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COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

31 January 2007

A meeting of the **CPP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **BOARD ROOM, AROS, HOSPITAL ROAD, LOCHGILPHEAD** on **WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2007** at **10:30 AM**.

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME/APOLOGIES**
- 2. MINUTES**
Community Planning Management Committee 6 December 2006 (Pages 1 - 8)
- 3. MATTERS ARISING**
 - (a) Local Economic Forums - Report back regarding Construction, one of the key sectors for growth (Aileen Edwards, David Dowie and Alan Milstead)
 - (b) Initiative at the Edge - Broadband situation (Alan Milstead/Sue Gledhill)
- 4. THE COMMUNITY PLAN 2007 - 2012**
 - (a) Feedback from Partnership Day held at 23 January 2007 (Eileen Wilson)
 - (b) CPP Biennial Conference, June 2007 - Update on preparations (Eileen Wilson)
- 5. LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2007 - 2010**
Report and Executive Summary (Nicola Debnam/Blair Fletcher) (Pages 9 - 14)
- 6. ARGYLL AND BUTE YOUTH STRATEGY**
10 minute Powerpoint Presentation (Martin Turnbull)
- 7. DTI CONSULTATION ON POST OFFICE NETWORK**
(Brian Barker) (Pages 15 - 54)
- 8. COMMUNITY PLANNING ISSUES**
 - (a) Update on CPP Priorities
 - (i) Health and Wellbeing Group (Elaine Garman) (Pages 55 – 56)
 - (ii) Argyll and the Islands Economic Forum (Alan Milstead/Sue Gledhill)
 - (iii) Dunbartonshire Economic Forum (Aileen Edwards)
 - (iv) Strategic Housing and Communities Forum (Malcolm MacFadyen) (Pages 57 - 62)
 - (b) Bute and Cowal Local Community Planning Pilot - Report on Seminar held on 1 December 2006 (Pages 63 - 66)

(c) Initiative at the Edge

- Isle of Jura report (Pages 67 – 72)
- Isle of Coll report (Pages 73 - 78)

9. AOCB

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL 2007 - DISCUSS VENUE

MINUTES of MEETING of CPP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held in the SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE OFFICES, KILMORY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, LOCHGILPHEAD on WEDNESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2006

Present: Andrew Campbell, Scottish Natural Heritage (Chair)
 Eileen Wilson, Argyll and Bute Community Planning Manager
 Aileen Edwards, Scottish Enterprise
 Alan Milstead, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
 Brian Barker, Argyll and Bute Council
 David Dowie, Communities Scotland
 Elaine Garman, NHS Highland
 Geoff Calvert, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
 David Proctor, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
 Gordon Anderson, Strathclyde Police
 Hugh Donaldson, Initiative at the Edge
 James McLellan, Argyll and Bute Council
 Julian Hankinson, Association of Argyll and Bute Community Councils
 Marlene Baillie, Strathclyde Police
 Muriel Kupris, Argyll and Bute Council

In Attendance: Charles Reppke, Head of Democratic Services and Governance, Argyll and Bute Council
 Nick Allan, Corporate Assets Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
 Eddy Graham, IBP Strategy and Research

Apologies: Raymond Park, Strathclyde Police (Vice-Chair)
 Jane Fowler, Argyll and Bute Council
 Donald MacVicar, Argyll and Bute Council
 Mike Firth, Scottish Water
 John Ironside, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
 Bill Dundas, SEERAD
 Pat Logan, Argyll and Bute Volunteer Centre
 Peter Minshall, Argyll CVS
 Gemma Sim, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
 Ken Abernethy, Highlands and Islands Enterprise

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Andrew Campbell welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Gordon Anderson, Local Authority Liaison Officer, Strathclyde Police, who was attending his first meeting of the management committee.

Andrew also advised that Peter Minshall was to rest from work following a recent road traffic accident and would not be attending meetings for the rest of the year. The management committee joined Andrew in wishing Peter a speedy recovery.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 4th October 2006 were accepted as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(a) PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM – TRANSFORMING PUBLIC SERVICES (SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE)

James McLellan referred to the last paragraph under item 7 on page 4 of the previous minutes and asked that the management committee confirm to the Scottish Executive that they are happy to consider the local approach to public sector reform.

Action note: Eileen Wilson to confirm to Scottish Executive

(b) CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Reference item 10(d) on page 6 of the previous minutes when it was agreed, following re-focussing of the Housing and Communities Theme Group, to retain a focus on the core subjects of Culture and Environment, Eileen Wilson reported that she and Keith Miller were to frame up with other groups suggesting a link, looking to arching groups.

Action note: Eileen Wilson and Keith Miller

4. PARTNERSHIP CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT – Introducing the Asset Procurement ‘Hub’ Initiative in Scotland

Nick Allan, Corporate Assets Manager, Argyll and Bute Council, gave a presentation on the proposed introduction by the Scottish Executive of the Asset Procurement ‘Hub’ initiative in Scotland which would be a procurement and property management vehicle for the public sector and its community partners.

Nick gave the background to the hub initiative, the setting up of a Joint Premises Board and explained the proposal for involving organisations. There would be choices in the introduction of the hub – would not be mandatory. He explained the delivery process, the reasons for having a hub and that it would assist in the promotion of shared services and efficient government. It would work by the creation of a national joint venture company, with confirmation of hub areas and the creation of hub companies, provide governance and operating frameworks, with processes and enabling funding arrangements, national strategic planning and programme management. It was planned to set up the hubs in the summer of 2007 and that the hubs were likely to be made up of NHS and local authorities across Scotland.

The hub would work with different levels of engagement, with sustainable investment across each hub area, providing urban regeneration within Councils and an enhanced role for Community Planning networks.

Consideration would be given to setting up a working group comprising the local authority and the local community planning partnership and to encourage collaborative working with communities, the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership will be asked to join.

Nick answered questions put to him about the size of hub areas and the local authorities which were signing up. There would initially be 5 areas, but possibly 4 or 6.

It was agreed that Nick would look at the proposals for the North East Scotland hub area and report back to the management committee at their meeting on 18th April 2007.

Nick has agreed to investigate the establishment of a group to look at asset management themes and Scottish Executive initiatives in relation to asset management planning. Nick will identify key individuals within the CPP and CHP to participate within this group. As part of this ongoing process Nick has been asked to look at other examples from across the country.

Action note: Nick Allan to report back to the Management Committee meeting on 18th April 2007

5. THE COMMUNITY PLAN 2007 – 2012

The management committee considered a paper which had previously been circulated proposing that the Community Planning Partnership Management Committee agree to the facilitation of a planning day where all the CPP partners can come together to begin the design process for the New Community Plan. The objective would be to discuss and agree key themes, format and content and to identify successes. Members would also be nominated for a writers sub-group to meet at intervals leading up to publication in June 2007 to ensure commitment to the production of a high quality plan.

It was agreed that the Community Plan Design Planning Day be held in Lochgilphead on Tuesday, 23rd January 2007 between the hours of 10.00 am and 4.00 pm.

A smaller writing group will then take on the writing of the plan based on the direction given during the planning day.

Action note: All to note date of Community Plan Design Planning Day – 23rd January 2007 from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm

6. CITIZENS' PANEL

The management committee noted the contents of a document which had previously been circulated from Eddy Graham of IBP Strategy and Research, setting out the findings of the 11th Survey of the Argyll and Bute Citizens' Panel, the fieldwork for which was conducted during October 2006.

Eddy gave a presentation on the findings of the survey, based on 696 responses, on Neighbourhood Issues, DriveSafe road safety, Policing issues, Biodiversity and Electoral change.

The management committee discussed various questions put to Eddy on the survey information provided. It was agreed that feedback on surveys undertaken would be provided to the Citizens' Panel and that a pack should be issued to the Panel advising the reasons for choosing the questions posed.

It was agreed that Andy McKay-Hubbard would look at the anti-social behaviour outcome agreement.

Andrew Campbell thanked Eddy Graham for his attendance and conveyed the appreciation of the Partners of such a survey.

Action note: Andy McKay-Hubbard to look at the Anti-Social Behaviour Outcome Agreement

7. COMMUNITY REGENERATION OUTCOME AGREEMENT

(a) Annual Report

Muriel Kupris submitted a report, copies having previously been circulated, on the first annual report in regard to progress made under the Community Regeneration Fund through the Regeneration Outcome Agreement for Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership and which received Ministerial approval in October 2006.

Muriel gave a strategic overview advising that the Regeneration Outcome Agreements for Argyll and Bute remained geographically targeted in 2005/06 at the most deprived 15% of data zones within Argyll and Bute.

- Ardenslate, West Milton and the Glebe, Dunoon
- Ballochgoy on Bute
- Dalintober/Millknowe. Campbeltown
- Kirkmicharl/Craigendoran, Helensburgh

The ROA remains focused in each area under the Partnership's four strategic regeneration objectives –

Improve opportunities for learning, employment and skills development;
Promote Health and Wellbeing;
Sustain and develop communities, culture and environment;
Encourage community development and capacity building

and twelve associated regeneration outcomes. The Partnership has retained the local partnership arrangement of Area Development Groups (ADGs) within each ROA area.

The area where the Partnership has struggled most to engage partners at both a local and strategic level has been around the theme of 'Getting People Back to Work'. This strategic priority is dealt with by two economic forums within Argyll and Bute and while some work has been undertaken in strengthening the links at a local level between the ROA and the strategic priorities of Getting People Back to Work more remains to be done during 2006/07.

The management committee discussed focusing on training and employment, the need for resources in smaller areas and for focusing on individuals. It was suggested that the Not in Education or Employment Training (NEET) initiative should be used through regeneration outcome.

The management committee noted the report.

For a copy of the Annual Report please contact Muriel Kupris, Community Resources Manager muriel.kupris@argyll-bute.gov.uk

(b) Stocktake Feedback

Muriel Kupris provided feedback on the mid-year stock-take meeting with Communities Scotland. Targets had reasonably been met. There were three

Consultancies on the Regeneration Outcome Agreement with local authorities taking the burden. Although one Datazone had been added no additional funding had been forthcoming. Muriel is waiting to hear back.

The report was welcomed by the management committee.

Action note: Eileen Wilson to write to Communities Scotland

8. CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE

The management committee noted report dated 15th November 2006, which had previously been circulated, on Argyll and Bute Council's proposed introduction of a Customer Contact Centre. The Council had gone out to tender for a partner to deliver the Contact Centre and Steria Consultants were appointed to deliver the business case and contact centre.

Charles Reppke explained the background to this being a vital element of the Council's best value improvement and development plan and Corporate Plan and would put the Council in a position to meet and thereafter continue to meet its electronic services delivery targets over the next 12 to 18 months. It would also ensure that business improvement and process change is given a clear focus which should allow the release over a number of years of efficiency savings. Most importantly of all customer contact and customer service will be improved, performance management of customer contact will become clearly auditable and this will allow the Council to set and monitor targets for service delivery within the areas developed for the Contact Centre.

The proposed timetable for the initial six services set out in the report was noted.

The Council were keen to share processes with other Councils and with Partners and it was felt that partners should be invited to future meetings as the Council were keen that partners should see and share the infrastructure.

Discussion took place regarding various possibilities for involvement, including the Passport Service. Positive about delivery of services to remote areas with questions asked about network capacity, systems, national procurement model and creating economies of scale. Concerns were expressed as to how the elderly would cope but it was confirmed that frontline staff would still be available for those who preferred person to person contact.

The management committee recommended the partnership's involvement and would report back to the Community Planning Partnership.

Andrew Campbell thanked Charles Reppke for the information provided and it was agreed that Charles would report back to the management committee to keep them updated.

Website - www.improvementservice.gov.uk

Action note: (a) Report to Community Planning Partnership meeting on 2nd March 2007
(b) Charles Reppke to report back with updates to Management Committee

9. ENGAGING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

There had previously been circulated letter dated 22nd November 2006 from the Scottish Executive in regard to engaging children and young people in Community Planning, advising that a new Community Planning Advice Note, developed by the Community Planning Team with help and advice from a wide range of stakeholders, was available.

The advice note explores the underlying reasons for and principles of effective engagement rather than setting out rigid parameters and includes illustrations of practice, information on various toolkits and contacts for relevant organisations. It also includes a framework for thinking through how engagement is planned at a CPP level, based on the National Standards for Community Engagement, which CPPs may find useful in evaluating overall progress.

Community Learning and Regeneration are currently planning an event in February 2007 to look at the future of the Argyll and Bute Youth Forum.

Eileen to contact the Scottish Executive with details of successful engagement with children and young people.

Eileen Wilson will report back to the management committee in April 2007.

Electronic copies of the Community Planning Advice Note are available in the document library of the Scottish Executive Community Planning website at <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/community-planning/> alongside related material including further links and, in due course, good practice examples.

Action Note: Eileen Wilson to contact Scottish Executive and report back to Management Committee on 18 April 2007

10. BIG LOTTERY FUND 'HUB'

Reference minutes of meeting of the management committee held on 4th October 2006, Argyll and Bute Council's Corporate Funding Officer produced a report, copies having previously been circulated, updating the management committee on progress and recommending that the management committee consider the proposal by the Big Lottery Fund that each local authority's external funding officer help facilitate a Local Partnership Hub which would primarily be a communication group for the BLF to interact with.

The aim of the Argyll and Bute Funding Hub would be to help develop or maintain sustainable projects in the area by maximising the amount of funding and support to these projects through improved quality of bids and closer links with local priorities.

The meeting agreed that a panel, drawn from the Community Planning Management Committee, would meet on the afternoons of the Management Committee meetings to receive presentations on individual bids for a detailed assessment.

Action note: Admin to (1) note to include the afternoon when arranging venue for future Management Committee meetings, and (2) supply list of future meetings to Arlene Cullum

11. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CPP BIENNIAL CONFERENCE – JUNE 2007

The management committee considered report by Eileen Wilson, copies having previously been circulated, with proposals for the date and venue as well as proposed themes for the Community Planning Biennial Conference 2007.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the conference be held on Friday, 15th June 2007 within The Pavilion, Rothesay, Isle of Bute.

It was agreed that Eileen Wilson would nominate a small working group to meet in January 2007 to consider the suggested key themes for the day and to -

- Decide what the day will be called
- Finalise the delegate list, including target groups
- Agree and invite keynote speaker
- Finalise the programme
- Agree structure, size and focus of workshops
- Agree and invite external facilitators (if decided)

A report will be submitted to the Management Committee on 7th February 2007.

Action note: Eileen Wilson to nominate Working Group and arrange meeting in January 2007

12. COMMUNITY PLANNING ISSUES – UPDATE ON CPP PRIORITIES

- (a) **Health and Wellbeing Group:** Elaine Garman updated the management committee on the activities of the Health and Wellbeing Group, copy report having previously been circulated.

The management committee noted the report and the agreements sought by the Health and Wellbeing Group. Partners also noted the request for assistance in identifying other sources of funding that could be considered as appropriate to be used for health improvement activity.

Elaine advised that the CHP would hold a planning day mid-December.

It was agreed to endorse the report and seek financial input from Partners.

Agreed to write to CHP to request that Fiona Ritchie attend the next meeting of the Management Committee.

Action note: Eileen Wilson to write to CHP

12. (b) **Argyll and the Islands Local Economic Forum:** (See next item)

- (c) **Dunbartonshire Economic Forum:** Aileen Edwards provided an update on the activities of the Dunbartonshire Economic Forum. The new strategy was launched in September 2006. The strategy focuses on three key sectors for growth. These are Construction, Tourism and Life sciences /Healthcare. The Forum's Construction Alliance Group is holding a workshop on the 13th December to bring agencies together to look at how greater economic impacts from construction can be created for the area's businesses and its residents. A survey has also been undertaken on Tourism issues which has raised issues around transport. It is intended to advertise

in the press to broaden the LEF Board membership.

Action note: Aileen Edwards, David Dowie and Alan Milstead to report back regarding Construction to the meeting in February 2007

(d) **Housing and Communities Group:** It was noted that the newly formed Argyll and Bute Housing and Communities Forum would meet on 8th December 2006 and that an update would be brought to the next meeting of the management committee.

(e) **Initiative at the Edge:**

Hugh Donaldson gave updates from the three islands of Colonsay, Coll and Jura, copies having previously been circulated. It was noted that, in September, Colonsay had ended its period under designation and would move on to further work with the assistance of the Community Land Unit from 1st December. The island of Coll had lost the services of Paula Darnton-Smith, LDO, in June and a new LDO had recently been appointed.

Hugh outlined problems being experienced with Broadband and Alan Milstead, AIE undertook to look into this.

It was welcomed that Scottish Water are to supply Coll.

The pro forma reports from the 3 islands of Colonsay, Coll and Jura were noted.

Action note: Alan Milstead to report back to the next meeting on the Broadband situation

13. FIX DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The management committee considered the proposed dates for future management committee meetings and after discussion agreed the following dates for future meetings – (10:30 – 13:00 hours) - venue to be confirmed as it was unlikely that SNH offices would be available during the first half of 2007.

Wednesday	7 February 2007
Wednesday	18 April 2007
Wednesday	13 June 2007
Wednesday	8 August 2007
Wednesday	3 October 2007
Wednesday	28 November 2007

14. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

(a) **SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS CONSULTATION**

Eileen Wilson advised the meeting of the Scottish Executive consultation on European Structural Funds and invited partners to view the Scottish Executive website for details of the implications in regard to the element of funding to partners - www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/10/20155513.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, 7 February 2007.

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL
**COMMUNITY PLANNING
PARTNERSHIP
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
DATE: 7th February 2007

**DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY FOR ARGYLL
AND BUTE – CONSULTATIVE DRAFT**

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has had a key role in developing this new local transport strategy and those partners who have engaged with us have been instrumental throughout the process. We are pleased to present the new strategy in consultative draft form and look forward to receiving any comments the CPP may have.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee note the production of the draft Local Transport Strategy (LTS), the details of the forthcoming consultation process and the timetable for approval.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 Following guidance from the Scottish Executive, the involvement of the CPP was sought in the development of a new LTS for Argyll and Bute. Many of the CPP partners engaged in the process and took part in a series of workshops in late 2005. These workshops gathered the key source material for developing the new LTS and allowed a network of partners to be established.
- 3.2 Throughout the development of the strategy, both the CPP Management Committee and the network of partners were kept up to date with progress. The presentation of this draft document to the CPP brings the process full circle, with a view to the Partnership taking ownership of the final publication.
- 3.3. Over the course of the next few months a wide range of stakeholders will be consulted on the new strategy. This is detailed below:

Date	Action
19/01/07	Publish draft strategy on Council website, including online comments form.
22/01/07	Send draft strategy to CPP network of partners and other stakeholders.
23/01/07 – 06/03/07	Public consultation roadshow throughout the area (see end of this paper for details).
06/02/07	Update CPP Management Committee on draft strategy and process for approval.
02/03/07	Present strategy to CPP Full Partnership meeting and seek endorsement.
06 & 07/03/07	Present strategy to Council Area Committees.
22/03/07	Present strategy to Council Strategic Policy Committee.
25/04/07	Seek final ratification of strategy at full Council meeting.

- 3.4. Members of the CPP are encouraged to attend their local roadshow event to give their views, or to download the draft strategy from the Council website and complete the online comments form.

For further information - please contact Nicola Debnam
Transportation & Infrastructure
01546 604120
22nd January 2006

Roadshow events are as follows:

Mull – 23/01/07, Craignure Village Hall, 11.30am - 6.30pm

Oban – 30/01/07, Corran Halls, 11.30am - 6.30pm

Helensburgh – 31/01/07, Victoria Halls, 11.30am - 6.30pm

Bute – 01/02/07, Rothesay Pavilion, 12.30pm - 6.30pm

Campbeltown – 14/02/07, Victoria Hall, 11.30am - 6.30pm

Dunoon – 15/02/07, Queens Hall, 11.30 - 6.30pm

Lochgilphead – 20/02/07, Community Centre, 11.30am - 6.30pm

Islay – 06/03/07, Bowmore Hall, 11.30am - 6.30pm

LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Moving Forward sets out plans and policies for transport in Argyll and Bute over the next three years.

The strategy has been developed in the context of national and regional transport policy, as reflected in the new National Transport Strategy and Regional Transport Strategies.

The transport strategy has been broken down into four chapters covering; **Where we are now**, **What we want to achieve**, **The action we will take** and finally **How we will measure our progress**.

Where we are now

- Most trips within our area take well over 1 hour and any trips outwith the area to major centres such as Glasgow or Edinburgh, on the whole, take over 2 hours. For island residents these journeys take significantly longer.
- The condition of our road network is currently well below the Scottish average, with a significant backlog of essential works. Much of the road network is no longer fit for purpose and weak roads and bridges force weight restrictions to be applied impacting on the local economy.



Glendaruel Bridge, west Cowal

- Sustaining viable public transport services is difficult in our remote and sparsely populated area. Many services operate at a low frequency, thus the task of integrating services is rarely easy.
- There is a mix of rail, bus, ferry and air services in Argyll and Bute which go some way to reduce the remoteness of the area, however many of these services are costly to the passenger.
- In many of our towns and villages a lack of “safe” walking and cycling links reduce the opportunities to take part in active travel.
- Safety is a major issue in Argyll and Bute where people have to travel further than elsewhere in the country to access basic services. The accident rate per head of population is amongst the highest in Scotland.
- Traffic volumes in Argyll and Bute are relatively low and in some locations road traffic is actually decreasing.

These challenges have set the framework for the strategy in identifying the things we need to do make transport better for everyone in the area.

What we want to achieve

Working with our partners we have developed a vision for transport in the area along with a number of objectives we want to achieve.

Our vision is to enable a vibrant Argyll and Bute and our objectives are to:

- Encourage a growing and sustainable economy in Argyll and Bute.
- Enhance people's transport experience.
- Manage the effect of transport on Argyll and Bute's rich natural environment.
- Support social inclusion, especially for our remote and island communities.
- Improve journey safety and personal security for everyone in Argyll and Bute.

In order to achieve these objectives, a variety of options are available to us. It is expected that no single option can achieve the objective and that a balanced package of measures will be required.

The action we will take

We have developed an action plan of policies and plans under the following option themes:

Infrastructure

- Implement programmed approach to road improvements.
- Tackle road maintenance backlog.
- Traffic management.

- Ensure all new development supports this strategy.
- Mitigate the effects of climate change on the transport network.



A816 Carnassarie

Passenger transport

- Enhance existing routes.
- Improve travel information.
- Improve booking facilities.
- Encourage integrated ticketing.
- Promote timetable and service integration.
- Improve parking at transport interchanges.
- Support air services.

- Review fare costs.
- Promote demand responsive services.
- Improve interchange facilities.
- Continue Community Transport provision.
- Develop Accessibility Planning.



Provision of real time information on local and long distance bus services

Freight Transport

- Develop a freight strategy.
- Encourage modal shift.
- Develop a strategic freight network.
- Identify opportunities for developing freight interchanges.
- Promote improvements to the national strategic transport network within and outwith the area.

Sea Transport

- Improve marine infrastructure / vessels.
- Review transport options for our islands.
- Review ferry network options.
- Improve parking at transport interchanges.
- Review of fare costs.
- Develop improved interchange facilities.

Active Travel

- Develop Travel Plans.
- Promote provision of necessary infrastructure.
- Promote benefits of active travel in terms of health / environmental gain.

Safety

- Improve driver behaviour.
- Review speed limits.
- Support measures to reduce vehicle speed in communities.

How we will measure our progress

We need to be able to judge how effectively the strategy is working, and whether we are achieving our objectives and those of the country as a whole. The annual update to the Action Plan will indicate what we have achieved and where we need to make greater efforts.

The strategy may need to be adjusted to reflect changing circumstances and we have developed a set of indicators that should let us know when our policies and actions need to be altered. This information will be gathered to inform the preparation of the next local transport strategy.

dti

THE POST OFFICE NETWORK

A consultation
document

DECEMBER 2006

Why the DTI is conducting this consultation

Post offices play an important social and economic role in the communities they serve. With new technology, changing lifestyles and a wider choice of accessing services, people are visiting post offices less. The network's losses have risen to almost £4 million a week this year and it is unsustainable in its present form. But it remains the Government's priority to maintain a national post office network with national coverage.

To achieve this, a new policy and financial framework is now needed and the Government is seeking views on its future proposals.

Issued	14 December 2006
Respond by	8 March 2007
Enquiries to Address	Post Office Network Consultation, Department of Trade and Industry, Response Centre, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET
Email	dti.enquiries@dti.gsi.gov.uk

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Introduction

Post offices provide a key service in our villages, towns and cities. A national network is essential and it has a social value as well as an economic role.

This is why we have invested over £2 billion since 1999 to support it. That support will continue. We are prepared to make substantial further funding available over the next five years to keep the network national and to help the company make the necessary changes to transform the network and put it on a stable footing for the future.

Post offices face a long-term challenge. From online services, e-mail, phone and Internet banking, direct debit, text messaging – people are increasingly choosing to live their lives in different ways. Some 4 million fewer people are using their post office each week than two years ago. The network lost £2 million every single week last year, rising to £4 million this year. That can't go on.

Those who run these businesses know that better than anyone. That is why the National Federation of Subpostmasters and the all-party Trade and Industry Select Committee have recognised that the current size of the network of over 14,000 offices as 'unsustainable'.

To create a sustainable network, we want to enable Post Office Ltd to modernise, to restore Crown offices to profitability, to invest in new product offerings and to look at innovative ways to deliver the services that people need. It will mean changes to the size of the network, but we will work with and protect vulnerable communities making sure that the right services are in the right place. For example where a subpostmaster provides 'Outreach' services to nearby small communities.

A national network on a strong, stable footing to meet the challenges of today. That is what the country needs. That is what our proposals aim to deliver.

Summary of the Government's proposals for the Post Office network

- We intend to make substantial further funding available over the five years to 2011. This will support the necessary restructuring and modernisation of the network to put it on a more stable footing and provide ongoing support for the social network up to current levels. There will be a need for an ongoing subsidy of the social network beyond 2011.
- We propose to introduce new access criteria for the national Post Office network which includes criteria to protect vulnerable consumers in deprived urban areas and rural and remote areas.
 - *Nationally*, 99% within 3 miles and 90% of the population to be within 1 mile;
 - In *deprived urban areas*¹, 99% of the population to be within 1 mile;
 - In *urban areas*, 95% of the population to be within 1 mile;
 - In *rural areas*, 95% of the total rural population within 3 miles.
 - In remote areas, 95% of the population in postcode districts² within 6 miles.
 - Across the country as a whole there cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach to access criteria. In applying them, Post Office Ltd will take account of local conditions such as rivers, mountains, valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands.
- The proposed new access criteria are in recognition of the important social role that post offices play in communities across the country.
- A national network is necessary to ensure that people have access to cash and benefits especially in remote areas.

1 deprived urban communities are those in the 10% most deprived super output areas as identified by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation

2 a postcode district is the first part of the postcode e.g. SL9. There are 2,795 nationwide of which 38 do not currently meet this criterion. These 38 will continue to be exempt but we will not allow any further postcode districts to be exempt.

- The current Post Office card account (POca) contract ends in March 2010. The Government has considered and decided that it will continue with a new account after 2010. This will be available nationally and customers will be eligible for the account on the same basis as they are now.
- We recognise the important social and economic role of post offices and we are committed to maintaining a national network but we also recognise that some restructuring will be necessary to put it on a firmer, more sustainable footing.
- We will provide support for a restructuring of the network with up to 2500 closures within that framework which will maintain a national network. Subpostmasters leaving the network under the restructuring programme will be compensated. We expect that Post Office Ltd will implement this process over an 18 month period from summer 2007, giving priority to protecting vulnerable communities in villages, towns and cities.
- We also intend to provide support for Post Office Ltd to open new Outreach locations to provide access to services for small remote communities by building on the success of the pilot trials including mobile post offices and post offices hosted in other locations such as village halls, community centres or pubs.
- We will provide support to enable Post Office Ltd to expand into new areas of business including the development of its new financial services products, such as savings and insurance, and provide finance to restructure and modernise and restore the network of Crown post offices to profitability transforming them into flagships of the Post Office brand alongside a number of closures and continued franchising through link-ups with experienced retailers.
- Post Office Ltd plan to develop new market and business opportunities for the network among Internet companies and other mail operators. For example, a key area of opportunity currently being trialled is to provide customers with the ability to pick up parcels they have ordered through mail order companies or via Internet services from post office counters. The company is also planning a rapid roll-out of up to 4,000 free to use ATMs across the network.
- For the longer term beyond 2011, we propose to investigate what role Local Authorities in England and the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland might play in influencing how the postal services are best delivered in the future.

How to Respond

The Department of Trade and Industry invites views on any aspect raised in this document and, in particular, where views have been specifically requested.

This consultation opened on 14 December 2006. The last date for responses is 8 March 2007.

When responding please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled. Written responses can be submitted by letter, fax or (preferably) e-mail to:

Postal Office Network Consultation
Department of Trade and Industry
Response Centre
Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
Fax: 00 44 (0) 20 7215 5329
E-mail: dti.enquiries@dti.gsi.gov.uk

A copy of the consultation response form is enclosed at Annex B. The Department will also be able to arrange for hard copies, or other languages or copies in Braille to be provided if necessary. Further copies of the electronic consultation document and the response form can be obtained from the DTI website – <http://www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/index.html>

A list of those organisations and individuals consulted is at Annex C. We would welcome suggestions for others who you think may wish to be involved in this consultation process.

Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If you want other information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Complaints

If you have any comments or complaints about the way this consultation has been conducted, these should be sent to:

Mary Smeeth
Consultation Co-ordinator
Department of Trade and Industry
Bay 4110
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
E-mail Mary.Smeeth@dti.gsi.gov.uk
Tel 00 44 (0) 20 7215 2146

See Annex A for the Consultation Code of Practice

Additional copies

You may make copies of this document without seeking permission.

Queries

Queries on the issues raised in this consultation should be addressed to the DTI Response Centre at the contact details above.

[If you foresee any unintended consequences or other implications of our proposals please let us know what you believe these may be.]

Section 1:

A National Network

The Post Office network plays an important social and economic role in the communities it serves. The Government has made substantial investment of over £2 billion in the network since 1999 and it will continue to maintain a national post office network.

- 1.1 From a peak of some 25,000 offices in the mid-1960s, the network began to decline in size as early as 1970 and has continued to do so since then with some 6,000 ad hoc closures having taken place by 1997. Until the first restructuring of the network on a managed basis under the Urban Reinvention programme between 2002 and 2005 and the introduction of a £150 million annual subsidy for the rural network in 2003 there was no policy or support to help the network adapt to wider changes in society.
- 1.2 Since 1999, the Government has made a very substantial investment in the Post Office network of more than £2 billion to help it adapt to the changing needs of customers and to the marketplace in which it operates. This included £500 million investment in the Horizon project to bring modern computer systems into every post office in the country for the first time – enabling Post Office Ltd to launch a range of new products and to open its counters to potentially over 20 million bank customers. It also includes the funding of £150 million a year, £750 million in total, to support the rural network for five years from 2003 to 2008.
- 1.3 A key element of this approach has been Government’s recognition of the important social and economic role post offices play in the communities they serve and particularly among the more vulnerable customer groups who rely on them as a lifeline. Because of the depth of its geographic reach, the Post Office network is uniquely placed to provide key services including access to cash and benefits, bill payment facilities as well as to postal services in remote areas.

- 1.4 Maintaining a national network with national coverage remains our priority and we therefore want to enable Post Office Ltd to modernise and refresh the network to tackle the challenges of the future, so that the network remains well used.

Section 2:

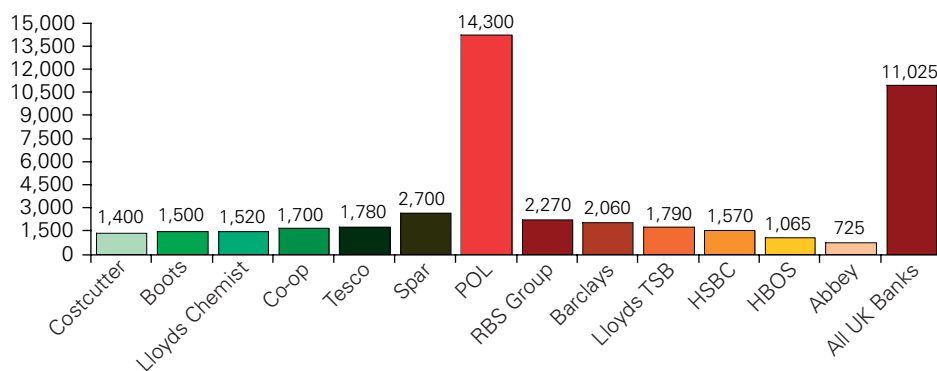
The Challenges

With new technology, changing habits and a wider choice of accessing services, people are visiting their post offices less often. Some 4 million fewer people are using the post office each week than two years ago. The network lost £2 million each week last year, rising to £4 million this year.

- 2.1 The market in which the Post Office network operates has changed beyond recognition over the last ten to fifteen years. Traditionally, the post office was where people went to post a letter, to pay their utility bills and to collect their benefits. Many still do. But increasing numbers of people choose to send an e-mail or text; pay bills by direct debit or Internet banking; and have benefits paid into their bank accounts. Stamps (which were once synonymous with the Post Office) can today be bought in 50,000 other retail outlets. They can even be bought, and personalised, over the Internet.
- 2.2 The way people choose to access their money, pay their bills or use government services is changing. 75% of all benefit recipients now choose to have their payments made into bank accounts. Nationally, 8.7 million out of a total of 11.2 million pensioners now get their pensions paid into a bank account. Online access to other services is proving very popular: for example over 3 million people have renewed their motor vehicle licence online this year. Clearly customers have embraced these new methods of payments which they find flexible and convenient.
- 2.3 As a result of this new technology, changing habits and lifestyles and wider choice of accessing services, people are visiting their post offices less and less. Though post offices served 24 million customers each week last year, some 4 million fewer customers visited a post office branch each week than two years earlier.

- 2.4 If the network is to survive it must face up to the very real challenge of adapting to the different ways people are choosing to access services. Post Office Ltd has made major strides in developing new areas of business such as financial services and telecommunications offerings to help offset declining demand for traditional products and services, but a substantial and growing gap remains between revenues and the costs of maintaining the network.
- 2.5 The Government is providing a social network subsidy of £150 million a year to support rural offices. With an average of 7 million customers a week using the rural network this represents an annual subsidy of just over £20. Despite this the network still lost on average £2 million a week last year with total losses of £100 million over the year before taking the social network payment into account. In the current financial year, losses are forecast to reach around £4 million every week or £200 million over the year and to meet Post Office Ltd’s cash requirements, the Government’s total funding will amount to more than £7 million a week.
- 2.6 The post office network is by far the largest nationwide retail network in the country compared with other commercial networks as shown in the table below. It has 8 times more branches than Tesco, and more branches than all the other UK banks put together. As those companies are constantly innovating and competing to offer more services, they present a constant challenge to the Post Office network. The network’s scale of coverage, heavily underpinned by public subsidy, is a considerable asset, but nevertheless the costs associated with maintaining it make it increasingly hard for Post Office Ltd to compete effectively for business against lower cost, more flexible competitors.

Size of Retail and Bank Branch Networks



- 2.7 With the exception of the 480 Crown post offices, all other post offices are privately owned and operate as agencies or franchises under contract with Post Office Ltd. Historically these branches have been located where the subpostmaster chose to set up in business rather than on a strategic decision on the part of Post Office Ltd. Over time this has left an oversized network not always best placed to serve its customers or to exploit available commercial opportunities.

- 2.8 In both rural and urban areas, too many branches are competing for the same customers and some branches are hardly used at all. Last year, on average the 800 smallest rural post offices served just 16 people a week at a cost to the taxpayer, whatever the level of transaction, of £17 per visit. 1,600 branches served fewer than 20 customers a day and losing £8 for every transaction they made. More than half the rural network has fewer than 500 customers each week and more than 80% of the rural network is unprofitable to Post Office Ltd.
- 2.9 Although Post Office Ltd's Urban Reinvention Programme helped to reduce levels of over-provision in some urban areas where there were too many offices competing for the customers available for them all to thrive as businesses. It is clear that with viability continuing to decline, more needs to be done to place the urban network on a sustainable footing and to protect the overall geographical reach of the network.
- 2.10 In addition to the branches operated by subpostmasters, Post Office Ltd directly operates and manages some 500 Crown post offices, mainly in the centre of our towns and cities. These Crown Offices conduct a fifth of all Post Office Ltd business. But last year they lost £50 million (and are expected to lose £70 million this year), with the agency offices located in deprived urban areas collectively losing a further £5 million.

Section 3:

Need for Change

The network is unsustainable in its present form. It needs to adopt more flexible and cost effective ways of delivering services and responding to customers' needs.

- 3.1 There is now widespread consensus between Post Office Ltd, the National Federation of Subpostmasters, Postcomm and Postwatch that change is needed to modernise and adapt the Post Office network to meet the needs of customers in today's digital age. The recent all party Trade and Industry Committee also recognised that consensus reporting in its Ninth Report published on 30 October 2006 that "There appears to be widespread, if reluctant, acceptance among our witnesses that a network of 14,500 branches is unsustainable."³
- 3.2 It is clear that the Post Office Network has a continuing and important role for the future. It provides one of several channels for delivery of Government services. It acts as a social hub in many areas.
- 3.3 On a purely commercial basis it would not be possible for Post Offices to continue to play these roles. Post Office Ltd has indicated that a purely commercial network would comprise only around 3,600-4,000 offices. Recognising the social role played by post offices, however, the Government believes there is a need to retain a national network beyond what is affordable on a purely commercial basis. In order to do this in a way that is sustainable for the future Post Office Ltd will need to adopt new, more flexible ways of delivering its services which are able to respond to the changing needs of its customers.

³ Link to the Trade and Industry Ninth Report on Royal Mail Group can be found at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmtrdind/1556/155602.htm>

- 3.4 A national network is required which provides for those in need, delivers services more cost-effectively, adopts innovative methods to better align demand and supply and which ensures convenient access for communities with real social need.
- 3.5 Where there is over provision threatening the livelihoods of subpostmasters this needs to be addressed. Where full-time offices exist to serve small customer numbers alternative ways of delivering services, such as the partner deals with other businesses or mobile units trialled by Post Office Ltd over the last 18 months, need to be considered.
- 3.6 We intend to provide support to enable Post Office Ltd to halt the losses from the Crown Office network and to modernise and improve the service offering these offices provide to customers. To fulfil its role as the commercial core of the business, the Crown office network must be restored to profitability. This will involve franchising some of these operations. But it is recognised that a core network of Crown offices is key to delivering transformation of the business and helping Post Office Ltd develop a strong presence in new areas of business. This will be achieved through a programme of refurbishment and investment.
- 3.7 Continuing Government support has to be aimed at enabling Post Office Ltd to modernise the way that it delivers services to its customers and to provide a stable platform for the future while keeping a national network.

Section 4:

The Future Shape of the Network

We will maintain a national network with national coverage – ensuring adequate safeguards for those most in need.

- 4.1 There is a need for a national Post Office network providing reasonable access to all communities, including those in remote areas. Post offices provide a valuable service for the vulnerable in our society (particularly the elderly, disabled and socially excluded) and it is important that the network continues to do so.
- 4.2 However, Post Office Ltd's financial position is critical and continues to deteriorate. There is wide recognition that there are no quick or easy solutions to the core problem of bridging the gap between costs and revenues. Government recognises the urgent need to put in place a financial package to modernise and restructure the network placing it on a stable footing.
- 4.3 The Government is therefore intending to make a further substantial investment to put the network on a stable footing by 2011. The Government's objectives for any restructuring of the network are as follows:
 - To keep a national network national, paying particular attention to the needs of remote rural and deprived urban communities across the country within the framework of clear and understandable standards of access to post office services;
 - To focus on services to customers rather than bricks and mortar and to introduce more flexible, innovative ways of providing services for remote communities, for example, mobile post offices and other Outreach models using modern technology;
 - To invest in new equipment and automation to modernise the service delivery to customers in the major Crown offices – transforming them into flagships of the Post Office brand;

- To focus on a range of products and services that customers expect and need from their post offices and how they can forge a sustainable business;
- To address the issue of over provision of offices with low footfall so that customer demand better matches the supply of offices and, where appropriate, enable the subpostmaster to leave on compensated terms;
- To provide certainty for customers on future access and greater clarity and stability for staff and subpostmasters.

- 4.4 As most people recognise, this will require some reduction in network size, particularly among the least used offices and those making the biggest losses, but this will be carefully managed to ensure that communities with the greatest social needs do not lose access to post office services. The Government will set criteria for access to ensure coverage at an appropriate level and will provide funding for Post Office Ltd to enable this to be delivered. The Government's proposals for delivering the national network are outlined in the next chapter.
- 4.5 Modernisation of the network will require significant effort on the part of Post Office Ltd. It needs to focus on working to bring the Crown offices back to profit, transforming them through refurbishment and investment into the flagships of the Post Office brand. Post Office Ltd is working closely with staff and Unions to develop a strategy to achieve this. The proposals centre on a small number of closures and continued franchising of directly operated branches by pursuing link-ups with well established, respected retailers that share the Post Office's commitment to excellent customer service. The result will be a smaller profitable national chain of Crown offices operating to modern retail standards, also setting standards for customer service throughout the network and pioneering the use of new technology such as self-service channels. The company's priority in developing its strategy for the Crown office network is to work constructively with staff on implementation. The transformation of the Crown office network will be achieved through a carefully managed programme of conversions and closures and through improved productivity. In addition, significant reductions in administrative overheads and staffing levels are planned across the business.
- 4.6 Post Office Ltd also needs to minimise its losses by focusing on improving the products and services it offers and on adopting new and more flexible business models. Rather than focusing on traditional facilities, Post Office Ltd will explore Outreach (provision of services by a core subpostmaster to outlying communities which do not or no longer have a permanent post office as described at 4.7) and other innovative ways to deliver the right services to people who need them.

4.7 With Government funding, Post Office Ltd has been successfully trialling Outreach services in rural areas in all parts of the United Kingdom to test the potential for subpostmasters who run larger offices also to offer services in smaller communities. The trials include using mobile post offices, delivering postal office services directly to people's houses and hosting post offices in other businesses such as pubs, community centres and village halls. The introduction of Outreach services helps to keep costs down while helping people gradually to adapt and to accept changes in how services might be delivered in the future. The Outreach approach is designed to provide delivery of 'value for money' rural post office services that can be tailored to meet different circumstances and situations. Under the trials Post Office Ltd has been running, a core post office serves a number of Outreach sites using one or more of four Outreach options. These are:

- ***Hosted*** – a full service offered by the subpostmaster (or a fully trained employee) of a nearby post office at a "host" site such as a shop, village hall or church.
- ***Partner*** – a basic service with access to cash, bill payments, stamps, weighing and leaving parcels being provided by another retailer alongside their main business such as a petrol station or pub overseen by the core subpostmaster who would provide the site with the products required.
- ***Home service*** – a limited service offered via telephone or on-line ordering, with the subpostmaster arranging delivery in person to the customer's home or to a local delivery point.
- ***Mobile*** – a full service is offered by a mobile post office visiting a number of locations at set times on a regular basis.

4.8 The Post Office has many examples of imaginative ways of providing post office services to small communities as recognised in their annual 'Best Post Office Awards', which this year reflected the changing ways in which people are willing to deliver and receive post office services. A small branch in Cnwch Coch, near Aberystwyth, which is run from a working farm, was named the most innovative branch in the UK. Whilst the Rosebush post office in Carmarthenshire, run from a cowshed on a farm making cheese, was runner-up. There are also examples of community run village shops combined with a post office as in the co-operative venture at Bicknoller in Somerset. Examples of initiatives introduced in the Outreach pilot trials are set out below.

- In Frittenden, Kent the community welcomed the return of access to Post Office services lost after the closure of the local shop. The Bell & Jorrocks pub volunteered to become the location for a new automated Partner service with the Core branch being at Staplehurst meaning that locals now have the chance to get cash and stamps, as well as refreshments and a spot of lunch, all under one roof.

- In Fife the sub-post office at Leven also provides services through village shops in the communities of Windygates and Collinsburgh, demonstrating the opportunities for existing businesses to play host to a post office for a part of the week, which not only maintains services but also brings the benefit of added visitors to the host business. And the scope for working with communities to find solutions isn't limited to using commercial businesses. The village hall is used to host to a satellite post office for the small community of East Stour in Dorset.
- The subpostmaster of the Llandeilo branch is showing how a single Core branch can help maintain service to a number of communities and provides a service using portable equipment hosted at Carmel village hall as well as at the village shop in two other nearby communities. The same subpostmaster also operates a satellite branch in the isolated village of Bethlehem, which famously receives a much-needed boost to custom every Christmas time from those wanting to send greetings cards bearing the distinctive postmark.
- The Post Office has also been successfully testing imaginative new ways of bringing services to communities by using distinctive Post Office vans. In Durham, the Mobile service operated by the Post Office branch in Tow Law is a welcome visitor at nine communities in the area. In Northern Ireland the idea of a post office on the move has even been taken one step further where the Post Office has linked-up with a mobile library service. And in Suffolk, the subpostmaster of the Core branch at Aldeburgh is helping provide post office services to the door for six small communities in the surrounding area.

4.9 To improve their cost effectiveness, the hours for the Outreach services can be set at a level more appropriate to the level of business generated in that community, ending the current situation where many subpostmasters are open for long periods of time with little or no custom. In many cases the range of services available is extended, through access to the Core site's product range, meaning many customers will have access to the likes of motor vehicle licensing and passport check and send services for the first time.

4.10 In addition to network restructuring, Post Office Ltd is developing a transformation plan for the business. Their vision is of the Post Office as a trusted advisor and helping hand for both consumers and small businesses as they manage their households, their money and their enterprises. Post Office Ltd will extend its services with new mails and financial service products tailored to customers' needs and with more convenient access. The business is focusing products and services in four key areas:

- *Mails* – Building on its traditional products and its position as the retail arm of Royal Mail, the Post Office aims to be the place to go for all mail needs, providing advice and expertise as well as a full range of products. For example it is looking at how to provide customers greater convenience for picking up packets and is working with eBay and mail order houses to provide additional high-convenience mails products.
- *Financial Services* – Post Office Ltd also aims to build on its successful launch into financial services as the fastest growing entrant in Car Insurance selling on average 1,000 policies a day, £1.2 billion invested to date in the Instant Saver Account, expand its range of banking, personal finance, travel (for which it is the market leader in foreign exchange provision) and bill payment products, introduce 4,000 new PayStation electronic terminals and offer 4,000 free to use ATMs across the network.
- *Telecoms* – Post Office Ltd has built a significant business in the telecoms area with both HomePhone and now the number two player in the UK for mobile top-ups. The business is looking to launch further products in this area such as a broadband offer.
- *Government services* – Post Offices will continue to provide a broad range of Government-related services, simply and conveniently and will seek to work in partnership with a range of Government departments to look for opportunities to deliver services on their behalf via post office channels.

4.11 In addition to continuing to build products and services for consumers, Post Office Ltd also plans to extend its services and convenience for small business customers. It has plans to transform the customer experience in accessing the Post Office, and in addition providing more convenient access through multiple channels such as Internet or telephone, making it easier for customers to access Post Office products and services in a way that best suits them as well as increasing opening hours where there is a clear customer demand.

4.12 Within the mails area, Post Office Ltd is reviewing a range of initiatives to improve service and convenience to customers. A key area of opportunity will be providing customers with the ability to pick up parcels they have ordered through mail order companies or via Internet services from post office counters. The business is currently carrying out some trials in this area and is working with other parts of the Royal Mail Group to develop propositions for large clients including mail order companies, retailers, and other businesses which have a need to get parcels to customers in the most efficient and convenient way. Post Office Ltd and Royal Mail are working closely together to provide end-to-end solutions for its major customers in this area.

- 4.13 As well as the planned programme to refurbish Crown Offices outlined below, Post Office Ltd is also developing new ways of working with and supporting its subpostmasters and franchise partners, again with the objective of meeting customer needs more consistently. These include up to 4,000 free to use cash machines (ATMs) across the network and another 4,000 PayStation terminals will be rolled out across agencies and franchise offices, enabling subpostmasters to provide a greater number of services electronically and with more flexibility. Post Office Ltd expects about 20% of its sales to come through direct channels by 2011, and will be investing in its website and call centres to give customers the best possible Post Office experience beyond the branch. Nevertheless for those customers preferring to visit a post office, a national network of offices will continue to provide national coverage in line with clearly specified access criteria. Customers of the smallest offices which cannot be retained will however have the choice of using direct channels or visiting a nearby office.
- 4.14 Crown offices, in common with much of the rest of the network, have long suffered from lack of investment. Where Crown offices directly managed by Post Office Ltd can be improved, this needs to be delivered by investment in the premises, in new technology and in improved customer offering but in some cases conversion to a franchise operation may be a more appropriate way forward, Post Office Ltd will also invest in improvements to the premises and the layout and operation of customer services to bring standards up to those customers expect of a modern retail business. Crown offices will act as flagships setting standards for customer service across the network and pioneering the use of new technology such as new automated self-service facilities.
- 4.15 In addition to Post Office Ltd's efforts to transform the business, the Government remains committed to allowing people to access their pension and benefit in cash at the post office if they choose to do so, and there is a range of accounts which make that possible. The current POca contract ends in March 2010. The Government has considered and decided that it will continue with a new account after 2010. This new account will include similar features to the POca. It will be available nationally and customers will be eligible for the account on the same basis as they are now. EU procurement rules leave us with no option but to tender competitively for this product, and we must ensure that the best value for money for the taxpayer is achieved, but Post Office Ltd is well placed to put in a strong bid given the size of the network and the access criteria that we are now introducing. In addition, cash will be available at the post office through some 4,000 free to use ATMs which are being introduced across the network as well as a range of interest accounts which will be attractive to the general public as well as those POca users who choose to build up balances on the Card Account.

Section 5:

A Restructured National Network

Restructuring of the network will be undertaken within the framework of access criteria which safeguard rural and deprived urban coverage and will ensure that a national network is maintained. Outreach will provide services in many rural areas.

- 5.1 The Government recognises the important social and economic role post offices play, particularly in rural and deprived urban communities, and also accepts that where such post offices role can never be commercially viable there will a need for an ongoing social network payment of up to the current level of £150 million a year. The restructuring of the network will reflect this.
- 5.2 To enable Post Office Ltd to deliver a stable national network, Government plans to introduce a set of key criteria defining the minimum access requirements to post office services across the United Kingdom. These criteria will set a standard for national coverage and will be supplemented by additional criteria to safeguard rural and deprived urban coverage. We therefore propose to task Post Office Ltd with restructuring the network to establishing one that meets the following access requirements to an outlet⁴
- *Nationally*, 99% within 3 miles and 90% of the population to be within 1 mile;
 - In *deprived urban areas*⁵, 99% of the population to be within 1 mile;
 - In *urban areas*, 95% of the population to be within 1 mile;
 - In *rural areas*, 95% of the total rural population within 3 miles.
 - In remote areas, 95% of the population in postcode districts⁶ within 6 miles.

4 an "outlet" can be a fixed branch or a location at which outreach services are available

5 deprived urban communities are those in the 10% most deprived super output areas as identified by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation

6 a postcode district is the first part of the postcode e.g. SL9. There are 2,795 nationwide of which 38 do not currently meet this criterion. These 38 will continue to be exempt but we will not allow any further postcode districts to be exempt.

The Government recognises that across the country as a whole there cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach to access criteria and that Post Office Ltd will need to take in to account local conditions on a common sense basis to reflect obstacles such as rivers, mountains, valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands to avoid undue hardship and ensure that the principles behind the access criteria are adhered to.

- 5.3 The current policy of preventing the avoidable closure of post offices in rural areas will be replaced by a new policy of maintaining the coverage levels set out above. After the restructuring programme, there will continue to be changes to the network as a result of natural exits (for example when the subpostmaster retires or moves on). Any closures resulting from natural exits would be subject to the access criteria above and, depending on local circumstances, services would need to be maintained or replaced with alternative service delivery methods.
- 5.4 In rationalising the network, we would require Post Office Ltd to ensure that no one part of the network or no particular group of people is significantly more adversely affected than any other. We expect that rationalisation will principally affect a combination of least used branches and non-commercial branches in areas of over-provision where people can find alternative branches nearby.
- 5.5 We will provide support to Post Office Ltd to compensate subpostmasters who are obliged to leave the network under the restructuring programme on a similar basis to the Urban Reinvention programme (under which compensation of 28 months remuneration was paid. The average payment to urban subpostmasters was £60,000 per office). It is clear that significant numbers of subpostmasters want to leave the network under a structured programme that compensates them for not being in a position to sell on their business.
- 5.6 We will be asking Post Office Ltd to develop local plans that fit within this framework. Whilst decisions on specific closures and their locations will be a matter for the company, we will limit Post Office Ltd to a maximum of 2,500 compensated closures nationally. They will also need to ensure that network restructuring is completed within the designated funding package as well as meeting the required access criteria.
- 5.7 In developing Post Office Ltd's proposals, branches that are specifically required to meet either the Universal Service Obligation for access to postal services or the Government's new criteria for national and remote area coverage will require special arrangements. Depending on circumstances, these will either be excluded from closure proposals or their closure will be mitigated through the introduction of Outreach delivery methods.

- 5.8 We will encourage Post Office Ltd to build on the success of the Outreach service delivery model to help maintain services to more remote communities. A significant number (about 500) of new Outreach will be put in place helping to mitigate the consequences of the managed rural closure programme following consultation with subpostmasters and local communities. Over time, Post Office Ltd, where it makes commercial sense and takes due account of local sensitivities, could employ this new business model extensively in future as branches closing through natural attrition are replaced in accordance with the new national coverage criteria. Together with existing Outreach delivery points and additional ones mitigating some of the closures which will arise through natural exits. Such delivery points will, by 2010-11, play an increasing role in delivering continued services to remote communities where conventional offices are not economic.
- 5.9 Drawing on experience of the Urban Reinvention Programme, we would expect that Post Office Ltd's approach to closures and other service restructuring measures will be to consult on area proposals based on groupings of adjacent Parliamentary constituencies and will be planned and consulted on the basis of putting forward proposals for all closures and other related changes in that area at the same time to better capture and reflect the needs of customers. Implementation will be programmed in the most efficient manner. Area proposals will be developed within the framework of the relevant access criteria and with the participation of subpostmasters and Postwatch. Members of Parliament and of the devolved administrations will be informed of the proposals before being put to a six week public consultation amongst customers and other organisations.
- 5.10 Because Post Office Ltd will be developing its closure proposals on a strategic basis in compliance with the access criteria, it will be a compulsory scheme. But, wherever possible, we expect them to match closures with offices where the subpostmaster has indicated his or her willingness to retire from, or leave, the business, thereby minimising the numbers of closures where subpostmasters have not indicated a wish to close their business on the compensated terms basis of the restructuring programme.
- 5.11 Against this background, Post Office Ltd will not be consulting on the principles of change as these will have been established by Government policy and covered as part of this national policy consultation. The role of Postwatch at this stage will be to check that the right people are consulted, their views properly gathered and subsequent decisions effectively communicated.

Section 6:

Conclusions

- 6.1 The Government is committed to a national network of post offices. We believe that the range of measures in our proposed forward strategy, set out in this consultation document, will place the restructured network which emerges on a stable footing for the foreseeable future. We also believe that the proposed measures strike a balance between the cost to taxpayers in financing the social role of post offices and the needs of the most vulnerable groups of customers, particularly in rural and deprived urban areas. We have worked closely with Post Office Ltd over the past months and our proposals reflect the company's investment case to Government. We will continue our discussions with the company in the coming months and will look to reach final decisions after we have considered responses to this consultation.
- 6.2 The Government's proposed further investment will provide Post Office Ltd with an opportunity to modernise and restructure the network and put it on a stable and more sustainable footing by 2011. Beyond that point, it is important that the shape and coverage of the network continues to reflect and adapt to local needs. It is the people "on the ground" who best understand the value of a post office to the local community and Local Government is also well placed to understand local concerns and needs. Their involvement may enable more regular appraisals of the level of post office coverage that is required to meet local needs. The Government wants in the longer term to devolve greater responsibility for local decisions to a local level and to provide greater flexibility for local funding decisions. Government therefore intends to investigate what role both Local Authorities in England and the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland might play in influencing how the postal services are best delivered in the future.

- 6.3 This consultation paper sets out the Government's proposals for restructuring the post office network to put it on a stable footing for the longer term. We welcome comments raised on the issues raised in this document and specifically welcome responses to the questions listed below.

Summary of Questions

In this consultation the Government invites responses to the following questions:

1. Do you think the Government's forward strategy for the post office network addresses all the key issues and challenges the network faces?
2. Are there other significant factors affecting the future of the post office network which appear to have been overlooked in the Government's proposed approach?
3. Do you have comments on the national access criteria proposed?
4. Do you have comments on the access criteria proposed for deprived urban and rural areas?
5. Do you have any suggestions as to how services might be better delivered through the post office network?
6. Do you have any comments on Outreach arrangements as a means of maintaining service to small and remote communities?
7. Do you have comments on the practicality of community ownership of parts of the post office network, which might involve the transfer of assets to community organisations and/or the establishment of local mutual or co-operative organisations to own and run local services?

Consultation Code of Practice

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

The complete code is available on the Cabinet Office's web site, address <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation/index.asp>

Annex B

The Post Office Network

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is 8 March 2007

You may find it helpful to set out your responses to the consultation using this response form.

Name: _____

Organisation's name and
remit (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Return completed forms (preferably by e-mail) to:

Postal Office Network Consultation
Department of Trade and Industry
Response Centre
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET
Fax: 00 44 (0) 20 7215 5329
E-mail: dti.enquiries@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Please cross one box from the following list of options that best describes you.

- Individual
- Individual – Subpostmaster
- Small to Medium Enterprise
- Trade Union
- Interest Group
- Regional Organisation
- Devolved Administration
- Local Government
- Central Government
- Other (please specify) _____

Please feel free to answer as many or as few questions as you wish. It is helpful if you can explain your views as fully as possible in the comments boxes, especially where you disagree with the proposals set out in the consultation paper.

Question 1.

Do you think the Government's forward strategy for the post office network addresses all the key issues and challenges the network faces?

Yes No No view

Comments

Question 2.

Are there other significant factors affecting the future of the post office network which appear to have been overlooked in the Government's proposed approach?

Yes No No view

Comments

Question 3.

Do you have comments on the national access criteria proposed?

Yes No No view

Comments

Question 4.

Do you have comments on the access criteria proposed for deprived urban and rural areas?

Yes No No view

Comments

Question 5.

Do you have any suggestions as to how services might be better delivered through the post office network?

Yes No No view

Comments

Question 6.

Do you have any comments on Outreach arrangements as a means of maintaining service to small and remote communities?

Yes No No view

Comments

Question 7.

Do you have comments on the practicality of community ownership of parts of the post office network, which might involve the transfer of assets to community organisations and/or the establishment of local mutual or co-operative organisations to own and run local services?

Yes No No view

Comments

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views.

We do not intend to acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.

List of Organisations Consulted

Action for Communities in Rural England
Age Concern – England
Association of British Credit Unions
British Chambers of Commerce
Business in the Community
Centre for Environment and Rural Affairs
Commission for Rural Communities
Co-operatives UK Limited
Disability Rights Commission
Federation of Small Businesses
Forum of Private Business
Help The Aged – England
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Local Government Association
Mencap
National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
National Association of Local Councils
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Federation of Women’s Institutes
Plunkett Foundation
Royal National Institute of the Blind,
Rural Shops Alliance
Social Enterprise Coalition
Townswomen’s Guild
Village Retail Services Association

Age Concern – Scotland
Association of Scottish Community Councils
Communities Scotland
Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities
Help The Aged – Scotland
Money Advice Scotland
Scottish Consumer Council
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Scottish Enterprise
The Scottish Parliament

Age Concern – Wales
Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
Countryside Council for Wales
Help The Aged – Wales
National Pensioners Convention Wales
One Voice Wales
Wales Pensioners
Wales Rural Forum
Welsh Assembly Government
Welsh Consumer Council
Welsh Council for Voluntary Action
Welsh Local Government Association

Age Concern – Northern Ireland
Community Relations Council
Equality Commission
General Consumer Council For Northern Ireland
Help The Aged – Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Assembly
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
Northern Ireland Social Care Council
Rural Community Network
Rural Development Council
The Northern Ireland Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters
Postcomm
Postwatch



Printed in the UK on recycled paper containing a minimum of 75% post consumer waste.
First published December 2006. Department of Trade and Industry. www.dti.gov.uk
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Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership

Health and Well Being Theme Group (HWTG) Update

There have been two meetings since the last CPP Management Committee. The main focus has been on future funding for Healthy Living Centres. As reported at the last CPP Management Committee monies were sought from the Community Health Partnership (CHP). The paper generated from the HWTG discussion was taken to the CHP Planning and Prioritisation session. This session considered projects/developments that had financial implications in 07/08 and therefore only the Islay aspects were discussed. The proposal to continue to provide CHP funds to Islay HLC were put through to the next stage of prioritisation. The outcome of that is awaited.

The HWTG has subsequently considered the position of using Health Improvement Fund monies if the CHP is unable to commit other CHP resources to it. It was agreed that we should prioritise the use of HIF funds should no further mainstream monies be forthcoming from the CHP. It was also noted that if that were the case the same would have to be considered for Bute and Kintyre with the proviso of agreeing a suitable model for Kintyre.

Other issues:

- The application for a Scottish Executive telecare grant of £141,000 has been approved. 30% will be allocated this financial year and 70% next financial year. The grant was made to the Health and Social Care Partnership.
- The initial response to the Joint Health Improvement Plan Audit was low so a further letter and audit form has been sent out to partners.
- We have commenced a review of the HWTG. A sub group has now been set up. This will initiate the process but will ensure that the process is as inclusive as possible.

Elaine C Garman
Chair, Health and Well Being Theme Group
30 January 2007

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ARGYLL AND BUTE STRATEGIC HOUSING & COMMUNITIES FORUM

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8TH DECEMBER 2006,
LOCH FYNE HOTEL, INVERARAY**

Present:

Cllr. George Freeman (GF)	(Chair), Argyll & Bute Council
Malcolm MacFadyen (MM)	Head of Planning & Performance, Argyll & Bute Council
Allan Brandie (AB)	Research & Development Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Allan Macdougall (AM)	Director, Fyne Homes Housing Association
Mark Lodge (ML)	Statutory Planning Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Joanna Shedden (JS)	Planning Co-ordinator, Communities Scotland
Janet Crook (JC)	Investment Co-ordinator, Communities Scotland
David Dowie (DD)	Operations Manager, Communities Scotland
Ian Mcfadyen (IM)	Manager, Supporting People, Argyll & Bute Council
Susan Brooks (SB)	Planning Officer, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park
Yolanda Shoemake (YS)	LHS Admin Assistant, Argyll & Bute Council
Linda Haig (LH)	Director of Investment and Regeneration, Argyll Community Housing Association
Morven Short (MS)	Director, Dunbritton Housing Association
Lesley McInnes (LM)	Chief Executive, West Highland Housing Association
Cllr. Isobel Strong (IS)	Bute & Cowal Area Committee/ADA Partnership
Patricia McCrossan (PM)	Service Officer-Community Work, Argyll & Bute Council
Eddie Renfrew (ER)	Strathclyde Fire & Rescue
Eileen Belshaw (EB)	Service Standards Officer, Argyll & Bute Council
Mike Firth (MF)	Development Liaison Manager, Scottish Water
Alan Steele (AS)	Scottish Water

ISSUES	ACTION BY
<p>1. Apologies: Alistair McGregor, Argyll Community Housing Association; Stephen Youd, Communities Scotland; Moira MacDonald, Argyll & Bute Council; Douglas Hunter, Argyll & Bute Council; Jacqui Macleod, Crofters Commission; Eileen Wilson, Argyll & Bute Community Planning Partnership; Alan Milstead, HIE; Fergus Murray, Argyll & Bute Council; Jim Frame, SEPA; Steven Watson, Alienergy</p> <p>NB – Chair noted the response received from Keith Miller, Forestry Commission regarding attendance and recommended seeking alternative representation for the Forum as appropriate.</p> <p>2. Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>(a) Strategic Housing Forum minutes 08/09/06 approved, subject to following amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 5, second bullet to read £34million not £37million. <p>Matters Arising –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOD - MM advised that this matter is to be pursued via the Helensburgh & Lomond Housing Market Study. • Item 7: Implementing 2006 Housing Act – DD advised that the dedicated team within Communities Scotland was now in place to take this forward. Main contact – Ian Muirhead. 	

<p>(b) CPP 3rd Theme Group minutes 25/05/06 – approved as accurate.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 2(a) – Home Safety Checks – It was agreed that this matter was relevant to a wider range of organisations/partners (including all RSLs, Care & Repair and Supporting People) and recommended that Strathclyde Fire & Rescue (Geoff Calvert) be invited to provide a paper/presentation to the next Forum. • CPP Manager – The appointment of Eileen Wilson was noted. She is included in the membership of the reconstituted forum and will be invited to future meetings. <p>3. Strategic Forum - revised remit and membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with the CPP management board’s decision regarding the title and basic reconstitution of this Forum, the detailed proposals outlined in SHCF Paper 0106 were approved subject to the inclusion of more explicit statements/emphasis on a) Equal Opportunities and b) specific Planning issues (sustainable design, affordable housing) as key objectives. • PM advised of a recent Communities Scotland-funded post appointed until march 2007 to support equalities issues primarily in respect of the ROA but potentially able to provide wider support to other partners. • PM also suggested the Forum should explore links between Community Regeneration Fund and RSL’s Wider Action role. To this end, it was proposed that Patrick Flynn from Communities Scotland should also be invited to participate. (Post meeting note – Communities Scotland advised that the three representatives currently attending the Forum would normally be sufficient to cover all relevant aspects, but further representation could be invited as and when appropriate). • Membership – potential additional representation from NHS Highland and Council’s Social Work/Residential Care services was considered. It was noted that Douglas Hunter, Service Officer for Joint Futures was an appropriate representative to link with community care/social work issues. • MS requested clarification of Forum representation across the other CPP themes and MM agreed to table a paper for the next meeting reflecting strategic linkages between relevant groups/bodies. PM invited RSL representation on the Community Learning & Regeneration Strategic Board. • It was agreed that the regular CPP six-monthly report should be included on this Forum’s agenda in future, for information. • DD advised of the timetable for the Community Plan review and opportunities to influence this. Chair requested any comments/proposals on this issue to be emailed to YS for collation, and a paper to be tabled at next meeting. <p>4. Scottish Water development Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MF provided a verbal update on the investment programme covering the period 2006-2010 and circulated a summary of 	<p>MM</p> <p>DD/ EW</p> <p>Group</p>
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<p>covering the period 2006-2010 and circulated a summary of development sites within Argyll and Bute. This pro active, longer term focus on development was generally welcomed by the group, as were the wider links now established with RSLs, Homes For Scotland as well as proposal for quarterly meetings with Council Planners. The need to link this programme with Communities Scotland's investment programme was stressed by all partners. MF advised that a detailed programme with dates for the priority sites is expected by spring 2007, and while the programme is robust it remains flexible to meet needs as they arise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual update on strategic site capacity is available online at www.scottishwater.co.uk. • Given the cross-border geographies of certain partners (eg National Park, Dunbritton), MF agreed to circulate a national list of sites. 	MF
<p>5. Planning Issues – Update (NB. This item brought forward)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ML provided an update on following issues: • Local Plan – revised timetable for Public Inquiry was circulated. The lengthy process was acknowledged. • Affordable Housing Policy – the single objection to the policy, received from MOD, has now been withdrawn and therefore, in effect, this policy can be considered as actively in force pending formal adoption of the completed Plan. ML to circulate the finalised policy as a separate document for members' information. • Renewable Energy Policy – ML advised that all 3 strands of this policy had received conflicting objections and further work was required. However, the good practice Sustainable Design guide will be formally launched on 19th December 2006 on Council website, and includes guidance on eg energy efficiency/ heating systems etc. {ML left the meeting at this point} 	ML
<p>6. Local Housing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MM provided a verbal update, confirming the stock transfer to ACHA was successfully completed on 21st November 2006. • Further guidance still awaited from Scottish Executive regarding implementation of 2006 Housing Act. Communities Scotland confirmed this would not now be a requirement of the 2007 LHS Update. An internal working Group has been convened to progress this within Council – external partners will have opportunity to participate as appropriate. • Positive progress with Home Argyll was noted (and the Gold Excellence Award acknowledged), and a memo summarising initial monitoring arrangements was circulated for members' information. Further promotion was recommended. 	
<p>7. Communities Scotland Investment Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DD and JC circulated the current programme noting that the full details of future years should be available for next forum. While 	

details of future years should be available for next forum. While robust, the programme also has scope for flexibility.

- This year's expenditure profile is currently on schedule, with c. 70% of main investment committed. However, actual unit output is down at this stage and there is still risk of slippage with the Early Action Fund –£3.75m remains uncommitted.
- **Private Sector Housing Grant** - 50% currently spent and there is potential for additional spend this year.
- Overall, the position was acknowledged to be very positive and healthy.

8. Homelessness Update

- In the absence of the Community Support Development Manager, MM tabled SHCF Paper 0206.
- While improved investment has resulted in some progress, the increasingly critical situation regarding homelessness and future allocations, as well as the current situation regarding use of (and duration of) B&B occupation was highlighted.
- The Scottish Executive's "changing goalposts" and onerous requirements/target setting were flagged as major causes for concern for all housing providers (and other partners).
- Chair advised that the Homeless Steering Group recently agreed that the national outcomes outlined at paragraph 3.5 of SHCF Paper 0206 should be prioritised as follows in the Argyll and Bute context:
 1. Fewer people become homeless in the first place;
 2. The duration of homelessness is reduced;
 3. Sustainable resettlement is secured for people who become homeless;
 4. Existing homelessness becomes more visible; and
 5. No one need sleep rough.
- AM raised issue of time-lag between presentations being recorded and appearing on system list – potentially, picture is even worse than appears.
- The issue of hidden homelessness being hugely underestimated in rural contexts was again highlighted as a major concern.
- The group agreed that the issue of re-branding/awareness-raising/ education was a critical concern. The Forum has a role to play in progressing this.

9. Community Regeneration

- PM tabled SHCF Paper 0306 and EB circulated an appendix outlining local level Regeneration Outcome Agreements.
- PM advised that Communities Scotland's feedback on the ROA was overall "very good" and in particular capacity building was graded as "excellent".
- A Community Regeneration strategy conference will be held over 28th/29th March 2007 with a view to developing a revised strategy for 2008.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM flagged the changes outlined in the revised national SIMD report for Argyll and Bute, but noted concerns with the appropriateness of these indicators in the rural context. • Consultants ODS are currently reviewing the implementation of ROAs and will consider Argyll and Bute as one case study. 	
<p>10. Supporting People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IM provided an overview and update of Supporting People services with SCHF Paper 0406. • Current service reviews are on schedule for completion by March 2007. • Future funding remains at risk, with potential reductions of up to £2m if the current Scottish Executive formula is applied. • The forum's role in lobbying the Scottish Executive was discussed and it was agreed that the situation required close monitoring. 	
<p>11. National & Local Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JS tabled SHCF Paper 0506 and agreed to liaise with Council on a detailed paper for next forum in response to the Bramley Report on affordable housing need and the final version of the Newhaven Pro Forma for local authority needs assessments. • '<i>Glasgow & Clyde Valley Gypsy Travellers Research Study</i>' – timescale for report now March 2007. Initial fieldwork in Argyll & Bute has been completed. • Homestake research – DD advised that Communities Scotland are currently exploring the potential for funding an authority-wide exercise to estimate demand for the Homestake grant in conjunction with the local RSLs. • JS undertook to include wider research exercises in future updates, to reflect the broader remit of the Housing and Communities Forum 	<p>JS/AB</p> <p>JS</p>
<p>12. A.O.C.B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DD requested an update on the proposals for the additional income generated from reduced Council Tax discounts on holiday homes. MM to produce paper for next meeting. 	<p>MM</p>
<p>13. Date of next Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 16th March 2007, 10.30am (NB – Change of venue. In future meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Kilmory) 	

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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
CORPORATE SERVICES**

**COMMUNITY PLANNING
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

7 FEBRUARY 2007

BUTE AND COWAL PILOT

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report outlines progress in taking forward the Bute and Cowal localised Community Planning Pilot, and gives an indication of the proposed future structure of the project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Management Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

3.0 DETAIL

3.1 The Committee will recall that an evaluation of the Bute and Cowal pilot in 2006 indicated that the Pilot had failed to achieve some of its original objectives. The evaluation highlighted that there had been:

- little influence on the partners
- a lack of clarity of the purpose of the pilot
- often nothing concrete to decide upon
- sporadic attendance from some of the partners
- insufficient community representation, though the Community Reps who participated found the experience positive

The CPP Management Committee considered the report and highlighted the need for change. The Committee tasked the Community Planning Manager, Pilot Co-co-ordinator and Council's Policy and Strategy Manager with producing recommendations for the way forward.

The pilot group considered this matter and agreed to a new set of objectives for the Area Partnership which are:

- To broaden community involvement
- To have a local influence on service provision
- To identify areas of concern and address these via CPP partners

The rationale for this change is that there will be:

- Focus on partners as the main delivery mechanism
- Focus on areas where partnership working can add value
- Less bureaucracy
- Enhanced community involvement.

The Area Partnership also agreed changes to the process to reflect the change in objectives and criticisms of the process from the evaluation. It was agreed that the new process would comprise:

- Two events as workshops/seminars each year timed to influence the planning and budget setting cycles of the main partners
- A small core group to plan and manage the seminars – led by the coordinator for the Area Partnership
- Meetings between the seminars focused on particular topics or issues. These could be:
 - Ad hoc time limited groups of particular groups/organisations focused on issues identified by those bodies as a common concern to be addressed
 - More formal meetings of partners to consider broader or more complex issues that need more concerted effort

The workshops/seminars would be 'mini-conferences' enabling a large number of organisations/community groups to take part – perhaps 5 to 10 times as many as at present. Participants would benefit from the numerous networking opportunities and be able to take part in specific sessions of interest to them. They would also be able to avoid sitting through discussions which are not relevant.

This process would allow partner organisations to gather information, test out ideas and discuss draft plans prior to agreement. Community organisations would also have opportunities to raise issues and concerns affecting them as well as present ideas where they are seeking support.

The process would also tap into existing organisations, networks and research without creating new structures that duplicate existing arrangements. As a result, the Area Partnership would capture many voices through greater attendance by more diverse range of organisations.

3.2 To progress this, a seminar was held at Strachur Village Hall on 1st December 2006. Over 80 people attended, from all of Bute and Cowal's communities, and attendees included community reps and organisations, services providers, voluntary groups and business people. The event comprised keynote speakers in the morning, followed by 4 thematic workshops, networking opportunities, and a plenary session in the afternoon identifying ways forward for

localised Community Planning. The event was evaluated very positively, and generated a significant degree of enthusiasm for effective localised Community Planning in the Bute and Cowal area.

Key issues/themes identified at the seminar were:

1. Anti Social Behaviour
2. Health and Well Being
3. Local Economic Forums
4. Housing and Communities
5. Culture and Environment.

3.3 At the follow up meeting from the seminar it was agreed that each of these themes should be progressed by existing groups where at all possible, and that the critical factor for the pilot was to be able to ensure that the identified issues are acted upon and progressed, ie to ensure that the pilot has a degree of accountability for matters brought to it's attention, and that the enthusiasm for the pilot and localised Community Planning which has been generated is not lost. It was further agreed that a small management group for the Pilot will meet to ensure an overview of progress, to ensure delivery and to maintain the momentum which has been generated. Attendees at the seminar will be provided with a 6 monthly newsletter updating them on progress, and inviting feeding in of issues for the next seminar. The next seminar will take place in late 2007.

Membership of the pilot management group comprises:

Shirley MacLeod, Pilot Co-ordinator
Eileen Wilson, Community Planning Manager
Margaret Johnston, Community Representative
Alan MacDougall, Fyne Homes
Janet Crook, Communities Scotland
Inspector Marlene Baillie, Strathclyde Police
Bridget Paterson, Interloch.

This management group has identified that the issues brought forward at the seminar will be progressed:

1. Anti Social Behaviour issues will be progressed by the Community Safety Forums.
2. Health and Well Being issues will be progressed by the Public Health Networks.
3. Local Economic Forums will be progressed by AIE, lead by Alan Milstead.
4. Housing and Communities issues will be progressed by Fyne Homes, led by Alan MacDougall.
5. Culture and Environment- this will initially be progressed by linking into the work of Eileen Rae, the Council's Arts Development Officer, and by identifying links to the work of the National Park Authority, Community Futures Groups etc.

It is intended that by progressing these issues in this way, through groups linked to the pilot and leading on such specific topics, actions identified will be progressed to the satisfaction of those who raised them at the December seminar, and that this method of working will prove effective in delivering localised Community Planning in the Bute and Cowal area.

For further information contact: Shirley MacLeod, Community Planning Pilot
Co-ordinator 01369 704374

Date: 25th January 2007

Initiative at the Edge Base Report

Area	Isle of Jura
------	--------------

Contacts - Please list all relevant contacts (Ensure people listed are actual people who will be able to deal with Initiative business)

Local Development Officer		Community Group		Agency	
Name	Address	Name	Address	Name	Address
Deborah Bryce	Jura Service Point School House Craighouse Isle of Jura PA60 7XG	Dick Mayes (Chairman)			
Deborah.bryce@argyll-bute.gov.uk		Lealt Isle of Jura		dick@lealt.waitrose.com	
01496 820161					
01496 820162					

Please use the space below to indicate any past, current and future projects for your area/s. Outlining the status and progress of the specific project

Action	Target	Indicator	Progress
Passenger Ferry	Put in place a summer only passenger ferry from Craighouse, Jura to Crinan.	On-going	Rural Community Transport Initiative (RCTI) application was unsuccessful. Looking at other avenues to implement a summer service which is hoped to show the need and in turn provide a

			more suitable and robust business case for a three year funding application. Cncll R Currie is liaising with George Lyon to help with the project. Interviews carried out with four potential operators. They are to provide individual bids by February. Infrastructure at Crinan and Craighouse still to be agreed and carried forward.
Parking Area next to Village Hall, Craighouse.	To complete a parking area for approx twenty cars	On-going	Private engineer carried out a topographical survey of the area end of January. To draw up working drawings which we will then send out for a tender cost. Letter sent to Ardfin Estate to discuss purchase of land Still no costs from Council yet.
Roads and Passing Places	To upgrade roads and passing places	Work underway	ABC agreed to the upgrading of 20 passing places by a local contractor. Survey complete. Work underway, 11 passing places complete so far.
Jura Road Man	Create part-time or full-time post for a maintenance worker	Complete	Position filled. Family of four moved to Craighouse from mainland.
Beach Clean	Up keep of our shorelines and beaches throughout from Feolin to Ardfarnal.	On-going	Beach Clean 26 th August. Hall to Manse. Successful, aided by Re-jig. £225 raised. Next clean scheduled for April 2007
Crofting Land	Bring more families to Jura.		Looking at the possibility of creating new crofts.
BT Internet	Upgrade exchange on island to help self employment		Contact BT to confirm whether it is possible or not to upgrade the exchange on the island. A Mr Desmond Linton from BT Devolved Government Unit Scotland is looking into this, 9.11.06.
Regeneration Plan	An umbrella venture incorporating seven projects within Craighouse area	On-going	Document and illustration of seven projects happening and proposed for the Craighouse area collectively known as the 'Regeneration Plan' all assisted by various community groups, these are; <i>Jura Development Trust</i> - Antlers tea-room & interpretation centre, Pontoons & moorings and Bio-fuel. <i>IatE</i> - Car park & recreational are and Direct mainland Passenger ferry service. <i>Village Hall Committee</i> - Village Hall refurbishment <i>Jura</i>

		<i>Community Business - Workshops.</i> Full funding application to be submitted to The Big Lottery Fund by Jan. OPF has been approved for Antlers and Car Park.
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Please indicate any projects past, present and future and outline amount, if any, of funding approved and the amount of funding spent

Project Title	Funding Approved	Funding Spent
Beach Clean April	£750.00	£750.00
Beach Clean August	£225.00	
Development Plan	£10,000 -	
"		£198.16*
	£	£

Please list below any pending media coverage or recent media coverage providing a details of who provided the media coverage – if possible

Media Coverage	Details of media coverage	Contact details
Jura Jottings	101 island recipients 175 mainland recipients	We continue to report our progress in our local newspaper.

List any local links that you would want to see on the Initiative at the edge website:

Any other information

£750 raised from April Beach Clean. £300 awarded to Playground Association, £300 to School Board for trips and £150 to Jura Badminton Club.
£198.16 spent for the investigation carried out on the land ownership of the foreshore.
£225 raised from August Beach Clean. £200 to be used to produce large display boards for exhibitions in hall. £25 remains as kitty for next clean – food and drink.

Date Sent: 26 January 2007
Date Returned:
Date Logged:

JURA

Passenger Ferry –Rural Community Transport Initiative grant application form was unsuccessful. Looking at other avenues. Need to provide a summer service to develop the need to secure a more robust business case for future applications. Working with A&BC and potential operators to provide a skeleton service this year. Operators will require a subsidy – source options to fund this. Funds secure for infrastructure.

Village Car Park & Recreational Area – Working with an independent engineer to provide a topographical survey of the area to ascertain the amount of material required to land fill. Once this has been calculated, send out to tender. Funding support from BLF max 50%. Initiative at the Edge will match fund a small percentage. Require funding from other sources, proving difficult since such a project is not seen as a great need, car park will support many projects within the Craighouse Regeneration plan which has seven major projects;

1. Car park, with a recreation area, to the North of the hall (Initiative at the Edge)
2. Renovated and extended village hall (Isle of Jura Village Hall Committee) requires a great demand for parking.
3. New Antlers building to include a bunkhouse, tea room and interpretation centre. (Jura Development Trust) requires parking.
4. Passenger ferry with landing facilities (Initiative at the Edge)
5. New moorings and landing pontoon (Jura Development Trust) provides infrastructure to support the passenger ferry.
6. Workshops
7. Bio fuel project

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Initiative at the Edge Base Report

Area	Isle of Coll
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Contacts - Please list all relevant contacts (Ensure people listed are actual people who will be able to deal with Initiative business)

Local Development Officer		Community Group		Agency	
Name	Fiona Carswell	Name	Development Coll	Name	
Address	Middle Pier Arinagour Isle of Coll PA78 6SY	Address	Peter Isaacson Uig Cottage Isle of Coll PA78 6TB	Address	
E-mail	developmentcoll@btconnect.com	E-mail	isaacson@isleofcoll.org.uk	E-mail	
Tel	01879230000	Tel	01879230491	Tel	
Fax	01879230000	Fax	01879230272	Fax	
Mobile		Mobile		Mobile	

Please use the space below to indicate any past, current and future projects for your area/s. Outlining the status and progress of the specific project

Action	Target	Indicator	Progress
Community Centre	To build a multifunctional building combined with a new primary school to include, service point, library, catering, sports facility, archive collection, meeting rooms, work shops, exhibition space	On-going	Fund raising under way Secured contract with independent advisor to assist the group through 1 st phase of applying for funding and help with the intensive side of the paper work. Meeting scheduled for 5.02.07 to decide on what the community want from there community centre which will enable the group to decide on the amount of land needed to purchase from land owner. Meeting scheduled for 22.02.07 with architect to brief the group on how the design process might work. Group to constitute and open own bank account. Big lottery fund application applied for 1 st phase.
Affordable Housing	To build affordable housing, to ease present housing problems on Coll	On-going	Three potential development sites been located. LDO met with Gregor Cameron (WHHA) to up date on sites and what action to take. Community to decide on which potential site to develop on from plan. Copy of housing questionnaire to be confirmed by development Coll and to be carried out by Clare Jones February 07.

Village Improvements	Feasibility study drawn up to enhance specific areas around Arinagour village	On-going	Several points chosen to enhance in village by community at meeting. From one point a consultant has been arranged to carry out a survey and produce a report into safety of seawall Feb.3 rd 07 Coll association to be approached for funding to replace eroded gate into war memorial monument. SNH to be approached to locate consultant to carry out survey into erosion around village. Old water pump to be restored. Funding partners to be approach re footpaths from Carnan Road to village.
Small Producers		On-going	At a meeting held on 22.01.07 it was decided that the group had gone as far as it could go in its present form. At present there does not seem enough surpluses to sell off the island. More ambitious small producers already know what is available in the way of grants, funds, support and help. Development Coll remains committed to help small producers on the island.
Renewables	Investigate sources to provide a sustainable income (community wind Turbine)	On-going	A potential site has been chosen and provisionally inspected by planning authorities. A meeting has been organised with Mark Jennison was LDO for Tiree. Early Feb.
Recycling group		On-going	Secured new site for plastic recycling Winter newsletter been printed and sent out. Bale wraps scheme up and running and proving a huge success with local farmers. LDO to look into more funding to take bale wrap off island and down to Solway plastics. Design drawn up to print on a bag for life, which will be sold to help raise funds for the group. Confirm quotes to print 1000 bags and order by April 07
Water	Improving the water supply and ensure future mains supply	On-going	Jamie McGrigor MSP forwarded a letter from Scottish water, advising they will address growth in the village supply as dictated by housing demand from developers, councils and housing association. However no sign of extending supply outside the village at present. Development Coll will continue with letters to Scottish water.

Please indicate any projects past, present and future and outline amount, if any, of funding approved and the amount of funding spent

Project Title	Funding Approved	Funding Spent
Recycling	£250	£250
Recycling	£500	£500
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£

Please list below any pending media coverage or recent media coverage providing a details of who provided the media coverage – if possible

Media Coverage	Details of media coverage	Contact details

List any local links that you would want to see on the Initiative at the edge website:

Any other information

Date Sent:
Date Returned:
Date Logged:

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Coll Report – Concerns and Successes

Concerns – Coll

- Although we have letter from Scottish water stating that they will address growth as dictated by housing demand from developers, councils and housing association. We have evidence other wise.
- Increasing demand for visitor B&B, with decreasing availability
- Five key families will be made homeless, due to lack of rentable housing.
- Identified village seafront made be concern due to stormy weather
- Lack of secondary education on island threatens social cohesion
- Provision of mobile phone coverage

Successes –

- Development plan on schedule
- Several successful projects on schedule, new build Community centre, affordable housing, recycling group, renewables, village improvements
- Potential site has been located for new build community centre
- Lottery fund application in process for 1st phase of community centre
- A site has been identified and next step is feasibility stage
- Public meeting of village improvements has been held and identified several potential points to enhance
- Successful bale wrap scheme under way

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