

**COLLABORATION BETWEEN ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL AND SCOTTISH
CANALS**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to allow members to consider a draft Minute of Understanding (MOU) between Argyll and Bute Council and Scottish Canals which represents a new collaborative approach of working between both parties. The purpose of this new approach is to work together to drive forward the regeneration of Ardrishaig/Lochgilphead and settlements along the Crinan Canal corridor, to secure investment into the wider Mid Argyll area and to maximize local socio economic benefit offered to our area from the Crinan Canal. The Canal offers significant recreational, tourism, heritage, environmental and regeneration opportunities. It is an asset of national importance and has been described as 'Britain's most beautiful shortcut' and there is no doubt that it has a significant role to play in the Scotland's Maritime Tourism economy

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee notes the content of this report.
2. That the Committee agree to the attached MOU and to its formal signing

**COLLABORATION BETWEEN ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL AND SCOTTISH
CANALS**

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to allow members to consider a draft Minute of Understanding (MOU) between Argyll and Bute Council and Scottish Canals which represents a new collaborative approach of working between both parties. The purpose of this new approach is to work together to drive forward the regeneration of Ardrishaig/Lochgilphead and settlements along the Canal Canal corridor, to secure investment into the wider Mid Argyll area and to maximize local socio economic benefit offered to our area from the Crinan Canal. The Canal offers significant recreational, tourism, heritage, environmental and regeneration opportunities. It is an asset of national importance and has been described as 'Britain's most beautiful shortcut' and there is no doubt that it has a significant role to play in Scotland's Maritime Tourism economy

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the content of this report
- 3.2 That the Committee agree to the attached MOU and to its formal signing

4.0 DETAILS

- 4.1 Since 2007 Argyll and Bute Council, in partnership with Scottish Canals, formerly British Waterways, have been working together with the Ardrishaig Community Council and the associated Development Trust to seek to deliver the key actions within the Ardrishaig Regeneration Masterplan and Action Plan. The masterplan was approved by the Executive Committee in October 2008 as Supplementary Planning Guidance in line with the recommendations of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay (MAKI) Area Committee in August 2008.
- 4.3 The masterplan and associated action plan emerged from a high priority 'Area for Action' (AFA) within the Council's then adopted Local Plan 2009. The focus was to secure environmental improvements and regeneration opportunities and to bring

investment to the waterfront in Ardrishaig in recognition of the key role that it had to play as a gateway into the Canal.

- 4.4 Scottish Canals, along with the Council, own the majority of land within the masterplan area with the exception to the Ardrishaig Boat Club, which occupies a prominent waterfront site and is privately owned by the Club.
- 4.5 Unfortunately despite a number of successful community engagement events including a “Place Making” day and the creation of a strong steering group, which has met on a regular basis, the delivery of the key actions/projects, which formed the basis for the materplan, have not progressed. Whilst there are a number of reasons for this, not least of which has been the economic downturn and resulting impact on land values, this has been disappointing to the community, the Council and Scottish Canals.
- 4.6 However more recently there has been a refocus on not just Ardrishaig but Lochgilphead and the wider Crinan Canal corridor by Scottish Canals and the Council looking at the potential regeneration opportunities that this significant asset can offer to the area. It is from this wider focus on recreation, tourism, heritage, environmental and regeneration opportunities that this partnership agreement has been drawn up and it is hoped that this will re-stimulate focus and action going forward.
- 4.7 One of the first actions to be taken forward in regard to this refocus is to seek to deliver a charrette for the Ardrishaig/lochgilphead and Crinan Canal corridor. This is reflective of the agreement of the Planning Protective Services and Licensing Committee on the 24 June 2015 at which Members endorsed the proposal to use the charrette process to deliver community actions plans in 5 pilot areas across Argyll and Bute one of which was focused around Ardrishaig/Lochgilphead and the Crinan Canal corridor. A funding bid has been submitted to the Scottish Government for charrette funding, deadline 31 October. This funding would be matched with funding from both Scottish Canals and the Council.
- 4.8 The charrette process are primarily community driven and will help to inform the content of the Local Development Plan at a local level, explore future issues, consider the communities in a more holistic manner, and promote the implementation of the Single Outcome Agreement related actions. They should consider wider social and economic issues as well as the traditional land use planning ones. An action plan will be produced from the charrette process that will then be considered by the Council and Scottish Canals.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Council welcomes the opportunity to strengthen and refocus its partnership working with Scottish Canals to identify, through the charrette process, key initiatives and projects linked to the Crinan Canal as a whole, including the waterfront of Ardrishaig and to also look at opportunities to link to Lochgilphead. This links to our wider economic objectives for the area and also links back to the Ardrishaig Masterplan objectives as well as to the delivery of key infrastructure points along the

Argyll Kayak trail, including points along the Crinan Canal.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 6.1 | Policy | Consistent with the objectives of the Single Outcome agreement (SOA), Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP), Local Development Plan and Ardrishaig Materplan to deliver economic regeneration to our communities |
| 6.2 | Financial | Officer time and match funding from Scottish Canals and the Council to support and deliver the charrette. A bid for charrette funding has been submitted to Scottish Government and if successful the Charrette will require to be delivered by 31 March 2016. The match funding from the Council for the charrette will come from EDST budget. The charrette process will inform the development of an action plan. The action plan will come before members for their consideration and approval at a later date. There will be no direct financial implications arising from this report other than the match funding for the charrette which is already allocated from EDST budget. |
| 6.3 | Legal | None at this time |
| 6.4 | HR | None |
| 6.5 | Equalities | None |
| 6.6 | Risk | The objectives of the SOA are predicated on securing future investment to increase the attractiveness of the area to ensure that we retain and attract new people to the area to live, work and visit. The MOU seeks to strengthen the current working relationship with Scottish Canals to ensure that there is a greater commitment to the delivery of shared objectives. |
| 6.7 | Customer Services | None |

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure – Pippa Milne

Policy Lead Cllr Aileen Morton

For further information contact: Audrey Martin, Projects and Renewables Manager, tel 01546 604180

Minute of Understanding between Argyll & Bute Council and Scottish Canals.

1.0 The Parties

Argyll and Bute Council (A&BC) and Scottish Canals (SC).

2.0 Objectives

2.1 To enter into a partnership between both organisations to deliver the following Scottish Government, SC and A&BC visions, aims and objectives:

The Strategic Framework for Scotland's Marine Tourism Sector
"Awakening the Giant"

"By 2020 we want Scotland to be "A marine tourism destination of first choice for high quality, value for money and memorable customer experience delivered by skilled and passionate people"

Scottish Government Regeneration Strategy and Making the Most of Scotland's Canals

"Our canals are an asset that we wish to use wisely in order to enhance the future quality of life for Scotland's inhabitants and to help create a more successful, sustainable country ... This can be done by continuing to develop the role canals, both urban and rural, can play in delivering wider public benefits and by working in strong partnerships with others to secure those benefits.

Scottish Canals Vision for growth:

Safeguarding our Heritage – Building our Future:

- ***Through stronger Communities;***
- ***By attracting new customers and income;***
- ***Thanks to empowered motivated people.***

Argyll and Bute Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023 overall objective which states that:

"Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population"

The Argyll and Bute Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) objective of :

"Realising our potential together, Argyll and Bute will unlock the opportunities offered by its significant, sustainable economic assets for the benefit of its communities and the competitiveness

and security of the Scottish and EU economies.”

- 2.2 The Crinan Canal is recognised as an important economic asset at an international, national and local context. Scotland’s Marine Tourism framework recognises the importance of the Crinan Canal to attract visitors to the area and to increase their length of stay and spend in the area. Both parties wish to work together to maximise the benefit derived from this asset, to deliver economic regeneration for the area by improving the local environment and economy, increasing the tourism and business offering and increasing those using the canal (both locals and visitors).
- 2.3 Working towards mutually beneficial goals which seek to maximise the impact of investment and to secure the delivery of the SOA, the overall aims and objectives of the partnership will be as follows:
- 2.3.1 Grow canal side uses and animation (activities, footfall, interest);
 - 2.3.2 Deliver economic regeneration in the mid Argyll area with a focus on the development of a community action plan and charrette
 - 2.3.3 Increase tourism activity in the area,
 - 2.3.4 Celebrate the heritage of the canal ,
 - 2.3.5 Increase leisure opportunities
 - 2.3.6 Maximise the opportunities available to the area from the unique environment and biodiversity along the length of the canal
 - 2.3.7 Grow existing businesses and create new business opportunities ;
 - 2.3.8 Increase the footfall on the canal and through the canal
 - 2.3.9 Help towards Scottish Governments social agenda and the delivery of the objectives of the SOA

3.0 Strategy

- 3.1 A&BC and SC are seeking to strengthen their existing partnership working by entering into a partnership agreement, The purpose of this is to provide an agreed framework for future working from which to progress to either a more formal collaboration agreement or a potential joint venture vehicle once specific projects have been identified.
- 3.2 The initial piece of work to be taken forward through the partnership will be a charrette which will involve communities along the Crinan canal corridor and other relevant stakeholders.
- 3.3 On completion of the charrette process both A&BC and SC will develop and agree an action plan for the way forward, and a further report will be brought back to Council for consideration of the action plan and its approval. The parties will work together to identify 3rd party grant/funding opportunities where required.
- 3.4 Upon agreement of the action plan by both parties both Scottish Canals and A&BC will commit to work together to actively progressing and support its delivery.

- 3.5 The action plan will identify key targets which will be agreed between the parties and must also meet best value criteria for both A&BC and SC.

4.0 Responsibilities & Reporting Procedures

- 4.1 A working group will be formed from the relevant A&BC and SC departments which will report to an Executive Group. The Executive Group will include senior managers from A&BC Development and Infrastructure Department and Scottish Canals Estates & Commerce Department. The Executive Group should meet twice a year.
- 4.2 The MOU will be reviewed annually and updated in agreement with the partners to reflect any changes.
- 4.3 Either party will be entitled to withdraw from this Minute of Understanding on giving three months' notice in writing to the other party.