy Notice for the Cross-Party Group on Industrial Communities.

This was noted by all present.

## Agenda item 3

AGM

Minutes of the 'Initial Meeting' approved.

Office Bearers Elections.

Colin Beattie MSP appointed Convener – moved by Robert Young and seconded by Paul McLellan MSP.

Alex Rowley MSP appointed Depute Convener – moved by Colin Beattie MSP and seconded by Cllr. A. Craik.

Roddy MacDonald appointed Secretary – moved by Colin Beattie MSP and seconded by John Mason MSP.

## Agenda item 4

Regular Meeting.

Minutes of previous meetings approved and adopted.

## Agenda item 5

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – An Update - Professor Steve Fothergill

Professor Fothergill provided a comprehensive overview of the key issues.

- After more than 5 years of lobbying for a replacement for EU funding to the Nations and Regions the UK Government has finally released the prospectus for the fund paving the way for the submission of local investment plans.
- The funding builds up to the same as the EU funding it replaces; the share going to the four nations has been maintained; there is a wide shopping list of eligible measures; the funding has been allocated by formula, not competitive bidding; and within England the share going to the Midlands has been protected.
- That said, there are a number of flaws, not least that funding is presently only committed to March 2025.
- The Chair of the GB Alliance has written to the DLUHC Minister Neil O'Brien outlining a number of concerns relating to the timescales for submitting plans and delivery; potential delays in UK Government approval; funding allocation flaws in England; the potential hiatus in funding for employability and skills; and the short-term nature of the funding.

- It was noted that the All-Party Group in Westminster is holding an online event for stakeholders to gain feedback on the UK Government's plans. This is scheduled for the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- Following detailed discussion on the challenges ahead it was agreed that the Cross-Party Group should invite the relevant Scottish Government Minister to a future meeting. Thereafter, a decision will be made on how best to engage members of the Scottish Parliament including involving the appropriate Committees.

## **Agenda item 6**

An overview of the work of the Cross-Party Group in this Session – Roddy MacDonald

Roddy MacDonald provided an update including the following.

- NPF4 Consultation – all MSPs were provided with a copy of the Alliance Scotland submission.
- Letter to Richard Lochhead MSP, Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work on issues arising from the UK Renewal Fund including the deadlines for applications and the challenges relating to delivery.
- Letter to Kate Forbes MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy on issues relating to Land & Property Development and Gap Funding outlining a series of 'Asks' from the Scottish Government.
- Engagement with Scottish Parliament Committees on Subsidy Control, Levelling Up, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the future of our Towns in Scotland.
- Freeports – engaging with the Scottish Government on key issues arising and contributing to a GB wide event led by Cllr. P. Henderson on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## **Agenda item 7**

AOCB and Date of the Next Meeting.

The following issues were raised.

- Cllr. P. Henderson provided an update on Freeports and the potential of Community Wealth Building in Local Authority Areas. It was agreed that these issues should be kept under review.
- Robert Young of the CRT provided an update on activities in our areas and stated that he would be happy to meet with National and Local Representatives should they so wish.
- The next meetings of the Cross-Party Group are scheduled for Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 from 6.00pm and Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November from 6.00pm in the Scottish Parliament subject to approval from the Parliamentary Authorities.

- It was agreed to invite a representative from the Scottish Government to address the Cross-Party Group at either of the above meetings subject to their availability. The topics of interest would include some of the key issues currently under consideration including the Levelling Up Agenda, the replacement EU Funds and Subsidy Control. Th invitation will now be taken forward and members will be advised of progress in due course.

