ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL   **MID ARGYLL, KINTYRE AND THE ISLANDS COMMITTEE**

Development and Infrastructure   **2 DECEMBER 2015**

Digital Infrastructure Update

1.0   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   This report provides an update on the various digital infrastructure projects including:
- Next Generation Broadband
    - Highlands and Islands Programme
    - Community Broadband Scotland
    - Extension of Funding
- Mobile Communications
    - Mobile Infrastructure Project
    - Scottish Government Pilot on Coll
    - Vodafone Rural
    - Commercial upgrades

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Mid Argyll, Kintyre and The Islands Committee
1.   Note the content of this report.
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Development and Infrastructure

2 DECEMBER 2015

Digital Infrastructure Update

2.0   INTRODUCTION

2.1   Work has commenced on a number of programmes which aim to improve the digital infrastructure across Argyll. This report provides an update on the various projects within the MAKI area.

3.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   It is recommended that Mid Argyll, Kintyre and The Islands Committee
1.   Note the content of this report.

4.0   DETAIL

The work being undertaken in relation to digital infrastructure relates to broadband or mobile communications.

4.1   **Next Generation Broadband**

Next generation broadband within the MAKI area is being delivered by the Highlands and Islands project and Community Broadband Scotland supported community projects.

4.2   Work continues on building the new infrastructure network to support next generation broadband. Having completed the subsea cable links in 2014, land based backhaul and local access fibre cables are required to connect communities. Whilst telephone exchanges will continue to provide a service in relation to telephone calls only a handful of exchanges will handle next generation broadband services, new access cables running from these "headend" exchanges directly to new communication cabinets within communities will ensure that the superfast speeds reach the local cabinets.

4.3   During 2015, we have seen new connections which mean that next generation broadband is available in the MAKI area for the first time, work continues in many of these locations to extend the fibre services to as many premises as possible within the budget of the project. A summary of all exchanges across MAKI is contained at Appendix 1.

4.4   Once the new fibre cabinets are live, customers who want access to superfast broadband must order the upgraded fibre service from their internet service

provider. Members of the public can check whether they are able to order a next generation service at www.digitalscotland.org/whereandwhen. If they are not able to order a next generation broadband service they will be given an indication of whether the service is likely to be available within their exchange area and if so when the first premises are expected to be connected.

4.5   Highlands and Islands Programme
        The Highlands and Islands (H&I) programme in Argyll is currently expected to connect 83% of premises when taken with the commercial rollout.

4.6   The first live premises through the H&I programme in MAKI were in Campbeltown and Lochgilphead exchange areas during the summer, these connections have been delivered earlier than the 2016 dates estimated in the initial planned rollout plans.

4.8   Work is continuing across much of MAKI with further deployment expected during 2016 which will extend connections to the rural parts of the area.

4.9   Community Broadband Scotland
        Community Broadband Scotland (CBS) operates to support communities in taking forward their own broadband solution where coverage through the above programmes is not expected.

4.10   During 2015, CBS announced that a contractor has been appointed for the Giga Plus Argyll project which is seeking to provide superfast broadband to all premises on Colonsay, Iona, Lismore, Luing and parts of Mull, Jura, Islay and the Craignish Peninsula - approximately 1,400 properties. The project will receive £988,000 funding from CBS to assist with capital costs. It is expected that coverage will be rolled out to premises within the Giga Plus project area from 2016.

4.11   **Other broadband issues**

        Extension of Funding
        Additional funding has been received from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and the Scottish Government which will provide a further £42 million to extend the rollout into Phase 2. It has not yet been confirmed as to how the additional funds will be allocated or the implications it could have for coverage in Argyll or the MAKI area.

4.12   In addition to government funding, the Phase 1 contracts provide for a "gain share" clause to clawback funding if the project reached agreed take up levels. In August 2015 it was announced that BT would make a payment of £17.8 million which will be used to extend coverage.

4.13   In order to better understand how the additional funding could be utilised, a modelling exercise is currently being undertaken. It is expected that this will be completed by the end of 2015 and will confirm those locations which cannot be covered by the fibre rollout.

4.14 **Mobile Communications**

Mobile Infrastructure Project
Previous updates detailed work associated with the Mobile Infrastructure Project. This project is due to be completed by March 2016 and unfortunately will not deliver any new masts within Argyll. Potential sites had been identified however the transmission links into the mobile operators' networks were not available.

4.15 Scottish Government Pilot on Coll
In March 2015, a new mobile mast funded by the Scottish Government went live on the Island of Coll. We are working with Scottish Futures Trust to confirm whether there is potential for any similar pilots elsewhere in Argyll including in the MAKI area.

4.16 Vodafone Rural
Vodafone has announced that seven communities in Argyll are included in a programme to receive their Open Sure Signal product. Open Sure Signal boxes connect to the internet (minimum 4mbps required) and provide a 3G mobile coverage for Vodafone users within approximately 500m radius (reducing where trees, buildings etc. block the signal). The first live location was Ormsary on the Knapdale peninsula. Vodafone are also hoping to make installations at Ardfern and Port Askaig within Mid Argyll.

4.17 Commercial upgrades
When Ofcom awarded the contract for delivering 4G across the UK it included a stipulation that 95% of premises within Scotland receive coverage. 4G coverage is available to some parts of Argyll but not yet within the MAKI area. It is understood that further 4G deployments are planned and we expect parts of MAKI to benefit from this although details of upgrades are not yet known.

4.18 Alongside the 4G licence, amendments have been made to the licences issued by Ofcom to the mobile operators to implement 90 percent geographic voice coverage throughout the UK by no later than 31 December 2017. Again it is not known what impact this will have on the MAKI area.

4.19 Other activities
As updated at the last Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee, we met with the Scottish Government and Scottish Futures Trust at the beginning of September to identify activities which can assist with improved mobile and broadband connectivity. We continue to work with them to develop opportunities within Argyll including the MAKI area. We are also working with businesses including through the Economic Forum to lobby for improved mobile coverage. The issue of poor mobile coverage has also been raised by the fish farming industry and we are working together to lobby for improvements.

4.20 Our hilly landscape is one reason why mobile coverage can be intermittent. To try to assist mobile operators in building new masts, our Development Management Team has indicated an in principal agreement to trial larger masts within suitable locations. Detailed discussions will need to be undertaken to identify those locations which might be suitable.

4.21   **Public Wi-Fi**

The Scottish Government has launched a £1.5 million programme to provide more public Wi-Fi availability. The initial phase of the programme will be the provision of Wi-Fi in public buildings such as libraries. We are working with the Scottish Government to establish which locations across Argyll might be eligible to receive funding.

5.0   CONCLUSION

5.1   Digital connectivity across the MAKI area is improving with the biggest change during 2015 being the introduction of superfast broadband to the Campbeltown and Lochgilphead exchange areas. Rollout is expected to continue during 2016 with coverage extending to the more rural settlements as well as some of the islands. The Giga Plus Argyll project will enhance the Highlands and Islands programme and further extend next generation connections. Progress on mobile coverage is less certain although we will continue to press for improved coverage through both commercial and publically funded programmes.

6.0   IMPLICATIONS

6.1   Policy – the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and Economic Development Action Plan support improvements in the digital infrastructure.

6.2   Financial – Across Scotland funding of £410m has been committed to the Phase 1 next generation broadband project across Scotland (including a contribution from COSLA on behalf of all local authorities). A further £42m is confirmed for phase 2. No direct financial implications to the Council at the present time.

6.3   Legal – none.

6.4   HR – None.

6.5   Equalities – the differing nature of the deployment of new technology has the potential to lead to inequalities in terms of access to digital services including those which support business and personal development.

6.6   Risk – there is an overall risk that the economic benefits arising from modern digital infrastructure are not fully realised. There are risks that those areas which do not benefit from digital infrastructure could become less attractive locations within which to live and work which could have implications in relation to the SOA objective of growing the population. The various programmes are reliant on new technology and innovation which is developing rapidly. Some projects are reliant on commercial operator decisions to invest whilst grant funding is necessary for many aspects of digital infrastructure improvement in Argyll. These aspects all create a level of uncertainty around the extent of infrastructure improvements.

6.7   Customer Service – improvements in broadband and mobile technology
       improve the opportunities for digital based customer services.

Appendices
1   Exchange overview
2   Broadband leaflet (correct at October 2015, updates will be available from
       http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/superfast-broadband#leaflet)

See also http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/superfast-broadband

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APPENDIX 1 EXCHANGE OVERVIEW

Exchange Area	Initial Programme Date	Date for 1st connections
Achnamara	Exploring solutions	Exploring solutions
Barbreck (Ardfern)	Exploring solutions	Jul-Dec 2016 & Giga Plus Argyll –2016
Bowmore	Jul-Dec 2016	Jul-Dec 2016
Campbeltown	Jan-Jun 2016	LIVE – work continuing
Carradale	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Clachan	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Colonsay	Exploring solutions	Giga Plus Argyll –2016
Crinan	Exploring solutions	Jul-Dec 2016
Ford	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Furnace	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Gigha	Exploring solutions	Exploring solutions
Glenbarr	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Inveraray	Jul-Dec 2016	Jul-Dec 2016
Jura	Exploring solutions	Jul-Dec 2016 & Giga Plus Argyll –2016
Kilchenzie	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Kilmartin	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Lochgilphead	Jan-Jun 2016	LIVE – work continuing
Machrihanish	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Minard	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Ormsary	Exploring solutions	Exploring solutions
Port Askaig	Exploring solutions	Jul-Dec 2016 & Giga Plus Argyll –2016
Port Charlotte	Jul-Dec 2016	Jul-Dec 2016 & Giga Plus Argyll –2016
Port Ellen	Jul-Dec 2016	Jul-Dec 2016
Portnahaven	Exploring solutions	Jul-Dec 2016 & Giga Plus Argyll –2016
Skipness	Exploring solutions	Exploring solutions
Southend	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Tarbert	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Tayinloan	Exploring solutions	Exploring solutions
Tayvallich	Jan-Jun 2016	Jan-Jun 2016
Whitehouse	Exploring solutions	Exploring solutions

APPENDIX 5 BROADBAND LEAFLET

Next Generation Broadband in Argyll and Bute

Connections now in Campbeltown, Cardross, Dalmally, Dunoon, Helensburgh, Innellan, Lochgilphead, Oban, Rothesay and Taynuilt

Coming soon...
Arrochar, Balvicar, Benderloch, Clynder, Connel, Craignure, Kilcreggan, Kilmelford and Rhu Exchange Areas

£145.8 million for **Highlands and Islands**

£264 million for Rest of **Scotland**

The Scottish Government

Delivered by BT openreach

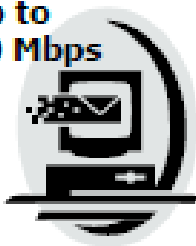Keep up to date by registering at

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/newsletters

2014

First properties within Argyll connected

Better connected for business, online learning and social activities

Up to 80 Mbps

10 new subsea cables in Argyll and Bute

www.digital scotland.org

85%

of properties expected to be connected by 2017

Digital Scotland
Community Broadband supporting communities to develop their own solution
www.communitybroadbandscotland.org
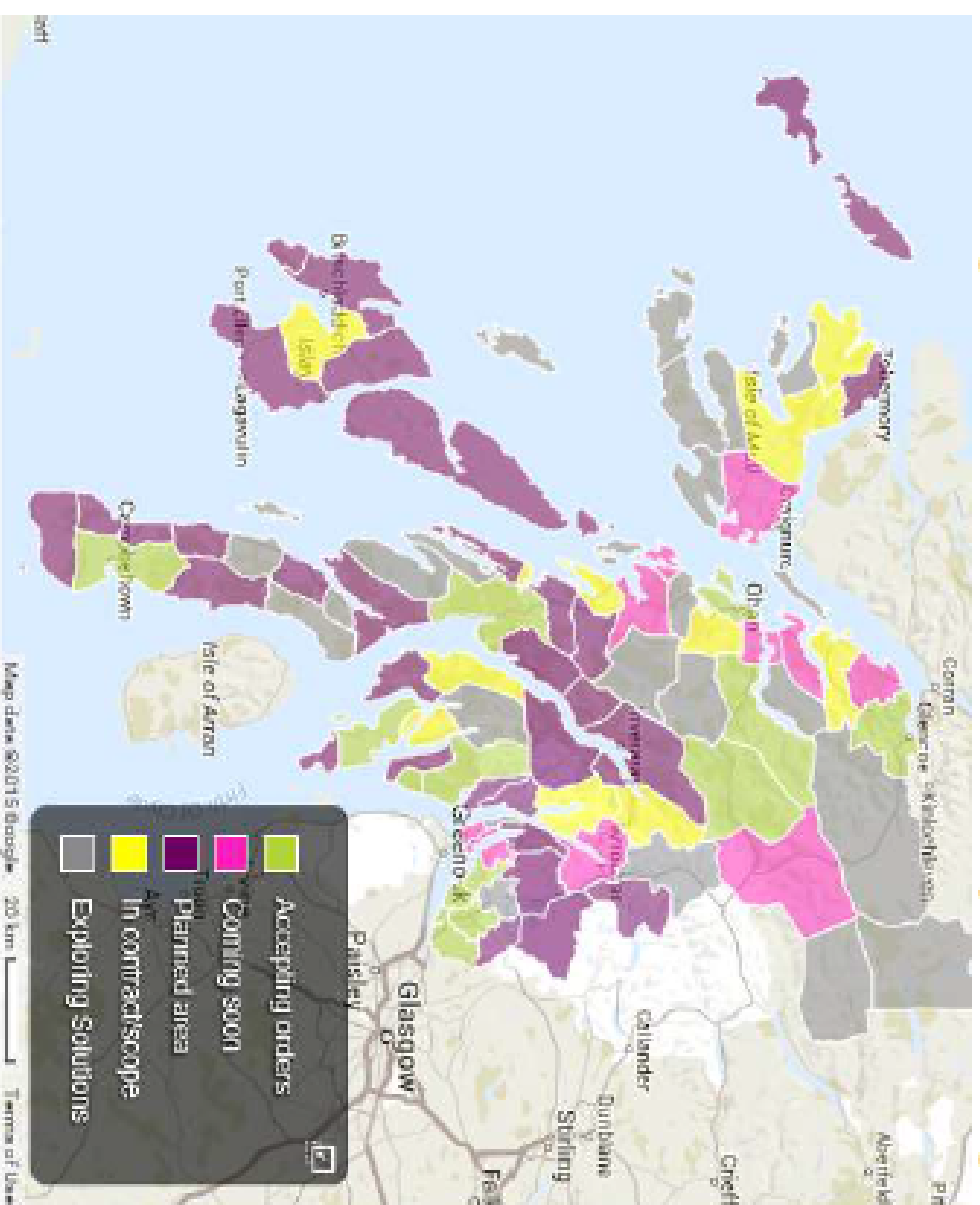
GigaPlus Argyll
Community superfast for 1,400 premises

Digital Scotland
Interactive map at www.digitalscotland.org

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/superfast-broadband

Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

Visit www.digitalscotland.org/whereandwhen and click on your exchange for further details

For premises in Aros, Barbreck, Colonsay, Craignure, Dervaig, Fionnphort, Jura, Kinlochspelve, Lismore, Luing, Pennyghael, Port Askaig, Port Charlotte, Portnahaven, Tiroran and Ulva Ferry exchange areas see also http://gigaplusargyll.co.uk/post_code

Legend:
- Accepting orders
- Coming soon
- Planned area
- In contractscope
- Exploring Solutions