

**ARGYLL ENTERPRISE WEEK**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide a briefing on Argyll Enterprise Week.
- 1.2 Argyll and Bute Council's Business Gateway and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Argyll are jointly hosting an 'Argyll Enterprise Week'.
- 1.3 Argyll Enterprise Week will run in Oban from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016. This will be run as a pilot and if successful, can be replicated in other areas in future years.
- 1.4 It will comprise of a week of activities aimed primarily at new and existing small to medium sized enterprises (including social enterprises) to help them learn new skills, meet new contacts, access support and ultimately grow their businesses in Argyll and beyond.
- 1.5 The objectives of the event are to:
  - Increase awareness of the support available;
  - Raise ambitions and provide inspiration;
  - Enhance skills and knowledge;
  - Facilitate networking; and
  - Engage a wider audience with enterprise activity.
- 1.6 There will be a focus on key themes within the event, linked to the objectives of HIE, Business Gateway and the Council's Economic Development service:
  - Digital;
  - Internationalisation;
  - Innovation;
  - Skills;
  - Business start-up;
  - Early stage business growth;
  - Young people; and
  - Social enterprise/third sector.

Activities will be linked to key sectors where appropriate – particularly tourism, creative industries and food & drink.

- 1.7 Argyll Enterprise Week will deliver a range of enterprise related activities to meet these objectives and key themes. This will include a business support trade fair, workshops, seminars, guest speakers, business competitions, one to one advice, demonstrations and best practice sharing.
- 1.8 Up to £10,000 funding for the venues and marketing of the event will be provided through existing budgets from HIE and Business Gateway. The £5,000 contribution from the Council's Business Gateway will be funded from the Business Gateway Local Growth Accelerator Programme budget and therefore there is no additional financial implication for the Council.
- 1.9 A wide range of partners from the wider business support network will deliver activity as part of Argyll Enterprise Week. HIE and Business Gateway are working with these partners to develop a detailed schedule of activity for the week.
- 1.10 A communications plan is being developed with HIE. This will be agreed by the Council's Communications team.
- 1.11 High profile guest speakers will be invited to open the event. These will be approached via HIE in partnership with the Council's Communications team.
- 1.12 Key milestones for the project include:
  - Mid July – Communications plan agreed for the event;
  - End July – Programme of activity for the week agreed;
  - End August – Launch activity commences; and
  - Mid September – Marketing of the detailed programme of events commences.Officers will provide an update on the communications plan and programme of activity for the week at the EDI Committee meeting.
- 1.13 It is recommended that members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure (EDI) Committee:
  - Note the activities planned and partners involved with Argyll Enterprise Week; and
  - Suggest any additional opportunities to further align Council and partner activity within Argyll Enterprise Week.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Argyll and Bute Council's Business Gateway and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Argyll are jointly hosting an 'Argyll Enterprise Week'.
- 2.2 Argyll Enterprise Week will now run in Oban from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016. This will be run as a pilot and if successful, can be replicated in other areas in future years.
- 2.3 It will comprise of a week of activities aimed primarily at new and existing small to medium sized enterprises (including social enterprises) to help them learn new skills, meet new contacts and ultimately grow their businesses in Argyll and beyond.
- 2.4 Argyll Enterprise Week will deliver a range of enterprise related activities to meet these objectives and key themes. This will include a business support trade fair, workshops, seminars, guest speakers, business competitions, one to one advice, demonstrations and best practice sharing.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that members of the EDI Committee:

- 3.1 Note the activities planned and partners involved with Argyll Enterprise Week.
- 3.2 Suggest any additional opportunities to further align Council and partner activity within Argyll Enterprise Week.

## 4.0 DETAIL

### Objectives

- 4.1 The objectives of the event are to:
- increase awareness of the support available;
  - raise ambitions and provide inspiration;
  - enhance skills and knowledge;
  - facilitate networking; and
  - engage a wider audience with enterprise activity.
- 4.2 There will be a focus on key themes within the event, linked to the objectives of HIE, Business Gateway and the Council's Economic development service:
- Digital;
  - Internationalisation;
  - Innovation;
  - Skills;
  - Business start-up;
  - Early stage business growth;
  - Young people; and
  - Social enterprise/third sector.

Activities will be linked to key sectors where appropriate – particularly tourism and food & drink.

- 4.3 Key milestones for the project include:
- Mid July – Communications plan agreed for the event;
  - End July – Programme of activity for the week agreed;
  - End August – Launch activity commences; and
  - Mid September – Marketing of the detailed programme of events commences.

Officers will provide an update on the communications plan and programme of activity for the week at the EDI Committee meeting.

### Why run an Enterprise Week?

- 4.4 Much of the activity proposed within the Enterprise Week is available across the year from a range of partners as part of their core activity. However, clustering some of this within an Enterprise Week will have the benefit of:
- Easy access for entrepreneurs to a wide range of support, in one place at the same time;
  - Linking appropriate support providers together under themes, strengthening the appeal and relevance to entrepreneurs;
  - Showcasing the breadth of support available;
  - Creating a stronger story for marketing activity – generating a 'buzz'; and
  - Engaging new clients through an alternative approach.

- 4.5 The Enterprise Week model has been used successfully elsewhere. Some examples include:
- Moray, Scotland – November 2014 (Elgin & Forres)
  - Wandsworth, London - February 2015  
<http://wandsworthenterpriseweek.biz/about>
  - Derry, Northern Ireland – February 2015  
<http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/BusinessOpportunities/EnterpriseWeek>
- 4.6 Feedback from Moray Business Gateway about the first Moray Business Week was very positive. 21 events were delivered and 618 businesses attended, with 96 booked onto the launch event. They have shared their learning around marketing and running a successful enterprise week.

### **Location**

- 4.7 Geography is always a challenge for running an event in Argyll, with no single significant cluster of population. Consideration was given to Argyll's largest towns of Oban, Lochgilphead, Dunoon, Rothesay and Campbeltown. Helensburgh was excluded as the location as it is not within HIE's delivery area – but Helensburgh businesses will be able to attend and if the pilot is successful discussions can be progressed with other partners regarding a future enterprise event in Helensburgh.
- 4.8 Oban was selected for the pilot Argyll Enterprise Week based on:
- Availability of a suitable main venue for the trade fair event and a range of smaller venues for workshops/seminars;
  - Historically better attendance at HIE and Business Gateway events;
  - Size of the town and accessibility from other areas – Mull, Lochgilphead, Inveraray; and
  - University Town ambitions – UHI at Argyll College and SAMS.

### **Budget**

- 4.9 A budget of £10,000 has been identified for venues, refreshments and marketing. This will be funded from HIE and Business Gateway budgets. The £5,000 contribution from the Council's Business Gateway will be funded from the Business Gateway Local Growth Accelerator Programme budget and therefore there is no additional financial implication for the Council.

### **Partners and activities**

- 4.10 The list of partners is still growing. Those that have already confirmed interest in participating includes:
- DSL Business Finance Ltd;
  - SJ Noble Trust;
  - Scottish Edge;

- Business Loans Scotland/West of Scotland Loan Fund;
- Argyll and the Islands LEADER;
- Skills Development Scotland;
- HIE Digital team;
- HIE Internationalisation team;
- HIE Innovation team;
- HIE key sectors team;
- Scottish Enterprise;
- Scottish Development International;
- Interface;
- Federation of Small Businesses;
- Bid4Oban;
- Argyll and Bute Council Planning and Regulatory Services;
- Argyll and Bute Council Procurement;
- Argyll and Bute Council Economic Development;
- Argyll and Bute Council Community Services (16+);
- Scottish Manufacturing Advisory Service;
- Craft Scotland;
- VisitScotland;
- AliEnergy;
- McPhee solicitors;
- Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce;
- Young Enterprise Scotland;
- Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative;
- JobCentre Plus;
- Argyll Financial Services;
- Social Enterprise Academy;
- MacLeod Construction;
- Royal Bank of Scotland;
- Clydesdale Bank;
- Firstport/Vital Spark;
- Argyll College/UHI;
- InspirAlba;
- Scotland Food and Drink; and
- Investing Women Angels.

- 4.11 Now that partners have confirmed their interest in participating, planning is ongoing to finalise their detailed schedule of activities. Some partners will run workshops, seminars, events, competitions, others will attend the trade fair only.
- 4.12 Opening speakers for the launch day are being sought. The ambition is to invite high profile political and entrepreneurial figures to lend their support. Any approaches to senior politicians will be made via HIE in partnership with the Council's Communications team.

## **Marketing**

- 4.13 HIE's Events Team and Argyll and Bute Council's Communications team are supportive of Argyll Enterprise Week. HIE are developing an outline communication plan which will be shared with the Council's Communications team. This will include PR, advertising and social media.
- 4.14 Partners are being asked not to promote their events until Argyll Enterprise Week has been formally launched and to co-ordinate with the overall communication plan.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Argyll Enterprise Week is a new initiative for Argyll, developed as a partnership between HIE and Argyll and Bute Council.
- 5.2 It offers an effective way of raising awareness of the support on offer, providing inspiration, increasing skills and encouraging networking.
- 5.3 The activities proposed fit with both HIE's, Business Gateway's and the Council's Economic Development Service's objectives.
- 5.4 It presents an opportunity for the Council to showcase the support it provides and the benefits of living and working in the area.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

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|----------------|--|
| 6.1 Policy     | Support to new and existing businesses aligns to the Council's SOA and Economic Development Action Plan.   |
| 6.2 Financial  | No additional budget is being sought.  |
| 6.3 Legal      | None at this time.   |
| 6.4 HR         | None at this time.   |
| 6.5 Equalities | The event will have no adverse impact on key equality groups and the support can positively help disadvantaged individuals move into self-employment. The proposed activities will comply with all Equal Opportunities policies and obligations. |
| 6.6 Risk       | There is limited risk for the Council as its Business Gateway team has the skills and resources needed to deliver the event in partnership with HIE  |

6.7 Customer Service

The event aims to positively impact the relationships between the Council, HIE and the business community.

**Pippa Milne, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure**

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**14<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

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