

**Industrial Communities Alliance Scotland's  
Ten Point Action Plan for Government****Report by John Blair, Director, Corporate Resources****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** This report has been prepared to review the content of the Industrial Communities Alliance (ICA) Scotland ten point action plan for Government and to highlight how the plan might link to the existing and emerging economic development strategies of the Council and Midlothian Community Planning Partnership (MCP) partners.
- 1.2** A copy of the action plan has been placed in the Members Library. In addition, copies of the booklet have been circulated to all Elected Members.

**2 Background**

- 2.1** The ICA is the all – party association representing some 60 Local Authorities (LAs) in the industrial areas of England, Scotland and Wales.
- 2.2** The Alliance was formed in 2007 by the merger of the longer standing associations covering coal and steel areas and also includes a wide range of other industrial areas.
- 2.3** The aim of the Alliance is to promote the economic, social and environmental renewal of the areas covered by its member LAs. The ICA works with the Governments in London and Edinburgh, with the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff, with the EU in Brussels, with Development Agencies and with its own member LAs.
- 2.4** This Council currently has the undernoted Elected Member representation on the ICA:
- Councillor C Johnstone – Voting
  - Councillor A Bennett - Observer
  - Councillor D Rosie - Substitute

In addition, a senior member of staff from the Council's Economic Development Section provides appropriate officer support at ICA meetings, conferences and lobbying events.

**3 Report Implications**

- 3.1** Scotland's industrial communities – the places once built on industries like coal, steel, shipbuilding, textiles and engineering – continue to lag

behind in terms of prosperity and jobs. The recovery from recession in ICA areas such as Midlothian is also proving challenging. Scotland's older industrial areas are a substantial part of the country, home to perhaps as much as half the population, and have been particularly affected by job losses from industries such as coal mining and manufacturing.

**3.2** The action plan is the ICA's view of what is needed to revive the economy in Scotland's current and former traditional industrial areas. It is based on extensive discussion within the ICA and its constituent member LAs on the challenges facing some of Scotland's most difficult local economies and disadvantaged communities.

**3.3** Contained in the action plan are a number of key topic headings, many of which have relevance to Midlothian. These include:

- Use public procurement as a development tool;
- Invest in infrastructure to support the Scottish economy;
- Make the most of European funding;
- Deliver a new Assisted Area map that will support investment in the regions;
- Beef up the Enterprise Area initiative;
- and
- Introduce a job creation programme

**3.4** The action plan recognises that economic policy is only partially a devolved matter. In some cases, the policy proposals outlined in the action plan need direct action by the SG. In other cases, the initiative lies with the Westminster Government. In some instances, both Governments will have to play a joint role.

**3.5** From a Council perspective, there are a number of ways in which the ten point action plan could be utilised.

- Circulate the action plan to a wide range of key Council contacts including Midlothian Community Planning Partnership partners;
- Refer to the document when holding discussions with, for example, SG officials on economic development/regeneration project initiatives; and
- Utilise the document as key background reference material in the preparation of strategic documents such as the Midlothian Economic Recovery Plan which is currently being drafted.

## **4. Report Implications**

### **4.1 Resources**

Any ongoing work associated with the ICA is undertaken by staff in the Council's Corporate Resources Division in close liaison with Divisional colleagues and MCPP partners.

With regard to financial resource implications, the Council's Annual membership fee for the ICA is budgeted for and currently amounts to £5,500.

## 4.2 Risk

There is a risk that failure to follow most, if not all, of the points outlined in the action plan will put the Council out of step with other ICA member LAs. In addition, there is a risk that failure to participate in ICA lobbying activities on key issues such as the forthcoming Assisted Area map formulation could have a notable adverse impact on the Midlothian business community.

## 4.3 Policy

### Strategy

Driving forward sustainable economic development in Midlothian is a key corporate priority of the Council.

The ICA Scotland's ten point action plan for Government links with the undernoted existing and emerging strategies

- Scottish Government (SG) Economic Strategy and associated SG strategies;
- Scottish Enterprise Business Plan; and
- Midlothian Economic Recovery Plan (in preparation)

**Consultation:** No specific consultation has been involved in the preparation of this report. However, ICA member LAs were fully consulted and involved in the preparation of the ten point action plan.

**Equalities:** There are no equalities issues arising directly from this report.

**Sustainability:** There are no sustainability issues arising directly from this report.

**Environmental Impact:** There is no environmental impact arising directly from this report.

**IT Issues:** There are no IT issues associated with the proposals outlined in this report.

## 5 Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- i) note the content of the Industrial Communities Alliance Scotland's ten point action plan for Government; and
- ii) agree that the action plan be forwarded on to a wide range of key Council contacts including Midlothian Community Planning Partnership partners.

**Date 18 November 2012**

**Report Contact:** John Beveridge, Economic Development Manager  
**Tel No:** 0131 271 3431 **E-mail:** [john.beveridge@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:john.beveridge@midlothian.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:** File ref: 7070 Industrial Communities Alliance