

OUTCOMES FROM THE CONVENTION OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS – 31 OCTOBER 2016- INVERNESS

PRIORITIES FOR GOVERNMENT	LEAD	UPDATE
The Scottish Government will drive forward transformational policies to close the educational attainment gap and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, working closely with COHI members to deliver better and locally differentiated outcomes for communities across the Highlands and Islands.	Karen Frew	No Action required
ENTERPRISE & SKILLS REVIEW	LEAD	UPDATE
COHI members will be fully engaged, in particular, in progressing Phase 2 of the Enterprise and Skills Review.	Dominic Muro/Sam Anson	No Action required
EU REFERENDUM	LEAD	UPDATE
Recognising the significant influence of the EU for developments in the Highlands and Islands, and the Scottish Government's commitment to protect Scotland's place in the EU, the government will also seek to develop a more integrated Team Scotland approach involving all Scotland's representatives on the Committee of the Regions	Ian Mitchell/ Russell Bain & Kirsty Markie, SG	Letter to be sent from DFM to all Scottish members of CotR drawing attention to the COHI discussions early in the new year. We will highlighting key messages from document on Scotland's Place in Europe published on 20/12/16 and encouraging them to work together to maximise impact of Scotland's voice. SG EU Team are progressing this action on behalf of CoHI Secretariat.
HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS BEYOND 2020	LEAD	UPDATE
COHI members welcomed prior work to		A follow-up workshop, engaging largely the same senior officials from

<p>identify priorities for the Highlands and Islands, post-2020, and endorsed the proposals to develop sequenced work plans by the COHI Senior Officer Group and for discussions at COHI meetings in 2017. While recognising the importance, relevance and inter-relationship of all the priorities identified, three themes most likely to deliver a strong and vibrant economy in the Highlands and Islands, at pace are: digital and transport and connectivity; education and skills; and community, Economic and quality employment opportunities. COHI partners acknowledged the importance of strong, coordinated and focused drive from all in delivering significant economic impact for the Highlands and Islands. The Scottish Government will continue to facilitate this work.</p>	<p>Karl Reilly,SG Katie Lackie, Highland Council</p>	<p>all COHI member organisations as were involved in the initial work, met on 1 February to develop an approach for taking this work forward over 2017. The workshop explored the scope and key strands to incorporate within the four priority themes agreed in October and decided that individual subgroups would be required to coordinate work across the Highlands and Islands on each theme.</p> <p>The workshop agreed that next steps would be to build a more detailed understanding of current and planned activity relevant to each priority theme at a local, regional and national level, using this to identify gaps and constraints in delivering the desired improvement in outcomes as explored in an earlier phase of this work. This will then enable action plans to be developed for each theme, building on existing work, and for the contribution of individual organisations as well as asks of non-COHI members to be agreed. A standard scoping template was agreed for use across the four themes.</p> <p>The next steps will also include consideration of resource requirements necessary to coordinate a programme of work and drive forward the activity within each plan in a way which delivers improved medium to longer term outcomes for residents and businesses in the Highlands and Islands.</p> <p>Lead individuals to coordinate input across all partners in scoping out action plans for each theme were agreed. All organisations will have an opportunity to contribute on each of the themes that are relevant to them and meetings have been scheduled for 1 and 2 March in Inverness to take forward the next stages of this work. A substantive update on progress across all strands of this work will be provided at the autumn 2017 COHI. (A draft write-up of the 1 February workshop will be circulated for information in advance of the 20 February COHI).</p>
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FUEL POVERTY AND NATIONAL NETWORK PRICING	LEAD	UPDATE
<p>COHI members noted that Ofgem and National Grid highlighted that the issue of electricity network charges is reserved to the UK Government. It was agreed that the UK Government Energy Minister, Baroness Neville-Rolfe, be invited to the next meeting in order to speak on the UK Government's policy position on the distribution of network costs across GB and fuel poverty in the North of Scotland.</p>	<p>Marian McSeveney/ Cherly McNulty, SG</p>	<p>Letter sent to new UK Government Energy Minister Jesse Norman to attend CoHI on 20th Feb. Minister is unable to attend forthcoming CoHI but it has been suggested that an invitation be sent for Autumn CoHI for consideration.</p>
<p>Mr Ewing highlighted that since the last meeting of COHI, and the letter that had been issued as an action from the meeting, there had been no announcement from UK Government on the Remote Island Wind Contract for Difference. COHI members endorsed another letter be sent from the Deputy First Minister , Angus Campbell, Steven Heddle and Gary Robinson to the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Greg Clark MP and this be press released in order to bring attention to the matter in advance of a decision being made.</p>	<p>Marian McSeveney/ Cherly McNulty</p>	<p>Letter issued 31 October 16</p>

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PROGRESS AND OPPORTUNITIES	LEAD	UPDATE
<p>Following informative presentations from Ofcom and HIE, Mr Ewing reflected that there had been tremendous progress on improving digital connectivity but this was not sufficiently well recognised. Copies of both presentations should therefore be circulated to all CoHI members. Mr Swinney noted that Ofcom should advise SG and CoHI as to when they would seek further powers from DCMS as this would be an opportunity for making a strong supportive recommendation to the UK Government.</p>	<p>Gareth Wells</p>	<p>Both presentations circulated to members 3 February 2017</p>
HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS SKILLS INVESTMENT PLAN	LEAD	UPDATE
<p>Clr Norman MacDonald and Seonag Campbell presented an update on partners work delivering against the H&I Skills Investment Plan. The progress was welcomed and COHI's influence on the development of the plan recognised. Contributors recognised the real challenge of replacement demand for skills in areas like Health & Social Care and reference was also made to the introduction and implication of the new Apprenticeship Levy. Members agreed that NHS partners and the Forestry Commission should join the Programme Board and ensure that Sectoral Developments are fully integrated and where possible action is taken to de-clutter and simplify systems. DFM endorsed this progress and offered continued support for the delivery of actions within the Regional</p>	<p>Seonag Campbell SDS</p>	<p>No Action required</p>

Skill Investment Plan		
REALISING UHI STRATEGIC VISION	LEAD	UPDATE
COHI members endorsed the vision for UHI's Strategic development, recognising that the focus on learners, research and place resonated with discussions throughout the day about SG' programme for Government and H&I priorities post 2020. This strategic alignment provides a framework for UHI development and the action of COHI members.	Prof Clive Mulholland, UHI/Karen Frew, SG	<p>The strategic development of the university focussing on learners, research and place is progressing at pace. A new Partnership Council (compromising all 13 partners), has been established to ensure the organisation remains focused on the key objectives of the university. This, together with a new enhanced senior management team (currently being recruited), will enable the institution to accelerate its objective to be a highly performing sustainable tertiary university for the region.</p> <p>Momentum is continuing to build around the UHI Regional School of Health Care and Life Sciences. Capacity building funding for research has been secured by working in partnership with HIE. Discussions are taking place with Scottish Government regarding the further enhancement of nurse education numbers in the region. £9m has been secured from the Inverness and Highland City-Deal to create an innovation eco-system in digital health in the Highlands, and discussions regarding a further significant funding package from EU Structural Funds are at an advanced stage.</p> <p><u>Oban Town</u> Oban has initiated plans to develop as a University Town. The University of the Highlands and Islands is fully supportive of this and sees the development of UHI in the town as the logical solution and the one most likely to achieve sustainability. It will therefore be important to ensure we have aligned planning towards a common goal.</p> <p><u>Fort William (STEM)</u> In Fort William, the university with the college are keen to work with the new owners of Rio Tinto Alcan Lochaber. We currently have plans to develop a new centre for Science and Technology that could provide the specialised skills base the new owners will require as they develop their investment. It will be important therefore that all agencies collaborate and align plans to maximise economic impact in the region.</p>

OUTSTANDING OUTCOMES FROM THE CONVENTION OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS STORNOWAY 31 OCTOBER 16

	LEAD	UPDATE
<p>CoHI leaders to write, collectively, to BT underlining the importance of obtaining clear and accurate information on coverage and speeds provided as part of the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme.</p> <p>A note of thanks to be sent, from CoHI leaders, to the Mobile Network Operators for their engagement to date.</p> <p>Senior members of CoHI and the Deputy First Minister to meet with Ofcom and BT as soon as possible to discuss gaining access to reliable data on coverage and speeds. A report from this meeting will be provided to the next meeting of CoHI.</p> <p>A monthly update on rollout by mobile operators to be provided to CoHI members</p>	<p>Gareth Wells & Digital Director</p>	<p>The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity met with Brendan Dick from BT Scotland on 6 September 2016 and set out SG’s expectation that quality of service, broadband speeds and access to coverage data would improve. The Cabinet Secretary reiterated these views in a letter on 20 September. BT is providing both DSSB teams with regular reporting on coverage and speeds.</p> <p>Work around the testing and verification of speeds, for both mobile and fixed networks, is in progress. SG would be pleased to provide CoHI members with a paper to update them on progress.</p> <p>Mobile operators are unable to supply the levels of data required to supply monthly updates on mobile rollout. This information would be unlikely to show meaningful levels of change. HIE are supplying each local authority across the region with a tailored update to coincide with CoHI meetings.</p> <p>Ofcom gave a presentation to the October 2016 session of CoHI in Inverness on their work in Scotland and participated in wider discussion. This followed a direct invitation from Mr Ewing to Sharon White, Ofcom’s CEO.</p> <p>Action not achievable</p>