



## **Meeting with Lee Medd of Dumfries and Galloway Chamber of Commerce 7 January 2016**

### **Present:**

#### **Dgap**

Alan Jones

Penny Coles

#### **D&G Chamber of Commerce**

Lee Medd

The Chamber of Commerce has contact with over 6000 businesses across the region. Many of these are involved in the tourism economy and therefore concerns about the damage a pylon and power line route may cause are of interest. From the experience of Beaully Denny there has been little benefit to the local economy during construction as most of the work was done by non-local firms and labour. The concern is for the long term potential damage to the tourist industry in Dumfries and Galloway.

Lee will be meeting with the new SPEN co-ordinator, Iain Steele, to be based in the Dumfries office soon.

Alan Jones explained Dumgal against Pylons' current position with support from various groups and individuals. Alan outlined Dumfries and Galloway Council's recent meetings and comments that had been forwarded to SPEN. A brief description of DGAP's alternative proposal for a transmission network for Dumfries and Galloway was explained which avoids the need for an overhead power line and three new sub stations across Dumfries and Galloway where none has existed before. This included the recent proposal of creating a link into the Western HVDC sub sea cable which would reduce costs. Lee felt this would be of interest to his Board and members as it put forward a different solution that safeguarded the landscape of Dumfries and Galloway. This important natural resource is of benefit in attracting new businesses, workforce and visitors to the region.

Alan outlined the proposal to initiate research into the effect and impact of an overhead power line and pylons on tourism. We hope to seek and obtain external funding for this. Lee said that he felt that the Chamber of Commerce would be happy to be a stakeholder in this work and would welcome the information and outcome of any new research to inform his members in coming to their own conclusions about the impact on their business. Alan spoke about his latest research into the carbon footprint of local authorities across the UK and D&G's unique claim to be carbon neutral. This could be a powerful marketing tool in attracting eco friendly visitors.

Lee was thanked for his interest and support.

### **Actions**

- Alan to forward a set of slides to Lee for use with his board of directors.
- Alan Jones would be happy to give a presentation to members of the Chamber of Commerce about DGAP's proposal. DGAP would be prepared to organise this in the centre of Dumfries if Lee would suggest an appropriate date and time and be prepared to advertise this to members.

- Alan would be pleased to write a piece for the Chamber of Commerce newsletter about our proposal and another on D&G's carbon footprint.
- Lee offered to facilitate a meeting with either Paula McDonald, Regional Director of Visit Scotland and/or with Caroline Robertson, Farm Business Development Scheme, Visit Scotland.
- Penny will contact Visit South West Scotland, the group of accommodation providers across the region.