

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghaidheal agus Bhoid

Customer Services
Executive Director: Douglas Hendry



Kilmory, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RT
Tel: 01546 602127 Fax: 01546 604435
DX 599700 LOCHGILPHEAD
e.mail –douglas.hendry@argyll-bute.gov.uk

9 April 2014

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the **SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP - OUR ISLANDS: OUR FUTURE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD** on **WEDNESDAY, 16 APRIL 2014** at **2:00 PM**, which you are requested to attend.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director - Customer Services

BUSINESS

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)**
- 3. OUR ISLANDS: OUR FUTURE**
Extract from the Minute of the Council meeting held on 23 January 2014
(Pages 1 - 6)
- 4. OUR ISLANDS: ISSUES**
Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services
(Pages 7 - 12)

SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP – OUR ISLANDS: OUR FUTURE

Councillor Len Scoullar (Chair)
Councillor Mary-Jean Devon
Councillor Duncan MacIntyre
Councillor Isobel Strong

Councillor Robin Currie
Councillor Anne Horn
Councillor Robert Macintyre

Contact: Hazel MacInnes Tel: 01546 604269

This page is intentionally left blank

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL
CUSTOMER SERVICES

SLWG – OUR ISLANDS: OUR
FUTURE
16 APRIL 2014

EXTRACT OF MINUTE OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2014

21. OUR ISLANDS: OUR FUTURE

The Council considered a report which provided background information on taking forward our own island initiative which it is proposed could also include other Scottish island Councils.

Decision

1. That the Council keeps a watching brief in regard to the 3 islands Councils initiative;
2. Agreed to the Council developing its own islands initiative including a position statement for our islands which outlines the key areas for support, including any increased resources and powers from the Scottish Government and UK Government;
3. Agreed that the Council works with other Scottish Islands Councils to determine if there are common issues and areas of interest that can be developed in partnership;
4. Agreed to the Council setting up a short life working group of 7 Members consisting of Councillors Currie, RE Macintyre, Devon, D MacIntyre and Scoullar (Chair) from the Administration and Councillors Horn and Strong from the Opposition to investigate and to take forward the actions above and to meet with the Scottish and UK Government to present its own case in regard to our islands and their needs and to seek support and commitment; and

(Ref: Report by Acting Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure dated 23 January 2014, submitted)

This page is intentionally left blank

OUR ISLANDS: OUR FUTURE

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council at their meeting on 27 June 2013 discussed the Our Islands: Our future campaign being led by the Shetland, Orkney and Western Isles Councils to obtain greater extension of powers devolved to Scotland's islands. The Council agreed a motion *"that the Council enters into dialogue with the 3 islands Councils to put the case that the islands of Argyll and Bute should be part of this campaign so that all of Scotland's islands are part of this initiative and that the Council is represented and takes part in the islands conference in Orkney in September."*
- 1.2 At the 29 August 2013 meeting, the Executive Director of Customer Services provided an update in relation to the positive response from the island councils and also notification of the establishment of an Island Areas Ministerial Working Group.
- 1.3 Elected Members of the Council attended the Our Islands: Our Future conference held on the 19/20 September 2013 and from this it was concluded that direct involvement in this particular campaign would not be the most appropriate route for Argyll and Bute.
- 1.4 Whilst direct involvement in the Our Islands: Our Future campaign may not be considered appropriate, it is considered that there is a need to take forward its own island initiative which it is proposed could also include other Scottish island Councils. There is a risk that inequalities could arise between Scottish islands if the latter is not pursued.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members agree to the following:
- That the Council keeps a watching brief in regard to the *3 islands Councils* initiative;
 - That Members agree to the Council developing its own islands initiative including a position statement for our islands which outlines the key areas for support, including any increased resources and powers from the Scottish Government and UK Government;
 - That Members agree that the Council works with other Scottish Islands Councils to determine if there are common issues and areas of interest that can be developed in partnership;

- That Members agree to the Council setting up a short life working group consisting of up to 9 Members to investigate and to take forward the actions above and to meet with the Scottish and UK Government to present its own case in regard to our islands and their needs and to seek support and commitment; and
- If minded to approve the above recommendations, the Council nominates appropriate elected members to sit on the short life working group to progress the actions.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The Our Islands: Our Future Conference was held in Orkney on 19/20 September 2013. It was attended by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services and Councillors McCuish and Currie.
- 3.2 A conference report is being prepared and is likely to be publically available in late January 2014.
- 3.3 The three councils have issued a position statement which identifies opportunities in relation to the development and extension of the powers which could involve:
- Resource-based – including control of the sea bed; development of Fishery Management Plans and Schemes of Assistance; The effective development of the world class renewable energy resources around the islands;
 - Location-based – including support to agriculture; sustainable transport: effective transport links to maximise Island resources; mainland/ island ferry services and inter-islands ferry services being commissioned, funded, operated and controlled from the islands to meet island needs;
 - Governance-based – including potential changes to fiscal arrangements to allow the islands to benefit more directly from the exploitation of local resources; recognition of the status of islands in the new Scottish Constitutional Settlement (regardless of the result of the referendum) and within the European Union Governance Framework; public sector reform with continued development of the integrated public authority concept; clarification of the role of HIE and any adjustment required to promote greater integration; possibility of extension of the principle of promotion of local legislation to other island areas, or in support of specific developments.
 - Culture based – including continued support for the Outer Hebrides as the heartland of the Gaelic language and for the promotion of the Orcadian and Shetlandic dialects and recognition of the Nordic aspect of the culture of the Northern Isles; further promotion of the disproportionately strong contribution of Scotland's islands to the culture, language, history and natural resource of Scotland.
- 3.4 The first meeting of the Islands Area Ministerial Working Group took place on 29 August 2013. Further meetings took place on 29 October

2013 and 21 November 2013. The Group will meet six times in total, and is working towards developing a prospectus outlining opportunities for island communities in the context of the referendum.

- 3.5 The Scottish Government has committed to bring forward a bill for an Islands Act following the independence referendum.
- 3.6 The councils have also met with the UK government on 14/15 October 2013 and again on 29 November 2013. The three Islands Councils and the Secretary of State for Scotland have agreed to work towards a Concordat to take forward the Our Islands Our Future initiative. Discussions are covering issues such as the development and management of island resources including renewable energy, oil and gas, fisheries and the Crown Estate. It was also confirmed that the Scotland Office would host a dedicated islands' desk.
- 3.7 As a result of attending the conference, it is considered that direct involvement in the Our Islands campaign is unlikely to be appropriate for Argyll and Bute Council however it is noted that any changes as a result of the campaign may create inequalities between the three councils' islands and other Scottish islands outwith the campaign. For this reason it is considered that the Council should develop its own initiative in close consultation with our island communities. In addition the Council would look to meet with other Scottish island councils to identify common areas of interest which can then be taken to Scottish and UK Governments for their consideration and support.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Our Islands: Our Future campaign has the potential to change the powers and responsibilities for those islands within the Shetland, Orkneys and Western Isles. It would therefore be appropriate for the Council to maintain a watching brief on the initiative.
- 4.2 Some of the issues affecting the three councils will also apply to islands within Argyll and Bute but there may also be other issues that are applicable to our islands and it would be advantageous to identify the specific issues relating to our islands (in conjunction with neighbouring authorities which also have islands where appropriate). Once these issues have been identified they could be used as a basis for discussions with the Scottish and UK governments.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy The development of a position statement and associated positive policy and resource support for our islands fits with the objectives of the SOA, EDAP and Local Development Plan which seek to deliver sustainable island communities.
- 5.2 Financial None at this stage
- 5.3 Legal None at this stage

- 5.4 HR A staff resource will be required to support the short life working group in identifying the issues and taking forward the actions.
- 5.5 Equalities None at this stage
- 5.6 Risk To do nothing may leave our island communities at a disadvantage as they would sit outwith the 3 islands initiative and potentially any benefit that comes from the Our Islands: Our Future campaign
- 5.7 Customer Service None at this stage

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services

For further information contact: Audrey Martin, Development Projects and Renewables Manager

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL SLWG – OUR ISLANDS: OUR FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE 16 APRIL 2014

OUR ISLANDS: ISSUES

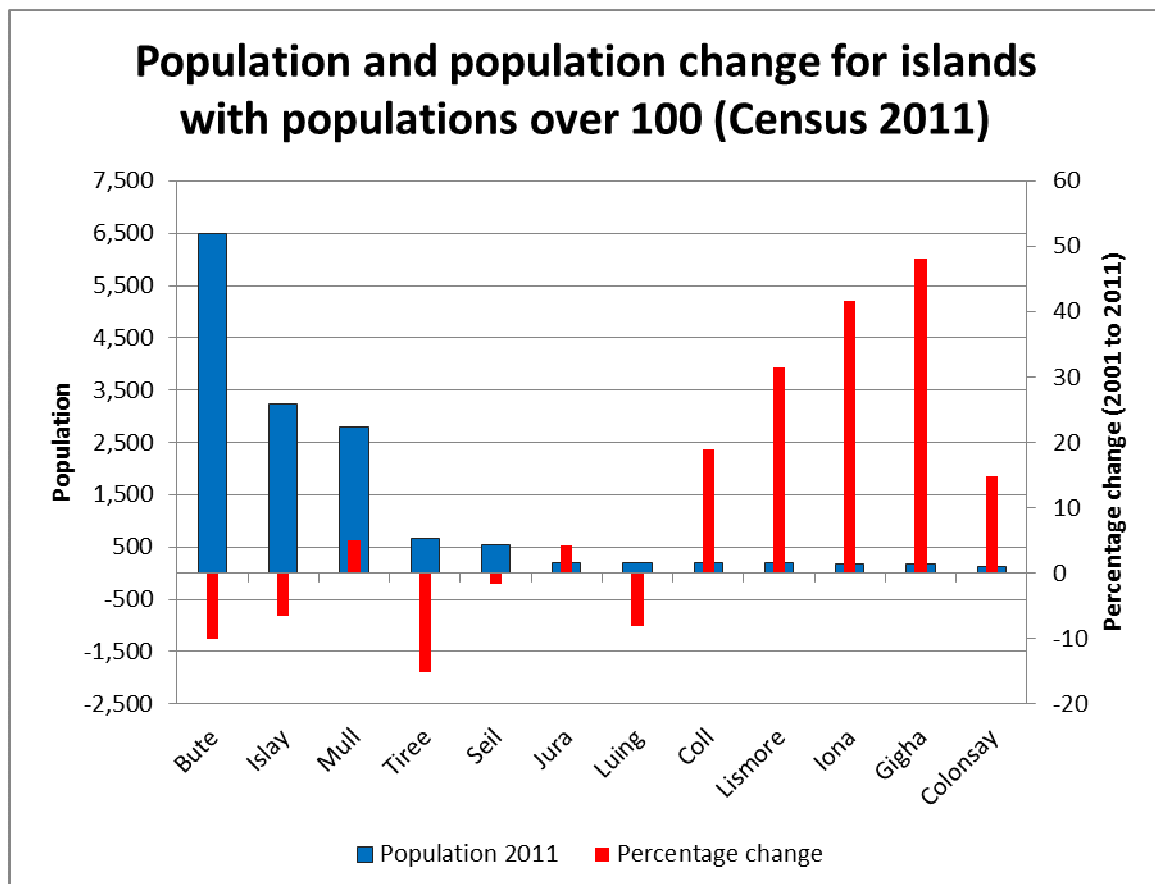
1.0 Background

- 1.1 In 2011, 17.1% of Argyll and Bute's total population (15,105 people) were usually resident on islands. This compares to a figure of 17.4% (15,889) in 2001. Argyll and Bute's island population fell by 5% over the period 2001 to 2011. Patterns of population change vary between and within islands.
- 1.2 Over the same period, Scotland's total island population increased by 4%. Western Isles' population increased by 4%, Highland's island populations increased by 8%, Orkney by 11% and Shetland by 5%. Within these areas there are also variations between islands.
- 1.3 According to the 2011 Census, there are 23 inhabited islands in Argyll and Bute. This is a net decrease of two islands since 2001 (see appendix 2).
- 1.4 In 2011, 17.1% of Argyll and Bute's total population were usually resident on islands. This compares to a figure of 17.4% in 2001. The 2001 Census enumerated 15,889 people as being usually resident on Argyll and Bute's islands. The 2011 Census recorded 15,105 people as being usually resident.
- 1.5 Although variations in population trends exist between islands, as a general rule, it is those islands within Argyll and Bute with populations in the hundreds that have experienced the largest rates of population growth (see table 1; Figure 1). An exception is Tiree, where the population has fallen by 15% over the period 2001 to 2011. While these islands show large population changes in percentage terms, the numbers of people involved may be small.
- 1.6 The two largest islands in Argyll and Bute have experienced population decline over the last ten years. Bute's population has decreased by 730 people (-10%). Islay's population has decreased by 229 people (-7%).
- 1.7 Mull, Argyll and Bute's third largest island by population, has shown an increase of 133 people (+5%).

Table 1: Percentage population change (2001 to 2011) for islands with populations over 100

| Council area and island | Usual residents | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| | 2001 | 2011 | Percentage change |
| Argyll & Bute | 15,889 | 15,105 | -5% |
| Tiree | 770 | 653 | -15% |
| Bute | 7,228 | 6,498 | -10% |
| Luing | 212 | 195 | -8% |
| Islay | 3,457 | 3,228 | -7% |
| Seil | 560 | 551 | -2% |
| Jura | 188 | 196 | 4% |
| Mull | 2,667 | 2,800 | 5% |
| Colonsay | 108 | 124 | 15% |
| Coll | 164 | 195 | 19% |
| Lismore | 146 | 192 | 32% |
| Iona | 125 | 177 | 42% |
| Gigha | 110 | 163 | 48% |

Figure 1:



1.8 The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) identifies that there are a number of threats to the future success of the area. Whilst there are a range of social and community challenges by far the most significant challenge

facing the area relates to the economy and population. Unless these specific issues are addressed the scope and capacity to address some of the other challenges facing Argyll and Bute will be greatly reduced.

- 1.9 There is a clear choice between managing decline and committing to creating a virtuous circle based around stabilisation and growth of the economy and population leading to improved social and community factors. The overall objective of the SOA for the 10 years to 2023 is **“Argyll and Bute’s economic success is built on a growing population”**. This outcome is entirely supportive of the 6 national policy priorities set out in the national guidance on community planning and will also see Argyll and Bute contribute to the national outcomes for Scotland.
- 1.10 The challenges facing Argyll and Bute are nowhere more evident than on our islands and it is for this reason that the Council has been giving consideration to the 3 Islands Council Initiative - Our Islands Our Future campaign. Following consideration of the matter the Council has agreed to develop its own islands initiative including a position statement for our islands which outlines the key areas for support, including any increased resources and powers from the Scottish Government and UK Government.

2.0 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING OUR ISLANDS

- 2.1 An initial list of some of the potential key challenges and issues facing our islands has been laid out below to allow the short life working group to consider and add to and amend as necessary:
- Sustainable Transport – effective and integrates road, ferry and air transportation links. PSO’s , travel/ferry costs, RET, timetabling, integration of transport services both on and off the islands to maximise access to and from the islands as well as on the islands – green transport options, commissioned, funded, operated and controlled from the islands to meet island needs
 - Transportation Infrastructure – infrastructure to support sustainable transportation links as well as investment in on island infrastructure including roads, ports and harbours.
 - Broadband, mobile phone coverage and Grid including issues around resilience. Need to consider level of funding for these and the influence of projects coming forward such as the Next Generation Broadband Project, Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP).
 - Service provision – public utilities such as water and sewage, public services such as refuse collection and island charges. Need to examine the investment plans, resources allocated and alignment with development plans.
 - Local responsibility for local resources– including control of the sea bed and any income from the seabed including future renewable developments; MOU with CE and funds such as the Coastal Community Funds may assist in some way towards offsetting this matter but only partially given limited monies involved.

- Economic activities - support to agriculture, crofting, fisheries, food and drink, businesses, tourism, skills, training, education, see greater benefit from key industries such as whiskey going back into our islands.
- Governance issues – including potential changes to fiscal arrangements to allow the islands to benefit more directly from the exploitation of local resources; recognition of the status of islands in the new Scottish Constitutional Settlement (regardless of the result of the referendum) and within the European Union Governance Framework; public sector reform with continued development of the integrated public authority concept; clarification of the role of HIE and any adjustment required to promote greater integration; possibility of extension of the principle of promotion of local legislation to other island areas, or in support of specific developments.
- Culture based – including continued support for the Gaelic language and for the promotion of the strong contribution of our islands to the culture, language, history and natural resource of Scotland.

3.0 WHO ARE THE KEY PARTNERS

- 3.1 Identify other local authorities with islands and who experience similar issues - Some of the issues affecting the three islands councils will also apply to islands within Argyll and Bute but there may also be other issues that are applicable to our islands and it would be advantageous to identify the specific issues relating to our islands (in conjunction with neighbouring authorities which also have islands where appropriate). Once these issues have been identified they could be used as a basis for discussions with the Scottish and UK governments.
- 3.2 Organisation such Scottish Islands Federation (SIF), community planning partners (NHS, HIE) may wish to work with us and may be able to assist in identifying some of the key issues affecting our islands.
- 3.3 Scottish Government, UK Government and European Partners (SIF), and Island Development Trusts are also key partners.

4.0 BASELINE INFORMATION AND CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Information gathered from consultations such as the Ferries Review, Air Services Review, SOA development, including community planning workshops and surveys and information available from HIE and other key organisations, should provide a good baseline to identify the key issues. These should be reviewed by the short life working group prior to any decision being taken in regard to any further consultations that could be done directly with our island communities. This would help to inform the identification of the key issues affecting our islands and from their a plan can be developed covering actions, timetable and resources.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy The development of a position statement and associated positive policy and resource support for our islands fits with the objectives of the SOA, EDAP and Local Development Plan which seek to deliver sustainable island communities.
- 5.2 Financial None at this stage
- 5.3 Legal None at this stage
- 5.4 HR A staff resource will be required to support the short life working group in identifying the issues and taking forward the actions.
- 5.5 Equalities None at this stage
- 5.6 Risk To do nothing may leave our island communities at a disadvantage as they would sit outwith the 3 islands initiative and potentially any benefit that comes from the Our Islands: Our Future campaign
- 5.7 Customer Service None at this stage

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services

For further information contact: Audrey Martin, Development Projects and Renewables Manager

This page is intentionally left blank