



One Year On - First update approved by Scottish Funding Council

At the end of September the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) received the first interim report on the Crichton Institute development. Aileen Ross, Outcome Agreement Manager (SFC) "was very pleased to see the impressive progress that has been made to date against the objectives, outcomes and agreed measures for this project ...".



It was in September 2012 that the SFC confirmed the grant allowing the establishment of the CI to go ahead.

CI now has a core multi-disciplinary team in place and has quickly established a reputation for its expertise and willingness to engage with the region's many communities of interest

Our first year's activities have included the hosting and facilitation of some key meetings for external organisations, forming partnerships with Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries & Galloway to develop the Crichton Institute Regional Observatory (CIRO) and a range of research and policy-related activities as well as the formation of our **Crichton Institute Partnership Board (CIPB)** of external stakeholders. The latter has been important to further incorporate issues and questions in relation to the South of Scotland. Representatives from key public, private and third sector organisations and agencies attended the inaugural meeting in October. Its role is to:

- ▶ encourage communities, business organisations and strategic partners to engage in research, evaluation and policy development and to identify Crichton Institute as their 'first port of call';
- ▶ help CI build reputation and capacity;
- ▶ keep CI connected to local stakeholders, professional and business groups;
- ▶ help CI identify our future priorities.

Year Two – Full Steam Ahead

2014 will see CI building on its reputation for high quality knowledge exchange and rigorous research relevant to the region; responding to information needs and acting as a voice for the region in terms of policy. CI will also work closely with public bodies on 'real time' data management and deployment, exploit the potential of Horizon 2020 to support local SMEs, engage with NHS Dumfries and Galloway as it moves forward with a major new hospital building project, and respond to national and international opportunities for knowledge exchange and innovation.

Partnership Working and Projects

CI has responded to a range of calls on its expertise so far:

- ▶ CI has been commissioned by **Dumfries & Galloway Council** is working with CI on its Economic Strategy to be published later next year.
- ▶ In collaboration with the **Crichton Carbon Centre (CCC)** CI has been successful in securing funding for a 3-year post-doc position to research 'Sustainable Rurality for South-West Scotland' which will bring specialist environmental knowledge to CI.
- ▶ In the last newsletter we reported on the visit of The Scotland Europa team and their information road show providing updates on the impending launch of the new European funding framework programme for research



and innovation - **Horizon 2020**. Since then CI has initiated talks with Heriot Watt University's School of Textiles (HW) and the Crichton Carbon Centre (CCC) to support a collaborative project. An application was made to Interface for an SME Engagement Voucher. Notification has just been received that the application has been successful. This is great news as the grant will enable the partnership identify European partners and develop a full funding bid to explore and understand the extent to which sustainable business practices can bring about transformative economic, social and

environmental outcomes in the SME community.

- ▶ Since the summer CI has undertaken an evaluation of the **Queensberry Initiative**, providing an analysis of this education initiative. Once complete the report will



assist the QI team to strengthen the continuation and further development of their education provision.

- ▶ With the **£200m project of the new Dumfries hospital** entering a crucial phase, the Crichton Campus Leadership Group has tasked CI to become the lead contact for the sub-group (representatives from NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Dumfries & Galloway College, University of Glasgow, UWS, OU Scotland and Skills Development Scotland) investigating and co-ordinating opportunities for skills development, training and research that may derive from this Acute Services Redevelopment project. CI was given the task following a recent Crichton Campus Leadership Group meeting.

consented and under construction onshore wind farm projects which represent opportunities but also challenges for the region.

Events

CI has attended a number of events over the last few weeks. We presented at the *LARIA conference* providing background to and the vision of the development of the Crichton Institute Regional Observatory. Further, CI participated in the *Fresh Start for the Arts in Dumfries and Galloway conference* as well as the *Investing in the Future* an employability partnership event organised by Dumfries & Galloway Council. Earlier in December CI were actively involved in the *Beyond Boundaries* workshop, hosted by the Carnegie UK Trust and SRUC. This brought together key regional and national stakeholders to explore the relationship between the health of small towns and their wider rural hinterland. The outcomes of the discussions will inform future activity and research at Scotland and UK levels.

Participating in events and actively listening to the people of the region and our CIPB members is informing our activities and shaping the events that we will hold in 2014.

- ▶ **CI Question Time** – is scheduled for early April. This first event is designed for you to ask questions about **Curriculum for Excellence** – What is it? Why is it different? How can my business benefit from the new qualifications? A panel of individuals with a background and expertise in teaching and research around this subject will be available to answer your questions and be part of a discussion around the topic. Look out for more information on this event in early 2014.
- ▶ **CI Business Conversations** – in the spring these regular informal networking opportunities between local SMEs and academic staff discussing current issues affecting business, looking for solutions and knowledge exchange will be launched.

Dialogue with Crichton Institute

CI wants to encourage dialogue and discussion on issues important to you and Dumfries & Galloway. Follow us on Twitter (@CrichtonInst) and on LinkedIn (Crichton Institute) or contact us direct. For other ways of engaging with CI please read on.

Crichton Institute Regional Observatory

The collaborative development of CIRO is progressing well. The Scottish Centre for Enabling Technologies (SCET), part of UWS, has just been given the go ahead for the actual building of the web portal. In the meantime a team, currently including representatives from Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries & Galloway as well as CI, are pulling together the first datasets and reports to be included in CIRO in time for the launch of phase 1 during spring 2014.

Crichton Institute Briefings

The first CI briefing paper has now been published and is available via the Crichton Institute website at: <http://www.crichtoninstitute.co.uk/index.php/press-releases>

- ▶ *Can farm business diversification stimulate the rural economy?*

Two further briefings will be available in soon:

- ▶ *Policies and institutions in the South of Scotland: Challenges and opportunities*
This briefing will provide background and context information on the challenges and opportunities currently facing the South of Scotland region.
- ▶ *National targets, local implications: Wind farm development in Dumfries & Galloway*
Dumfries and Galloway has over a quarter of Scotland's

The CI team also would like to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year!



Crichton Institute
Henry Duncan Building
Crichton Campus
Bankend Road
Dumfries DG1 4FD
01387 345370/1